

Teacher Education between National Identity and Global Trends

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Kari Smith: *Some of the main goals education strives to achieve are certification and socialization. To achieve these goals in the best interest of the individual and society is a demanding challenge for all involved. Yet the task becomes even more complex when seeking answers to questions such as in what context is the certification going to be used and into what society are the educatees expected to socialize? Teacher education is at the heart of the discussion as it is responsible for educating teachers whose task it will be to certify and socialize a new generation into a society, the nature of which is, to a large extent, still unknown. Is a teaching certificate issued in one specific country valid in that national context only, or can it be accepted globally by the international community? Are standards for teaching generic and have cross national value, or are the expressed standards nation-specific? Can we reach a global understanding of 'the best pedagogy of teacher education'? Should a teacher educated in Norway be certified to teach in Tanzania, and vice versa? Members of the panel are asked to share their views with the audience. Another issue to discuss is the issue of socialization. A person is socialized into a specific, definable society. What are the borders of this society? National borders? Religious borders? Ethnic groups? Language? Geographical areas etc.? Should teacher education aim at socializing teachers-to-be into a national or global society, and whatever the answer is, what comes at the expense of what? This becomes*

an even more crucial question when introducing the Norwegian 'dannings' (German "Bildung") perspective into the discussion. Is the Bildung perspective more confined by national and cultural borders than, for example, the content specific and the pedagogy of teaching?

The panel speeches

The panel members were requested to relate to the above issues and questions in their introductions. In the following section the points from each panel participant is summed up in their own words.

Elaine Munthe took as a starting point that “proximity leads to more complexity”: the closer you get to teacher education as a researcher, the more diverse and complex teacher education becomes. This brings up a question of: What can we study at a global level and what can't we? What are the boundaries, limits of our own research methods, of our own understanding, of the perspectives that we can take? Once we start posing such questions we are involved in questions about ethics, research ethics since this is intertwined with the validity of our research.

This is also related to the question of whether it is possible to develop common standards for all. Here I believe it is important to make a distinction between principles and standards. For instance, research has, to date, been fairly conclusive that engagement is important for students' learning. As a principle, this might apply globally, for all education. Standards tend to also describe what is expected concerning how to teach and they might be more local. Creating engagement with 60 students versus a classroom where you might have ten or even just two students will be different.

On the other hand, the discussions about standards are important, and I think they may be more important than actually arriving at established standards. This is interesting on a global level because by discussing standards across countries, we are discussing what we expect of teachers and teaching, we discuss important issues for education. These discussions can also bring about awareness of what is *not* expected of initial teacher education, what initial teacher education cannot do and what kind of learning needs to take place in the continuum of teacher education.

Marilyn Cochran-Smith: It seems to me that in terms of teacher educator practice and research and policy it's not really either a focus on national identity or a focus on global trends. We really need to give attention to both

of them, and think about how they relate to one another. With research on national teacher education issues, we have to understand these in terms of global trends, and we have to connect them to global trends. An example globally is the prevalence of neoliberal policies related to teacher quality and teacher preparation. As part of this, we see market-based teacher education reforms in many places with an accountability bottom line and a business or corporate perspective. This is different from the way we used to think about teacher education reform prior to the 1990s. In April 2012, I was part of an international panel on the policy and politics of teacher education, and on that panel we had papers written about the teacher education policy climate in England, Ireland, New Zealand, and the U.S. Our discussant was from Chile. In all, we had five national contexts represented that are very different from one another. They all talked about neoliberalism as a major global trend in what was happening in terms of policy and practice and in terms of major changes that were taking place. If we want to understand “the national” (or, more accurately, “the nationals”), we have to understand the global. A second point is the flipside of the first. And that is to do research and to understand global trends related to teacher education practice policy. We have to acknowledge and understand multiple nationals, which is related to the whole issue of increasingly diverse student populations. The third thought that I wanted to mention is about teachers and teacher educators’ roles as implementers of national policy, which they may not agree with, and they may not have anything to do with, in tension with teachers’ and teacher educators’ roles as advocates and people who are involved in trying to speak up for social justice and for changing the systemic aspects of education systems that perpetuate inequities. So here is my idea — and you have probably heard this phrase before — teachers and teacher educators need to work simultaneously within and against the system — that is, working within the structural arrangements and the school or educational organizations in which they work — and at the same time working against those structures. So what does it mean — to work both within and against? As teacher educators, we are trying both to work against institutional structures that perpetuate inequities and also teach others to do that. My last thought here is that as we have more and more discussions about national and global perspectives, we really need to be careful not to forget the fact that ultimately teaching is local. It’s not national or global, but local—that is, teaching is a deeply relational and almost intimate activity and process and relationship that occurs between teachers and students. And so I think that we need not to forget that a lot of the knowledge that teachers and teacher educators need to have is

local knowledge that is constructed in communities of educators working in similar local communities that both construct and share knowledge. Communities make this knowledge available for others for critique and to sometimes make it useful beyond the local context in which every teacher acts.

Svein Lorentzen: My main field for research has for many years been changing national identity in education, and particularly in text books. In sorting out teacher education research between national identity and global trends I will like to point out two sets of quality standards: one easy and one more problematic. The first and easiest one would be the standard of what is called academic quality. This one will include academic discipline competence at a distance from pedagogical competence. Important research would be on teaching and learning processes, organizational matters, classroom leadership, special education needs in particular, student groups, etc. The second standard, the more problematic one, would be on the civic quality in teacher education. This variable is in my head the question of democracy, human rights, meta-perspectivity, for instance with regard to ethnicity and religion and national values. Those are universal values, but in many societies national values are often contradictory to universal ones. In a number of nations and states national identity is made remote through education, with advocates, specific ideologies and religious beliefs through a systematic distinction between the “wes” and “theys”. Research into this civic dimension of teacher education is more problematic, but perhaps the most interesting and challenging. And not only in a less democratic society I think, also in our open, pluralistic, popular world it is more than easy to identify fields of research where critical questions would challenge problematic parts on national identity practices. A pressing matter would be to study identity in rapidly changing societies, asking questions like: How does a growing diversity affect education, in general and teacher education in particular? The kind of teacher education research I would like to see is along the line of Marilyn Cochran-Smith’s brilliant key-note, critical research addressing the less obvious, more controversial issues of education. And above all, increase the amount of research not only on teacher education, but also within teacher education. It will ensure that the necessary research quality is an important part of education. Titles like national identity in transition are already on the research agenda in sociology and political sciences. Globalization is a key word in such processes. In other words, the two conflicting headlines national identity and global trends in many ways fit together, and are indeed a challenge to researchers in teacher education.

Kristin Barstad: Different views on substantial and existential issues might be so different that an important question for teachers and teacher educators is how to address all with other opinions not compatible with the Norwegian ‘danning’ (Bildung) perspective. ‘Danning’ has to do with moral and ethical education, for instance concerning the philosophical question of what the human being is, and what should it be. How do we educate future teachers to meet different pupils, how do we meet the challenges of tomorrow, how do we maintain a future development of democracy with the ability to think critically about knowledge? We have to link knowledge to value, and link knowledge from different disciplines together. As teachers and teacher educators we are in the middle of very important work aiming at educating for citizenship (Norwegian ‘medborgerskap’). As humans, people with family and children travel worldwide and bring their culture, religion, language and traditions and questions concerning, these issues are intertwined with values. Which values, traditions and habits may easily live side by side and which may not? And how do we communicate and how do we solve this education and daily live in such in such a multifaceted picture – these are the questions I think we are confronted with.

Per-Olof Erixon: I will remind all of us that there is no place that we can call international. It consists actually of a national context. And I think this is a very important reminder because the first reflection I make is that teacher education in itself is a national project. There could be local interpretations, but it is based upon national policy, intimately, and I would say, connected with cultural history. And I would say that teacher education is almost like a language in itself. Therefore I presume it is so difficult to learn about others, how teacher education was in another country, and in another setting, and another national context, also how schools were in other countries. But research in this sense is by definition international and research is a matter of exchanging ideas, results and theories. To do this, we have to communicate. And it is something that is very basic in academic work; that is, that we write texts and also meet in conferences like this. We build networks and exchange experiences, like today for example. And this is fantastic isn’t it? This is some sort of international community, but it is also problematic. Because we, when we communicate like today, we communicate in another language that is nationally rooted in another country, to me: in English. But English is not my mother tongue. It belongs to another national context. And that is why it might be difficult to communicate without this problem, that all is connected to communication. We all know now that language is not just surface linguistics. Language is also, for the most I would say, rather

a view of the world. It is the package of all, I would say, history, experiences in history. Some sort of interpretation of the world. So, this means that when we come from another national context, we have to adapt and adjust to issues and ways of thinking which are not part of our national context. We have to adjust to another national language. That means that we probably don't mean the same thing. We know for sure that 'Didaktik' is a German concept with a capital letter; in English it means something different, and in French something different also. But when it comes to concepts, when we think we have the same image of, let's say knowledge, freedom, content, pedagogy there might be problems. But at the same time we have to find solutions to this. The solution is very much in line with what Marilyn said. To me it is very important to develop national identity in research connected to teacher education. At the same time I try to communicate my findings and my reflections out of the national context in an international setting. This is important for many reasons. If we don't develop a national perspective in the research of teacher education, we will have less to communicate internationally. The concept of international consists of national contexts. Therefore we have to develop the national at the same time as we develop the international communication of teacher education.

Stella Damaris Ngorosho: When we talk of globalizing the teacher education, then we have to think of principles and the ways to harmonize the economic situations (harmony between economies of the developed and developing countries) and the varied values attached to aims of education in different nations. The values of education are country specific and they articulate the very specific knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of each country (as a matter of experience). The provision of education reflects to a large degree the state of economy of that specific country. The main focus of education in Tanzania is on access, quality and equity (attainment of sufficient and effective education and training to all the citizenry of Tanzania), whereas England is emphasizing liberal and elitist values of education. In that way certification for Tanzania should reflect the country's education system. I would not expect a Tanzanian teacher trainee to embrace the values of England's teacher education. Globalization has both positive and negative impact on education, but we should focus more on the internationalization of education values so as to support the growth of educational goods and services.

Ulla Lahtinen: I would like to take a very concrete example. If I am an educator and became a teacher in Finland by a five year master's program in which I have learnt psychology, different kinds of psychological stuff, I have learnt mathematics etc., and I think I am very well educated to take care of a group of children, teach them, get them to learn to read and write. Then, what if I moved to Tanzania? I would come to a class with one hundred, even 120 children, maybe five or ten books for the whole class and if I tried to teach the children something, I think I would feel really stuck, I could not manage at all. When I look at the Tanzanian class teachers that do this job, I heard what Lee said here that Damaris' presentation was really a sad story, and he said he would cry, and yes, of course I cried many times when I saw these children in the school and saw the hard work. But I must say that it was also a success story. I cannot understand how these wonderful teachers really managed to teach these children something. At least half of the group could manage to proceed to the following grade. I think these teachers do a wonderful job. And although I had a good teacher education, I could not manage in that environment. I can see that the context is so important to know. I think the local is something that we cannot go around; we have to know the local situation, the local community. And as Marilyn said: everything has to do with what is in the room. And also what is just around the room, the walls and so on. So I think during the years in Tanzania I have learnt a lot, and I have learnt that I cannot do anything there if I don't learn to know the community and how it works. Another thing I would like to point out that maybe has to do with this global situation is that we learn, as Lee said, from things that don't go well. We can be in any country with these more and more diverse populations. If you really want to learn when things don't go well, when children or adults have problems, we analyze what is the reason, what is the problem, then we can learn something also for the global; from other countries and for other situations. But most important is that I see the local situation, the community that we have to learn about. What then can be more common and what we can use in all countries, it's what Lee called habit of mind, practice and hearts. That is something that is important wherever we are in any country, for a good teacher. But we cannot build standards based on that. To get to a standard, you have to develop that within yourself during teacher education and during your life. So I would just like to say that the local situation, the local community, is the main thing if we will understand the global situation.

Lee Shulman: How many of you are familiar with the character Superman? Well you know one of the principles in pedagogical content knowledge and

pedagogical representation is that one should not use concepts that are less familiar than the concept you are trying to make understandable. I begin with two simple thoughts. One is that the notion that we have an identity being national or global or religious or ethnic is a mistake. The certification to teach, the compassion to teach is inherently local. And that paradoxically, as Ulla said, if you can say these habits of mind, practice and heart are universal, then we have the interesting saying that the features of the compassion to engage in the activity are universal. They are like three baskets, they are interwoven. But which combination going into the baskets for different teacher purposes in demand would be quite different. That's the general couple of ideas. So let me try to elaborate them a little bit. Let's think about Superman. We all know about Superman. Superman in daily life is a newspaper reporter named Clark Kent. And his girlfriend is Lois Lane. Okay. How does he transform back and forth? In a telephone booth, which we do not find in our streets any more. I think it is a serious problem for Superman. Why do I mention Superman? Because I asked you to consider, what is a real identity. Is he really Clark Kent who assumes this shadow identity of Superman? Is he really Superman who pretends to be Clark Kent? Which is his identity when he dates Lois Lane? Or is each of these identities coequal, interacting, intermingling aspects of an identity? In other words, Superman is an example, a portfolio of possibilities. Not a single, integrated, internally consistent whole. And I fact, isn't it interesting that Superman Clark Kent is more effective in the world because he isn't just one thing, one identity, because he has capacity to draw on different parts of his repertoire of selves. Isn't it the case that the larger the repertoire of selves we have the greater are our capacity to act in the world. And therefore in consistency in coherence which is our educational goal, we have created this advantage to someone operating in the global society. I asked you to consider it, for example, when you and I discovered last night that we could speak Hebrew to one another. I had not in Norway expected that the Hebrew speaking part of my identity would be invoked. But when it was, it wasn't just the syntax, semantics and phonology of Hebrew that was invoked. A whole set of personality characteristics, expectations, isn't that right? And you know, we talked about language: haven't we had students who we think we understand to have a certain kind of identity, and we never think much about the fact that they are native speakers, that they are working in Norwegian or in English. I will argue for us that identity should be thought of as a multiplicity of selves that can be tried, that can be expanded into a growing human being. It is our job as educators to try to increase the size, the flexibility and usability of the identities, especially of

the teachers we prepare and the kids they teach. Now about certification, I will just make a couple of comments. One is, isn't it interesting that those of us with PhDs, once we received our PhD we were considered competent to teach our subject anywhere. I received my PhD 49 years ago. If teaching is inherently local how can we make this assumption about PhDs without any questions? Either it's crazy that we are permitted to teach, or that the notion of certification, neither global or local exclusively, is like so many other things situational, and one has to look at it case by case as either very local or quite across boundaries. I would simply make the final observation with regard to the certification of teaching. As some of you know one of the research and development projects that my colleagues and I did at Stanford was to develop something called the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards – an assessment of competent teachers in the USA. There are now over one hundred thousand board certified teachers in the USA. The mode of assessment, the heart of the assessment, is not a test of the conventional kind. It is a teaching portfolio that unfolds in a teacher's own classroom, in their context, over a period of one year. Highly structured so it can be compatible for teacher to teacher, but the assessment is of a narrative of pedagogy of teaching and learning captured contextually in particular in that teacher's own classroom. The standards are general; the portfolio, however, is quite local and particular in person. So should the certification of a national board teacher be general or particular? I leave it there.

Discussion and conclusion

Kari Smith: We have now heard several professors speaking. However, I think we have heard important witnesses here, and before I take this any further I would like to open the discussion to the floor, and I will just ask as many as possible to participate in the discussion but to have brief, concrete questions and to the panel a brief, concrete response.

In the discussion two issues of special interest were addressed: the connection between policy and research, and the language of research. The connection between national policies and research was considered very selective. The need for research that can inform policy was mentioned as relevant both nationally and internationally, even if policy makers often read research in a very selective way.

One of the challenges for research within pedagogy would be to broaden it up, to have more diversity in methods and approaches. A very much

a wider range of methods and approaches, particularly crossing borders between pedagogy and other disciplines was asked for.

The language of research is also a political issue, and in, for instance, Norway policy makers warmly speak of using the Norwegian language in research. However, the Norwegian Research Council demands texts written in English. We have to recognize very different national cultures.

Kari Smith: I think that as a conclusion, at least some local understandings. From the national we should approach the international. Within the international we should look for the national, within the national we should look for the local, and within the local we should look for the context and the persons we interact with.