



## TE\_REG

### Teacher Education Regenerated (TE\_REG)

**Beyond Competencies. Rethinking and redesigning teacher education curricula in the GenAI era.**

## Teacher Standards - Finland (UoH) Discussion Report 31.05.2025 (WP2b2)

**Context – Initial Classroom Teacher Education in Finland**

**Case: Classroom teacher training practice in University of Helsinki,**

**Viikki Teacher Training School**

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## Introduction

This report is part of the TE\_REG project, an Erasmus+ -funded initiative that addresses two critical challenges facing contemporary teacher education. First, the rapid emergence of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is transforming traditional teaching and learning practices. Second, while competency-based teacher standards—widely adopted across many countries—were initially introduced to enhance clarity and quality, they have often led to fragmented and overly procedural approaches to teacher preparation.

These developments, now further complicated by the disruptive potential of GenAI, underscore the urgent need to revisit the fundamental purposes of teaching and to explore how teacher education can evolve to meet these shifting demands.

As part of this effort, a literature review of guiding documents in teacher education was conducted and published in the Teacher Standards Overview Report (LINK). To complement this, Focus Group discussions were held between March and May 2025 with teacher educators, administrators, and student teachers at the University of Helsinki.

The report begins by outlining the context and holistic vision of teacher education at the University of Helsinki and its Viikki Teacher Training School, with a particular focus on the core aims of classroom teaching practicums. It then presents key competencies and themes that emerged from the Focus Group discussions, highlighting the values, tensions, and aspirations shaping current practice.

Finally, the report offers a forward-looking perspective on how holistic teacher education can be meaningfully integrated with more structured evaluation frameworks—such as competencies and standards—without compromising professional agency, ethical reflection, or pedagogical adaptability.

## Reimagining Teacher Education: Finland's Holistic Model

Teacher education systems worldwide reflect diverse educational philosophies, policy priorities, and cultural values. While many countries have adopted standards-based models focused on measurable competencies and accountability, Finland has maintained **a holistic, research-oriented approach rooted in trust, autonomy, and humanistic values.**



In Finland, teacher education emphasizes the development of reflective, ethical, and adaptable professionals. Teaching is viewed not merely as a technical skillset but as a moral and intellectual pursuit that nurtures the whole person—emotionally, socially, and cognitively.

Standards-based models offer structure and comparability but often risk reducing teaching to a checklist, overlooking its relational and creative dimensions. In contrast, Finland's model fosters critical reflection, ethical reasoning, and pedagogical adaptability—qualities increasingly vital in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

The rise of generative AI (GenAI) and other technological shifts is testing the resilience of both models. While rigid standards may struggle to keep pace with change, Finland's flexible, inquiry-driven approach encourages educators to question, experiment, and co-create knowledge with students.

Finnish teacher education is university-based and research-driven. All teachers complete a master's degree that integrates educational theory, subject content, pedagogy, and research methodology. Practicum experiences are embedded throughout, promoting deep reflection in collaboration with experienced mentors.

**Assessment** is formative and dialogic, emphasizing self-assessment, peer feedback, and reflective writing to cultivate lifelong learning and critical thinking. Currently, teaching practice is **evaluated as completed / to be supplemented**. It has been discussed among teacher educators whether there is a need to have clearer objectives, e.g. to have more specific tools to communicate why practice would have to be supplemented. The current aims are holistic and wide, which has mainly been seen as an advantage when holistic learning and reflection is emphasized.

Finland's global reputation for equity, autonomy, and research-based pedagogy remains strong, though recent debates around digitalization and AI present new challenges.

This reflection paper draws on insights from Finnish focus groups to explore how teacher education could evolve to meet the pedagogical, ethical, and technological demands of the GenAI era. Would collaborative teacher standards be needed – and if, which kind? Would a more structured tool be possible to develop in a way that autonomy would be maintained?

## Case: Classroom teacher training practice in University of Helsinki, Viikki Teacher Training School



Finland has national guidelines for teacher education which each of our universities apply with slightly different emphasis. University of Helsinki, since 1640, is the oldest and largest institution of academic education in Finland. It is an international scientific community of 40,000 students and researchers in 11 faculties on four campuses. In international university rankings, the University of Helsinki typically ranks in the top 1 %. (Source: <https://www.helsinki.fi/en>)

This report focuses on University of Helsinki (UoH) classroom teacher training which takes about 5 years and covers 300 ECT. Class Teacher Education qualifies graduates to teach grades 1–6 (students aged 7-12 years) and, with additional subject studies, grades 7–9. Studies are built in such a way that the teachers are able in reasoned pedagogical thinking, communal and societal activities, curriculum work, and researching one's own teaching.

As a **researching teacher** critically evaluating knowledge within educational sciences and producing research knowledge the teacher is capable of. The teacher gets tools for professional growth and to conceptualize and structure teaching at school. The studies include conducting research and taking part to guided teaching practices (see, [Opintosuunnat | Kasvatustieteiden kandiohjelma | Helsingin yliopisto](#))

University of Helsinki Viikki Teacher Training School has ample experience in teacher training and interlacing theory and practice. It is a school community with around 1000 learners from primary school to upper secondary school students and more than 100 teachers, having a lot of student teachers and visitors yearly. (See: <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/training-schools/viikki-teacher-training-school>). To meet the University's degree requirements, Viikki teacher training school collaborates with other departments in the Faculty of Educational Sciences, other University of Helsinki units and national and international education organizations in research, continuing education and instruction. The academic mission is to organize the teaching practice included in the pedagogical studies required of teachers as part of the University's teacher

education in a teacher training school, to supervise this teaching practice, and to develop it further. At Viikki Teacher Training School, two teacher practicums, Multidisciplinary and Magister, are offered to classroom teacher students across four academic periods each year. Each program follows its own specific curriculum and is designed to meet different educational objectives.

Multidisciplinary practice (10 ECTS) develops and deepens students' professional growth and understanding of the value basis of teaching and curricula. This happens by training tasks related to the teaching profession and by organizing guided observations tied with theory. During practice period (7 weeks, teaching 50 hours), theory and practice are intertwined, and practice is being conceptualized. Teachers' own 'practical theory', and his/her pedagogical thinking is supported within the guided practice. The aims are holistic, the student:

- Understands pupils' viewpoint and class interaction, and knows practical school work
- Knows how to set aims for learning wholes, implements these by using different teaching methods and evaluates them and understands, what knowledges and skills the learning whole requires
- Understands starting points of different disciplines while making subject specific pedagogical solutions
- Knows how to use different learning environments and implements multidisciplinary learning wholes
- Understands knowledge sector oriented consolidation of subjects (tiedonalahtöinen eheyttäminen) or phenomenon-based learning grounds and can apply these in teaching by doing cooperation
- Recognizes when guided different learners and knows different ways of support
- Knows how to act in co-teaching and collaborating.

#### Magister practice (10 ECTS)

"Teaching practicums are part of the teacher's pedagogical studies, aimed at helping students develop and deepen their professionalism as teachers. This is achieved through practicing various tasks related to the teacher's role. In the practicums, theory and practice interact: theoretical content from educational sciences, educational psychology, and multidisciplinary studies is applied in practice, and practical experiences are conceptualized. The development of the student's personal theory of practice and pedagogical thinking is supported through both collaborative and individual working methods. The practicums are supervised and progress in alignment with theoretical studies, with the goal of gradually increasing the student's autonomy. During the basic and intermediate study phases, students become familiar with the school environment, learning settings, and building interaction. From there, they move through subject-



specific or phenomenon-based practicums toward holistic teacherhood and the integration of teaching.” (EDUM821)

Magister practicum lasts 6 weeks and includes working 20 hours/week (observation and teaching), in total of 100 hours, and other work (e.g. planning, reflecting, guidance) 116 hours. After completing the practicum, the student:

- Is able to plan, implement, and evaluate the teaching work and classroom activities for entire school days.
  - Understands the ethical nature of the teaching profession and the diversity and societal significance of educational work.
  - Understands the role of the school as part of the local community.
  - Understands the school as a forum for leadership, development, and collaboration, as well as a learning organization.
  - Is able to reflect on their own teacher identity through both theory and practice, and is capable of working as a co-teacher.
  - Recognizes different types of learners and is familiar with various forms of support.
- (EDUM821 [Luokanopettajan opintosuunta](#) | [Kasvatustieteiden kandiohjelman](#) | [Helsingin yliopisto](#))

In UoH, teacher training curricula for class teacher education is being currently renewed. There have been a lot of discussions on aims, and how to develop evaluation. After every practice period, student evaluation is collected, and students are overall very content with the practicums. However, some student teachers see that theory and practice could even better be interlaced, and practice periods could have a stronger position in their training.

*“Both practicums completely changed my mindset about being a teacher -- it felt like only then I concretely understood what a teacher’s job is – not yet fully but at least got a surface-level idea.”*

### Focus group discussions: teacher standards/competences/aims

To explore the issue of teacher qualities, heterogenous focus discussions were arranged. The participants in focus groups were connected to education and teacher training in several levels.

The most widely recognized and used documents by the focus group members were the Teacher Practicum Curricula (multidisciplinary and master's level), particularly the

practicum guides EDUK812 and EDUM821, which clearly outlined aims, standards, and competencies. Interestingly, a wide variety of tools were used to support and guide future teachers on their path to the teaching profession.

As reflected in the TE\_REG Finnish Teacher Education *Overview* paper ([LINK here](#)) the Finnish holistic approach on teacher standards has its strengths and weaknesses: we do not have *clear specific standards* but aim to cultivate reflective practitioners. Holistic and integrated view is adopted. On the one hand, this choice leaves a lot of ‘space’ to grow during teacher education. On the other hand, there are not clear specific objectives to rely on to say when a teacher student has achieved ‘all required’ elements to be a teacher. But can there be such “required elements” or “standards” that would guarantee that a teacher is ‘ready’? The issue of teacher standards was not seen as simple:

*"There probably isn't a single definition of what makes a good teacher. Your idea of a good teacher is different from mine."*

Also the learning conception is at change. In former teacher seminar times (before moving to university) teachers were well prepared with subject content knowledge for doing practical things. The time is now different:

*"The whole curriculum is such that we can't possibly master all the content through hands-on experience, but we can develop the kind of know-how that helps us figure out how to master it when needed."*

*"Maybe the curricula used to be clearer, maybe the world was simpler. So now we can't really rely on a fixed idea of what makes a good teacher—what does that even mean anymore?"*

### **Student admission - an important phase**

In Finland, student admissions have long been considered important and have undergone continuous development.

*"Is the job to make a teacher out of anyone? Very few are NOT allowed to pass. Admission is essential."*

Admission relied for long on three wide criteria: 1) *educability*, 2) *suitability* and 3) *motivation* and MAP-model has been developed and used for it. In 2025 admission includes academic skills test and an aptitude test (applicant's motivation and suitability to the field). However, despite thoughtful admission challenges can still arise during studies



or teaching practicums. To address these situations, procedures such as the 'When Concern Arises' document have been established.

### **Aims: Teacher standards list?**

Teacher students start their education from very different positions; it is worth considering the relation of “some basic aims” and “some tailored aims”?

*"Should there be some kind of shared tool?"*

*"Well, yeah... some would think it's a good idea, others wouldn't."*

*"So what's the level of accuracy—a small, or a concrete thing?"*

*"Everything starts with the curriculum and the trainee's own goals—if we don't begin there, we can't really influence anything. And then again, is it even about influencing?"*

Since the informants emphasized the value of a holistic approach, they were asked whether certain criteria could be added to it.

*"It wouldn't be a problem to make a list, but then again..."*

*"It wouldn't be a problem to make a list, but then again -- to make minimum requirements, it's very difficult --- what would be the..."*

*"But that's really difficult, to have those kinds of standards..."*

*"-- maybe if there were some standards... our culture, the Finnish teacher culture, is really far from that, we always emphasize pedagogical freedom, and that's kind of a double-edged sword, that I do appreciate it, and that's why teacher education has to be of high quality."*

*"In our master's practicum we had a list, with statements like subject knowledge and pedagogical skills, and we had to reflect on them, like which one is a strength, which one already works, and which one still needs some practice in a way. But what was nice was that they were all statements you could influence, so you could develop them. They weren't personality-based. So, in that sense, it could kind of be adapted into a tick-the-box type thing, like what already works -- (kind of like a continuum)."*

*"Evaluating **people** is generally the problem."*



*"I as a supervisor would rather put the energy into developing the teacher for the future heavy work and their self-esteem -- rather than (thinking) whether this is (graded) 5 or 4."*

*"Goals -- there are quite a lot of them --- Maybe they should be carried through the practicum a bit more. So that your own teacher identity is at the center and that's really important and probably the most important thing, but then, like, do all the goals actually get fulfilled during the practicum period."*

Thus, while holistic approach and personal development was emphasized, there might room for more structured follow-up aligned with set goals. Additionally, the focus group discussions underscored a growing need for more tailored teacher education, as future learning paths are expected to become increasingly diverse.

## Important competences raised forth in discussions

Several competence areas were brought up in discussions. As in discussions, also when presenting and classifying them the task is not easy: many competences are multidimensional, as is the teaching profession itself.

For the purposes following classification is used, acknowledging that also other possibilities would have been possible: 1) Interaction competences, 2) Substance competence (subject knowledge and curriculum), 3) Pedagogic competence, and 4) teacher identity.

### Interaction competence

During the discussions, it was noted that interaction competence is generally very well established. It has been assessed through entrance examinations, and individuals have been developing these skills throughout their lives. A humanistic perspective and the ability to understand others were seen as central to the profession:

*"Academic understanding and cognitive empathy: the ability to consciously step into someone else's shoes, social skills"*.

*"As pupils come from increasingly diverse backgrounds, with all kinds of syndromes, it's good to understand the theory behind these situations. But even then—you can't just look it up in a book and know how to respond."*

Interaction, collaboration, and communication are at the core of teaching profession. It applies also to guiding social situations and inclusiveness in the class:

*“-- the pedagogy, that you organize the situation so that there is a sense of doing, and that no one is left alone, all that inclusiveness, a good, tolerant atmosphere – that is of course something you do a lot through your own personality. And also through your own value system, and of course through the values present in the school at the time, so naturally you support all that with your actions.”*

### Substance knowledge

In the context of education, "substance" refers to the teacher's mastery of subject-specific knowledge, what is being taught. It means deep knowledge and understanding of the subject or topic area. In Finnish primary grades (Grades 1 to 6, pupils at age 7-12) the classroom teacher teaches all (or almost all) subjects. In teacher education, the teaching of content has been trimmed over the years to the point that there are gaps. This is an issue that creates contradictory positions:

*“The teacher MUST master the content in such a way that you are clearly ahead of the children, so that you have answers to their questions. If you proceed at the same pace as the child, I think that's unfair and wrong toward the child—you have to take a step ahead. These primary school contents aren't so difficult that anyone couldn't master them.”*

*“I would backtrack, that you could still go into those basics, that now if a lot of applied work is done at the university, students feel that they do not have those basic skills, earlier they did, people were more interested and so on. But if teachers fundamentally feel that they have weak basic skills, then those need to be strengthened. And only then move on to applied work.”*

*“What if the future teacher doesn't have that skill (subject knowledge)? Then they always end up doing things where they don't know how to demand quality from themselves—or from the child either.”*

Without strong subject knowledge, a teacher cannot explain concepts clearly to learners at different levels, respond to students' questions in depth, adapt and differentiate instruction to meet diverse learning needs, nor support the development of students' thinking and understanding. However, it was also acknowledged that in it is impossible to “know it all”, especially in rapidly changing world. Therefore, strong skills to know how to find correct information are essential. Effective teaching requires both: without substance,



teaching may remain superficial; without pedagogy, even strong content may fail to reach the learner. Evaluation and assessment competences are needed also in relation to one's work.

### Pedagogic competence – organizing learning

In the discussions, the core challenge in teaching practicums—and where the most support was needed—was on organizing learning. The students needed guidance with the pedagogy and practical skills on *how* to teach.

Another key issue was fostering competences to understand how students learn—emphasizing child development, learning theories, and diverse learning needs. Discussions highlighted the importance of developmental psychology, knowing the learners, and understanding age-appropriate didactics, along with the ability to apply this knowledge effectively in practice. Classroom management skills are essential, including using age-appropriate methods and materials:

*"Interaction in a way that includes the understanding of the child's developmental level, so that the teaching also starts from that."*

*"--(nowadays) we have very little, for example, developmental psychology studies, so there's no understanding of that age phase, that if a child is in the stage of concrete operations throughout primary school, then what do you do there."*

Knowledge of developmental levels enables setting realistic expectations, creating appropriate learning opportunities, and guiding pupils at the right skill level.

*"When a child is given the freedom to plan their own work, but the teacher lacks an understanding of the child's actual capabilities, it can unintentionally lead to disappointment. This happens when the child's plan exceeds their current skill level, creating a mismatch between intention and ability."*

*"Sometimes you also have to tell the child: This is a nice idea, but at this point, it doesn't work even if it is a good idea."*

Designing, organizing and implementing instruction can be learnt through practicing how to plan lessons, use teaching strategies, and manage classrooms in complex teaching-learning situations. It is essential to learn to provide timely help for the pupil – and also give space to learn to think and work.

*“ -- the fact is that you have to make A LOT of decisions at the same time...”*

In discussions it was highlighted that the teacher should be competent **to guide pupils’ self-direction, thinking skills and learning to learn competences:**

*“Pupils must be guided toward self-direction. A child easily becomes lulled into the idea that the teacher is constantly guiding them.”*

*“The teacher should have very strong subject knowledge in order to, first of all, be able to verbalize the process to the child at a developmentally appropriate level, and on the other hand, to be able to offer the pupil—essentially differentiate in both directions—an APPROPRIATE amount of different solution strategies, and to help the child think independently and perceive their own level of competence.”*

*“-- big goal would be the development of critical thinking.”*

Also, supporting the pupil’s ability to perceive their own level of competence, learning to learn and having realism in ideas and implementations was raised forth. Sometimes teaching perseverance and precision is needed so that

*“-- the level doesn’t become so low that -- the substance required from the pupil is at such a low level that it easily turns into just tinkering.”*

Differentiation competences are needed to many directions, upward, downward and:

*“Or how you broaden it—how you get the child to think about the task in different ways, more broadly.”*

## Teacher identity

Teacher identity was described as a dynamic and ongoing process—teachers continuously shape and reshape their identity as they grow in their careers. Discussions on beliefs, values and experiences were considered important during the studies and in practicums. Teacher identity was seen to evolve over time through reflection and professional development. “Practical theory” and self-reflection were valuable tools.

*"You can't know everything, and not everything can be taught—there's no recipe for it all. But when you're **taught to reflect**, that's when your own personality, your way of working, your teacher identity, and your unique knowledge and skills can really come through in the best possible way."*

**“Ready” teacher?** The philosophical question: When will you be “ready?” was also reflected upon. The skill of being a teacher is a lifelong process, not a product done during studies. You are never “finished-finished” and even if you had all the boxes ticked, what would happen then? Finnish perspective is the lifelong learner’s position which applies also for the teachers and teacher educators. When asking if a teacher will be **ready**, the answer was clear:

*"Oh, never. Maybe that's actually what keeps the passion for the work alive—the desire to self-reflect, to grow, and to enjoy the process. If you ever feel like you're completely ready, maybe that's when it's time to change career."*

*"I don't feel like you're ever really ready. -- I still don't feel like I'm ready even though on a paper I am. So that definition – can you even give it a definition?"*

*"We're all so different, everyone has their own strengths, different ways of teaching, so I think it's really impossible to put it on the wall like, now you're ready when you do this or that."*

### Current challenges – what to do with them?

**Wellbeing:** Several focus group participants noted that an increasing number of trainees are struggling with their own wellbeing and ability to cope during their practicum periods.

*"--more and more we need to SUPPORT student teachers. I've moved into pre-guidance for that reason, because I feel like almost all of them need it. So that we can challenge them to think in advance and then afterwards we could look at it, so it's not just afterwards and that we also look forward in the feedback."*

*"-- many (students) even put in their goals that I don't to stress. That kind of thing didn't exist before. Young people are maybe more aware of that, and then of course there is what the media says about the teaching profession."*

*"So people are aware, they don't want to burn out, that life is probably more like multitasking and exhausting from every direction, so young people are more aware"*

*of their own well-being, that they take care of it, that it's really like that, that maybe in the past, even if there weren't any grades, people still tried to do better or maybe held themselves to a higher standard. And I'm not saying it's a bad thing to say that less is enough."*

**Commitment:** 'Less is enough' attitude has been seen more frequently than before, which was reflected to be perhaps not only a negative thing. However, if teacher education is just a performance to be completed and a lack of passion for teaching and learning is missing, it is not right for the future pupils.

**Self-concept:** Teaching profession requires pedagogical expertise and competence to critically examine and reflect one's actions. For some trainees critical reflection is challenging.

**Requirements/standards:** In some countries there are minimum requirements of what you need to be able to do. However, such minimum may become the new "completed" label which easily leads to the lowering performance level. Focus group members agreed that holistic goals work in Finnish context. Yet, some supportive tools were seen to be helpful in supporting the growth of teacher students.

*"The practicum – both practicums – have been so pivotal in terms of competence and getting into this world – and if that experience ends up being really weak, then it affects one's readiness to move into the teacher's job."*

**Evaluation:** In Finland, the teaching skill grade (i.e., a separate numerical evaluation of teaching ability) was gradually phased out from teacher education. Current pass/fail evaluation was seen to work. However, some members saw also the good sides in 1-5 graded teacher practicums.

*"Pass/fail evaluation is OK, but then again—fail... I claim that when I got a 5/5 teaching skill grade, I have also acted as a teacher accordingly. I have planned and succeeded."*

*"'Approved with thanks'—but how would one achieve that? There should be some criteria. And what would it even affect—would it have an impact on getting a job?"*

**Practical/theoretical:** The balance between theory and practice has been in debates for decades, also today:

*"-- the reduced number of hours in teacher education is visible, at least now in Helsinki – we have that research emphasis, the research-based teacher, even*

*though this is a practical profession, so I understand and hope that we're training reflective teachers and those who can practice pedagogical expertise... but if you don't have skills in arts and crafts subjects – “*

*“I'm worried, for example, about the quality of early education skills being poor, it's surely visible also in music and other specialties, like special expertise.”*

### Summary: Core Competencies for Future Teachers according to Focus Groups

- **Classroom Management:** Effective management remains a foundational skill.
- **Observation Skills:** Being able to observe and interpret classroom dynamics and student behavior and act as needed.
- **Communication:** Strong interpersonal and communication skills are essential in multiple levels.
- **Humanistic Perspective:** A values-based, empathetic approach is crucial.
- **Academic Understanding and Cognitive Empathy:** Possessing both theoretical knowledge and the ability to consciously adopt others' perspectives, supported by strong social skills.
- **Practical and Theoretical Balance:** Both strengths should be recognized and supported.

As the diversity of student backgrounds increases, including a range of neurodivergent profiles and learning needs, teachers must be equipped with:

- **Inclusion Competencies:** The ability to create inclusive learning environments and apply principles of special education.

### Summary: Concerns in Current Teacher Education

- **Admission Criteria:** The selection process for teacher education programs is critical.
- **Structure of Training:** Ongoing debate about teacher education structure and the theory/practice balance.
- **Reduction of Practicum:** Proposals to reduce the number of practicum credits (currently 20 ECTS at the University of Helsinki) raise concerns about the adequacy of hands-on experience.



- **Assessment Models:** While pass/fail grading is acceptable, it may lack nuance. A combination of holistic evaluation and specific criteria could enhance fairness and transparency.
- **Requirements:** Defining concrete core standards is challenging but creates clarity and focus.
- **Professional Development:** The Finnish teacher education relies on lifelong learning, implying that fixed 'readiness' is not even a goal. Interestingly, the responsibility for professional learning currently rests largely on individual teachers, with no national-level guidance or funding that reaches all educators. Strengthening real and equitable opportunities for professional development is essential.

### Envisioning the Future: Integrating Holistic Teacher Education with Structured Competence Evaluation

In teacher education, it is essential to develop systems that minimize bias and ensure that all evaluations—whether of students or teachers—are fair, transparent, and based on clear criteria. However, what these criteria are, is not carved in stone in rapidly changing times. The Finnish system has relied on broader competence areas. As presented, this holistic approach is acknowledged but could benefit from having some collaborative tools to be used to focus and conceptualize the broader competences. Interestingly, it seems to be the case that many countries who have standard lists want a more holistic and reflective teacher, and in holistic approaches some support from clear criteria's are considered potentially helpful.

In Finnish National Core Curriculum (FNCC, 2014) and important shift in evaluation was made clear: **from student assessment to assessment for learning and of learning**. A similar emphasis is in teacher education – we are not assessing the person but the (inter)action and the potential progress in action (e.g. planning, collaboration, organization) for that is something that we can change and work on.

Furthermore, from a holistic perspective, the emphasis is less on technical aspects and more on supporting the development of teacher personality and professional identity—offering guidance where it is genuinely needed. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to mentoring or support.

Given that teachers have different needs, can the same criteria truly apply to everyone? While core competences may be essential, the type and amount of support required can

vary greatly depending on the individual and the timing. Respondents valued the use of a self-reflective approach, which encourages the ability to evaluate one's own work and supports ongoing professional growth.

In teacher education practicums, "quality assurance" has depended on the teacher educators and university didactics, who interpret and implement it based on the holistic goals of teacher education, and its practicum aims. This at best supports teacher educators' professional autonomy and co-supervising enriches students' progress. However, as brought up in focus groups, the quality of supervising and interaction sometime varies.

To ensure that all students have professional guidance in achieving progress, some collaborative tools could be developed, and in fact many already exist – but are variably used. As Finnish teacher educators – also in the examined case in this article – have for long developed their own evaluation tools, time for sharing and discussions would be essential if we would aim to use similar tools which is not the current case. Some of the current tools are OVET and MAP (2020; 2021) for grasping the essence of teacher profession and KEHU (Toivanen & al., 2021) for the modelling and evaluating interaction situations with a development focus via conceptualization. Also the "broad triadic teaching dispositions (BTDD)" model (Dhert & Elen, 2023) might be considered.

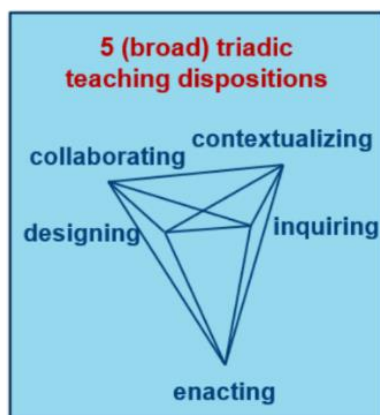


Figure X. The 5 BTDD's: Broad Triadic Teaching Dispositions" (Dhert & Elen, 2023)

At Viikki, "From Goals to Reality" model developed by Maskonen & Kaleva (2023) has potential to be developed to work both as a tool for student's own aims interlaced and conceptualized to practicum aims. In the current version of the model the teacher student

first sets the aims him/herself. The model is a three-phase form designed to help the trainee set goals for their guided teaching practice and reflect on their achievement. The objectives of using the form are:

1. To strengthen goal-setting in accordance with the training plan.
2. To develop the trainee's reflection skills as a tool for their teaching practice.
3. To foster trust, dialogue, and interaction between the trainee and the supervising teacher.
4. To serve as a guidance tool in the mentoring process.

Sijoita tavoitteet sektoreihin (A-E).

Arvioi miten hyvin hallitset tavoitteen asian tällä hetkellä (asteikolla 1-5, 5 tarkoittaa, että tavoite on saavutettu). Käytä vihreää kynää ympyröiden vahvistamiseen ja yhdistä eri sektoreiden ympyrät viivalla.

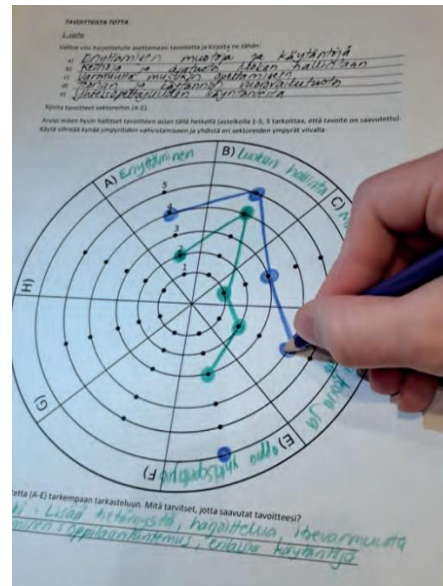
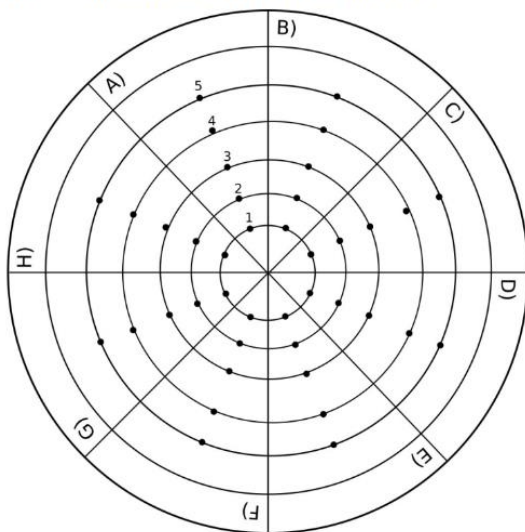


Figure X "From Goals to Reality" tool. (Maskonen & Kaleva, 2023, p. 89)

In the next version of "From Goals to Reality" some Core Aims from the Teacher Education documents could be interlaced to this model – perhaps different ones for each practicum. What would these important conceptualized core competences be? This should be considered collaboratively in the professional community. Importantly, these aims must be achievable and related to matters that may be learned.

Collaborative supervision sessions and interactive, article-based guided observations—currently used in all multidisciplinary practice periods—were seen as valuable. These



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sessions allow both trainees and trainers to take professional distance and adopt theoretical perspectives on practical issues. The focus is for instance on goals, interaction, structure, and the ability to articulate, reflect on, and reason through teaching practices, while discussing specific competences in a shared, interactive setting.

Plans are underway to organize collaborative discussion events aimed at exploring future directions for integrating teacher education standards, competences, and dispositions with a holistic approach that keeps trainees' reflective skills at the core. This process is intended to be open and inclusive, inviting participation and input from the entire professional community. Through such collective engagement, it may be possible to develop and adopt a meaningful and widely useful tool for teacher education. Finnish teacher education network eNorssi has Teaching Practice working group where the discussion also continues (see: [Ohjattu harjoittelu - eNorssi](#)).

For meaningful development in teacher education, it is crucial to allocate time for sustained dialogue and reflection. Key policy documents and reports—often unfamiliar or underutilized by teacher education leaders and practitioners—should become part of this process. This highlights the need to strengthen collaboration with academic departments and to foster a developmental mindset, rather than one focused solely on performance.



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