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Moving Beyond Rhetoric: a Culture to Substantiate Research Based Teacher Education

European, as well as national steering documents, including Norwegian (Østern & Smith, 2012; Østern, 2016) call for a research based teacher education. Finland is, perhaps, the country that has most profoundly substantiated the concept (Niemi, Toom, & Kallioniemi, 2012; Niemi & Nevgi, 2014; Hökkä & Eteläpelto, 2014; Sahlberg, 2014; Krokfors et al, 2015). It is, however, not always clear what is meant by a research based teacher education, or what the policy makers' intentions are when writing the documents. The danger is that the message rests in the rhetoric and is not being subjected to a profound analysis of the notion prior to being translated into practice.

In this presentation I will first argue that teacher education is a career long education, and it is time to move beyond the idea that teacher education is a synonym with initial teacher preparation for the profession. This view aligns with European documents (OECD, 2010; The Teaching Council, Ireland, 2011). Next I will explore who the teacher educators are, especially since in many contexts the practical component of initial teacher education is extended and school-based teacher educators play an increasingly important role in preparing new members of the teaching profession.

Against this backdrop, the main part of the presentation discusses the concepts of research-based teacher education, with a focus on consuming and producing research as an integrated part of a career-long teacher education. There is a need to go beyond the rhetoric and create a culture for research in teacher education at a national and at an institutional level by empowering all actors, teacher educators as well as students of teaching, to become research literate. I will also argue that practitioner research plays a central role in a research based teacher education and discuss the difficulties in legitimising this kind of research in the academic community. There are still several challenges to substantiate a research based teacher education that needs to be further explored in policy discussions as well as in research.

- Prof. Dr. Kari Smith, EARLI2017 Keynote Speaker, May 2016.

