



## **The purpose of teacher education in Europe Reflections on the ‘quality’ of teachers, teacher education and teacher educators**

*Marco Snoek*

*Centre of Applied Research in Education at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences*

In my keynote I will reflect on the concept of ‘teacher quality’ and ‘teacher education quality’ from different perspectives, based on my work within the Dutch context and within the Working group Schools of the European Commission.

My first reflection is that in Europe we use a rather static concept of teacher quality. Many countries have quality criteria for teachers (in terms of competence standards, qualification frameworks, etc.), but most of these quality criteria only describe one set of indicators that teachers need to start teaching. This seems to imply that teachers that meet those quality criteria can inspire their students throughout their whole career.

My second reflection is that this static understanding of teacher quality is partly due to the structure of the profession. This structure is rather unique: no other profession has such an abrupt change from preparation to profession. The structure of the profession (isolated teachers in classrooms) prevents a perspective of growth and development.

My third reflection is that due to this static understanding of teacher quality, teacher education limits its focus to initial teacher education instead of a much more important focus on the contribution of faculties and schools of education on the development of teachers during their careers.

Drawing on the work of Gert Biesta, my final reflection is that our understanding of teacher quality and teacher education quality is dominated by a focus on the purpose of ‘qualification’. This raises the question how teacher education can strengthen a focus on the other two purposes for education: socialization and subjectification.

I believe we need a more dynamic understanding of the purpose of teacher education, both in terms of teacher development/teacher careers and in terms of the contribution of teacher education and teacher educators to qualification, socialization



and subjectification. In my keynote I will point to some possible directions and the implications for research, policy and practice.