Placement mentors making sense of research-based knowledge

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Abstract

Placement mentors' role increasingly implies demonstrating to student teachers how research-based knowledge in combination with experience-based knowledge may be relevant in teachers' professional work. This is a challenge. Placement mentors are often unsure how to make sense of research-based knowledge. Frequently there is a mismatch between what they say they can and what they actually show they are able to do. This paper explores how placement mentors' reasoning is formed by their lack of power to define what research-based knowledge consists of. The analysis in this paper is based on an investigation of the epistemological premises that placement mentors rely on when they validate research-based knowledge. The theoretical-analytical point of departure is Michel Foucault's conception of power-knowledge.

Keywords

Placement teachers; Making meaning of research-based knowledge; Teacher education; Clash of epistemologies; Power-knowledge

Introduction

Internationally, teacher education has seen an increased focus on research-based teaching and training as means of developing research-based professional practice. This emphasis has been

spurred by political reforms and validated by research (Henkel 2000; Centre for Educational Research and Innovation 2008).

In teacher education, academic knowledge is often regarded as the authoritative source of knowledge, and the application of 'theory to practice' is highly prioritised. Research skills that student teachers have acquired on campus are to be applied in practice. (Eraut 2004b; Koster, Lagerwerf and Wubbels 2006; Clarke, Triggs and Nielsen 2013). Universities and colleges generally appear as the focal point and authority in cooperation with placement schools. Collaboration is frequently described as an arrangement in which teacher educators at universities and colleges inform placement mentors about the theoretical and research-based knowledge they are to make use of in their supervision they are to make use of in their supervision (Boyer Commission 1998; Grossman and McDonald 2008b; OECD/CERI 2008; Santhanam 2010). Schoolteachers, in their role as placement mentors, often describe the research-based knowledge and theories imparted during teacher education as alien (Grossman, Hammerness, McDonald and Ronfeldt, 2008; NOKUT 2006; Zeichner 2005). Accordingly, schoolteachers generally describe educational research as being of little relevance for practice in schools if the research cannot be directly applied in their school context (Everton, Galton and Pell 2000; Hemsley-Brown and Sharp, 2003; Papasotiriou and Hannah 2006; Zeuli 1994). Schoolteachers have been shown to be largely unaware of the potential value of qualitative research (Hemsley-Brown and Sharp 2003) and, thus, how their own teaching work possibly could be conceived as part of such research. Joram's (2007) study indicates that it in teacher education there is a distinct epistemological contradiction between teacher educators on campus and teachers in school and that the partners have difficulty seeing and recognising each other's perspectives on knowledge. The tensions between theory and practice seems to be significantly affected by the organisation of teacher education (Zeichner 2010). Pine (2009) and van Kraayenoord, Honan, and Moni (2011) believe this type of influence prevent the development of a more meaningful interaction between theory and practice in teacher education and argue that more systematic, collaborative research in which university staff and schoolteachers discuss and explore their common problems and sort out their shared educational challenges, is relevant. The new teacher education guidelines in Norway is based on such principles (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research [MER], 2010. Therefore, it is interesting to explore how placement mentors in primary and lower secondary schools in this country view this new organisation of teacher education and what the placement mentors perceive are facilitating and hampering mechanisms in their meaning-making of research-based knowledge.

Norwegian teacher education is in line with what we find in Scandinavian education (Krejsler, Olsson and Petersson 2014), and to some extent with what we find internationally. Norwegian teacher education for teaching in the primary and lower secondary schools (general teacher education) is a four-year study programme. According to the new national regulations for this teacher education (European Agency 2016), the basis of educational activity is subject competence, founded on a combination of science, arts and vocational studies. According to the National guidelines (MER 2010), the teaching provided in the subjects shall be research-based and the courses relevant for work in school. The courses shall be anchored in an active research environment so that the objective of being completely research-based can be achieved. This is new in Norwegian teacher education. According to the guidelines, practical training in schools is to play a determining role in education. In the first year, the main themes in placement are the teacher's role, teaching work and didactic meeting between the pupil, teacher and learning material. In the second year, the theme is the pupil and pupil diversity. In the third and fourth year, the themes are the school as an organisation, the professional community and cooperation with parents and other central agencies outside of the school. Practical training takes up a total of 20-22 working weeks. The placement mentor shall guide the training, and

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student teachers are to undergo an assessment with a pass/fail mark following each placement period. A teacher educator from the university college visits the placement school once every placement period. On these visits, the teacher educator, student teacher and placement mentor discuss how the student teacher is progressing. The teacher education institution is responsible for the content, quality and assessment in the placement. The institution is also responsible for ensuring progression between the periods of placement training and shall organise the placement so that collaboration with the placement school is possible. Thus, the Norwegian model of training seems to be quite like what Furlong et al. (2006) describe as a 'higher education-led model' but also to some extent to what they named a 'collaborative model'. According to the guidelines, the teacher education institution and placement school shall establish a long-term partnership regarding teaching plans for the placement training. This collaboration shall involve the academic communities at the teacher education institution and the placement schools and student teachers. It shall be formalised as a tripartite collaboration comprising an exchange of knowledge and teaching resources. This shall ensure that activities and exercises in the practical field are included in the teacher education subjects and that research-based student assignments are applied with support from the placement mentor.

In Norway, placement mentors usually are ordinary schoolteachers who have about five years of teaching experience. In Norwegian teacher education, it is not a tradition for placement mentors to have a mentor education. However, in the new National guidelines it is a requirement that placement mentors have completed further education in the supervision of teaching practice comprising at least 15 credits, or have pledged to start training in the supervision of teaching practice.

Questions explored in this paper are the following: i) Considering the new requirements for the placement school and university college partnership, how do placement mentors in their work make sense of research-based knowledge through their prioritisations and reasoning? ii) What impact has the dialogue between colleagues in school and with teacher educators at universities on the placement mentors' conceptualisations of research-based knowledge?

Our approach implies examining whether there is consistency between what placement mentors claim about their understanding of research-based knowledge and what they describe actually to be doing in their work. Furthermore, it will be examined if there is a pattern in the placement mentors' answers and whether these answers can illuminate the research questions.

Theoretical framework

What constitutes research-based knowledge is disputed (Cochran-Smith 2005; Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1909; Eraut 2004a; Hargreaves 1999; Hemsley-Brown and Sharp, 2003). A common way to distinguish research-based knowledge from experience-based knowledge is, as Eraut (2004a) does, by linking research-based knowledge to different conceptions of evidence. Eraut attributes research status to two types of evidence: research-based evidence (acknowledged scientific publications) and other scientific evidence (generated using traditional scientific procedures). Thus, following Eraut, research-based knowledge can be acquired by reading acknowledged publications, and research-based knowledge can legitimately be applied by the use of traditional scientific procedures. According to Eraut, unlike this, practice-based knowledge is a kind of evidence, which is generated through the professional practices of the profession. This type of knowledge is legitimately applied when it is performed in accordance with the criteria agreed upon by experts in the profession. These categorisations agree with the

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conventional conception of what constitutes research-based and experience-based knowledge. They seem to be widely used and recognised amongst education researchers (Hargreaves 1999; Hemsley-Brown and Sharp 2003). Based on these distinctions, most of teachers' professional work appears to be practice-based and thus categorically different from the research-based knowledge for teacher educators on campus. These distinctions seem to reflect the epistemological contradiction between teacher educators on campus and teachers in school (Joram 2007).

However, what these distinctions ignore is that what here is named practice-based knowledge also might be research-based. In the sense, the 'know-how' that schoolteachers display in fact may imply the kind of reasoning inherent in research-based evidence and other scientific evidence ('knowing that'), even if it is not explicated. This follows from Ryle's (1949) epistemological reasoning. Ryle's point is that although 'knowing how' and 'knowing that' is of a different kind, 'knowing how' actually logically may be prior to 'knowing that' because we actualise propositions through what we do. Thus, 'knowing how' may imply the practice of 'knowing that' if the practice is based on the same formal logic. Following such reasoning, Cochran-Smith (2005) and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) argue that schoolteachers' meaning-making of teaching and learning on certain premises may be research-based knowledge by virtue of its systematic nature, its intentionality and type of inquiry. Accordingly, Cochran-Smith and Lytle claim that writings initiated by teachers often concern discrepancies between theory and practice, and even if teachers do not seek to generalise beyond the immediate case, Cochran-Smith and Lytle often describe their writings as relevant to a variety of contexts. Moreover, Cochran-Smith and Lytle argue that teachers might complement an inquiry-based approach and apply discovery-based methods in their daily work when they use educational theory and scientific concepts to explore practical problems and revise existing theories and practices, and when they obtain data that point toward more productive alternative theories and practices, thus, modifying what is known from earlier research. This is in accordance with what Kemmis (2012, 885) describes as 'researching practice from within practice traditions'. Carr and Kemmis (1986) argue for defining such reasoning as part of an action research tradition. This understanding of research-based knowledge has less support than the more privileged conception of research-based knowledge that Eraut describes.

Based on these distinctions, the paper investigates what evidence placement mentors rely on when they define, prioritise and reason in matters concerning research-based knowledge, and whether prevailing power relations are reflected in placement mentors' reasoning, priorities and understanding. Then it will be explored whether the placement mentors' conceptions and reasoning about the relevance of research-based knowledge are affected by the organisational arrangements imposed on them, as displayed in the placement mentors ' descriptions of the cooperation between colleagues and with principals in schools. Finally, it will be examined whether the cooperation between the placement school and the teacher education programme also contributes to the constitution of the placement mentors' conceptualisations.

The basis for this epistemological approach is the assumption that knowledge, thoughts and expressed ideas are the product of interactions between groups of people over time, which contribute to produce a certain hierarchy of opinions and conceptual structures, where some may turn out to be more privileged than others. This concerns conceptions, which individuals use in their efforts to make sense of research-based knowledge. These premises will be sought in the procedures by which one in school legitimately is regarded as being able to acquire and make use of such knowledge. The theoretical point of departure is Michel Foucault's (1980) conception of power-knowledge. Foucault (1979) contends that depictions of the order of things are always historically contingent products of social power arrangements and the prevailing

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power-knowledge, which legitimates what is seen as true and right. This means that power is inscribed in the procedures by which one is considered capable of obtaining knowledge and in the ways one can legitimately use knowledge in social contexts. What may and may not be spoken and what is perceived to be significant, thus, reflects prevailing power relations.

According to Foucault (1980, 117), depictions of the order of things provide a basis for understanding the constitution of the subject as part of a prevailing historical framework, as part of a 'history of the present' (see also Foucault 1986, 220). Following Foucault, this is reflected in the prevailing ways placement schools and teacher education are organised and manifested in the possibilities and limitations that the organisational arrangements impose on the parties involved. Thus, power is inscribed in the arrangements and procedures by which one legitimately is supposed to obtain and make use of research-based knowledge. However, according to Foucault (1988), these procedures and arrangements will have an impact only as long as the people involved recognise them as legitimate. This is shown when the individuals concerned testify and confess that a prevailing understanding of knowledge is a true representation of their own personal understanding. Furthermore, the legitimation will be strengthen d when others who are authorised to know can verify this is a true understanding. In this paper, these processes of knowledge construction will be linked to placement mentors' premises for making meaning of research-based knowledge. According to Foucault, expert knowledge has a special significance because in society this kind of knowledge is recognised as giving the most correct and legitimate concepts by which people can classify themselves and their knowledge. As Foucault (1979) sees it, confessions play an important part in the judiciary, in medicine, in education, in family and in love relationships. We confess publicly and privately, to our parents, our educators, our doctor and so on, and to ourselves. We confess or are forced to confess. Thus, according to Foucault (1988), through this process of confession one is - with support from expert knowledge - able to discover from within oneself what one from an outside point of view is supposed to be. Studies based on such premises are rare in research on the mentorship of student teachers, although a few touch on this theme (e.g. Gore 2006). I will explore this theme by focusing on the epistemological premises that placement mentors display when they define, prioritise and reason in matters concerning research-based knowledge in mentoring. What is regarded as research-based knowledge, I argue, is closely linked to the question of what is agreed upon to be valid evidence, and the premise of what counts as evidence will vary according to what people perceive as valid, which again is displayed in the procedures, by which one obtains knowledge and makes use of knowledge. Through these meaning- making processes, prevailing power relations become apparent. On this basis, it will be explored what constitutes research-based evidence for placement mentors and whether there is consistency between the research-based knowledge they claim to be involved in and what they display through what they describe they are actually doing.

Methods and methodology

Research methods and data selection

This study is part of a large research project, 'Teachers' professional qualifications' (the TPQ project). The data presented in this paper are from a small part of this project. Firstly, a survey was conducted with 45 placement mentors at primary and lower secondary schools associated with the same university college situated in a major city in eastern Norway. All of the schools have approximately 30 teachers and 500 students. The survey represents the aggregated responses from placement mentors from these schools. These 45 have in common that they are engaged in the same teacher education programme. Most items in the survey were formulated

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either as graduated or yes-or-no questions, with room for comments. Very few respondents made comments. I tried to remedy this lack of detailed information with interviews. All of the topics and questions in the survey were covered in open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews with five placement mentors who also had completed the survey. This provided more in-depth descriptions of the issues that appeared mostly as tendencies and brief answers in the survey.

A possible objection may be that this study primarily is based on an intensive analysis of a small sample of placement mentors. However, even so, I will argue that micro-process studies like this may be appropriate because they can bring attention to important institutional processes that would otherwise be difficult to identify (Little 2012).

A methodological concern in this study has been how to combine the results from a relatively small survey with the data from the interviews. Abduction is found to be a relevant methodological approach. Abduction implies a process where the researcher interprets a case based on a hypothetical overarching pattern. The tentative interpretations may be strengthened, disproved or revised through observations of new findings. Abduction, thus, avoids the deductive problem of operating with 'guesses' decoupled from empirical data and the inability of induction to generate theory based on more than what pure empirical summaries allow (Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994). Inspired by such an approach, I have, however, in accordance with a deductive approach, studied earlier research and analysed the survey results to formulate hypotheses and theoretical patterns that, if valid, could enable understanding the inductive patterns discovered during interpretation of the interview results. By so developing and applying tentative conclusions to related and different findings within the same interview case, I have attempted to determine whether and on what terms my pre-understanding, inspired by earlier research and the survey data, corresponds with new discoveries in the interview data, and vice versa.

A primarily qualitative research approach provides limited opportunities for traditional empirical generalisation. However, a qualitative approach can enable another kind of empirical generalisation (Geertz 1973, 26) within the case study. To capture an in-depth picture of the possible mechanisms involved in placement mentors' meaning-making of research-based knowledge, I found it appropriate to cross-examine and check the survey data against the answers from only one of the five respondents interviewed. That respondent was strategically selected as his answers were most aligned with the aggregated answers in the survey. I find support for such a choice in Geertz. He argues that the possibilities of obtaining a qualitative empirical generalisation are related to the opportunities of finding meaningful connections through the comparison and cross-examination of different factors within the same context (here; amongst intentions and patterns of action and rationality within the same school context). On this basis, I have constantly checked whether my new discoveries from the interview case corresponded with the trends in the survey data, and conversely to establish the 'thickest description' of the qualitative data. Not including the four other interviewees risks losing shades in the interpretation of the interview data, which a comparison of the five respondents' answers might yield. However, my goal is not to bring forth the nuances and differences amongst five respondents but to compare the thick description of one interview case to the corresponding survey data, whilst constantly comparing them with results from international studies. Thus, I seek to reveal how particular circumstances in one case can illuminate micro-mechanisms more generally involved in placement mentors' sense-making. To bring more detail into this condensed description, I include a short excerpt of an interview with the placement coordinator/university trainer for lower secondary school at the university. Attached is a complete copy of the questions in this interview.

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Data analysis

The survey questions that the placement mentors answered concerned the following issues:

Qualifications which make them suitable to be placement mentors; potential role conflicts between being teacher for students and placement mentors for student teachers; their contribution to student teachers' competence in practical, professional and theoretical knowledge; support from school principals; whether they share a community of inquiry with other placement mentors; experience of cooperating with the university college.

Attached is a copy of the analysis diagram of the results to the questions in the survey.

Some of the issues from the survey were elaborated in the interview with the placement mentor. Of relevance for this study are the following issues:

Cooperation between teacher educators at the university college, placement mentors and student teachers; exchange of knowledge between placement mentors and campus educators; discussions between the partners in teacher education about how to reconcile experience-based knowledge and knowledge acquired at the university college; the organisation of the counselling; campus teachers' role in placement; student teachers' reflection on practice; placement mentors' identity as teacher educators; placement schools as part of teacher education; principals as managers of placement schools; teacher collaboration in placement schools.

Attached is a complete copy of the questions in the interview to the placement mentors.

In the first reading of the survey and interview answers, I identified how placement mentors generally positioned themselves as professionals, given their double role as schoolteachers and placement mentors, and whether research-based knowledge was a matter of concern. Based on this, I concentrated in the second reading on how, in these double roles, placement mentors reasoned about how to link research- and experience-based knowledge. In the third reading, I looked for variations and antagonisms in placement mentors' responses and attempted to determine whether what takes place in one arena (the placement school) could support or undermine what takes place in another (the university college, including some comments from the placement coordinator). I began with the survey of 45 placement mentors to get a general picture of how placement mentors tried to make sense of research-based knowledge in the placement.

Results

Reflective practice informed by research-based knowledge

Placement mentors do not appear to find research-based knowledge relevant for their work. When asked on the survey to describe what qualifications made them suited to be placement mentors, none of the 45 participants mentioned research-based knowledge. When they were asked how and to what extent they contributed to their student teachers' competence in reflection processes, which connects practical situations to academic, pedagogical and theoretical perspectives, none referred to research-based knowledge. Most placement mentors confessed that they were not very confident at connecting practical situations to academic, pedagogical and theoretical perspectives. Of the 35 participants who answered this question, 13 said that they made such connections to a medium degree, seven only to a small extent and six not at all. These six explained their view:

Some theoretical concepts, I don't have a very good grip on, but I am good with the most important ones and spend time on those to a lesser extent. [There] is too little time for it, and it is something that I do not care so very much about. Not too much. I am not a theorist but a practitioner. Which theories and theorists are not as important to

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me. No, I could have spent more time on this. I must manage this better. [I] can ask about theories, but they are not fresh in my memory.

These six justified their practice by stating that they were practitioners, not theorists. Generally, they described themselves as not confident at connecting practical situations to academic, pedagogical and theoretical perspectives. Even so, the placement mentors seemed to accept that research-based knowledge was an important part of teacher education. The answers of the interviewed placement mentor from Hill primary school also suggested this.

Interviewer (I): *[New teacher education] shall be research-based in the ways that student teachers shall engage in such a scientific way of working. ... The student teachers shall be challenged to think critically, and they shall familiarise themselves with research-based knowledge .... Do you think that this is important for student teachers' reflection on their own practice?*

Placement mentor (P): *Yes ... I really like that mind-set. And I think it's really useful. And I'd like to have known more about it before they came. ... I think that if we placement mentors had gotten more information about it, then we could probably have helped them more and made more out of it.*

I: *Yes, do you think that it is important expertise to have in the profession?*

P: *Certainly, but I see that not very many of teachers who have finished their education have it, either.*

The interviewee pinpointed and elaborated on what the 45 survey participants stated: He confessed that placement mentors and teachers generally lacked knowledge about how to make sense of research-based knowledge and that they depended on the teacher education programmes to familiarise student teachers with this kind of knowledge.

However, the placement mentor's espoused opinions about his understanding of research-based knowledge appeared quite different from the research-based know-how he displayed when he described how he, in practice, supervised his student teachers. He expressed this research-based know-how when he was asked about his views of the practical relevance of the new compulsory subject for teacher education on which he was working: pedagogy and knowledge of students:

I: *Okay, back to these national guidelines. They point out that there should be a correlation between the content and the methods of the new subject, Pedagogy and students' knowledge, and the practice. I'll just say, as an example, that in the first year, we have class management and adapted teaching and assessment. This is the theme in pedagogy, so is it also a theme in practice?*

P: *Yes.*

I: *Do you think that it will contribute to the relationship between theory and practice?*

P: *Certainly. ... And that was told at the university college. ... We had a full focus on classroom management, practiced it a lot, talked a lot about it. So right there, I think there was a pretty fine line between ... theory and practice. Yes, and perhaps even more because the student teachers had practiced quite a bit, so when [they] com[e] back to the university college, theory then will be a bit more easily digestible and meaningful.*

In the reasoning of these answers, the placement mentor directly linked his pedagogical principles to his professional work, not only generally to the topic at hand. Thus, he shows how he can systematically use theories of classroom management as analytical tools. Along with the student teachers, he explored the practical problems that student teachers faced in placement. For instance, he described how he arranged for student teachers to be able to acquire theory-informed practical knowledge through their ongoing practice in an interchange between the inquiry- and discovery-based approaches ('When [they] com[e] back to the university college, theory then will be a bit more easily digestible and meaningful'). The placement mentor turned out not to be as inexperienced with using research-based knowledge as he had claimed to be. The difference might indicate that he, like the 45 survey participants, had made the widely used,

conventional scientific conception of research-based knowledge his own, and that he thus underestimated his research-informed capability even whilst demonstrating it in his description of his professional practice simply because he relies on the conventional distinction.

A similar pattern is revealed when we compare what the 45 respondents said they could do is compared to what they described actually had been doing in their supervision. The participants confessed that they generally were not very confident about connecting practical situations to academic, pedagogical and theoretical perspectives. However, their actual mentoring practices presented a somewhat different picture. This is shown in the answers to the question 'To what extent and how do you contribute to your student teachers' practical, professional competence?' Nearly half of placement mentors (22) emphasised that they did so by acting as models and supervisors who systematically show student teachers what the routines of teaching and planning consist of and by evaluating these routines. The respondents stated:

We work systematically with what a teacher does, all the time. I try to be a good role model and ask what they have seen and think about it afterwards. We make them see and do many different practical exercises and variations of learning. Much focus is on practical tasks in the teaching profession. I try to balance theory and practice in the supervision, largely through modelling, conversations, guidance. All plans, tasks and discussions include reflection before, during and after the oral or written expressions. I try out various methods to get them to reflect individually and in groups. I strive to stimulate reflection in my mentoring.

Thus, the placement mentors espoused their understanding of research-based knowledge and showed that they possessed a research-based know-how. These quotations indicate that, in familiar supervisory settings, placement mentors displayed a greater understanding of how to connect practical situations to theoretical perspectives than they had acknowledged when they were asked about their familiarity with research-based knowledge. They seemed to have made the widely used, conventional scientific conception of research-based knowledge their own, thus underestimating their research-informed knowledge and capability. This tendency is in accordance with what the placement mentor from Hill primary school has explained in more detail. The 45 participants confirmed and filled out this picture by displaying how they did research-based knowledge as an integrated part of their work in their modelling, conversations, supervision and guidance. Despite their espoused belief and confession that teachers generally lacked understanding of research-based knowledge and that they were not theorists but practitioners, their counselling and supervision tell otherwise. Research-based knowledge emerges in the form of systematic, intentional inquiry that addresses discrepancies between theory and practice. This inquiry appeared when participants described how they were preoccupied with generalising beyond the immediate case ('I try to balance theory and practice'). The same approach was displayed when they used theoretical concepts as analytical tools to explore and reflect on practical problems that arise ('We make them see and do different practical exercises and variations of learning').

Cooperation in school and meaning making of research-based knowledge

Researchers have shown that mutually defined and commonly explored concepts stimulate teachers and principals to explore the context in which they work and to learn from and reflect on each other's experiences, both individually and collectively (Kwakman 2003; Shulman and Shulman 2004). Thus, if present, such a cooperation should be expected to stimulate reflection about the mismatch between what placement mentors say they understand of research-based knowledge and what they describe they actually have been doing in their teaching and mentoring. The survey may be able to provide information.

In the survey, the 45 placement mentors were asked to describe teacher collaboration in their schools. All 45 reported that cooperating with other placement mentors for various reasons was important to their meaning making. Typical answers included the following:

[I] have someone to talk with when I need it. We complement each other, sharing useful tips and advice, guiding and helping each other with various issues. [It is] of great importance. It is useful to discuss situations and have two points of view on different matters. I get more certain of my role and more reflective.

Thus, cooperation seemed to have a positive impact on the placement mentors' reflection. Furthermore, at 31 schools, the principal was described as proactive, supportive and engaged in the preparation and implementation of educational initiatives. The principal also promoted the placement mentors' cooperation. At 11 schools, the principal was described first to react when the placement mentors asked for help, a situation with which four were satisfied.

However, in the survey answers, it is difficult to find any clear explanations of how collaboration with other placement mentors and principals affected the placement mentors' reasoning about research-based knowledge and why they reasoned as they did about it. A more intensive study of cooperation within a single school setting might give a more detailed picture of whether and how dialogue with colleagues and the principal could help expand placement mentors' reflection and sense making of research-based knowledge. The interview with the placement mentor at Hill proved to be helpful. Aligning with the 45 survey respondents, the placement mentor at Hill primary school was quite satisfied with the principal's leadership:

I: *… the management in a way, are they profiling it as a placement school?*

P: *Yes. … But it must be a pretty strong leader around to go with a group of teachers.*

The Hill placement mentor does not say much more about the importance of the principal, so we have no evidence to pursue this matter further. Collaboration amongst the teachers at Hill, however, was discussed more. When asked to describe how teacher collaboration works at the team level, the Hill placement mentor stated the following.

P: *We work together at each step, so our teams are on the same step. …. Yes, now we try to raise it a notch and try to think a bit about development. … It's all about the little things that go by so fast in everyday life. So we had, after all, wanted more cooperation in some [type] of development, where one elaborates together and looks up a bit. And then it is not as often as one might have wished. …*

I: *Mmm, is there room for self-reflection? Is there time these days to reflect as a teacher or is there...?*

P: *There is not much time for that. … I think that the curriculums come and go, and we really do it the way we always have done a bit. … I notice much resentment amongst teachers about changing things. You may change a structure slightly, but in terms of how one thinks about students and in terms of how one thinks about teaching, it is quite similar to what it has always been.*

These statements indicate that most teachers wanted more developmental cooperation, but 'the little things that go by so fast in everyday life' were disruptive and made self-reflection and team reflection difficult. These disruptions included curriculums that 'come and go' and created 'much resentment amongst teachers about changing things'. Altogether, these factors appeared to make it challenging to find time and room to discuss how one as a teacher actually use and might be able to use reflection to establish a more research-informed knowledge base in the profession. These interruptions in on-going schoolwork appeared to be a possible explanation why placement mentors found it difficult to take the necessary time to detect, reflect on and discuss mismatches between what they said that they understood about implementing theory and research-based knowledge and what they described they were actually doing in teaching and mentoring student teachers. Thus, the cooperation in which the placement mentors were

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involved appears to hamper the expansion of their understanding and use of research-based knowledge.

Placement mentors' meaning-making and collaboration with the university college

It can preliminary be summarised that the placement mentors seemed to rely on a conventional scientific conception of research-based knowledge when they claimed to lack the ability to connect experience-based knowledge with academic, pedagogical and theoretical knowledge, which were delivered from teacher education. As shown, however, their displayed know-how indicated something else. There did not seem to be a line of communication between their conception of research-based knowledge and their research-based know-how. When the placement mentors described their lack of research-based capability and knowledge, they seemed to ignore that they had demonstrated a strong acquaintance with research-based procedures founded on an inquiry-based meaning-making and that they had made use of theory in practice in their supervision of student teachers.

The next step will be to explore whether the cooperation between placement mentors at schools and teacher educators at university college had any impact on the ways placement mentors related to research-based knowledge. The national guidelines are clear: University college teachers and placement mentors shall organise their teaching and training so that student teachers are encouraged to reflect on and criticise what they have learned both in the university college and at the school, in order to build up their own body of professional knowledge.

The answers from the interview with the placement mentor at Hill primary school should be placed within the broader picture of the survey of 45 placement mentors.

When asked how they experience cooperation with the university college at joint meetings, some placement mentors stated the meetings are badly planned, and others that they are satisfied with what they get, and that the information was consistent with what they were accustomed to. Others said they wanted clearer messages about what was expected of them in teacher education. A somewhat clearer picture emerges when the placement mentors were asked how cooperation with the university college could be improved. Of the 45 participants, 24 answered this question. Of these, 19 stated that the university college needed to make collaboration with the placement schools function more smoothly and effectively if the student teachers were to get an adequate professional qualification. Placement mentors related this to the university college's educational responsibility for organising the communication with the placement schools. Answers representative of this viewpoint include the following.

They [the university college]' must develop simpler plans and arrange for the communication to be clearer. More visits from the university college during the placement period would have been super. Better and more specific goals are needed. Good, but [I] would have liked more contact with the student teachers' tutor at the university college.

The placement mentors seemed to call for a more systematic, collaborative partnership in which educational challenges were made clearer and mutually defined and explored. This issue was followed up in the interview with the Hill placement mentor, as follows.

I: *According to the guidelines, … the teacher education programme and the placement schools are to establish long-term cooperation, which will also involve the student teachers. This perhaps means that these three partners are in a common arena sometimes?*

P: *No, in a way, it was no more than the one day with the tutor from the university college. And that was the time we had a project. And I think that instead of having a reflection day at the university college, we might rather have*

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reflection days out with the placement mentors at the school. ... It would have been all right - if you have in mind the idea of the triangle, then it is evident that it must be a bit higher frequency than once or twice. If one were to come some way, I think. Such a cooperation, of course, would have been ideal and with a professional flair or something.

The placement mentor from Hill stated that he wanted more frequent, professionally grounded collaboration situated at the placement school, instead of at the university college campus. In this way, he believed that it would be possible to get a closer and more practical understanding of the theoretical and research-based knowledge that the university college teachers bring to the partnership.

This line of reasoning appears to break from the conventional scientific conception of how to make sense of research-based knowledge - the view that academic knowledge and theory applied to practice are the authoritative sources of knowledge (Eraut 2004b; Clarke et al. 2013). Albeit, the placement mentor's argument was that, the university college was the focal point of the cooperation and the authority in the relationship. However, he envisioned how it might be possible to break out of this prevailing discourse. Nevertheless, he described this as difficult to achieve under the prevailing cooperative arrangement:

I: *According to the guidelines, counselling and assessment of student teachers in placement are the joint responsibility of subject teachers at the university college, placement mentors and principals. All three parties have a responsibility in relation to the counselling and assessment. ....What was the subject teacher's tutor role when she was visiting?*

P: *…. I would say that she had an observer role, and she had one conversation with [student teachers], so I didn't talk much with her. So, she probably should have had more time. Yes.*

I: *Okay, ... how is the responsibility divided when it comes to evaluation? Do you feel that there is collaboration when it comes to assessing the student teachers?*

P: *No, I felt that it was my responsibility ... and I was the only one who could do that, too, so it was okay.*

I: *What you're saying then is that the subject teacher from the university college was not included in the assessment of the student teachers' in placement?*

P: *Yes, that's right..*

I: *Do you think that the subject teacher may have something to contribute in terms of assessment of the student teachers in placement?*

P: *Absolutely.*

I: *How and why?*

P: *I think that they would have had much better qualified comments on how they manage to link theory to practice and in a very different way than me. And I also had to write that in the assessment report, that is not where I have the greatest expertise. It is not where I have the greatest opportunity to assess them.*

The placement mentor stated that he believed that the subject teacher from the university college had knowledge of great relevance to the student teacher's practice, which he as a placement mentor could not provide. However, he found this knowledge was not much help if the teacher educator's participation in placement kept on being distant and irregular ('She had an observer role. … I didn't talk much with her'). The placement mentor's problems seemed to arise when this distance and irregularity were a general pattern, which it is described to be. The following quotation indicates that the placement mentor envisioned a restructuring of the cooperation into a community of inquiry, in which the placement mentor and the campus teacher could regularly explore and exchange their opinions about experience- and research-based knowledge.

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I: *The guidelines presuppose that the placement mentors from schools contribute to the training at the university college with their experience-based knowledge. …. Do you know whether the placement mentors … have contributed in this way?*

P: *Not that I've heard about.*

I: *What impact do you think that kind of exchange might have on the education?*

P: *… I think that it can provide a much larger, i.e. conformity between theory and practice for the student teachers..*

I: *Yes. Did the subject teachers from the university college and the placement mentors from the school discuss how theory is obtained? Thus, how theory that is acquired in teacher education and knowledge gained in practice can complement each other?*

P: *No, I have never experienced that.*

I: *No. Could it have been appropriate?*

P: *Absolutely.*

Here, the Hill placement mentor revealed in more detail mechanisms that may hinder placement mentors' meaning-making of research-based knowledge, beyond the loose, random structuring of the cooperation. The mentor's statement indicates that the university teacher educators avoided inviting the placement mentors to exchange knowledge about how to use experience- and research-based knowledge in placement.

The following excerpt shows that the teacher education programmes did prioritise spending time on participating in placement. However, the placement mentor's statement suggested that the university teacher educators did not prioritise discussion of ways using research- and experience-based knowledge with the mentors. A conventional conception of the application of theory to practice appears to underlie the university teacher educators' view:

I: *Back to these guidelines. So, it is also stated that there should be a meaningful link of theory and practice in teacher education. The assumption is that subject teachers at the university college also participate in part of the placement. Do the subject teachers participate in the placement?*

P: *No - well, they attend the meetings at the university college with some information. However, my experience is that they do not participate in placement. No.*

I: *Would it be appropriate?*

P: *Yes.*

I: *Why is that?*

P: *Firstly, because they could then see how the placement and the placement group, in a way, worked and what grade and so forth they differed on, and ... which one they had gone through in relation to the theory as well. I think it would then be easier for them to get the student teachers to reflect when they were in the midst of it.*

Cooperation here emerges primarily as the expression of a separate yet complementary partnership model, in which the university college had responsibility for theoretical teaching, placement schools for the practical training, and none for bringing these two dimensions into dialogue. In an interview, the placement coordinator at the university college, who was also a university trainer, contributes a more detailed picture of what is at stake in the cooperation.

Interviewer (I): Do the subject lectures/university trainers take part in the placement in schools and what do the cooperation imply?

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University trainer/placement coordinator (U): Eehh ... we have, we have no such cooperation. Besides a mandatory visit, the cooperation only concerns the student teachers that are in danger of not passing the placement or will not pass the placement. Concerning these few student teachers, we have cooperation.

I: Yes, yes. So, there is no general summary about: 'Just like this did the placement work out now' or 'shall we do it in another way'; in other words, are not these types of questions summarised in a discussion?

U: Not with the placement mentors [...] No, we, we have no formal meeting place for this. [...]

I: We talked a bit about it earlier on ... that it is important that you as university trainers get insight into how the placement schools work. Huh .. knowledge imbedded in practice, and what happens in the classroom, and likewise that those who work as placement mentors gain insight into the mindset in the university college - to what extent do you systematically work to exchange knowledge in these ways?

U: I think it's too weak.

I: Too weak? ... Yes, so you mean that it n both ways is too weak?

U: Yes, yes; I meant ... especially the university trainers that have not worked in school before. Those university trainers, they know too little about what takes place in school. We who have worked in school - I don't know enough about how it is in school today because it is ten years since I was there, but I've been so much in school that I can captures quite a lot of what takes place. So, I think I know more than some of my colleagues who have not worked in school.

I: What are the obstacles to get such an arrangement working? Is there any reluctance among the academic staff to be involved in this?

U: I don't know ... but you have to have some ideas ....

I: But ... perhaps there are some who refuse because they would rather work in academic ways and thus qualify themselves, and that they therefore think that to enter into a development project is not always fruitful for their career, may be? That may be a reason?

U: Yes, yes. That may be a reason.

This shows in more detail how the current organisation of the cooperation contributed to maintaining and consolidating the conventional conception of research-based knowledge as something to be learned at the university and transferred to placement school where the placement mentor and student teacher are to adapt it. The quote indicates as well what possible reasons for the university teachers' attitudes were.

Discussion and conclusion

My point of departure for this research is that power is inscribed in various ways in the arrangements and procedures by which one legitimately is considered able to obtain and make use of research-based knowledge in placement. This paper has investigated the premises on which research-based knowledge is accepted as valid in placement and how power is inscribed in these premises. It is assumed that these premises are related to the arrangements and procedures by which placement mentors legitimately can achieve and use knowledge. Previous research indicates that educational researchers often neglect teachers' ability to make sense of research-based knowledge (Beck and Kosnik 2001) and that they do not believe that teacher-researchers have sufficient qualifications to participate in research-based activities (see also Evans, Lomax and Morgan 2000). This paper indicates that many teachers have made such a mind-set their own, demonstrated by their opinion and confession that you are either a theorist or a practitioner, and they are practitioners. This study suggests how teacher education promotes this view through what has been described as a conventional understanding of research-based

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knowledge and that its application is upheld by a certain kind of procedures and arrangements. Previous research has demonstrated the impact of this understanding. Schoolteachers often describe educational theories and models as too abstract and idealistic to work in a school setting where other values prevail (Caspersen 2013). This study suggests that such a point of view does not take sufficiently into consideration that there is a lot of research-based know-how that schoolteachers may display in their work. Know-how that has the possibility to be an explicit part of the conception of research-based knowledge, and that as such could be included in campus teachers', placement mentors' and student teachers' discussions about how to expand schoolteachers' professional knowledge base.

The present study indicates that the mechanisms involved in the reproduction of this conventional conception of research-based knowledge is manifest not only in placement mentors' general descriptions of their own research-based knowledge, which they believe to be largely deficient and absent. The mechanisms are also displayed in placement mentors' statements when they confess and insist that they lack capacity for making sense of research-based knowledge. These statements are in contrast to the research-based know-how they manifest in their descriptions of how they supervise student teachers, particularly in how they systematically teach what the routines of teaching and planning consist of. Placement mentors' research-based know-how is also exhibited in their descriptions and reasoning in their mentoring about how to deal with the discrepancies between what is intended and what occurs, and between theory and practice. Thus, contrary to the traditional disconnection between campus and school, placement mentors in fact implicitly seem to strive to bring together experience-based, theoretical and research-based knowledge in their education of student teachers. This way challenging the conventional conception of how to make sense of research-based knowledge - despite their denigration of their own research-based knowledge and their capability to make use of this knowledge. This renouncement of their own understanding of how to make sense of research-based knowledge emerges as an important premise for the maintenance of the current power-knowledge. This does not mean that schoolteachers' implementation and development of research-based knowledge are seen as sufficient for placement mentors to pursue in school. Placement mentors and student teachers also need to be familiar with the conventional conception of research-based knowledge. However, for this to happen, campus teachers as collaborators need to take into consideration that such an implementation of knowledge has to take place in a school context where the meaning-making and use of knowledge are of another kind. In the world of the teaching profession, being engaged in the production of scientific knowledge is not synonymous with being oriented towards knowledge and understanding for its own sake, as it is within academia. On the contrary, as we have seen, teachers primarily consider research-based knowledge as significant in school when it can help them to address conflicts, to deal with problems and to meet needs. This latter more inquiry-based form of knowledge production is what the Boyer Commission (1998) describes as 'the scholarship of application'. This scholarship is different from the form of knowledge production that appears to be most common within academia, where the focus more is on the discovery and dissemination of generalised explanations and theories (see also Rolf 1989), manifested in the books and lectures to which student teachers are introduced. Therefore, a dialogue is called for in which campus teachers, placement mentors and student teachers regularly share their hypotheses about how research-based knowledge in relevant ways can contribute to making student teachers' professional work better. Thus, to develop as a reflective practitioner, future teachers seem to be particularly in need of learning how to make practical syntheses of the academic knowledge acquired on campus and the experience-based knowledge they accumulate in school (Grimen 2008).

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Previous research indicates that a systematic, collaborative partnership between university teacher educators and school placement mentors might stimulate on-going sharing of experience-based and research-based knowledge. In such partnerships, they mutually discuss and explore their respective problems and hypotheses and seek to formulate a common language in order to grasp their shared educational issues (Pine 2009; van Kraayenoord, Honan, and Moni 2011). This study indicates that the mechanisms that undermine such a collaborative partnership and maintain a conventional understanding are complex. Most placement mentors want developmental cooperation, but disruptions in the daily planning and routines, and curriculums that 'come and go' make self-reflection and team reflection difficult. Placement mentors have little time to detect, reflect on and discuss the mismatches in their conceptions between what they claim to be capable of and the know-how they display in the descriptions of their supervision. The constitution of research-based knowledge emerges further through its inscription in the procedures and arrangements for knowledge production, which appear to persist in teacher education. Examples have been provided. University college teachers seem to offer little inspiration for the development of a more expansive and dynamic understanding of how to make sense of research-based knowledge, partly because of a loose, quite random structuring of the cooperation between campus teachers and placement mentors. In accordance with previous research (Furlong et al. 2006), cooperation in this case rather emerges as an expression of a separate, complementary partnership model, with the university college responsible for theory, and the placement schools responsible for practical knowledge and neither with a proactive responsibility for bringing these two dimensions into a dialogue. Such arrangement and procedures seem to contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of the current understanding and conception of research-based knowledge, thus underlining what constitutes power-knowledge. Placement mentors call for a more frequent, professionally grounded, collaborative partnership situated in the placement school, instead of in the university college.

Moreover, university college teachers' approach to cooperating seems to maintain a conventional approach to the implementation of research-based knowledge. They spend very little time participating in placement and do not invite placement mentors to exchange knowledge about how to make meaning of research-based knowledge in placement. This leaves placement mentors with the responsibility for applying theories and research findings delivered by university college teachers. The placement mentors are not invited to participate in the construction and execution of research-based knowledge. This shows in yet another way how research-based knowledge is inscribed in teacher education's prevailing procedures and arrangements for knowledge production.

The study also shows how a conventional approach to implementation of research-based knowledge might be maintained, despite formal prescriptions in the national guidelines calling for a more systematic, collaborative and mutually exploration by university college staff and schoolteachers about how to make sense of research-based knowledge. However, in accordance with international research, the Norwegian guidelines do not provide particularly detailed descriptions of how teacher educators might use research-based knowledge in their pedagogical work with student teachers. The guidelines generally seem to assume that, once qualified in the use of scientific procedures, student teachers will have the ability to put this knowledge into use in their professional practice (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research 2010; see also Boyer Commission 1998; Grossman, Hammerness and McDonald 2009). In this way, a prevailing power-knowledge may also be maintained.

The data set analysed in this study is small, derived from a survey of 45 placement mentors at primary and lower secondary schools associated with the same university college and an in-

depth interview with one of these placement mentors. A future study, which includes university college educators and student teachers, could yield a richer picture of the facilitating and hampering mechanisms in the meaning-making of research-based knowledge in teacher education and a more in-depth description of the conditions for the development of a more expansive understanding of how to make sense of this kind of knowledge.

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Attachments

Interview guide to university trainers/subject teachers at the university college

Cooperation teacher education – placement school

1. According to the National guidelines for the general teacher education, teacher education and placement school shall establish a long-term mutual cooperation that also should involve the student teachers.

Can you say a little about how this cooperation is organized and who participates in the collaboration?

- Before placement

- In placement and

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- After placement

(Please specify the answers)

2. <u>Do you agree with what is written in the National guidelines that the cooperation between teacher education and placement schools should include an exchange of knowledge?</u>

What do you think about this?

Why/why not?

Are there any exchange of knowledge?

From campus teachers to placement mentors?

From placement mentors to campus teachers?

Exchange of knowledge also means exchange of teacher resources - does that occur?

In your opinion, does such a cooperation makes a better teacher education?

Do campus teachers and placement mentors discuss how theory acquired at campus and knowledge learned in the placement periods can complement each other, for the benefit of student teachers' learning?

(Please specify the answers)

3. <u>According to the National guidelines, supervision and evaluation of student teachers in placement is a common responsibility for subject teachers at campus, placement mentors and the school principals</u>

Who does what in terms of guidance?

Does the guidance function in a good way?

Do all attend?

Do all subject teachers from campus attend at least one day of placement training?

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(Please specify the answers

Unity and coherence between teaching and training on campus and in placement

4. The National guidelines point out that there should be consistency between the content and methods of the subject 'Pedagogy and Knowledge about Pupils' and what takes place in placement.

In your experience, do this subject contributes to a better relationship between theory and practice?

If so, in what way?

What can make the subject function in a better way?

(Please specify the answers)

5. Do you use the student teachers' experience from placement in your teaching and training at the university college?

If so, how?

What might be done to make this better?

Research-based teacher education – use of research in professional work

6. In the National guidelines, it is stated that the academic community in teacher education shall include employees who are themselves active researchers.

In your opinion, would a more research active environment help provide a better professional qualification for student teachers?

Why/why not?

7. Regarding anchoring research, it is stated in the National Guidelines that educational programs should convey and engage student teachers in:

Scientific methods,

Critical thinking and

Recognized, research-based knowledge.

Can you point to specific examples of how these issues are taken care of and how the progression is taken care of through the program?

In this regard, is it something that does not function for the student teachers?

What might be done to get this better?

(Please specify the answers)

8. What is your point of view concerning these guidelines?

(Please specify the answers)

Analysis Diagram Survey

N = 45	Suitable qualifications for placement mentor	Role conflict being school teacher and placement mentor	Contribute to stud. teachers' prof., practi.-competence	Contribute to academic+pedagogi reflection at work	Support from school principal	Community of inquiry with other placement mentors	Cooperation with university college
	Personal characteristics (16); Practical, professional qualifications (18); Dedicated to management by objectives (1);Research-based knowledge (0); N=34	Yes (14): [Difficult to follow up both simultanously; Student teachers need to try out - pupils have right to education]; No (27): [They can relieve me and are often a resource]; N = 41	Large extent (22): [Models, supervisor who systematically show student teachers the routines of teaching and planning and how to evaluate this]; [Observe me and my colleagues; have their own lessons [20}; N = 42	Medium degree (13): [Reflection before, during and after class about subjects' content and pedagogy]; To a small extent (7): [Hard to get student teacher to reflect]; Not at all (6): [I am a practitioner; Theory not so important to me] N = 27	Yes (31): [Proactive: facilitate my work; supportive; supervise me, to some extent also student teacher]; No (11): Secluded; just on request]; N = 42	Yes (45): [Important for development of the professional work; Benefit greatly from exchange of experience with other placement mentors]; Not good enough (10): [Not much organised community of colleagues; N = 45	Not good (19): [Want clearer messages; too little info; badly planned ; be more smooth and effective; too little contact; Satisfied (10): [Good to have info on what student teachers learn; N = 24

Interview guide to placement mentors in the general teacher education

1. According to the National guidelines for the general teacher education, teacher education and placement school shall establish a long-term mutual cooperation that also should involve the student teachers.

Can you say a little about how this cooperation is organized and who participates in the collaboration? - Before placement - In placement and - After placement

 (Please specify the answers)

How are the student teachers involved in the cooperation?

What impact has the cooperation on student teachers' learning and participation?

If it has not been any cooperation before, during and after placement - what do you think are the reasons for that?

(Please specify the answers)

2. Do you agree with what is written in the National guidelines - that the cooperation between teacher education and placement schools should include an exchange of knowledge?

Why/why not?

Are there any exchange of knowledge?

From campus teachers to placement mentors?

From placement mentors to campus teachers?

Exchange of knowledge also means exchange of teacher resources - do that occurs?

In your opinion, does such a cooperation makes a better teacher education?

Do campus teachers and placement mentors discuss how theory acquired at campus and knowledge learned in the placement periods can complement each other, for the benefit of student teachers' learning?

 (Please specify the answers)

3. According to the National guidelines, supervision and evaluation of student teachers in placement is a common responsibility for subject teachers at campus, placement mentor and the school principal

Who does what in terms of guidance?

Do the guidance function in a good way?

Do all attend?

Do all subject teachers from campus attend at least one day of placement training?

What is their role here?

Are there aspects of the cooperation concerning the evaluation of student teachers that does not work?

What must eventually be done to make this better?

Who does what when it comes to the assessment of student teachers in placement?

Do the cooperation concerning the assessment function in a good way?

Do all attend?

Are there aspects of the cooperation on the assessment that does not function?

What must eventually be done to get this better?

(Please specify the answers)

4. According to the National guidelines, the education should be research-based in the way that student teachers are to engage in scientific methods (eg. observation and interview), critical thinking and familiarize themselves with the research-based knowledge.

Do you think this might affect the student teachers' reflection on their own practice? (For example, reflect on their own professional competence or own role)

If yes, do you have examples you can refer?

Is this a competence that is important in professional work?

(Please specify the answers)

5. Do you see the curriculum for the placement periods in teacher education as a guide for you as a placement mentor?

What other key government documents are helpful to you?

(Please specify the answers)

6. The National guidelines point out that there should be consistency between the content and methods of the subject 'Pedagogy and Knowledge about Pupils' and what takes place in placement.

In your experience, do this subject contributes to a better relationship between theory and practice?

If so, in what way?

What can make the subject function in a better way?

(Please specify the answers)

7. Do you see yourself as a teacher educator?

Is there an awareness in staff that you are a placement school?

(Please specify the answers)

8. As a schoolteacher, there are many tasks to take into account.

Do you feel sometimes that it is a conflict in having to reconcile the job as schoolteacher for pupils with being a placement mentor for student teachers?

(Please specify the answers)

9. According to the National Guidelines, a meaningful connection between theory and practice in teacher education presupposes that subject teachers from campus also participate in parts of the teaching practice in placement.

Do subject teachers participate in parts of the placement, if so, how?

In your opinion, does this make the placement periods better for the student teachers? In what way?

(Please specify the answers)

10. According to the National guidelines, the principals of the placement schools - because of their shared responsibility for the placement periods - are to ensure that there is a good pedagogical environment for the teaching and training.

To what extent is this taken care of?

How is it arranged for your work in the placement periods?

How do the principal follow up the placement periods in your group?

What does this mean for student teachers' learning?

Are there any aspects of this arrangement of placement that does not function?

What must eventually be done for this to be better?

(Please specify the answers))

11. To your experience, do one need a special supervisory competence to be a placement mentor?

If so, is it necessary with a minimum of 15 credits, as stated in the guidelines?

Is it arranged so you can take part in such a placement guidance?

(Please specify the answers)

12. According to the National guidelines, the placement and the way it is organized is to be evaluated during the academic year and at year-end to ensure the quality of the placement period.

Which schemes of evaluation do you know:

- that student teachers take part in?

- that placement mentors participate in?

If so, how does these evaluations take place?

Do they contribute to improving the placement periods?

(Please specify the answers)

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13. <u>To what extent does the placement periods include that the student teachers discuss and reflect on their own identity as teachers?</u>

If so, how do you facilitate this?

If so, what do you emphasize?

(Please specify the answers)

14. <u>How would you describe teacher collaboration at your school?</u>

At the public venues of the school:

- Can you exemplify tasks you are working on and how you cooperate?

On the team level:

- Can you describe tasks you are working on and how you cooperate?

15. <u>Other issues you want to comment?</u>

(For example: Is there forums for cooperation between your school and teacher education where you have opportunities to discuss the specific challenges one faces when it comes to creating a better school and teacher education for the future?)