Coherence in Teacher Education: What, Why and in recognition of complexity?

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Agenda

- We present background, findings etc.
  - Coherence in TE: What, Why, …
  - A typology aimed for clearing the use of the concept

- Co-reflection with you:
  - What other analyses does this call for?
  - How can we in a nuanced way understand the pre-occupation with coherence in relation to teacher education?
  - How can we work with this looking forward
    - in collegial collaborations among teacher educators?
    - (with student teachers?)
Background

- Coherence used frequently and with very positive connotations in discussions about teacher education - and without further definition Lund, 2018; Lund & Nielsen, 2019
- Central aspect in teacher educators’ beliefs Morrison, 2016
  - experiences with and concerns about complexity and uncertainty.
- Emphasised in TE research: Vision, Coherence, opportunity to enact practice Klette & Hammerness, 2016
- Call for more research Grossman et al., 2008
  - despite the increasing emphasis on developing coherent teacher preparation programs the ingredients of coherence remain relatively underexplored.
- Purpose of stimulating critical and collaborative learning conversations among teacher educators Czerniawski, Guberman & MacPhail, 2017.
Research Question

- Which meanings of the concept coherence appear in teacher educational discussions
  - among Danish teacher educators
  - in policy documents
  - and in the international research literature?
Methods

- Typology developed based on previous interviews with teacher educators
  - Inductive + deductive approaches: thematic analysis Braun & Clarke, 2006

- The typology is developed iteratively and is used as a cross-reference discussing results from two concurrent lines of analyses:
  - A focused review of the international research literature
    - Eric, Psych Info + Teacher reference centre, 200-2007, narrative synthesis
  - Analyses of two different policy documents Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016:
    - national law of teacher education
    - an external evaluation connected to a 2017 reform of teacher education in DK Andersen & Hansen, 2016
### Typologi: 6 meanings of coherence (in TE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>as a psychological and learning related concept, focusing on student teachers’ construction of meaning and understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>as a didactical concept related to continuity and progression.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>as a construct to describe organisation and structure of the program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>as construct to discuss connections between arenas, e.g. the campus-arena and placement schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>as an epistemological concept: the nexus between theory and praxis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>as a concept to describe stable and permanent collegial relationships among teacher educators</td>
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- This is an initial categorization, more could have been added, e.g. coherence as statistical cause-effect ....
4 themes from a narrative synthesis based on the research literature

1. Coherence: in opposition to something else in existing programs e.g. Russell et al, 2001; Hovdenak & Wiese, 2017 *(More successful program reveal coherence)*
   - Success: arena-connection *(type D)*
   - Evidence: student teachers experiences of (lack of) coherence *(type A)*
   - Solution: structure of the program *(type C)*

2. Coherence: student teachers’ practical syntheses e.g. Hatlevik & Havnes, 2017; Cuenca et al., 2011
   - Meaning-making - integrating knowledge and skills in understanding a challenge from school practice – experiencing meaningful connections *(type A)*
   - Phronesis; third/hybrid learning spaces, integration of knowledge forms *(type E)*
   - *The rebel angle* Buchmann & Floden, 1992 *(loose ends!!)*

3. Coherence in the curriculum *(type C)*
   - The type most frequently used in literature e.g. Hoban 2004; Hammerness, 2013
   - *The incoherence of curriculum* Gibbons, 2011

4. Critical discussions of coherence in teacher education seen in a democratic society e.g. Cochran-Smith, 2003; Koshmanova, 2003
Policy documents

- Analyses of two different policy documents Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016
  - national law of teacher education
  - an evaluation connected to a 2017 reform of teacher education in DK

- In the national law text, coherence primarily appears as a (limited) didactical relation (type B)
  - in the meaning of ‘intra subject connections’, e.g. the students’ competences to recognize connections in ecosystems in biology

- In the evaluation, coherence primarily appears connected to the question of relations, or lack of relations, between educational arenas, and between teacher education and schools (type D)
Findings across data-sources

- The **extend** the **variety** and **nuances** of the way coherence is used in discussions about teacher education even more apparent
  - often with implicit not expressed understandings of what coherence in teacher education is and has to be, and why.
  - It becomes clear that the appeals for more coherence in teacher education contain differences connected to the approach to the problem.
    - e.g. policy/top-down versus teacher educators themselves

- Looking forward, this is a very relevant area for cross-fertilization of ideas in learning activities for teacher educators:
  - issues to discuss e.g
    - working with **tensions** is necessary and a fruitful part of qualification to be a teacher
    - Smoothnees is an illusion
  - student teachers’ experience of meaning might be stimulated by **both** patterns and loose ends Hatlevik, 2014; Mausethagen & Smeby, 2017
  - “.. educational coherence is found where students can discover and establish relations among various areas of sensibility, knowledge, and skill, yet where loose ends remain, inviting a reweaving of beliefs and ties to the unknown..” Buchmann & Floden, 1992
Discussion

- Our analysis: Clearing the use of the concept (descriptive only)
- What other analyses does this call for?
- How can we in a nuanced way understand the pre-occupation with coherence in relation to teacher education?
- How can we work with this looking forward
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