Chapter 7
Second-Phase Induction for Teacher Educators: Challenges and Possibilities

Åsa Morberg and Eve Eisenschmidt

Introduction

Chapter 6 described how difficult, and sometimes stressful, the development of beginning teacher educators can be and from Chapter 6, we learn that beginning teacher educators receive limited formal support. This chapter addresses the issue of the induction of teacher educators in the university context. To understand fully the induction of university teacher educators, the notion of second-phase induction is a useful concept. This concept allows us to focus on the needs of beginning teacher educators and on the various kinds of support activities that can be offered during second-phase induction. Even though the examples given in this chapter are based on authors’ experiences and observations in two quite different European countries, Estonia and Sweden, the problems will easily be recognised by those working in other teacher education institutes, and the support activities presented will be useful for those who are involved in the induction of teacher educators in a large range of countries in Europe.

The process of becoming a teacher educator differs from one country to another, but there are two main routes to become a teacher educator (see also Chapters 1 and 2). The first routes, quite common at the universities of Estonia and Sweden, is that of an academic who becomes a teacher educator. It is not unusual that researchers who have obtained a PhD become involved in teacher education. These teacher educators are familiar with the world of higher education and have no (or fewer) problems with research tasks than teacher educators who have been teachers. On the other hand, these academics have little or no experience as a teacher, and they might feel less confident in teaching student teachers since they are less familiar with the skills teacher students need to work in schools.

The second route to become a teacher educator is based on practical experience. Teachers who worked in primary or secondary schools continue their careers as teacher educators at the university. These teacher educators know the teaching profession from within as they have practical experiences as teachers. However, these
educators may experience problems when having to do research, and they might encounter specific problems when teaching adult students in higher education. Whatever their background teacher educators may not always be fully prepared for their new jobs and further professional learning, what we term second-phase induction, is needed.

This chapter deals with the issue of how to induct beginning teacher educators for their new work at university teacher education institutes. In this chapter, the authors first introduce the notion of second-phase induction. This is followed by a focus on the problems concerning second-phase induction. The authors also provide suggestions to improve second-phase induction.

Second-Phase Induction

The concept of second-phase induction is developed by the authors of this chapter and it is grounded in their own experiences as university lecturers, researchers and supervisors of beginning teacher educators (see Eisenschmidt, 2006).

The induction phase is an important phase in teachers’ professional development (Gold, 1996; Tickle, 2000). The term ‘induction’ in education is a fuzzy concept that generally refers to the teachers’ first period of work in which novice teachers develop into experienced teachers. Sometimes the concept of induction is used to describe a period of time, like the first year. The concept is also used to indicate a support programme within this period, a more formal course, or a type of supervision by a senior teacher or mentor. The notion induction may also refer to the more individual professional learning process of novice teachers (Britton, Paine, Pimm, & Raizen, 2003; Blair-Larsen, 1992). However, the aims of induction is always to support professional socialisation, the development of professional competences and/or workplace learning (Eurydice, 2002).

The first induction phase is the phase new teachers go through when they start working in schools after finishing teacher education (or a new researcher may go through when s/he starts working at a university). For new teachers, the induction phase is considered to be a link between initial teacher education and professional development and lifelong learning as a teacher at school (see Fig. 7.1).

Teacher educators have had careers as teachers or academics and bring with them knowledge, skills and experience that are valuable for their work in teacher education. But no matter how extensive their prior working experiences as schoolteacher or academic is entering the university as a teacher educator is a major step that requires socialisation and learning, and hence the term ‘second-phase induction’ for novice teacher educators.

Second-phase induction is a socialisation process, through which the beginning teacher educator becomes a member of the teaching staff and accepts the knowledge, skills, qualities, norms and manners valued in the university. In this socialisation process, the opinions and attitudes of experienced teacher educators are of great importance to the beginning teacher educators.