

Mature aged students in transitions into new careers through welfare professions?

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Agenda

Background and context

1. What is the merit based educational program?
2. Research questions and investigation methods

Preliminary points

1. Understanding the concept of career
2. Career choice as an internal and an external process
3. Meaningful connections between being a mature aged person and becoming a student and a professional

Questions

Background and context

Denmark

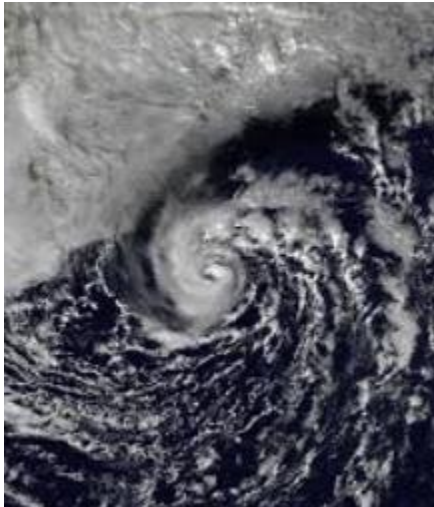
Lack of labour within the welfare professions

How do we recruit students?



Challenges:

In 2030 there will be a shortage of 36.500 teachers, social educators, nurses and social workers in Denmark



- Declining democratic recruitment base
- Declining motivation among young students to pursue welfare education programmes
- Problems retaining newly graduated and hired professionals and at the same time experienced staff tend to leave the professions

Merit based education?

Programmes in DK for mature age students in transition into new careers

1. Approximately 30-year-old scheme
2. Provides access to higher education through approved validation of prior learning (VPL)
 - Applicants can get access to the educations through the validation of **at least two years of relevant work experience**, or
 - Having a **higher educational degree**; (minimum at a bachelor level)



Research Question & Methods



Focus

Mature age students' perspectives on career and educational choices as well as their experiences encountering merit-based education.

Questions

*What motivates the mature aged students to make a decision regarding new direction in **career and education**?*

*How do the Mature age students **experience** merit based education?*

*And how do they **interpret** their situation in terms of developing a new professional identity?*

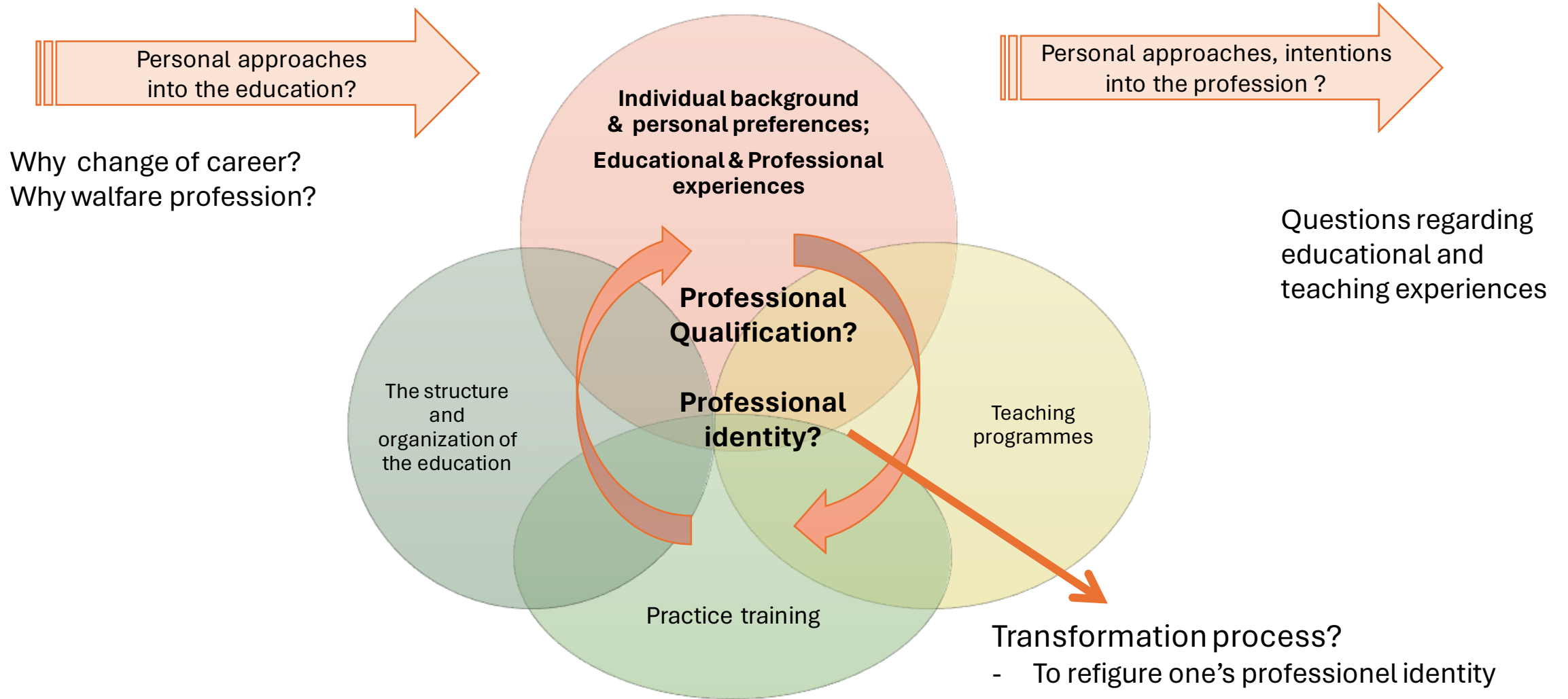
Methods

Survey; Quantitatively collected

- Target group: All students in two merit education programmes for teachers and educators. VIA University College (central Jutland)
- 250 student, response rate 28%

Interviews: Qualitatively collected

- Two focus groups, interviewed online
- Two interviews (individualy)



Interview guide in graphic

- based on results from analysis of survey.

The background of the slide is a close-up, high-contrast photograph of numerous metal bolts and nuts. The bolts are of various sizes and orientations, creating a complex, textured pattern. The lighting highlights the metallic surfaces, showing reflections and shadows that emphasize the industrial nature of the objects. The overall color palette is dominated by dark blues and greys, with some lighter highlights on the metal surfaces.

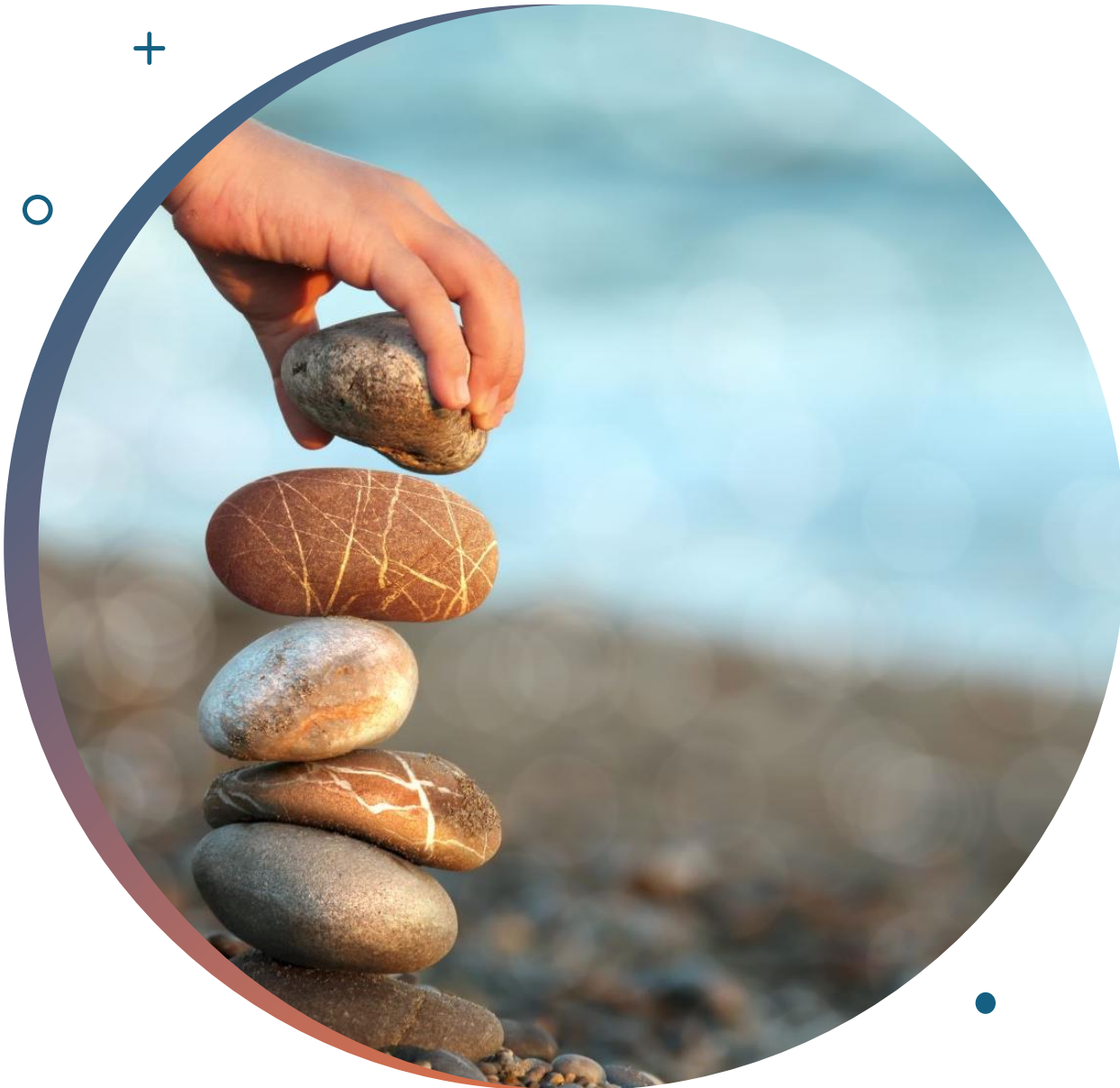
Preliminary points

Career as a way to understand lifelong learning

Career choices as a internal/external process

Meaningful connections between being a mature aged person and becoming a student and a professional

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Career as a lifelong and a lifespan perspective

(Hooley, Sultana, Thomsen: 2015 & 2022, Super: 1976, Law: 1999, Krumboltz 1999, 2009, 2013)

- A career is a travel through life, choices, learning opportunities, work experiences etc.
- Career is lifelong – it takes place throughout life
- A career is in a lifespan – and considers all aspects of human life.
- Career is an individual experience, but often accelerates or finds a primary goal or expression in collaboration with other people



Comparative data - statements

- *My education as a tailor was a conscious choice, even though I knew I probably wouldn't work with it for my entire life. My career change now is a deliberate choice, with the thought of being better positioned in the future (also in terms of being able to further my education and pursue other positions), as I will be in the labour market for a long time to come.” (Statement from student at the merit based education for Social Educations, 2023)*

How to influence career development and career choices

Krumboltz 2009, 2012 & 2015))



Understanding choices as an internal/external process

External Side of Choice:

Social justification (including social status, income, and support):

Needs to be argued to the outside world and continuously affirmed so that the choice is maintained as a meaningful one.

Internal Side of Choice:

Finding meaningful answers within the new educational path:

Involves doubts about the consequences of the choice, grief over the loss of previous social and professional identity, and more.



	Type A	Type B	Type C	Type D	Type E
Orientation	Academic identification	Professional identification (psychological – holistic)	Identification as a practitioner	Professional identification (Edification)	Professional identification (self-realization)
Previous education/work experience	Master's degree/ High school teacher	Master's degree/ Archaeologist	Trained teaching assistant/ preschool assistant	Master's degree/ student	Master's degree/ Anthropologist
Professional goal	Theoretically and professional role model	Teaching disabled children. Establish inclusive communities	A higher education offers more opportunities in practice	General education is the school's overarching societal mission	Searching for a meaningful working life. To make a difference.
Teaching experiences before admission	10 years teaching in high school	Yes, short term Internship	Yes, 15 years I preschool	No	No
Identification	Pre-professional identity	Transformative identity	Pre-professional identity	Professional identity	Transformative identity

Developing professional identity in education for a profession

(Lang & Høyer, 2024), Cornett, 2022)



Identities as a professional

Buchmann&Floden (1991, 1992), Heggen (2008), Jackson 2016, Lang & Høyer, 2023, Illeris 2013)

Professional identity	Individual and personal identity: Who am I in the profession? Personal values, beliefs and norms shapes by personal experiences, values, education and interaction within professional contexts
	Collective identity : Who are we in the profession? (defined by colleagues) Collective shared values, norms and standard that define the profession
	Collective identity : Who are they as a profession? (described by others)
Pre-professional identity	Individual and personal identity: Who am I to become in the profession?
Transformative identity?	Individual and personal identity How can I redefine my professional identity from one arena to another?

“I am midway through life and have many years before retirement. I tried various jobs, both good and bad. This educational choice is truly an affirmative decision—something I want in my life, given where I currently stand.” (Statement student at the Merit based education for Teachers), 2023)



Questions to investigate...

- How can institutes establish a learning environment specialized for mature aged students?
- How can institutes benefit of knowledge regarding biased understanding of mature-aged students.
- How can institutes promote and support professional identity development for these specific students.



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Thank you!

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