

# HOW TO EDUCATE TEACHERS FOR INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS?

Edwin Buijs MSc, dr. Helma Oolbekkink – HAN University of Applied Sciences: Applied Research Centre for Quality of Learning  
edwin.buijs@han.nl

## Introduction

Innovative schools need student teachers who are prepared for their schools and the changing role of the teacher. These schools have a number of characteristics in common, including a coaching role for teachers, student-centredness, and authentic learning contexts [1]. Earlier exploratory research indicated that teaching in innovative schools places specific demands on teachers including coaching skills, strong pedagogical skills, flexibility and reflectiveness [2].

## Research question

How should teacher education be organised to be able to prepare student teachers for innovative schools?

## Method

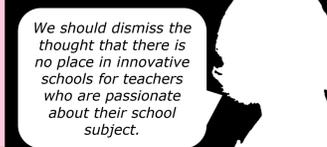
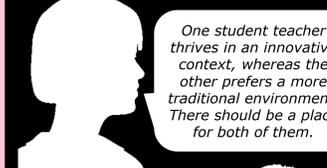
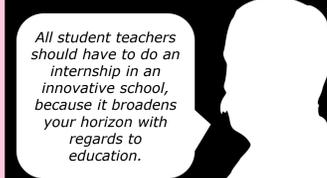
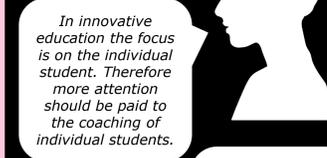
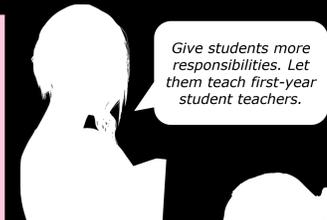
For this study an exploratory design has been applied. Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with student teachers during or right after their internship on an innovative school and with their mentors and teacher educators:

- **5 student teachers:** studying to become a teacher in Dutch, history, geography or economics in secondary education.
- **3 mentors:** school-based teachers with a central role in mentoring and assessment of student teachers.
- **2 school-based educators:** school-based monitors of the internships of student teachers.
- **4 institute-based educators:** institute-based monitors of the internships of student teachers.

## Results

Suggestions of student teachers and teacher educators on how to arrange teacher education in order to prepare for innovative schools:

- **Experience in practice:** Intensify internships and bring the practice of innovative schools to the teacher education institution.
- **Content of the study:** Focus more attention on coaching skills and individual coaching of students, disorders like ADHD, and knowledge required in specific contexts (like VET).
- **Arrange teacher education like an innovative school:** A testing ground where teachers and students develop education themselves and with opportunities for experimenting.
- **Encourage ownership of students:** Freedom to choose or adapt assignments and space for the further development of individual talents.
- **Broad orientation and developing a vision:** Focus attention on different types of innovative educational concepts.
- **Research:** Let students conduct research on similarities and differences between different types of (innovative) schools and let them analyse good practices.
- **More responsibilities for students:** Give students more responsibilities, let them participate in staff-meetings and coach first-year students.
- **A solid knowledge base:** A thorough control of subject specific knowledge and pedagogy remains important.
- **Close cooperation between teacher education institute and work field:** Cooperate closely in designing a curriculum and in educating student teachers.
- **Focused preparation:** Aim the internship preparation of students at the specific type of innovative school of their internship.
- **Professional development of teacher educators:** Equip teacher educators with knowledge about innovative education and with coaching skills.



## Conclusion and discussion

Results of this study show predominantly similarities between student and teacher educator perceptions of the changes needed to adapt teacher education to prepare students for an internship or a career in innovative schools. They both challenge teacher educators to include more innovative practices in teacher education, to increase alignment with innovative schools.

### Practical implications and further research

Using the results of this study, HAN University of Applied Sciences has developed and launched a pilot trajectory (accompanied by monitoring research) in which student teachers are prepared for innovative education.

### Questions for discussion

- How does teacher education in your country prepare students for innovative schools?
- Would it be desirable if student teachers could be qualified for different types of schools?

### Innovative schools involved in this study

**Academy for Community and Talent (ACT):** VET, secondary and higher education; coaches help school dropouts take on their studies again or find a job.

**Agora:** secondary education; students learn by conducting research on topics and questions of their own interest, under supervision of a coach.

**Notre Dame:** secondary education; students formulate learning goals on their own level and pace and make a planning for each day and week, under supervision of a coach (inspired by Kunskapsskolan Education).

**ROC Nijmegen:** VET; students pursue their own learning goals in their own pace, under supervision of a coach.

### References

- [1] Smit, K., De Brabander, C. J., & Martens, R. L. (2014). Student-centred and teacher-centred learning environment in pre-vocational secondary education: Psychological needs, and motivation. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 58(6), 695-712.  
[2] Geerdink, G.M.T. & Buijs, E.C.H. (2019). Wat kenmerkt leraren in vernieuwingscholen zoals ACT? *Tijdschrift voor lerenaanbidders*, 40(3), 157-172.

