

Development in Teacher Education in Denmark: Master and Doctoral Studies

Razvoj učiteljskega izobraževanja na Danskem: magistrski in doktorski študij

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Abstract

By way of introduction, an overview of the recent development in teacher training, Master of Education (MEd) and doctoral studies in pedagogy in Denmark will be presented. In this connection, the presentation will include on the new Professional Bachelor Degree as a new teacher education, the variety of the MEd's (both one and two year degrees) and their function in the educational system and on the growing demands for doctoral studies. The Professional Bachelor Degree as teacher education is taught in regional Centres for Further Education (CVUs) outside the university system, while Master's of Education are solely a matter for the universities. Problems concerning collaboration between the two sectors of respectively first cycle degree and second/third cycle degrees will be mentioned. One important problem, which must be solved, is to follow the demand from the ministry that the universities deliver a "research connection" to the CVUs.

Key words

Master of Art (education) (MA) and Master of Education (MEd), research-based teaching, "research connection", the Bologna process, transition of the Danish educational system, professional Bachelor degree, the R&D problem, evidence-based teaching and research

Povzetek

Na način uvoda bomo predstavili pregled novejšega razvoja v usposabljanju učiteljev, stopnjo Master of Education (MEd) ter doktorski študij pedagogike na Danskem. V tej povezavi bo predstavitev vključevala novo profesionalno stopnjo Bachelor kot novost v izobraževanju učiteljev, različne programe MEd (tako eno kot dvoletne stopnje) in njihovo funkcijo v izobraževalnem sistemu ter rastoče zahteve na področju doktorskega študija. Profesionalno stopnjo Bachelor v izobraževanju učiteljev izvajajo regionalni Centri za nadaljnje izobraževanje (CVU) izven univerzitetnega sistema, Master's of Education pa je izključna zadeva univerz. Omenili bomo probleme, ki zadevajo sodelovanje med obema sektorjema v povezavi s stopnjami prvega oz. drugega/tretjega

cikla. Pomemben problem, ki mora biti rešen, je, slediti zahtevi ministrstva, da univerze podajo "raziskovalno povezavo" Centrom za nadaljnje izobraževanje (CVU).

Ključne besede

stopnji Master of Art (izobraževanje) (MA) ter Master of Education (MEd); na raziskovanju utemeljeno poučevanje; "raziskovalna povezava"; bolonjski proces; tranzicija danskega izobraževalnega sistema; profesionalna stopnja Bachelor; problem R in D; na dokazovanju utemeljeno poučevanje in raziskovanje

Master's degrees in Denmark normally take two years of second cycle study, so we – like most of the European countries – adhere to the Bologna Declaration. In the past six years, a new one-year Master's has been introduced in the field of education. Most of these are offered by The Danish University of Education (DPU). The one-year Master's (often called "professional Master") are aimed at different kinds of educational tasks or professions (as indicated by the list below), it is even stated that the requirements to demands on the one-year master should be "at the same level" as the two-years master.¹

An overview of the master's degrees at DUE:²

Two-year masters (Master of Arts (Education))

- Educational Sociology
- Philosophy of Education
- Educational Anthropology
- Educational Psychology
- General Education
- Educational Theory and Curriculum Studies (Danish, Mathematics, Material Culture and Music)

One-year masters (Master of Education (MEd))

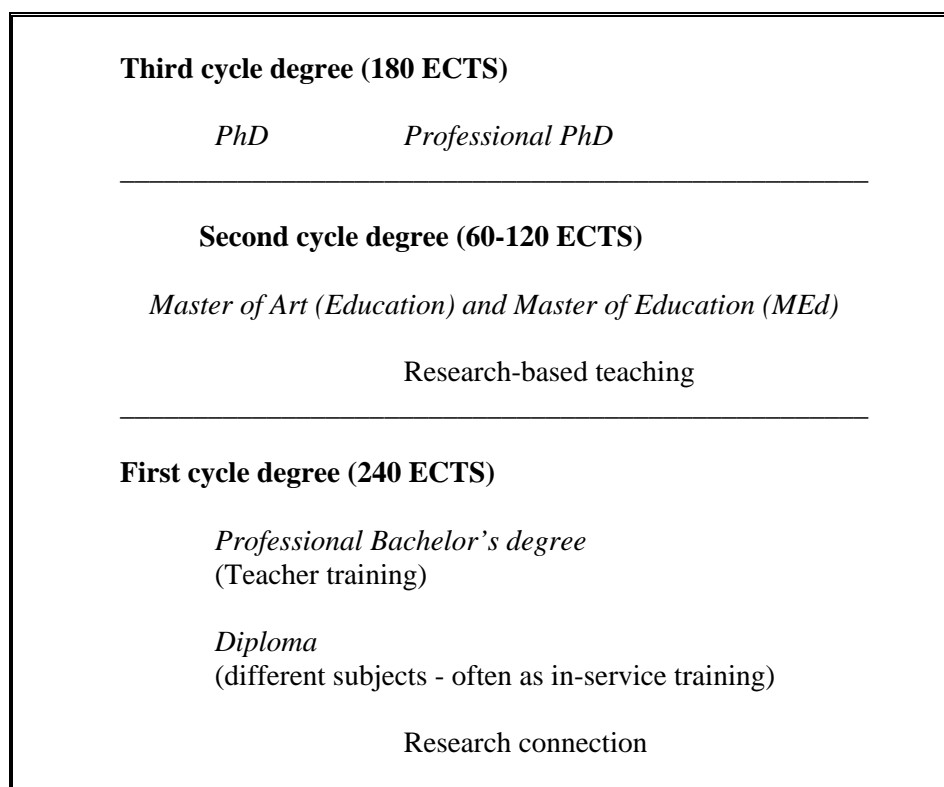
- Leadership and Innovation in Complex Systems
- Adult Learning and Human Resource Development
- Health Promotion and Education
- Educational and Professional Development
- Special-Needs Education

¹ The Rector of DPU, Lars-Henrik Schmidt, said that a one-year Master are for professionals, for one's occupation and for one's carrier – the two-years Master is for "eternity" and opens up for deeper research. Even so there have been examples of students from the one-year Master who went on to do a PhD.

² In 2005 DPU had some 4000 students. The students are mostly part-timers because most of them already had a job, as school teachers, pre-school teachers, nurses etc.

- Guidance Counselling
- Intercultural Education
- Citizenship Education
- Educational Management
- Social Work Education
- Drama and Theatre Education
- Flexible MEd Programme

The Danish system of educational studies is shown in the following scheme:



The teacher education in Denmark is organised in several regional centres (called “Centres for Higher Education” (CVU) although they do not offer second and third circle studies). The four-year teacher education at the centres was in 2000 renamed as “Professional Bachelor’s degree” and the students earned the right to attend the Master studies at DPU. Some other universities have also chosen to accept professional bachelors at their master study.

The CVUs are not set up to do research work, but the CVUs are encouraged – or expected to – use research results from DPU and other universities. This

“research connection” is carried through - but on a very small scale. It should also be mentioned that DPU is not allowed to offer Bachelor’s degrees, apparently to avoid competition with the CVUs.

The Bachelor’s degree for teacher education in Denmark is not research based, unlike every other Bachelor’s degree; they are three-year Bachelors in accordance with the Bologna Declaration.

It should also be mentioned that the Professional Bachelor’s degree only qualifies the candidate for employment in primary and lower secondary schools. Teachers at upper secondary school go directly to other universities to earn their Bachelor and Master in one main subject (major) and a secondary subject (minor) for later having their authorizations to teach in upper secondary schools or “gymnasium”.

The Master studies at the DPU leads to positions as teacher in the CVUs and other educational centres (but not as upper secondary teachers!) or to do research as PhD-students and later to positions at universities or other research institutions.

At the third circle a new Professional PhD has been introduced in DPU, presumably other universities will also offer this eventually. The Professional PhD is a student employed at e.g. a regional centre, and do research with close ties to their daily work as teacher trainer, consultant etc. The intention is that the student providing research in her/his field brings the best and latest research results to be useful for the institution.

The Master of Education in a period of development and transition

The Danish educational system is undergoing transition – and is under pressure. The schools and the teacher education is criticised for lacking results especially in Danish, in math and in the natural sciences, according to the PISA report. The school is criticised for not providing evidence-based teaching, and the teacher education for not providing the teacher firm knowledge on subject didactics. On the other hand, the teacher education is also criticised for not being academic enough. The Ministry of Education wants the school teachers (now with a Professional Bachelor’s degree) to be able to go on to post-grade academic studies, which has only happened – because it was requested - at the DPU.

The problem is that there is little co-operation or communication between the university system (neither DPU or other universities) and the CVUs and the teacher education. There is no good relation between research and development (R&D). As the English educational theorist David Hargeaves (and later OECD)

has pointed out, research results from universities and other research institutions are neither read nor used at the teacher training institutions, and the regional educational centres have only slight connections to the schools. Apart from that, there is no connection between the system that produces school teachers and the university based system that produce upper secondary teachers.

This situation with many unsolved problems and with lack of general policy to make the educational institutions work together should make us to ask the question: What is the benefit to society of Master's degrees in the educational field – especially the many educational Masters at the DPU? In fact, the Masters at DUE have no obligatory function in the Danish educational system. They are not “needed” as precondition for any position. The Danish government has established the DPU by merging four educational institutions, among them The Royal Danish Educational School, which was already university, and The Institute of Education. The idea was for DPU to be the centre of educational thinking, educational research and to supply the society with educational Masters of different kinds - but without a rigid connection to the educational sector.

The result so far is that the DPU, despite all problems, has been a success. The 4000 students in MA and MEd probably make the DPU to the biggest university in Europe for second and third cycle students in education, even if most of the students are part timers. The students who have finished their Master seem to use it in new jobs or to further their carrier in the institutions they already are employed at.

The Masters in Education internationally seen

A thorough survey of the political and educational context in every European country would be necessary to judge whether the Danish situation and the Danish problems in the field of education are more or less common in European countries or specific for Denmark. Nevertheless, it should be expected that at least some problems are common for the majority of Europe: The problem of combining development in schools and in teacher education with research (the R&D problem)³, the complex concept of “evidence-based” research and teaching⁴ and the collaboration (or lack thereof) of different institutions in the educational field.

³ In many countries teacher education is offered at universities, and yet it seems that the teacher education is not normally research based.

⁴ Evidence-based research and teaching is demanded from politicians in national and local government, but it is not always (in fact rarely) appreciated that evidence in research and teaching is costly and has to be a result of several years work.

Master's in education could perhaps be an instrument to solve such problems. The fact that the one- year Master's are not a precondition for any position in the educational field could instead of being a weak point for the studies, be its strength. Because the Masters depend on the market – that is, the needs of the educational institutions – the candidates will only be employed where there is a demand. The Master's in education are well suited to contribute to the development in schools and teacher training institutions. In 2006, modules from the master study are used at a few teacher training institutions as supplementary or in-service training.