

Institutionen för pedagogik och specialpedagogik

DE FÖRSTA SEX ÅREN

En studie av fyra lärares
professionella utveckling med
en yrkeslivshistorisk ingång

av

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AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

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ABSTRACT

Title: The first six years
A professional life-historical investigation of the professional development of four primary school teachers

Language: Swedish with an English summary

Keywords: Professional identity-building, professional socialization, narrative research, professional development

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The present study is the result of research collaboration where participating teachers and a researcher have jointly analyzed and reflected over experiences from professional training and professional work in order to develop an understanding of skills and knowledge that are relevant to the professional development and professional lives of teachers. The focus is on four female primary school teachers' stories. Certain things run through these stories. They are (i) a quest for professional development, (ii) a strong commitment to teaching and (iii) an ongoing identity-building process. The overall purpose of the thesis is to identify and describe these processes and thus contribute meaningful knowledge to the debate on teacher professional development within the Swedish educational landscape. Two questions have been particularly important. These are:

- What individual and structural conditions and processes appear to be important for professional development and career choice?
- Which key events and turning points can be identified in teachers' lives and work, focusing on the early years of the occupation and how can these be understood?

The professional life stories have a chronological structure and they have been organized around three time periods. One of these is The Road to the profession, including teachers' stories about their background, school experiences, past professional life and what has influenced them to take the step to become a teacher, and experience from their education. The second is the first years in the profession. This is the period covering the first three years of working life after teacher education? It depicted a diversity of experience and the experience of strenuous and stressful work situations in which new teachers, with high aspirations, confronted at times unanticipated work assignments and challenging conditions for which they did not always feel fully prepared. However, as well as these tensions of development there also appears to be a period of intense and stimulating knowledge development in which the teachers experienced opportunities to put their ideas about education, development, cooperation and educational projects to the test. Through this they say that they developed professionally in a way that strengthened their professional identity. The continuing work history period is the third period. It includes experience from the three year period following the first years in the profession. Here the teachers describe a process of establishment at each workplace, where the teachers' continuing quest for educational development and change is in the fore, as is an aim toward further professional development and greater stability in the professional role.