VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY

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GROUNDED THEORY OF THE INFORMAL LEARNING “PENDULUM”: EXPERIENCE OF NON-RELATIVE FOSTER FAMILIES

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Introduction

Relevance of the topic. Contemporary society is viewed as the society of learning and creative application of knowledge in which a high value is placed on the concept of life-long learning, which includes formal, non-formal and informal forms of learning. Informal learning was first described in around 1970. Coombs and Ahmed (1974) defined the types of formal, non-formal and informal learning. However, informal learning draws increasing attention of scientists, researchers and practitioners affected by the trend of lifelong learning only (Lin & Lee, 2014). Informal learning is described as a natural accompaniment to everyday life, which is not necessarily intentional learning, and so may well not be recognized even by individuals themselves as contributing to their knowledge and skills (Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, 2000). It is an everyday conscious and/or unconscious, incidental, spontaneous and not necessarily intentional, little or not at all organized learning through which the learner acquires certain competences (Schugurensky, 2000; Tereseviciene et al., 2004; Alonkeriene, 2009; Pauriene, 2017). It was recognized some 50 years ago that informal learning plays an important role in the discourse of lifelong learning, because it is a process by which every individual creates and acquires new knowledge, skills and values from daily experiences and various encounters with the social environment (Cooms & Ahmed, 1974; La Belle, 1982). This form of learning may take place both at the individual level and in groups, i.e. through various social interactions. However, the concept of informal learning is far more complex; it has multiple meanings and diversity. Therefore, the theoretical part of the dissertation focuses on the multi-leveled nature of the concept of informal learning in order to get a better understanding of the scientific and practical aspects and problems underlying this form of learning.

It is observed that attempts are being made to develop a theoretical conceptualization of the phenomenon of informal learning by addressing the similarities and differences of formal, non-formal and informal learning (Golding et al., 2009), describing the types of informal learning (Marsick & Watkins, 2001; Marsick, 2009), analyzing how the concept of informal learning developed and evolved (Eraut, 2004; Straka, 2004; Pauriene, 2009; Carliner, 2013; Lin & Lee, 2014; Van Noy, James & Bedley, 2016, Werquin, 2016). Informal learning was addressed from different
perspectives by Schugurensky (2000), Livingstone (2002), Stasiunaitiene and Fokiene (2004), Livingstone and Sawchuk (2005), Aleknaite-Bieliauskiene (2009), Alonderiene (2009), Choi and Jacobs (2011), Rudyte (2011), Burksaitiene and Sliogeriene (2012), Zydziunaite et al. (2012), Carliner (2013), Duguit et al. (2013), Denson et al. (2015), Pauriene (2017). A discussion is being held in Lithuania about the mechanism of identification, evaluation and recognition of the competences acquired through non-formal and informal adult education in higher education in Lithuania and Europe (Tereseviciene & Burksaitiene, 2003; Tereseviciene et al., 2003; Lauzackas et al., 2005; Sliogeriene, 2008; Fokiene & Sajiene, 2009; Burksaitiene & Sliogeriene, 2012). Studies highlight the role of informal learning in the culture of lifelong learning (Zydziunaite et al., 2012). The development of professional competences of teachers through informal learning has also drawn the attention of researchers (Pauriene, 2017). However, it is observed that the attention paid to non-formal and informal learning in Lithuania is insufficient; empirical justification for informal learning is especially lacking.

It is self-evident that an individual learns not only in a formal educational setting but in a number of other surrounding settings: at work, community, home. Van Noy, James and Bedley (2016) highlight that a great deal of informal learning occurs in the settings of daily life. Everyday informal learning is defined as daily learning taking place at home, work or community, which is not always conscious and intentional. Informal learning in the family/home setting encompasses a full range of new information, the transfer and acceptance of knowledge, the acquisition of new skills, personal development, support for each other, access to community resources (Rogoff, Gutierrez & Callanan, 2016).

The informal learning of children is perceived as natural and first learning in a family where parents/foster parents convey family values, educate them, involve them in family and community endeavours, pass on traditions, and models of behaviour (Riedinger, 2013; Ramani & Siegler, 2014). Nevertheless, it should be noted that the informal learning of adults also occurs in the family setting (Van Noy, James & Bedley, 2016). Still, most attention is paid to the informal learning of adults in the work setting (Livingstone & Sawchuk, 2005; Alonderienė, 2007; Choi & Jacobs, 2011; Zydziunaite et al., 2012). Hence, we can see that empirical data on adult informal learning in the home environment are lacking.
The issues of foster care have gained increasing attention in Lithuania over the past decade after the reform of foster care (de-institutionalization) was launched in the country. A child deprived of parental care is one of the most vulnerable members of society. Therefore, family-based foster care intends to provide complex assistance, satisfy a child’s needs, provide conditions to live and learn in the family setting. The above is enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was ratified by Lithuania as far back as 1995. Family foster care (together with adoption) is considered a priority objective in the context of the reform of foster care. A foster family environment rather than institutional care is considered most favourable for a child (Gvaldaite & Simkonyte, 2016). According to the data of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2019), the number of children deprived of parental care remains high every year: 2,098 new cases of foster care (guardianship) were registered in 2018 (2,252 cases in 2016 and 2,524 cases in 2017). There was a total of 8,177 children (4,011 girls and 4,166 boys) deprived of parental care at the end of 2018. It is obvious that family foster care related issues are a particularly urgent problem in Lithuania both in the practical domain and in the research of political and social sciences. However, the research on this topic in education sciences is rather scarce.

Various discussions on the topic of family foster care are relevant and widely spread in Lithuanian and foreign research studies; child foster care often becomes the object of research (Jones & Morrissette, 1999; Strom & Strom, 2000; Snieskiene, 2001; Ehrle & Geen, 2002; Harden, 2004; Pabedinskiene, 2004; Park, 2005; Pasztor et al., 2006; Siedienë & Leminskiene, 2007; Sivickyte & Zydziunaite, 2008; Valle et al., 2009; Vitkauskas, 2010; Bagdonaitė-Stelmokienė & Snieskiene, 2011; Raudeliuniene & Urbikaite, 2011; Bagdonaitė-Stelmokienė, 2015). However, foster family related questions are addressed rather narrowly with an emphasis on a foster child’s needs, the challenges faced by foster parents, and the need for social assistance. Educational insights into the topic of family foster care are lacking. Meanwhile, foreign authors (Broady et al., 2010; Wehler, 2014; Diaz, 2017) point out that it is not only important to analyze how a foster family educates a foster child but also how a foster family learns from daily fostering experiences. According to them, informal learning takes place in a foster family, but too little attention is paid to reveal how this learning actually takes
place; it is noted that too little emphasis is placed on the importance of this phenomenon in the discourse of lifelong learning.

**Research problem.** It should be noted that the studies on informal learning have been on the rise (Field & Tuckett, 2016; Nygren et al., 2019; Morrison & McCutheon, 2019); however, foreign and Lithuanian studies mainly focus on the aspects of adult informal learning in the work setting (Livingstone & Sawchuk, 2005; Alonderiene, 2007; Choi & Jacobs, 2011; Zydziunaite et al., 2012). There are still a lot of unknowns underlying the phenomenon of informal learning in the context of social sciences. Informal learning occurring in the daily home environment, especially in the daily environment of the families going through a unique experience, i.e. families fostering a non-relative child, which are addressed in this dissertation, is little studied. In their studies Broady et al. (2010), Wehler (2014) found that foster parents learn on a daily basis through various situations; that everyday informal learning takes place in a foster family; however, it was not revealed how informal learning takes place in the light of non-relative foster care, what dimensions of informal learning can be distinguished, how families themselves perceive informal learning in the contexts of everyday experiences. The importance of informal learning of these families in the continuum of lifelong learning has not been evaluated. Discussions on the informal learning of children through everyday situations, which reject a conservative approach that children only learn when they are explicitly being taught, are lacking as well. Hence, a broader understanding of the concept of children’s teaching/learning by revealing and substantiating children’s informal learning comes into play.

After reviewing the studies (Jones & Morissette, 1999; Strom & Strom, 2000; Snieskiene, 2001; Ehrle & Geen, 2002; Harden, 2004; Pabedinskiene, 2004; Park, 2005; Bankauskiene & Staskeviciene, 2006; Pasztor et al., 2006; Sediene & Leminskiene, 2007; Sivickyte & Zydziunaite, 2008; Bankauskiene & Staskeviciene, 2009; Valle et al., 2009; Vitkauskas, 2010; Bagdonaitė-Stelmokienė & Snieskiene, 2011; Raudeliūnaitė & Urbikaitė, 2011, Bagdonaitė-Stelmokienė, 2015) focusing on the topics of family foster care, it was observed that little attention is paid to the research from the perspective of education sciences; educational insights are lacking. The research concentrating on the

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1 The term applies to families to which a non-related child (children) is placed for permanent (longer than 6 months) care which by the decision of the court of Lithuania “shall be established for children deprived of parental care who, under the existing conditions, are unable to return into their natural family, and their care, upbringing, representation and protection of their rights and legitimate interests are entrusted to another family” (Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania, 2000, Book III, Article 3.256).
experience of non-relative family foster care as an educational phenomenon is particularly lacking, i.e. it is not revealed what and how a family fostering a non-relative child learns through informal learning by experiencing various daily social interactions and facing multifaceted situations in different contexts. The experience of non-relative family foster care is an excellent source of learning for all members in a foster family; however, there is a shortage of studies enabling to approach the non-relative fostering experience from this perspective. It should also be noted that little or no attention is paid to the biological children of foster parents, their learning experiences and emotional challenges.

Various studies (Poland & Groze, 1993; Snieskiene, 2001; Höjer, 2004; Cline, 2005; Broady et al., 2010; Bagdonaite-Stelmokiene & Snieskiene, 2011; Wehler, 2014; Bagdonaite-Stelmokiene, 2015; Diaz, 2017) ascertained that the experience of non-relative family foster care may be valuable to all members in a family. This experience provides an opportunity to learn from different daily situations. As a consequence, informal learning takes place in a family providing care for a non-related child; however, it is not clear what types of informal learning prevail; how such learning occurring through various daily experiences actually proceeds; what stimulates and what hinders informal learning. Research-based evidence demonstrating that informal learning is important in a foster family and that formalized training should be expanded by combining experience-based learning and by realizing that informal learning is extensive, ever-present and everywhere-present, multi-leveled and multi-layered (Wehler, 2014) is lacking.

The above entailed the main research questions addressed in the dissertation:

- What determines the informal learning of the families fostering a non-relative child?
- What characteristics of informal learning emerge in the families fostering a non-relative child?
- What factors stimulate or hinder informal learning in the contexts of everyday experiences of the families fostering a non-relative child?

Research object is the informal learning of the families fostering a non-relative child from everyday experiences.
**Aim** is to develop a grounded theory about the informal learning taking place in the contexts of everyday experiences by revealing the learning experiences of the families fostering a non-relative child.

**Novelty of the topic.** The informal learning taking place in non-relative family foster care is construed as a unique social-educational phenomenon, which was approached through the subjective concepts of experience of foster-family members. It is a new topic in the domain of education as well as other social sciences. The thesis combines the research objects of education (phenomenon of informal learning), philosophy (everyday experiences of a foster family, rhizomatic learning), social work (family-based foster care), sociology (informal learning as the phenomenon socially constructed in the reality of everyday life).

The dissertation analyzes the main types of informal learning through the major dimensions of learning: process, activities, context, interactions, results, and orientations with respect to time. In this way, the overlaps and dividing lines between different informal learning types were revealed in the study.

The rhizomatic feature of informal learning discussed with reference to postmodernists Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Usher and Edwards (2003), Kang (2007), Cormier (2008) and Chan (2010) enabled us to see the informal learning of a foster family as multi-leveled and multi-layered, not always predictable, continuously ramifying in multiple directions and limitless, where the road of learning is constantly constructed and reconstructed both intentionally and consciously as well as spontaneously and randomly.

The dissertation describes the main orientations of informal learning taking place in a non-relative foster family with respect to time by revealing how a personal road of learning is constructed and how learning takes place by reflecting on the lived experience, i.e. the practical forms of the generation of knowledge are revealed in agreement with Kafle (2006), who pointed out that the creation of knowledge is indeed possible and it becomes possible through subjective experiences, insights and reflection.

To investigate the informal learning occurring in a foster family, all family members were deliberately included in the study; therefore, the study revealed the specificities of the daily informal learning of both adults and children. In this way, a broader and more complex understanding of children’s teaching/learning was revealed.
by rejecting the conservative approach that children may only learn when there is an explicit instructional focus.

The metaphor of the pendulum used in the dissertation enables us to see the concept of informal learning and its complexity in a new light. Informal learning taking place in a foster family is seen as the swinging motion of a pendulum with a view to maintaining the equilibrium position in the ever-changing daily situations. By drawing on the attributes of the pendulum metaphor discussed by Matthews, Gauld and Stinner (2004, 2006), the dissertation analyzes the energy of motion of the “pendulum” of informal learning (the force making informal learning to swing), the specificities pertaining to the unpredictability of motion (different orientations of informal learning and contextual factors stimulating or hindering informal learning) as well as the need to maintain equilibrium.

**Philosophical and methodological approaches.** Referring to the social construction of reality/social constructionism paradigm (Berger & Luckmann, 1999; Burr, 2000), the informal learning of the families caring for a non-relative child is understood as a phenomenon socially constructed in the reality of everyday life. According to this paradigm, individuals themselves construct their way of learning and social reality in which the processes of informal learning take place. The situations of informal learning, actions and desired learning outcomes are constructed through various daily interactions and experiences by reflecting on the new situation in a family. The everyday life of the families fostering a non-relative child is construed as an intersubjective world in which informal learning takes place through mutual interactions and sharing of experience.

The dissertation also builds on the ideas proposed by postmodernists Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Cormier (2008), Mackness and Bell (2015), based on which informal learning is understood as rhizomatic learning, which is a multi-leveled process with no beginning and no end. In this way, we can see that the informal learning occurring in a non-relative foster family is not always viewed as intentional and conscious; a part of it is spontaneous, incidental and implicit informal learning.
Brief overview of theoretical parts of the dissertation

Role of informal learning in the continuum of lifelong learning. The theoretical part of the dissertation describes the transformation of the culture of lifelong learning and the role and importance of informal learning in the context of lifelong learning. The shift from the paradigm of teaching to the paradigm of learning where learning is understood as an active process based on the initiative and involvement of learners (Singh & Mishra, 2017) justifies the importance of informal learning in the light of lifelong learning where informal learning intertwines with formal and non-formal learning. The above forms supplement, expand and enrich one another. It is emphasized that learning does not only take place inside but also outside educational institutions; learning can take place everywhere (Edwards, 2009), including everyday situations, and not only at some specific time but all the time (Edwards & Usher, 1998; 2001). Given the above, all three forms of learning should be recognized and combined in the context of lifelong learning in order to educate a mature, responsible and active personality. It is also acknowledged that the informal learning taking place in everyday life contributes to personal development and growth (Schugurensky, 2000; Colley et al., 2003).

The definition of informal learning is problematic, because an individual acquires knowledge and develops skills through various social interactions and individual practical activities by often not even foreseeing the learning objectives (Straka, 2004). Different scholars address this phenomenon through different discourses and at different levels by drawing on various theoretical perspectives, thus leading to even more divergent definitions of informal learning (Zydziunaite et al., 2012). Some authors equate informal learning to self-directed learning (Livingstone, 2001; Tough, 2002) or with experiential learning (Gola, 2009). Schugurensky (2000) suggests to classify informal learning by using two main categories: intentionality and consciousness. He further proposes the taxonomy of three forms of informal learning: self-directed learning, which is intentional and conscious; incidental learning, which is unintentional but conscious; and learning through socialization, i.e. unintentional and unconscious learning. In his follow-up studies the author further expanded the types of informal learning by adding tacit learning, which is also unintentional and unconscious (Duguit & Schugurensky, 2013). Speaking about informal learning, Gola (2009) and Marsick
(2009) note that it may derive from experience, incidental learning, self-directed learning and tacit learning. Pintrich and Zusho (2002), Cunningham (2010), Jossberger (2010) and Morgan (2013) single out self-regulated and self-managed types of informal learning. Lave and Wenger (1991), Chaiklin and Lave (1993), Pauriene (2013) propose situated learning as another type of informal learning. The above suggests that a single definition of informal learning is lacking in scholarly literature. Informal learning has many different definitions that overlap each other (Carliner, 2013). Hence, when different concepts are in use, clarity is required. Owing to this, in the theoretical part of the dissertation the author expands the scientific discussion and reviews different definitions and types of informal learning by distinguishing identical dimensions of learning. The dissertation characterizes the types of informal learning according to the main learning dimensions: process, activities, context, interactions, results, and orientation with respect to time. The analysis confirmed that it is difficult to single out a specific type of informal learning in the context of lifelong learning. It is difficult to find the dividing lines between the types of informal learning, as conscious and intentional as well as spontaneous and incidental learning may take place simultaneously. They intertwine, supplement and reconstruct one another. Though certain characteristics of learning come to the fore and we may identify the dominant type of informal learning, it can nevertheless be observed that the types of informal learning overlap, intertwine and merge together. At the same time, the above substantiates the complexity of informal learning and its importance for continuous personal growth and development.

Informal learning is both conscious and intentional and unconscious, incidental, not necessarily intentional, little or not at all organized learning through which the learner acquires certain competences. At this point, the postmodernist approach, which supports the understanding that the learning process must not necessarily include a clearly defined situation, plan and learning outcomes, as well as the concept of rhizome proposed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and further developed by Cormier (2008) in order to describe learning as rhizomatic come into play. The informal learning of the family fostering a non-relative child is also perceived as multi-leveled, multi-layered, ramifying, unpredictable, and limitless. It is underlined that informal learning takes place in social contexts; it is the road of learning, which is continuously constructed and
reconstructed consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or randomly and which leads to personal development and growth.

**Social construction of informal learning of non-relative foster families.**

Informal learning takes place in various social contexts. It is a continuous process, which is created, constructed and reconstructed consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or randomly. Hence, the second chapter of the theoretical part discusses the paradigm of social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1999; Burr, 2000) enabling us to interpret the informal learning taking place in the families fostering a non-relative child as a socially constructed process. According to Berger and Luckmann (1999), everyday life presents itself as an intersubjective world where people act in each other’s reality, share it and get to know each other. The experience of everyday world of the families fostering a non-relative child is also regarded as an intersubjective reality which is continuously created and in which we get to know and comprehend other individuals and the surrounding world. Individuals interact and share their experiences; this is how informal learning takes place. Reciprocal learning occurs through face-to-face situations where an individual’s openness and interest in getting to know another individual have an important role to play (Berger & Luckmann, 1999). Through the creation of openness, respect and interest based relationships in foster family conditions for informal learning and better knowledge of each other are established.

Context is crucial for the knowledge and perception of the world, i.e. the social construction of reality or phenomenon depends on a particular time and place in which it takes place (Burr, 2000). It means that the ways through which individuals get to know the world, construct and reconstruct it are specific to a certain culture and period of history and depend on certain economic, social and political agreements dominating at a specific time in a specific culture. Kang (2007) notes that experience, as the source of learning, is always contextualized. An individual learns through interactions with people, events, and situations. Therefore, the study addressing the informal learning of the families fostering a non-relative child sought to pay attention to the sociocultural and political context. The context is not perceived as an ordinary place of learners but as something that shapes learners and learners, in turn, shape the context, i.e. mutual exchanges take place.
By drawing on the ideas imbedded in social constructionism, the dissertation discusses how the informal learning of the families caring for a non-relative child is constructed through different everyday interactions and experiences and by reflecting on the new situation in a family. The informal learning of the family fostering a non-relative child may not even be recognized by the family itself; it may occur unconsciously. Hence, in order for an individual to realize that he/she actually learnt something or that informal learning occurred, self-reflection is required. At this point, it is important for another individual to help him/her to slow down the spontaneity of experience in order to direct attention to oneself and one’s experience consciously.

Use of the pendulum metaphor to substantiate the swinging of informal learning taking place in a foster family and the need to maintain equilibrium. The empirical study accomplished as part of the dissertation views informal learning taking place in a foster family as the swinging motion of a pendulum where equilibrium and balance are continuously sought in everyday situations. Therefore, the theoretical part ends with the discussion on the metaphor of the pendulum, which is used to explain the property of swinging of the informal learning taking place in non-relative foster care, which is constructed as the core category of the constructivist grounded theory about informal learning in a foster family.

The dissertation discusses the main characteristics of the pendulum as described by Matthews, Gauld and Stinner (2004, 2006): motion energy, unpredictability of motion and central axis/maintenance of the equilibrium position. The amount of energy determines the swinging area. The greater the force is applied to push it, the wider it swings. The harder you try to stop it, the smaller the swinging is or it stops altogether. In the light of informal learning, the learner’s internal energy or, in other words, will, efforts and intention to learn are also important. It determines whether learning will start altogether. An individual may choose when, how, where and what he/she is willing to learn, to select respective sources, forms, settings of learning and to anticipate the desired learning outcomes (Ainsworth & Eaton, 2010; Werquin, 2010). In the event of incidental or spontaneous informal learning, an individual’s willingness and conscious choice to reflect on what has already been learned and acquired are important as well. Through reflection an individual may realize after a certain period of time that he/she
has learned something; only then an individual can see the learning outcomes of incidental or spontaneous informal learning (Manuti et al., 2015).

The pendulum is subject to an external force, which may accelerate or retard its motion. The greater the force placed on the pendulum, the wider its swing is and the stronger the energy of motion emanates from it (Matthews, Gauld & Stinner, 2004; 2006). In a foster family the pendulum of informal learning is also affected by external forces: the factors of community, relatives, macro environment, which may both enhance the motion of informal learning and slow it down.

Another property of the pendulum is the unpredictability of its motion (Matthews, Gauld & Stinner, 2004; 2006). It is not possible to predict the swings, as many factors are at play; it is therefore not possible to anticipate all outcomes a priori; they may be incidental. Different types of informal learning bring the aspects of consciousness/spontaneity and intentionality/randomness to the forefront. The types of informal learning intertwine, merge, overlap, and thus the learner may not always know that he/she has actually learned something or he/she may discover that spontaneous or incidental learning took place through reflection on the lived experience only (Schugurensky, 2000; Marsick & Watkins, 2001; Gola, 2009; Marsick, 2009). The above explains that it is difficult to foresee all the outcomes of informal learning and the scope of learning itself.

The central axis of the pendulum – the maintenance of the equilibrium position – is yet another characteristic feature (Matthews, Gauld & Stinner, 2006). A small bob hanging on a thread or string is attached to the top of the pendulum, i.e. its central axis. The pendulum’s range of motion changes continuously, but its pivot, i.e. the central axis to which the thread with a bob is attached, does not change. This central pendulum axis is a balanced personal perspective, mindset, which moves forth and back, dynamically changes in the social context, but is always driven towards balance and the maintenance of equilibrium. In the course of informal learning an individual also intends to achieve balance. For instance, in the face of daily challenges, which disbalance a foster family, individuals start looking for a way out, they learn how to solve the challenges they are facing, thus trying to restore balance. Balance between different types of informal learning is also important: orientation towards future objectives and learning from experience (Brockbank & McGill, 2006; Gattegno, 2006).
Metaphorically, pendulum swings help to explain the shifts and transformations in the learner’s thinking and activities as well as how informal learning is affected by internal and external forces. The pendulum metaphor helps to reflect the process of informal learning by showing it as a forth-and-back movement occurring in different directions between different poles rather than a linear process. The latter are neither good nor bad, neither positive nor negative; pendulum swings simply show and reflect the main directions of informal learning: constant moving forth and back between intentional, conscious, structured, self-regulated, self-directed, situated informal learning and spontaneous, incidental, often unconscious, unstructured informal learning or experiential learning. The metaphor of the pendulum also explains informal learning as a dynamic and rhizomatic movement, which occurs in the ever-changing contexts and conditions and is subjected to different external forces, which either accelerate or hinder informal learning.

Research methods

The empirical study was conducted on the basis of constructivist grounded theory strategy (Charmaz, 2006; 2008). By using a systematic collection, synthesis, analysis and conceptualization of data, the aim of the study was to develop a theory about the informal learning of a family fostering a non-relative child.

The author of the dissertation deliberately rejected the classic grounded theory (hereinafter – GT) version whose advocates claim that reality has to be discovered by the unbiased researcher who is not affected by any preconceived notions, and this is the only way for a GT to emerge from data. According to the proponent of constructivist GT, Charmaz (2006; 2008), the researcher is not a tabula rasa; the world seen, perceived and sensed by the researcher influences her understanding about the existing reality and about the phenomenon in question. Consequently, the constructivist GT uses an interpretive aspect of data. This version of GT emphasizes an individual life-story and personal experience of research participants. It is recognized that there are multiple social realities, and all attempts to generalize are partial, limited by time and place where they proceed (Charmaz, 2008).
Referring to the constructivist GT research strategy, the research was conducted as a cyclical process where data collection and analysis took place together. Research memos were also continuously written and integrated into the research; the ensuing process of conceptualization was again followed by data collection until theoretical saturation was achieved (see Fig. 1).

To collect data, narrative interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), which centres on the narratives of the research participants about their experiences of informal learning in non-relative foster care, was applied. A coherent narrative of the research participants about their experience in raising their biological children and fostering a non-relative child with the focus on the moments of learning in everyday experiences helped to approach the process of informal learning in a foster family. The author of the dissertation chose a narrative interview, because this method of data collection is more focused on the narratives told by participants, which emerge spontaneously after the researcher initiates the topic for the conversation. The narrative helped the research participants to create and express their meanings and knowledge. It concentrated on the
stories told by the participants, the plot, and narrative structures (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). A coherent narrative, story and details provided by the participants were important in the study. The selection of narrative interview was also determined by the researcher’s focus on the process of informal learning. Hence, it was easier to approach it through a coherent narrative of the research participants about how the experience of non-relative foster care proceeded. It helped the participants to organize and express their meanings and knowledge from the cognitive and linguistic point of view. Narrative interviews were associated with the object of the research; hence, the narrative story was initiated by the researcher herself, i.e. by asking the participants to tell about specific experiences of non-relative foster care and the learning taking place as part of it.

Based on theoretical sampling, the study included 19 foster parents (12 women 3 of whom were divorced and 7 men, one of whom was divorced) and 11 biological children of foster parents (8 girls and 3 boys). The age of foster parents ranges from 33 to 65 years. All foster parents have higher education degree; they all are employed; one woman is retired. The age of biological children ranges from 13 to 19 years old. The duration of non-relative foster care varies from 6 to 23 years.

The average duration of a narrative interview with foster parents was 1 hour 20 minutes and 55 minutes in the case of their biological children.

**Data analysis.** Based on the constructivist grounded theory method, the data analysis included several stages (Charmaz, 2006; 2008): initial coding, focused coding, theoretical coding. Referring to the constructivist GT, data collection and analysis were a continuous process (Charmaz, 2006). Hence, data coding commenced with the very first interview. Research memos were written and drawn throughout the research and integrated into the discussion on the findings: “Writing successive memos throughout the research process keeps you involved in the analysis and helps you to increase the level of abstraction of your ideas” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 72). The memos included the researcher’s comments and ideas about the collected data, codes, categories, their properties, interrelations. Memos were written throughout the research: in data collection, analysis and interpretation. They accelerated the researcher’s analytical work and increased productivity. The author did not only write memos during the research but all the time, whenever any ideas on the phenomenon in question came to mind, e.g.
while reading a book, watching a film, communicating with colleagues, attending methodological seminars or conferences.

Data collection and analysis took place as the researcher moved back and forth through the data and continued until all categories were saturated, i.e. until theoretical saturation was achieved. Theoretical saturation occurred when the researcher could no longer find new specific aspects in the collected and analyzed data, and relationships between categories were established (Holton, 2009). In other words, theoretical saturation occurred when no new or important data emerged in categories, when no new qualities were found in data, and that prevented excessive data collection.

To achieve the research trustworthiness, the researcher complied with the major research trustworthiness criteria proposed by researchers (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006; Cope, 2014) in the field of qualitative research in education: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. Whereas the dissertation drew on the constructivist GT perspective, not only the discussed trustworthiness criteria common to all qualitative research studies but also the criteria for evaluating studies that follow a GT approach were applied. Charmaz (2006) supports the criteria discussed by the predecessors of GT, Glaser & Strauss (1967): fit required to evaluate whether qualitative codes, subcategories and categories emerge from the collected data and preconceived theoretical perspectives are not created; work refers to the ability of the substantive grounded theory about informal learning which was formulated during the study to provide assumptions and clarifications, reveal and show the interactions taking place in the area of study; relevance means that the new grounded theory is relevant to the action in the area of study it is supposed to explain; modifiability indicates the changes that the grounded theory had to go through in case new data emerged. The study also complied with the additional research trustworthiness criteria proposed by Charmaz (2006): the above-mentioned credibility; originality refers to the continuous evaluation whether the new categories are authentic, fresh and insightful; resonance refers to the researcher’s consideration whether the formulated categories portray the richness of the studied phenomenon, whether the new GT makes sense to the research participants; whether the analysis offers deeper insights about their experience; usefulness answers whether the analysis offers interpretations that people can use in their daily lives; whether the analysis may spark further research in substantive areas;
how the research contributes to the creation of new knowledge and to making a better world. Therefore, the introduction to the dissertation describes the scientific and practical novelty of the topic; the dissertation ends with scientific and practical recommendations.

**Research ethics.** The study was conducted in line with the following major ethical principles in qualitative research: respect for participants, protection of dignity and reduction of anxiety, informed consent, confidentiality, the researcher’s beneficence and prevention of harm to the research participants as well as the researcher’s justice and moral obligation (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2001; Konza, 2005; Draucker, Martzolf & Poole, 2009; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Vanclay, Baines & Taylor, 2013; Sanjari et al., 2014; Dempsey et al., 2016; Raheim et al., 2016; Roth & von Unger, 2018). All principles of research ethics are interrelated and supplementary.

**Findings**

**Courage for change as the condition for informal learning to gather pace: “To give one’s life”**. Personal courage for change through the lived internal fight was revealed as the starting point of informal learning – the internal force making the learning “pendulum” to move. Two supplementary and overlapping moments of change emerge at this point: to change others and to change oneself. A family takes a firm decision to change the life of at least one child deprived of parental care, to change the world, to make it better: “To do something good, to serve, to make my contribution to society and to the world, to change the world” (GM10). At first, families do not realize that they themselves will have to change: “The coming of foster children to our home made our whole life to change” (GT20). On the one hand, a foster family lives through an internal fight caused by the desire to help and compassion to an unfamiliar child: “I felt sorry for those children” (GM10; V10). On the other hand, a family experiences egoism and the inability to see the foster care of a non-relative child as a meaningful activity: “Why do I need this, why do I have to do this?” (GM1). The internal fight between compassion and egoism becomes even more troublesome, because a non-relative, unfamiliar child comes into a family, and it is emotionally difficult for a foster child to make it better: “To do something good, to serve, to make my contribution to society and to the world, to change the world” (GM10). At first, families do not realize that they themselves will have to change: “The coming of foster children to our home made our whole life to change” (GT20). On the one hand, a foster family lives through an internal fight caused by the desire to help and compassion to an unfamiliar child: “I felt sorry for those children” (GM10; V10). On the other hand, a family experiences egoism and the inability to see the foster care of a non-relative child as a meaningful activity: “Why do I need this, why do I have to do this?” (GM1). The internal fight between compassion and egoism becomes even more troublesome, because a non-relative, unfamiliar child comes into a family, and it is emotionally difficult for a foster child to make it better: “To do something good, to serve, to make my contribution to society and to the world, to change the world” (GM10). At first, families do not realize that they themselves will have to change: “The coming of foster children to our home made our whole life to change” (GT20). On the one hand, a foster family lives through an internal fight caused by the desire to help and compassion to an unfamiliar child: “I felt sorry for those children” (GM10; V10). On the other hand, a family experiences egoism and the inability to see the foster care of a non-relative child as a meaningful activity: “Why do I need this, why do I have to do this?” (GM1). The internal fight between compassion and egoism becomes even more troublesome, because a non-relative, unfamiliar child comes into a family, and it is emotionally difficult for a foster
family to accept him/her. There is a clash between “insider” and “outsider” worlds. The previous traumatic experience of foster children, their internal wounds and aggression undermine the intention of a foster family to help an unfamiliar child. On the one hand, it makes the informal learning occurring in a foster family more troublesome and enhances confusion; on the other hand, it points the course of learning, i.e. what a foster family needs to learn in order to realize the manifestations of a foster child’s aggression, recognize a foster child’s inner wounds and be able to respond to his/her needs in a proper way.

Biological children tend to idealize the preparation to accept a non-relative child; they think that the placement of a non-relative child into their family will be joyful; they picture their future foster brother or sister as their new friend. Their thoughts and intentions are rather egoistic, e.g. they wait for the placement of foster children into their family in order to escape the feeling of loneliness: “I was eagerly waiting and wished to have sisters, because I felt lonely” (V7). After facing a non-relative, unfamiliar child, biological children feel confused. Their confusion is determined by the uncertainty resulting from their parents’ failure to share information and to explain how the process of placing a non-relative child into the family will take place: “I kept asking my mother what was happening and how it was going to happen, but nobody told me anything” (V6).

Gradually, a foster family realizes the need to change their attitudes and learn to overcome themselves. In this way, they learn to accept a different child: “I had to overcome myself again and again to accept her differences” (GT3). The boundaries of acceptance and relationships are gradually expanded on both sides; mutual attachment takes place.

**Orientations of informal learning.** The informal learning taking place in a foster family encompasses different learning orientations with respect to time. Some learning trajectories are oriented towards the goal and aspirations for the future; yet others focus on the past and lived situations as the family is learning from the past. Both orientations manifest themselves simultaneously; they are repetitive and supplement one another. Hence, informal learning in a foster family is seen as a swinging, upward and spiral movement.
The construction of the road of learning in order to self-actualize: “To become a good foster parent”. The construction of the road of learning is construed as intentional actions of every member in a foster family leading towards the goal, i.e. “to self-actualize and to become a good foster parent” (GM10). It is a learner’s intentional movement forward through a predefined learning process, which starts with a formal training course for foster parents. When a foster child is placed into a family, a further road of learning is not only constructed by an individual him/herself willing to develop and gain some knowledge; learning is also dictated by certain situations emerging in a family: “It depends on your needs today” (GT1). It does not only reveal individual willingness to learn but also the learning process dictated by the environment and different situations as a family has to solve daily challenges.

Foster parents resort to such learning activities as the search for information in online portals, forums, the analysis of scientific literature; they gain knowledge from other foster families. Foster families search for solutions and new knowledge by consulting professionals: “We turned to psychologists, different professionals, and various self-help groups. I attended various lectures. I went everywhere I could” (GM10). In this way, a foster family accumulates and reorganizes the knowledge it already has and constructs new meanings: “Your vision and views change” (GM2). Foster parents try to apply the newly acquired or reconstructed knowledge in their daily life.

Reflection on experience by discovering a new self: “I became a different person”. Informal learning in a foster family does not only take place with a learner’s focus on the future and conscious construction of one’s road of learning; learning from experience by looking back at the past also takes place. By reflecting on experience, a foster family gradually realizes that different everyday situations enabled their personal development: “I believe that we got more from her than we gave her” (GM1). Foster parents refer to it as the lessons of life: “You live and you learn, you go through your experience and make conclusions out of it” (GT1). The reflection on one’s experience takes place when a foster family analyzes its mistakes and learns from them: “You make a mistake, analyze it and make your conclusions. You apply them and try not to make the same mistake in a different situation” (GT1). Experience is reflected through the continuous identification of emerging feelings and their “ventilation”, through the
sharing of lived experience with others. Foster parents share their experiences within the family. They search for solutions together: “We sit down every evening and we talk; we think what to do, what to change, what to apply – we learn like that” (GM10). Informal learning also takes place through a dialogue with oneself, when, reflecting on various experiences, the members of a foster family rethink what they learnt, how this learning took place and how they were feeling about it. Diary-writing helps to develop this dialogue with oneself.

The reflection on experience and learning from the daily experiences of non-relative foster care enable a foster family to discover and see itself in a new light: to know itself better, to realize its limitations. By reflecting on experience the biological children of foster parents learn to be emphatic. They develop their understanding about abandoned children; they realize what it means “not to have parents” (V9). It leads to their maturity. The reflection on experience enables a foster family to realize what it has gained, learned, how it changed; to get to know itself better and take appropriate decisions leading to successful foster care of a non-relative child.

**Social context of informal learning.** The informal learning of a foster family takes place in a certain social context encompassing the factors that stimulate and hinder informal learning. It gives rise to the phenomenon of swinging learning, which includes social actors inside a foster family and outside it whose actions either speed up the swinging of informal learning or slow it down.

**Sharing of lived experience: “There are two of us and we will handle everything”**. Informal learning takes place in a foster family through social interactions. At first, it takes place inside the family by sharing the lived experience with others. A foster family acts together; all family members look after a non-relative child. Therefore, every one of them is viewed as an active actor of learning. Informal learning and the sharing of lived experience take place by supporting each other, looking for solutions together and through the togetherness and unity of the family: “We stuck together, we put our shoulders together, we used to do everything as one, whatever we decided, we did it” (GM10). Mutual commitments, sharing of duties, helpfulness, listening to each other are important in this case. The sharing of lived experience provides an opportunity to learn from each other, thus making it the factor that speeds up the “pendulum” of informal learning.
Support from environment: “We grew like that together”. Informal learning in a foster family causes the ripple effect when the experiences of non-relative foster care in a family affect other individuals in their environment. In this way, mutual social learning emerges: both a foster family and the environment learn from each other. Learning takes place through social interactions with relatives and the community by cooperating and receiving support from them: “We would not survive without the community” (GM10). A foster family learns from the individuals in its environment; in turn, the latter ones learn from the foster family. Mutual sharing of knowledge, skills and understanding takes place. Reciprocal social learning takes place through mutual support in self-help groups. In this way, a foster family receives help from the families and professionals who are more experienced in this matter. They may learn and draw experience from each other. Religious foster parents also get support from their religious community. Religion and prayer which they can lean upon in difficult situations are of crucial importance for them. Thus, the informal learning of a foster family is seen as a social process where not only the family itself but also the surrounding environment acts together. Reciprocal social learning takes place; the personal growth of every actor occurs through observation, cooperation, and support. The support from the environment is also construed as the factor supporting and reinforcing the swinging of the informal learning in a foster family.

Opposition to change: “I did not want her”. The informal learning taking place in a foster family is made more troublesome by the opposition of biological children to change. Biological children oppose to the changes taking place in a family by expressing their envy to foster children over the attention paid to them: “How can it be that a stranger girl suddenly comes and steals the attention of my mom!” (GM10). Opposition to change makes the process of informal learning of the whole family more difficult; it interferes with and disbalances its swinging. On the other hand, it pushes the “pendulum” of informal learning to the opposite direction: a foster family has to analyze its experiences, rethink its further actions and decisions as to how not to forget biological children and to help them: “You have to remember that it is most important to show attention to your own children” (GM11).

Unsupportive environment: “People look at us with hostility”. The swinging of informal learning in a foster family is troubled by hostile and unsupportive
environment. Foster parents often feel that they are rejected by their immediate environment and the community and sense the lack of support from assistance services. The relatives of a foster family may withdraw and not provide their support to the family in its decisions; they often tend to moralize: “The hostility is huge, because it is really difficult for people to understand what you are doing here and why you need this” (GM10). A foster family also feels indifference coming from the members of a school community. The colleagues not seeing any sense in non-relative foster care may be unsupportive as well. A foster family may sense the community’s condemnation. Suspicions caused by the foster care of a non-relative child which are coming from the environment are also sensed by the biological children of foster parents: “The village was full of various rumours; we were as if under a magnifying glass” (V1). Thus, unsupportive environment, its hostility and lack of support or even condemnation aggravate and restrict the informal learning taking place in a foster family.

‘Emotional triangle’: “The foster daughter, we and her family”. By fully accepting a non-relative child to be a part of the family, a foster family must also accept the child’s biological family, its history and origins. The experience of acceptance drives foster parents into the so called ‘emotional triangle’, i.e. the experience of relationships related to a foster family, a foster child and a foster child’s biological family. A foster family often faces a huge hostility from a foster child’s biological family. Though foster parents raise and care for a non-relative child, his or her biological family sees the process as the threat to the loss of their child and the complete loss of their maternity or paternity rights. Hence, their hostility may take the form of threatening behaviour: “They say, ‘Give the children back, bring them back, the children are at your place, bring them to me’. He tested me in all possible ways” (GM11). The biological children of foster parents undergo the same experiences in the relationships with a foster child’s biological family: the loss of stability in a family, becoming hostages of the situation, in particular when they see their suffering parents. However, in contrast to their parents, biological children use yet another strategy in these interactions of “emotional triangle”, i.e. withdrawal: “I don’t want to interfere between the foster girl and her father” (V3). Since foster parents are obliged to allow a foster child to meet his/her biological family as well as to bring, accompany, pick up
him/her, it is easier for the biological children of foster parents to withdraw from a similar situation than to their parents.

The above ‘emotional triangle’ interactions give the stimulus for informal learning to take place. A foster family learns to maintain the emotional balance between all the individuals falling to this triangle and learns to accept both a foster child and his/her biological family. They learn to give themselves unconditionally by also not underestimating and changing a foster child’s natural family. It is an acute, emotionally painful and often dramatic point to all the actors in the non-relative fostering process. At the same time, it is a continuous process of learning taking place through challenges and trials.

**Constructivist grounded “pendulum” theory about the informal learning of non-relative foster families**

The informal learning of a foster family fostering a non-relative child takes place in every daily situation through various social interactions. Different and supplementary types of informal learning emerge in this process. A part of this learning occurs with an individual’s intentional orientation towards the future in the attempt to self-actualize. Yet another part is seen as spontaneous and incidental learning when learners do not even realize that they have acquired certain competences. It is only by looking at the past and reflecting on their experience that a foster family discovers itself in a new light. Hence, we can see a continuous movement of informal learning forth and back in time in the attempt to keep balance in everyday life. The core category of the data-based substantive theory – *the swinging of informal learning by keeping equilibrium* – was constructed in this way. The pendulum metaphor is used to explain that informal learning taking place in a foster family is not a linear, unidirectional or step-by-step process; on the contrary, it is unstable and constantly swinging in different directions: by focusing on the future and also looking back at the past and learning from it. The maintenance of the equilibrium position is seen as the central axis of the swinging “pendulum” of informal learning (see Fig. 2).
Fig. 2. Grounded “Pendulum” Theory about the Informal Learning of a Non-relative Foster Family
Swinging of the informal learning “pendulum”: “You look back at your experience and you move forward again”. Informal learning in a foster family as if swings forth and back in time like a pendulum. It is a continuous swinging of informal learning as a foster family seeks to self-actualize and to discover itself in a new light. The chosen metaphor of the pendulum enables us to show the informal learning taking place in a foster family as continuously moving in different directions, as rhizomatic learning, where different types of informal learning intertwine and overlap, as a socially constructed phenomenon. However, this swinging does not imply the movement from one point towards another and the coming back to the same point. It is an upward and spiral “pendulum” motion. Learners continuously look into the future and learn intentionally in order to become good foster parents, but the standard of what it means to be a good foster parent is continuously lifted and determined by unique and diverse situations, interactions and contexts. In the same way—by learning from and through experience—a foster family gradually takes a look at the past and sees itself in a new light: after the family acquires new skills and knowledge and develops certain qualities, it sees its changed attitudes and beliefs, its new values. It is a continuous and dynamic change of all members in a foster family and their personal growth.

The motion of the “pendulum” of informal learning in a foster family takes place at two levels simultaneously: personal and social. The personal level encompasses an individual’s independent or autonomous informal learning: intentional, planned and predefined. It covers the aspects of self-regulated, self-directed and self-managed informal learning. When learning independently, a person takes initiative, evaluates what learning outcomes he/she intends to achieve, what it wants to learn and in what ways; an individual plans and controls the process, time and place of learning, analyzes and evaluates the achieved learning outcomes and anticipates further steps of learning.

Non-relative foster care is perceived as an intentional activity. Thus, informal learning is also viewed as goal-driven learning when the learner (i.e. a member of a foster family) perceives the personal value and benefit of learning. The intentional informal learning in a foster family starts when a person resolves to change him/herself and wishes to change the surrounding world. In the light of the collision between a familiar and unfamiliar world when a non-relative child is accepted into a family, a foster family starts
constructing its own personal road of learning. Everyone is looking for his/her own ways of learning hoping to find answers to arising questions and trying to respond to emerging challenges. Various forms of learning are in use: search for information on the Internet, reading of scientific books and articles, attendance of training courses and seminars. The members of a foster family intentionally organize the learning activities and time dedicated to their learning. In this way, we see the intentional achievement of knowledge. After theoretical knowledge is acquired, a foster family tries to apply it to practice by continuously keeping track of their words and actions, analyzing them and trying to act in the way they learnt in theory. After facing the arising challenges, a foster family resorts to an explicit form of intentional learning – problematic learning – when an individual seeks to understand and solve a certain problem or challenge. The members of a foster family themselves take responsibility as to what, how and when they are going to learn. Meanwhile, their intentional informal learning is motivated by the belief that the challenges of non-relative foster can actually be solved and that the ultimate goal – to become a good foster parent – can be achieved.

The personal level of the “pendulum” of informal learning also covers learning from experience when a foster family discovers itself in a new light by reflecting on its experiences. Duality can be seen at this point: an individual learns from and through experience. As a foster family learns from specific experiences, it reflects on various situations critically, intentionally and actively; it learns by analyzing the mistakes made in the past and makes use of personal discoveries. When learning from experience, knowledge is constructed by transforming personal experience. An individual considers and gives meaning to the acquired experience, creates and builds new knowledge and chooses further solutions and actions. A foster family also learns through experience: randomly and spontaneously when learning takes place by experiencing everyday situations and various social interactions and only later realizing that an individual actually learnt something through this experience.

As an individual learns intentionally, incidental, spontaneous, unconscious and not preplanned informal learning takes place at the same time. When a foster family learns intentionally or from its experience, it takes responsibility for its learning outcomes. Meanwhile, when learning is spontaneous or incidental, the learning outcomes are only
recognized later when they are achieved, or it is seen what an individual is lacking and what he/she should learn in the future.

Informal learning takes place when foster parents cooperate within the family and with the environment. Hence, informal learning through cooperation takes place in various social contexts and by means of different contextual relationships. The social level includes the clashes of the “pendulums” of informal learning of different individuals. It gives rise to the ripple effect when an individual’s learning outcomes affect the learning of others. Shared learning can be observed at this point where spouses and parents, biological and foster children share their lived experience and learn from each other. Social learning when learning takes place in collaboration with the environment – relatives, a foster child’s biological family, professionals and community – can be observed as well. The latter ones also observe and learn from a foster family. Therefore, continuous change, growth and development are also seen in the environment of a foster family.

When foster parents attend self-help groups, situated learning during which more competent and experienced foster parents share their experience with others takes place. Relations with other foster parents are established through self-help groups; foster parents share their knowledge and generate new knowledge through cooperation. Foster parents themselves choose what may be useful for their family and how it can be applied to their specific situations.

The social level of the “pendulum” of a foster family’s informal learning encompasses different horizontal dimensions of informal learning: micro, mezzo and macro environments where different poles and fluctuations between them may also be observed. Two forces exerting influence on each other meet in the micro environment: on the one hand, a foster family shares the lived experience among themselves; they experience the feeling of togetherness and unity; on the other hand, there is opposition to changes and the foster care of a non-related child. As regards the mezzo environment, a foster family experiences the support of their relatives, colleagues and friends, yet, on the other hand, they feel their lack of support and understanding. At the macro level, a foster family, on the one hand, receives support from professionals and various special services; on the other hand, it experiences control and distrust. Some poles of different dimensions hinder the
informal learning in a foster family and slow down the “pendulum” of learning; yet others make it swing, stimulate and provide energy. Hence, the social level with the factors affecting informal learning plays two major roles: it either pushes the “pendulum” to swing or slows it down. As a result, the social level is twofold: it is seen as the domain where a foster family finds support and assistance in non-relative foster care and as the domain in which the “pendulum” of a family’s informal learning is slowed down by interfering factors: opposition to foster care, unsupportive community, control of services. The duality of the social level also manifests itself in the fact that it exerts influence on the informal learning of a foster family and at the same time is influenced itself, i.e. the environment also changes through social learning, cooperation and observation of a foster family.

The informal learning of a foster family takes place at the personal and social level at the same time. It is therefore difficult and sometimes even impossible to determine which type and time of informal learning led to personal development, acquisition of new knowledge, discovery of new understanding, and personal growth. The personal level directly overlaps with the social level. For instance, when a person learns independently and intentionally, such forms of learning as the setting of goals, discussions, communication and cooperation with others, receipt of professional advice, gaining of experience from other foster parents through self-help groups, action-based learning are in use. Self-control, motivation, reflection play a role in this process; at the same time, the randomness and spontaneity of learning are observed as well. Hence, we can see how different types of informal learning intertwine: self-managed, self-directed, self-regulated, situated, incidental learning, learning from/through experience. The “pendulum” of informal learning moving in different directions and across different contexts helps a foster family to self-actualize, to see and accept itself anew, to develop continuously both at the personal and social level. At the same time, the “pendulum” affects a foster family’s social environment, which also learns and changes through observation, cooperation with, and support of a foster family.

Need to maintain equilibrium in the “pendulum” of informal learning: “Will we live through it?”. The maintenance of the equilibrium position is viewed as the vertical axis of the “pendulum” of informal learning taking place in a family caring for a non-related child. It tries to find balance and to maintain equilibrium in all situations, choices and contexts. The
aspects pertaining to the need to maintain equilibrium emerged in the very first data of the empirical study already, when it was observed that foster parents fluctuate between the choice to accept a foster child or not. In later stages the swinging between different poles was continuously seen in empirical data and the categories being constructed: between acceptance and rejection, between motion and stagnation, between improvement and multidirectional collapse, between openness and withdrawal. Informal learning is seen in these diverse manifestations – in order to accept, open up, move forward, it is necessary to step out of the comfort zone and learn to accept an unfamiliar, different and unknown world, to expand the limits of tolerance, to move forward intentionally and learn from experience at the same time. In this way, the author of the dissertation gradually came up with the interpretation of the informal learning taking place in a foster family as pendulum motion trying to keep equilibrium between different choices in diverse situations and contexts.

The need to maintain balance is especially noticeable in the attempt of foster parents not to forget and not to abandon their biological children. Foster parents notice that most of their attention goes to foster children, whereas biological children become disadvantaged emotionally. In the event of unsuccessful experience of foster care, biological children tend to withdraw into themselves. Withdrawal and stress may result in psychosomatic disorders. In such cases foster parents start blaming themselves that they cause harm to their biological children. They come back to their moral values and reconsider what is best: whether to foster a non-relative child or to save biological children from the damage inflicted on them. Foster parents no longer see the meaning in non-relative foster care. This feeling is reinforced by their disappointment when their efforts do not bring the desired result. Foster parents disappoint with the behaviour of their foster children, which is detrimental to their biological children. A foster family goes through internal suffering, because their inner moral values tell them to help the disadvantaged children; however, at the same time they see that the foster care of a non-relative child is harmful to their own family. This internal fight brings a foster family to an emotionally difficult decision – refusal of non-relative foster care. In this case, the swinging of the “pendulum” of informal learning loses its equilibrium and may stop altogether.
The need to maintain balance is also seen in the relationship of spouses. While looking after a non-related child, who demands a lot of attention and time, less attention is paid to one’s spouse; spouses feel that they push away each other, thus leading to the collapse of spousal relationship. After a non-relative child is placed into a family, spouses start arguing more, they disagree and do not satisfy the needs of intimacy. Spouses see each other’s reactions and personal qualities that they have not seen before, that they dislike. The collapse of their relationship may be due to the lack of support and unity in a family when spouses see that decisions are not taken through cooperation; they do not talk things over and do not share their experiences. Foster parents live through emotionally painful situations when they decide to divorce but they are afraid to lose their foster child. However, in the event of divorce, foster parents start blaming themselves for the damage caused to their biological and foster children.

The need to maintain equilibrium is also seen when a foster child is taken from a foster family, the relationship with a foster child discontinues, and a foster family needs to start living a new life. When a foster family gets attached to a foster child and considers him/her their family member, they experience the condition similar to grief. After a foster child is taken away from a foster family, the latter feels as if it was underestimated and rejected. After the relations with a foster child discontinue, the biological children of foster parents withdraw into themselves. However, gradually a foster family learns to let go their foster child, to live through the painful loss and move forward. This is how learning from a painful experience takes place.

When a foster family is unable to maintain balance in a family, it may take a decision to refuse non-relative foster care. Non-relative foster care is a huge test for the whole family. It experiences emotional fatigue. Hence, a foster family starts doubting its choices, wishes to refuse foster care and to discontinue their bond with a foster child. An emotionally difficult decision to refuse a foster child is fueled by a child’s internal wounds and the inability of a foster family to fully accept a different child, the failure to see meaning in foster care. Biological children, seeing how their parents suffer and how difficult it is for them, decide that they will avoid similar decisions in the future. They feel immense disappointment seeing their suffering parents.
To sum up, the swinging of the informal learning “pendulum” may discontinue if the equilibrium in a foster family is not maintained. The experiences of non-relative foster care may be unsuccessful and lead into the multidirectional collapse of a family and interpersonal relations. The failure to maintain equilibrium and the collapse of relations in a foster family is multidirectional: foster parents refuse a foster child; spouses resolve to divorce; a foster child is taken away from foster parents and returned to a biological family. This collapse becomes even more likely when there is a lack of support from the environment to a foster family, emotionally difficult wounds of a foster child, opposition of biological children to change, and personal disappointment with the choices made. Meanwhile, the support coming from a foster family’s social environment and their relatives as well as the unity and togetherness of the family itself help to maintain balance.

Conclusions

The Grounded Theory of the “Pendulum” of Informal Learning developed in the study enables us to define the informal learning of a foster family fostering a non-relative child as a continuous upward spiral movement taking place in different directions and amplitudes. It is largely unpredictable learning overlapping with different types of informal learning; it is socially constructed, intentional, conscious and/or incidental and spontaneous. The “pendulum” of informal learning of a foster family swings at both personal and social level as well as in micro, mezzo and macro contexts. The “pendulum” of informal learning of a foster family, which moves across different contexts and in various directions, assists learners in their continuous development and growth; it helps to give sense to oneself, see and accept oneself anew. The intertwining different types of informal learning in a foster family substantiate the feature of rhizomatic learning. Therefore, the informal learning of a foster family fostering a non-relative child is rhizomatic learning manifesting itself as a complex and dynamic process of learning continuously moving in multiple directions and at a different pace, changing together with the context around the family and responding to an individual’s changing needs.
The informal learning of foster parents gathers pace due to a learner’s internal force – an individual’s courage for change. It is a precondition for informal learning to commence. A foster family perceives change as an intentional wish to change the surrounding world and to help a child deprived of parental care. Nevertheless, the moment of change also lies in an individual’s internal transformation by not always fully realizing that through non-relative foster care and natural learning from daily situations an individual will change as well. The courage for change is multi-leveled and encompassing intertwining dimensions: an individual has to dare to demonstrate generosity, create mutual dependence and strive for mastership through continuous learning. All that is accompanied by an individual’s autonomy and freedom to take decisions and responsibility for his/her actions. However, personal courage is restricted by internal factors, such as the fight between compassion and egoism, alienation, inability to change oneself and to change others, as well as external factors, such as the constraints inflicted by the environment, the control imposed by social assistance services, and the lack of support from the environment.

The process of the “pendulum” of informal learning taking place in foster families covers two major learning orientations with respect to time and the desired intentional or incidental learning outcome. Both orientations of informal learning intertwine and take place at the same time as the learner resorts to various learning activities:

- **Future-oriented informal learning** means the construction of the road of learning of foster-family members in order to self-actualize and to become a good foster parent. In this road of learning a foster family sets the goals for personal development intentionally and plans the learning process, desired results and activities consciously. It gives rise to both individual construction of a person’s road of learning as well as the learning process dictated by different situations and context. As future-oriented informal learning proceeds, new knowledge and skills are acquired, restructured and applied in daily situations and new meanings are constructed. It is a person’s independent and intentional learning which takes place by using such learning activities as the reading of scholarly books and articles, searching for information on the Internet, participation in forums, attendance of various training courses and
seminars; it is also social learning, which manifests itself through cooperation with relatives, professionals and learning from more competent individuals.

- Past-oriented informal learning means the reflection of foster-family members on their experience by discovering a new self. The personal change of the members in a foster family takes place by sharing their lived experience with others, analyzing mistakes, reflecting on experience through a dialogue “with oneself”. New meanings discovered in the process are integrated into personal, social and community contexts. The reflection on experience enables a foster family to realize what has already been acquired, to see itself in a new light, to get to know oneself better, and to take adequate decisions. It is incidental and spontaneous learning and learning from and through experience where the acquired experience is re-considered and integrated into a person’s biography through reflection, analysis of mistakes and discoveries. Even when learning from experience is incidental and spontaneous, a person must reflect on experience in order to recognize what has already been learned and acquired.

The “pendulum” of informal learning of a foster family is constantly influenced by the context and, in turn, exerts influence on it. It gives rise to the two-sided “ripple effect”, i.e. spreading, usually unintentional, effect of one person’s learning on others by sharing one’s knowledge and understanding with different actors in a social setting. This “ripple effect” caused by informal learning takes place at the social level encompassing the horizontal “pendulum” dimensions of micro, mezzo and macro environments. The social level demonstrates duality: it is an arena of opposing forces which either speed up or slow down the “pendulum” of informal learning. At the micro level, the sharing of lived experience among themselves, the feeling of togetherness and unity contribute to a foster family’s learning; meanwhile, the process is hindered by opposition to change (which may come from a foster child, biological children and adults themselves). At the mezzo level, the learning of a foster family is supported by relatives, friends and colleagues; meanwhile, the lack of understanding and rejection of the environment have a disturbing effect. At the macro level, the learning of a foster family is encouraged by the support of professionals and assistance services and aggravated by their distrust and control as well as the lack of support and assistance from the environment.
The vertical axis of the “pendulum” of informal learning in a foster family is the maintenance of equilibrium. A foster family must find balance and maintain equilibrium in all its choices, different situations and contexts. The need to keep balance is especially seen as foster parents try not to abandon their biological children and to keep heartfelt and close relations with them. It is also necessary to maintain balance when a foster child is taken away from a foster family and it needs to learn to live a new life without him/her. What is more, it is required to restore balance when a foster family takes a decision to refuse the foster care of a non-relative child. It is an emotionally demanding process disbalancing the whole family. Hence, it is crucial to receive assistance and support from the environment. A foster family resorts to its social support networks, seeks advice from other foster families; the unity and togetherness of the family itself are important at this point. If equilibrium is not maintained in a foster family, the swinging of the “pendulum” of informal learning discontinues. Non-relative foster care may be unsuccessful and end in a multidirectional collapse. Its likelihood is reinforced by unsupportive environment, emotionally difficult wounds of a foster child, hostility coming from biological children, and personal disappointment with the choices made.
Publications on the theme of the doctoral dissertation / Disertacijos tema publikuoti straipsniai:


Presentations delivered on the theme of the doctoral dissertation / Disertacijos tema skaityti pranešimai:

1. ‘I became a different person’: personal change of foster parents through the experience of fostering. At the international conference “Children in Social Work”, Trnava, Slovakia (08.11.2019).


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8. Learning from experience gained by foster parents who foster a non-relative child. At the XII international young scientist conference, Riga, Latvia (08.12.2016).


11. Considerations on informal learning: different concepts and their dimensions. At the international scientific conference “Society. Integration. Education”, Rezekne, Latvia (27.05.2016).

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**REZIUMĖ**


Disertacijoje siekiami atskleisti, kaip vyksta savaiminis mokymasis ne giminaitį vaiką globojančioje šeimoje. Todėl aptariami ir vaiko globos šeimoje klausimai, kurie Lietuvoje itin aktualūs šimtmečiais, šalia pradėjus vaiko globos pertvarkos (deinstitucionalizavimo) procesus. Matoma, jog vaiko globos šeimoje klausimai Lietuvoje yra ypač aktualūs problemas tiek praktikos, tiek politikos ir socialinių mokslų tyrimų lauke, visgi šia tema tyrimų edukologijos mokslo kryptyje nėra daug.

mokymosi reikšmingumas mokymosi visą gyvenimą kontinuume. Taip pat pasigendama diskusijų apie vaikų savaiminį mokymąsi kasdienėse situacijose. Tai tampa svarbus platesnis vaikų mokymo(si) koncepcijos supratimas, atskleidžiant ir pagrindžiant vaikų savaiminį mokymąsi. Įvairūs tyrimai (Poland ir Groze, 1993; Snieškienė, 2001; Höjer, 2004; Cline, 2005; Broady ir kt., 2010; Bagdonaitė-Stelmokienė ir Snieškienė, 2011; Wehler, 2014; Bagdonaitė-Stelmokienė, 2015; Diaz, 2017) atskleidė, jog ne giminaičio vaiko globojimo šeimoje patirtis suteikia galimybę mokytis iš įvairių kasdienių situacijų. Tad, šeimose globojant ne giminaitį vaiką, vyksta savaiminis mokymasis, tačiau nėra aišku, kas sąlygoja savaiminį mokymąsi, kokie savaininio mokymosi tipai vyrauja, koks yra šio per įvairias kasdienes patirtis veikiančio mokymosi procesas, kas skatina ir kas trukdo savaiminiam mokymuisi.

Visa tai suponavo pagrindinius disertacinio tyrimo klausimus:

- Kas sąlygoja šeimų, globojančių ne giminaitį vaiką, savaiminį mokymąsi?
- Kokios charakteristikos išryškėja ne giminaitį vaiką globojančių šeimų savaiminio mokymosi dimensijose: procese, veiklose, sąveikose, rezultatuose ir socialinėje aplinkoje?
- Kokie veiksmai skatina arba trukdo savaiminiam mokymuisi, vykstančiam ne giminaitį vaiką globojančios šeimos kasdienių patirtių kontekstose?

Tyrimo objektas – ne giminaitį vaiką globojančių šeimų savaininės mokymas iš kasdienių patirtių.

Tikslas – sukurti grindžiamą teoriją apie kasdienių patirčių kontekstuiose vykstančią savaiminį mokymąsi, atskleidžiant ne giminaitį vaiką globojančių šeimų mokymosi patirtis. 

Temos naujumas. Ne giminaičius vaikus globojančių šeimų savaiminis mokymasis suprantamas kaip unikalus socialinis-ekzekcinis fenomenas, kuris buvo tiriamas per subjektyvias vaikus globojančios šeimos narių mokymosi patirties koncepcijas. Tai nauja tema ne tik edukologijos, bet ir kitų socialinio mokslo krypčių erdvėje. Darbe apjungiami edukologijos (savaiminio mokymosi fenomenas), filosofijos (vaikus globojančios šeimos išgyvenamos kasdienės patirtys, rizomatiškumas mokymosi), socialinio darbo (vaiko globa šeimoje), sociologijos (savaiminis mokymasis kaip kasdienio gyvenimo tikrovėje socialiai konstruojamas reiškinys) tiriamieji objektai. Disertacijoje išanalizuoti pagrindiniai

Teorinės dalies apžvalga

Ne giminačių vaiką globojančių šeimų savaiminio mokymosi socialinis konstravimas. Savaiminis mokymasis vyksta įvairiuose socialiniuose kontekstuose. Tai nuolat sąmoningai ar nesąmoningai, tikslingai ar atsitiktinai kuriamas, konstruojamas ir perkonstruojamas procesas. Tačiau antrame teorinės dalies poskyryje aptarta *socialinio konstrukcionizmo paradigma* (Berger ir Luckmann, 1999; Burr, 2000), leidžiantai paaikiškini ne giminačių vaiką globojančių šeimų savaiminį mokymą kaip socialiai konstruojamą procesą. Remiantis socialinio konstrukcionizmo nuostatomis, aptarta, kaip šeimu, globojančių ne giminačių vaiką savaiminis mokymasis konstruojamas per įvairias kasdienes interakcijas, išgyvenimus, reflektuojant pasikeitusią šeimos situaciją. Ne giminačių vaiką globojančios šeimos savaiminis mokymasis gali būti net pačios šeimos neatpažįstamas, vykstantis nesąmoningai. Tai tam, kad asmuo suvoktų, jog kažko išmoko ar vyko savaiminis mokymasis, būtina savirefleksija.


**Tyrimo metodologija**

Atliekant empirinį tyrimą, remtasi *konstruktyvinės grindžiamosios teorijos strategija* (Charmaz, 2006; 2008), naudojant sisteminą duomenų rinkimą, sintezę, analizę ir konceptualizaciją, siekta sukurti teoriją apie ne giminačių vaiką globojančios šeimos savaiminį mokymą. Disertacinių tyrimų vykta kaip cikliškas procesas, kuriame duomenų rinkimas ir analizė buvo vykdomi kartų, taip pat nuolat rašomos ir į tyrimą integruojamos
atmintinės, konceptualizuojama ir vėl grįžtama prie duomenų rinkimo, kol pasiekiamas teorinis prisotinimas.

Duomenims rinkti pasitelkite naratyviniai interviu (Kvale ir Brinkmann, 2009), siekiant koncentruotis į tyrimo dalyvių pasakojimus apie savaiminio mokymosi patirtis globojant svetimą vaiką. Tyrime dalyvavo 19 globėjų (12 moterų ir 7 vyrų) ir 11 globėjų biologinių vaikų (8 merginos ir 3 vaikinai).


Vykstant tyrimą buvo remtasi esminiais kokybinių tyrimų etikos principais: pagarba tyrimo dalyviams, jų orumo išlaikymas ir nerimo sumažinimas, informuotas sutikimas, konfidencialumas, tyrėjos geranoriškumas ir nusiteikimas nekenkti tyrimo dalyviams bei tyrėjos sąžiningumas ir moralinė atsakomybė (Bryant ir Charmaz, 2007; Draucker, Martsolf ir Poole, 2009; Kvale ir Brinkmann, 2009; Vanclay, Baines ir Taylor, 2013; Sanjari ir kt., 2014; Dempsey ir kt., 2916; Raheim ir kt., 2916; Bryant, 2017; Roth ir von Unger, 2018). Visi tyrimo etikos principai susiję tarpusavyje ir vienas kitą papildo.
**Tyrimo rezultatai**


**Mokymosi kelio konstravimas siekiant įprasminti save: „tapti geru globėju“**. Mokymosi kelio konstravimas suvokiamas kaip kiekvieno globėjų šeimos nario tikslinio veiksmai, vedantys įsikeltu tikslo link – įprasminti save ir tapti geru globėju (GM10). Tai tikslinas besimokančiojo judėjimas į priekį, iš anksto planuojamas mokymosi procesas, kurio pradžia yra formalūs globėjų pasirengimo globai kursai. Priemimą globotinį į šeimą, tolimesnį mokymosi kelią konstruoja ne tik pats asmuo, bet ir aplinkos pasaulis ir santykių situacijos, kylančios šeimoje. Taip atskleistas ne tik individualus noras mokytis, bet ir aplinkos bei skirtų situacijų dėmesio mokymosi procesas, sprendžiant iškylančius kasdienius iššūkius. Pasitelkiamos tokios mokymosi veiklos kaip informacijos paieška internetiniuose portaluose, forumuose, mokslinės
literatūros nagrinėjimas, žinių semiamasi iš kitų globėjų šeimų. Sprendimo būdų ir naujo žinojimo siekiamas konsultuojantis su specialistais. Taip globėjų šeima kaupia ir pertvarko jau turimas žinias, konstruoja naujas prasmes. Įgytas ar perkonstruotas žinias stengiamasi pritaikyti kasdienybėje.

**Patirties reflektavimas atrandant save naujai:** „aš tapau kitu žmogui“. Globėjų šeima, reflektuodama savo patirtis, pamažu suvokia, jog įvairios kasdienės situacijos leidė jiems tobulėti. Globėjai tai įvardina kaip gyvenimo pamokas. Patirties reflektavimas yra globėjų šeimai analizuojant padarytas klaidas ir iš jų mokantis. Patirtis reflektuojama per nuolatinį kylančių jausmų atpažinimą ir jų „išventiliavimą“, per dalinimą išgyvenama patirtimi su kitais. Savaiminis mokymasis vyksta ir per dialogą su savimi, kuomet reflektuodami įvairias patirtis, globėjų šeimos nariai permatsta, ko jie išmoko, kaip vyko šis mokymasis. Patirties reflektavimas ir mokymasis iš kasdienių svetimo vaiko globojimo patirčių leidžia globėjų šeimai atrasti ir pamatyti save naujai: geriau save pažinti.

**Dalinimas išgyvenama patirtimi:** „mes čia dviese, mes susitvarkysim“. Savaiminis mokymasis globėjų šeimoje vyksta per socialines sąveikas, pirmiausia šeimos viduje – dalinantis vieniems su kitais savaičių patirtimi bei išgyvenimais. Globėjų šeima veikia kartu, svetimą vaiką globoja visi, kiekvienas iš jų yra matomas kaip aktyvus mokymosi veikėjas. Savaiminis mokymasis, dalinantis tarpusavyje išgyvenama patirtimi, vyksta per vienas kito palaikymą, išskaitant sprendimų kartu, per šeimos sutelktumą ir vienybę. Tam svarbus yra abipusis įsipareigojimas, dalinimas pareigomis, paslaugumas, vienas kito įsiklausymas. Dalinimasis išgyvenama patirtimi leidžia mokytis vieni iš kitų ir kartu tai yra savaiminio mokymosi „švytuoklės“ judėjimą skatinantis veiksnys.

**Aplinkos palaikymas:** „mes kartu taip augom“. Savaiminis mokymasis globėjų šeimoje sukelia „bangavimo“ efektą, kuomet svetimo vaiko globojimo patirtys šeimoje paličia kitus jų aplinkoje esančius asmenis. Taip randasi abipusis socialinis mokymasis: tiek globėjų šeima, tiek aplinka mokosi vieni iš kitų. Mokymasis vyksta per socialines sąveikas su artimaisiais ir bendruomene, bendradarbiaujant bei gaunant palaikymą iš jų. Globėjų šeima mokosi iš aplinkoje esančių asmenų, o šie – iš globėjų šeimos. Vyksta abipusis pasidalinimas žiniomis, įgūdžiais, supratimais. Abipusis socialinis mokymasis vyksta per vienas kito palaikymą savipagalbos grupėse. Čia globėjų šeima gauna pagalbą iš
daugiau patirties ir žinių turinčių šeimų bei specialistų. Todėl globėjų šeimos savaiminis mokymasis matomas kaip socialininis procesas, kuriame veikia ne tik pati šeima, bet ir visa ją supantį aplinka. Vyks atibupis socialinis mokymasis, kur stebint vieni kitus, bendradarbiaujant ir palaikant, vyks atkiekvieno veikėjo asmeninis augimas. Aplinkos palaikymas matomas kaip globėjų šeimos savaiminio mokymosi siūlavimą palaikantis ir stiprinantis veiksnys.


**Aplinkos atstūmimas: „žmonės priešiškai žiūri“.** Savaiminio mokymą globėjų šeimoje apsunkina aplinkos priešiškumas ir atstūmimas. Globėjai neturi apie kaitą gauti informacijos, nes jie nežina, kokias veiksnio veikimą turėtų globėjai mokėti. Aplinkos atstūmimas matomas kaip globėjų šeimos savaiminis mokymosi siūlavimą palaikantis ir stiprinantis veiksnys.

**„Emocinis trikampis“: „globotinė, mes ir jos šeima“.** Globėjų šeima, visapusiškai priimdamą į savo šeimą ne giminaitį vaiką, turi priimti ir jo biologinę šeimą, ją įtakos ir ištakas. Šioje priėmimo patirtvyje išgyvenamas „emocinis trikampis“ – tai yra tarpusavio santykių išgyvenimai, susiję su globėjų šeima, globojamu vaiku ir jo prigimtinė šeima. Šiose „emocinio trikampio“ sąveikose taip pat vyksta globėjų šeimos savaiminis mokymasis. Globėjų šeima mokosi išlaikyti emocinį balansą tarp visų šiame trikampyje esančių asmenų, mokosi priimti ne tik globotinį, bet ir jo biologinę šeimą. Mokosi besalygiškai dovanojant save, kartu nenuvertinant ir nepakeičiant globotinio prigimtinės
šeimos. Tai yra aštrus, emociškai skausmingas ir ne retai dramatiškas taškas visiems svetimo vaiko globos proceso veikėjams. Ir kartu tai yra nuolatinis mokymosi procesas, vykstantis per iššūkius ir išbandymus.


Išvados

mokymosi rezultatu bei pasitelkiamomis mokymosi veiklomis. T. y. į ateiči orientuotas savaiminis mokymasis – globojančios šeimos mokymosi kelio konstravimas siekiant įprasminti save ir tapti geru globėju; bei į praeitį orientuotas savaiminis mokymasis – tai globojančios šeimos narių įgytos patirties reflektavimas atrandant save naujai.

Globojančios šeimos savaiminio mokymosi „švytuoklė“ yra nuolat veikiama kontekste ir pati jį veikia. Taip randasi dvipusis „bangavimo efektas“ – plintantis, dažniausiai netyčinis vieno asmens mokymosi poveikis kitiems, dalinantis žinojimu ir suvokimu tarp skirtingų socialinės aplinkos veikėjų. Šis savaiminio mokymosi „bangavimo efektas“ vyksta socialiniame lygmenyje, kuris tarp jų, mezo ir makro aplinkų horizontališkas „švytuoklės“ dimensijas, kuriose nuolat veikia priešingos jėgos, padedančios arba kliudančios siūbuoti savaiminio mokymosi „švytuoklei“.

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GROUNDED THEORY OF THE INFORMAL LEARNING “PENDULUM”:
EXPERIENCE OF NON-RELATIVE FOSTER FAMILIES

Summary of Doctoral Dissertation

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