TEACHERS' LEARNING EXPERIENCES: TYPOLOGY OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

The destabilizing force of the COVID-19 pandemic served as a catalyst for intricate change processes at both societal and individual levels. This study investigates the experiences of Latvian schoolteachers, examining the substantial changes they have undergone in their professional roles. The study seeks to illuminate the diverse ways in which teachers have engaged in transformative learning processes during three years of pandemic and to identify the challenges they encountered in the process. By delving into the transformative nature of teachers' learning experiences, as a result a typology was developed to illustrate the trajectories of this change.

The aim of the study was to investigate how transformative learning manifests in teachers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify the orientation frames of the change teachers have undergone. Employing a qualitative design grounded in an ethnomethodology approach, the study utilized narrative interviews with 23 Latvian general education schoolteachers, adhering to the principles of maximum variation and theoretical saturation in sampling. The documentary method was employed for data analysis and interpretation. The reported outcome of this study is a two-dimensional typology of teachers' transformative learning experiences, reflecting five axes of transformation: Digital Methodological, Relational, Self-Efficacy, Personal Boundary, Organizational Transformations.

The study provides valuable insights into how educators adapt and evolve in response to the challenges posed by the pandemic, while also identifying valuable support mechanisms.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, teachers' learning experiences, teachers' professional development, transformative learning, typology.

Introduction

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Education sector, unavoidable and disrupting as it has been (Kim & Asbury, 2020; The World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF, 2021; World Bank, 2020), may serve as a lens for researching more subtle, long-term, personal, and intrinsic change processes. School closures and the shift to remote teaching

forced schoolteachers to repeatedly reinvent their work, confronting dilemmatic learning situations and learning on the go (Goba-Medne & Rubene, 2023). This shift, though challenging, offered a unique opportunity to explore the transformative nature of learning by delving into teachers' learning experiences. This paper reports on the research developed as a part of doctoral thesis project (Goba-Medne, 2023), exploring teachers' learning experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and the typology of transformative learning experiences developed. Theoretical framework for this research had been developed before the outset of the pandemic to investigate the potential of transformative learning theory for researching teacher change and education paradigm shift (Goba-Medne, 2019; Goba, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic created circumstances conductive to transformative learning – a disorienting, pressing and challenging situation (Mezirow, 1991) that forced teachers to update their digital competence and accelerate digital transformation in schools (Rubene et al., 2021). Therefore, transformative learning experiences became researchable in the general population of teachers and not as extraordinary occurrences.

Transformative learning as a phenomenon is topical for researching the field of teacher professional learning and development through its potential to illuminate the change processes needed for larger shifts in teacher practice, paradigmatic shifts in pedagogy, as well as explanations why reforms in education systems are not working as intended (Goba-Medne, 2022). The exploration of individual teachers' experiences in the context of COVID-19 provides an opportunity to elucidate the processes through which pedagogical practices undergo significant changes. Simultaneously, it offers a chance to investigate the specific circumstances under which this learning occurs – encompassing support systems, contextual and cultural factors, internal and external resources, and subjective challenges.

Through a meticulous examination of their experiences, the study provides valuable insights into how educators adapt and evolve in response to the challenges posed by the pandemic, along with an exploration of the support mechanisms that have proven to be valuable.

Theoretical Background

The study's theoretical framework is based on Jack Mezirow's work (Mezirow, 1991), complemented with subsequent developments and critiques of the theory, such as those proposed by Hoggan (2016a), and supplemented by other learning theories for a comprehensive perspective, including activity theory advanced by Engeström (2009). In the context of comprehensive learning theories (Illeris, 2015; Jarvis, 2006), transformative learning experiences are positioned on a spectrum of learning complexity (see Figure 1). Considering its possible outcomes, transformative learning may be considered the most complex and challenging type of learning an adult can undertake.

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Figure 1 Transformative learning represented on a spectrum of learning by complexity
Note. Figure first published in doctoral thesis (Goba-Medne, 2023)

Applying Hoggan's definition (Hoggan, 2016a), transformative learning within teachers' professional activity and its development may be described as "a process leading to significant and irreversible changes in how teachers perceive their professional activity, how they conceptualize (explain) it, and how they implement (do) it" (Goba-Medne, 2023, p. 63).

To help identify transformative learning experiences, five essential aspects or processes of transformative learning were aggregated through literature analysis (Goba-Medne, 2023):

1. Initial encounter with novelty or a disorienting dilemma accompanied by borderline emotions such as fear, guilt, anger, frustration.
2. Building the initial understanding of novelty through exploration.
3. Forming of a new perspective, thereby overcoming the initial uncertainty.
4. The understanding of the novelty undergoes social testing and revision.
5. The new perspective predominates in subjective interpretations and future actions.

The concept of learning experience, in turn, is a multidimensional and holistic phenomenon and encompasses intellectual, affective, embodied, and social dimensions, guiding future meaningmaking and actions (Goba-Medne, 2023). Therefore, the concept calls for a qualitative design study to adequately explore its multifaceted nature.

Methodology

A descriptive qualitative study was carried out employing an ethnomethodological research approach (Bohnsack, 2014; Eberle, 2014). The research aim was to investigate teachers' learning experiences that accompanied the transformations of their professional activity in the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Two research questions were set: 1) How is transformative learning reflected in teachers' learning experiences? 2) What are teachers' learning experiences directed at in the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic? Approval from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Approval No. 71-46/8, issued on May 26, 2022) was obtained to ensure compliance with ethical and data protection principles as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy of the University of Latvia, and the study's data was handled accordingly.

Research participants comprised 23 Latvian general education schoolteachers (teacher experience ranging from 3 to 39 years) that were purposefully selected according to the principles of maximum variation (various subject areas, regions, types of schools, education levels) and theoretical saturation (Gerhartz-Reiter, 2017; Nohl, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 2015) ensuring continuous monitoring of the congruence and extensiveness of

the collected data. Narrative oral interview (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000) was selected for data acquisition due to its strengths in acquiring rich data and highlighting the interviewees' particular perspective and narrative structure. Interviews were carried out between May and September of 2022, lasting 47 minutes on average and encompassing three waves of pandemic experience. Interviews were transcribed in full, reviewed for data protection, and interviewees were identified using the code 'Sk' followed by a number.

Narrative interviews were analyzed using the documentary method of interpretation (Bohnsack, 2014; Nohl, 2010), constructing a typology of teachers' transformative learning experiences. This methodology facilitates both comparative analysis of the cases as well as typology development, with a particular focus on reconstructing implicit knowledge and orientation frames, along with their transformations. Thus, it enables identification of characteristic aspects of transformative learning. Key steps of the analysis process include: initial listening to interviews to identify the main topics of narrative; transcription of interviews; interpretation stage focusing on decoding meaning and formulating thematic structure; reflective interpretation stage involving the reconstruction of orientation frames through formal logic analysis, initially within interviews and then through comparative analysis; and type formation stage where sense-genetic types are derived from the orientation frames (or transformation dimensions), while sociogenetic types reveal common experiential grounds irrespective of sensegenetic type (ibid.). The process commenced with specific cases featuring significantly distinct scenarios, progressively integrating additional interviews.

Results

The data collected yielded rich insights into the experiences of teachers and how they overcame various challenges. By utilizing the documentary method and focusing on transformative dimensions inherent in teachers' narratives, a two-dimensional typology was developed that characterizes the learning experiences of teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic in Latvia (See Figure 2).
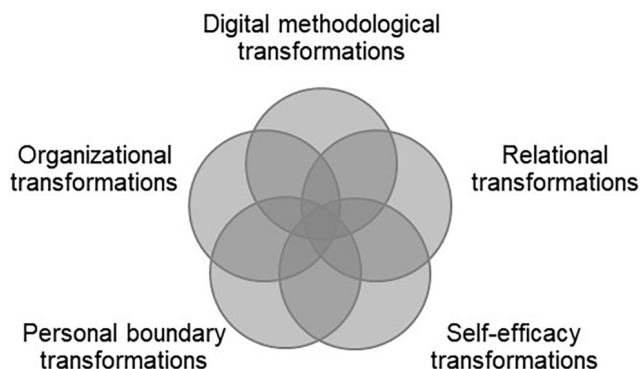

Figure 2   Typology of teachers' transformative learning experiences during COVID-19 pandemic
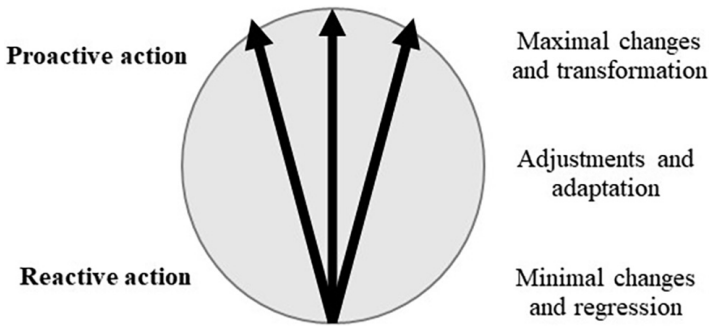*Note.* Figure first published in doctoral thesis (Goba-Medne, 2023)

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Figure 3 Logic of type construction with documentary method
Note. Figure adapted from doctoral thesis (Goba-Medne, 2023)

Within the sense-genetic dimension of the typology, five distinct types of transformation reveal the directions or axes in which teachers have changed through this experience and indicate how these learning experiences have integrated in their subsequent work – *Digital Methodological, Relational, Self-Efficacy, Personal Boundary, and Organizational Transformations*. Various degrees of transformation were identifiable within each type – from regression and non-learning up to evidence of deeply transformative learning. The five types are not mutually exclusive, nor isolated, namely, each interview (case) may include characteristics of several types to varying degree, which corresponds to general guidelines of documentary method (Nohl, 2010).

The second, socio-genetic, dimension of the typology (See Figure 3) complements each of the five types by characterizing the level of engagement exhibited by teachers in reshaping their work. This spectrum ranges from a reactive approach, where initiative is awaited from external sources (e.g., school leadership), to a proactive approach that exceeded the expectations placed on the teacher at that time. The level of engagement in transforming one's work shaped the way teachers sought solutions to pandemic crisis-induced challenges at work and it appeared to coincide with the degree of transformative learning they experienced. The most pronounced transformative learning was evident in the narratives of teachers' who exhibited initiative at the outset of the pandemic crisis, for instance, teacher Sk19 selftaught to implement synchronous online lessons and interactive tasks already at the time when her school community didn't urge doing so. Apparently, these teachers have pioneered new solutions and inspired others to succeed.

Digital Methodological Transformations

This type is directed towards acquiring and improving digital solutions and methods for their application in the teachinglearning process. This pervasive shift was the most evident due to its unavoidability as virtually all teachers were compelled to update their digital competencies for remote work. However, not all teachers showed the same extent of transformation. Significant changes were initiated through overcoming the threshold of online lesson delivery which happened in different moments for different teachers,

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influenced by institutional demands and shaped by their own initiative. At the outset, teachers encountered the imperative to transition to remote teaching, marking the beginning of their digital journey.

The most significant transformations within this type are characterized by proactive engagement in self-directed learning and the implementation of engaging online lessons with a high degree of interactivity and diversity of methods used. Reported experiences include a variety of scenarios, such as realization that one could be teaching arts in a distance learning school with great success (teacher Sk4), updating mastery so that one could successfully develop high quality learning materials and lead professional development courses (Sk19), taking up mentorship role in IT for fellow teachers (Sk13) and even developing entrepreneurial ventures in online education, thus leaving school (Sk16). Primary school teacher Sk19 reported "*I probably had never learned so much in my life as during remote learning, because I was always looking for ways to improve. (..) I've mastered my skill to develop learning materials (..)*", however it likely brought harmful effects on overall health, wellbeing, and private life: "*time for the family, time for oneself was not actually left there*".

The middle of the spectrum of Digital Methodological Transformations locates cases where digital learning technologies are used to compensate for the lost face-to-face modality, teachers become more open to technology enhanced teaching and establish new working routines, however they don't exhibit initiative to be front runners in their pedagogical practices. A more grounded attitude and tendency to preserve energy leads them to letting others take the initiative to foster change, an excerpt from Sk8's interview displays such a cautious tactics: "*We hadn't been taught to disallow (online) participants take control thus far*".

Conversely, negative and regressive experiences within this type manifest in resistance to change and a reluctance to embrace digital technologies. Some educators may refuse to provide online lessons, exhibit avoidance by going on sick leave or even leave the job altogether. Teacher Sk19 reports her observations: "*Three colleagues told me: "I won't teach in Zoom!" They didn't even consider learning to do it.*"

Evidently, experiences within this spectrum vary significantly, shaped by educators' prior technological proficiency and familiarity with interactive tools. Consequently, what constitutes a significant transformation for one educator may represent fundamental shifts for another, highlighting the diverse starting points and potential outcomes within Digital Methodological Transformations.

Relational Transformations

The type delineates the changes in teachers' interactions with others, encompassing alterations in the perception and explanation of the encountered situations, and shifts in the behavioral responses in social context. This transformation type is characterized by an enhanced emphasis on fostering human connections and a reevaluation of the significance of interpersonal relationships amidst the challenges posed by the pandemic.

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The most significant transformations within this type are marked by an emphasis on genuine appreciation for the value of human relations and building mutual understanding. Participants reported a heightened commitment to adopting a more student-centered approach, exhibited an increased awareness of the importance of nurturing positive teacher-student and collegial relationships characterized by empathy, care, and socioemotional wellbeing. This transformation is evident in teachers' renewed efforts to provide motivational feedback, empathize with students' perspectives, and proactively shape the course of lessons to cater to individual needs. Subject teacher Sk11 recounted of gradually becoming more accommodating towards students: "*I hadn't learned that much yet to look at the child from their own point of view (..) Initially I could be a drastic teacher (..) Now I have a calmer perception of it all.*"

Middle of the transformation spectrum entailed cases where teachers had attached higher value to human relations, mutual understanding, and empathy, however, their narratives weren't dominated by these experiences, nor they characterized these as important transformations within themselves. For instance, subject teacher Sk13 concluded that through assisting others she had learned to be more accepting of the limits of the ability of students and colleagues: "*Now when I have seen various situations, I realized that one needs to be patient, and you shouldn't demand much, expect less and also, thank God that they learned even that.*"

Conversely, negative and regressive experiences within Relational Transformations are characterized by challenges in communication and interpersonal dynamics with students, parents, or colleagues, leading to feelings of frustration, disillusionment, and professional burnout. Subject teacher Sk12 shared his observations on the mental state of fellow teachers: "*Many colleagues were on the verge of burnout (..), in fact they are still on the edge now.*" These adverse experiences may prompt contemplation of leaving the profession altogether as teachers grapple with feelings of unappreciation and resentment, which is evident in a prestigious school's teacher's Sk6 statements: "*And nobody thanks you either (..), there's resentment. (..) I'll give this profession one more year. If nothing changes, I'll leave.*"

There were notable variety of challenges in the interpersonal domain among teachers who were class teachers, among schools of different provision and community welfare, suggesting that the characteristics of community plays important role in encountering and tackling these issues. Challenges such as burnout and dissatisfaction with the lack of recognition underscore the need for continued support and recognition of the importance of relational dynamics in educational settings.

Organizational Transformations

Cases where teachers demonstrated growth in the field of systematic and efficient improvement of their professional activity formed the basis for this type. It involved commitment to reassessing priorities, rearranging work, refining time management skills, enhancing flexibility and actively engaging in orchestrating the school's digital

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transformation. Growth in the organizational domain was closely linked to processes within the school community and its resource allocation.

The most significant transformations within this type exhibited proactive and efficient action in managing one's professional activity (Sk5) or even coordinating a schoolwide digital transformation (Sk1). Teacher Sk1 inferred the extent of efficiency of organizational change in her school that she served in her administrative position: "*If we now remove all the extra work that was there (due to pandemic), and stay at this same pace, yes, we will actually be able to do much, much more than before.*" Subject teacher Sk5 exhibited greater ownership of her work organization as well, involving initiating changes in her lesson schedule, which brought satisfaction: "*I liked the feeling of freedom when I was my own boss (..) Now I know the instruments to achieve something more.*"

In the axis of Organizational Transformations, educators exhibited varying degrees of adaptability and proactivity. The middle of the transformation spectrum entails cases where teachers adjusted their organizational practices to the new situation, engaged in improvement initiatives initiated by others, however, didn't perform more as was formally required of them. Namely, while some teachers demonstrated proactive behaviors and took decisive action to improve professional practices or drive digital transformation efforts, others exhibited a more passive approach, adjusting to changes without demonstrating proactive engagement. For instance, primary school teacher Sk8 successfully mastered planning ahead weekly, however did it ondemand: "*The school directed us to plan for a week already, a week in advance (..).*"

While working remotely, practically all teachers had to reorganize their work, making it less likely for regressive experiences to be identified apart from cases where teachers left their jobs at the outset of the pandemic. However, negative experiences stemmed from issues of support and control within the organizational context. Instances of excessive control or lack of support from school leadership hindered educators' ability to enact meaningful change, leading to frustration and disillusionment. Additionally, teachers may resist change or opt to leave their jobs due to perceived barriers or lack of alignment with organizational objectives. Novice teacher's Sk17 statements illustrate this: "*I didn't feel any support (..) We throw you in, then swim! And we'll see if you can swim or not.*"

Overall, Organizational Transformations reflect the dynamic interplay between individual agency and institutional contexts, highlighting the pivotal role of educators in driving organizational change and fostering a culture of continuous improvement within educational settings. Teachers expressed concerns about the workload and lack of support, reflecting on the need for a conducive environment that fosters autonomy, empowerment, and collaboration.

Self-Efficacy Transformations

This type of transformation captures the journey towards more effective management of internal resources and prioritization of personal well-being amidst escalating work demands, instability, and tension. In the face of mounting challenges, teachers endeavored to restore equilibrium between professional responsibilities and private life,

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managing their time accordingly, and striving to preserve internal resources in response to crisis induced pressures, thus finding space for selfcare and resilience-building.

Teachers who underwent maximal transformations within this axis demonstrated remarkable resilience in effectively managing workloads while prioritizing self-care practices, these notable transformations are characterized by the attainment of a heightened awareness of personal limits and the establishment of boundaries to safeguard well-being. Teachers typically underwent profound transformations when they approached the brink of exhaustion and burnout, prompting a reevaluation of priorities, overcoming perfectionism, and implementing self-preservation strategies. Teacher Sk19 was forced to learn in this domain due to mounting personal issues, which resulted in a more balanced relationship with her professional role: "*I realized that these are my students, they have families, (..) there are those who love them, and there are no irreplaceable people. (..) somehow, I tried, learned to balance it all.*" In turn, teacher Sk5 was forced to learn setting firmer boundaries and become less forthcoming to avoid burn-out: "*I've always tried to be the nice person (..) but working (..) in a triple workload situation made me realize there are things you just can't carry out (..). Remote work helped me realize when it's enough.*"

The middle part of Self-Efficacy Transformation spectrum includes cases where individuals learned various tactics to find balance between work and private life, although these narratives remain peripheral in the overall interviews. The scenarios involve setting limits for completing job tasks, establishing boundaries in communication with students and parents, restricting non-urgent communication to working hours, declining additional duties, delegating tasks, and accepting help. Most interviewees mentioned several tactics they used for boundary-setting, self-care, and restoration.

In contrast, minimal or regressive changes within this sense-genetic type are characterized by the adoption of self-preservation tactics, a diminished commitment to work, and contemplation of reducing workload or leaving the profession altogether. If teachers found themselves unable to rebalance their internal resources and receive suitable support, insufficient self-efficacy nearly inevitably brought undesirable outcomes. Teacher Sk19 recounts such cases: "*It all builds up. (..) colleagues really burned out and left work (..) they needed to rest, recover*". These experiences underscore the toll of prolonged stress and highlight the importance of fostering a supportive and cohesive community environment to mitigate the risk of burnout. Supportive and cohesive communities provide a vital source of strength and encouragement, facilitating resilience-building and collective problem-solving. Conversely, fragmented communities may exacerbate feelings of isolation and amplify the challenges associated with managing personal well-being in stressful conditions.

Personal Boundary Transformations

This transformation axis encompasses the dynamic process among teachers of challenging, expanding, and ultimately transcending personal limitations and boundaries. These transformations are reflected in shifts in teachers' perceptions of their potential, their ability to overcome mental barriers, and their critical examination of systemic

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conditions within the educational landscape. As educators navigated this journey, they moved towards greater levels of professional autonomy, self-determination, and civic engagement.

In cases characterized by maximal transformation, teachers expanded their professional possibilities, demonstrated reliance on self-directed professionalism, and adopted a critical perspective towards systemic aspects of education. They exhibited an expanded outlook and a willingness to question established norms and practices. The most pronounced cases assigned a central position to experiences of bending and challenging boundaries to achieve the best results for their students and themselves. The extraordinary crisis presented an opportunity to experiment with new methods and circumvent the habitual systemic constraints, as illustrated by arts teacher Sk4: "*I was definitely looking for what fits (..) And then I thought about how to bypass the system! (..) I found arguments why I can work more freely*." She voiced concerns about the inherent lack of trust in teachers' professionalism within the current curriculum reform, yet showing readiness to explore new pathways: "*I have to say that Skola2030 with its curriculum pretty much forces me to wade into fields that I have not wandered into before, really. (..) Well, since I like (doing) it, I don't mind (..).*" Similarly, increased expressions of personal autonomy were evident in the case of Sk16, as the teacher constructed her future professional career outside of the school environment, drawing on skills acquired during the pandemic. Her utterances reflect a growing sense of civic engagement and self-reliance: "*I share my opinion more now (..) I learned to work more independently (..) now I can provide help to more kids.*"

In the middle of the spectrum, teachers view boundaries as somewhat flexible guidelines open to interpretation. While they may hold critical views, they lack the drive to challenge these boundaries actively, opting instead for a more passive approach. Nevertheless, they maintain a critical stance and engage in reflective analysis, retaining their evaluative perspective. For instance, teacher Sk21 aimed to maintain a positive outlook, and adjusted openly to the forthcoming challenges: "*I will adapt to the situation as is (..) If one has chosen a life like that*". Many teachers reflected on how the pandemic crisis tested their boundaries within other narrative topics. Subject teacher Sk22 learned to seek for help and approach problems with more calm, overcoming mental barriers: "*My darkest moments were when I thought: "Well, this is a grim problem!" (..) But when I attempted to solve it, it all changed, it wasn't like someone would refuse help.*"

Issues regarding boundaries became especially evident in cases when teachers' personal beliefs and values clashed with systemic requirements, such as mandatory vaccination, these experiences take an ambivalent position on the transformation spectrum. For instance, interviewees Sk7, Sk22 and Sk23 admitted resigning from their teaching positions due to profound disagreements over the management of crisis in the educational setting and at large. An experienced teacher Sk7 expressed frustration, stating: "*It's insane and terribly unfair. (..) the evil that is being done is simply insane*". This scenario represents a failure in communication and educational management, resulting in the loss of experienced educators. However, from the teachers' perspective, leaving their positions

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allowed them to maintain their integrity and retain an inner locus of control over their professional lives. Teacher Sk23 admitted that the hardships made her find a new focus: "*I realized that it is no longer my place, where I'd like to work, (..) now I can focus on my creative potential again.*" Nevertheless, this situation strained relationships and dampened morale within teacher communities.

Non-learning, negative and regressive experiences within the spectrum of Personal Boundary Transformations show in the conformity to predetermined limits without resistance or the rejection of previous initiatives aimed at personal and professional growth, or ultimately – personal boundary problems potentially contributed to taking a sick-leave, reducing workload, or leaving the job due to inability to cope. However, such cases didn't take part in voluntary interviews, rather, they were mentioned by colleagues.

Interestingly, neither the teachers who engaged in personal boundary transformations nor those who refused reported civic activities outside school to influence decisionmaking processes on topics they felt strongly about. Typically, initiatives would focus at the school level, indicating a lack of a strong lobby within the teacher community to coordinate the expression of teacher opinions. This aligns with societal trends in Latvian society, where civic and political activity is generally viewed as low.

Discussion and conclusions

Beyond doubt, the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and the resulting changes in teachers' working conditions have provoked transformative learning in teachers. This is evident both in the learning process, characterized by the five essential aspects of transformative learning, and the learning outcomes as suggested by the two-dimensional typology of transformative learning, which delineates the five axes of transformation: Digital Methodological, Relational, Self-Efficacy, Personal Boundary, and Organizational Transformations. An indepth exploration of transformative learning among teachers underscores the complexity of this process, extending beyond categorizations based on depth, breadth, and stability of change proposed by Hoggan (2016b). Instead, this study suggests that transformative learning manifests as a spectrum of responses to disorienting situations, with teachers undergoing varying degrees of transformation influenced by their individual capacities, subjectivity, past experiences, personal circumstances, interpersonal interactions, and contextual factors. The exact placement of each individual case on the transformative learning spectrum is subject to interpretation, while simultaneously providing insight into the trends and complex challenges faced by the group under study.

While a proactive disposition towards adapting professional practices in response to pandemic disruptions often led to significant transformations, it did not guarantee them. Some teachers reported encountering burnout, illness, and resistance to infection control measures, while others found agency in leaving their positions to pursue alternative career paths. This highlights the dual nature of transformation: while potentially beneficial, it is also a risky endeavor. It prompts us to consider the threshold for transformative change, define personal limits, and appreciate the role of contextual support

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in facilitating or hindering transformational processes. The study emphasizes the importance of crisis support in nurturing resolve of existent issues, rather than relying on provocations to stimulate transformative learning.

Teachers' experiences illustrate transformative learning as a multifaceted journey embedded within an intersubjective web of influences, rather than a binary outcome of whether transformative learning occurred or not. Consequently, efforts to foster transformative learning should prioritize strengthening teacher autonomy and promoting collegial professionalism within the school community. Flexible support mechanisms for self directed, practice-based learning and professional development, as well as meaningful involvement of teachers in decision-making processes, are recommended to facilitate transformative learning experiences.

The COVID-19 pandemic has served as a catalyst for transformative learning among teachers, shaping their learning experiences and informing research on the dynamic interplay of individual, interpersonal, and contextual factors in fostering educational improvement. Teachers under study confirmed experiencing diverse challenges, growing demands and shortages of resources as evidenced in other studies (Daniela et al., 2021; Kim & Asbury, 2020; Murgatroyd & Sahlberg, 2016; World Bank, 2020). Addressing the diverse challenges and growing demands faced by teachers necessitates a comprehensive understanding of their personal journeys through crisis-induced challenges, recognizing that nonproactive teachers are not inherently inferior or less concerned for their students' welfare but may simply not be the primary agents of change.

Furthermore, addressing shortages of systematized data on teachers' professional development and learning experiences in Latvia is imperative for informing evidence-based policies and interventions aimed at supporting educators in navigating evolving educational landscapes. Researching how teachers managed their personal journeys through the crisisinduced challenges helps build a deeper understanding for providing tailored support.

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