

# Induction in Estonia: Over Fifteen Years of Experience – Successes and Struggles

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**Abstract:** This article gives a brief historical perspective of how the induction programme for newly qualified teachers was launched in Estonia. The induction programme was the result of a combined effort from universities, schools and policymakers. A pilot study was carried out in the academic year 2002/2003. The following year, a group of educators and researchers from Tallinn and Tartu Universities analysed the results, improved the implementation model, and in 2004 launched the programme with the support of the Ministry of Education and Research throughout Estonia.

In this paper, we introduce the theoretical framework, the roles of different parties to the induction programme, and analyse the implementation process in order to find answers to the following questions: Firstly, what are the developments and challenges in the Estonian induction programme? Secondly, what are the perspectives for the induction programme in the future? The methodological approach reviewed policy documents, research articles and doctoral dissertations on induction from 2004–2019. The analysis showed that close cooperation between parties was required to achieve a successful launch, but it seems that the main responsibility for implementation was left to the universities, who were seen as a party highly interested in the continuity of teacher education. Moreover, the execution and quality of mentoring varies among the schools, which can be a problem for new teachers.

Based on research evidence and the current situation in teacher education, we will endeavour to give a forward-looking view on how to support beginning teachers in Estonia.

**Keywords:** newly qualified teachers, mentoring, induction programme

# 1 Introduction

Continuing professional development is an essential part of a teacher's life. In Estonia, preparations for the period between initial teacher education and in-service education – for the induction as the first working year(s) – started in 2001. The universities realised the need to establish a support system for the continuous professional development of graduates.

The Estonian education system had supported beginning teachers at various times in the past. However, the importance of induction came under discussion again during the preparation of the policy document *Framework Guidelines for Teacher Education* (2000) which highlighted the changes that had taken place in the teaching profession. This document provided the formal criteria for teacher education, such as the level, structure and amount of the study. For instance, initial teacher education for all school levels takes place at universities and must consist of three parts: 1) general studies, focusing on the development of teachers' general cultural, communicative, and social competencies; 2) subject studies, and 3) studies in educational science, psychology and didactics, including practical training at schools. According to requirements, two teacher initial education models are used in Estonian universities: the integrated five-year model, in which subject and educational studies take place concurrently (for class teachers at the primary school level); and the two-phase (or consecutive model), in which students complete their subject studies, a three year Bachelor's level course followed by a two year Master's level course of teacher education (for subject-teachers in lower and upper secondary level). Pre-school teachers and vocational school teachers are prepared at Bachelor's level. This policy also states that every teacher entering the profession must participate in the induction programme. At the same time, the *National Teacher Education Development Plan* (2003) addressed the three stages of the teachers' professional development: initial education; induction; and continuing professional development. Universities and schools collaborated in preparing and implementing the induction year programme together with policymakers in 2001/2002.

It was agreed that induction in Estonia should aim at: 1) supporting beginning teachers to adjust to the school organisation; 2) developing the basic competencies of new teachers as described in the national teacher standard; and 3) providing support in solving problems that arise in daily teaching.

The induction system provides opportunities for school development, and also feedback to the institutions for initial teacher education to improve the quality of their curricula (*Framework Guidelines for Teacher Education*, 2000). At that time, one of the reasons for designing the induction programme for newly qualified teachers was to create a smoother transition from initial education to working life, to diminish the “practice shock” and, on the other hand, to encourage a more collaborative culture at schools.

Since launching the induction programme almost twenty years ago the landscape of teacher education has changed. The *Estonian Teacher Education Strategy for 2009–2013* focused on how to ensure the development of teachers’ competencies throughout their career, starting with initial teacher education, the induction year and later on in their continuing professional education. In 2013 at the University of Tartu and 2015 at Tallinn University, teacher education underwent major reforms. One of the aims was to offer more flexible ways to acquire teacher education (e.g. short cycles taking into account earlier studies and work experience, designing workplace learning programmes, etc.).

The next milestone, *Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020* (HTM, 2014), addresses the school leader’s essential role in initiating changes and developing a leadership style that focuses on the development of students, teachers, and the whole school personnel. It also places more emphasis on the concepts of teachers’ workplace learning and collaboration.

However, even after twenty years, some aspects remain the same and are in urgent need of change. A career in teaching is failing to attract younger people. The average age of teachers is quite high (49 years; OECD average is 44); 54 % of teachers in Estonia are aged 50 and above (OECD average 34 %) (OECD, 2019). The induction policy has been in place in Estonia for fifteen years, yet only 31 % of teachers report having participated in some kind of formal or informal induction. While school principals across the OECD generally consider mentoring to be important for teachers’ work and students’ performance, Estonian teachers reported that only 17 % had an assigned mentor (OECD, 2019). Although the official policy is in place, the reality is that it is not being implemented. Teacher education is changing, and it is important to analyse the entire process of launching an induction programme and to propose possible ideas for consideration.

The key questions are:

1. What are the developments and challenges in the Estonian induction programme?
2. What are the perspectives for the induction programme in the future?

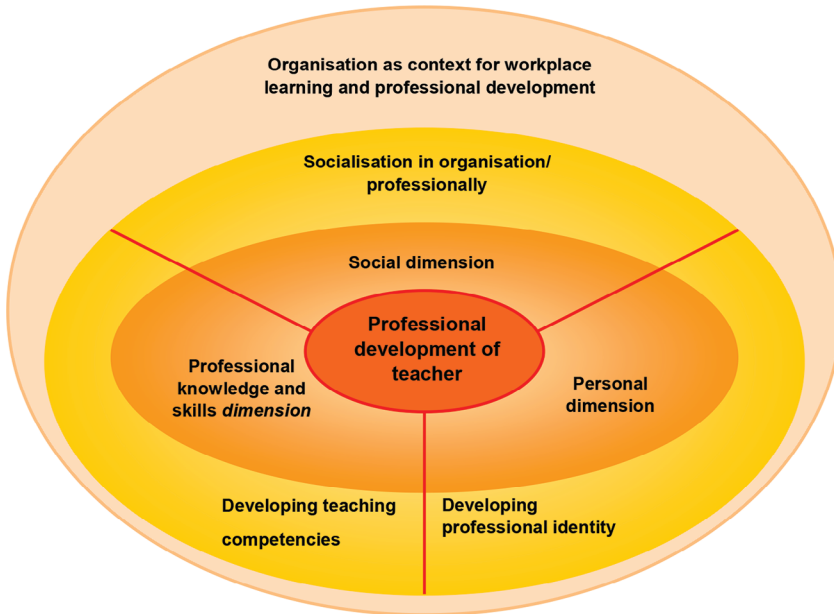
## **2 Theoretical background and the main parties to the induction programme in Estonia**

The Estonian approach to induction is seen as a period after initial teacher education, when beginning teachers become fully responsible teachers. Induction is a part of a teacher's continuous learning in partnership with teacher education institutions and schools.

### **Theoretical background of the induction process**

Arising from the theoretical knowledge, and taking into consideration the context of Estonian teacher education, teacher development can be seen in three dimensions: 1) professional knowledge and skills; 2) a social dimension; and 3) a personal dimension (see Figure 3) (Eisenschmidt, 2006). Accordingly, the processes supporting development occur simultaneously in three areas: (1) developing teaching competencies; (2) socialisation in the organisation and professionally; and (3) developing a professional identity.

The development in these dimensions and the corresponding processes take place in the school context and are influenced by the processes within an organisation. The Estonian school system was decentralised when an independent republic was re-established in the early 1990s, and the responsibility for the local school system was devolved to the municipalities (Estonian Parliament, 1992). Estonian school principals have a wide level of autonomy, including the authority to hire and negotiate working conditions and employment contracts for teachers, the allocation of school finances, educational priorities and development plans for the school. Thus, one of the theoretical foundations of the induction year in Estonia was that schools were seen as learning organisations where teachers support each other's professional growth within an organisation (Senge, 1990;



**Figure 3.** The theoretical foundations of the induction year (Eisenschmidt, 2006).

Fullan, 1991; Harris & Muijs, 2005). At the same time, the induction year is an opportunity to strengthen the implementation of the professional development of teachers and workplace learning in schools. Developing a mentoring system in schools is seen as an area that increases collaboration among teachers. The relationship between the beginning teacher and mentor is a good example to other teachers of how cooperation with their colleagues can benefit them to develop closer working relationships.

The second facet of the induction period was to look at the newcomers' socialisation process, through which the beginning teacher becomes a member of the wider teaching community – accepting the knowledge, skills, qualities, norms and manners valued in society regarding the particular profession. Two socialisation processes take place simultaneously – socialisation within an organisation and professional socialisation. Professional socialisation is more successful if a person adapts quickly to an organisation; therefore, the focus in the induction year is on recognising schools as organisations and getting to know school culture, the aims of a school and colleagues (Lortie, 1975). It is a social process, where the opinions and attitudes of other teachers have great influence.

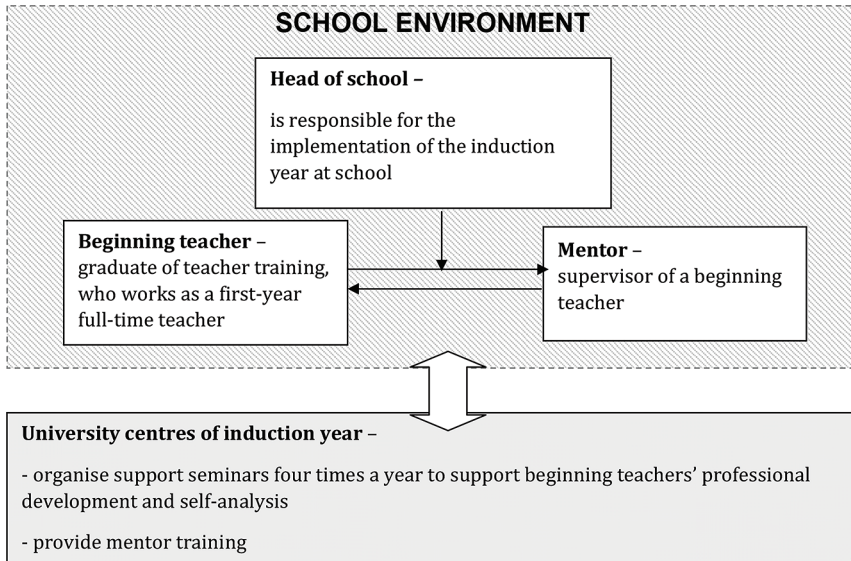
The third essential element of the induction period is the beginning teacher's readiness to develop, analyse and improve their own competencies. In order to ensure the continuity of the professional development of teachers, it is essential to connect the three stages: initial education; induction year; and continuous professional development (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). During the first working years, the basic competencies are developed, including adopting a suitable teaching style and creating a learning environment, which forms the basis for a professional self-concept. David Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning was chosen as the basis for the self-reflection process of a beginning teacher. During the induction year, it is the mentor who supports a beginning teacher in the process of reflection and planning of one's development.

The three theoretical aspects – school as a learning organisation, socialisation both organisationally and professionally, and beginning teachers' readiness for professional development – were followed when planning the content of the induction programme and designing roles and activities for all actors in the process.

## Main parties and their roles in the induction programme

In Estonia, four parties are involved in the induction year programme: (1) school principals, who create the environment that supports the beginner's professional development and appoint mentors; (2) mentors, who are partners for beginning teachers, supporting their professional development and socialisation in a school context; (3) beginning teachers themselves, who are ultimately responsible for their professional development; (4) university induction year centres, where mentor training and support seminars for beginning teachers (10–15 beginning teachers per group) take place (see Figure 4).

The role of the principal is crucial in the development of a school into a learning organisation. Appointing the mentor is the principal's decision and this is critically important, as the mentor, a teacher from the same organisation, is the first contact person between newcomer and organisation. The principal's task is to find teachers who have suitable



**Figure 4.** Parties to the induction year (Eisenschmidt, 2006).

qualities to be a mentor – e.g. empathy, willingness to listen and understand other perspectives, but also a readiness to participate in school development and collaborate with other teachers. A mentor should have at least three years of working experience and feel confident enough to share their own experiences and support the new teacher's reflection process.

Theoretically, a mentor has three important tasks in the Estonian induction system: (1) to support the professional development of a beginning teacher; (2) to support the socialisation of a beginning teacher by recognising the school as an organisation; and (3) to participate in the school's development. The primary role of the mentor is to support a beginning teacher's professional development and learning through dialogue and reflection. According to the regulation, all mentors have to pass mentor training at the university. This course, financed by the Ministry of Education and Research, includes the following goals: 1) to facilitate the acquisition of mentoring competencies and attitudes necessary for analysis and development of pedagogical practice; 2) to present skills necessary for supporting teachers' professional growth and promoting a culture of cooperation at school.

All mentors receive the same training as agreed between all Estonian universities. Mentor training consists of four modules, which are organised as two-day sessions, and take place throughout the duration of one academic year. The first module introduces the concept of mentoring (e.g. mentoring as a professional partnership, the roles of the mentor, the mentor's tasks, beginning teachers' professional development). The second focuses on different competencies for mentoring (e.g. communication skills, such as active listening, giving feedback, etc.) and ethical issues in mentoring. The third module looks at the mentor's activities supporting the professional development of beginning teachers (e.g. classroom observation, reflection process). The final module focuses on mentors' own needs for professional development.

Beginning teachers are responsible for maintaining their relationships with mentors, planning professional conversations, lesson observation, and, based on reflection, improving their own competencies.

The induction programme combines two action environments: (a) learning and development in the school context with mentor support; and (b) the two-day, quarterly peer meetings at the universities. The peer-group meetings take place during the school holidays, as these periods are considered a suitable time for teachers' professional development. This approach is quite unique because of the integration of the two types of mentoring: one-to-one mentoring at school and peer-group mentoring at the universities. The peer-group meetings have similar elements to the peer-group mentoring introduced by Finnish colleagues Heikkinen, Jokinen and Tynjälä (2012). The reasons why the universities organised support seminars for beginning teachers was to: 1) help the initial teacher education institutions understand what problems beginning teachers have, and get feedback about the quality of initial education; 2) discuss problems with their mentor that beginning teachers find uncomfortable to discuss at school; 3) support the development of teachers' reflection skills; 4) allow beginning teachers to share their successes and failures at the group sessions and seek solutions together (Eisenschmidt, 2006). Therefore, the university support seminars created a bridge and continuity between initial education and continuing professional development.



When preparing and analysing the suitability of the implementation model and developing a programme with several partners, special attention was given to the facilitation of networking throughout the preparation and launch process. At the beginning of the preparation of the induction programme, a group of experts representing the main partners was tasked with the role of leading the design and monitoring process. As well as sharing their ideas and developing a common understanding of the aims of the induction programme, they highlighted the need for cooperation and networking between all parties to be part of the programme (Eisenschmidt & Niglas, 2014). The main tasks for networking were as follows: (1) universities jointly developed the theoretical model for the induction programme; (2) universities and school representatives designed mentor training and peer-group seminars; (3) ministry and university representatives developed the policy and the evidence-based evaluation of the process; and (4) school and ministry representatives were responsible for the formalisation and implementation of the induction policy into the larger educational system.

### **3 The developments and challenges of the Estonian induction programme**

During the first years of implementation, a systematic development of the national programme based on a monitoring system was followed. Two doctoral dissertations (Eisenschmidt, 2006; Poom-Valickis, 2007) as well as research articles were published based on data collected during the implementation of the induction programme.

Results of implementation showed that the first working year for the newcomers was a period of adaptation to the organisation; however, it was doubted whether any organisational learning actually took place. The beginning teachers considered the mentor to be more like the “local guide” (Eisenschmidt, 2006), as collaborative communication was limited in some schools and the mentor was the only link with the teachers (Löfström & Eisenschmidt, 2009).

Monitoring the development of beginning teachers and their professional learning experiences during the first year of work showed that they

lack reflection skills, had problems coping with classroom management and difficulties working with parents. The positive observation was the increase in beginning teachers' self-efficacy beliefs at the end of the year (Poom-Valickis, 2007). Beginning teachers' self-efficacy and motivation-related issues were researched more thoroughly during the implementation process (Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014), which revealed that beginning teachers who enjoyed their work also improved their teaching skills by the end of the first working year. The findings indicated that academic and social growth, cohesiveness and trust in the students were responsible for the self-efficacy beliefs of beginning teachers. Beginning teachers with high motivation and with increased self-efficacy beliefs considered their work to be important. The results indicated that the most important job satisfaction predictor for novice teachers is their sense of community, and a teacher who feels connected to the working environment also has a higher perception of job satisfaction (Meristo, 2016).

At the same time, the feedback on the importance of the induction year among beginning teachers was very divergent, which indicated that the value placed on the induction year varied greatly, probably depending on the assistance received from the mentor, the meaningfulness of the university peer-group seminars and the teacher's own readiness to analyse his/her professional growth (Eisenschmidt, 2006). Analysis of the three years (2004–2007) of monitoring showed that the beginning teachers' readiness for reflection correlated with their perceived meaningfulness of university seminars and with the principals' support (Eisenschmidt, Poom-Valickis, & Oder, 2008). Also, teachers' evaluations might depend on workplace culture, as it appeared that the school leaders of the organisation with a higher co-operative culture placed more value on the induction year as a learning period for the beginning teacher (Eisenschmidt, 2006) and, thus, paid more attention to creating a favourable atmosphere for mentoring. A supportive teacher community helps to increase the cohesiveness amongst colleagues and newcomers to become members of the school community.

In one study, the correlation between the beginning teachers' involvement in school development, collegial cooperation and supportive school management, were studied longitudinally (Eisenschmidt, Oder & Reiska,

2013). School management support perceived by beginning teachers was correlated both with collegial cooperation and involvement into school development, both in the first and fifth year of work. Teachers' readiness to propose an improvement to their work organisation was correlated with involvement in school development and collegial cooperation, and these connections strengthened throughout the years. A teacher's determination to show initiative and improve their work is correlated with their feeling of being fully-fledged members of the organisation and being supported by senior management (Eisenschmidt, Oder & Reiska, 2013).

Another study investigated beginning teachers' relationships with their mentors as well as the collaboration between beginning teachers and their colleagues after five years of practice (Eisenschmidt & Oder, 2017). Over half of the beginning teachers continued to collaborate with their mentors during this period, which motivated more cooperation, perceived leadership support and an interest expressed in colleagues' work (Eisenschmidt, Reiska & Oder, 2015).

Beginning teachers were also asked to analyse peer-group seminars at the university (Lepp, Koni, Kimmel, & Raam, 2019). The results indicated that beginning teachers wanted to share their experiences and reflect on them, and to have an opportunity to learn from other teachers' experiences. The value of seminars for newly qualified teachers is that it gives them the opportunity to talk about issues that they are unable to confide in with colleagues in the workplace. Also, participants valued the seminars as the possibility of linking theory and practice (scientific reasoning to the questions raised), and as a supportive environment, where they could share their personal problems, and conduct a deep and systematic self-analysis.

The beginning teachers' learning and knowledge-building practices were researched in the extended professional learning community, including both schools and universities (Tammets, Pata, & Eisenschmidt, 2019). The analysis showed to what extent there are elements of shared practices in the extended professional community, but beginning teachers said that they received little support from other teachers or from the university induction programme group.

Several suggestions to improve and change the induction programme were highlighted during the monitoring of the programme launch

(Eisenschmidt, Poom-Valickis & Oder, 2008). Firstly, initial teacher education needed to put more emphasis on the future teachers' professional identities and continuous professional development. The importance of supporting novices' reflection process during initial teacher education should be given more attention, because reflection skills are not self-evident and need to be developed and practised. Reflection seminars were recommended as a means for integrating theoretical courses and school practice experience. Throughout the years of initial teacher education, the future teacher is encouraged to keep a professional development portfolio in various formats, e.g. e-portfolio. This could be considered as continuity between initial education and the induction year programme.

Secondly, mentoring development needs were identified and three main areas were highlighted: 1) the mentoring process itself; 2) the content of mentor training; and 3) mentoring in the school community. The last area includes matters pertaining to socialisation and school leadership (Löfström & Eisenschmidt, 2009). Mentors' preparation should pay more attention to the mentors' skills and readiness to support the professional growth of the beginning teacher through the process of feedback and reflection in an organisational context. Teacher education institutions should apply a more holistic view of mentoring in mentors' training; mentoring can be seen as a workplace learning approach by strengthening the mentor's role in the school's development and creating a collaborative learning atmosphere for all teachers.

Thirdly, attention was paid to organisational learning as the basis for fostering a teacher's professional development. The changes are more easily achieved in schools which are oriented towards the idea of teachers' professional learning. The new forms of the teachers' continuing professional education address the importance of workplace learning, which is based on collaboration with their colleagues. Therefore, the school environment should become more supportive of teachers' learning and development, and both the teachers as well as school leaders should have the competence to foster organisational learning. It was therefore suggested that mentoring, as a school-based professional learning approach to support beginning teachers, should be an essential part of the principals' leadership training.

One of the benefits of the model was the partnership of universities and schools in supporting the beginning teachers' professional growth, since this approach creates a strong connection between initial education and their continuous development. Co-operation with schools provides feedback on the quality of initial teacher education and creates opportunities for interconnecting theory and practice. As universities are also the main in-service training providers in Estonia, several topics, e.g. collaborative learning and teachers' self-reflection, were also addressed in the content of other courses offered to teachers and leaders.

In addition, the potential of networking to facilitate policymaking was carefully analysed (Eisenschmidt & Niglas, 2014). The attempt was to find an approach that could avoid the problems usually faced in top-down reforms. Having the network-based (*bottom-up*) development of the reform, there is still contradictory evidence about whether launching the induction programme was implemented using a *top-down* or *bottom-up* approach. The initiators of the programme were university staff members who possess a middle level position between administrators (ministry) and practitioners (schools); all parties were involved in the network and invited to collaborate. Initially, changing from a top-down model was challenging, because many members of the network lacked confidence in their ability or had not had an opportunity to contribute to the process of policy development. A common perception of the practitioners is that policy is formed by "somebody else from somewhere far away" and that is somewhat remote from the realities of everyday life. Even though all the important partners were involved from the beginning and the range of partners expanded during the design and implementation process, it was not possible to ensure the equal participation of all parties. However, the continuous emphasis on networking helped to keep all the partners informed of developments. Furthermore, some positive changes in the attitudes of the members of the network were observed as the process of policy development was becoming more transparent and comprehensible for them, and they gradually started to understand their role and responsibility in the process of designing regulations for reform (Eisenschmidt & Niglas, 2014).

## 4 Future perspectives for the induction programme

It would appear that the existing teacher education system has not been responsive enough to guarantee the sustainability of the educational system. The teachers' average age is high and a large number will soon retire (54 % of teachers in Estonia are aged 50) (OECD, 2019), there is a lack of new teachers, a growing tendency where a new generation is interested in working as part-time teachers, and career changers who would like to enter the teaching profession. Several changes have been reconsidered in response to the changing situation. On a national level, new regulations regarding the qualification of teachers have been introduced (HTM, 2013). A person with a Master's level of education can develop his/her teachers' competencies in the workplace, analyse themselves against the teacher professional standards and apply for a teacher certificate from the Estonian Teachers' Association. However, so far only 10 % of teachers who enter the profession have used this opportunity (Pedaste, Leijen, Poom-Valickis, & Eisenschmidt, 2019), and the main way to become a teacher still is through a university teacher education programme. Nevertheless, this is a signal for changes in the educational system to conceptualised teacher preparation and the ways to support teachers' learning in the system. Due to the shortage of new teachers, universities are looking for solutions to make teacher education more flexible and offer opportunities for individualised curricula, as approximately 50 % of teacher education students already work as full-time teachers while they study in university. Therefore, the support programme for the beginning teacher has to accommodate these changes, with the role of the mentor taking on more importance. As initial teacher education moves towards the workplace, more emphasis is placed on beginning teachers' willingness and ability to learn from their own teaching experiences. The design of the current induction programme is changing, with less teachers who need this kind of support after graduation, and more who need this simultaneously with their initial education.

Moreover, to consider both perspectives – entering the profession from other fields (career changes) and simultaneous initial education and working at school – mentoring and workplace learning are becoming more

important. As mentioned earlier, the *Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020* (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, 2014) addresses the school leader's essential role of focusing on the development of all learners, including teachers, and developing a school culture where the concept of teachers' workplace learning is strongly emphasised. We have learned during the implementation period that the induction as a short-term (e.g. one or two-year) programme is not relevant in the context of continuous professional development. Research also showed that beginning teachers who have stopped collaborating with mentors value their collaboration with colleagues lower (Eisenschmidt et al., 2013), thus it is important to address the continuous collaboration among colleagues where support for newcomers is of utmost importance. The school leaders' main role is to find ways to strengthen professional learning communities in their organisation, where teachers can collaborate and learn continuously and mentoring becomes natural part of workplace learning.

The aims of induction also need reconsideration as the context, knowledge and concepts of teachers' work and learning constantly develop. Almost twenty years ago, one of the aims of the induction programme was adjustment and socialisation to the system – the organisation and the profession. This aim is giving a more passive role to newcomers, by underestimating their potential and prospective ideas to improve the learning process and organisational development. This kind of limited approach to beginning teachers' individual potential could make teaching a less-attractive proposition. The concept of teacher agency is seen as the potential to act in the interplay between personal capacities and contexts (Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson, 2015). The teacher agency approach presumes teachers being active in their everyday work, i.e. taking responsibility for their pedagogical practices by making decisions about their teaching and school activities. Teacher agency, therefore, refers to the power of teachers (both individually and collectively) to actively and purposefully direct their own working lives within structurally-determined limits (Hilferty, 2008). Recently, the ecological model of teacher agency and how teacher agency could be strengthened was elaborated on and introduced into Estonian teacher education context by Leijen and colleagues (Leijen, Pedaste, & Lepp, 2019). The model highlights professional

competence, structural and cultural context, and professional purpose, as the main elements of achieving agency. Authors also emphasise that reflection could be used to strengthen conditions for supporting teacher agency in teacher education, which is also relevant in the context of induction and mentoring of beginning teachers.

Universities are looking for an opportunity to support organisational learning processes and develop new research-based practices in an authentic school context (e.g. Future School Programme, Edulabs, etc.). These programmes strengthen school-university collaboration, taking into account the schools' needs and creating a better understanding of how to develop programmes for teachers. Also, in-service training courses for teachers offered by universities follow more meaningful approaches. The focus is on team-based courses, where a group of teachers from the same school analyses the needs of a particular school and together plan a possible development programme. Teachers work and learn in a team to create new solutions and university academics help to research the impact of new initiatives. The whole process helps to build a learning community where practitioners and teachers work together.

There are now more initiatives to support teachers' professional development at schools. For example, non-governmental organisations seeking opportunities to help schools. An example of this is the network School for New Teachers. They are aiming to develop a learning network of school leaders who are committed to constant improvement of their people-related practices and processes – to make schools better spaces for growth for all. They propose to establish a well-educated mentor community, available to schools seeking qualified mentors.

## Conclusion

We could distinguish three phases in the implementation of the induction programme in Estonia. During the years 2001–2004, the induction programme was prepared. A representative group of experts worked together to solve challenges they faced regarding beginning teachers entering the profession. Universities understood that their graduates needed support, and a smooth transition between initial education and



continuing education was required. Schools became aware that they needed to develop a new culture where newcomers are supported, and teachers work collaboratively. An implementation model was designed.

During the years 2004–2013, the induction programme was piloted and launched. In the beginning of this programme, extensive monitoring and improvement were carried out, and three cycles of implementation took place (Eisenschmidt et al., 2008). Every academic year, clear development focuses were agreed upon by an expert group of representatives from all parties. After the first year of implementation, universities developed the content of the principal training and mentor education. During the second year, the focus was on the university support seminars and their format, and two universities agreed upon the unification of induction seminars and group mentoring practices. In the third year, the focus was on initial teacher education and the induction year monitoring results; the feedback results were passed on to the university programme designers. The teacher education curricula were analysed and modified based on these findings.

The experts from Tallinn and Tartu Universities met at the universities' induction centres to analyse their work, educate mentors and carry out group mentoring sessions for new teachers. During the programme launch, efforts were made to keep representatives of schools actively involved in the development process to demonstrate that one of the biggest benefits of networking is that it enables access to localised information (Eisenschmidt & Niglas, 2014). Later, the schools' involvement decreased, leading to a situation where the universities have been the main developers of the programme, which might be the reason why the schools did not feel a sense of responsibility towards developing the mentoring system in the schools.

Seeking alternative ways for induction could be considered as the third phase. Due to changes in the educational system, ways of learning how to become a teacher have been broadening, and considering the emerging professional learning communities at schools, the induction programme for newly qualified teachers needs to respond to these changes. This means that more flexible and individual approaches for induction need to be found. The school culture has a strong impact on newcomers'

well-being and socialisation. Thus, it is of critical importance to create a collegial working culture, which enables professional development and will, in turn, affirm their staying in the profession. Moreover, it is necessary to support new teachers' agency. For that, we cannot keep considering newcomers to be not experienced enough and think that they only need to focus on classroom teaching. This could lead to a situation where new teachers' potential is underestimated and their prospective ideas to improve the learning process and organisational development are not heard. Therefore, involving them in school development and collegial work is of the ultimate importance. In conclusion, the search for a sustainable model of induction for new teachers will continue as long as the contexts and all actors in the system are in development.

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