# **Vitanova, G., Miller, E., Gao, X., & Deters, P. (2015). Introduction to theorizing and analyzing agency in second language learning: Interdisciplinary approaches. In P. Deters, X. Gao, E. Miller, & G. Vitanova (Eds.), Theorizing and Analyzing Agency in Second Language Learning: Interdisciplinary Approaches (pp. 1–13). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.**

…notions of agency and the self have always seemed inherently intertwined, agency has been far more difficult to define, although it has been viewed, understandably, as one of the many facets of the self. Thus, the idea of agency or our understanding of the nature of humans’ capacity for agency has been, to a large extent, determined by historically influential models that explain the nature of the self. (p. 1)

The self was seen not only as possessing an essential and unchanging core but also as independent and rational. Choice and action, which have come to be closely associated with agency, form an important component of this rational, individualistic self. For centuries, or at least ever since Aristotle, agency has also been associated with consciousness. (…) Deliberate, conscious choices and actions that are, at the same time, intrinsically moral underlie most Western perspectives on agency. Korgsaard’s excerpt also reflects that, for a long time, and in different disciplines, the relationship between agency and identity has been perceived as deeply entangled. Human actions and experience have occupied a central role as well. (…) Psychologists see the relationship between subjects, actions and experience as organic. Not all acts exemplify human agency, however. Agency requires not merely the ability to produce a change in the world, but also that acts should be knowingly, consciously undertaken by subjects. Thus, reflexivity has emerged as another significant component of agency (Kogler, 2012). (p. 2)

# **Biesta, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2015). The role of beliefs in teacher agency. Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice, 21(6), 624–640.**

There is an emerging tendency in curriculum policy in the UK and elsewhere to acknowledge the importance of teachers’ agency – that is, their active contribution to shaping their work and its conditions – for the overall quality of education (see, e.g. Goodson, 2003; Nieveen, 2011; Priestley, 2011). (p.624)

This is a significant shift given several decades of policies that worked to de-professionalise teachers by taking agency away from them and replacing it with prescriptive curricula and oppressive regimes of testing and inspection (see Biesta, 2010). (p.624)

# **Edwards, A. (2015). Recognising and realising teachers’ professional agency. Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice, 21 (6), 779-784. doi: 10.1080/13540602.2015.1044333**

But first, what is agency? By offering different definitions, the papers demonstrate just what a difficult question this is. My favourite explanation of agency is a relatively old one. It was offered by Charles Taylor in a 1997 essay, where he connected agency with both responsibility and self-evaluation, themes which resonate across the current collection of papers.