

# What is meant by a professional arena at an upper secondary school in Sweden?

19. Teaching and Teacher Education

**Ulrika Bergstrand**<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>, *Lena Bylund*<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>, *Magnus Larsson*<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ulrika Bergstrand, [ulrika.bergstrand@hig.se](mailto:ulrika.bergstrand@hig.se)

<sup>2</sup> Lena Bylund, [lena.bylund@gavle.se](mailto:lena.bylund@gavle.se)

<sup>3</sup> Jessica Nilsson, [jessika.v.nilsson@hig.se](mailto:jessika.v.nilsson@hig.se)

<sup>4</sup> Magnus Larsson, [magnus.larsson@gavle.se](mailto:magnus.larsson@gavle.se)

## **Research topic/aim**

Teacher professionalism today requires a competence amongst teachers to interconnect research with practice (Nihlfors, 2020), which we here refer as a professional arena. In this ULF-project, researchers together with active teachers at an upper secondary school want to explore how it is possible to establish a link between teaching reflected questions posed by teachers and the ongoing research efforts, within the framework of a professional arena. In this arena, teachers' competence is created by dialogue both through a common knowledge base of professional knowledge as well as teachers' day-to-day experience (Bergh, 2015; Jarl & Rönnerberg, 2015). The study asks the following questions: what is meant by a professional arena and why is it deemed important according to teachers and researchers in a municipality in Sweden? What kind of challenges and possibilities are involved in developing a professional arena, according to the teachers and researchers?

## **Theoretical framework**

Shulman and Shulman (2004) highlights four concepts of professional capital such as knowing what is in education policy, moral capital, change capital and teaching and teaching skills. This theoretical framework will be used to analyze the professional arena and can define the professional arena in progress.

## **Methodological design**

The methodologic design is action research (Rönnerman, 2022) which bridges the gap between theory and practice and puts teachers at the center of professional development (Bergmark, 2020). Activities on the professional arena focus is for example on, mathematics didactics, vocational educators, students' academic literacy, and the function pre-service teachers. The empirical material consists of fieldnotes from observations where data is collected by watching and listening to participants when they act or express their opinions (Jacobsson & Skansholm, 2019). The participants also write reflection journals which gives opportunities for a deeper analysis (Rönnerman, 2012). Interviews will be conducted with the participants to complement the data material and are well suited to taking part in the experiences of another person or group (Jacobsson & Skansholm, 2019).

## **Expected conclusions/findings**

The anticipated result of this study is the creation of a dynamic professional arena where educators' requirements and methodologies converge with the research expertise of scholars. The arena could be a tool to strengthen the teacher's professional development through a locally designed competence development initiative in an educational setting characterized by changes.

## **Relevance to Nordic educational research**

From a Nordic education research perspective, a professional arena in an upper secondary school in Sweden could be relevant for teachers at all levels. The novelty of this design is that it takes teachers' point of view as its starting point, rather than researchers' preconceived notions of what constitutes an interesting subject of study in schools.