

## The Educational Practice of School-Age Educare Teachers Teaching Visual Art in Swedish Primary Schools

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this article is to increase the understanding of the challenges that Swedish school-age educare teachers with a certification in visual art experience in their everyday school practice. The study focus on the educational practice of teaching visual art from a holistic perspective which also includes the teachers' perception of their overall work situation and their professional identity. Due to dual professional roles, these teachers are not only required to meet the criteria formulated in the syllabus of the subject visual art, but also to achieve the goals for the educare centre (National Agency of Education, 2019). The method used is in-depth individual interviews with nine teachers, together with observations of visual art lectures and the physical and material environment. The results provide insights into what it means to work as a school-age educare teacher teaching visual art in primary schools, struggling with limited resources and identity conflicts. The study highlights how teachers often end up in a struggle between individual agency and social structures since they have to resist, adjust and negotiate to get acceptable work conditions.

**Keywords:** policy enactment; professional identity; school-age educare; visual art education

### Introduction

The professional role of teachers in Swedish school-age educare (SAE-teachers) has undergone a major change due to teacher education reforms in 2011, which gave certification to teach a practical/aesthetic subject in years 1–6 of compulsory school (one semester of the teacher program).<sup>1</sup> As the responsible teacher for this subject, teachers are not only expected to teach, but also to make assessments and grade in year 6. In 2014, the first group of these “new” SAE-teachers graduated from Swedish universities.<sup>2</sup> One of the goals with the new teacher education was to create a professional identity focused on the school-age educare centre, together with a special competence in a practical/aesthetic subject (SOU, 2008:109). Historically, the Swedish school-age educare centres were oriented towards socially oriented education and care. Since the 1980 s, closer cooperation with schools gradually developed. However, the change in teacher education 2011 affects the professional identity of these teachers on a deeper level. At the same as conditions are created for developing a new and

1 They also have the opportunity to extend their degree by studying another practical/aesthetic subject, which makes them qualified to teach both subjects in years 1–6 of compulsory school.

2 In addition, since 2013, SAEC-teachers with an older education who received their degrees after 1977 have also been able to apply for teacher certification in these subjects.

independent professional identity where teachers can use and develop their competence in a practical/aesthetic subject, they now become even more of a link between the school and the educare centre. It poses great challenges since this new group of teachers gets a dual professional role, where they must keep a balance between two educational activities: the traditional socially oriented education in the educare centre and the goal-and results-driven school education (Andersson, 2013; Ackesjö, Nordäng, & Lindqvist, 2016). By being given two professional roles, they become “professional hybrids” (Croft, Currie, & Locket, 2015). In addition to questions about professional identity, the dual professional role raises questions about policy practice, how teachers perceive their task in relation to policy documents (Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011). Due to professional hybridity, their policy practice not only affects the syllabus of their practical/aesthetic subject but also the goals for the educare centre. While the practical/aesthetic subject is mandatory, a formal learning that is measured in grades and reviews (National Agency of Education [NAE], 2019, pp. 26–32), the activities in the educare centre are voluntary, based on a holistic perspective on the pupil which promotes informal learning and development that cannot be measured (ibid. pp. 22–25).

## Aim and Research Questions

The topic of this article is SAE-teachers who received their degrees after 2011 with a certification in visual art. In the study, I will focus on the educational practice of teaching visual art. An important part of this is teachers’ interpretation of the subject visual art and the resources they have to conduct their teaching. The study is based on a holistic perspective which includes the teachers’ perception of their overall work situation and their professional identity. The following research questions will be addressed:

- *How do SAE-teachers experience their practice of teaching visual art, and what resources are provided to them to achieve the course objectives?*
- *How do they experience their work situation as a whole?*
- *What effects does the dual mission have on their professional identity?*

## Theoretical Framework

The fact that the teachers in the study work in two different educational activities, and that they are given two professional roles, demonstrates professional hybridity. Croft, Currie, & Locket (2015) describe professional hybrids as situated between different organizational groups, where they are forced to move between these groups. They end up in a position where they are not only supposed to balance across boundaries between two different assignments; they are also expected to construct identities as a new professional work force. At the same time as the hybrid role can give potential strength moving between two different professional contexts that enables to view issues in the organization from two different perspectives, as well as ability to retain professional influence across multiple organizational areas, it contains identity conflicts. Croft, Currie, & Locket (2015) stresses the importance of a positive initial stage in

the hybrid's professional life ("liminal space"), since negative and "perverse" experiences in the liminal space risks perpetuating identity conflict and prevent identity transition, which would undermine their potential strength as hybrids. On the other hand, if the negative experience is temporary and transitional, or manageable, professional hybrids are able to improve potential strength as hybrids and retain influence across multiple organizational areas. Heggen (2008) points out that qualification for a professional practice is about identifying with a professional field and a profession; and to identify as a professional in this field. Based on a distinction between professional identity on an individual level and at the collective level, the work of creating and maintaining a professional identity takes place on two fronts: towards other members of the profession and towards different groups outside the profession. The teachers in the study must construct their professional identity through identification with, and against, different professional identities. Days, Kington, Stobart, & Simmons (2006) highlights the importance of social agency in the creation of teachers' professional identity: the relationship between individual agency and social structures (power and status). Individual agency is not just based on the influence teachers have, their personal biography is also an important factor in the creation of professional identity.

The theory of *policy enactment* (Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011) is used to explore how the teachers in the study perceive their expected role and teaching practice in relation to the syllabus of visual art (NAE, 2019, pp. 26–32) and what resources are given to them to reach the course objectives. Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins (2011) point out the importance of understanding how teachers creatively work to interpret policy texts and translate these into practices, in real material conditions and with varying resources. It also means that the implementation of these policies depends on the right conditions and resources for achieving the goals. Since the teachers in the study work in two different educational activities, their policy work also involves the goals for the educare centre (NAE, 2019, pp. 22–25).

## Previous Research

Andersson (2013) has studied how SAE-teachers' professional orientation has developed in different contexts. The new teacher education enables a re-professionalization, or reshaping, of the profession. Decisive factors for the outcome are the organization of educational practice and the teachers' working conditions. The members of this new professional category thus find themselves in what Andersson calls "the field of tension between traditions and the new policy intentions". In this field of tension they are not only expected to find a balance across the boundaries between two different assignments, they are also expected to construct autonomous teacher identities. Hansen (1999) examined primary school teachers' and SAE-teachers conceptions of their professional identities from an ethnographic approach. Her results show teachers dependence on the tradition where they belong. Whereas the primary school teachers' professional culture is described as a culture with a relatively strong classification and framing, the SAE-teachers' culture is described as a culture with weaker classifications and framing.

In 2014 Ackesjö, Nordäng, & Lindqvist (2016, 2018) started a longitudinal research project where they followed students' professional development during their first five years in the labor market, after they graduated in the new SAE-teacher program of 2011. The results show that the teachers after a few years in the profession experienced an ambiguity in their professional role, as if they both belonged everywhere and nowhere in the tension field that is created between school and the educare centre. Results also show how students orient themselves in different directions. While the majority express a bounded identity disposition, identifying themselves with a traditional profession in the educare centre and distancing themselves from teaching the practical/aesthetical subject they have studied before graduation, some students assumed a dual and split professional identity. They had a self-perception that contained both SAE-teacher and schoolteacher, or that they struggled to identify themselves as a new kind of hybrid profession. For these cross-boundary groups working life also becomes a struggle. They often find themselves in a two-front war, with a sense of not belonging entirely either to school teachers or teachers in the educare centre, constantly fighting for legitimacy. Berglund, Lager, Lundquist, & Gustafsson Nyckel (2019) highlight the opportunities that dual competence can provide to strengthen primary education through an innovative perspective. Through focus group interviews, they examined students' self-perception before graduating in SAE-teacher education of 2011. They distinguished three different positions in relation to the dual competence requirement: Re-creators, Co-Creators and Innovators. While the Re-creators actively choose to become either a teacher in the school-age educare *or* his subject, the Co-creators adapts to the education's implementation, producing parallel skills. The Innovators displays a productive creative competence in which the students use their practical aesthetic subject knowledge in the school-age educare activities, and their school-age educare skills in the teaching of the practical aesthetic subject.

Chapman, Wright, & Pascoe (2017) has studied policy enactment in primary arts education in Western Australia. They emphasize access to learning opportunities, quality support from school leadership personnel and development of arts resources, both physical and material as important factors to minimize disruption and make enactment effective in student learning. A negative factor they found in their study on policy enactment was lack of value for the arts as a learning area from the school management.

## Method and Context

As a starting point, a questionnaire was sent to principals in three Swedish municipalities in order to find informants. The principals were asked if they had any SAEC-teachers graduated after 2011 teaching visual art at their school. If this was not the case, they had to clarify what kind of teacher did have this assignment. Even though not all of the principals answered the questionnaire (the response rate was 54%), the responses gave a clear indication that relatively few certified SAE-teachers (graduated after 2011) taught visual art. Furthermore, the questionnaire showed that teachers that were not certified to teach art made up about half of those who taught visual art.<sup>3</sup> *Municipality A* (133 schools) had six SAE-teachers graduated after 2011 with a certification in visual art, *Municipality B* (38 schools) had four, and *Municipality*

3 The questionnaire was sent through mail in February 2019.

C (16 schools) had two teachers. Of these twelve teachers, nine accepted to participate in the study. Contact with the informants was made through their principals. They will be referred to as *Teachers 1–9*. The distribution is as follows: *Municipality A: Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4; Municipality B: Teachers 5, 6, 7; Municipality C: 8, 9.*

The study is based on in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). In addition, observations were used as a data collection tool. Visual art lectures and the physical and material environment, such as school premises and art material, were observed in order to study the resources for reaching the goals in the policy text (Wragg, 2011). The informants taught visual art with different grades 1–6 and to a varying degree of their assignment as SAE-teachers (10–49%).<sup>4</sup> Observations were made of one or two visual art lessons with each teacher. The lessons involved school years 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6. The analysis of the data from interviews and observations has been carried out using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Regarding the findings in this study there needs to be a note of caution. There are limitations to the study. The sample in the study limits transferability, since it was sampled from only nine SAE-teachers teaching visual art in three municipalities. From a qualitative approach, the intent is, however, to reach a wider and deeper understanding of the teachers' description of their school practice and their professional identity, as well as their interpretation and translation of the policy texts. This has been done through carefully conducted interviews that gave the informants time to reflect, as well as a close reading of the interviews, together with observations of the physical and material environment.

The data material in the study was collected in accordance with the Swedish Research Council's (2011) ethical principles for research concerning information, consent, confidentiality and use. Teachers and pupils' caregivers were provided with written information, after which they gave their approval for participation. Participants are guaranteed confidentiality, and the description of lessons and school environments is carried out so that no one can be identified. The presentation of the result is used solely for research purposes.

## Results

Interviews and observations provides insights into what it means to work as a SAEC-teacher teaching visual art in primary schools, working with limited resources and identity conflicts. The study highlights how teachers often end up in a struggle between individual agency and social structures since they have to resist, adjust and negotiate to get acceptable work conditions. The table below displays relevant background data for each teacher who participated in the study:

4 Interviews and observations were conducted in February–April 2019. The interviews took place in the local school context, in a group-room or the classroom when the pupils were not there. The transcription from the recordings has been adapted to written language codes, using punctuation, etc. The interviews ranged in duration from 35 to 90 min, they were recorded on a portable mini-disc recorder.

Table 1

|                  | Graduated | Employed at this school | Teaching visual art | Years           | Other assignments                            | Teaching premise | Group size               |
|------------------|-----------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--|------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Teacher 1</b> | 2014      | 2015                    | 49%                 | Year 4, 5, 6    | Educare-centre year 2, 3                     | Art class room   | Full class<br>Half class |
| <b>Teacher 2</b> | 2015      | 2015                    | 10%                 | Year 2          | Educare centre year 1, 2 Assisting in school | Class room       | Half class               |
| <b>Teacher 3</b> | 2017      | 2017                    | 49%                 | Year 3, 4, 5, 6 | Educare centre year 1 – 2                    | Art class room   | Half class               |
| <b>Teacher 4</b> | 2016      | 2018                    | 49%                 | Year 3, 4, 5, 6 | Educare centre year 4                        | Art class room   | Full class               |
| <b>Teacher 5</b> | 2016      | 2016                    | 25%                 | Year 2, 3       | Educare centre year 2, 3 Assisting in school | Art class room   | Full class               |
| <b>Teacher 6</b> | 2016      | 2016                    | 25%                 | Year 1 – 6      | Educare centre year F-4 Assisting in school  | Art class room   | Full class               |
| <b>Teacher 7</b> | 2014      | 2014                    | 25%                 | Year 4, 5, 6    | Educare centre year 2, 3 Assisting in school | Art class room   | Half class               |
| <b>Teacher 8</b> | 2017      | 2018                    | 10%                 | Year 2, 3       | Educare centre year 2, 3 Assisting in school | Class room       | Full class               |
| <b>Teacher 9</b> | 2014      | 2014                    | 10%                 | Year 2, 3       | Educare centre year F, 1 Assisting in school | Class room       | Full class               |

The results of the interviews and observations are presented through five themes that emerged in the analysis of the data:

- Negotiation and compromise
- Sufficient/ insufficient resources
- Holistic perspective on visual art

- A difficult work situation
- A conflicted professional identity

## Negotiation and Compromise

When teachers describe their experiences of teaching visual art, a clear pattern emerges of teachers forced to be active subjects who have to negotiate and compromise in order to get acceptable work conditions. “Negotiation and compromise” appears as the first theme in the study. Seven of the teachers made an active choice to teach visual art during their teacher education (*Teachers 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9*). They also express a clear personal interest in visual art. Significant is that three had a previous education in visual design (*Teachers 1, 4, & 8*). After graduation, the desire to teach visual art remained. But to get this assignment, all but one had to position themselves as active subjects. This meant that they clearly had to articulate their desire to teach visual art towards the school management. Five teachers had to clearly state that they wanted to teach visual art while they were on their job interview. They made it a requirement (*Teachers 1, 4, 6, 7, & 8*). As job seekers, these teachers had to work actively to be able to teach visual art since they became employed as SAE-teachers. For three of them, it required a great deal of effort since they had been denied teaching visual art at their previous workplace (*Teachers 1, 4, & 8*). *Teacher 8* demonstrates this:

To be able to teach visual art was one of the reasons why I switched schools, I was denied that at my previous school. At the job interview, I was promised to teach visual art, and that was one of my criteria for taking this assignment. It was something that I actively sought.

Two of the teachers had not actively chosen to teach visual art during their education, and they express no personal interest in the subject (*Teachers 2, & 3*). However, they express that after they initially felt uncertain about their competence, they have developed with the task.

All of the informants have an assignment as SAE-teachers. The educare-centre is their main educational mission. In addition to working in the educare-centre and teaching visual art, they assist class teachers in school as well as look after pupils on school breaks. The informants also describe that they often have to substitute for absent schoolteachers. This is not formulated in the assignment, but it is expected of them. Decisions around the schedule and the structure of the assignment are constructed in an assignment dialogue between the principal and the SAE-teacher. There are no detailed rules. The assignment can be changed from one school year to another, just like their work schedule, school premises and other resources. In addition, the teachers describe regulations regarding their schedule and the structure of their assignment as unclear on many points, where school management also lacks knowledge of the application. As shown in Table 1, the informants’ assignment as visual art teachers varies from 10 to 49%, where three of them teach visual art for 49% of their assignment. The percentage of time they teach visual art (if they, for example, would teach 49%) corresponds between the informants, since the scheduling time is broadly consistent and none of them has scheduled time for grading and teacher meetings. The SAE-teachers get their assignment regulated by where they have their main task. If they would have worked more than 50% as visual art teachers, they should be offered an employment with a holiday leave. Since all of the informants have an assignment as SAE-teachers, it means that if they work less than 50% as a

visual art teacher, they work on school holidays. Two of the informants claim that if they had been hired as visual art teachers instead of SAE-teachers, they would have had a higher pay (*Teacher 1, & 4*). *Teacher 4* considers study to get a certification in a theoretical school subject in order to get a full time assignment as teacher.

When decisions around the schedule and the structure of the assignment are constructed in an assignment dialogue between the teacher and the principal, teachers that have a strong desire to teach visual art are put in a vulnerable position. It is largely on the principal's responsibility to recognize the teacher's specific competence and to provide good working conditions. The fact that teachers have to negotiate to get acceptable working conditions highlights how teachers risk being at a disadvantage in the process that governs their terms of employment. These structural problems force these teachers to be active subjects who negotiate and compromise.

### Sufficient/ Insufficient Resources

When it comes to the resources that are provided to the teachers to be able to conduct their visual art education, which is a prerequisite to achieve the course objectives in the syllabus for visual art, the data shows that they are to some extent sufficient, although the shortcomings are predominant. Based on this, "Sufficient/ insufficient resources" is distinguished as the second theme in the study.

Six teachers taught in a classroom that was adapted for visual arts education. However, observations showed that two of them shared the classroom with other school subjects (*Teachers 4, & 6*). Three teachers taught visual art in the pupils' classroom. Observations showed that these teachers were forced to carry visual art material to the classroom. Another thing that emerged in the observations were problems with storing pupils' work (*Teachers 2, 5, 8, & 9*). This aspect was never brought up in the interviews.

Teachers are predominantly satisfied with the availability of materials. However, *Teachers 2, & 3* express that the budget restrictions prevents them from purchasing some of the visual art material they would like to use. Lack of access to computers is another problem that is mentioned by three teachers (*Teachers 2, 6, & 8*). Problems with resources such as facilities, equipment and supplies affects the design of the visual art classes. *Teacher 3* describes this:

We had no money when I started working here; I only had oil pastel crayons and bottle color. I barely had any paper. (...) Then I had to make film. We had no choice. We worked with fundamental values, images, film and ICT.

When it comes to time resources, all of the teachers describe the planning time for lessons they have in their schedule as broadly sufficient for the basic needs. However, the problem is that they often have to substitute for other schoolteachers on their planning time. The time that the informants get for planning is broadly consistent. They describe that the planning time is 50% of the teaching time, which means that ten hours of teaching gives five hours of planning time. According to the informants, schools seem to respect their need for planning time, but they often have to replace an absent colleague.

What is most noticeable in the interviews is the lack of time resources when it comes to school scheduling, scheduled time for grading and reviewing pupils and time to attend staff



meetings. Five teachers describe problems with the school schedule as they only have short lessons of about 40 minutes (*Teachers 2, 4, 5, 8, & 9*). This means that lessons are too short for pupils to complete their tasks, and also that teachers spend too much of the lesson time producing and removing material. The schedule is adapted to other school education and it has been difficult to get a change. Observations confirmed that short time frame for lessons added stress to the work situation, both for the teacher and the pupils. The observed lessons also showed that different group sizes affects the sound level in the classroom. It also affects teachers' opportunities to instruct and help pupils. Inevitably, it has significance on the design of the lesson. Six of the lessons were completed in full class, while three were completed in half class. For the majority of the informants, this means that the execution of the lesson places great demands on them.

What is remarkable is that none of the informants has scheduled time for grading and reviewing pupils. They also lack opportunity to attend teacher meetings and full day staff meetings, which causes considerable problems:

I can never attend any full day staff meetings. Then I have to work at the leisure-time centre.<sup>5</sup> It's such an opportunity that I would have needed to attend, because I don't have any other chances to gather with the other teachers. For example, I know nothing about some of the pupils who come here and things can turn out completely wrong. Therefore, you get to figure out later that this pupil has a problem. I never get any time to find out about these things or to discuss arrangements with other teachers. (*Teacher 4*)

The quote above is characteristic of what teachers describe in the interviews. It clearly indicates problems with time resources that has an effect on the teachers' ability to achieve the course objectives for all pupils. Not being able to attend staff meetings limits the teachers' ability to make individual adjustments for pupils with special needs. Not having the opportunity to meet the teacher staff limits the possibility to integrate visual art with other school subjects. Furthermore, it can also negatively affect the teachers' ability to become part of the teacher team.

When it comes to educational resources, four teachers describe deficiencies in the teacher education in terms of basic practical skills (*Teachers 1, 2, 4, & 7*). Five teachers claim that they experience lack of knowledge in grading pupils (*Teachers 1, 2, 4, 7, & 9*). This can have negative effects when it comes to a fair assessment of pupils' knowledge. None of the teachers has been given the opportunity to receive continuing education, such as courses or study days with other visual art teachers. It forces them to seek knowledge on their own through various channels, often on the internet. This is described by *Teacher 6*:

Competence development is what I miss the most. YouTube is my friend sometimes if I don't know how to make an art assignment, since I never meet any other visual art teachers. I never get to go on any network meeting for visual art teachers, or courses, so I always try to find new things to do with the resources I have.

The quote shows shortcomings in educational resources. It also indicates that the teacher is forced to be entrepreneurial when it comes to seeking knowledge in order to reach the course objectives. The need to be an active subject, and to use existing resources in a creative way, is also characteristic of the challenges that teachers face when they need to conduct lessons in a short time frame and/or with full classes of pupils. This also applies when teachers need to teach in the pupils' classroom and need to carry material to each lesson. Other challenges are the lack of time resources, not having scheduled enough time for grading and reviewing pupils' assessments and being denied the possibility to attend full day staff meetings. The lack

5 Informants use the term "leisure-time centre", which is used in everyday practice.

of resources not only affects the teachers' work situation, it also affects their possibilities to achieve the course objectives in the syllabus of visual art (NAE, 2019, pp. 26–32). The study shows that even if there are some resources for teaching visual art that are sufficient, the limitations are more prominent. The lack of resources for teaching visual art is a structural problem that is added to the problems that teachers experience in the process when their terms of assignment are to be determined.

### Holistic Perspective on Visual Art

When teachers describe their practice of teaching visual art, and how they perceive the subject, a holistic perspective emerges which is clearly linked to their dual competence. “Holistic perspective on visual art” emerges as a third theme in study. All teachers describe the syllabus as open to different interpretations, where it is often demanding and difficult to achieve all of the course objectives. When teachers describe their teaching and their lesson plans for a longer period, it becomes clear that they closely follow the syllabus for visual art (NAE, 2019, pp. 26–32) with an aim to reach the course objectives. It is nothing remarkable because it lies in their teaching assignment to reach these course objectives. Based on this, they grade and review their pupils. What is interesting, however, is that when they describe their view on the subject, all of them express an integrated view of visual art in relation to other school subjects. Significant is that they highlight a holistic perspective on visual art in relation to pupils' learning and development which extends beyond the subject itself. Visual art is seen as an opportunity to enhance pupils' learning, but also self-confidence and motor skills. In what is formulated by the teachers, there are major similarities with the learning objectives for school-age educatee not just in terms of aesthetic creativity, but also the overall view on pupils' learning and development. These learning objectives regard aesthetics as optional activities. From a holistic perspective on the pupil, these activities promote an informal learning (NAE, 2019, pp. 22–25). The holistic perspective emerges clearly when six teachers promote an integrated view of pupils' learning where visual art can be used as a resource in school education as a whole (*Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, & 8*). However, their experience is that the potential of visual art is not fully used in school. The following quotes from the interviews illustrates this theme:

I think that many children need the practicality of visual art. It could be much more interwoven with the theoretical subjects. It is a very small part of school education, but many children would need more. They have a longing when they come in to the visual art class and it is fun to see their development while working with them. The curiosity they have, I think it's great fun. (*Teacher 8*)

Unfortunately, I think visual art is a bit tucked away. (...) I think it is wrong to believe that you conduct visual art education on the lessons just because you draw a little. Moreover, it is a problem that you do not see that it is new knowledge that can be used for more than when you just sit and draw. One of the most important things is that you see competencies of the pupils that you may not see in other subjects. Someone who does not feel secure in theoretical subjects may have an easier time mastering visual art, may have easier to sit still. (*Teacher 2*)

These quotes not only just show a holistic perspective on pupils' learning and development where the teachers have a specific dual competence, but also experiences of visual art having a low status in school, together with lack of knowledge about the subject and its potential for

pupils' learning. This raises questions about whether deficiencies in using visual art as a resource in school education is linked to aspects such as the subject's status and knowledge of it.

The lessons observed clearly showed that the teachers work towards the course objectives for visual art. The teachers that had lessons in year 4–6 presented the course objectives for the pupils. Seven of the teachers use self-made prototypes for the assignment, where the course objectives were attached (*Teachers 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, & 9*). The prototypes were described as a tried-and-tested method that clarifies the assignment for the pupil. Instead of a prototype, *Teacher 4* made a simple sketch on the white-board, while *Teacher 5* used a film to instruct. They both described prototypes as too controlling and limiting for creativity and that there were risks of comparison with the teachers images. *Teachers 6, & 7* used reflection papers where the pupil answers questions about the assignment afterward. The purpose was to increase the pupils' ability to reflect on their own learning process.

What appears in the observation material shows, just as in the teachers' descriptions of their teaching and their lesson plans, that they work clearly towards the course objectives. It is also, what is expected of them in their teaching assignment. In addition, pupils are assessed against these course objectives. What is not as obvious, however, is that in their description of visual art, they express a holistic view that is consistent with the learning objectives for school-age educare. Prominence here is their view on visual creativity and its opportunities to strengthen the pupils' learning and development from a holistic perspective that complies with the learning objectives for the educare centre. Furthermore, the holistic perspective is also visible in the integrated view on education that is expressed by six teachers, where visual art is seen as a resource for pupils learning and development in school education. The "Holistic perspective on visual art" that appears as a third theme in the data thus encompasses several factors that have a development factor in education. The ability to use the dual competence in the development of school education is an example of competent hybridization.

## A Difficult Work Situation

All teachers describe negative effects of working in two different educational activities, but to varying degrees. They all describe their work situation as stressful and conflicting and that there is too little planning time for the activities in the educare centre. Furthermore, they feel that school education has the highest priority, which also means substituting for absent teachers. Overall, the teachers experience a lot of frustration and stress. "A difficult work situation" appears as a fourth theme in the study. Variation in negative experiences is related to the amount of time the SAE-teacher teaches visual art. As presented in Table 1, this varies from 10 to 49% among the informants, where three of them teach visual art 49% of their assignment. The percentage they teach visual art (if they, for example, would teach 49%) corresponds between the informants. The more the informants teach visual art the more stressful and conflicting they experience their work situation. This is also related to requirements to grade pupils in year 6, which is the case of five teachers who also have a lot of teaching (*Teachers 1, 3, 4, 6, & 7*). Important factors are also if they experience problems with pupils' school schedule and if they have other assignments during the school day. After school

ends, they work in the educare centre. In addition to taking care of large groups of children, they are also expected to offer educational activities. These activities are voluntary and based on the educational goals of the educare centre (NAE, 2019, pp. 22–25). The informants have about 50% of their assignment in the educare centre, where the selection of children varies from year 1 to year 4. The following two quotes are representative for the teachers' description of their work situation as a whole:

A bit stressful. Or very stressful at times. Because you have to teach visual art and you have to grade, you have to develop pupils, and then you have to work in the leisure-time centre, which requires something completely different from you. You get very tired. I had wanted to focus on one thing, I think. That is how I look at it. It may sound very negative. However, it is a little bit negative when I think about it. It is actually so. (*Teacher 3*)

I have a so-called combi-assignment. It's fun to teach visual art during school hours. You get the overall perspective on the children. But it's intense. Sometimes you feel very insufficient. During school time, we are many teachers who work around the children, and then when the school ends it is the same number of children, but then we are fewer teachers. Then you should be enough for the children, it's their afternoon. When they are tired. (*Teacher 9*)

The quotes show how teachers experience stress and conflict when working in two different educational activities where they to a high degree are alienated from the process that determines the process of their work conditions when having dual roles. Expectations and demands from pupils, schoolteachers and school management create a conflicted work situation. Informants describe support from the school's management and support from colleagues in the educare centre as important factors to cope with their work situation. Here there are differences between teachers in how they experience the degree of support. When it comes to support from the school management, it is highly dependent on these people's knowledge of the education in the educare center and SAE-teachers competencies. As mentioned before, the teachers describe regulations regarding their schedule and the structure of their assignment as unclear on many points, where school management also lack knowledge of the application. Together, what is described here indicates the need for SAE-teachers teaching visual art to be active subjects who have the ability to demand support from management and colleagues. It also indicates that resources intended for the educare centre are used to support school education. Following quote illustrates this:

Right now, I'm working with a fantastic team in the leisure-time centre. Wouldn't it be for these girls, I don't think I would manage to work so much and in this way. I have a lot of support there. They know that some days it's better to let me be outdoors with the kids, instead of letting me take care of an activity. Some days, teaching visual art is very demanding. (...) During a regular week, it works well, but when it is time to grade the pupils it gets tougher. Then I have very good support from my team in the leisure-time centre. They make sure that I sometimes have the opportunity to go away and work with grading. (*Teacher 1*)

The quote shows that resources intended for the educare centre are used when *Teacher 1* goes away to grade after the school day is ended. Other teachers also bring this up. Finishing up after visual art lessons is another example of this that is mentioned in the interviews. These structural problems raise questions about what happens with the quality of the education in educare centre when resources are used to support school education. It also raises questions about what happens with teachers that don't work with a supportive team in the educare centre. *Teacher 7* describes this:

You work throughout the whole school day, and then you go to the leisure-time centre, and you are pretty tired. Because you work so intensely during the days and then you try to keep up with planning for the leisure-time centre

and we don't have much planning time for these activities. There are far fewer hours compared to school. Even if I work 50% in the leisure-time centre and 25% with visual art, I have less planning time for the leisure-time centre. The visual art classes are no problem to get together, but the activities in the leisure-time centre is a much bigger problem. I am also the only educated person in my team. So then, you have to fight extra because of this. I'm the team leader at the leisure-time centre.

Like the other informants, *Teacher 7* highlights the problem of being drained of energy when the school day is over. Furthermore, she describes the problem of being the only educated person in the team where she is forced to take on a leadership role. Overall, a pattern emerges in the study of teachers experiencing a difficult work situation. Dual educational roles creates pressure and stress, which is reinforced by the fact that these teachers to a high degree are alienated from the process that determines their work conditions. It also takes resources from the educare center. Together with the fact that teachers experience themselves as being drained of energy, this risks having a negative impact on achieving the goals for the educare centre in the curriculum. Consequently, the structural problems highlighted by the informants risk having negative consequences not only on the possibilities of achieving the course objectives for visual art, but also the opportunities to achieve the goals for the educare centre.

### A Conflicted Professional Identity

All informants describe their primary professional identity as "SAE-teacher". This is what they have studied to become, and what they are employed as. They also describe themselves as part of a teaching team in the educare centre. They feel connected with their colleagues here, even if they have different tasks during the school day. There is a well-functioning collaboration where you are expected to help each other. They do not feel that they are fully part of the schoolteachers' team in the same way. The majority of the teachers experience conflicts with having two different educational roles. Overall, they express difficulties in combining their dual competence in the professional identity. One teacher is the exception as described below. "A conflicted professional identity" emerges as the fifth theme in the study. Teachers describes themselves as being "torn between" different roles and different educational activities, as if they are difficult to combine. It does not only affect how they view their work situation, but also how they perceive their professional identity since they are interwoven. The following quotes illustrates this:

It's children coming throughout the day, back and forth, and you are very much torn between it. It's a bit complex, I think. And you are not only torn between groups of children, but you are also torn between two very different activities. It's partly personal, but also because of the children's view of you. When am I a teacher, and when am I a leisure-time teacher?<sup>6</sup> Because it's two different roles. (*Teacher 4*)

Then I would say that I'm a leisure-time pedagogue. That's what I've been all the time I worked here. I can still react when the children say 'there goes my visual art teacher'. That's right, I'm a visual art teacher, but I feel most like a leisure-time pedagogue. (*Teacher 5*)

One teacher expresses how she ends up in-between two educational roles:

6 Informants use the term "leisure-time teacher" or "leisure-time pedagogue", which is used in everyday practice.

The thing is that after this teacher education you end up somewhere ‘between the chairs’ (neither here nor there). For one cannot work at the leisure-time centre as a whole because you are grading pupils, and it is an important part of everyday work life. At the same time, you are not a real teacher either. (*Teacher 1*)

The statement from *Teacher 1* about not being a “real teacher” and at the same time experience difficulties in fully participating in the activities of the educare centre is a clear expression of a conflicted professional identity.

In the interview material, one teacher stands out as an exception. Despite describing her primary professional identity as SAE-teacher, she does not express conflicts with having two educational roles:

I thought about it the other day. Who am I? I have different roles. When I’m in the leisure-time centre then I’m a leisure-time pedagogue. When I’m in the visual arts class room, I’m not a leisure-time pedagogue. I am a visual art teacher. I have not only one identity in this school I have many. (*Teacher 6*)

*Teacher 6* states that she can move between different roles. Unlike the other informants, she does not express a conflicted professional identity. It can be interpreted as she, as a participant in the study, answers what she is expected in accordance with the school’s policy. However, after observing lessons and the school environment, it becomes obvious that her professional self-perception is related to the school context. She works in a very small rural school where different school years are mixed in the classroom, which requires collaboration between teachers. Furthermore, there are no strong institutional boundaries between school and educare center. The schoolteachers and the principal have knowledge about what is happening in the educare centre and its activities. In this school context, the SAEC-teacher is not as alienated from the process that determines the work conditions, compared to the other informants in the study. *Teacher 6* teaches visual art 25 % of her assignment. Besides her, it is the teachers who teach visual art 25–49 % of their assignment that express the strongest statements about a conflicted professional identity. The more they teach visual art, and especially if they also have to grade pupils, the more difficult they experience their dual mission. The study highlights how different structural problems affects how teachers experience their work situation, which ultimately also affects how they perceive their professional identity.

## Discussion

The starting point for the study was to increase the understanding of the educational practice of teaching visual art among a small group of SAE-teachers who received their degrees after 2011, considering a holistic perspective on their overall work situation and their professional identity. The study shows how shortcomings in resources for teaching visual art not only affects the work situation of the teachers when they teach visual art, it also risks having negative effects on the possibilities of achieving the course objectives. Furthermore, the structural problems that teachers experience also risks producing negative effects on the conditions for achieving the goals for the educare centre. Teachers experience themselves feeling drained of energy after the school day ends, and some of them also describe that resources are taken from the educare center when they have to go away to grade or finish up after lessons. It illustrates how the implementation of the policy documents depends on the right conditions and resources for achieving the goals (Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins,

2011). The study highlights how the informants position themselves in relation to the syllabus for visual art in their lesson planning and their assessment of pupils' knowledge. Significant, however, in the informants view on visual art is a holistic perspective on pupils' learning and development where visual art can be used as a resource from a broader perspective on education, which to a high degree is consistent with the goals in the curriculum for the school educare regarding aesthetic activities. This indicates a broadened application of visual art that opens up new learning opportunities for the pupil. The holistic perspective on pupils' learning that is prominent in the study not only shows a creative implementation of policy texts (Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011), it also highlights an innovative, broader perspective on education, a dual competence made possible by the new teacher education of 2011 (Berglund, Lager, Lundquist, & Gustafsson Nyckel, 2019). Another aspect of this is whether the teachers are given the opportunity to use their dual competence and develop a hybrid professional identity (Croft, Currie, & Locket, 2015). It seems that the most problematic aspect of the new teacher education reform is that SAEC-teachers to a high degree are alienated from the process that determines their work conditions.

While the teachers in my study describe their work in the educare centre as their primary professional identity, they have problems identifying themselves as schoolteachers. As Heggen (2008) points out, qualification for a professional practice is about identifying with a professional field and a profession; and to identify as a professional in this field towards other members of the profession and towards different groups outside the profession. The teachers in the study are employed as SAE-teachers; an identity they have been socialized into during their teacher education. Furthermore, they are part of a teacher group at the educare centre where this identity is shared, influenced by a different culture and traditions than the school (Hansen 1999; Andersson, 2013). Since professional identity is formed in the interaction between social structure and individual agency (Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2006), the structural obstacles described by the informants such as uncertain conditions for assignment and inability to participate in staff meetings for teachers' stands out as a decisive negative influence. Consequently, positive factors as personal interest and active choice to teach visual art become less important in the construction of their professional identity. The experience of the work situation interacts with the teachers' self-perception of their professional identity. To be able to develop a hybrid professional identity, the right structural conditions are required. Croft, Currie, & Locket (2015) stresses the importance of a positive initial stage in the hybrid's professional life to prevent risks of continuing identity conflict and prevent identity transition, which would undermine their potential strength as hybrids. Since teachers in my study struggle with poor conditions for employment and limited time resources, and in addition have to fight to be able to teach visual art, this creates continuing identity conflicts and prevent identity transition. This counteract the opportunities given by a dual competence to improve potential strength as hybrids and retain influence in the school education. If teachers won't have the chance to attend staff meetings how can they improve their influence? In addition, the school education runs the risk of losing the knowledge that teachers with dual competence possess. Another aspect is how their dual competence is used in the educare centre considering the stressful and conflicting work situation described by the teachers. The fact that resources are taken from the educare centre to support school education has been noted by researchers (see Andersson, 2013). As we see in the study, teachers depend on their colleagues in the educare centre to cope with their dual mission when some of them are grading pupils and finishing lessons after the end of the school day. Nevertheless, com-

petencies also runs the risk of being unused when these teachers are too tired to work with educational activities.

To be able to become a new type of teacher with dual competence that enhances education, the SAE-teacher must be able to move between institutional borders, between school and educare centre. As Andersson (2013) points out, they are not just forced to find a balance across the boundaries between two different assignments; they must also be able to construct autonomous teacher identities. The assignments are in turn linked to two different cultures and traditions. Hansen (1999) describes the primary school teachers' professional culture as a culture with a relatively strong classification and framing, whereas the SAE-teachers' culture has weaker classifications and framing. It is in line with *Teacher 1*'s statement about not seeing herself as a "real teacher". She also expresses that she ends up in-between two educational roles. It highlights the great challenges that teachers with dual assignments experience when they need to move between institutional borders and try to construct an autonomous teacher identity. Ackesjö, Nordäng & Lindqvists (2016, 2018) longitude survey of students who graduated in the new SAE-teacher program of 2011 displays these problems. Those who, like the teachers in my study, already during their education wanted to work both as SAE-teacher and schoolteacher, a cross-boundary group, got a difficult work situation where they had to fight for legitimacy. My study sheds light on how this is linked to structural factors such as employment conditions but also the availability of resources, especially time resources and educational resources.

The holistic view on pupils' learning that is expressed by the teachers in the study, together with an integrated view on visual art in relation to other school subjects, has a potential to develop visual art education as well as the whole school education. However, teachers describe that the use of visual art as a resource in other school education is a low priority. This raises questions as to whether the dual competence made possible by hybrid professionals is fully utilized in school. Chapman, Wright, & Pascoe (2017) recognized in their study a lack of value for the arts as a learning area from the school management. Whether this also applies to Sweden is difficult to know without a study, but the experiences described by the teachers in my study raises questions. Researchers who advocate that visual art should be used as a resource in school education to a higher degree (see Lindström, 2012; Bamford, 2006) highlight the need for a multimodal, holistic perspective. Lindström (2012) concludes from his research that aesthetic learning has many dimensions and emphasizes the fact that visual art enhances learning outside the visual art subject itself: "teaching and learning about, in, with and through the arts" (p. 13). Other researchers who want to highlight the importance of teaching *through* the arts, not only *in*, to enhance pupils' learning (see Bamford, 2006) have presented similar results. Another aspect of this is the need for pupils' to develop and master visual literacy in an information society (Kress, 2003). The competence to understand and use visual images is an informal knowledge that requires a lot of training on a wider basis in the educational system, not just on visual art lessons.



## Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Study

Through a small, qualitative study with nine teachers, I have been able to increase the understanding of the everyday educational practice: what it means to work as a SAE-teacher teaching visual art in primary schools. They struggle with difficult work conditions and limited resources. In addition, as professional hybrids they have to fight for legitimacy as a cross-border group. Nevertheless, they are also dedicated to teach visual art. Moreover, they have a dual competence that can reframe school education as a whole, not only on visual art lessons, if only given the right conditions. It would be interesting to study SAE-teachers certified in teaching visual art from the perspective of their dual competence, both in their school practice and in the educare centre. This could be done through a qualitative study, using interviews and observations as methods. Another aspect that would be important to study is the school managements' knowledge of this group of teachers and the competences they possess. In addition, it would be important to study how they reason about terms of assignment. The result of the questionnaire with principals in three municipalities showed that there were relatively few SAE-teachers certified to teach visual art who actually taught the subject. Knowledge of SAE-teachers' competencies and terms of employment is important, not only to strengthen the quality of school education as a whole, but also to support this group of hybrid professionals in their fight for legitimacy.

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