“Practitioner agency... Why and how we should support it in professional settings”

Deriving from Biesta and colleagues (2015), agency is understood as practitioner's meaning making and enactment within specific contexts. Their ecological model encompasses three dimensions, iterational, projective and practical-evaluative, which help to understand the achievement of agency. In this presentation I aim to discuss how context and circumstance promote or hinder practitioner’s agency and how their agency could be extended and supported within work context. I illustrate how agency draws largely on one's professional knowledge base. Moreover, agency is also influenced by one’s personal history and moral purpose, which, interacting with professional competences, also relate to self- and collective beliefs of enactment. I present three approaches to reflection which could be used to support this wide array of conditions for achieving agency. These procedures can be seen as complementary and promoted within workplace by means of different professional development activities.

Äli Leijen, PhD, is Professor of Teacher Education at the Institute of Education of the University of Tartu. Her current research themes include teacher education, teacher knowledge, teacher reflection and professional identity. She has worked as an expert in several teacher education developments in Estonia, lead and participated in several international research projects and is an active member of several research organizations, including ISATT, EARLI and AERA.