

**This is an electronic reprint of the original article.  
This reprint *may differ* from the original in pagination and typographic detail.**

**Author(s):** Arvaja, Maarit

**Title:** Building teacher identity through the process of positioning

**Year:** 2016

**Version:**

**Please cite the original version:**

Arvaja, M. (2016). Building teacher identity through the process of positioning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 59(October), 392-402.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.07.024>

All material supplied via JYX is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all or part of any of the repository collections is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or educational purposes in electronic or print form. You must obtain permission for any other use. Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone who is not an authorised user.

Building Teacher Identity through the Process of Positioning

Maarit Arvaja

Finnish Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä

Correspondence concerning this manuscript should be addressed to Maarit Arvaja, Finnish Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä, P.O. Box 35, 40014 University of Jyväskylä, Finland, Email: [maarit.arvaja@jyu.fi](mailto:maarit.arvaja@jyu.fi), Tel: +358 40 8054277

Building Teacher Identity through the Process of Positioning

Abstract

This study explores teacher identity work in the context of a one-year programme, Pedagogical Studies for Adult Educators. The data consist of weekly learning diaries written by Anna, a university teacher, during one academic year. The diaries are analysed by means of dialogically oriented narrative analysis leaning on Bakhtinian notions of voicing and ventriloquation. The results show how Anna positions her storytelling and narrated self in relation to relevant characters by voicing and evaluating these characters. The construct of positioning provides tools for understanding the relationship between the self and others in teacher identity.

Keywords: teacher identity, narrative identity construction, Dialogical Self theory, positioning

### 1. Introduction

In the context of teacher education, the tradition of focusing merely on teachers' and student teachers' acquisition of 'occupational assets', and assessing their development in terms of predefined professional standards, has turned out to be too narrow a perspective when it comes to researching and supporting teachers' professional development (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Instead, a new starting point for this aim is to focus on teachers' personal perspectives and how teachers themselves make sense of their teachership and teaching practices (e.g., Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Cohen, 2010). By taking a more personal perspective, the emphasis is on the relevance of knowing oneself for the development and construction of one's teacher identity (Meijer, Korthagen & Vasalos, 2009).

Flores and Day (2006) suggest that teacher education should place a stronger focus on giving students opportunities to reflect upon their personal biographies and schools' cultural contexts in order to understand the relationships and possible tensions between these. Therefore, a need exists to develop practices that would actively support reflective identity work (Cohen, 2010) and, hence, promote professional self-understanding (Alsup, 2006; Arvaja, 2015; Meijer et al., 2009). In educational contexts, this identity work can be enhanced through personalisation and subjecting one's own experiences to reflection and analysis (Arvaja, 2015; Malinen, 2000; Meijer et al., 2009). This provides possibilities for the (re-)negotiation of one's I-positioning and 'being, thinking and acting' as a teacher (Akkerman et al., 2012).

This study is situated in the context of a one-year programme, *Pedagogical Studies for Adult Educators* (PSAE), where the importance of personalisation and an explorative attitude is stressed in building and developing one's teacher identity. Leaning on the dialogical approach to teacher identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011) and narrative self-construction (Wortham, 2001), this study explores how one individual student, university teacher Anna, negotiates her teacher identity as an interplay of the self and others within the frame of one-year pedagogical studies. The study presents conceptual and methodological constructs of positioning (Hermans, 2003; Wortham, 2001) as a means for studying and understanding this relationship. In the dialogical approach to narrative self-construction, both the personal and professional self are seen to be represented, enacted and constructed through constant interactional positioning with respect to others. Therefore, how Anna in her weekly learning diaries narratively constructs her I-position as a teacher through the process of this kind is

examined. The study focuses especially on the role of personal narrative and biography in constructing teacher identity and in making sense of one's work.

Next, I first discuss the theoretical background as regards the dialogical approach in negotiating teacher identity. After that, we take a closer look at the dialogical approach to narrative self-construction.

### 2. Theoretical background

#### 2.1 Dialogical approach to teacher identity

The contemporary view of professional learning and teacher identity has overcome the conception of learning and identity as the acquisition of predefined competencies, skills, knowledge and roles offered by institutions and other people (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Lipponen & Kumpulainen, 2011; Vähäsantanen, 2015). According to Vähäsantanen and Billett (2008), the construction of identity rather involves an ongoing process in which individuals are active agents. Professional identity negotiation is manifested in active reflection and interpretation between the person and the social context (Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Luttenberg et al., 2013; Vähäsantanen & Billett, 2008). In this process, personal experiences, interests, values and beliefs relative to one's professional self are reflected in connection with situational expectations and external conditions regarding their work (Beijaard et al., 2004; Vähäsantanen & Billett, 2008). Both personal and contextual factors shape professional identity negotiations and influence how teachers perceive themselves as professionals (Flores & Day, 2006; Meijer et al., 2009; Vähäsantanen & Billett, 2008).

Recent conceptualisations on teacher identity lean on postmodern (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011) and poststructuralist views (Zembylas, 2003), which are characterised by such conceptions as multiplicity, discontinuity and sociality. *Multiplicity* often refers to different dimensions of identity such as professional and personal identity (Day et al., 2006), or sub-identities pertaining to different contexts and relationships (Alsup, 2006; Beijaard et al., 2004; Sutherland et al., 2010). Terms such as ongoing process, unstable, shifting, changing and dynamic are often used in characterising the *discontinuous* nature of teacher identity construction (e.g., Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Zembylas, 2003). The *social* nature of identity means that teacher identity is communicatively and discursively constructed with other people such as colleagues (e.g., Bannister, 2015; Cohen, 2010) and, on the other hand, that the broader social and cultural context with its (changing) institutional norms, practices,

beliefs and discourses is involved in the interpretation and construction of teacher identity (e.g., Vähäsantanen & Billett, 2008; Zembylas, 2003). These postmodern and poststructuralist views on identity show how people position themselves differently in different situations, contexts, cultures and historic settings, and also in relation to other persons (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Zembylas, 2003).

Akkerman and Meijer (2011) argue that some problems exist in leaning purely on postmodern (or poststructuralist) views on identity. For example, if identity is constantly changing, how can a person maintain a coherent sense of self in the long term? They suggest that we also need to take into account the modern stance on identity. The dialogical approach, building on Dialogical Self theory (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Hermans, 2001), combines a postmodern and a modern stance on teacher identity, and sees identity simultaneously as multiple, discontinuous and social as well as unitary, continuous and individual.

Bakhtin's (1981, 1984) concept of voice, especially multivoicedness, provides a tool for understanding and exploring how different perspectives are embedded in the person's self. Akkerman and colleagues (2012) interpret Bakhtin's notion of voice 'as a speaking personality bringing forward a particular perspective of the world' (p. 229). The theory of Dialogical Self (Hermans, 2001) extends the concept of voice, arguing that voices are not only in what we say, but also in who we take ourselves to be (Akkerman et al., 2012). An 'I-position' of a person, according to this theory, 'is a particular voice that has been internalised in one's Self-presentation' (Akkerman et al., 2012, p. 230). Akkerman and van Eijck (2013) suggest that the I-position links the notion of voice to a person's identity.

The dialogical self is diverse in the sense of *multiple* I-positions that can be used in expressing oneself (e.g., the I-position of a teacher, mother or hard worker). Multiplicity helps understand teachers' varying positions. For example, teachers also have more personal, inner voices, such as assertive or passive, embedding also their personal and intimate experiences (Seikkula et al., 2012; Wortham, 2001). These voices also shape their sense making as a teacher. Consequently, when people are talking or thinking, they often integrate, contrast, and move between different I-positions (Hermans, 2003; Linell, 2009). Therefore, the self is a negotiated space and the voices within the self can be diverse or even contradictory (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Hermans, 2001). However, the self is not usually fragmented since people have a natural tendency to maintain it as a coherent construct (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). This *unity* of the self is held together through constant self-

dialogue (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011) or internal dialogue (Linell, 2009) between different I-positions of the self.

According to the dialogical approach, the *discontinuous* nature of identity means that I-positions can change in response to the social settings one encounters. For example, a teacher may move from a caring position to an authoritative position. However, the authoritative voice here does not necessarily signify a dominant I-position in the teacher's self, but may reflect a peripheral position evoked by a momentary need for classroom management (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Hence, some I-positions are more dominant or more familiar than others (Hermans, 2003). Also differences, oppositions and conflicts between different I-positions are indications of the discontinuity of the self (Hermans, 2003). Even though their identity is dynamic and changing, people have a desire and capacity to keep up a coherent sense of the self (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). According to the dialogical approach, the *continuity* of identity is maintained through narratives. Through narration, people construct their identity by integrating their old and new experiences and expressing their interpretations of personal meanings in coherent chains of events (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995). Narrative construction connects the past, the present and the future (Wortham, 2001). Therefore, through narration, people also build possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1987). Along with narratives, people rely on cultural or semiotic tools (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011), cultural models (Gee & Green, 1998), typical texts (Shotter & Gergen, 1989) and storylines (Schaefer, 1992) from the culture to organise themselves and to maintain coherence in their identity.

The dialogical self is *social* in the sense that other people have positions in a multivoiced self (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Building on Bakhtin, Hermans and Kempen (1993) argue that individuals often speak the words of the groups or society to which they belong. Thus, the social world plays an important role in the construction of self, while it mediates the voice of traditions, generalised others, institutions, groups, communities, colleagues, relatives and friends through the dialogical participants (Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Linell, 2009; Markova, 2006). In this way, the voices of others become woven into what one says and as part of one's thinking, reasoning and acting, as part of Me. The dialogical self is, however, also *individual* in the sense that all individuals are unique specifically because of their multiple and dialogically related I-positions (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Also each individual has a unique personal narrative and history due to his or her life course (Arvaja,

2015; Flores & Day, 2006; Linell, 2009). Therefore, teacher identity always involves a biographical perspective, and every teacher holds a unique teacher I-position linked with other I-positions of the self.

### 2.2 Negotiating teacher identity as positioning the self and the work context

Teacher identity often involves struggles as teachers have to make sense of varying perspectives, expectations and roles they confront in their work (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Alsup, 2006; Beijaard et al., 2004; Meijer et al., 2009). Alsup (2006) studied beginning teachers and showed how these teachers faced contradictory expectations of being both students and teachers, which led to identity struggles between these I-positions. The study by Meijer and colleagues (2009), in turn, showed how during a single school year a student teacher was re-defining her teacher position and building up coherence between her personal and professional self in teaching. This required zooming into the personal aspects of the self and becoming aware of one's strengths in teaching. Flores and Day's (2006) longitudinal study exploring teacher identity in the early years of teaching revealed that the teachers' personal and biographical histories played a significant role in explaining the different ways they made sense of their teaching and learning experiences. In light of these empirical studies, teacher identity can be seen as a continuous negotiation, integration and shifting between different I-positions of the self.

Teacher identity is also negotiated between the self and the work context. Changes and reforms in educational settings often lead to new positioning in relation to those settings (Ketelaar et al., 2012; Luttenberg et al., 2013; Vähäsantanen, 2015; Vähäsantanen & Billett, 2008; Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013). For example, the studies by Vähäsantanen and Billett (2008) and Ylijoki and Ursin (2013) showed how differently individual teachers and academics reacted to, negotiated and interpreted the changes at the workplace, and how it was manifested in different and even opposing strategies, pathways and storylines in their narratives, such as progressive, stable or regressive storylines.

These studies show how teachers position themselves differently in relation to their respective work communities or institutions and the values and ideologies (i.e., voices) these represent in their minds. Therefore, roughly speaking, either a match or a mismatch exists between their professional sense of self (or I-positioning) and the work context. It is suggested that in their identity negotiations teachers both implicitly and explicitly assess whether the work, for example, in terms of content or relevant practices, aligns or misaligns



with their (preferred) work identities (Kira & Balkin, 2014). This also has implications for one's sense of wellbeing, satisfaction and engagement at work (Day & Kington, 2008; Flores & Day, 2006). In an ideal situation, a person holds a satisfying work position in a context that is in accordance with the person's identity; such a setting allows the person to appreciate his or her own work and foster a sense of self in agreement with it (Billett & Pavlova, 2005). In the case of misalignment between one's professional I-position and work context, the consequences often relate to negative and regressive interpretations or storylines and non-engagement (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010; Vähäsantanen & Billett, 2008; Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013). However, the misalignment can also lead to transformative identity work shaping (the preferred) work identities or developing one's work context to align it better with one's (preferred) identity (Kira & Balkin, 2014). Thus, there is reciprocity between identity and context as they shape each other (Luttenberg et al., 2013).

Even though the tensions and conflicts between various I-positions of the self or between the relevant others and one's I-positions can be problematic, Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) argue that these can also trigger and lead into more dialogical integration of I-positions and progressive development. This may manifest itself in deeper awareness (Alsup, 2006; Meijer et al., 2009), professional self-understanding (Arvaja, 2015) and transformative learning (Malinen, 2000; Mezirow, 2009). To conclude, teachers' professional identities are not fixed and predefined, but are connected to their personal narratives and experiences in social contexts and are evolving in continuous negotiation between these and different I-positions of the self.

### 2.3 Dialogical approach to narrative self-construction

Taking a dialogical approach to narrative self-construction (Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Wortham, 2001), this study investigates more deeply the relationship between different I-positions of the self and between the self and others in teachers' identity negotiation. Especially, this relationship is analysed with reference to *the process of positioning* (Wortham, 2001) as evidenced in the learning diaries of Anna, a university teacher/researcher pursuing PSAE.

Building on Bakhtin's and social constructionist views (e.g., Hermans, 2003; Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Gergen, 1994), the dialogical approach to narrative self-construction sees that the self is constructed through relationships with others and emerges through constant interactional positioning with respect to others in daily life. Hence, according to Wortham

(2001), the self (and different I-positions within) is narratively constructed through positioning different voices in the social world in relation to each other, and by positioning oneself with respect to these voices. From the perspective of the dialogical self, this means posing an identity question, ‘Who am I in relation to the others?’ instead of ‘Who am I?’ (Hermans, 2003, p. 104).

Bakhtin’s terms *voicing*, *double-voicing* and *ventriloquation* are important for understanding the complex relationship between the self and the others in teacher narratives (Wortham, 2001). In their narratives, like learning diaries, teachers talk about themselves, and in doing so, they explicitly or implicitly construct an interactional relationship to the surrounding world (Hermans, 2003; Wortham, 2001). In a learning diary, both the narrator’s and the other characters’ voices are established. The *narrated self* in a learning diary can be seen as the protagonist who is represented through the telling of events, characterisations, and experiences related to oneself. It can be regarded as retrospective in the sense that all that is told has already taken place. The *storytelling self*, however, is the voice that ‘writes the story’, choosing and evaluating the words, stories, events, and experiences both with regard to oneself and for the voices of others. *Characters’* (the relevant others in the story) voices are articulated in the learning diaries in an ongoing process. This process of *voicing* draws on positions and ideologies from the larger social world, as the others (e.g., individuals, groups and communities) described come to speak like recognisable types of people (Wortham, 2001; 2004) or recognisable social types (Wortham & Gadsden, 2006).

The process of voicing (i.e., characterising) provides ‘material’ that the narrators use in positioning themselves interactionally (Wortham, 2001). In *double-voicing*, according to Wortham (2001), the narrators articulate or position themselves by engaging in a dialogue with various characters (and their represented voices) and juxtaposing these with each other. A piece of double-voiced discourse can be identified when different types of voices from the social world are put into the conversation at the level of social positions and ideologies associated with these voices. While voices are drawn from the complex social world, they become engaged in a dialogue that involves multiple perspectives and often conflicting positions. A double-voiced discourse often involves ‘a conflict’.

In addition to the construct of voicing, Bakhtin’s (1984) term *ventriloquation* is important in the process of positioning. Becoming a narrative self involves positioning oneself with respect to others whose words (and relational stances, characteristic acts and viewpoints) one

ventriloquates (Bakhtin, 1984). To put it simply, ventriloquation means that others' voices (including the narrated self) are *evaluated* (Wortham & Gadsden, 2006). In ventriloquation one's storytelling self evaluates the other voices by differentiating or identifying and/or by distancing or standing closer (e.g., taking a critical or supportive stance) with these voices. Thus, as the teacher (narrator) places the characters into recognisable social groups and takes an evaluative stance to them, he or she voices, juxtaposes and ventriloquates them, and simultaneously establishes a position for him- or herself, thus constructing his or her teacher identity (Wortham, 2001; Wortham & Gadsden, 2006). Consequently, as regards teacher narratives, positioning oneself (and thus building an I-position as a teacher) often takes place indirectly through ventriloquating others' voices, rather than by expressing things explicitly in one's own voice.

This study approaches teacher identity construction from the viewpoint of an encounter and negotiation of the self and the others. It takes a dialogical approach to teacher identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Hermans, 2001), and leans on a similar approach to narrative self-construction (Wortham, 2001). By analysing the learning diaries of one university teacher/researcher, Anna, the study explores how she is constructing her I-position as a teacher during her one-year PSAE. Hence, teacher identity is seen as *positioned into being* through positioning one's (storytelling and narrated) self with respect to the relevant characters and their respective voices as presented and evaluated in the narrative. The focus is especially on the intertwined relationships of the personal and professional aspects in teacher identity.

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1 Subject and context of the study

The subject in this study is a university teacher/researcher participating in a one-year study programme called *Pedagogical Studies for Adult Educators* (PSAE) at a university in Finland. The overall aim of the programme is to support and develop the participants' pedagogical competence through the principles of dialogue, explorative attitude and personalisation (Malinen, 2000). These principles are embedded in pedagogical practices consisting mainly of group discussions (e.g., learning groups, drama) and individual reflection (e.g., learning diaries). The pedagogical studies give the students a qualification to teach in the field of adult education, such as in a university or university of applied sciences. The programme comprises nine thematic periods (from September to May). One period lasts

approximately four weeks. In the first week, the students meet face-to-face (contact period) and attend a) whole group ( $N = 40$ ) *lectures and workshops*, b) *learning group* meetings in small groups (about 10 students), c) literature reviews in small groups, and d) additional *theme area meetings* based on one's own interest (e.g., dialogue, narrative, drama, pedagogical leadership), and *teaching experiments* based on these. During the three remaining weeks, the students either work in their day jobs or are engaged in their main studies, but they also pursue the PSAE as *distance learning*, which involves writing a *learning diary* for each of the three weeks from a given theme. The themes for the diaries are related to the topics dealt with during the preceding contact period.

One-half of the students ( $n = 20$ ) selected in the programme are higher education students majoring in educational sciences. The other half ( $n = 20$ ) consists of teachers who already work in different adult education institutes without a formal teacher qualification (e.g., at universities). This study focuses on one sample student called Anna. While pursuing her pedagogical studies, Anna also works at the university in a position that comprises mainly research work, but includes teaching as well. Anna was sampled from among eight students who participated in the same learning group throughout the programme. As a researcher, I followed this learning group's work more closely during the one-year programme. Of these eight students, only three were working as adult educators at the time. Because my research interest in this study lies specifically in the person-work relationship, the sample student was selected from among these three students. Focusing on one single student allows for deep and detailed explorations of the complex process of positioning in the student's narrative (cf. Avraamidou, 2014; Meijer et al., 2009). Anna was informed about the aims and purpose of this study and consequent reporting. She was also asked for her permission to use the data collected, and she had the right to withdraw from the study at any point. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, Anna's real name, specific field, department or other data enabling personal identification are not reported.

### 3.2 Data collection and analysis

The data includes Anna's learning diaries written on a weekly basis during distance periods. For each week, the teacher of the programme assigned a topic to be written about, such as: 'My own learning history: which experiences would I like to zoom in on? Why are they important?'; 'How to help students use their potential?' The students were instructed to freely reflect on the topics assigned. Altogether, Anna wrote 18 learning diaries, the length of which

varied between approximately 1,500 and 2,500 words. In analysing the learning diaries, the focus was on Anna's narrative self-construction through different types of positioning (Wortham & Gadsen, 2006). Particularly, two layers of narrative positioning, voicing and evaluating (ventriloquation), and their interconnections were in focus as relevant elements in Anna's narrative self-construction (Wortham & Gadsden, 2006), and more specifically, in her I-positioning as a teacher.

In the first step of the analysis, each of the learning diaries was coded by identifying Anna's own I-positions and voices as well as relevant characters and their respective voices. These were typically related to and represented through various narrated events in the past (Wortham & Gadsden, 2006) and coded at the level of thematic meaning units (Linell, 1998). In Anna's narrative, her own voiced positions were identified mostly by the use of the first-person pronouns (such as I, me, my) (Aveling, Gillespie & Cornish, 2015). Relevant characters in Anna's narrative were seen as 'inner-others' whose voices belong to other individuals or groups (Aveling et al., 2015). In line with the dialogical approach, the term 'character' (and respective voices) refers not only to (concretely) named individuals, groups or institutions (and their voices), but also to generalised others or cultural typifications (Markova, 2006; Mead, 1934; Linell, 2009; Wortham, 2001). The voice(s) of a character can be seen to represent a recognisable social type or recognisable type of people with their related characteristics, values or ideologies (Wortham & Gadsden, 2006). Identifying the others and their respective voices in Anna's narrative were traced mostly through the use of third-person pronouns, as well as through Anna's quoting and naming individuals, groups or institutions (Aveling et al., 2015).

Positioning oneself with reference to particular voices and their characterisations is often reinforced through evaluation (Wortham & Gadsden, 2006). Therefore, evaluation related to the voicing of different others and the narrated self were also coded in Anna's narrative. Through evaluation, narrators can distance or differentiate themselves from, move closer to, or identify themselves with the voices in the narrative. This is revealed, for example, in negative or positive evaluations expressed through linguistic means, such as the selection of verbs or adjectives, or using certain evaluative, contextually loaded terms (e.g., 'mass production' may have a different sense in the context of industry versus the university environment) (Wortham, 2001).

## BUILDING TEACHER IDENTITY

It can be said that through evaluation Anna positions herself with respect to the voices of others and, thus, builds her I-position as a teacher. Therefore, in the analysis, it is important to pay attention not only to the verbal content, but also to the position taken by the speaker in that instance. Bakhtin (1984, p. 266) refers to ‘the speaker’s attitude toward others’ utterances’. The speaker says something about the past words that have been spoken about the same issue, and in doing so, takes a position with respect to those other speakers and their position. All words echo with the ‘voices’ of others, and as analysts, we try to understand the speaker’s position with respect to others who characteristically speak this way. Through the processes of voicing and evaluating different characters and her narrated self, Anna (the narrator) is constructing her professional identity and I-position as a teacher.

Table 1 below provides examples of the coding of the learning diaries in the first step of the analysis.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

In the second step of the analysis, the interconnection of the voices and their evaluation across all the learning diaries were used for outlining Anna’s teacher I-position. For example, as can be seen from Table 1, Anna builds a student-centred I-position both by characterising herself and by characterising and evaluating others. In the light of Anna’s narrative in terms of the events described, the voices assigned to other characters and herself, and the evaluations concerning these voices (e.g., agreeing or disagreeing), it can be said that Anna communicated and reinforced a particular sense of herself both as a person and as a teacher. The focus in the analysis was particularly on the interconnection of the voices and evaluations that seemed to play a role or to be relevant to Anna’s I-positioning as a teacher. In this study, this kind of I-positioning refers to a personal tendency of being, thinking, acting, believing, and valuing (Arvaja, 2015; Akkerman et al., 2012). In tracing interconnections especially reoccurrences and repetitions in characterising and evaluation were sought for. Therefore, zooming into Anna’s characterisations and evaluations revealed how she positioned and saw herself through, and with relation to, her narrated self and different relevant others.

It must be noted that in her diaries Anna was free to choose and present the specific characters and the particular aspects of herself that she saw appropriate for the given context, though partly guided by the assigned themes. Presumably, much of her self and consequent I-positioning as a teacher remained hidden and beyond the scope of this data and analysis.

However, the narrative approach does not even try to reach for ‘the absolute truth’ or ‘whole’ representation of the self, since the narration itself has a power to change the self (Wortham, 2001). The interconnection of the voices and their evaluation, that is the process of positioning, added the power of reinforcing – and also analysing - a particular sense of self in the narratives. It also helped to zoom in on the relationships between different I-positions of the self and between the self and the others in Anna’s identity negotiations.

As for my own role regarding the PSAE, I acted as a researcher and had no teacher post in the programme. I was responsible for collecting the data and making subsequent analyses and interpretations. However, I had attended the same programme as a student a few years earlier while also working at the university. Knowing the ethnographic context (both the pedagogical studies and the work context) was important for understanding some narrated events, voices and evaluations in Anna’s narratives (Wortham, 2001). To ensure higher reliability and credibility (Guba, 1981), I asked Anna to read the analysis and findings of this manuscript and especially to point out any interpretations she disagreed with. I also negotiated the analysis and findings with the teacher and developer of the pedagogical studies. I have also provided a large set of translated data examples (Hammer & Berland, 2014) for the readers to evaluate and judge my interpretations.

### 4. Findings

In Anna’s narrative, repeatedly occurring voices were considered the most salient ones in Anna’s positioning. In the next sections, these most salient characters and their voicing and evaluating in Anna’s I-positioning as a teacher are presented.

#### 4.1 Past self and ‘the big change’

According to the dialogical approach to narrative self-construction, if the same characterisation or voice is repeated on many occasions, it indicates that the narrator wants to reinforce a particular sense of self (Wortham, 2001). In Anna’s narrative, the character of her past self is brought up on several occasions. Anna’s discourse is double-voiced as she draws a sharp line between her past self and her present and continually evolving self. In her narrative, she names this transition as ‘my Big Change’:

Example 1: As regards PSAE, perhaps the biggest thing to myself in my history is ‘my Big Change’, which I faced after a personal crisis [...] of mine. Before this, I was very shy and timid, and it affected considerably my interactions with people. For example, I felt comfortable on my own, and I had few

## BUILDING TEACHER IDENTITY

friends. I could not even imagine working as a teacher, although I have a few teaching experiences from my shy era. After my crisis, my life changed little by little to a more daring and more social direction. [...] Gaining courage and the big change in my life took place over several years, and of course mental growth will certainly go on throughout my life. Somehow, I feel that I am now quite another person than before. (Diary 1)

In her diaries, Anna's storytelling self is repeatedly ventriloquating the voice of her past self. Anna is engaged in self-dialogue between different I-positions of the self (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). The same distancing pattern characterises this positioning. She is juxtaposing her storytelling self with her past narrated personal voice that she characterises as 'very shy and timid' (Example 1). She also repeatedly points out and describes her transformation from a shy and timid person into a more courageous and assertive/social person, and at the same time, establishes and maintains this voice of the (present) self. As Example 2 shows, she extends this transformation to further aspects such as developing from a rigid and rational person suppressing her feelings into a more openly sensitive person:

Example 2: So I am quite a sensitive emotional person myself. Or my new self is like that more openly; before 'My Big Change', I sought to hide sensitivity. One could say, in fact, that before [...] I was a rationalist, and then as a result of the crisis, being super bored with my overly rigid habitus, I set myself free from the chains of rationality and hiding one's feelings. So of course, this did not happen in an instant, and I think the process is still going on. I love to be more genuine both with myself and in interactions with other people. Shyness, protecting one's sensitiveness, etc., were earlier like a protective shield, but no longer on such a large scale. (Diary 11)

Anna emphasises that the transition, 'My Big Change', has enabled her to be more genuine as a person and in interactions with others. A conflict or crisis between Anna's personal I-positions seemingly leads to progress and identity development (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). In distancing herself from her earlier, less genuine I-position, she uses strong expressions such as 'being super bored', 'set myself free from the chains', and 'protective shield'. For Anna, overcoming this tension has meant revealing and enacting her authentic voice (Markova, 2006). This transition is important in positioning Anna not only personally but also professionally. Her developmental transition, as reflected especially in her interpersonal 'competence', has enabled her to become a teacher:

Example 3: One's own world of emotions, emotional experiences, and as how much of these one allows to others as well, is inevitably influencing at work. Particularly so in teacher's work or in other jobs involving a lot of contact with other people. In the old days, it would certainly have been a horror



## BUILDING TEACHER IDENTITY

should a student start to weep in front of me, but I have on occasion coped with such a situation, too. . . . Actually, the recognition of one's own sensitivity and emotionality, and also the recognition of people's dissimilarity to some extent at least, have made social interactions easier for me. (Diary 11)

In the above example, Anna reinforces her present I-position as a teacher by distancing her past self ('in the old days'). Therefore, in Anna's narrative, there is a parallel between the personal and professional sense of self. Her present self ('my new self'), which she voices as being genuine in social interactions (Example 2), is important in enacting the kind of teacher position Anna appreciates as part of her professional self. Being a teacher in the past, therefore, would have been an impossible idea for Anna (Examples 1 and 3). In building her I-position as a teacher through her diaries, she reinforces a particular sense of self. The importance of interaction and interpersonal relationships with others (including students and colleagues) is underlined frequently in constructing her personal and professional identity, enabled by the transformation she has undergone at a personal level (Examples 1 thru 3).

In her narrative, Anna actively uses the voice of the past self in constructing the present voice by positioning her thinking, acting and feeling as contrasted to this voice. Therefore, the past self is always present as a voice to be distanced from. Anna's I-positions vary between opposite qualities as part of her multivoiced, narratively structured self (Hermans, 2003). It can be said that Anna's 'new self' is in the dominant position as regards her identity, whereas the past self is in the peripheral position (Hermans, 2003). Even though this peripheral position may be activated by encountering some external others (Hermans, 2003), it 'must' remain in the peripheral position as regards Anna's I-position as a teacher. Therefore, this past voice is not only evaluated in relation to the personal self but also in relation to Anna's I-positioning as a teacher.

### 4.2 Towards a teacher identity matching one's personal character

During the pedagogical studies, Anna renegotiates her I-position as a teacher. Along with this process, she adopts the voice of the pedagogical studies stressing the importance of 'being' oneself as a teacher, that is, having a teacher identity that matches one's personal character. On the other hand, she eventually distances herself from the idea of being a teacher enacting a culturally predefined role.

In the first learning diary, Anna differentiates herself from the lecturer and positions herself as being a teacher who enacts a teacher role:

## BUILDING TEACHER IDENTITY

Example 4: Another thing I kept thinking about was that Maija (or Eeva) said in the lecture that students should be met in one's own persona. I myself have found it good, at least earlier, that I have formed a kind of teacher role for myself, since it is handily there in-between the self and the student in case of difficult situations. (Diary 1).

In the above example, we can see that Anna associates certain implicit predefined characteristics with the cultural typification (Crapanzano, 1992) or cultural ideal (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011) of a 'teacher'. Therefore, 'the teacher' (voice) is a particular kind of typification Anna has learned and enacted in everyday interactional events in her teaching. She sees that being a teacher is partly acting in a role, which is differentiated from one's personal self. Hence, she draws a distinction between her personal and professional self. Later on, Anna returns to this issue:

Example 5: Somehow, I earlier thought that teachers are of a certain type, I mean they have a specific kind of role. And even though one's persona is allowed to show, it should not show too much in order that a teacher would really be a teacher in students' eyes. But it would not need to be like this, I mean it's absolutely wonderful that bringing out one's own persona seems to be supported in PSAE! In my earlier days when I was shy and timid, I was probably suffering the most from the fact that I was unable to bring out my own self from behind the protective shell in any sphere of life, actually, not to speak about social interactions. Now that I have not had such a strong protective shell for years, I'm somehow annoyed with the idea that I should behave against my personality to be a real teacher. So it's good that things don't have to be like this. Adopting a role has always been hard for me anyway, I mean taking on a role that feels artificial. (Diary 10)

Example 5 above illustrates Anna's renegotiation of teacher identity. This renegotiation shows in Anna's differentiation from the idea of teachers being a certain type of people (see also Example 4), and also in turning down the idea of behaving against her (present) persona. Anna seems to feel that her previously adopted teacher role, defined by cultural typification, has not supported her as a teacher because she has not fully identified herself with that role. This self-dialogue manifests itself in a struggle (i.e., double-voiced discourse) between Anna's collective and personal positions (Hermans, 2001), where the collective position represents the norms and expectations adopted by the generalised other, while the (present) personal position represents her true subjective feelings, the authentic voice (Markova, 2006), which contradicts the collective position. In this self-dialogue, Anna solves a conflict between her personal and professional I-positions by redefining her teacher identity as more coherent and dialogically integrated with her personal position (Hermans & Hermans-

Konopka, 2010). Hence, in this renegotiation Anna draws a parallel between her personal and professional self. For her, the pedagogical studies (and related values) represent a voice with which she can identify herself: being a teacher means being yourself (cf. Meijer et al., 2009).

In her narrative, Anna again reinforces the separation from the past ‘shy and timid’ voice. It seems that her present self as an open person with no protective shell or roles is in line with her effort to dismiss the rigid, closed personal voice in the past. Anna repeatedly ventriloquates this voice and positions her (storytelling) self far away from this voice, which she characterises as a shell, an artificial cover applied in social interactions. Thus, a parallel exists between the voice of ‘the teacher’ as a predefined role, and the voice of Anna’s past self, both evaluated and positioned as differing from one’s true self. Likewise, a parallel exists between the voice of ‘teacher identity matching one’s personality’ and the voice of Anna’s present self as a representation of her true self (i.e., authentic voice; Markova, 2006).

Example 5 shows that the pedagogical studies, and particularly the values and conceptions they represent and promote, constitute a voice that strengthens Anna’s I-positioning and ‘teacher identity matching her personality’. This enhances the connection between Anna’s personal and professional self, while she feels that her I-positioning as a teacher is in better accordance with her personal authentic voice. This example well reflects people’s natural desire to maintain a coherent and consistent sense of self, and to create a dialogical space between different I-positions (Hermans, 2003). According to Hermans (2003, p. 113), maintaining this dialogical space between different I-positions requires a certain ‘fit’ between them, like Anna’s case well illustrates. In this light, the self can be seen ‘as a synthesising activity [...] as a continuous attempt to make the self a whole [...]’ (Hermans & Kempen, 1993, p. 93).

### 4.3 Characterising oneself as a teacher

In her diaries, Anna constructs her I-position as a teacher both through characterising, representing and voicing herself as a teacher and through voicing and ventriloquating other characters. As Anna evaluates the voices of different characters, she establishes a position for herself. In the next example, Anna identifies herself with the voice of her former colleague:

Example 6: Aino has always been my idol because she is self-confident and is really working for the students. (Diary 1)

## BUILDING TEACHER IDENTITY

This positive evaluation was later accompanied with the characteristics of being empathetic and attentive as features of such a professional pedagogue that Anna ventriloquates:

Example 7: A pedagogic professional is also genuinely interested in promoting students' learning, and can be empathetic to students up to certain limit [...] and listen to what the students have to say.

(Diary 3)

This position is further reinforced by negatively evaluating some unnamed teachers:

Example 8: It's just that not all teachers are suitable for the job; since they are not engaged in teaching with their heart, neither are they necessarily interested in the students' learning. (Diary 3)

As Examples 6 to 8 show, a dialogical self not only includes others as positions within the self but also contrasts with others that are part of what I am not (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011).

By voicing and evaluating characters in distinctive ways, Anna builds an I-position of a student-centred teacher who is genuinely working for students and interested in their learning. Anna reinforces this positioning through narrating and explicitly characterising herself as a teacher:

Example 9: As a teacher, I am easy to approach, and I'm genuinely interested in students and their learning and guiding them, and I can be empathetic to students. [...] I think that being one's own personal self makes it easier to interact with students, since then the interaction situations are more genuine. Moreover, acting as oneself is less exhausting in the psychological sense than enacting a given role. It would be ideal if I could support students in building their own kind of study paths and bringing out their strengths. From the teacher, this calls for time and good listening skills as well as forming a confidential relationship between the student and the teacher. [...] it is important that students get support from the teacher when needed so as to find their own road. (Diary 17)

Anna's way of voicing herself gives her a characteristic I-position. In her narration, she speaks with a student-centred voice of a teacher who is genuinely interested in students and their learning, and who values a genuine relationship with them. She also stresses the ability to be empathetic. Again, Anna highlights the importance of being oneself as opposed to taking an artificial role (see also Examples 4 and 5). She also sees this as a key for genuine social interactions with the students. Furthermore, Anna draws a parallel as regards positioning herself as a teacher and positioning the students. Besides emphasising a teacher identity that matches one's personality, she also points out that it is important that students are their own selves and find out who they are, while her role as a teacher is to support them in 'building their own kind of study paths'.

## BUILDING TEACHER IDENTITY

Understanding people's differences and, hence, uniqueness and individuality is an evolving characteristic in Anna's professional and personal self-construction during the pedagogical studies and is repeatedly highlighted in her positioning:

Example 10: I think that an adult educationist should understand that people are different learners. [...] I feel that for the past month or so (and earlier as well), I've been turning over in my mind the dissimilarity of people. Or we did have this theme already earlier in the autumn, but it seems that I got stuck with this theme. [...] So I have only recently started to understand how different people are, if one can ever fully understand this. (Diary 11) (See also example 3).

In Anna's narrative, progress and continuous development are seen as part of her personal I-position (see Examples 1 and 2). This 'lifelong development' is also reinforced in characterising a professional adult pedagogue that Anna identifies with in constructing her professional sense of self:

Example 11: Although lifelong learning is a cliché, I would use it as a quality for a professional in adult pedagogy [...] or let's say, rather, 'lifelong development'. That is, a person considering herself a professional in pedagogy should be able to develop herself continuously, and she must not get into a rut with her pedagogic skills or teaching philosophies. As developmental tools, one can use one's own processing of matters [...] This idea of 'lifelong development' occurred to me only after the first PSAE week when I realised that, although I had imagined being reasonably good in the pedagogic sense, and that I have been pondering a lot of things touching upon pedagogy, so yet I had to change many of my views within a few days. I don't believe anymore that, in the pedagogic sense, anyone can ever be fully qualified. (Diary 3)

In building her I-position as a teacher (especially as an adult educationist), Anna attributes teacher identity (being, thinking and acting) with certain characteristics through voicing and evaluating both her past and present self and the others in her narrative. As a teacher, Anna voices herself as working for students, being a student-centred teacher who appreciates personal and good interactions with students, which presupposes a relationship based on trust, giving time, listening and empathy. She stresses individuality and uniqueness of both herself and the students, and sees 'lifelong development', 'processing' and 'pondering' as important aspects in her professional development. Therefore, the set of certain characteristics represented and enacted repeatedly in Anna's diaries reinforces a particular sense of her teacher identity (Wortham, 2001). This kind of self-positioning contributes to her narrative identity construction. Thus, in her self-narrative, Anna is not only reflecting on her identity but also actively constructing it in terms of past, present and future.

### 4.4 Work environment suppressing the professional self – renegotiating professional identity

The PSAE seemed to have two different meanings for Anna. On the one hand, as was demonstrated earlier, the pedagogical studies contributed to the change in the way Anna positioned herself as a teacher. Her conception shifted from holding a predefined teacher role towards a teacher identity matching her personality (see 4.2). In this new positioning, her personal and professional self-conceptions seemed congruent in terms of similar characterisations. On the other hand, while strengthening her professional self as a teacher, the pedagogical studies seemed to decrease her motivation for her work as a researcher:

Example 12: It's frightening, too, how my enthusiasm for teaching/guidance is increasing along with PSAE, since the shift of my interest increasingly outside my current job description is weakening my motivation to work in my current job [research]. Luckily enough, it seems I can start teaching at the turn of the year, so perhaps I can then direct my energy to that. (Diary 8) For me, the danger of PSAE actually lies in that I think it's one reason why I am now experiencing such a strong work identity crisis. Or, in fact, I have had this crisis for two or three years already, I guess, but PSAE is opening my eyes more to the notion that the career I have ended up with is not the right one for me. [...] But, I mean, PSAE is increasingly opening my eyes to the idea that teaching/education is work that I want to do. (Diary 10)

Example 12 above demonstrates that Anna's I-position as a researcher is weakening while her I-position as a teacher is strengthening during the pedagogical studies. The study programme with related ideas, values and ideologies represents for Anna a voice that is in accordance with her personal and professional voice. The pedagogical studies seem to promote a new awareness as regards Anna's professional sense of self ('opening my eyes') (Alsup, 2006), thus contributing to her re-defined professional I-positioning (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011).

The importance of using one's own strengths and potential is often stressed in Anna's narrative (see section 4.3.). This is related to the feeling that her present work consisting mainly of research does not allow her to use her full potential:

Example 13: For some time already, I have had this feeling that I cannot make use of all my strengths in my job, e.g. [...] creativity needed for things other than doing research remains almost totally unused in my current job. (Diary 16)

This narrative is in line with Anna's ideal of uniqueness and individuality, finding one's own path and using one's own potential, which she also considers important from the students'

point of view and also regarding her supportive role as a teacher (see Example 9). In Anna's I-positioning, the frequent references to one's true self can be seen as part of the process of maintaining and enacting her present bold and assertive voice in contrast to the past shy, timid and passive voice (Wortham, 2001). Distancing herself from the present work is related to Anna's notion that she is not able to use her full potential, and she feels that the current work does not match her personal and professional interests (Kira & Balkin, 2014). In a way, her current work is suppressing her personal and professional voice and sense of self (Billett & Pavlova, 2005). Anna's dissatisfaction is also related to the fact that the practices, values and ideologies at the workplace (own department) are in conflict with her own:

Example 14: [...] yet my research motivation or my motivation for employment in the current department has been decreased, besides the competition, by the poor management of our department and the lack of support and encouragement for one's work from the superior (or senior colleagues). (Diary 8) And pedagogical education is hardly ever appreciated in our department [...] When I was applying for PSAE and told my superior, his comment, somehow illustrating the general attitude of our department, was that, 'well, go for it then, but do it with as little effort as is ever possible'. But there is no sense in this kind of study, if one is not genuinely motivated and willing to develop oneself! (Diary 10)

The above example demonstrates how positioning is reciprocal (Wortham, 2001). This means that individuals position themselves in response to how others position them. Anna feels that neither herself nor the values she represents are respected and supported by her superiors and the work community (Example 14). This shows, in return, in Anna's disrespectful and critical position towards the work community. She points out competition, lack of support and bad management as negative features of her work environment.

Anna takes a critical position also as regards the university at large. Anna's I-position as a teacher is based on a student-centred orientation that respects students' uniqueness in terms of finding one's own potential and path. However, she feels that the university does not support these values:

Example 15: The latest curriculum reform and time limits set for students to finish their studies have, in my opinion, driven university education in a direction that resembles mass production. Earlier, students could, for example, write a master's thesis for two different subjects, but now this is prevented. Also, the studies must proceed more straightforwardly, which may prevent choosing more unusual subjects as one's minor. We can say, therefore, that academic freedom has also been reduced for students during and after all these reforms. (Diary 15)

## BUILDING TEACHER IDENTITY

In outlining the relationship between her sense of self and the social context, Anna's discourse is double-voiced, drawing a clear distinction between her voice and the voice of the university and the ideology and values it represents:

Example 16: Discovering one's potential, talents, etc. requires time, nonetheless, and also time for oneself. As efficiency thinking has spread into university as well, it may also affect students' possibilities to recognise and apply their strengths. Even though I would truly like to help students in their choices and study-related problems, I feel that the university world does not give much of a chance for this. Because lecturers' posts are filled by research merits (and I don't believe this will change), if you would consider a career, then everything 'extra' like giving more time to students should be cut off. This is one reason why I want to leave university, as so many things there seem inhuman. [...] In the university world, self-interest can surpass humanity, and if you want to help students more than you 'must', then at worst it can be 'suicide career-wise' at the university. [...] Because I have actually already decided to try and seek a job elsewhere, I can now also invest more in both teaching and students. (Diary 16)

Anna's critical position towards the university can also be seen as related to more general changes that have recently taken place in Finnish universities (see Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013). Anna's narrative is double-voiced; she depicts the university's policy as managerial, characterised by mass production, efficiency driven, limited choices and time, while she sees that the traditional academic values and humanistic ideals that she prefers are deteriorating (Examples 15 and 16). Anna's stance towards the situation at the university and her own department resembles the narratives of resistance and loss (Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013). This means that Anna positions herself as critical yet powerless with respect to the hegemonic institutional voice. Anna positions both herself and the students as victims who have no freedom to choose individual and creative options, and who have no possibility of finding and using their true potential. In addition, Anna voices herself as a caring, human and empathetic person who works for the students, whereas the university at large is voiced as indifferent, inhuman and uninterested in students' problems. The gap between Anna's ideal professional self and her current professional reality is huge. Her work environment does not enable her to act according to her ideals and values – rather on the contrary (Kira & Balkin, 2014).

In order to maintain her identity and personal sense of what it means to be a teacher, Anna feels she has to leave the university or commit 'suicide career-wise'. In this light, it is no wonder that Anna's work motivation in the current situation seems weak and wavering and



she is in crisis with her professional identity (Example 12). However, she does not passively accept the current situation but has decided to leave and seek a job elsewhere as she mentions in her diary (Example 16), thereby showing a progressive movement (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010) as regards her narrative self-construction and future plans.

### 5. Discussion and conclusions

Taking a dialogical approach to teacher identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011) and narrative self-construction (Wortham, 2001), this study explored the intertwined relationship between the self and others in teacher identity negotiations. By analysing the learning diaries of a specific student, Anna, the study examined how she constructed her I-position as a teacher during her one-year pedagogical studies. The study focused on the dynamics of Anna's identity and showed how self-dialogue was used to narratively construct one's self and maintain a coherent sense of self (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). The study showed how teacher identity construction involves a negotiation of multiple positions in relation to the self and others.

Anna's case demonstrated how her biographical history and personal sense of self strongly contributed to her perceptions of work, and played a pivotal role in building and renegotiating her professional self (Flores & Day, 2006; Meijer et al., 2009). In fact, the study shows how teacher identity is not merely a professional construct but includes personal histories as well (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Hermans, 2003). In Anna's diaries, the narrative of transformation – a change in the personal sense of self – was tightly intertwined with her interpretations and perceptions of her own teacher identity. Anna's past shy and timid self was continuously narrated and ventriloquated by her storytelling self. By distancing herself from this past self, she was also separating herself from the characteristics that she considered unfit for her teacher identity. Correspondingly, the personal characteristics of her narrated present self were consistent with her preferred teacher identity. In other words, Anna saw that her personal transformation from a shy and timid person to a bolder and more open person made it possible for her to work as a teacher in the first place. Such striving for coherence and continuity between different I-positions reflects the unity of the self (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011).

As many studies demonstrate, changes at the workplace often lead to renegotiation of the relationship between the self and work (e.g., Luttenberg et al., 2013; Ylijoki & Ursin, 2014), and shows in changes in the teacher's self-narrative (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Also in

Anna's narrative, general changes in the university seemed to contribute to the reinterpretation of her work as a researcher and teacher, especially from the teacher perspective. In the course of the study year, Anna constructed a teacher identity that was more congruent with her personal and professional sense of self and related values and ideologies, even though it conflicted with the constraints of her current job in this regard. The pedagogical studies provided a model for 'teachership matching one's personality'. Anna drew on this model in constructing her teacher I-position, but felt dissatisfied with her current work position partly because she could not act there accordingly.

Anna's case illustrated how wellbeing and (dis)satisfaction at work are tightly connected to one's personal experience of the (mis)alignment between the values and ideologies pertinent to the self and the work context (Day & Kington, 2008). Anna's I-position as a teacher was based on humanistic values and ideologies, and she characterised herself as being a student-centred teacher. However, Anna voiced her work community as representing managerialist ideologies and values that did not serve the students' interests. It seemed that this contradiction between her own voice and the authoritative voice (Linell, 2009) of the work community resulted in the crisis Anna experienced. In her narrative, Anna positioned the pedagogical studies as a voice that helped her find a path when confronting a crisis in her work. Anna strengthened her own voice in the struggles between different voices, such as humanistic versus managerialistic ideologies (Zembylas, 2003).

On the one hand, Anna's narrative was based on a transformative success story with the outcome of finding who she is and what she wants to do, thus strengthening her professional identity as a teacher. On the other hand, her narrative was a story of resistance and loss (Ylijoki & Ursin, 2014) in the sense that she could no longer identify herself and engage with her current work position. In fact, transformative identity work in Anna's case led to stronger misalignment between the self and work context (Kira & Balkin, 2014).

However, seeing the self as dialogical and consisting of multiple I-positions helps to better understand teacher identity and the reasons behind the struggles of one's identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). In Anna's self-narrative, there were many tensions – manifested in a self-dialogue and double-voiced discourse – between different I-positions of the self, for example between Anna's authentic and collective voice. There were also tensions between Anna's voiced positions (e.g., humanistic voice) and the voiced positions of others (e.g., managerialistic voice). However, from the viewpoint of Anna's identity growth or

development, these conflicts and their solutions were crucial for the redefinition of her personal and professional I-positions and also for their dialogical integration (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). This, in turn, offered a possibility for progressive rather than regressive movements (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010) as regards her narrative self-construction and future work plans. Therefore, the power of self-narratives lies not only in their ability to seek and represent coherent identities, but also in their ability to express and deal with multiple, fragmented and partly conflicting selves, while providing multiple scenarios for the self (Wortham, 2001). Narrative self-construction also embodies the possibility to free oneself from less productive storylines, as Anna's case demonstrates.

The learning practices in the pedagogical studies were strongly based on the ideas of personalisation and an explorative attitude (Malinen, 2000). The significant impact of the pedagogical studies was also reflected in Anna's diaries on many occasions. In addition, it seemed that the learning diary itself was a powerful tool, which engaged Anna in self-dialogue and negotiating her I-position as a teacher through voicing and ventriloquating both the self and others (Wortham, 2001). In writing her learning diaries, Anna was reflecting on and analysing her experiences, and was thus engaged in *reflective identity work* (Cohen, 2010). For Anna, this opportunity to reflect on fundamental questions relative to one's personal and professional identity seemed to promote a new awareness and professional self-understanding (Alsup, 2006), and led to redefining her teacher and professional position. Through deeper awareness, Anna was able to integrate the personal and the professional in her I-positioning as a teacher (Meijer et al., 2009). This finding stresses the importance of learning to know oneself better as a prerequisite for being a good teacher (Meijer et al., 2009). In teacher education it is, therefore, important to acknowledge that teacher identity is not only restricted in the teacher profession and professional contexts, but it is tightly intertwined with one's personal biography and developed by the social environment and maintained by cultural conditions, such as teacher education itself. Pedagogically, this means supporting every student's and teacher's reflective identity work and, thus, avoiding static categorisations of 'the teacher'.

As for methodologies, Wortham's (2001) dialogical approach to narrative self-construction provided useful tools for the conceptualisation and analysis of teacher identity negotiation and for capturing reflective identity work. The construct of positioning provided conceptual tools for understanding the relationship between the self and others in the context of teacher identity. In narrative approaches to examine this relationship, the data is typically collected

by interviews (e.g., Wortham, 2001; Vähäsantanen & Billett, 2008; Ylijoki & Ursin, 2014). However, in this study, the learning diaries proved a useful tool not only in capturing Anna's identity negotiation as an interplay of the self and others as they appear within the utterances of the multivoiced self (Aveling, et al., 2015), but also for tracing the timeline of her sense making process. Anna's learning diaries made it possible to identify her identity trajectories, that is, change, renegotiation and development in her personal and professional I-positions over her narrated past as well as during the one-year period of the pedagogical studies. As developmental processes often involve struggles between I-positions, the learning diaries opened a window to Anna's self-dialogues in terms of struggles and challenges she faced in her work and career (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). In general, focusing on tensions, doubts and dilemmas not only helps researchers but also teachers in revealing and understanding the various possibilities and obstacles in 'being a teacher'. However, in order to capture the full complexity of teacher identity, future studies could look more closely at teachers' I-positioning by combining micro- and macro-analysis, that is to say, how the professional sense of self is negotiated both in the dialogical relationships in the teacher's everyday activities and in the teacher's self-narrative embedded in the socio-cultural conditions (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Aveling et al., 2015; Hermans & Kempen, 1993).

#### References

- Akkerman, S. F., Admiraal, W. & Simons, R. J. (2012). Unity and diversity in a collaborative research project. *Culture & Psychology*, 18(2), 227-252.
- Akkerman, S. F. & Meijer, P. C. (2011). A dialogical approach to conceptualizing teacher identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(2), 308-319.
- Akkerman, S. F. & Van Eijck, M. (2013). Re-theorising the student dialogically across and between boundaries of multiple communities. *British Educational Research Journal*, 39(1), 60-72.
- Alsup, J. (2006). *Teacher identity discourses. Negotiating personal and professional spaces*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Arvaja, M. (2015). Experiences in Sense Making: Health Science Students' I-Positioning in an Online Philosophy of Science Course. *Journal of the Learning Sciences* 24(1), 137–175.
- Aveling, E-L., Gillespie, A. & Cornish, F. (2015). A qualitative method for analysing multivoicedness. *Qualitative Research*, 15(6), 670-687.

- Avraamidou, L. (2014). Tracing a Beginning Elementary Teacher's Development of Identity for Science Teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 65(3), 223-240.
- Bakhtin, M. (1981). Discourse in the novel. In M. Holquist (Ed.) *The dialogical imagination*, (pp. 259-422). Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.
- Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics* (C. Emerson, Trans.) Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bannister, N. A. (2015). Reframing practice: Teacher learning through interactions in a collaborative group. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 24(3), 347-372.
- Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, 107-128.
- Billett, S. & Pavlova, M. (2005). Learning through working life: self and individuals' agentic action. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 24(3), 195-211.
- Cohen, J. (2010). Getting recognized: teachers negotiating professional identities as learners through talk. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(3), 473-481.
- Crapanzano, V. (1992). *Hermes' dilemma and Hamlet's desire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Day, C. & Kington, A. (2008). Identity, well-being and effectiveness: the emotional context of teaching. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 16(1), 7-23.
- Day, C., Kington, A., Stobart, G., & Sammons, P. (2006). The personal and professional selves of teachers: stable and unstable identities. *British Educational Research Journal*, 32(4), 601-616.
- Flores, M. A., Day, C. (2006). Contexts which shape and reshape new teachers' identities: A multi-perspective study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22, 219-232.
- Gee, J., & Green, J. (1998). Discourse analysis, learning and social practice: A methodological study. *Review of Research in Education*, 23, 119-169.
- Gergen, K. (1994). *Realities and relationships: Soundings in social construction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Educational Communication and Technology Journal*, 29(2), 75-91.
- Hammer, D. & Berland, L. K. (2014). Confusing Claims for Data: A Critique of Common Practices for Presenting Qualitative Research on Learning. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 23(1), 37-46.
- Hermans, H. J. M. (2003). The construction and reconstruction of a dialogical self. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 16(2), 89-130.

- Hermans, H. J. M. (2001). The Dialogical Self: Toward a theory of personal and cultural positioning. *Culture & Psychology*, 7(3), 243-281.
- Hermans, H. J. M., & Hermans-Jansen, E. (1995). *Self-narratives. The construction of meaning in psychotherapy*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Hermans, H. J. M., & Kempen, H. J. G. (1993). *The dialogical self: Meaning as movement*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Hermans, H. J. M., & Hermans-Konopka, A. (Eds.). (2010). *Dialogical Self theory: Positioning and counter-positioning in a globalizing society*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Kayi-Aydar, H. (2015). Teacher agency, positioning, and English language learners: Voices of pre-service classroom teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 45, 94-103.
- Ketelaar, E., Beijaard, D., Boshuizen, H. P. A., & den Brok, J. (2012). Teachers' positioning towards an educational innovation in the light of ownership, sense-making and agency. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28(2), 273-282.
- Kira, M. & Balkin, D. (2014). Interactions between work and identities: Thriving, withering, or redefining the self? *Human Resource Management Review*, 24(2), 131-143.
- Linell, P. (2009). *Rethinking language, mind and world dialogically: Interactional and contextual theories of human sense making*. Charlotte, NC: Information age publishing.
- Linell, P. (1998). *Approaching dialogue. Talk, interaction and contexts in dialogical perspectives*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Lipponen, L. & Kumpulainen, K. (2011). Acting as accountable authors: Creating interactional spaces for agency work in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(5), 812-819.
- Luttenberg, J., Imants, J. & van Veen, K. (2013). Reform as ongoing positioning process: the positioning of a teacher in the context of reform. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 19(3), 293-310.
- Malinen, A. (2000). *Towards the essence of adult experiential learning. A reading of the theories of Knowles, Kolb, Mezirow, Revans and Schön*. Jyväskylä: SoPhi.
- Marková, I. (2006). On the "inner alter" in dialogue. *International Journal of Dialogical Science*, 1(1), 125-147.
- Markus, H & Nurius, P. (1987). Possible selves: The interface between motivation and the self-concept. In K. Yardley & T. Honess (Eds) *Self and identity: Psychosocial perspectives*, (pp. 157-172). Oxford, England: John Wiley & Sons.
- Mead, G.H. (1934). *Mind, self and society*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- Meijer, P., Korthagen, F. (2009). Supporting presence in teacher education: The connection between the personal and professional aspects of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(2), 297-308.
- Mezirow, J. (2009). An overview of transformative learning. In K. Illeris (Ed.), *Contemporary theories of learning*. New York: Routledge.
- Rodgers, C., R. & Scott, K. H. (2008). The development of the personal self and professional identity in learning to teach. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D. J. McIntyre, & K. E. Demers (Eds), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (pp. 732-755). New York: Routledge.
- Seikkula, J., Laitila, A., & Rober, P. (2012). Making sense of multi-actor dialogues in family therapy and network meetings. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 38 (4), 667-687.
- Schaefer, R. (1992). *Retelling a life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Shotter, J. & Gergen, K. J. (Eds.) (1989). *Texts of identity*. Inquiries in social construction series, Vol. 2. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications.
- Sutherland, L., Howard, S., & Markauskaite, L. (2010). Professional identity creation: examining the development of beginning preservice teachers' understanding of their work as teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(3), 455-465.
- Vähäsantanen, K. (2015). Professional agency in the stream of change: Understanding educational change and teachers' professional identities. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 47, 1-12.
- Vähäsantanen, K. & Billett, S. (2008). Negotiating professional identity: vocational teachers' personal strategies in a reform context. In S. Billett, C. Harteis & A. Eteläpelto (Eds.) *Emerging perspectives of workplace learning* (pp. 35-49). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Wortham, S. (2001). *Narratives in action. A strategy for research and analysis*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Wortham, S. (2004). The interdependence of social identification and learning. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41(3), 715-750.
- Wortham, S. & Gadsden, V. (2006). Urban fathers positioning themselves through narrative: An approach to narrative self-construction. In A. De Fina, D. Schiffrin & M. Bamberg (Eds.) *Discourse and identity* (pp. 314-341). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Ylijoki, O-H. & Ursin, J. (2013). The construction of academic identity in the changes of Finnish higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(8), 1135-1149.

## BUILDING TEACHER IDENTITY

Zembylas, M. (2003). Emotions and teacher identity: A poststructural perspective. *Teachers and Teaching*, 9(3), 213-238.