Summary

This thesis aimed to explore ways to stimulate community development in school-university partnerships in teacher education. The four studies in this thesis provided insights in the way student teachers collaborate and insights in ways to foster community development in SUPs. The general research question was: *How can we stimulate community development in school-university partnerships?*

Chapter 1 gives an overview of the background of this research, the theoretical framework and the set-up of this thesis. Teacher communities are often mentioned as fruitful collaborative contexts as they provide an ongoing venue for teacher learning to improve professional practice, collective capacity and continuing intellectual development (Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001; Little 2003; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford 2005). Many advantages of these communities are described; faculty collaboration, student learning, organizational performance and organizational innovation all benefit from the community concept in schools (Mullen & Schunk, 2010). A community is seen to foster collaboration and lifelong learning among teachers to stimulate school improvement through organizational and cultural change (Matthews, Crow, & Matthews, 2009). To be able to participate in a teacher community, teachers need to have a certain level of community competence to collaborate with their colleagues. Therefore, pre-service and in-service teacher education has a challenging role in stimulating student teachers to develop community competence. However, teacher education institutes pay little attention to the development of community competence. Student teachers do not prefer to collaborate during their learning process and collaborative learning is only implemented once in a while in teacher education (Ruys, Van Keer & Aelterman, 2010). Another recent development in teacher education is the movement towards linking teacher education to (professional development) schools in several countries. School-university partnerships focus on both the education of student teachers and the professional development of teachers (Castle, Fox & O'Hanlan Souder, 2006; Ridley, Hurwitz, Hackett & Miller, 2005). In these school-university partnerships student teachers develop their community competence simultaneously in theory (the teacher education institute) and in practice (the teacher community in the school). This complicates the concept of community development and community competences when student teachers are believed to need certain competences to participate in such a community and at the same time improve their community competences by participating in that community. Based on the concept of

communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) a professional community of teachers is defined by Admiraal, Lockhorst and Van der Pol (2012) as a group of teachers who are socially interdependent, who participate together in discussion and decision making, and share and build knowledge. These activities are characterized in the community model of Admiraal, Lockhorst and Van der Pol (2012, Table 3) by three dimensions:

- *group identity* is defined as the mutual engagement that binds teachers together in a social entity;
- *shared domain* is defined as a joint enterprise as understood and continually negotiated by its members;
- *shared interactional repertoire* is characterized by a shared practice and beliefs on how teachers in a group interact.

Chapter 2 reports on a study an overview of the state-of-the-art of the preparation of student teachers to participate in communities of secondary school teachers. The research question of this study, as reported in chapter 2 was: *To what extent do the teacher education curricula in three teacher education institutes in the Netherlands pay attention to and aim to stimulate the development of community competence?* To answer this research question, the activities of three teacher education institutes were investigated in order to identify the intended, implemented and attained curriculum of van den Akker (1998). Interviews with the heads of department, student teachers and teacher educators were conducted. These interviews were complemented with observations in mentor groups, subject matter groups, and reflection groups, and document analyses of study guides, portfolios and the electronic learning environment. The conclusion of this study was that the development of community competence and collaboration was seen to be important, but was not systematically included in the implemented and attained curriculum. Student teachers do not systematically learn how they can benefit from collaboration with colleagues and fellow student teachers and they do not intentionally learn how to reflect on their own community competence. Based on these results, the question was raised whether School-University Partnerships (SUPs) can stimulate the development of community competence and communities in student teachers' daily practice in school.

Chapter 3 reports on the development and implementation of design principles to stimulate community development and competence. The research question of chapter 3 was: *What design principles* contribute *to the development of communities of student teachers, teachers and supervisors in a school-university partnership?* This study investigated which design principles to stimulate community development were feasible in School-University Partnerships and had an effect on community development. Based on the Learning Together model of Johnson and Johnson (1999) 14 design prin-

ciples were developed and implemented in collaboration with the responsible teacher educator according to the pragmatic design paradigm (Visscher-Voerman & Gustafson, 2004). Before the project started, the educator and researcher met two times to discuss the design principles and propose activities. During the project, every meeting of the group was prepared and evaluated by the educator and researcher, in which the teacher educator was responsible for the activities, while the researcher monitored the implementation of the design principles. During the study, these design principles and accompanying activities were continuously adapted based on the feedback of the group members. The quality of community processes was measured through observations of the group members for a period of a school year. It was found that to stimulate community development in a SUP the following five design principles should be implemented:

1. *Equivalent cooperation*: it is emphasized that everyone is equivalent so that both student teachers and teachers can learn from each other and help each other to reach the group goals.
2. *Obligation to contribute for all members*: every group member is obliged to contribute to the products and goals of the group.
3. *Learning to know each other*: the group learns to know each other's qualities, expectations and concerns and is stimulated to take these into account.
4. *Reflecting on the collaboration*: group members are asked to reflect on the collaboration of the group.
5. *Profiling the group as a unit*: Identity interdependence is stimulated by profiling the group as a unit.

Additionally, we found that the teacher educator and the task at hand played a significant role in stimulating community development.

Chapter 4 focused on the importance of the course aim to stimulate community development. The research question was: Which design principles contribute to community development of student teachers in school-university partnerships in either reflection meetings or theme meetings? Design principles which seemed to be effective in the previous study were implemented and evaluated on their importance for both reflection meetings and theme meetings. In the reflection meetings, the student teachers exchanged experiences with each other and reflected on their professional behaviour. In the theme meetings, the group tackled a pedagogical subject based on an assignment provided by the mentor teacher.

In this study, two communities were studied in which five design principles were implemented in co-design with the mentor teachers according to the communicative

design paradigm (Visscher-Voerman & Gustafson, 2004). Community development was measured by the *Community Quality Observation Protocol*. The conclusion of this study was that in reflection meetings, it is important that the group members learn to know each other's' qualities, expectations and concerns (design principle *learning to know each other*).

For the theme meetings, three design principles stimulated community development: (1) *equivalent cooperation*, according to which it is emphasized that everyone is equivalent so that both student teachers and teachers can learn from each other and help each other to reach the group goals, (2) *goal interdependence* by negotiating shared goals and defining a common goal and (3) *group members are stimulated to exchange resources.*

Chapter 5 focused on the role of the leader to stimulate community development. The research question was: How are transformational and transactional leadership activities related to the quality of a community in a school-university partnership? According to Harris (2004), who studied distributed leadership on the level of the school as a community, distributed leadership could be realized by transformational leadership. Transformational leaders build self-esteem, enhance professional competence and give the group members the confidence and responsibility to lead development and innovation. Transformational dimensions are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation. Transformational leadership and transactional leadership form two aspects of the leadership conceptualization. Four dimensions of transactional leadership are described by Pounder (2006): contingent reinforcement, active management by exception, passive management by exception and laissez-faire leadership. Leadership styles were related to the development of both types of communities. The extent to which the mentor teachers showed transformational or transactional behaviour was measured on a micro and macro level. The results showed that transformational leadership did not under all conditions further the development of communities of student teachers. Transformational leadership seemed to have the most effect on shared interactional repertoire.

Based on the results of the four empirical studies, in **Chapter 6** conclusions are drawn, and limitations and implications are discussed. The first conclusion is that community development and competence are considered to be important in teacher education but are not explicitly and systematically implemented in the teacher education programs in the Netherlands. A school-university partnership (SUP) has the potential to stimulate community development and community competence for both student teachers and teacher educators.

In designing a community in a SUP, five design principles seemed to have an effect on community development: equivalent cooperation, obligation to contribute for all members, learning to know each other, reflecting on the collaboration and profiling the group as a unit. Learning to know each other seemed to play a significant role when reflecting on experiences while equivalent cooperation and exchanging of resources furthered content discussions. Finally, teacher educators should not only explicitly implement design principles, but also have to be conscious about their leading style, finding a balance between stimulating distributed leadership through transformational and transactional activities.

Limitations of this research are the small scale nature of this research. The studies in this thesis mainly used qualitative methods to reach a deep understanding of the processes in communities in SUPs. This also means that only a small amount of data could be gathered. Additionally, some remarks are made about the *Level of Community Development Observation Protocol* and the *Leadership Style Observation Protocol* which were developed during this research. In relation to these limitations, directions for future research have been determined.