**Introduction**

Teacher educators fulfil many roles (Lunenberg, Dengerink and Korthagen, 2014). These are context-dependent and change over time (Kelchtermans, Smith and Vanderlinde, 2018). Of these roles, teaching and research have evoked the most interest among researchers.

Laudel and Glaser (2018) describe three development paths for researchers' career: cognitive development, academic (‘scientific community career’) and institutional leadership (‘organisational career’). Cognitive development is the scientific knowledge accumulated by researchers from the studies they conduct. Institutional leadership is defined as the positions they are appointed to in their place of work. As their career develops, researchers employ fulfil more prominent and influential roles within their institutions. The current study focuses upon teacher educators' professional development as teachers and as researchers, and therefore examines three developmental paths: teaching, academic career and institutional leadership.

Teacher educators' professional development is divided into four phases (Meeus, Cools and Placklé, 2018): pre-service, induction, beginner and professional. Most studies into the professional development of teacher educators focus on the induction and beginner phases, whereas the professional phase has received less attention (Griffiths, Thompson & Hrynigewicz, 2014).

The current paper examines the perceptions of experienced teacher educators who are engaged in research regarding the three professional development paths, the interrelationships between the three and their institutions' positions concerning them. First, we describe each path and note the salient features of each one.

**Teaching**

The principal task of teacher education institutes is teaching. For teacher educators who have previously taught in schools, teaching is their chosen career and they feel confident in their professional abilities. Their excellence in teaching is often the reason for their recruitment as teacher educators. In the induction phase, teacher educators need to adapt to the differences between teaching in schools and in teacher education institutes, change their teaching and assessment methods and adopt a scholar's identity (Berry, 2007, Murray & Male, 2005; Swennen, Jones and Volman, 2010). To teach about teaching, they have to become familiar with the research in this field, to be aware of their students' needs as learners and explicitly clarify their deliberation and reasoning processes to their students as they teach. Teacher educators cannot avoid serving as teaching models for their students and as such, they are under constant scrutiny and face criticism about the extent to which their actual teaching meets the standards they believe in (Kelchtermans et al., 2018). The 'teacher' identity of teacher educators continues to be a central part of their professional identity, even many years after they have transitioned to teacher education (Murray and Male, 2005; Swennen et al., 2010; Griffiths et al., 2014). Teacher educators greatly value professional learning of pedagogical subjects such as assessment or integrating computer technology (ICT) in teaching (Czerniawski, MacPhail, and Guberman, 2017) and continue to learn and keep abreast of the latest developments in these fields (Meeus et al., 2018).

The development path of the ‘teacher of teaching’ identity is less clear. In most places, there are no formal recruitment criteria or preparation processes for this role. In some countries, such as the Netherlands and the US, teacher educators’ professional associations provide accreditation processes that record participants’ professional development vis-a-vis a list of professional standards. However, this is a voluntary process with a low participation rate. Furthermore, the very idea of a uniformly abiding list of standards is highly contested (Berry, 2016).

**Research**

Researchers agree that teacher educators need to engage in practice-based research in an ongoing manner to improve the quality of their practice (Cochran-Smith, 2005, Loughran, 2014; Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015). Describing teacher educators' attitudes to research, Tack & Vanderlinde (2016) use the term ‘researcherly dispositions’ which include: valuing research; being a smart consumer of research; acquiring research skills; and conducting research. Teacher educators who are active researchers supervise their students’ research projects, conduct their own research and publish their findings, thus contributing to the development of a knowledge base for teacher education (Tack & Vanderlinde, 2014).

In contrast to the on-going development and positive atmosphere which characterises professional learning in teaching, Griffiths et al. (2014) found that feelings about professional development in research are mixed, and that development is fraught with interruptions and regressions. Novice teacher educators often feel a lack of confidence in their research skills, especially those coming to teacher education from schools rather than from academia. Teacher educators who are not engaged in research, or whose studies are not published, feel undervalued. Throughout their career, teacher educators feel the need to improve their research and academic writing skills (Czerniawski et al., 2017). However, in practice, the number of teacher educators who participate in activities aimed at improving their research skills is small (Meeus et al., 2018). Nonetheless, teacher educators who are active researchers, whose studies are published and whose achievements are acknowledged describe a positive experience of professional satisfaction, success and impact (Zeichner, 2005; Griffiths et al., 2014; Smith, 2017).