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University teachers' professional identity work and emotions in the context of an arts-based identity coaching programme

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Abstract. In changing work contexts, there is a critical need to adopt practices that support professional identity work in order to promote individuals' resilience and well-being at work. This chapter reports on an investigation into professional identity work and emotions in the context of an arts-based coaching programme aimed at prompting experienced university teachers to process their professional identities. Since different (un)pleasant emotions emerged during the programme, the chapter notably discusses the advantages and pitfalls of using arts-based methods among adults. The findings also contribute to the theoretical understanding of the role of emotions in professional identity processes by revealing professional identity work as an emotional endeavour encompassing both pleasant and unpleasant emotions, such as joy, inspiration, frustration and shame.

Key words: Professional identity, emotions, arts-based methods, teachers, university.

Introduction

Being a teacher is a complex process in the face of changing educational circumstances, as changing educational contexts often challenge teachers' professional role and cause tensions between their professional identity and work (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018). In the university context, external changes notably seem to threaten traditional academic values, missions and careers, and to challenge individuals to process their professional values and interests, for example, by moving from teaching towards research (Arvaja, 2018; Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013). In this sense, teachers are asked to undertake continuous identity work aimed at processing a distinct and integrated perception of who they are as professionals in relation to their changing work (Arvaja, 2018; Beijjaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). According to Day (2017), teachers need to construct and

sustain a meaningful, positive sense of identity to succeed over time as professionals. He also points to the significance of such professional identity for elaborating teachers' efficacy, well-being and resilience at work (see also Vähäsantanen, 2015). All of this implies that teachers' engagement in continuous identity work can produce a meaningful and coherent sense of professional identity that also promotes their resilience and well-being at work.

It is worth noting that identity work is an emotional and challenging process (Winkler, 2018), particularly without socio-emotional support. Although some educational practices and arts-based methods exist to support teachers' identity work (e.g. Beltman, Glass, Dinham, Chalk, & Nguyen, 2015; Leitch, 2006), there is a need for empirical evidence of the underlying social and emotional identity processes related to the use of such methods in educational settings. This is essential if we are to understand resilience in adulthood and elaborate how arts-based methods support professional identity work.

Consequently, this study investigated professional identity work and emotions in the context of an arts-based identity coaching programme. In line with the current discussion (Chemi & Du, 2017), we recognise the power of arts-based methods as stimulative means for learning, including professional identity work. The participants in this study were experienced university teachers in mature adulthood. The research questions were as follows: (i) *What kinds of emotional experiences emerged regarding arts-based methods during the programme?* (ii) *In what ways were emotions part of the professional identity work while using a specific arts-based method called the Professional body?* Here, arts-based methods are understood as including artistic forms, such as drawings, drama work and spoken story-telling (Wang, Coemans, Siegesmund, & Hannes, 2017). Since the professional body method was found to support professional identity work (Vähäsantanen, Hökkä, Paloniemi, Herranen, & Eteläpelto, 2017), this study was also aimed at elaborating this arts-based method in depth.

The chapter concludes with a discussion on the different sides of using arts-based methods in educational settings and the emotional nature of professional identity work. This chapter

suggests that emotions can support and hinder professional identity work, but such identity work can also evoke both pleasant and unpleasant emotions.

Theoretical viewpoints: Professional identity work and emotions in arts-based frameworks

Professional identity is seen as individuals' historically-based perceptions of themselves as professional actors (Arvaja, 2018; Beijaard et al., 2004). Particularly, it captures individuals' current professional interests, ambitions, values and commitments, their perceptions of meaningful responsibilities at work and their future orientations and dreams (e.g. Vähäsantanen, 2015). In this sense, professional identity is a temporal phenomenon that includes aspects related to an individual's past, present and future.

Owing to various changes that occur in different educational settings, teachers must constantly work on their professional identity in relation to their changing professional responsibilities and work practices, which might challenge their existing identity (Beijaard et al., 2004). This chapter addresses professional identity work among university teachers. Within the different conceptualisations in mind (e.g. Arvaja, 2018; Winkler, 2018), we understand professional identity work as a deep sense-making process aimed at enabling teachers to (re-)define, craft, maintain or strengthen a distinct perception of who they are as professionals and what is meaningful for them in their work, and negotiate a meaningful relationship between their identity and work. This implies that professional identity work is always an unpredicted and individual process that can result in different outcomes, varying from maintained identity to transformed identity, even in the same work context (Vähäsantanen, 2015). Overall, professional identity work can be seen as a process where an individual processes her/his understanding of oneself as a professional actor. Therefore, professional identity work differs from the more general learning goals and processes that are involved in the development of professional skills and knowledge.

Although individuals must often carry out professional identity work in changing work environments, identity work is not an easy, self-evident process. It is more difficult to redefine and craft the core aspects of one's professional identity (e.g. core professional beliefs, missions and values) than one's work-related activities (Korthagen, 2004). In particular, experienced teachers find it challenging to transform core aspects of their professional identity because they have defined this identity into something specific over a long period of time (Vähäsantanen, 2015). Therefore, individuals in mature adulthood particularly need special support for their professional identity work. In this study, we address professional identity work and emotions during such a life phase.

To explore emotions in identity work, we understand emotions as individuals' subjective experiences that emerge in relation to social events and context, other people and themselves (e.g. individuals' identities) in their professional lives (Uitto, Jokikokko, & Estola, 2015). This kind of conceptualisation emphasises the socio-cultural viewpoint of emotions, including the interpersonal nature of emotions (Zembylas, 2007). Thus, we recognise emotions as emerging from and being constructed in social interaction and context instead of seeing them just as a product of an individual's internal state.

To date, Winkler (2018) has emphasised that emotions can play different roles in identity work: (i) emotions act as triggers for identity work, (ii) identity work is an emotional endeavour, and (iii) emotions emerge as outcomes of (un)successful identity work. This implies that emotions can, for example, boost or hinder identity work. Although we cannot ignore emotions in young teachers' identity work, we could assume that experienced teachers' professional identity work is even more emotional, since their identity work can be considered more challenging than the one of younger teachers, as noted above.

In particular, arts-based methods can offer a rich and fruitful recourse for identity work via enabling individuals to engage in constructing knowledge about themselves. One of their main premises is to enable individuals' conscious, unconscious and borderland experiences to be seen,

recognised and elaborated (Leitch, 2006). Arts-based methods seem to offer a way to participate actively and express multiple truths, and the interaction of these truths enables new individual and collective meaning making. In this meaning making, the nature of embodied and tacit (non-articulated) knowledge, as opposed to merely discursive knowing, is important (Taylor & Ladkin, 2009). Embodied knowledge goes beyond logical and rational thinking, which traditionally has been defined as knowledge. Embodied knowledge offers a way to surpass the limits of language and become aware of unvoiced and unexpressed emotions and experiences (Leitch, 2006).

Such knowing and knowledge are closely interrelated with emotions. Art itself evokes emotions and thus offers a way to combine embodied knowledge with emotions, thinking and verbalisation. Artistic work also has the power to make identity work visible by offering possibilities for displaying emotions related to bodily stored experiences through externalisations and descriptions of experience. Thus, arts-based methods have the potential to open one up to express and process one's professional identity (Beltman et al., 2015; Chemi & Du, 2017) and perform new actions on the basis of emotions (Chemi & Borup Jensen, 2015).

Methodological outlines

Arts-based identity coaching programme

The specific aim of the arts-based identity coaching programme under study (comprising six workshops offered over a six-month period, each lasting approximately 2.5–3 hours) was to prompt the participants to become aware of, re-explore and process their professional identity in relation to their (changing) work (Vähäsantanen et al., 2017). Consequently, the programme aimed to support the participants' well-being and working in the challenging university context. The small group-based programme was provided by an experienced coach. Its core was social interaction, as the focus of the coaching was on reflecting and processing one's experiences, perceptions and emotions with the support of other group members and coach in order to process one's professional identity. Although the programme aimed to provide an arena for identity work,

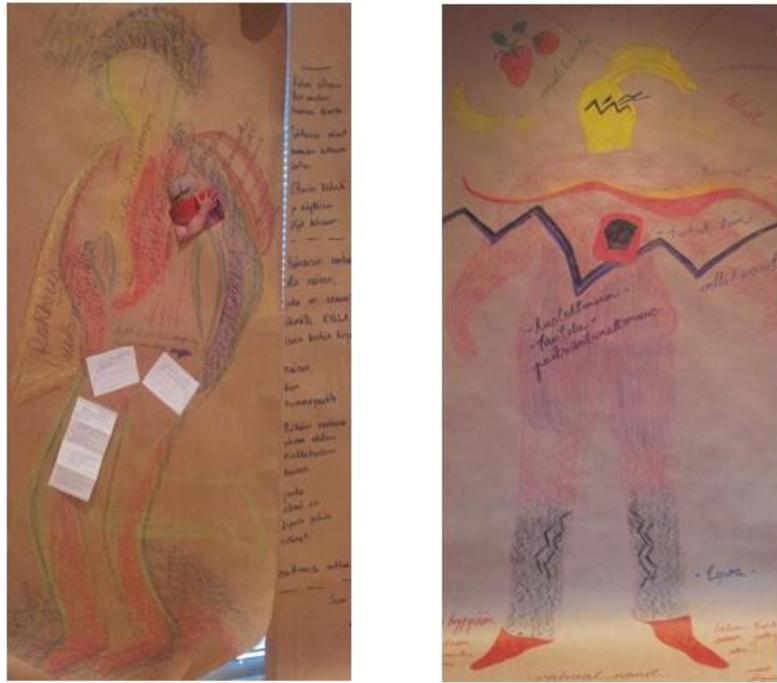
the participants were seen as active actors; that is, persons whose identity work was the result of their actions rather than the outcome of externally specified aims and forces. Furthermore, the participants were able to decide the nature and extent of their participation during the programme.

In the programme, several methods and techniques were used to support professional identity work, including drama work, sociometric practices, pair- and group discussions and visual methods, such as individual drawings and narrated, visual storylines. These were used for different purposes. For example, in the first workshop, to become aware and to process one's professional history as part of professional identity, each participant discussed their history with another participant. Furthermore, for these purposes, the participants illustrated the most significant experience for their professional identity development through means of drama work.

In the second and third workshop, one important method used was an archetype exercise that included an archetype test that the participants completed as homework (Pearson, 1991). Carl Jung introduced the concept of archetypes, pointing to universal themes of human existence that are evident in commonly shared storylines and characters in fairy tales, myths, poems and films. Pearson's archetype test assesses the characteristics of 12 different archetypes (e.g. Innocent, Orphan, Warrior, Creator) that are potentially active in a person's present life situation. These archetypes were explored through (i) sociometry to perceive and visualise one's childhood archetype to others, (ii) drama-based exercises to recognise and visualise what kind of an archetype each person is in their current work community and (iii) a group discussion to consider and share what kind of an archetype one would want to be in the future.

Furthermore, a method called Professional body was used in the final workshop (see Picture 1; Vähäsantanen et al., 2017). This method combines individual and collective processes of professional identity work. *As an individual process* (a home assignment before the workshop), participants were instructed to draw a Professional body on a paper using various materials, such as clippings and drawings. They were able to select these materials by themselves (i.e. they were not provided for them). While personalising and visualising this body, the participants were

instructed to address different themes, such as professional history, core commitments and values, and future dreams (see also Mahlakaarto, 2010). Therefore, they were asked to answer questions such as ‘Where I’ve come from?’, ‘What are my current values and mission at work?’ and ‘What are my future goals and dreams?’. During this individual phase, the participants were not asked to interact, but some participants helped each other to draw their body lines on the paper.



Picture 1. Examples of Professional bodies

Afterwards, the completed bodies served as material for a *collective process* in the workshop. First, the participants described the process of creating their professional bodies and shared their experiences. After hanging the drawings of the Professional bodies on the walls, the participants were able to comment and ask questions concerning the drawings, followed by the creator’s answers. Furthermore, each participant narrated the storyline of their body in more detail, to which the others responded through embodied, drama-based activities (such as the mirror technique) either by using words or silently. The whole process (lasting about an hour in the case of six teachers) was guided by a coach who gave comments, asked questions, and provided the participants with empowering viewpoints.

Participants and datasets

The participants included six experienced Finnish university teachers who had participated in the programme. The average age of these female participants was 51 years (46–57 years). All of them had at least a master's degree in their field, and they had worked in the field for an average of 18 years (16–28 years). The programme was organised to ten university teachers in total. In this study, however, we utilised the research material from six participants, because they were the ones who were able to engage in all data collection phases. In this multimethod study, we utilised the following datasets:

- (i) Six *Professional bodies* that illustrate professional identity from a temporal viewpoint.
- (ii) *Video recordings* (57 minutes in total) from the workshop where the Professional bodies were narrated and processed in the group. In these recordings, each teacher also described the process for producing one's Professional body.
- (iii) Six *post-interviews* (396 minutes in total) were conducted shortly after the programme and six *follow-up interviews* (in total 292 minutes) were carried out some years after the programme. Both interviews focused in particular on teachers' emotions and professional identity work during the programme. They also captured teachers' experiences of the programme, including its methods.
- (iv) Six *stimulated recall interviews* (310 minutes in total) were conducted shortly after the follow-up interviews. In these interviews, each teacher viewed video-recorded episodes of her Professional body work in the group and was encouraged to reflect on these episodes after watching them.

Data analysis

To answer the *first research question*, we applied the principles of narrative analysis (e.g. Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). First, we read the post-interviews and follow-up interviews in their entirety with each teacher. This narrative holistic content reading was aimed at identifying the most meaningful contents of each interview regarding the emotional experiences of arts-based methods. By comparing the similarities and differences between teachers' narrations, it became clear that their emotional experiences of the arts-based methods varied. Overall, we were able to

categorise these experiences into three groups. The experiences of each teacher could be placed fairly unambiguously in one of these groups. Second, a single core narrative was created and named for each group so that each narrative formed a coherent and chronological unity. One narrative was constructed by using research material from one teacher, and the two other narratives were based on the interviews of two or three teachers.

To answer the *second research question*, we applied qualitative content analysis (Saldaña, 2013) to analyse all of the datasets. First, we identified all relevant accounts of professional identity work using the Professional body, moving from one participant to the next. These accounts were re-read to group them into different categories illustrating professional identity work. Altogether, we identified and named two main categories to illustrate the individual and shared parts of professional identity work. Second, we re-read the accounts of professional identity work to uncover the most common emotions regarding identity work processes.

To follow ethical guidelines, to increase trustworthiness and to decrease the bias of this qualitative study, the participation in the programme and in the study was voluntary, the interviews were open-ended so that the participants were able to express their experiences and emotions openly without strict frameworks, the datasets were coded through a collective process, the findings were verified with different datasets, and the participants were able to read the chapter before its publication.

Emotional experiences of arts-based methods

The findings indicate that the participants' emotional experiences of the programme's arts-based methods varied considerably, most notably in the case of drama-based methods. Here, we present three different narratives to demonstrate the different emotions, participation and identity work associated with these methods. It is also worth noting that the participants' accounts of their participation in arts-based working included similar descriptions. All participants felt *safe* and *confident* in the group and were *satisfied* with the considerable opportunities for being heard and

seen and for expressing their experiences and thoughts with other people. The group meetings were also full of *joy, empathy, kindness and togetherness*, and such meetings refreshed participants.

Courageous adventurer

Before the coaching programme, the courageous adventurer was interested especially in its thematic contents. The arts-based methods also fascinated her because of her previous experiences and because she perceived herself as a kinaesthetic and embodied person rather than as a rational one.

Through the programme, the adventurer was *satisfied* with the methods used. In particular, she *enjoyed* and felt *inspired* by the drama-based methods, as they were useful for working deeply with her identity and other meaningful matters in (working) life at the unconscious, un-cognitive and emotional levels:

Well, I really liked the drama-based methods; I think they were really good. Somehow, the fact that we don't act on such a conscious level... So, I felt that the unconscious layers of myself began to move and become visible with the help of those methods, that when in the university world we often work so much with reason and consciousness. So, it feels really healthy and good that there's also another layer that moves, other than just the conscious side. I felt that those drama-based methods were really nice. And it was refreshing and fun, but also touching. You get in touch with emotions – your own emotions.

In this sense, the adventurer recognised the arts-based methods as attractive, and she threw herself open-mindedly and sincerely into different exercises with 'adventurous feeling about what's going to happen and what it is that we're going to do'. Although she felt positively about the methods, it was not self-evident that she was throwing herself into the coaching processes. Instead, conscious decision framed her participation – additionally, *courage* was strongly present in this decision. Courage was necessary for revealing her weaknesses to others and for jumping into change processes despite being unsure of their course and outcomes:

When we went through different kinds of situations through the means of drama. Situations that I participated in, you had to think about whether you have the courage or not. So, there was this question of courage, if you have the courage to throw yourself into the situation and what the consequences are. So that you have the courage to clearly decide that, 'Oh well, now I'll just go and see what's going to come of it'.

In addition to courage, the *confident* and *safe* atmosphere of the group encouraged creativity and throwing oneself into involvement.

The adventurer was extremely *satisfied* with the contents and methods of the programme. The methods were empowering and helped her to process her professional identity (through working on and redefining more profoundly what 'being a researcher' means to her), deal with the meaningful matters in her private life and modify her acting in the work community. For example, demonstrating Pearson's archetypes through drama expressions was meaningful to her. In particular, the presence of a strong emotional trace and un-cognitive processes enabled deep and comprehensive learning – including professional identity work – better than ordinary lectures and group discussions did. Several powerful emotions also emerged while seeing others' drama-based exercises. Unpleasant emotions, such as *sorrow* and *irritation*, emerged especially when the adventurer learnt about, for example, the mistreatment of others at work. Such emotional experiences enhanced one's clarity about one's own professional values and facilitated to change one's behaviour at work.

Surprised experiencer

Before the coaching programme, the surprised experiencer had no extensive experience of arts-based methods, including drama methods. She perceived herself strongly as a verbal learner, and she had notably worked in dialogical environments that supported acting at conscious levels. Although she was *suspicious* of unfamiliar arts-based methods, she decided to participate in the programme due to its interesting thematic contents.

During the programme, the experiencer was not suspicious, reserved and cautious anymore while participating in drama-based methods. Instead, she recognised that she participated actively and threw herself spontaneously into different exercises. She was extremely *surprised* about such participation because she did not see herself as a drama person. Due to this surprise, she was *confused* and reflected on the methods and her unexpected activities. It seems that the experiencer was riveted by unfamiliar drama methods that activated her to participate spontaneously:

I noticed being amazed that wow, how you act in a way that you can't know in advance, and don't understand afterwards how it went... But it's good to acknowledge that people probably behaved spontaneously in these situations and probably wouldn't have done so if they had thought about it more carefully. At least I felt like that at some point... I was really surprised that I found myself, for example, in that situation, where the coach said that please come here, and I just went and talked about a co-worker openly in a negative way. So, I think I screwed up there a little bit. I was ashamed afterwards, and I was thinking how in this kind of dramatisation you can exceed yourself, go beyond your own limits.

Afterwards, she felt at least some *shame* and *regret* when thinking about situations where she felt that she had revealed too much about work-related matters and persons. Consequently, she thought that she should have been more cautious without throwing herself headlong into coaching: 'Yeah, I was annoyed afterwards that I should have been more careful, but I just somehow fell into such situations. I didn't like much myself afterwards'. Although the experiencer felt that the drama-based methods, in a sense enticed her to participate without making a clear and conscious decision to do so, she emphasised that she, not the coach, was in charge of her own activities.

Overall, the drama-based methods did not convince the experiencer. After the programme, she still felt that such methods did not suit her, although she noted that arts-based methods can lead towards novel expressions that can reveal unconscious matters:

Those exercises were very captivating. In a way, I did more than I had thought to do. The action swept you away. And then some things came out which you sometimes should take up. Probably, you could express yourself very differently through the means of drama compared to mere words, like in which position you are or how. Those moves are very meaningful, such

as facial expressions and expressions in general.

Although arts-based methods caused some unpleasant emotions, the experiencer was overall quite *satisfied* with the coaching programme. The programme helped her reflect her core professional interests; consequently, her professional identity as a teacher was strengthened and socially accepted. In particular, she was pleased with the discussion with other participants, as they supported her identity work and brought, for example, *joy* and *empowerment* to her private life.

Cautious observer

The cautious observer had previous experience of arts-based methods, and she was not convinced of their suitability for her as a learner and a person, since she was not such an artistic and visual person. Instead, she was quite critical and cautious of such methods because she felt that they were not the most suitable method for learning and handling matters.

After the programme, the observer felt that discussions with other participants were the best part of the programme, whereas arts-based methods, such as drama methods, did not motivate her. The main reason for this was that she did not understand their actual and profound idea and intention:

Those drama exercises didn't really touch me. I somehow couldn't get into them at all. I couldn't really tune myself into them. Those drama-based things, because I just don't see the point... Like with some movement, you describe something you want to communicate to another person. I just don't understand it at all...

In these kinds of situations, *irritation* and *frustration* also emerged.

Since drama-based methods did not motivate and inspire the observer, they did not provoke her to participate actively and throw herself spontaneously into different exercise processes. Rather, she was mainly reserved and consciously controlled her participation. In particular, she avoided situations where she might get too involved in situations or offend other participants. She also refused to participate in some exercises because they were against her values and ways of

acting. For example, she did not want to say something nasty to another person in the drama exercise as she was supposed to. That is, it seemed that the observer made conscious decisions not to participate actively in arts-based exercises. She also mentioned that the safe atmosphere of the group gave her *courage* to refuse to do exercises.

Overall, the arts-based methods did not please the observer because they were outside of her comfort zone. Such methods might have helped her describe previous events in life and work, but did not make it truly possible to gain new inspiration about her (professional) identity:

I think the drama exercises, they didn't really give me anything. I guess it was interesting to get to know about them, but I didn't find them very useful... It was nice to be able to deal with an earlier event in this drama-based moment. But that it would've advanced something or created some new understanding, that didn't happen.

In this sense, the utilisation of drama-based methods did not provide a very successful learning experience for the observer. However, the other methods – mainly discussions with other participants – provided an arena for reflecting and strengthening her professional identity (including a perception of her strengths and weaknesses, as well as her core mission as a teacher) while gaining others' acceptance of core aspects of her professional identity.

Emotional professional identity work via creating and sharing one's Professional body

Despite the contradictory experiences of the arts-based programme reported above, all participants experienced the Professional body method mostly as positive. In relation to the second research question, we concentrated on the ways in which emotions were part of the professional identity work while using this method. Here, two categories are presented: (i) Individual professional identity work that demonstrates different emotions and forms of identity work via processing one's Professional body; and (ii) Collective emotional experiences in a group while sharing one's Professional body.

Emotional identity work as an individual process

All of the participants described the core elements, grounds and future aspirations of their professional identity through their Professional body. Using this method in a safe and creative environment evoked particularly pleasant emotions and supported participants' commitment and well-being at work, as we shall demonstrate next.

The method allowed for identifying and explicating the core elements of one's professional identity. In creating and processing their Professional bodies, the teachers used and highlighted the meanings of colours and symbols (e.g. scout scarf, rock, thunderbolt). Creative and illustrative ways were especially helpful in expressing the emotional and embodied aspects of identity work better than via writing.

When I was making this, there were a lot of colours. I also added some words, but different feelings and everything on top of my drawing. Then I was wondering how I ended up in this profession and so on, but there's a lot of this emotional side. In place of the heart, there's a big black stone, but there's also red. The head has light, but there are also black, painful thunderbolts coming out of it, so in this kind of moment, you learn to walk by taking small steps.

Ultimately, the Professional body method was a powerful way of shaping and strengthening one's professional identity, where visualising was a central way to process and express one's inner thoughts and emotions. The process of creating one's Professional body evoked various pleasant emotions, such as *satisfaction*, *joy* and *inspiration*. Inspiration boosted the process of creating one's professional identity through elaborations on one's professional strengths, commitments and future dreams. Satisfaction and joy supported the strengthening and shaping of professional identity through becoming aware of the core elements in one's own professional identity. Thus, these pleasant emotions offered a foundation for their professional identity work.

However, some participants felt uncomfortable with the Professional body method because they did not see themselves as 'artistic or visual persons'. For them, the identity work was hindered because of the *frustration* towards the art-based ways of working that they did not find helpful for

themselves. For some participants, the unpleasant emotions emerged especially as outcomes of the identity work. Despite regarding the creation of the Professional body as a pleasant task, some participants assessed the outcome as ‘quite modest, since this is not a natural way of working for me’. In this case, the university teachers expressed *shame* as an outcome of quite unsuccessful arts-based identity work.

In their Professional bodies, the teachers also recognised their values and described the (im)balance between their current professional duties (e.g. research and teaching) or between different life areas – most typically work and family life:

The Professional body image, while creating it or afterwards... I was thinking what my mottos for coping or working really are, which values are important to me, the values that carry me in my work and life, and also what my options considering work are, if there are any options. So, I acknowledged these, and I sometimes go back to these things. It was somehow nice that they were in the body. Through the body image, I think about doing research and teaching; those are my two hands. And then I can ponder if they're in balance or not and what the ideal situation would be. Like, it's very easy to perceive identity-related issues as a part of your body.

For some participants, finding a work– private life balance was one of the main issues reflected in their Professional bodies and also in relation to their current life situation. Here, they experienced more *courage* in making wise decisions according to their personal values to strike a balance between their professional and personal lives. They also expressed more *compassion* towards themselves. Thus, these comfortable – one could also say relieving – emotions were evoked as a consequence of identity work, especially when elaborating the current goals and future aspirations.

Since the participants were in mature adulthood, the issue of ageing was evident, and professional identity was reflected in terms of this shared life phase. In the group discussion, participants created and used the narrative of ‘a mean old hag’ and gave it a very positive connotation of a strong woman who knows and respects herself and is an agentic actor in defining herself.

It's like about defining yourself and what's important to you. Before everything went according to different kinds of needs, when the children were small... other people's needs and the needs at work. Now, I'm beginning to be like a mean old hag, who takes her own space.

Professional identity work was an emotional endeavour that, besides evoking pleasant emotions, included tensions and unpleasant emotions. Processing one's Professional body was accompanied by emotions of *frustration*, *confusion* and *compassion* in relation to one's identity work. This was typically the case when participants reflected and realised that they were still working with the very same issues that they had experienced previously. Consequently, this evoked frustration regarding the slowness of the change process, and the lack of learning was accompanied by 'Irritation, because it is still the same. No learning at all'. In this sense, emotions emerged from slow and even unsuccessful identity work. However, at the same time, they also felt compassion towards themselves when accepting their identity re-defining to be a slow and time-consuming process.

Collective emotional experiences in a group through sharing identity work

The Professional body method also offered ways and space for collective sharing and experiencing among the participants. Verbalising its contents and meanings offered a new way to elaborate on one's professional values, core commitments, main strengths and expectations and dreams. Although the Professional body task was an individual one, it was not possible to complete without help. Some participants drew their body lines on a paper with other participants. They found the drawing of their figure with colleagues to be a *joyful* situation with togetherness. The physical and embodied nature of being drawn by a colleague and seeing one's actual-size body figure was also a powerful experience. This offered tools to see oneself from a new angle and also to work on and redefine one's own identity.

I didn't want to take the position that I had been drawn into because it looked horribly speedy. So then I drew myself in a slightly calmer position. I'm somehow really happy about this discovery, and I'm probably gonna work on this in my life now.

An essential part of the process was sharing one's Professional body in a workshop through visual and spoken storytelling. This enabled collective identity work in two different ways during the workshop meeting. This happened, first, through sharing one's professional identity work process and the Professional body, and getting feedback from the others. As one of the participants describes below, collective working offered new reflections of oneself through the eyes of others:

It was also very good when we got comments on these bodies through the mirroring technique. Somehow, the fact that the mirror is given to you, how you've been heard and how others understand you. So, I think, as a situation, it was extremely efficient – a really good and functional situation... The fact that I've been seen and heard.

Second, collective experiences were enabled through hearing and relating to other participants' identity stories. The process of sharing revealed similarities in the core elements of the teachers' professional identities. At the same time, since there were no strict rules regarding the format of the Professional body, the various ways of undertaking professional identity work were made known. Commenting on each other's Professional body was meaningful not only to the presenter but also to the feedback giver. Thus, the sharing of one's Professional body was a journey, during which *excitement, joy, courage* and *compassion* were present and caused by the collective identity work.

However, the process of describing and sharing one's Professional body within a group of colleagues was not only a pleasant journey; it was a rollercoaster of emotions where *fear* and *shame* concerning the quality and goodness of one's Professional body were followed by *courage* and *joy* when sharing one's story with the group. This was the case for all participants, but especially for those who felt uncomfortable with the method and who described feeling unpleasant emotions. Although the participants were satisfied with being *encouraged* to throw themselves into the process of creating the Professional body, they had doubts about accomplishing and

presenting their task to the group. On one hand, presenting oneself through the Professional body caused doubts about the quality and contents of the outcome, accompanied by *shame* and *guilt* owing to poor performance. On the other hand, the task fostered the agency to act according to one's choices.

When I quite heavily threw myself into creating the Professional body, I was wondering what people in the group were thinking of me, that I made it in this way. But, on the other hand, it's good that you also have the courage to let go. Because there were no rules and I don't have to tell the whole truth, I've just chosen this path and this particular way of creating it. It was a nice exercise; it also gave me an opportunity to show my own creativity.

Eventually, sharing one's Professional body with the group made the teachers feel *encouraged, inspired* and *happy*. The feedback that they received from the others enabled them to see themselves through the others' eyes. Eventually, the emotional mode turned back into a pleasant one via shared and collective meaning making within the group.

Discussion and conclusions

The findings of the study reported in this chapter contribute to the understanding of arts-based practices and enrich the theoretical understanding of the role and range of emotions in professional identity processes. The strength of this study was its utilisation of different datasets collected over time. The weakness of this study was the utilisation of self-reports as data. Nonetheless, self-reports are potentially the most suitable method for revealing participants' actual experiences and nuanced emotions (Pekrun, 2016).

First, this chapter provided a discussion of arts-based methods from the viewpoint of emotional experiences. Although all participants felt safe and confident in the group, the findings depict their different emotional journeys via using arts-based methods, notably drama-based methods. The nature of their participation varied: conscious decisions involved both throwing oneself into action (*adventurer*) and cautious (*observer*) participation, whereas unconsciously active participation was a result of the methods (*experiencer*). Different emotions emerged via

engagement in arts-based working. Emotions such as courage and cautiousness framed the teachers' participation, but such working also evoked emotions such as satisfaction and shame. In the case of the adventurer, drama-based methods with pleasant and unpleasant emotions helped in processing and re-defining one's core aspects of professional identity. In the case of the experiencer and observer, professional identities were strengthened and accepted mainly via shared group discussions. The drama-based methods evoking unpleasant emotions were not so supportive for identity work.

Second, this chapter approached professional identity work through the use of the Professional body method from an emotional perspective. The findings reveal that the method supported participants' creative professional identity work, particularly in terms of balancing teaching and researching duties, becoming aware of what is most important in their work and learning how to navigate towards a meaningful future. Professional identity work was found out to be a rich emotional endeavour, during which emotions both supported and hindered identity work and emerged as outcomes of the process (see also Winkler, 2018). Pleasant emotions (e.g. inspiration) supported the identity work of the teachers, whereas unpleasant emotions (e.g. fear) hindered the process. Here emotions played a role in affecting the ways the teachers approached, assessed and completed their Professional body. In addition, emotions emerged as an outcome of the identity work process. Similarly, both pleasant (e.g. compassion) and unpleasant (e.g. shame) emotions were present.

The findings further underline the meaning of this kind of navigation particularly in mature adulthood. Through individual and shared identity work, the participants created the narrative of a mean old hag representing the power, acceptance and appreciation of oneself as an individual and professional actor. In addition, the collective part of the Professional body work provided information about how one is seen in the eyes of others. This fostered a powerful arena for professional identity work in terms of receiving supportive feedback from the other participants and the coach. Through this feedback, the teachers were able to become aware, accept and

appreciate themselves as professional actors and human beings. In this collective process, both pleasant and unpleasant emotions were salient in the professional identity work.

All in all, the findings emphasise the meanings of both pleasant and unpleasant emotions in arts-based professional identity work especially in adulthood. These emotions were intertwined with the substance of the identity work, but also the arts-based methods per se. Taking part in participatory arts-based practices arose joy and enthusiasm, but also a wide range of anxiety, fear and pressure to accomplish the tasks and to ‘perform’ in the right way (cf. Chemi & Borup Jensen, 2015). To conclude, arts-based methods were not the most suitable working methods for all participants, but at best, they promoted fruitful professional identity work by enabling participants to go beyond language and cognitive ways of knowing and being. Arts-based methods offered new frontiers for participants to become aware of their core professional beliefs, missions and values and to refine or strengthen their professional identities. At best, such professional identity work can enhance individuals’ well-being at work, particularly in terms of energising and increasing their empowerment at work and in their private lives.

Despite being fruitful and effective, there are pitfalls of using arts-based methods in identity work (cf. Brady & Brown, 2013). These methods have the power to reveal unconscious and unexpressed issues of which the individual is not aware. When these issues are worked through in collective processes, there is a possibility of revealing something that one will regret afterwards, as was the case of the *experiencer*. In addition, there must be a safe and confident atmosphere in the group without, for example, any severe conflicts between participants. This highlights the importance of the expertise and ethical responsibility of the coach and her/his understanding of the power of these methods. Overall, the coach must be an expert to guide participants of different backgrounds and orientations on their journeys in individual and ethical ways.

To conclude, we need to remember that our research findings cannot be generalised for other arts-based learning contexts, since this study was conducted within a specific programme with specific aims and methods. However, our study is able to contribute to the discussion on

professional identity work and arts-based methods. This chapter encourages to explore these topics more comprehensively, including perspectives on unpleasant emotions. It would also be important to explore emotions (as an embodied responses and reactions) in respect with professional identity work through using physiological data collected with real-time measurements.

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