

# *Developing Sensitive Sense and Sensible Sensibility in Pedagogical Work: Professional development through reflection on emotional experiences*

*Anna-Carin Bredmar, University Kalmar Västxjö, Sweden*  
Email: [anna-carin.bredmar@lnu.se](mailto:anna-carin.bredmar@lnu.se)

## Abstract

The increased influence of neoliberalism in education has allowed the trend of evidence-based teaching to dominate professional development in many Western countries. Despite increased and persistent neoliberal measures in education, education critics argue that neoliberal reforms have a naive view of teaching. This narrowed neoliberal view both ignores the complexities involved in the everyday interaction between teacher and student and constrains the teacher's judgement thereby limiting their contribution in the educational process. Many educators will note the significance of reflection in learning as essential and often emotional. However, the emotional experiences embedded in teacher reflections are often ignored, even discounted, in the discussion of teachers' professional development. Investigating this phenomenon of emotions in teacher reflections, analysed by drawing on lifeworld theory, revealed how emotional experiences can be a resource in teachers' professional development. To acknowledge teachers' emotional experiences means recognizing that the teacher's subjective and lived body is involved in the reflective and learning process of becoming professional.

**Keywords:** Emotional knowledge, reflection, teachers' professional development, educational judgement

## Introduction

During the last decade there has been increasing interest focused on teachers' professional development among policy makers and politicians (Biesta, 2012b). One could argue this attention is a good thing, as an expression of concern for the quality of education and teachers' work. However, when professional development is dominated by the growing interest of evaluating teacher effectiveness in the wake of neoliberalism, these professional observations have become negative. Currently, neoliberal perspectives frame teachers' professional development predominantly in terms of students' achievements and focus on studies trying to measure the impact

of teaching based on abstract competencies. According to Biesta (2012b) this approach to professional development has prompted a loss of relevance, confirming for teachers the importance in determining the implementation of evidence-based teaching approaches and increased effectiveness. Biesta (2012b) writes, “the key question is how to become educationally wise. The capacity for educational judgement should be seen as a quality of the person” (p. 8). While not denying the need to address technical issues within education, teacher professional development must also consider a humanistic-emotional reflective process in becoming a teacher.

Teachers’ emotions are of significance to their pedagogical work (Hargreaves, 2000; Nias, 1996). Therefore, knowledge pertaining to emotional sensitivity is integral to a teacher’s practice, and central to this discussion is how reflection on emotional experiences can contribute to teachers’ professional learning (Bredmar, 2014). Teachers reflecting on their professional development reveal different perceptions of knowledge, which in turn entail an interface between two worlds that define learning: intellectuality and emotionality. The question guiding this lifeworld investigation is as follows: how can emotional experiences form a possible basis for developing pedagogical knowledge? The fundamental assumption, made by many in education, is that emotions make a significant contribution in pedagogical work and should be central to their professional learning. Teaching depends on a fragile interplay in the encounter between the teacher and the student. This requires judgement about priority and balance between the different domains of education purpose: qualification, socialization, and subjectification (Biesta, 2012b). According to Biesta (2012b), the domains of education’s purpose apply to the teacher’s work both in terms of students’ learning, as well as the teacher’s own professional development. The focus in this article is on the latter. In order to teach, teachers need to be able to make educational judgments about the purpose of education and that requires them to reflect on their everyday work. Such reflection must include a vast variety of fields that comprises the act of teaching. And in the process of developing educational judgment, reflection on emotions is an unexplored source of professional knowledge. Through the use of lifeworld theory (Bengtsson, 2013; Dahlberg, Dahlberg & Nyström, 2008; Mazis, 1993; Merleau-Ponty, 2002; van Manen, 1997), the aim is to analyze how professional development is occurring through teachers’ reflection on their emotional experiences. This revealing of lived experience, drawing on the lifeworld approach, contrasts against a neoliberal measures and metrics approach dominating teachers’ professional development.

## **Professional Development**

The increase of neoliberal interference in professional development has resulted in teacher evaluations being used for scrutinizing professional performance. The evidence-based approach to professional development used in most countries is related to programs that focus on experimental designs such as Randomized Controlled Trails (RCT) and meta-analyses to measure the impact of interventions (OECD, 2003).<sup>1</sup> The starting point of basing professional action on the best evidence available seems unproblematic. However, the question is what kind of role research evidence can and should play in professional action (Biesta, 2010). According to Biesta (2007, 2009), the evidence-based approach offers a narrow way of understanding the role of research in educational practice that not only limits the scope of educational decision making to mere technical

---

<sup>1</sup> An evidence-based approach to professional development can mean more than just RCTs and meta-analyses. This is, for example, the case in Sweden where evidence-based programs in education seem to move beyond “what works?”-questions.

questions about effectivity and effectiveness, but that also constrains teachers' opportunities to participate in educational decision making.

Countering a neoliberal narrative in the lives of teachers, the lifeworld approach in teacher professional development situates the teacher as vital, and suggests that teachers' subjectivities in pursuing their professional selves should not be overlooked (Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2006). Teachers' education is complex and there are numerous programs and models to describe professional learning and how professional competence is developed (Munby, Russell, & Martin, 2001). In addition, there are various theoretical concepts within pedagogical-professional research where the relation between professional and personal attitudes is emphasized such as teachers' practical-professional theories, experience-based strategies, and subjective-educational theory (Aspelin & Persson 2008). These concepts indicate that teachers' actions and thoughts regarding their work are mainly formed during their professional lives in a more or less reflective manner. Hence, teachers are naturally developing a subjective, experience-based teaching theory in both their professional practice and a wider pedagogical context, which includes the teacher's vast lived experience. Central to this professional process in becoming a teacher is reflection about everyday work (Bengtsson, 1995a). This subjective professional theory is constantly evolving and is manifested in the teacher's actions, notions, values, and emotions. Therefore, teachers' reflection on emotional experiences forms a resource that can contribute to an understanding of professional learning from pedagogical encounters not captured in the limited neoliberal measures of what constitutes effective practice.

Reflection is an important step in teachers' professional learning (Bengtsson, 1995b; Mathewson-Mitchell & Reid, 2017; van Manen, 1995). Schön (1983) positions that the practice of reflection could provide significant gains in professional vocational knowledge. Reflection theories have been applied to teachers' work and teacher education in a number of different studies, with the aim to transform teaching and teachers' work into an extensive basis for practical knowledge (Aspelin & Persson, 2008). Schön's (1983) theory is that knowledge is developed through practical actions and, for the teacher, actions need to be subject to reflection. Therefore, what does reflection mean for teachers, and in what way does reflection differ from thinking generally (Bengtsson, 1995b; Ekebergh, 2007)? Lifeworld phenomenology allows teacher-educators a starting point for revealing that reflection and learning are closely linked (Bengtsson, 1995b; Ekebergh, 2007) and that reflection is at the very hub of the learning process (Ekebergh, 2007). The meaning of learning is related to the individual's understanding process (Gadamer, 2004; Husserl, 1970, 1973; Merleau-Ponty, 2002), which means that learning and understanding are synonymous, and reflection is an important step in these processes. Therefore, teachers' personal lived experiences become of crucial importance in the reflection as a self-reflective approach, an active act that requires distance to oneself and the natural attitude (Bengtsson, 1995b; van Manen, 1997). From a phenomenological perspective, reflection means to direct attention in a specific direction and maintain an open-minded attitude: an extroverted curiosity and amazement at what is new and different (Dahlberg et al., 2008). In teachers' professional learning such open attitude needs to be followed by reflection.

## **Lifeworld Analysis**

In order to understand the complexity of pedagogical work as lived experiences, the lifeworld and its fundamental structure, the intertwining between life and world, is the starting point (Todres, Galvin, & Dahlberg, 2007). There are basic structures in the lifeworld that are emphasized in phenomenology because they form a framework for a holistic, human understanding (Dahlberg et al., 2008). This framework includes an understanding of lived experiences of, for

instance, body, time, space, and relations. These four fundamental constituents of the lifeworld may be seen to belong to the existential grounding by which all human beings experience the world (Merleau-Ponty, 2002). Lived means that they include both what is often called “subjective” and “objective” elements that are rooted in experience. Lived body, lived time, lived space, and lived relations can be differentiated but not separated; together they form an intricate unity called the lifeworld.

The lifeworld analysis of emotional experiences is based on examples taken from interviews with teachers where I explored the phenomenon “work enjoyment” in pedagogical work (Bredmar, 2014). The interviews were with 19 teachers, who teach pupils, aged six to 10, in four different Swedish compulsory schools. This study raised an additional question that has become central to this discussion: the importance of teachers’ emotional experiences to their professional learning. As a further exploration on professional development, I analyze how reflection on classroom teachers’ emotional experiences in their pedagogical work can provide deepened knowledge in and about the profession. Grass-roots professional development has been challenged by policy-makers’ expectations of how evidence-based approaches can and should be put into practice in classrooms (Biesta, 2012a). This local and personal-professional reflection as a means of professional development challenges neoliberal evidence-based metric practice. And this is a limiting view that may very well reduce teachers’ ability to develop skills needed in their daily educational setting and places the pedagogical encounter at risk (Biesta, 2012a, 2012b).

Lifeworld analysis illuminates the meanings of teachers’ reflection on their emotional experiences: lived body, lived time, lived space, and lived relations with others and how these phenomenological insights can be potent professional development. The following reflections are from five classroom teachers: Anna, Cecilia, Felicia, Lisa, and Ofelia (names have been changed for confidentiality) to illustrate teachers’ lived emotional experiences as a possible source for professional development (Bredmar, 2014). The lifeworld analysis (Dahlberg, et al., 2008) on teachers’ professional development through reflection on emotional experiences points to three important components in the phenomenon: experience-based learning, situation-bound learning, and integrative-professional knowledge. This thematic synthesis is intended to characterize the phenomenon in a more general way and under each theme is the constituent analysis that characterizes the essential meanings presented. The results from the theoretical analysis is related to teachers’ professional development and contrasted against a neoliberal drive of research subordinated to an aggregative<sup>2</sup> logic to measure the impact of teaching, which has come to define teachers’ professional development.

## **Experience-based Learning**

The thematic findings indicate that reflection as a form of professional development for teachers shows that emotional experiences are a potential for vivid learning that are not simply measured. The teacher’s emotions usually shape how a pedagogical situation is immediately perceived and appears to the teacher. Emotional experiences precede reflection and intellectual assessments since a relational context usually first presents itself emotionally. Such experiences are not considered as a neoliberal metric when determining effective teaching.

---

<sup>2</sup> See Levinsson and Prøitz (2017) for a more detailed description of aggregative and configurative systematic reviews in the evidence-based practice movement.

## You just feel it

Feelings accompany a teacher's embodied knowledge of the educational situation. The lived relation to the students and to their school results is often almost hidden in its commonplaceness. When Felicia is teaching her students in her classroom her feelings permeate her as a whole person; her thoughts, her actions, and her values, she "just feels that it's going well." When the lesson is over, her feelings as embodied experiences transcend time and space and endure both in the moment at hand, as well as a working memory to reflect upon.

It's right there in the moment somehow. Walking around with a smile on your face. Letting them out for recess and walking away and feeling good [...] a positive attitude and positive parents and sort of being cheered on somehow, all the time, and sort of, well, then you get the energy. It's not that someone's constantly telling you: Oh my God, it's going so well! You're so clever! Not like that. But you yourself are feeling that, you just feel that it's going well, and seeing results. (Felicia)

Felicia's emotional experiences carry meaning that is confirmed by the results she observes with her pupils. A joyful mood in her work is an ordinary feeling, but her lived experiences are rich, both concrete and abstract references a felt embodiment. Her educational judgement in the situation, during and after the lesson, is not measurable, it's an ongoing lived experience in relation to her work with children. This lived experience is not expressed in words but through her body when she is "walking around with a smile on her face." This is not a cognitive action, but an emotional experience that includes feelings and expectations that are vital for Felicia's pedagogical judgement to act (or not act) upon. She is learning to trust her own observations of teaching effectiveness. Reflection, as a form of professional development, is not limited to measuring teaching performance, but also trusting feelings of pedagogical connection with pupils that is beyond the lesson. The lived experience of joy is a basic quality of teaching that is not included in a neoliberal evidence-based approach to effective teaching, but can be present in the encounter between the teacher and pupils. Joy is impossible to count because it's shared and lived. Professional development should encourage teachers to look for moments of joy and reflect over these moments to understand them professionally.

## What happened?

Fluency in teachers' work could also be exchanged for stress and increased tempo; joy is diminished and is replaced by negative emotions such as failure and discomfort. Cecilia describes the powerful role that feelings can play in her classroom when she is teaching her students.

It's a bit different, sometimes you feel the fluency or as having an awesome feeling, Yes! Everyone knows what to do and I'm...enjoying the kids' work.... But sometimes, you feel that it gets out of hand and that there is a lesson that you yourself either were a bit vague in your instructions, or you feel a bit low some days and then I somehow feel that I am one step behind throughout the lesson. It is increasing its pace, the kids are stressed and want a lot of help, and so you go into the trap of just

rushing faster and faster.... And then you think afterwards: What was it that happened? (Cecilia)

Cecilia's actions are influenced and changed based on how the situation appears to her and the mood that drives the pace of her lesson delivery. She experiences the classroom rhythm quite differently, feelings shift from awesome to feeling one step behind and pressed to increase the teaching speed. Her feelings reveal a strong embodied knowledge about the educational situation. The joy associated with a feeling of harmony in the classroom makes the situation appear open and full of potential, yet this feeling is quickly diminished by the experience of stress. There is a dramatic turn in Cecilia's experience of lived time where an atmosphere of joy and harmony is replaced by a sense of insufficiency—her effectiveness is lived by teaching faster, covering the material quicker. What is driving her pace? Reflection on her emotional experiences might deepen her understanding of how the lesson develops. Cecilia's reflection on her emotional experiences can illuminate new ways of acting in a lesson that gets out of hand. Such reflection could also reveal external underlying pressures. Her emotional experiences in the classroom call for consideration. Where do these ideas of feeling insufficient and ineffective come from? In light of neoliberalism, there is the constant pressure that has come to permeate a teacher's practice; a teacher always has to be effective (Biesta, 2012a). Cecilia might recognize that picking up the pace only exacerbates the neoliberal notion that you are never good enough as a teacher. Her lived experience could show her, upon reflection, that it is not about always achieving more. Through reflection, she can discover, question and resist an external neoliberal pressure in an effort to preserve the atmosphere that Cecilia describes as fundamental for good pedagogy.

## **Reflecting on Emotional Understanding as Professional Development**

When Felicia and Cecilia experiences en-joy-ment in their work, they understand that their teaching is going well; it is an emotional understanding. Joy is the foundation for their pedagogical activity and is of vital importance to their relationality as a teacher. The body intuitively understands a situation long before this understanding can be expressed in words. Gendlin (1962) uses the expression “a felt sense” (p. 16) to describe emotional understanding. Based on empirical studies of psychotherapists and their patients, Gendlin shows the importance of paying attention to the physical changes taking place, for instance, in an interview situation to understand how learning occurs. Felicia's and Cecilia's feelings are intertwined with the educational context and their understanding of the situation forms in the relation between them, the children, and the immediate situation—not some external form of measurement of teacher effectiveness. These emotional lived experiences are a wordless experience for them to act upon. But to be a part of their professional learning, these lived experiences needs to be reflected upon.

To recognize and reflect on different emotional experiences can support teachers' educational judgment and their professional development. Biesta (2012b) calls such ability “becoming educationally-wise” (p.15) and such ability should be seen primarily as a quality of the person, not as a competency to be perform. In other words, teaching professional development cannot be reduced to a result of simply implementing evidence-based teaching strategies. To be able to make wise pedagogical judgment, teachers need to reflect upon their embodied teaching experiences. Biesta (2012a) argues that “wisdom comes with experiences” (p.18). Therefore, the significant complexity of education is lost in most evidence-based programs since implementing

research of evidence-based teaching of what works risks to hinder teachers' possibilities to make their own educational judgment (Biesta, 2012a). Such a restriction may instead lead to "teacher de-professionalization in the name of educational research" (Langelotz & Levinsson, 2017, p 1).

Subconscious emotions and their influence on the immediate moment in the classroom is critical professional development for teachers. Denying your emotional response can lead to premature conclusions, assumptions, and prejudice as well as contribute to a lack of insight. In order for emotional experiences to lead to teachers developing deepened knowledge in their work, they need to be subjected to reflection. Cecilia's reflection over her emotional experience illuminates the importance of developing a tact of teaching (van Manen, 1991) to handle the experience of stress and speed of time in a lesson that gets out of hand. A pressure of not being effective might eliminate the possibility of being present in the moment, which is counter to the prevailing neoliberal narrative of not being effective enough in the classroom. To be present in the pedagogical situation is fundamental in the teachers' lived experience (Bredmar, 2015, 2017).

For Felicia's and Cecilia's reflection on the meaning of lived experiences raises professional development orientated questions: What's working well or not well? Why is the educational situation so smooth and joyful? Or why do I feel insufficient? Am I creating undo stress? Teachers discover and reconsider what, in the educational situation, can be confirmed by feelings—their emotions. Neoliberalism, however, does not take into account emotions in the moment of teaching. If teachers are asked to ignore the emotions that are involved in their work and only act on pre-given methods, the emotions will still have a powerful impact on their teaching. The risk is that, instead of seeing feelings as a resource, they only become an unspoken powerful influence. The observation of emotional experiences can become a source of professional development if they are regarded as meaningful and conveyers of knowledge (Bredmar, 2015, 2017). The powerful physical establishment of emotions contributes to teachers' possibility of observing the work with their whole being; namely the subjective body is involved and engaged in the reflective learning process (Bengtsson, 2013; Mathewson-Mitchell & Reid, 2017). Neoliberalism limits teachers to policies of control that focus upon artificial measures of teachers' effectiveness (OECD, 2003, 2007), constituting a risk to a teachers' ability to enjoy good teaching.

### **Situation-bound Learning**

Teachers' professional development through reflection on emotional experiences seems to contribute to teachers' contextual understanding of the pedagogical situation in terms of both the classroom atmosphere and the temporal pace. The classroom in which teachers find themselves forms a practical basis and is where they need to discover for themselves understanding in their everyday work. Teachers need to be open to the nuances that emerge as important in their students' lives and learning processes, and their collegial relations. They have to find suitable educational methods that are responsive to the curricular directives of the day. Good teaching means adjusting to the learning situation based on what is actually there, not just following what has been planned (Biesta, 2007). Teachers need to develop a professional sensitivity and insight that can guide their choices and actions.

### **Stillness**

Teachers' work often requires fast decisions, flexibility, and an ability to improvise in each specific situation (Biesta, 2012b; Bredmar, 2017; Nordänger, 2010). By observing and reflecting upon the emotions involved in situation-bound lived experiences, teachers can develop

professional knowledge. Anna gives an example of how a teaching situation sometimes is so overwhelming and complex that she needs to take a short pause and a deep breath in order to sort things out. Anna describes the importance of pausing in paying attention to what is going on in the classroom, enabling her to be emotionally present in the classroom.

I actually think you have to make the most of it as well. You can just go about your day without feeling. But sometimes you just have to stop [to] feel, and yes, this works with the pupils, well, it's very... [deep sigh] it's full speed ahead all day, very intensive. But you have to make sure, maybe in the afternoon, to reflect on what was good and not so good. And that's when you feel. (Anna)

Anna's work is "full speed ahead" and intense and this requires her to "stop and feel." Insights do not only arise solely from activities and exercises of different kinds, the purpose and meaning of teaching can also be elicited by stillness and allowing for meaningful reflection. Such moments of stillness can appear in the moment, but also at the end of the day. For Anna, she now knows that she needs to reflect upon her work at the end of the day, in her own time. In her words lies a responsibility: a recollective thinking to reflect on the feelings that she has felt during the day, needing to be brought into words. Anna experiences the incarnation of this presence in the "us" (or lack of "us") in her lived relations with her students, from which derives an understanding of the quality of an embodied encounter as a lived experience. Emotions are naturally interconnective; they contribute in engaging and involving a person in the situation (Mazis, 1993). Since emotions are dynamic and penetrating, they contribute to an ability of "grasping the whole" (Bredmar, 2013 p. 61; 2017, p. 10). Such emotional experiences are usually subtle and profound like a mood, which can make them difficult to express in words and, for Anna, impossible in the moment of teaching. Since teacher work is characterized by volatile situations that can change character quickly, sensitivity to nuances is required.

Anna points to the risk of a teacher not being fully present in a pedagogical situation. A teacher's working day is often intense and complex when trying to grasp at professional understanding. This is an argument for the absolutely central role of educational judgement that can be made in relation to teachers' professional development, which is that teaching should develop into an evidence-based profession (Biesta, 2009, 2012a, 2012b). Anna emphasizes the importance of being emotionally involved in the teaching situation; she embodies it within her classroom. Thus, a teacher's emotions both flow through the educational situation and are simultaneously affected by the situation. The situation is perceived as a whole, interlaced with a number of relations. Anna's lived experience shows professional judgement is not just based on scientific evidence of "what works," but also that, in the stillness, professional development lessons can be realized through reflection.

## **Self-reflection as Professional Development**

After a teacher has been busy and engaged in daily teaching situations, reflection is necessary, for deepening their professional understanding of the specific situation. By adopting a quizzical attitude to one's own emotions and actions in the situation, reflecting on intent, values, and meaningfulness can contribute to one's knowledge of pedagogical work. For Anna it is important to reflect on both "what was good and what was not so good." Through reflection she becomes aware of her feelings connected with her working day. In teacher's everyday actions, they

are often totally absorbed by the activity. Therefore, it is not possible to distance oneself from the ongoing work situation and engage in self-reflection, which a reflected approach requires. It is possible that a change in attitude occurs and there is an increase in teachers' attention, which can contribute to a quizzical attitude in the situation (Ekebergh, 2007). But according to the theory of intentionality (Husserl, 1970, 1973; Merleau-Ponty, 2002), a distance to the situation is required, which makes it possible for the teacher to consciously turn towards "self" in order to reflect. Taking time for such reflection on emotional experiences may not seem effective, but is an important interruption in the flow of lived experiences and makes it possible to observe the structure and meaning of the pedagogical situation. By paying attention to the emotions involved in a situation, a teacher can discover essential aspects of teaching—what engages, touches, and disrupts.

With this perspective of professional learning, which emphasizes teacher reflection on emotions, it becomes obvious that evidence-based programs of "what works" cannot just simply be applied in different educational situations (Biesta, 2007). Dall'Alba (2009) argues that when professional development only focuses on technical acquisition and application of knowledge and skills, it falls short of facilitating teachers' integration into professional ways of being. Becoming a teacher with professional skills requires a transformation of self—developing new ways of being and acting. Treating knowing, acting, and being as separate entities falls short of what teachers' professional development programs are expected to achieve.

## **Integrative Professional Knowledge**

Teachers' professional development-based reflections on emotional experiences is characterized by complex and intertwining layers of professional practice. The analysis supports a view on knowledge where life and world, theory and practice, as well as intellect and emotions, interact in the learning process. Through such interaction, deepened insight into the complex character of teaching can be achieved (Bengtsson, 1995a). Professional development by reflection upon emotional experiences becomes a valuable walkway lesson for teachers and is not promoted through neoliberal agendas.

### **On the Right Track**

Lifeworld analysis reveals two aspects of an integrative perspective on professional knowledge. The first is the importance of viewing practice and theory as complementary and mutually dependent on one another. By reflecting on one's own professional experiences it is possible to deepen and articulate the professional proficiency that is developed in practice. Secondly, a reflection process can isolate personal lived experiences in light of research results and theoretical concepts and, when merged, can contribute to teachers' recognition of themselves as embodying professional knowledge (Ertsas & Irgens, 2017). Lisa recounts how lectures in connection to competence enhancing activities can be confirmed by her emotional experience of her work, as well as contribute to new understandings to guide her practice. For Lisa, an open-minded attitude is important for her to embrace new academic theories.

Yes, it's the same when you listen to lectures. 'Yes, that's right!' You constantly think of things and make little notes in the margin...because you always relate to [your work], as you are interested in this. 'I have that book at home, I need to have a look in it and read some more, that sounds interesting' et cetera.... And I feel: 'Oh, how lovely!' It has many positive effects on the enjoyment of your work. And I feel:

'Yes, exactly, I'm kind of on the right track!' Or: 'That's something I also need to think about.' It's both getting confirmation on what you do, that it works, and getting a sense of direction in what to do. (Lisa)

Lisa describes how, during the lecture, she constantly makes connections to her work, because she feels engaged. Even though reflection always implies a distance to the natural attitude in order to see ones' practice, reflection is never an isolated phenomenon with a clear beginning and end. Reflection is something that happens in a context and in relation to activities. The context includes both practice and scientific theory, as well as subjective theory that is localized to teachers' practice—not a forced neoliberal agenda that is based on abstract competencies. Rather, evidence for what works can be made in relation to lived experiences, and these professional and emotional experiences need to be subjected to scrutiny and analysis in order for an even deeper professional knowledge to be developed (Dahlberg & Ekebergh, 2008; Levinsson, 2013). This does not mean that research and scientific theory provides an exhaustive explanation, but they may be of help in illustrating a deeper meaning of lived experiences in order to reach an insightful understanding of teaching. Lisa becomes a praxis bridge of integrated knowledge: her lived experiences of scientific theory and professional practice are revealed during her reflections during the lecture. Her emotional engagement in her work keeps her interested and open-minded, and she both feels confirmed and challenged.

Lisa's participation in the lecture is an emotional extension, bringing her practice to life. Such personal relational engagement is not valued in neoliberal agendas, and is, therefore, often ignored in favor of efficiency and governmental control over teachers. Lisa's reflecting becomes professional development due to the integrated knowledge process that conveys a dynamic development where personal feelings and thoughts are discovered, which may not have been reflected upon before. The embodied learning, and the movement between theory and practice, has the potential to support the integration of different sources of knowledge and the development of knowledge that otherwise would be hard to grasp and use. This is of most importance for teachers considering that we practice in a neoliberal era in which discussions about education are dominated by measurement and evidence-based programs for effective teaching. Teachers need to allow research theory, subjective theory, and practice to enrich one another in order to acquire new knowledge and deepen insights into the complex nature of teaching (Bengtsson, 1995a; Mathewson-Mitchell & Reid, 2017).

## **Open to What the Kids Want to Give**

The integrative view of knowledge stresses the mutual interaction that occurs between reason and sensitivity in learning. By paying attention to this interaction, the relation between emotional and intellectual knowledge becomes visible, as does how they contribute to different types of knowledge. The increased wave of neoliberalism, however, establishes a difference and opposition between reason and sensitivity that is taken for granted by classroom teachers (Bengtsson, 2013; Mazis, 1993). Presenting teaching from the neoliberal lens is a one-sided picture: it is learning as something purely cognitive (McClelland, Dahlberg & Plihal, 2002). Today's neoliberal trend in education has overlooked how professional development involves the whole person as a physical being (Mathewson-Mitchell & Reid, 2017): one embodied with integrated knowledge.

Ofelia describes the importance of getting involved in one's work in order to understand one's interaction with pupils. In such involvement, emotions are of crucial importance (Mazis, 1993). The emotions evoked in a situation provide knowledge about the ongoing flow and movement that takes place; emotions develop, surge, and subside, and knowledge contributes to the interaction of emotions and reason. Ofelia's description shows that there is something in interaction with students that is hidden if she's not open to receive it, which among other things are often emotions. According to Ofelia you have to pay attention to such emotional flow.

It's an interaction. Not just between the children...something also happens in the relation between children and adults. Yes, exactly and thus you have to acknowledge what you receive, what the kids want to give. But you have to have the ability to see it. (Ofelia)

The professional proficiency that Ofelia talks about as "the ability to see" and "acknowledge what the children want to give," can be developed by teachers in their work. By subjecting such emotional experiences to reflection, this professional proficiency can be enhanced. According to Mazis (1993), emotions contribute knowledge that lacks the intellectual illusion of objectivity. The knowledge of emotions is intimately connected to the body and what touches us, because we feel it in our entire bodies. Consequently, emotions have a special way of contributing both to self-awareness and to an understanding of the relation between people and things (Mazis, 1993; Sartre, 1990). Together, emotions and reason contribute knowledge about the situation that can guide teachers in their pedagogical actions.

This integrative way of understanding emotions and reason as a source of professional knowledge is excluded by the neoliberal movement. Educational practices, according to Biesta (2012b), always serve more than one purpose at the very same time. That is what makes education so interesting and also the reason why a particular kind of judgement is needed in education. To be "educationally wise" (Biesta, 2012b), teachers need to allow both sense and sensibility to interact in their work. The teacher's intellect life and emotional life contribute different elements in the understanding process, thus providing knowledge in different ways (Bredmar, 2014; Mazis, 1993). One way in which emotional experiences can contribute to understanding professional knowledge is by the teacher asking questions of their own emotions and establishing a conscious communication as part of self-directed professional development. To do that as a teacher, one must "acknowledge what you receive" from pupils, as Ofelia points out, and an important component of that acknowledgement is the emotional experiences that are involved in the situation.

## **Sense and Sensibility is Essential in Professional Development**

The teacher is at risk of being controlled by reason, by limiting professional knowledge to only that which emphasizes rational calculations. Instead of an interaction between emotion and reason, there is only the demand for universal and measurable knowledge, which means that an important body of knowledge is lost. The same is also true if entirely emotional experiences unreflectively form the basis of a teacher's practice in action. Emotions always communicate meaning to the person experiencing them, but that does not mean that they necessarily say something about what is occurring in the moment. This requires sensitive and sensible reflection. If utilized properly, as in Lisa and Ofelia lived experiences, a teacher's emotion in a teaching situation can be questioned and explored as a form of professional development.

Emotions are intimately associated with the body, a sense experience. The stronger the emotions, the stronger their manifestations in the body, whether positive or negative (Mazis, 1993). A process of professional development should encourage teachers to feel the way they feel, because it is not until then that the real reflection and discernment can begin. These emotions, however, must always be put in relation to the situation in which they arose.

Teacher's work and teacher education has, during the last two decades, been strongly influenced by pervasive neoliberal ideas. This has led to a dramatic change in teachers' professional duties with the increased demands for assessment and performativity, and the growing discussion of which competences and evidence-based approaches are needed in twenty-first century teachers. Such an instrumentalist view of education threatens the very core of teaching (Biesta, 2012a, 2012b). Such an analysis might illustrate how neoliberalism could devalue Lisa and Ofelia emotive accounts and therefore risks to fall short in offering teachers a way forward. Lifeworld theory, conversely, reveals and acknowledges the importance of teachers' lived experience as a form of professional development. In order to be pedagogical, teaching must be anchored in the lifeworld that engages students, not because of neoliberal agendas, but in the reflective effort of professionals becoming teachers through responsive professional development.

## **Professional Development and Neoliberalism**

An examination of reflection-based professional development illuminates teachers' emotional experiences as key to professional knowledge that needs to be integrated in educative practice. From a lifeworld perspective, reflection involves the whole teacher; it is not just a cognitive activity (Merleau-Ponty, 2002). Rather, it is a complex collection of embodied memories, feelings, and expectations that becomes clear in lived-emotional experiences. The lived emotional experience holds feelings that teachers associate with their work as an important sounding board. Inferring from these teachers' lived experiences helps us create professional meaning from emotional contexts. Emotional experiences are able to point to the relational dimensions associated in educational activities, as well as the existential conditions necessary for this work to function (Bredmar, 2014) within the demands of teaching as demonstrated by Anna, Cecilia, Felicia, Lisa, and Ofelia.

Reflecting on the personal feelings that teachers associate with different situations has dual purposes: it helps the teachers to see their self and the networks of relationships they are involved in as sources of integrated knowledge. Additionally, self-reflection is not only directed "inwards," but also "outwards," which is the linchpin of a lifeworld approach (Todres et al., 2007). The powerful physical presence of emotions demonstrates the interconnectedness between reason and emotion, as well as the fact that reflection not only has a cognitive basis, but is also related to the teacher becoming an educator. A reflective dialogue based on emotional experiences is primarily aimed at guiding and expanding practice to embrace new ways to act and behave as a teacher, as well as the opportunities to transform schooling and education. Professional development becomes an opportunity for teachers to discover, through reflection, their need to continuously develop their professional knowledge and skills as teachers. This is knowledge that is not always captured in pre-given models or the predesigned measurements of a one fits all metric. Rather, professional development needs to be developed in teachers' processes of becoming professionals (Dall' Alba, 2009).

A one-sided theoretical approach to knowledge leads to a marginalization of the individual's experiences and a growing gap between scientific theory and practice in teachers' work. The examination of teachers' professional development through reflection on emotional

experiences implies a quite different position for the teacher, not as the one who is there to realize evidence-based directives formulated elsewhere, but as the one who plays a central role in engaging with what is educationally desirable and required in each concrete situation. Research, scientific theory, and practice seem to have difficulties coexisting in teachers' professional development based on a neoliberal agenda, although these are obviously interconnected in teachers' lifeworld. If scientific theories and research are not in the service of practice, they cannot be used to increase the understanding of teachers' work and, thereby, develop professional knowledge (Ertsas & Irgens, 2017). In the wake of neoliberalism, scientific theories risk becoming just simplified structures and models that lack the ability to illuminate the complex reality involved in teaching. The gap between research and practice is perpetuated. By taking teachers' own emotional experiences as a starting point and reflecting on them in relation to research and theories of education, they become an opportunity to create meaning and relevance in pedagogical work.

## Conclusion

Developing sensitive sense and sensible sensibility in pedagogical work can support teachers in becoming "educationally wise." In accordance with Biesta's (2012b) reasoning, judgement of what is educationally desirable turns out to be an absolutely crucial element of teachers' professional development. The result from this article focus upon how teachers can develop such a crucial ability in their work. Such professional judgement cannot be developed through aggregative evidence-based programs that are promoted in education today, rather it comes with personal experiences (Biesta, 2012b; Dall 'Alba, 2009; van Manen, 1991). Therefore, teachers' personal professional development needs to be highlighted and specifically teachers' experiences—both intellectual and emotional—need to be brought into the discussion of "what comprises" a professional teaching for the twenty-first century.

## References

- Aspelin, J. & Persson, S. (2008). Lärares professionella/personliga utveckling. *Educare*, 1, 27–46.
- Bengtsson, J. (1995a). Theory and practice: Two fundamental categories in the philosophy of teacher education. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 18,(2–3), 231–238.
- Bengtsson, J. (1995b). What is reflection? On reflection in the teaching profession and teacher education. *Teachers and Teaching*, 1(1), 23–32.
- Bengtsson, J. (2013). Embodied experience in educational practice and research. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 32(1), 39–53.
- Biesta, G. (2007). Why 'what works' won't work. Evidence-based practice and the democratic deficit of educational research. *Educational Theory*, 75(1), 1–22.

- Biesta, G. (2009). Good education in an age of measurement: On the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education. *Educ Asse Eval Acc*, 21(1), 33–46. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-008-9064-9>
- Biesta, G. (2010). *Good education in an age of measurement: Ethics, politics, democracy*. Boulder, Co: Paradigm Publishers.
- Biesta, G. (2012a). Giving teaching back to education: Responding to the disappearance of the teacher. *Phenomenology and Practice*, 6(2), 35–49.
- Biesta, G. (2012b). The future of teacher education. Evidence, competence or wisdom? *Research on Steiner Education*, 3(1), 8–21.
- Bredmar, A.-C. (2013). Teachers' experiences of enjoyment of work as a subtle atmosphere. An empirical lifeworld phenomenological analysis. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 13(Sup 1), 1–16.
- Bredmar, A.-C. (2014). *Lärares arbetsglädje. Betydelsen av emotionell närvaro i pedagogiskt arbete*. (Doctoral thesis, Gothenburg Studies in Educational Science, 351). Gothenburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis.
- Bredmar, A.-C. (2015). Emotionell lyhördhet i lärares arbete. In J. Bengtsson & I. Berndtsson (Editors), *Lärande ur ett livsvärldsperspektiv* (55–76). Malmö: Gleerups.
- Bredmar, A.-C. (2017). Emotionell närvaro i pedagogiskt arbete. En filosofisk analys med fokus på det mellanmänskliga mötets betydelse. *Pedagogisk forskning i Sverige*, 22(3–4), 255–275.
- Dahlberg, K., Dahlberg, H. & Nyström, M. (2008). *Reflective lifeworld research*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Dahlberg, K., & Ekebergh, M. (2008). To use a method without being ruled by it: Learning supported by drama in the integration of theory with healthcare practice. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 8(Special Edition), 1–20.
- Dall'Alba, G. (2009). Learning professional ways of being: Ambiguities of becoming. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 41(1), 34–45.
- 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, 601–616.
- Ekebergh, M. (2007). Lifeworld-based reflection and learning: A contribution to the reflective practice in nursing and nursing education. *Reflective Practice*, 8(3), 331–343.

- Ertsas, T. I. & Irgens, E. J. (2017). Professional theorizing. *Teachers and Teaching*, (23)3, 332–351.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (2004/1960). *Truth and method*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company.
- Gendlin, E. (1962). *Experiencing and the creation of meaning*. New York: The Free Press, Macmillan.
- Hargreaves, A. (2000). Mixed emotions: Teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16(8), 811–826.
- Husserl, E. (1970/1900). *Logical investigations. Volume 1 Prolegomena to pure logic. Expression and meaning. The ideal unity of the species*. London: Routledge.
- Husserl, E. (1973/1939). *Experience and judgment: Investigations in a genealogy of logic*. Evanston: North Western University Press.
- Levinsson, M. (2013). *Evidens och existens. Evidensbaserad undervisning i ljuset av lärares erfarenheter*. Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis.
- Levinsson, M., & Langelotz, L. (2017). 'Making' a research user: *Teacher de-professionalization in the name of educational research*. Presented at the ECER Conference, Copenhagen, August 22-25, 2017. Retrieved from <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:hb:diva-12828>
- Levinsson, M., & Prøitz, T, S. (2017). The (non-) use of configurative reviews in education. *Education Inquiry*, 8(3), 209–231. doi: 10.1080/20004508.2017.1297004
- Mathewson-Mitchell, D. & Reid, J-A. (2017). (Re)turning to practice in teacher education: Embodied knowledge in learning to teach. *Teachers and Teaching*, 23(1), 42–58.
- Mazis, G. A. (1993). *Emotions and embodiment. Fragile ontology*. New York. NY: Peter Lang Publishing.
- McClelland, J., Dahlberg, K., & Plihal, J. (2002). Learning in the ivory tower. Students' embodied experience. *College Teaching*, 50(19), 4–8. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27559068>
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2002/1945). *Phenomenology of perception*. New York: Routledge.
- Munby, H., Russell, T. & Martin, A. K. (2001). Teachers' knowledge and how it develops. *Handbook of research on teaching*, 4, 877–904.
- Nias, J. (1996). Thinking about feeling: The emotions in teaching. *Cambridge Journal of Education*. 26(3), 293–306.

Nordänger, U.-K. (2010). Hur framträder lärarskicklighet? – om framträdanden, ramverk och fasader som delar av yrkeskunnande. *Didaktisk tidskrift*, 19(2), 63–80.

OECD (2003). *New challenges for educational research*. Paris: CERI.

OECD (2007). *Evidence in education. Linking research and policy*. Paris: CERI.

Sartre, J-P. (1990/1939). *Skiss till en känsloteori*. Gothenburg: Daidalos.

Schön, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner. How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.

Todres, L., Galvin, K. & Dahlberg, K. (2007). Lifeworld-led healthcare: Revisiting a humanising philosophy that integrates emerging trends. *Med Health Care Philos* (10)53. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11019-006-9012-8>

van Manen, M. (1991). *The tact of teaching. The meaning of pedagogical thoughtfulness*. Ontario: Althouse Press.

van Manen, M. (1995) On the epistemology for reflective practice. *Teachers and Teaching*, 23(1), 42–58.

van Manen, M. (1997) *Research lived experience. Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Ontario: Althouse Press.