Nothing comes closer to being societal than education

AT THE FACULTY of Education – the School of Education until the end of 2016 – we study issues related to education and training, and we educate teachers from early childhood education to adult education as well as other lifelong learning professionals. We are interested in educational institutions and society and the interaction between them. Thus, we work in the center of the University of Tampere’s cornerstone – social research and research-based instruction.

Our approach is becoming more and more international. This is evident in the various topics of research and with whom we conduct our research. Likewise, internationality is visible in the education we provide. Teaching contains elements of multiculturalism and the mobility of both people and ideas. Here at the University of Tampere, we offer two international master’s degree programmes. Last year we also carried out programmes in Indonesia, Thailand and Argentina.

This publication has been created for you to provide you with an understanding of the fine work we do here at the Faculty of Education, together with our partners.

Risto Honkonen
Dean of the Faculty of Education as of 1.1.2017
THE YEAR 2016 will be remembered at the University of Tampere Teacher Training School as an eventful, yet interesting, year. At the comprehensive school, the completion of the core curricula meant putting the finishing touches on what had already been started. The revision of the upper secondary school curriculum was completed in the spring. Carrying out the work in phases was necessary because the same people labored to build the foundations of teaching for both levels of education.

Construction work in the Kuokkamaantie building was initiated. After a long time in planning, the renovations began in the spring. The sounds of the construction machines bellowed in the corridors throughout the summer and autumn. The comprehensive school was, in fact, able to have the Christmas pageant in the renewed assembly hall – the last traces of construction dust were wiped away just before the dress rehearsal. However, the work continues. The decision made in the autumn to move the 5th and 6th grades to the Kuokkamaantie building, once the renovations are finished, will open up new opportunities for a unified comprehensive school.

In the spring the upper secondary school moved out of the way of construction to the university’s main campus where the upper secondary students had the opportunity to begin their studies in an academic environment. Studying in Atalpa, Pinni B and Virta has meant students have had to move from one place to the next during their breaks, and we can, indeed, say that the whole school is in motion. It will continue to be in motion as the upper secondary school is now permanently located on the university’s main campus.

Plans for collaboration between the university’s different faculties and the upper secondary school were made throughout the spring. The upper secondary students have an immense number of university courses to choose from. During the autumn, experiments were made in offering upper secondary school courses to university students, for example beginner courses in foreign languages, among others. A new type of tripartite collaboration model has been created for mathematics between the upper secondary school, subject teacher education and the teachers and students in the mathematics education.

Use of the Virta facilities has worked in good spirit with the permanent personnel there. However, there is an obvious need for additional facilities for the laboratories and art instruction in both the teacher education and the upper secondary school. Thanks to the flexibility of the teachers and skillful planners, we were able to find places to work during the academic year.

The first Circus Performance Arts groups began in the comprehensive and upper secondary school, which provided students with the opportunity to learn about Sorin Sirkus' activities and to consider learning from a new perspective in many subjects. We have faced many challenges throughout the year, acquired new and credible partners and learned many interesting things. Collaboration and doing things together carried us further than we could have ever imagined during this eventful year.

Arja Aalto-Laaksonen
Principal of the upper secondary school
Children visit university

PROMOTING the human rights of children is the duty of every adult. The School of Education at the University of Tampere organised the Take your child to work day for the first time as part of the Children's Rights Week. The purpose was to introduce children to work and the working world as well as to show the children where adults important to them work and what work is like. The day was organised by an ombudsman for children together with labor market organisations. Researcher Susanna Mikkonen was responsible for the arrangements at EDU.

Globalising social welfare and healthcare conference

THE CONFERENCE held in April 2016 involved discussion concerning the field of social welfare and healthcare and the key questions arising from cultural diversity. The purpose was to engage in dialogue to promote intercultural collaboration and expertise in the social welfare and healthcare field. Representatives from the ministries, private and public employers, labor market organisations and educational institutions as well as researchers in the field took part in panel discussions and workgroups. Topics pertaining to international job recruitment, language learning and recognition of degrees completed abroad were discussed.

The TRANSIT Research Centre and the MULTI-TRAIN and TRANS-SPACE projects affiliated with the School of Education organised the conference.

REWARDED DISSERTATION CULTIVATES ITS STRENGTH FROM TWO DISCIPLINES

Finnish Educational Research Association awarded university lecturer Pauliina Alenius for best dissertation in educational science. Her dissertation examines the everyday learning experiences of immigrants from Estonia and those migrating between the two countries as well as different learning spaces from a cross-border perspective. The electorate considered the study innovative and interdisciplinary.
Circus Performance Arts

CIRCUS PERFORMANCE arts, a nationally unique discipline, began at the Teacher Training School. Teaching takes place in collaboration with Sorin Sirkus, an internationally renowned circus.

A curriculum-based Circus Performance Arts class was established in the lower secondary school and students in the upper secondary school have the opportunity to choose a Circus Performance Arts track as well. The teaching of Circus Performance Arts is also in the curriculum for the primary school.

Emphasis on Circus Performance Arts is manifested in the study of circus technology, but also in other areas of teaching, teaching methods and in the everyday routines of the school. In addition, the emphasis on Circus Performance Arts is observed in the curriculum's joint subjects.

University lecturers and visual artists Juha Merta and Jouko Pullinen of the School of Education set up their exhibition “Horizon of fear – academic fables” in the EDUSTA Gallery located in the Virta Building. The works were first on display at the Pleiku Gallery in Berlin in February 2016.

The artists state, “Our conceptual works of art have been created through dialogue, which, for us, means mutual innovation, implementation and evaluation of when a piece of work is finished. Dialogue is constructed around tactful encounter, around respect. Sometimes you have to put your own thoughts aside, let them dwell in your mind or on your desk. We want to combine the strengths and weaknesses of two artists: a painter and a graphic artist.”

The gallery’s other exhibitions showed experiences of our Master’s Degree Programme Indonesia, the communal art project by classroom teacher students, textile work of Finnish students and Iraqi refugees as well as the professional expertise and characteristics experts in administration need.

Bits from the report on education reform

THE UNIVERSITY of Tampere has succeeded extremely well in executing its education reform, as stated by an outside assessment group. The underlying context for this was a previously implemented peer evaluation of education in which areas of focus in development were identified. The education reform involved shifting from subject-based education to comprehensive degree programs and competence-based curricula. Vice Rector Harri Melin considers the success of comprehensive degree programs innovational on the national level as well.

The education reform gave way to the strengthening of the university’s pedagogical leadership and the establishment of common practices and rules. As a university-level body, the teaching council supervises and ensures that the degree programmes are in line with the strategy and that the practices are uniform. Education is planned, implemented, assessed and developed as a whole in the new faculties.

When determining the direction of the education reform, focus was placed on developing the competence needed in the working world and on defining objectives for competence. The assessment team suggested, for example, to differentiate between theoretical competence and general competence in the objectives. General competence involves critical thinking, skills in acquiring information and social skills. It will be natural to continue development as indicated by the report. The report was published 27.1.2017.
The year of research

THE SCHOOL has invested extensively in research in recent years, and 2016 was, indeed, both active and productive. More than 100 peer-reviewed publications were published. Two tenure track assistant professors began working in the School in the spring – read more on page 11. Two new research groups were established: Culture, Nature and Art in Education (CNAE) as well as Multi-literacies through Lifecycles (MULTI). In early autumn the dean granted funding to the research groups to hire researchers in various stages of their career to work between August and December. In addition, conference participation was generously allotted financial support, which means that the School's research was presented at several conferences in Finland and abroad.

Thinking together, writing together

THE LEARNING and Development in School (LDS) research group's collective way of working made year 2016 a rather productive one. The group published twelve articles, ten of which were international science articles. The group's diligence in publishing is based on an extremely well-working joint writing strategy.

The group's senior researchers have developed writing processes together for years and the new generation of researchers on the group has now enthusiastically adopted their writing method. Behind the publications and joint writing lies the process of thinking together, where ideas, analyses and observations are challenged and refined.

The research group's other division of work supports joint working. Their philosophy is that everyone does everything as needed. Collaborating and dividing up the work calls for reciprocity and belief that the common good is also good to each individual researcher.

Working together, being open about best practices and continuous development of activities contributed to the group's grant allotted by the Academy of Finland. With the grant, the Universities of Eastern Finland, Helsinki, Oulu and Tampere began a joint project in September which involves the study of the connection between teachers' teaching strategies and student adjustment.

BLOG MAKES RESEARCH KNOWN

The Higher Education in Transition (HET) research group created a blog as a channel for communication. Those interested can access the blog through the link on the websites of the School of Education and the university. The blog contains information about the group's researchers and their work as well as current issues concerning the group's activities. Research intern, Maria Huhtala, worked on the research group in the autumn of 2016 and during that time interviewed the team's researchers. The blog helps researchers get to know each other and make research known to a broader audience.

▶ http://blogs.uta.fi/het/

Drawings are often used to aid the research group in gathering material.
Learning about digital learning – multi-literacy researchers visit US

THE MULTI-LITERACY research group works in close collaboration with American professor Angela Wiseman. Marita Mäkinen and Pirjo Kulju visited Professor Wiseman in Raleigh, North Carolina. While writing a joint research article, Mäkinen and Kulju learned about the local life, everything from modern art museums to traditional barbeque restaurants.

Mäkinen and Kulju also visited local schools and learned about teaching practices for multi-literacy. The school visits revealed, among other things, what digital learning can be at best. Even the young learners were able to utilise different applications effortlessly – under a QR code, they found a pleasing story to listen to with their own headphones, they modeled a news report with a news reporter app and made all kinds of digital presentations through information search exercises.

The goals and learning strategies for literacy were on posters on the classrooms’ walls. In this way, the teacher’s pedagogical guidelines were visible to both the teacher and pupils at all times.

The key to applying digitalisation successfully seemed to lie in the commitment of the teacher, whose job involved only digital technology and development of pedagogy together with other teachers.

THINKING ECOLOGICALLY IN EDUCATION – AN INTRIGUE IN FINLAND AND THE UNITED STATES

Thinking ecologically in education joins together researchers from the Culture, Nature and Art in Education (CNAE) research group and researchers in Ecojustice and Education at Eastern Michigan University (USA).

Four of the CNAE group’s researchers participated in the EcoJustice Conference in Michigan in March, 2016. Professor Rebecca Martusewicz and John Mullen, MA of Eastern Michigan University as well as Gary Schnakenberg, PhD of Michigan State University visited the School of Education in May. The research group’s doctoral student, Jani Pulkki, in turn, worked on his dissertation and lectured at Eastern Michigan University from August to November. In addition, the Kone Foundation granted further funding to group members Raisa Foster, PhD and Jussi Mäkelä, MA (Edu.) for the Art Eco project.
Human agency in society plays a central role in early childhood education research

**COLLABORATION** with international, national and local actors is everyday reality for the Early Childhood Education Institutions, Policies and Practices (ECEPP) research group. In 2016, civic engagement was highlighted in the CHILDCARE research project funded by the Strategic Research Council (Academy of Finland). The dominant platform for the project is collaboration with both municipal and national actors. Research data was collected from parents, political decision-makers and professionals in early childhood education.

The initial results of the research were discussed not only with municipalities, but also with the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, the Regional State Administrative Agency, as well as the Ombudsman for Children, the Finnish Parents’ League, the Central Union for Child Welfare, the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare as well as the Ministry of Education and Culture. Together with seminars and meetings, dissemination and communication have been made possible through the project’s blog and Facebook account maintained by the CHILDCARE project researchers.

Research Director Kirsti Karila says, “Civic engagement is not a new issue for our research group. We already have well-established research collaboration with an early childhood education partner network. Researchers, students and daycare personnel within the network study and develop practices in early childhood education and training. However, the year 2016 was more vigorous than previous years as far as interaction is concerned.

In 2016, Kirsti Karila was nominated a permanent consultant for the early childhood education advisory board, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Education and Culture and promotes the development of early childhood education.

EquJust collaborates with refugees and asylum seekers

**THE EQUJUST GROUP** answered to the acute, global challenges of justice and equality with the Let’s Work Together (LWT) action group that empowered asylum seekers and refugees. The LWT group provides opportunities to asylum seekers and refugees to study, meet with people and have discussions with various networks.

In the autumn, the research team hired two asylum seekers as trainees, which deepened and secured collaboration among LWT participants, expanding it to include studies in the language center, Finnish and social work at the university and making it a part of the Supporting Immigrants in Higher Education in Finland project. At the end of the year, the team met at EDU with regional partners and researchers from the Universities of Zürich, Wuppertal and York to share experiences and plan the future together.

In addition, several discussion events concerning the topic, How Universities Respond to the Refugee Crisis, have been held with partners from the University of Zürich, Tallinn University, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and Yeungnam University as well as the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz).
Demand for EDU training abroad

IN THE SPRING 2016, the first university pedagogy programme affiliated with the School of Education was organised in Thailand. Thirty RMUTT university teachers completed a 10-credit university pedagogy course, which included contact instruction in Thailand and online study. The course culminated with a contact instruction period in Finland. Esteemed guests from Thailand and Finland’s newly nominated ambassador in Thailand, Satu Suikkari-Kleven, participated in the graduation ceremony held at the end of the course.

In the autumn, three new university pedagogy groups began in Thailand. University lecturers Johanna Annala, Jyri Lindén and Juha Himanka are the teachers in charge of the 90 participants.

A new initiative began in Latin America when Professors Marita Mäkinen and Eero Ropo provided instruction to principals in a course organised by the Provincial Ministry of Santa Fe. Fifty principals, primarily from the economically weaker areas of Santa Fe, attended the first course called The School and the Director’s Identity. Focus in the course was placed on the identity theory of mind and applying it in school teaching as well as the theoretical questions pertaining to school leadership. An agreement was made with the provincial Ministry of Education in Santa Fe to execute a joint master’s program. The program includes three periods of study in Argentina.

Professor Eero Ropo and doctoral student Juliene Ferreira Madureira visited the Finland House during the Rio 2016 Olympics and met with numerous Brazilian organisations interested in Finnish education. Negotiations to begin collaboration in the area of teacher training got off to a good start and continued in the autumn.

Thirty Indonesian teachers have studied in customised courses at the School of Education where they will complete their master’s degree on their leave of absence from their teaching. The experiences of 15 teachers altogether in balancing two cultures in the implementation of the training provided valuable assets to our international expertise. The program will continue in 2017 with a one-month period of training in Tampere.
Crossing disciplinal borders with multi-literacy

THE STUDIES for class teachers are increasingly being developed into thematic continuums that cross disciplinal borders. The first extensive development project in teaching was constructed around the concept of multi-literacy. Multi-literacy is one of the central areas of competence in the core curriculum for comprehensive school whereby the world is viewed through our many senses and in a multicultural way.

In the project, art, media culture, handicrafts, Finnish language and literature and sports provided opportunities to consider cultural diversity from the perspective of different senses and social structures. The objective was to demonstrate to students that disciplines do not have strict borders within which they should teach; rather they help to see the same phenomenon from a number of perspectives.

Themes in the autumn semester included the built environment and cityscapes. Students participated in the Break a Brain eco-social art festival where they produced multi-sensorial and multimedia art interventions. They challenged students and city-dwellers to see and feel the everyday cityscape from new perspectives. Office365 and OneNote, especially, were used as the learning environments. Emphasis in the autumn was placed on illustrations, sound, movement and materialism, and in the spring, 2017, emphasis will be placed on language and written culture.

Together with the Logopedics, Speech Communication and Actor’s Work, the Speech and Voice Research Laboratory organised a memorial seminar on September 16, 2016 to commemorate Timo Leino, an advocate for speech research and education.

The memorial diversely presented research in speech, voice and speech communication at the University of Tampere in the form of presentations and an extensive poster exhibition. In addition, the audience heard recitals by students in acting and songs sung by mezzosoprano and postgraduate in vocology, Maarit Aura, and Elisa Lairikko of the Palatsi Music Theatre in Tampere.

Research was presented at various conferences in Svratka, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Dublin. The most notable results were the validation of an acoustic parameter for measuring voice quality in the Finnish language and using it to introduce a vocal screening in orientation studies, to help students prepare themselves as well as possible for teaching profession, which is particularly harsh on the voice.

The speech education module that began in the autumn semester of 2015 has had a good start. Worth 60 ECTS credits, the module provides basic skills in teaching or researching speech techniques and voice skills, as well as practice in speaking skills for various professions.
A broad perspective in education benefits everyone

AT THE UNIVERSITY of Tampere, teaching and research staff are a part of the tenure track system, which is a four-level career advancement path. In 2016, two researchers were assigned the third level, i.e. associate professor. Professor of Education, Tuomas Takala, interviewed EDU’s first associate professors, Hanna Toiviainen and Jaakko Kauko.

About a year ago, you both transferred from the University of Helsinki to Tampere and the rather new tenure track position at EDU. What have been your experiences with these two events?

Jaakko Kauko: For me, it has been very rewarding. For the first time in my academic career I have the prospect of stability and a career path that doesn’t depend on external funding!

Hanna Toiviainen: Jaakko and I have a different career history, but I, too, feel that this gives me continuity to my academic work. We are already used to the tough competition among researchers and the strict criteria for advancing in an academic career, but there’s always something new to learn, and now there’s also a new work environment.

What is special about the University of Tampere? And how would you compare the work communities in Education in Helsinki and Tampere?

Hanna: I began my studies at the University of Tampere, and completed a degree in youth work. So, Tampere is a familiar place to me, even though I completed my master’s degree in Helsinki. I’ve enjoyed my time here; there’s good spirit and nice people to work with here.

Jaakko: Transferring to Tampere was easy for me as well. My dissertation involved higher education policy, studied particularly in the Faculties of Management, Social Sciences and Education. The greatest difference in research compared to Helsinki is strong post-structural and feministic approach to research there, e.g. research on discrimination. I have a lot in common with the post-structural perspectives. I try to take them into account in my teaching here.

Hanna: Contrary to Helsinki, Early Childhood Education, Teacher Education and Lifelong Learning are all together here. I’ve learned more about researching early childhood education and school in one year than ever before. Moreover, everyone studies together in the courses. This is the most remarkable thing in many aspects.

Neither of you are distinctively teacher educators. In your opinion, what is the significance, in the future, of knowledge acquired through lifelong learning and education and non-vocational research-based knowledge?

Jaakko: Here, it is a commonly recognised notion that teaching must be societal. To understand what societal is, there has to be research that focuses on it. We offer the entire school the opportunity for professionals in education to understand society’s political, economic and social processes from an analytical point of view. A broad perspective benefits everyone, no matter what profession you occupy.

Hanna: Since vocation is strongly emphasised as it is, our task is to emphasise general educational orientation. In the university, research-based knowledge is precisely the point. Although a more vocational approach has found its way to the university, I feel that vocation can always be replaced with research. This also applies to early childhood education and teacher education – they are not offered at the university level merely because it is the highest institution for professional development, but because education is considered to be based on research. Our task is to train educationally critical people for society.
THE BEGINNING of the 2016 academic year involved preparations for introducing the new National Core Curriculum in basic education at the University of Tampere Teacher Training School. Before the last changes were made, parents and guardians of the schoolchildren were also asked to make comments on it. In June, the executive committee for the School of Education approved the completed core curricula for both comprehensive and high school education at the University of Tampere Teacher Training School.

The new curriculum was introduced in grades 1–6 at the onset of the new school year in the autumn, 2016. Grades 7–9 will gradually begin applying the new curriculum during the years 2017–2019.

The primary objective in the new core curriculum is transversal competence which comprises seven areas of competence: 1) thinking and learning to learn, cultural knowledge, 2) interaction and self-expression, 3) daily life and taking care of oneself, 4) multi-literacy, 5) competence in ICT, 6) skills needed in the working world, 7) social participation, influence and building a sustainable future. The idea is to make these competences a part of all of the schools’ activities.

The new curriculum emphasises students’ participation. More opportunity is given to their own questions and ideas than previously. Students also participate in assessment according to their level of development.

One example of this type of learning was the multi-disciplinary learning module that the students and teachers in grades 1–9 planned together. Carried out in August, the module taught students about the Nekala area. Also new to the curriculum was the beginning of Swedish studies in the sixth grade and social studies in the fourth grade. It has also been interesting to follow the implementation of optional studies in grades 4–6. Students have had the opportunity to learn about circus performance arts, phenomena in physics and chemistry or nature, new skills in ICT or investigate the characteristics of colors. Students in the music classes have expanded their musical skills. Some of the students in the 7th grade began studying in the Circus Performance Arts track in the autumn. Teaching in the Circus Performance Arts track takes place in collaboration with Sorin Sirkus.

Working on the core curriculum is, above all, a process. The year 2016 saw a climax in this process, but the work continues. The core curriculum is assessed and developed annually.
Research-based practices in the daily life of schools

FURTHER EDUCATION at the School of Education is based firmly on research. Teaching involves the combination of the latest research information and practice to ensure new approaches are introduced in everyday practices and the teaching community. This strengthens the impact of teaching and motivates participants. Both the Finnish National Agency for Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture have funded further education.

The new early childhood education curriculum and the basic education core curriculum reform affected further education in 2016. The Early childhood education pedagogy in changing practices study module, worth 15 ECTS credits, was aimed at those working as kindergarten teachers. Participants furthered their skills in implementing and developing early childhood education pedagogy and the curriculum in their work with children and their work community. In addition, another 15-ECTS-credit course, Early childhood education curriculum in practice and shared leadership, was offered to executives and supervisors where participants implemented and developed early childhood education pedagogy and curriculum work from the perspective of their duties and work community. They also advanced their skills in leadership and readiness in managing pedagogy.

Further education aimed at class and subject teachers involved the didactics for teaching Swedish in the elementary school and utilising verbalisation in mathematics and Finnish. All of the courses also dealt with the integration of comprehensive, multidisciplinary learning modules, especially multi-literacy and culturally and linguistically sensitive teaching.

During the year, participated in project Democracy and human rights in teacher education, which was coordinated by the University of Jyväskylä and geared towards classroom teachers, subject teachers and teachers in vocational education. The project involves the teacher training departments in all Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences where participants create practical solutions for integrating democracy and human rights in teachers’ basic and further education. As part of the project, the School of Education executed a supplementary intervention in subject teacher education where future teachers of history, social studies, philosophy, ethics, psychology, journalism and speech communication study. They will be teaching the types of school subjects in which learning about human rights, democracy and citizens being pro-active is necessary for their future jobs.

The School of Education has a strong tradition in multicultural education which became more diversified in 2016. For the sixth time, people with an immigrant background began studying subjects taught in basic education and cross-curricular themes and aim to graduate in the spring, 2017. Collaboration between the University of Tampere and the University of Turku has yielded a 30-ECTS-credit specialisation program, Multiculturalism in teaching, where participants study to become experts in cultural diversity possessing competence in developing not only their own work community but also the more extensive national community and in providing international training.

ENCOUNTERS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF INTEREST GROUPS

In October 2016, EDU invited interest groups and partners to hear about and discuss the future of education and learning as well as to participate in workshops. The afternoon began with a speech by Editor-in-chief Jouko Jokinen of the Aamulehti newspaper. After the workshops, we heard from philosopher and writer Lauri Järvilehto.
2016 from the students’ viewpoint

WHEN I ASKED my fellow students what the year 2016 was like, I received a long, somewhat perplexed look. This was followed by a lingering moan of vague words that could be interpreted as ‘what about it’.

I encountered that same perplexity when I recapped my memories from the year 2016. Admittedly, a lot can happen in a year, but retrospectively, it seemed difficult to grasp just what happened during the year. Well, what about it? However, after the initial perplexity, both myself and my fellow students suddenly came up with the two issues that have been stirring in our everyday lives over and over: cuts in funding and the Tampere3 projects.

It’s no wonder that reminiscing about the year didn’t produce a gust of vivid ideas right away. With the overshadow of weighty discussions, 2016 seemed to students like a bad dream which is safer to forget that to remember. All in all, the past year was marked by uncertainty about the future that affects all students, not only regarding their own studies but also from the perspective of the looming working life.

Students heading into a teaching career, especially, have been concerned about being able to cope with their studies and work due to the increased pace and finding balance between new teaching innovations and the fundamentals.

For me and my closer friends, graduation is closer than the freshman year we’ve left behind. For this reason, we have engaged in much discussion about the assets teacher education has given us to develop our teacher identity in these modern times.

In the end, amidst all of the uncertainty and questions about the future, we have found security and support nearby. Collective projects and changes, both good and bad, have united students in education as well as the entire university in concentrating on the common goal. Collaborating and sharing the burden have become significant resources. Although the steps towards the great, collective, scientific community are small on the annual level, I can attest to an immense number of doors that have opened, for example between actors in degree programs and Schools, during my three-year journey at the university.

Whether the year 2016 was a bad dream or not, it exhibited its place in the continuum of years. Like so often in dreams, the year succeeded in reminding us once again of what’s important and worthy of our consideration.

Sara Komulainen
classroom student teacher
Education and working world collaborating

**TRAINING** for mentors who supervise in-service training for students of early childhood education was organised. Mentor training is a part of the activities in our early childhood education partner daycare network. Since 2013, nearly 100 kindergarten teachers have completed the mentor training. The in-service supervision provided by the mentor is defined as instructional interaction between a more experienced employee and a student where learning through experience and interactive dialogue is key. The interactive relationship is a learning partnership.

The mentor training involves instructional interaction, perimeters of knowledge in mentoring, ways of mentoring as well as assessment and giving feedback. Four contact teaching days are included in the training and all of the students together attend an orientation lecture and then work in smaller groups. During the time they are working, the students also do assignments given during the contact teaching. Both the mentor and the students have felt that the mentor training is important for the in-service supervision. After the training, mentors felt they were better prepared to supervise students, their role was strengthened and the nature and quality of the supervising acquired new meaning.

**FURTHER EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

In 2016, the School of Education offered two further-education courses, funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture, for professionals in early childhood education: Early childhood pedagogy in changing practices ended in November 2016, and Early childhood education curriculum in practice and shared leadership, which will continue until the end of 2017. The purpose of further education is to deepen professionals’ understanding of early childhood pedagogy both theoretically and in practice. Participants in the course scrutinise the early childhood education legislation and the principles of the early childhood education curriculum, curricular work and pedagogic leadership in early childhood education. Most of the training involved the analysis and reform of the pedagogic culture at the participants’ own workplaces.

The further education courses involve combining practical experience and the latest research with a pedagogic development project implemented in the participants’ own work community. In its entirety, the training comprises modules worth three to five ETCS credits, which involve contact teaching, work in reading circles and independent planning, implementation and assessment of a development project.

A total of 84 enthusiastic early childhood education professionals take part in the training and the feedback about the training has been extremely positive.