

Can Teacher Education Make a Difference?

Niels Brouwer

Radboud University Nijmegen

Fred Korthagen

Utrecht University

Occupational socialization in schools is a known factor counteracting attempts at educating innovative teachers. In this study, findings are reported from a longitudinal study conducted among 357 students, 128 cooperating teachers, and 31 university supervisors from 24 graduate teacher education programs. Quantitative survey data as well as in-depth qualitative data were collected over a period of 4.5 years. Development of teaching competence was followed from candidates' enrollment until their third year as in-service teachers. Occupational socialization in schools was demonstrated to have a considerable influence on the development of graduates' in-service competence. However, evidence was also produced for an impact of specific characteristics of the teacher education programs studied involving the integration of practical experience and theoretical study. Implications of these findings for the design of teacher education programs and the conduct of teacher education research are discussed.

KEYWORDS: occupational socialization, program design, teacher education, theory-practice gap.

The impact of teacher education on teachers' behavior in schools has been a recurrent issue in the literature on teacher education. Several authors claim that the effects of teacher education on the actual practices of teachers are generally meager. A gap between theory and practice seems to persist

NIELS BROUWER is an Associate Professor in the ILS Graduate School of Education, Radboud University Nijmegen, P.O. Box 38250, 6503 AG Nijmegen, the Netherlands; e-mail n.brouwer@ils.ru.nl. His research interests include the psychology of teacher learning, curriculum development and multimedia use in teacher education, and the epistemology of social research.

FRED KORTHAGEN is a Professor at the IVLOS Institute of Education, Utrecht University, P.O. Box 80127, 3508 TC Utrecht, the Netherlands; e-mail f.a.j.korthagen@ivos.uu.nl. His research interests include mathematics education, the professionalization of teacher educators, and the development of inspiration in teaching.
