
NISCAR 2025, TROLLHÄTTAN, SWEDEN

AGENCY, LEARNING AND REFLECTION IN THE WORK OF A NEWLY GRADUATED TEACHER

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INTRODUCTION

Post doc research project: Teacher's agency, professional development and well-being

Theoretical and methodological background:

CULTURAL-HISTORICAL PSYCHOLOGY and
SUBJECT-SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

BASIC CONCEPTS:

Agency, participation, conduct of everyday life, life scenes, life trajectory, human–world relations, conditions (inc. material environment), meaning structure, grounds for action, reflection...

(Dreier, 1999; 2021; Holzkamp, 2013a; 2013b; 2016; Schraube & Højholt, 2016; Suorsa, 2014) AND (Mälkki, 2011; Peltola 2022; Peltola et al. 2020; Rainio & Hilppö, 2017)

CONTEXT (ECEC), CONDITIONS AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH

- Early Childhood Education (and care) ECE(C)
- Team = 3 adults (inc. at least 1 teacher)
- Investments in teacher education
- **RESEARCH AND TOPICAL CONCERNS:** Low salary, burnout, heavy responsibilities, limited resources, lack of teachers.
- **NEWLY GRADUATED TEACHER:** From the day one she/he has full responsibility of the group of children and becomes the leader of the team and pedagogy.





RESEARCH QUESTION
What kind of *balancing* an
early childhood teacher
faces in the beginning of the
career?

THIS RESEARCH

Peer group discussions

Newly graduated teachers'
first year at work in ECEC
centre (N=5)

5 meetings during the year

BALANCING I: BELONGING

[EXAMPLE FROM THE DATA]

- Need to learn quickly, adopt the current ways of working and become a part of the community
- Need to belong even if there are things to change and renew



BALANCING II: BOUNDARIES OF WORK

[EXAMPLE FROM THE DATA]

- Boundaries of participation / “Boundaries of my own work”
- Central support comes from the team
- General meaning structures are formed through participation (Exploring meanings would need more time and space)
- Typical discourse: Individualistic idea of self-management or ability to make decisions and set boundaries





BALANCING III: AGENCY AND CONTROL

[EXAMPLE FROM THE DATA]

- How to be an agent and have control of your work when you are still learning?
- Space and structures for agency
- Teacher is easily evaluated through the ability to perform everyday structure



[CONCLUSIONS] NAVIGATING AND REFLECTING

NAVIGATING: Getting to know the working environment and learning new becomes a part of the agency -> map of meanings to navigate with

REFLECTION: The challenge of learning, mastering new knowledge and becoming a part of the community

**BALANCING IN HUMAN-WORLD
RELATION**

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THANK YOU! QUESTIONS?

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