

## Vocational Teacher



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These six articles all investigate the basic elements of Finnish vocational education. There is an article about the law, one about work-based learning, two articles about ethics, one article about designing for learning and an article about special needs of learners. Vocational education is always changing. It is because life of work has always been changing. Maybe nowadays, a little bit faster than before.

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## FOREWORD

Dear Reader!

These six articles all investigate the basic elements of Finnish vocational education. There is an article about the law, one about work-based learning, two articles about ethics, one article about designing for learning and an article about special needs of learners.

Vocational education is always changing. It is because life of work has always been changing. Maybe nowadays, a little bit faster than before.

Regarding changes, education laws give teachers a structure and a stability. You must follow some kinds of rules that are grounded on law. The law regulates work-based learning. Anyway, we know that as the life of work changes, laws change also.

However, something stays: teachers are for the ones who need to learn. That is why we design for learning. We do not design for teaching. Teachers exist for someone else.

There is also another thing that remains the same: there are always those who can learn even without teachers; but when there is some trouble in learning, teachers are really needed. Teachers are to support learning when it is difficult to learn something.

Teachers who support learning must realize the resources and the powers of the learners. Some things you learn easily, with other things you may have to do more work. Then teachers support learning with the help of always "learning learners". Only learners themselves can have the power to learn. In pedagogics, learners are always active.

Everything leads to one conclusion: teachers are the ones to learn also. As a teacher, you must understand the ways others learn. It is impossible to know that in advance. You must constantly investigate and learn the learning of the others.

When you work as a teacher, you are the illustration of a lifelong learning. Students force you to learn.

Have a happy learning as a teacher!

**Mika Saranpää**, Education manager,  
Haaga-Helia School of Vocational Teacher education

## WORK-BASED LEARNING IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

■ Petja Sairanen

Work-based learning is an integral part of Finnish vocational education. A work-life focus and competency-based approach have been the premise for vocational qualifications since the mid-1990s.

In this article, we examine the different alternatives for organising vocational upper secondary education at workplaces in connection to practical work assignments. The article presents the core legislative concepts, the training agreement and apprenticeships, as well as the alternative to work-based learning in multiform education.

At the start of 2018, the Vocational and Training Act and Decree (L 531/2017 and A 673/2017) came into force and specified new guidelines for vocational education and its work-based learning module. Nowadays all vocational qualifications are organised under the same legislation. The core process directing studies is the personal competence development plan (PCDP) drawn for each student.

### Training agreement or apprenticeship?

During their qualification studies, students acquire skills systematically in different learning environments. Work-based learning is defined as training organised at a workplace in connection to practical work assignments. The alternatives are either a training agreement or an apprenticeship agreement.

The agreements differ from one another in that only students in an apprenticeship receive a salary, because they are in an employment relationship. One employer's mnemonic for the difference between a training agreement and an apprenticeship is that if a training agreement student is absent from their shift, the employer would not employ a substitute. However, if an apprentice is off sick, the employer will employ a substitute.

The education provider ensures that the education organised under a training agreement and an apprenticeship is in accordance with the legislation. The education provider (vocational institution) is in charge of preparing the agreements and organising the work-based training as well as naming the co-ordinating teacher for the student. The agreements specify the practical arrangements between the student, education provider and the workplace, and the agreement or agreements are linked to the student's PCDP.

The co-ordinating teacher checks the suitability of the workplace for the training agreement or apprenticeship and for competence demonstrations. The co-ordinating teacher also prepares the students for the workplace and ensures that the students know their duty to comply with the arrangements at work and occupational safety regulations and provides the workplace with the necessary background information. The coordinating teacher checks the workplace instructor's competence for the role, supports the workplace in their implementation of the training and demonstration and introduces the qualification criteria to the workplace representatives.

The PCDP must specify the practical work duties, which will allow the student to achieve the targeted learning outcomes. A training agreement or an apprenticeship can be drawn for an entire qualification, for qualification units or for one qualification unit. Having an agreement in place is a prerequisite for an education provider to receive basic funding for the student. Without an agreement, the organiser cannot receive funding and the work-based learning is not instructed, even if the student's competence was increased.

Both forms of agreement expect the workplace to have sufficient production and service activities, necessary tools and staff with the required professional skills, qualifications and work experience to fulfil the qualification requirements and the personal competence development plan and competence demonstrations. (L 531/2017 Section 72.)

### Training under training agreement

A training agreement is meant to replace the previous on-the-job learning agreement, and it is normally drawn for students in vocational upper secondary qualification. Students achieve their competence in accordance with the PCDP at the workplace in connection to practical work assignments, but they are not entitled to a salary or compensation. The employer cannot receive training compensation for students working for them under the training agreement. The education provider makes an agreement in writing with the representative of the workplace with regards to the student's acquisition of competence at the workplace. The agreement is temporary, and it may comprise one or more unit(s) of a qualification or smaller study modules. (L531/2017 Section 71. A 673/2017 Section 18–19.)

The training agreement details the agreement parties' duties, the start and finish date of the training and other necessary issues regarding the organisation of training. The duties of the training workplace include enabling the acquisition of expertise in accordance with the student's personal competence development plan, organising instruction and naming a workplace instructor as well as monitoring the development of the student's competence. The co-ordinating workplace instructor organises

orientation for the student and participates in the planning, implementation and assessment of the training and competence demonstration. The workplace instructor guides the student in accordance with the PCDP and gives feedback on the student's development. (L 531/2017 Section 71.)

## Apprenticeship

An apprenticeship may come into question when the employer can employ the student or when the student is already employed by the company. The latter is often applied to further vocational qualifications or specialist vocational qualifications. A training agreement can be easily transferred into an apprenticeship, if the student, for example, secures a summer job there. This means that the summer job can count towards his/her qualification. An apprentice must be at least 15 years old.

An education provider has a permission to organise apprenticeship training for those qualifications specified in its authorisation to provide education. An education provider can also have an authorisation to provide extended apprenticeships, which means that the educational institution can operate as a so-called apprenticeship office. The institution can buy services, for example, theoretical studies and competence demonstrations from other operators, which have an authorisation to provide education for the qualifications in question.

In an apprenticeship, most of the student's competence is acquired at the workplace engaged in practical duties. If necessary, competence can also be acquired in other learning environments. Apprenticeship training is based on a temporary contract and an agreement between the employer and the education provider. In an apprenticeship, a student is a full-time employee and receives a salary. A full-time entrepreneur can participate in an apprenticeship in his/her own company. The employer receives training compensation, if the training incurs costs for the employer. The education provider and the employer come to an agreement on the compensation. One apprenticeship agreement can cover the entire time to achieve the target competence for a complete qualification, a unit of a qualification or another additional vocational qualification unit. (L 531/2017 Section 70.)

Stages for implementing apprenticeship training:

1. Ensure that the student's workplace fulfils the requirements for an apprenticeship.
2. Plan the apprenticeship with the employer and the student.
3. As an apprentice, a student becomes an employee (a student on a training agreement remains a student)
4. Prepare a personal competence development plan (PCDP) with the person applying for an apprenticeship.





Requirements for a workplace employing an apprentice:

- the student's working hours must be a minimum of 25 h/week to enable work-based learning.
- sufficient production or service operation concerning the qualification requirements.
- sufficient tools, premises and equipment.
- a named workplace instructor with necessary expertise, education or work experience.

The PCDP for the apprentice includes:

- the extent to which the student's prior learning is identified and recognised
- with regards to competence demonstrations, the PCDP is to feature the units or the qualification to be completed, and the dates and content for the demonstrations.
- all competence demonstrations are carried out during the apprenticeship, and the last demonstration determines the date for the termination of the apprenticeship.
- core duties during the acquisition of competence and the timetable for them.
- additional vocational studies to complement the work-based training and acquisition of competence in other learning environments (theoretical and other studies). The content and duration for these studies must be planned. If the above-mentioned requirement for additional studies does not arise, the training can be organised at the workplace in full.
- the instruction and support for the student and the need for special support, which is taken into consideration during the acquisition and demonstration of competence.
- the co-ordinating workplace instructor and co-ordinating teacher.

Work-based learning during part-time study without a training agreement or apprenticeship

Sometimes students cannot or do not want to commit to a training agreement or apprenticeship. Such situations may come up if

- a student has a full-time job, whose duties or conditions are not suitable for training or apprenticeship agreements
- the student's employer does not want to commit to a temporary training agreement or apprenticeship
- the student does not want to commit to the employer for the duration of a training agreement or apprenticeship.

From the perspective of an education provider, a training agreement or apprenticeship should be drawn so that the education provider receives funding for the student during work-based learning.

It is clear that a student who is working cannot study five days a week outside working hours. The student's personal competence development plan (PCDP) will include details of the number of days the student participates in the education provider's targeted and instructed study (study day) taking place in different learning environments. (L658/2017 Section 1.)

The student could acquire competence, for example, on 1.5-2.5 days a week. The content may include contact days, instructed development exercises, learning journal assignments and comments and exercise feedback. The student works simultaneously at his/her main job and does work assignments, which support the achievement of the learning targets, but the working hours are not counted as study time, because no training or apprenticeship agreement is in place. This arrangement can be ideal for further vocational and specialist vocational qualifications during which studying is often multiform learning and takes place alongside work.

### Competence Demonstrations - assessment of competence at work

With the new legislation, students' competence assessment was also reformed. The expertise and competence required by the qualification units are demonstrated by carrying out practical work assignments in genuine work situations and processes, during which the student's competence is assessed.

In principle, the demonstration of competence only differs from normal work in that the employee (student) is assessed whilst working. During the demonstration, the student shows how successfully s/he has achieved the qualification requirements. Vocational qualification units are always assessed in demonstrations, but the achievement of the targeted learning outcomes of common vocational units or their sub-sections can also be assessed in connection to a vocational qualification unit. If necessary, the required competence for completing common vocational units can be demonstrated, for example, in written or oral exams. Competence is assessed in diverse ways by comparing it to the qualification requirements. The assessment must cover all vocational competence requirements and targeted learning outcomes for the qualification or qualification unit being completed. The practices for the qualification-specific assessment are clarified in the education provider's qualification-specific implementation plan for the assessment of competence. This document can be used for the orientation of the assessors of competence. (Finnish National Agency for Education 2018, 5–6.)

Often the demonstration of competence is organised at the same workplace where the student has been working to acquire his/her competence. Competence is assessed and the decision made by two assessors named by the education provider. One of the assessors is a qualified teacher or, for a specific reason, the education provider's representative and the other

one is a work-life representative. The work-life representative can be the employer, an employee or a self-employed person. The assessors must have sufficient expertise and competence on the qualification and specifically the vocational qualification unit or common vocational unit being assessed and sufficient understanding of the assessment and qualification requirements. The other education provider's representative refers to an instructor or other member of teaching staff of the educational provider who fulfils the requirements for an assessor. The competence assessment on the common vocational units and their sub-sections is carried out by a teacher, who also makes the decision on the assessment ((Finnish National Agency for Education 2018, 7.)

### FOR CONSIDERATION

1. A student acquires competence at a workplace on a training agreement over summer and the employer wants to employ him/her for a month. How to proceed?
2. An unemployed jobseeker would like to acquire a Special Vocational Qualification in Business Management. What opportunities would you recommend?
3. A student applying for an upper secondary school qualification in restaurant and catering services has been working for a year in a café. How will you identifying his/her competence and offer him/her guidance?

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## TEACHERS' LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

■ Sampo Mielityinen

Education and teaching are subject to numerous legal regulations. Finland's legal system is based on the assumption that everyone knows the regulations governing their activities. Thus, teachers must - even for their own legal protection - know the main regulations governing their activities. Further information is available from your educational establishment's lawyer or your union. This article presents the structure of the legislation and main features of a couple of themes, which are central to teachers' responsibilities.

### Dual structure

The structure of the legal framework is dual. Firstly, we have specific statutes for different forms of education and educational establishments. The central ones for vocational teachers are:

- Vocational Education and Training Act (L 531/2017)
- Government Decree on Vocational Education and Training (A 673/2017)
- Ministry of Education and Culture Decree on the Structure of Vocational Qualifications (A 680/2017)
- Decree of Teacher Qualifications (A 986/1998)
- Universities of Applied Sciences Act (L 932/2014)
- Government Decree on Universities of Applied Sciences (A 1129/2014)
- Act on Liberal Adult Education (L 632/1998) as well as the Decree on Liberal Adult Education (A 805/1998) stipulating the act.

These statutes provide, for example, educational establishments'

- duties
- organisation
- steering and funding
- the organisation, structure and content of qualifications and education
- student selection
- the educational environment
- students' legal protections and discipline directed at them.

Educational establishments' funding models have been enforced with separate decrees.

The regulations for teaching, instruction and assessment are considerably more detailed for vocational education than for universities of applied sciences. The Vocational Education and Training Act carefully regulates personalisation, assessment of competence and work-based education.

Legislation is a lot vaguer on this with regards to universities of applied sciences. Universities of applied sciences have adopted their own degree regulations to enforce their procedures.

Furthermore, teachers' and educational establishments' rights and responsibilities are regulated by a number of acts, whose scope is not limited to education. This includes

- teachers' position as an employee and office-holder
- teachers' criminal liability
- protection of personal data in education
- teachers' and their employers' damage liability
- equality and non-discrimination in education as well as
- copyrights.

Thus, the general legislation regarding the issues at hand is often applied to many of the legal problems that arise in vocational education. Sometimes these acts include further provisions for teaching. For example, the equality and copyrights legislation includes specific provisions for education, in addition to the general principles.

It is also important to remember that the Constitution of Finland (L 731/1999), which provides for individuals' fundamental rights, as well as international human rights agreements which bind Finland must be taken into account in teaching and education. For example, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child contains, in addition to general principles, such as respecting the views of a child, also an article on educational goals (article 29).

### Teacher as an employee or an office-holder

A full-time teacher is either in a contractual or public service employment relationship. All universities of applied sciences operate now as limited companies, and their staff are in an employment relationship in accordance with the Employment Contracts Act (L 55/2001). Among vocational education teachers, some are in contractual and some in public service employment relationships. The Act on Civil Servants in Local Government (L 304/2003) is applied to teachers in public service employment relationship with local government educational establishments.

Teachers' core duty in a contractual employment relationship is to attend to their work "with care" and in a public service employment relationship to perform their duties "duly and without delay". The wordings of the acts vary slightly but the key idea is the same: the employer is in charge of work arrangements and staff resources, but within this framework, an individual teacher can be expected to perform their duties with due care and attendance. (Employment Contracts Act, Chapter 3, Section 1; Act on Civil Servants in Local Government, Section 17)

Furthermore, teachers must also adhere to the instructions and regulations of their employer. In contractual and public service employment relationships, the employer has a general right to direct i.e. the right to direct and supervise work. Although teachers' work has traditionally been associated with significant autonomy, the employer has the right to determine how work is performed, also in educational establishments. This right covers a variety of issues from the general pedagogic strategy of the establishment to details, such as the use of technical tools and learning environments. Unlawful orders must naturally not be followed.

Teachers must be loyal to their employer. According to the Employment Contracts Act, employees "shall avoid everything that conflicts with the actions reasonably required of employees in their position"; office-holders and civil servants must act in accordance with their position and duties. This loyalty obligation has been specified in legislation by, for example, prohibiting the utilisation and communication of business and professional secrets and by limiting secondary occupation.

However, legislation does not forbid teachers' secondary occupation, but places restrictions on it. Provisions differ for contractual and public service employment relationships:

- A teacher in a contractual employment relationship is prohibited by law from working or engaging in activities that "would, taking the nature of the work and the individual employee's position into account, cause manifest harm to their employer as a competing activity contrary to fair employment practices" (Employment Contracts Act, Chapter 3, Section 3). For example, employees are not allowed, as a secondary occupation, to implement training that competes with the employer's activities.
- The law prohibits local government office-holders from taking on secondary occupation, which would mean that they need to engage in the secondary occupation during working hours, unless the employer grants a permission for it. Being granted a permission is dependent on whether the secondary occupation would impede carrying out public office duties or reduce trust in the teacher's fairness. Teachers are also not permitted to engage in activities that, as competitive activities, would evidently cause damage to the employer. (Act on Civil Servants in Local Government, Section 18)

In both contractual and public service employment relationships, engaging in secondary occupation means that the employer's procedures must be followed, for example, by applying for a secondary occupation permission or making a notification of secondary occupation.

The loyalty obligation also affects the kinds of things teachers are allowed to disclose to others regarding the educational establishment's activities, for example, in social media or outside the work community in general. However, this does not remove teachers' freedom of speech secured by the Constitution. Teachers have, as experts, an important role in the public debate on education, and the loyalty obligation does not intend to prohibit that. However, the loyalty obligation in the legislation directs the teacher to act in a way that does not place individual establishments or their staff under unfounded negative publicity. For example, spreading inaccurate information about your employer with an intention to cause harm is prohibited. In borderline cases, the boundaries of free speech come into consideration, and this is hard to determine accurately in advance. If the educational establishment has provided guidelines for social media use, they provide support for personal consideration. (Hietala et. al. 2016, 234–236.)

## Safety

Students have the right to study in a safe learning environment. Therefore, the employer as well as individual teachers are responsible for ensuring that teaching situations are safe. Tools have to be in working order and procedures safe.

If a teacher or another member of staff at the educational establishment fails to attend to safety and a student or his/her property is harmed as a result, the employer is liable to damages in accordance with the Tort Liability Act (L 412/1974). The teacher may in such a case be liable to compensate to the employer for the damages it has had to pay.

Diligence consists of a number of items:

- **Following the standards and regulations for activities**

Teachers must be aware of the standards and safety regulations for every teaching situation. If, for example, dangerous machinery or equipment are used for teaching, the teacher must study their user manual and, of course, ensure that students are aware of the safe procedures. Breaking the rules cannot be justified by lack of time or assumed "local customs".

- **Active monitoring of risks**

Detailed rules or regulations are not available for every action or situation. Even in such cases, the legal system assumes diligence i.e. assessment of risks and reasonable precaution. Thus, teachers must independently assess each learning occasion and aim to limit the risk of accidents.

The Supreme Court assessed in its decision 1994:1 that a PE teacher in a business college should have intervened when students had started playing football in a PE hall using a volleyball instead of playing floorball as planned. The teacher's employer was obligated to pay compensation to the student who had been injured in the game, because the teacher had not prevented the game despite surely understanding the risks of the situation.

Thus, the legal system encourages systematic risk management in teaching and education as well. A teacher's potential negligence may have an impact on other legal ramifications in addition to liability and compensation. For example, criminal liability often calls for negligence, and the employer's right to subject disciplinary measures, such as a warning or dismissal, on the teacher may depend on his/her observation of care and diligence.

## Equality and non-discrimination

Equality is a basic right provided by the Constitution. According to Section 6 of the Constitution, no one shall, "without an acceptable reason, be treated differently from other persons on the ground of sex, age, origin, language, religion, conviction, opinion, health, disability or other reason that concerns his or her person." The prohibition of discrimination as provided in the Constitution is reified in the Act on Equality between Women and Men (L 609/1986) and the Non-discrimination Act (L 1325/2014).

Equality and non-discrimination laws concern education as well. Firstly, that means the prohibition of discrimination. A student may not be discriminated against on the basis of

- gender, gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation
- age, origin, nationality or language
- religion, conviction, opinion, political activity or trade union activity
- family relationships, state of health or disability
- other personal characteristics.

The prohibition of discrimination must be complied with comprehensively in different teaching-related circumstances. According to the Act on Equality, discrimination is prohibited, for example, "in student selections, the organisation of teaching, the assessment of study performance or in any other regular activity of the educational institution". Thus, teachers must take the prohibition of discrimination into account in all their pedagogic activities.

The concept of discrimination in the Equality and Non-discrimination Acts is broad. Both direct and indirect discrimination as well as harassment are prohibited. Indirect discrimination differs from direct discrimination in that a procedure or instruction, which is ostensibly neutral, leads, in reality, to discrimination. Harassment may occur in a variety of ways: it



may be verbal, non-verbal or physical. Prohibited harassment includes all activities that violate a person's integrity or dignity by creating a degrading, humiliating, intimidating, hostile, offensive or aggressive atmosphere. Teachers must, not only, refrain from harassment but also intervene if they witness harassment within a student group.

In addition to the prohibition of discrimination, another central legal responsibility for educational establishments is the systematic and targeted promotion of equality and non-discrimination. Thus, the implementation of equality and non-discrimination laws does not only refer to refraining from discrimination; instead, educational establishments are expected to continuously work on improving equality and non-discrimination. This must also be evident in individual teachers' activities.

An education provider must produce equality and non-discrimination plans for the educational establishment. The plans - in practice, the combined equality and non-discrimination plan - must assess the implementation of equality and non-discrimination as well as to describe the necessary measures to promote them in the future. In accordance with the Act on Equality between Women and Men, the plans must give special attention to pupil or student selections, the organisation of teaching, learning differences and the assessment of study performance, and to the prevention and elimination of sexual harassment and gender-based harassment. Education organisers must ensure that teaching, research and learning materials support equal opportunities for the education and professional development of girls and boys as well as women and men.

## Discipline in education

The use of force against a student or his/her property is always a violation of his/her basic rights. Thus, the right of educational establishments' staff to use different disciplinary measures is precisely provided for by law. Teachers' position as such does not give them the right to discipline; instead, a justification for the used measures must always be found in legislation.

The Vocational Education and Training Act recognises the following disciplinary measures:

- written warning
- an expulsion for a fixed time
- a command to leave the teaching premises
- a removal of a student from the teaching premises, by force if necessary
- a ban from participating in teaching for a maximum of three school days
- inspecting a student's property
- a removal of a forbidden item or substance for the duration of a school day
- a cancellation of the right to study.

The conditions for using and the procedures for each disciplinary measure is provided for in the Act. The Universities of Applied Sciences Act contains a similar provision with slight deviations in details. In vocational education, the education provider must, according to legislation, prepare a plan for using disciplinary measures and the procedures associated with the measures. From teachers' perspective, this makes the provisions of the act more concrete and precise.

This article provides a general view of the structure of legislation concerning education as well as of a couple of central legal responsibilities for teachers. From the point of view of teachers' legal risk management, it is essential to know the legislation, ask for help when necessary and to document your actions and communication in problem situations.

### FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Who could provide help for you when you are facing legal problems related to teaching?
2. How to best promote the implementation of equality and non-discrimination in your educational establishment?
3. How can you best improve the safety of learning environments?

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 Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014)  
 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Treaty series 60/1991)

## DESIGN TOOLS CAN ASSIST IN CREATING INSPIRING LEARNING PROCESSES

■ Katri Aaltonen and Merja Alanko-Turunen

The starting point for the work of vocational teachers has become to be able to guide students' learning activities. Furthermore, learning environments have expanded from educational organisations' premises to include the online and workplaces. In this article, we discuss how vocational teachers utilise different collaborative working phases connected to design thinking in developing classroom learning or online learning.

We start by defining what design for learning and co-teaching mean. We also explain how the design for learning idea has been seized as one of the trends for design thinking in the world of education. After that, we analyse how teachers can utilise design thinking when creating study modules. In addition, we consider what the preconditions of and challenges for successful co-teaching are.

### Teaching and design

Embracing design thinking has been seen as one of the solutions for the increasingly complex requirements of education. It has been observed that designers have systematic processes at their disposal and tools for working on complicated issues, dealing with contradictory demands, re-defining problems as well as for co-working with users - whether they are students or other partners (see e.g. Goodyear 2015).

Design thinking highlights the aim to understand the needs and desires of users. The goal is to develop activities through this understanding. This idea can also be applied to planning and developing pedagogics. However, it must be remembered that, even with design, pedagogical activities cannot be dwarfed into instructions to be carefully followed, because pedagogics are always established in context with participants and situations.

Teaching as a profession can also be described as a design science (Laurillard 2012). Teachers start by establishing a comprehensive understanding of the needs of both students and work life. They systematically develop their pedagogic activities by working on their pedagogic manuscripts and sharing them for example via online platforms. This co-operation between teaching communities within different educational organisations has already been initiated in many international projects, but it has tended to peter out after the projects have finished. The problem has also been the lack of sharing culture and trust within the learning organisations.

Design thinking is well suited to the changes in vocational and educational training in which it is important to understand the big picture, to come up with new ideas or to give up on entrenched thought patterns and operating models. Empathy, optimism, desire to experiment, participation, cooperation and comprehensive thought processes describe design thinking (Lor 2017). A manifestation of empathy is an open-minded interest in helping understand students' differing viewpoints, needs, hopes and motivations. Optimism is a belief in our ability to find achievable approaches to the challenges at hand. The processes behind design thinking are always investigative and, thus, based on the culture of experimentation.

In order for teachers to be inspired by these new ways of working and job descriptions, it is important to make sure that teachers' work becomes even better and more rewarding with the changes. Thus, we must be able to commit the teaching community to the development efforts of their work through various collaborative and participative methods. Teachers must have the courage and tools to employ new pedagogic approaches demanded by the changing operational environments. The desire and skill to develop new content in co-operation with other teachers, students and work life representatives is also connected to this. Participation is a basic requirement for successful co-teaching: it makes everyone feel that they are an important part of the development and reform process. The planning for competence-based education requires comprehensive thinking – the ability to bring together different areas of expertise and opposing viewpoints.

### Defining learning design

Learning design, just as service design, draws from various research traditions, so the terminology can be challenging to define. The terms for it include at least learning design and design for learning. It may also come up as design-based education, in which students learn their vocation in accordance with a design-based pedagogic approach. Whichever definition is applied, the most important thing is this: learning design offers processes, tools and models, which can be used to improve the learning experiences offered to students.

The design for learning term emphasises the idea that teachers cannot ever completely plan their students' learning experiences - learning is the result of students' actions, and what they do or don't do has a direct impact on learning outcomes (see Goodyear & Dimitriadis 2013). Teachers can support learning by designing learning environments and activities as well as assembling different learning groups.

Design can be interpreted as planning of a certain kind. When learning is designed, the main targets are good learning tasks; learning environments which support learning, as well as, student groups' social organisation with



its divisions of work. Thus, the products of learning design work indirectly: students interpret and modify them to suit their needs. In addition to this, the design process seldom produces something completely new. Often teachers produce new combinations from existing things. (Goodyear 2015, 32.) Table 1 summarises the differences between planning and design.

## Co-teaching

Co-teaching refers to the co-operation of two or more teachers whereby the teachers plan, implement and assess the activities of a student group. As a thinking process and a work method, it implements the principles of participation, co-operation and comprehensive thinking found in design. A rational agreement, personal attitudes and emotional experiences of previous teaching teams guide co-teaching. All these must be discussed when the operating agreement for the teaching team is compiled.

A co-operative culture is established by exposing different attitudes, viewpoints and values on co-teaching and by examining each group member's preferred working models. The operating agreement contains the jointly agreed rules on, for example, assessment or instruction as well as transparent resourcing and division of work: the responsibilities, roles and resources for co-instructing a student group. Thus, the operating agreement states the objectives and principles of co-teaching, but also offers concrete examples of communication and sharing forums, team meeting timetables and how the co-teaching will be assessed.

As co-teaching is developed and evolves, the most important thing is that the teachers are keen to participate in collaborative activities and have a positive attitude towards it. They must be able to work and interpret their predominant ideas about learning, teaching and assessment to ensure that new information and ways of working are successfully adopted. The teachers must also be able to influence how the new tools are used for the new way of working. Thus, the question is largely about studying and re-interpreting teacher identity: how do I have to change and how do we have to evolve to embrace the new work processes? Assuming design thinking, in particular, calls for a shared understanding of how to think and act like a designer.

	PLANNING	DESIGN
<b>Starting points</b>	goals objectives, programs of action and activities	customers and their needs
<b>Basic assumptions</b>	convergence, linearity and order	divergence, disruption, and chaos
<b>Logic</b>	instrumental, deductive logic and rational analysis	expressive, values and emotions
<b>Control</b>	rules, procedures, goals and pre-determined results	principles, product specifications, client values and client responses
<b>Emphasis on thinking</b>	convergent thinking	divergent thinking
<b>Procedures</b>	timelines, rules and codified procedures	alternatives, invention
<b>Integration</b>	analysis and segmentation	synthesis and unification
<b>Change</b>	reform	transformation
<b>Organizational thinking</b>	bureaucracy	learning organization

## Working on study modules

Learning process design contains several phased work models. Within those models, teachers, students and work life representatives as well as IT and library personnel update existing or work on new educational programmes, modules and learning tasks. These kinds of workshop-style working models are often led by trained facilitators, who ensure that all work activities help achieve the goal. The most common collaborative learning design processes in Finland are Carpe Diem (Salmon & Wright 2014) and ABC learning design workshop (Young & Perovic 2016). (See also Bower & Vlachopoulos 2018.)

Carpe Diem is a team based approach to learning design. In addition to the teachers of the learning module, students, work life representatives as well as IT and information retrieval specialists are invited to take part in the design group. The Carpe Diem working model involves two intensive workshop days. The model also includes work before and after the workshop. The workshops themselves progress through six stages: The first workshop day covers the first two stages and the second day, the last four.



On the first stage, the group outlines a draft for the study module and composes a plan of the key elements. The outline for the study module should take a versatile approach to examining the targeted learning outcomes, mission and the user experience for the study unit - what kinds of students are we working with?

In the second stage, the group produces a visual storyboard, which looks in more detail at the different stages, timetabling and assessment of the learning process.

During the third stage, the group works on the first prototype for the study unit. The group can establish learning environments and a series of learning activities at this stage.

In the fourth stage, the teaching colleagues and students are asked to provide feedback on the learning environment solution and learning activities.

During the fifth stage, the learning environment solutions and learning activities are modified based on the feedback. At this stage, students' workload in relation to the aims is assessed and the relevance of various instructions examined.

In the sixth stage, the participants establish future plans on how to proceed and who will assume the responsibility for finalising and further developing the learning activities for the study unit.

The ABC learning design (Young & Perovic 2016) is based on development work carried out in University College London. The theory behind it leans on Laurillard's (2012) Conversational Framework's six learning types. These are acquisition, investigation and production, discussion, collaboration and practise. The development work on the ABC learning design is based on establishing a work process to support the change in curriculum work. The final product was a canvas-based design process with its work cards and carefully timed work stages founded on design thinking. These work stages are

1. summarising the core messages of the study module into a tweet
2. examining and choosing learning types for the study module phased in different ways for handouts and a canvas base using work cards.
3. choosing and defining learning activities
4. specifying onto a canvas base the places for formative and summative assessment
5. defining potential shared pedagogical veins
6. an elevator pitch presentation of the study unit and assessment with the group.

We will next describe how the principles and tools of design thinking can be utilised in teachers' and important interest groups' teams. We have utilised the Carpe Diem and ABC learning design activities to highlight in concrete terms the design process (Figure 1).

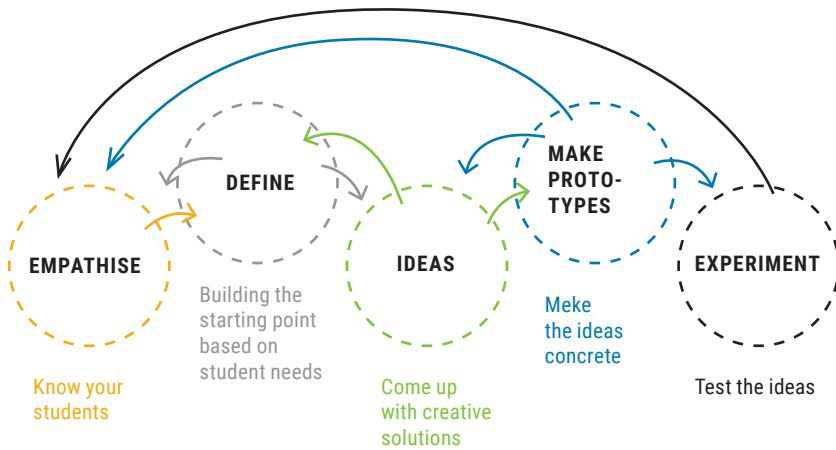


Figure 1. Stages of design thinking (see e.g. Ling 2016).

### 1. Understanding students (empathise)

The student-focused design of the learning processes and the empathy principle mean that getting to know the student group is at the heart of the process. It is, of course, not possible to know all the students thoroughly, unless the teacher has, as a tutor-teacher, participated in the students' personalisation discussions. The background information provided by the student administration systems is always superficial.

However, a teacher can get a satisfactory picture of students' needs, hopes and previous study experiences by just interviewing a handful of them. The aim is to understand the students comprehensively: what kinds of development needs and learning possibilities and barriers do they have? It is possible to create personas based on student interviews, which will help teachers understand the different motivations and aims of the participants.





## 2. Learning processes (define)

The core for multi-disciplinary competence areas is formed by targeted learning outcomes; the learning process description must always start with “with the end in mind”. What kind of competence must the students achieve within the module? Where is the common thread running through the vocational competence and the different teachers’ areas of expertise? You can try and find the common thread by writing a tweet, a core promise, explaining the kind of learning the students will be able to achieve in this module.

Teachers can also think about what they would like the students’ capabilities to be five years after this course. This ensures that the strategic guidelines of the assessment are discussed. This is also a good moment to consider the desired atmosphere and spirit for the study module. The orientation basis for the shared competence areas is established by choosing a vein that combines, also on an activity level, the teachers’ different areas of expertise (e.g. a theme for project work, a vocational case or a development task for a company).

## 3. Building a visual outline of a study module (ideate)

The teaching team outlines the core knowledge and skills which students should command in relation to the targeted learning outcomes. How are these correctly timed or phased? The students must have, for example, sufficient IT skills for the next stage of project work or adequate theoretical understanding for workshop activities. The descriptions of the active stages include remote and face-to-face contact work or timing learning in the educational institution and workplace. The method for completing the qualification (e.g. personalised study path or alternative completion methods) determines the precision or insight at which the process is described.

Different visual tools help structure the learning process, including storyboards or headlined canvas-base models with their work cards. The teaching team works, with the shared visual structure, finding ideas, discussing and defining their choices. They specify the design targets for the learning methods into learning activity outlines. At this stage, it is good to get a chance to study and assess how other teams of teaching colleagues have outlined their scripts, if other teaching teams are simultaneously going through the same work process. This will give the teams a chance to develop their ideas.

The discussions within collaborative and guided work processes fuel reflection, creativity and co-development dialogue, thus, making the object of design work broader and more in-depth learning process rather than just a consideration for teaching content (Nicol 2012).

#### 4. Establishing the learning tasks and environments (prototype).

Different vocational learning outcomes demand varied methods of learning. Learning professional concepts is different from learning work procedures or gaining more in-depth professional ethics. Verbs describing skills (e.g. can define, explain, argue, plan or assess) in learning outcome sentences give ideas of how the skills described in them could be obtained. Learning methods based on skills verbs include information processing and interpretation, application of information and problem solving, skilled practice and reflective thinking. According to the context and pedagogic principles, they are implemented individually or collaboratively. Different learning methods, on the other hand, require a variety of individual or collaborative learning activities for which digital work tools provided by the educational organization may become useful.

The choice of learning environments is also based on intended learning outcomes. In different learning environments, it is possible to achieve different types of learning. The learning environment concept tends to include a physical, social and mental dimension. Physical architecture is different from "learning architecture". A physical space often features separate learning spaces, which may mean tables for small groups, chairs in circles for discussions or quiet corners for individual work. The learning spaces for online learning platforms are organised using, for example, co-writing or peer feedback tools. Social learning environments are established through communication during face-to-face work or in digital applications, which enable interaction online. The mental dimension describes the emotional experience of the learning environment, the atmosphere for learning. Students come to and leave from the learning space with their emotions at the forefront.

The intended learning outcomes are the basis for planning the assessment of learning and competence. According to students' feedback on co-teaching, it is put to test and under scrutiny most vigorously in student assessment. Thus, it is important to agree on the principles guiding co-assessment (e.g. things that impact the final assessment, the ways and places for providing feedback and the schedule for the assessments). Furthermore, the teachers need to decide together

- the objectives of assessment (what is being assessed?)
- the criteria for assessment (the basis for receiving a mark?)
- the methods of assessment (how is the work assessed?) and
- the environments for assessment (where is the assessment done?).

Assessment criteria and performance criteria are different things. Assessment criteria describe the level of competence the student must possess (quality); whilst performance criteria describe the tasks that students must complete (e.g. return a study journal or participate in



an exam). The assessment always includes feedback on obtaining the competence (learning), and thus the assessment and guidance go hand in hand. (Saranpää 2012.)

### **5. Experiments and continuous assessment (experiment)**

As the teaching team designs the learning, the team produces different models and outlines, which support the implementation and assessment of the study module. This means that abstract development becomes concrete: learning paths, series of learning activities and tutoring processes. The teaching team must decide when each learning activity or tutoring process phase must be finished and who is responsible for producing it. The core and support processes take time and several meetings to establish the focus.

It is important to be agile at the implementation phase of the study module. The team must have the courage to try new things at a fast pace and, if necessary, implement corrective measures. It is also important to document what the experiments have taught for the benefit of the next development round. Design embraces lightness and porousness - the plans do not need to be endlessly honed.

To ensure that the design process provides a conscious learning process for the teachers, it is important to organise shared moments of reflection to allow the team to consider the solutions they have established and their capacity carry out the future study modules: the team must be able to develop them if necessary and sometimes also to give them up.

### **Summary**

Teachers' close collaboration in the production of multi-disciplinary study modules offers new opportunities for students to develop their own skills. After they have graduated, students will be increasingly capable of taking on ever more complicated work assignment. Those in charge of educational programmes must understand the working methods of designing learning processes and commit to them so they can support the teachers in the demanding development work. When both managers and colleagues are enthusiastic about experimenting and applying, the threshold for trial intentions lowers.

Teachers have both positive and negative experiences of co-teaching. At best, it helps grow your and your team's shared competence and produces an empowering feeling of increased respect in the eyes of other teachers. It provides the space and place for teachers' interaction and co-operation. The problems are seen to be connected to the fortuitous forming of teaching teams, the open sharing of materials, the uneven distribution of resources, work and contributions (e.g. free riders in the teaching team), personal chemistry, different values and the difficulties of finding shared

time. The lack of genuine dialogue, the difficulty of bringing up problems or one teacher's dominant behaviour or misuse of power have reduced teachers' desire to work in teams. (Kamula, Mustakangas, Rajakangas & Siltavirta 2018.)

Co-teaching is only effective if teachers have the ability to be flexible with their own principles and previous ways of doing things. Teachers must be genuinely equal in relation to one another so that different knowledge bases and areas of expertise are equally valued even if one was more central to learning the vocation. Efficient teaching teams can be described with terms such as self-direction, systematic and participation. Teaching teams are responsible for their own working methods: leadership, responsibility, expertise and strengths are shared. Teams should have a coordinator, but the position can rotate.

It is important to remember that even in a good study module re-design is a rule, not an exception. On an organisational level, teaching teams' continuous development processes must be supported so that the re-design would come together as smoothly as possible.

#### FOR CONSIDERATION

Invite your colleague to a meeting and consider what collaborative learning design process could mean in your organisation and what it would demand from your work team?

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## STRUCTURES AND POSSIBILITIES OF SPECIAL SUPPORT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

■ Eija Honkanen, Maiju Kangasaho and Leena Nuutila

The interaction between a teacher and a student is one of the most important factors promoting the learning process. Rather than focusing on teachers' teaching, the emphasis is given to students' learning with a coaching-style instruction approach. The key idea behind the coaching-style approach is to encourage students to learn and find employment, as well as, to promote competence despite any challenges and difficulties in learning. The aim is to achieve appreciation of diversity, social integration and employment opportunities for everyone.

In this article, we examine the structures of support available in inclusive vocational education in which the teacher-student interaction is important and the school is common to everyone. Inclusive vocational education ensures that everyone is included and can participate as well as offering equal rights, choices and opportunities to study (Honkanen, Kaikkonen & Kotila 2008). Sometimes students need support in their studies, and in vocational education, the structures of support include general support, special support and intensified special support.

We will also take a look at how legislation on vocational education steers students, work-life operators and above-all, education providers and teachers with regards to special support. What do special and intensified special support mean? How do teachers take special support into consideration in instructing and teaching?

### Good interaction as a cornerstone of learning and professional growth

An educational community consists of different people, who should work together to promote students' well-being and professional growth. Functional and respectful interaction between teaching and guidance staff comes across to students as a communal, safe and caring educational environment. Good co-operation between teaching and guidance staff also forms the foundation for evolving and inclusive vocational education.

However, the interaction between a teacher and a student is also one of the most important factors promoting the learning process. When successful, it can improve and maintain the motivation to study and commitment to education and improve learning outcomes. A positive emotional and learning environment enhances learning potential.



Our personalities affect in various ways how we approach different kinds of students. It is good to consider the impacts teachers' attitudes, temperament and approaches have in daily life. It is important to realise that understanding and accepting diversity also provides opportunities for deploying that diversity, thus, ensuring that everyone's strengths and skills are embraced.

Well-functioning interaction and empowering student-centred dialogue are based on the idea that people are genuinely present in interactive situations and interested in one another. Teachers can support their students' empowerment in a variety of ways and, thus, strengthen students' vocational identities. At the heart of the resource- and solution-focused methods are values, which are structured around communication with students: listening, sensitive interaction, trust, belief in students' abilities, hopefulness and future awareness.

The sincerity of the communication is dependent on how much the student and teacher or instructor trust one another. Trust increases when students know the teachers they work with. Acts of communication may refer to seemingly insignificant, everyday things. Everyday communication means interaction in informal situation and during lessons. The communication is unsuccessful if the teacher does not listen to the student. Interaction is one-way or non-existent in such situations. The skill of listening includes sensitivity to the situation and the ability to understand non-verbal communication. Often in a situation lacking genuine interaction the student withdraws and makes up excuses. (Honkanen, Nuutila & Sorjonen 2018, 89–92.)

Embracing students' strengths and challenges and offering targeted guidance are key to the co-operation between a teacher and a student in situations connected to special support. Genuine dialogue and leisurely, transparent encounters are important in everyday guidance and teaching. A sincere, empowering dialogue is part of an interactive relationship. At best, it includes mutual respect, equality and transparency which supports growth through the act of taking the other person's views into consideration. The interaction and co-operation between a student and a teacher can be productive, but when unsuccessful, it may mean that the student's views are neglected. (Happo et al. 2015, 58–70.)

### Special support in vocational education

Vocational students are eligible to receive special support. The aim of special support is to pursue a qualification or training and to achieve vocational skills and competence. Special support covers preparatory education and all vocational qualifications. Vocational preparatory education refers here to the preparatory education for vocational training (Valma) and the preparatory education for work and independent living

(Telma). Vocational qualifications include vocational upper secondary qualification, further vocational qualification and specialist vocational qualification. (L531/2917 Section 64.)

Special support may refer to pedagogic support measures, which are long-term and regular. A student may need help due to learning difficulties, a disability, illness or some other reason. The aim of special support is to promote students' overall rehabilitation, and often this means multi-professional co-operation with providers of rehabilitative services. The education provider decides on the special support for the student and records it in the student's personal competence development plan (PCDP). Because the decision on special support must be recorded in the PCDP, the plan and the decision are made in co-operation with the student and the education provider. The student's guardian must also be heard when making a special support decision. The special support decision can also be dissolved, if the student no longer needs it as studies progress. (L531/2017 Section 67.)

### Structures of special support

An education provider makes a decision on the different structures and organisation of special support. To implement special support, an education provider must rely on a wide spectrum of experts as well as multi-professional and work life networks. These parties may co-operate to respond to the different needs of students during their studies (Honkanen 2006, 155–163). The structures of special support must meet student needs; be student-focused, diverse and achievable, as well as, promote learning and support rehabilitation (Honkanen 2006, Miettinen 2007, Selkivuori 2015). The support provided for students and the structures of special support can be implemented by a multi-professional team.

Vocational teachers are key experts on students' competence, the progress of their studies and their challenges in learning. Teachers know their students and are essential to each student's learning process. When a vocational teacher and a special education teacher combine their expertise on planning special support, they will be able to provide different forms of support for everyday needs and opportunities for their students to achieve vocational competence.

The planning takes into consideration students' competence, abilities and aims. Competence refers either to a student's existing competence, which can be put to use during the training or competence needed for the qualification requirements. The abilities describe a student's capacity to operate and can be inherent or developed tendencies or characteristics. The aims describe the targeted learning outcomes, which also include a time perspective. Based on the aims, teachers come up with targeted support measures which promote students' learning and competence.





Just stating that a student needs individual support is not considered a sufficient support measure. The support measures must be described in the PCDP with concrete and comprehensible ideas: what, when, with who, where etc. The special support must, in other words, always include concrete actions and be planned and implemented for each individual student. (Honkanen 2018.) Individually planned support measures do not mean that individuals would act on their own but that each student receives individual support to achieve their learning goals within the community in which they operate at any given time.

In vocational education and training, a safe learning environment is the foundation, support and prerequisite for learning. This means having an accessible and inclusive learning environment established by everyone who takes part in the learning process, typically, the teachers, students and work-life instructors. An accessible learning environment must be free from physical, psychological, social and attitudinal barriers. An accessible learning environment gives everyone a chance to learn and, thus, to improve their vocational competence. An accessible learning environment promotes equal interaction and the possibility to bring ideas and thoughts forward and provides opportunities to try, succeed and fail and to show emotions.

Vocational teachers can dismantle barriers to learning by, for example, helping students secure learning-related skills. In addition to learning skills, teachers can also work on the learning process with their students by helping to prepare for an exercise; offering guidance for starting and working on an exercise; providing feedback; anticipating exercise completion, as well as, preparing an encouraging assessment in which success and development take central role.

This is part of the structure to safeguard learning. In teaching and learning, a structure means planning a clear framework. A clear framework supports students and helps them work. It anticipates the space, time, individuals, tools and activities etc. and aims to keep them clear and predictable for students. In addition to the time used to study, the framework should also include pausing, which is important for students. Pausing offers a way to pace learning and to promote the absorption of the taught content and helps students to memorise it. It allows students to keep going and to regulate their activity level and promotes their concentration.

Through everyday schoolwork, teachers can gradually start to recognise the best ways for individual students to work and the ideal learning environments and materials. Teachers help all their students to learn by adjusting the achievable, multi-channel learning materials, which aim for active learning and by providing individual opportunities to enjoy different learning environments and styles. Students might benefit from learning

materials and learning guidance which has been cut into smaller sections. That allows students to proceed a small step at a time, which makes it easier to take in and understand the material. Thus, it is easier for students to work towards their goals at their own pace and to learn new things in the most appropriate way for them. The language used with the students, is also key to learning: teachers must use clear language, explain concepts and check that everyone understands.

Instead of learning by writing and reading, students also need to have a chance to participate in active learning, which is a natural learning method in vocational education. Many students also benefit from multi-channel and active learning. Multi-channel learning means that students have a chance to utilise their senses (sight, hearing, touch, balance, smell, taste). Experiences gained by using our senses leave a more permanent memory trace and help us learn.

It is fruitful to use different learning environments in vocational education. That helps us examine learning methods, learning goals and how learning environments support learning outcomes. For example, sometimes at the early stages of studies, it is necessary to work in a calm space equipped with specific lighting. Sometimes an environment that stimulates and invites active participation is sufficient. At other times, it is useful to head to authentic work-based learning environments.

It is important to remember that students who need support will also need it during work-based learning, and that should be anticipated. Support may mean intensified instruction or orientation at the workplace; written instructions in addition to oral ones, and support and guidance using mobile devices. It is essential that the student and others at the workplace know what kind of instruction is beneficial for the student and what promotes their learning and working.

Plain and multi-channel learning material which strengthens and activates interaction supports learning, particularly when a student has language or reading and writing related problems. Learning materials that activate the senses of sight and hearing may mean images, video, audio, colours, clearly structured written material or learning materials and exercises specialising in active learning. Active instruction and learning and instruction that progresses by section strengthen understanding and help those students who have problems with remembering.

Peer instruction is a form of guidance which is worth activating and utilising during vocational studies. Many students benefit from working together allowing them to learn from others as well as help others learn. Working together is a key part of vocational competence needed in work-life. At work, we learn from one another, help each other learn and learn together.

Integrating learning into real work assignments and making them more concrete helps many students to understand what, for example, maths skills are needed for, how to utilise skills learnt on Finnish lessons and what the purpose of learning foreign languages is. Integration often motivates students to learn skills needed in their vocation and in work-life. Technology and the digital capability approach offer solutions which are innovative and support the development of competence for all students (Nuutila & Honkanen 2016, 49–57). Technological and digital solutions can provide a means to work together utilising learning materials with an aim to develop competence. These solutions can support learning which is not tied to a time and a place; help specialise learning, and provide tools for revising, mental learning and anticipation.

### Adaptation and exceptions

Supporting learning and special support solutions are diverse, and recognising their intersection is not always straightforward. However, if it becomes apparent that a student will not achieve the expected level (satisfactory 1, T1) in vocational competence despite special support measures and close supervision, it is possible, as a special support measure, to adapt the assessment, which must always be anticipated.

The adaptation can only be done for a vocational upper secondary qualification. The Finnish National Agency for Education provides in the vocational upper secondary qualification requirements the extent to which competence assessment cannot be adapted. For example, adaption or exceptions is available for the vocational qualification for social and health care and for the vocational qualification for education and guidance. (L531/2017 Section 67.)

The Parasta osaamista – Best Competence network project has produced the following indicative and illustrative adaption assessment criteria. For the adjusted competence assessment, the team creates personal and adapted assessment criteria for the student in question: M1, M2, M3, M4, and M5 (see table 1). Of course, that means that this decision has been discussed with the student, and the possibility for the student to achieve a satisfactory level (T1) in the qualification and in competence demonstration and assessment has been rejected.

A deviation from the qualification requirements or targeted learning outcomes for a vocational upper secondary qualification means that the student does not demonstrate the targeted learning outcomes, and the student's competence is, thus, not assessed. A deviation may mean that the targeted learning outcome is unreasonable for the student due to his/her disability, health or language skills.

	SATISFACTORY 1 M)	T2 M)	GOOD 3 M)	H4 M)	EXCELLENT 5 M)	SATISFACTORY 1 Competence in accordance with the qualification requirements.
Level of competence general description	Assisted		Supported		Instructed	Mostly independently
Duties and instruction	Student carries out individually planned duties or works with tasks after ample practice under continuous assistance		Student carries out individually planned duties with support or under continuous instruction		Student works with familiar repetitive duties under instruction or under continuous instruction	Student works with familiar repetitive duties having been instructed
Working environment and hours	Student works in individually customised working environments and receives plenty of extra time		Student works in familiar working environments with support and an individual schedule		Student works in familiar working environments having been instructed	Student works in new work situations and environments under instruction
Team and cooperation	Student works continuously under the instruction and assistance of a work partner* Key competence has been achieved!		Student works as part of a team under instruction		Student works as a member of a team or with a work partner fairly independently	Student works as a member of a team or assisting someone else
	*) Work partner refers to a teacher, instructor, workplace instructor, workplace coach or some other person					

Table 1. Examples of adapted assessment criteria

The exceptions can only be applied to vocational upper secondary qualifications. The Finnish National Agency for Education can determine whether exceptions can be made in the targeted learning outcomes. The exceptions may only apply to the qualification unit to which it is essential, when taking into account the student's individual aims and capabilities.

## Summary

In vocational education, students' learning is secured by establishing accessible learning and learning environments. The accessibility of learning must be available for all students.

Teaching, instruction and support of vocational teachers and work-based learning are important ways for students to achieve vocational competence. Sometimes students need stronger support measures, special support to achieve vocational competence. It may mean individual instruction from a teacher, starting work on exercises together, adapting learning material to meet the student's needs, different learning environments, providing time. Special support is also individual support provided by a vocational teacher, which takes into account a student's need for support in everyday learning situations. Special support is carried out through a multi-professional teamwork in which the role of the vocational teacher is key, because s/he helps students to learn in everyday situations in the educational establishment and during work-based learning.

The day-to-day life at school involves human emotions, which is why we need emotional competence, empathy as well as interactive and communication skills. In the future, humanity and working with diverse students will be increasingly important. Valuing diversity and different ways of learning is a huge resource and a possibility for inclusion.

## FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Find out what kinds of pedagogic supervision and learning arrangements for support have been recorded to ensure that students achieve vocational competence.
2. Find out what kinds of special support measures are used during work-based training.
3. How has multi-professional co-operation been organised in your organisation to support students' learning outcomes and graduation? What are your duties in multi-professional co-operation?

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## WORK, EDIFICATION\* AND PHILOSOPHY

■ Mika Saranpää

“Self-learned is the only one who has learnt.  
The rest have been taught.”

Erno Paasilinna (2010) wrote his own aphorisms. Probably. I am personally writing this text. I am in this text. I write; therefore I work. Maybe I am. I have been taught to do this work. I have gradually learnt it myself too, by practising writing and reading. You appear to be reading right now too? Philosophy has also been taught to me. But, then, I have also learnt that on my own, by living, being and thinking about living and being. Inevitably, the job of thinking is done, with beads of sweat on their foreheads, by those who work. The work of thinking includes a seed of edification.

In my article, I discuss the philosophy of vocational education from the perspective of ethics. My basic premise is ethics as the first philosophy (see Levinas 1996, 68–69). Ethics as first philosophy studies humans' way of being in relation to the Other. The Other is the one that defines the necessity of responsibility and sets the question for me. I use “criteria-based assessment” – i.e. competence assessment, which is based on the criteria recognised and somehow recorded by the assessing parties – as a phenomenon on which I apply philosophical standpoints. This because assessment is the first pedagogy (see Saranpää 2015, 81).

“Firstness” in both these cases means only that both ethics and competence assessment are elementary to thinking and action. The issue and phenomenon of assessment is elementary to learning: in order to be able to think about the issue of learning, we already have ideas about when change has led to something better. Thus, we are always already assessing when we are contemplating learning. In exactly the same way, the basis for philosophy is how we exist in the world already as humans in relation to one another and everything else. This basis is first, and it is the foundation for epistemological (related to the nature of knowledge) or ontological (related to the nature of being and existence) reflection.

In order to discuss the issue described above, I must first shed light on certain ontological and epistemological perceptions and connect them to vocational education and our ideas of the phenomena of “vocation” or “work”. In my article, I make the primary association through “competence assessment”. I do that because, competence assessment is, in its own way, a highly conceptual and abstract topic within the field of education. To

assess competence, we must be able to verbalise work and action, to have high competence of thinking (see Saranpää 2015, 70–72). I could even say that it is philosophy at its purest, in a very practical sense.

Verbal expression, speech and linguistics are part of work and vocations through the criteria-based assessment of competence. Therefore, I conclude that being edified and any kind of work go hand in hand in the same way as edification and higher education do. Or higher education and work. Of course, they do not always go together. Sometimes they are cut apart due to the sheer stupidity of people. But they can belong together. Work and edification go naturally together, if they are not artificially separated.

### Basic ideas and their connection to the topic being studied

Ontological and epistemological basic ideas, which I discuss in my article, are the rational, empirical, phenomenological and postmodern ideas of knowledge and being, people's ways of being and knowing. All of these take their own, slightly differing perception on the relationship of the consciousness and the body on what we think our knowledge concerns. When we think that our knowledge relates to something in some way, we define ourselves as potential knowing creatures, humans who impact the reality. (The Internet is a good source for preliminary study of philosophical perceptions.)

The rational standpoint places the human mind at the heart of all order and meaning. The world is organised in accordance with the order of human knowledge - reason, logic. When humans explore the order of their thinking, they also explore the order of the world.

If we bring the rationalist standpoint to vocational education, we can find it, for example, in how others relate to criteria-based assessment. It is important to remember that criteria are language and a product of human thinking. Criteria-based assessment, thus, requires clauses extensively abstracted from practical activities.

According to rationalist thinking, criteria clauses should follow pre-determined reason i.e. logic and, thus, represent the absolute truth and all different operators should interpret the clauses similarly. Everyone possesses the same reason, according to rationalists. If it is not the same, it is irrational.

Clauses based on reason should mirror what is happening with work activities. Thus, the quality of work activities could be proven and unequivocally defined with absolute criteria. Is this possible? Probably not at least in the absolute sense.





According to the empirical standpoint, people construct the order of their mind using their tools of observation. The tools of observation include eyes, ears and so forth. Senses are important. But science has also developed people's tools of observation. These extensions to people's tools of observation include micrometres, spirit levels, microscopes and so forth.

According to empirical thinking, real order does exist and is being dug out from reality using observation and continuously improved. An observation in itself is clean, because otherwise it could not observe what is outside it.

If we associate the empirical standpoint with competence assessment, we will not witness significant difference to the rational one. Maybe the most important difference would be that an empiricist acknowledges that the criteria clauses are the result of observation. They are, therefore, more prone to criticism than the clauses in a rationalist world. According to rationalist thinking, the basis of criteria clauses is the order of reason, after all. There are numerous perceptions of the originator of reason in humans. "God" is seen as quite a typical alternative.

An empiricist does not look for deities, but an empiricist also believes that an exact language can be formed. That language would be the language of science. And because it is the language of science, it is free of interpretations. If we propose that such a language is at the basis of competence assessment criteria, we are doing largely the same thing as rationalists, only with a different premise.

It may be a good idea to contemplate here that the core element for both empiricists and rationalists may be the "will to power" or "different forms of power" (find out more: Nietzsche, Foucault). With their idea of supreme language, both the rational and empirical standpoint, provide experts with supreme understanding of linguistic criteria. Thus, competence assessment becomes a top-down activity. For example, self-evaluation is quite a challenging idea from this standpoint. A student is not an expert yet, but only in the process of becoming one.

The third standpoint is phenomenological (the manifestation of reality in the lived and experienced world). This changes the order of knowledge altogether. The observer and the object of knowledge are no longer separate; instead, they exist in relation to one another. In fact, it can be said that they not only exist in relation to one another, but also are formed within it. Thus, knowledge is not absolute.

This way of thinking about the formation of knowledge sets the principles for contextuality and situationality. Knowledge exists always within operating environments and situations.

Another important phenomenological opener is linking knowledge to meaning. This comes up already in the hermeneutics of the early 19th century in Germany. But phenomenology made this into an attitude within the philosophy of science. Before phenomenology, hermeneutics had been the study of history - or biblical and legal texts. Along with phenomenology, all humanities and even logic and natural sciences come within the same thinking. That thinking is that every observation is always saturated by meaning. There is no such thing as a pure observation.

As such, this is not such an extraordinary thought. In physics, the theory of relativity and the uncertainty principle have been saying the same thing since the early 20th century. Thus, scientist do not need to feel anxious about this.

What does phenomenology mean in relation to criteria-based competence assessment? Firstly, every criterion is always open to interpretation. When a criterion clause is formed, it is already interpreted right in that moment, but also when it is read.

Secondly, if clauses are open to interpretation, they must be interpreted separately and anew at every assessment context. There is no such thing as an absolute clause. Language is in motion.

Competence assessment must also be in motion. Every moment of assessment is an interpretation. The aim is to understand, in co-operation with others, what is really happening when we are assessing and how it could be given meaning from a qualities perspective. Criteria function as openers to the qualities of work. They are not absolute definitions. This understanding requires dialogue in the assessment situation. I will come back to this later.

The fourth standpoint is post-phenomenological or postmodern. I cannot think of other words with which to shed light on these diverse and complex perspectives. These standpoints have the same basic tone as phenomenology: things materialise only within their environment and situation. Deviating from phenomenology and maybe going further, these standpoints take people's corporeality and many associated phenomena seriously.

I will go straight to criteria-based competence assessment. Even if from a phenomenological standpoint, it would be in some way possible to keep the party giving the competence demonstration in some sort of quarantine and, at most, let them explain their thoughts during the assessment, according to the postmodern standpoint, the person demonstrating their competence must be allowed to participate in the assessment.

The person demonstrating his/her competence is, as a corporeal being, a priori participant, and this involvement cannot be negated. The person is gendered or not, s/he is ethnic or not, s/he has an age, or not, s/he is complex, weird and versatile, s/he must not be assumed, but must be allowed to assess, together with peers. All assessment participants are peers.

Because language is a central factor dividing actors in criterion-based assessment, linguistic awareness must be highlighted. This means that the criterion specialist (teacher), work life representative and student must together try and put into words the work being done, so that everyone has the opportunity to understand and participate in the assessments. Polyphony is one phenomenon, which postmodern thinking expects from us. Polyphony means enabling dialogue.

Above, I defined teachers as criteria experts. Teachers are foremost and deeply knowledgeable about the set of criteria used for assessment. It is their responsibility to help the others participating in the assessment to put work into words and understand the criteria. Teachers are in charge of helping to establish the criteria dialogue to support expression through words.

### **Dialogue, attitude and education of work**

I will now take a few steps back. Within phenomenology, German philosopher Martin Heidegger studied the possibilities of science to be in the know. In *Being and Time* (see Heidegger 2000, 49–63), he defines phenomenology as an attitude, not a research method. The latter approach defines and halts, sets in advance means for approaching issues. Phenomenology, which is an attitude, on the other hand, gives room for an open outlook, and for searching for undetermined research methods.

This is connected to the idea that a concept - and concepts are those beacons which guide our thinking in this world - includes the phenomena of hand and grasping. A hand and the way it grasps can be both exclusive and inclusive.

In German, *Begriff* means a concept. And, thus, the verb *greiffen* refers to grasping. When humans think, they always grasp something. The issue is somehow at hand. Thus, when thinking, humans grasp something they already have a connection to. The key is to think how we grasp things.

“Already” is important here. We always have a pre-understanding; we have always already understood something before we are even aware of it. This, for its part, steers our thinking. And then there is our relationship with the future. We are hoping for something. And then we exist in the here and now. We try and cope with things. Humans are temporal beings, and

this temporality forms a core condition in our thinking. (See e.g. Heidegger 2000, 398–401.)

The Finnish language is even more amusing than German. The Finnish word for concept, *käsité*, includes the word *käsi*, hand. You could jokingly say that the Finnish language is based on a Merleau-Pontian phenomenology. Maurice Merleau-Ponty from France emphasised in his philosophy the primate handedness and corporeal phenomena. Humans are corporeal beings when they do anything at all or when they merely are. Thinking follows corporeal formation of meanings that have already happened. (See e.g. Merleau-Ponty 2012; regarding the amusing scope of Finnish language, see <https://www.kielikello.fi/-/renki-isantaa-kasittamassa>. (In Finnish))

When we talk about the concept of primate handedness, we are close to considering our attitudes. We always have at hand what we have already assumed as our attitude. Whether we recognise it is a different thing altogether. Heidegger's idea that philosophy is rather an attitude than a method can now be connected to this. As a method, philosophy aims to set a permanent, attested attitude. When we think of philosophy as an attitude, instead, we recognise that it can never stop somewhere that is considered correct. It can only ask more to get closer to things.

For some bizarre reason, "edification" has been regarded as a phenomenon to belong to the sphere of science and academic knowledge. "Academic knowledge", has then been understood as something that can be acquired using certain methods, abstracted concepts, and often also as certain kinds of texts. Scientific writing has been a central tool to this. Whereas, scientific writing is associated with scientific reading as revealing a precise meaning.

"Well-read" in a Finnish context seems often to be connected to being edified. However, I do not wish to commit to the interpretation of the term "well-read" within these narrow margins. Because, a positive definition of being "well-read" can mean that people expand and broaden their language through reading. When reading, people open their minds up to new possibilities. People do not limit their linguistic ideas to rule-following; instead, people who read can surrender to the natural movement of language. Language lives and, therefore, so do people. This may offer a way to expand our understanding and small enclosed world.

If we take the connection between Merle-Pontian phenomenology and the Finnish language seriously, we can bring edification to the domain of work and to all human activity on the whole. It can even be said that working promotes edification. Or doesn't. But exactly the same thing can happen in the well-read circles.



Edification of oneself through work requires thinking. Thus, we must put into words what we are doing. Make our activities part of our language. Language is what allows us to form new ideas with others. Language enables us to connect with others. This connection also exists at work.

Thus, education requires dialogue. Mikhail Bakhtin (1999, 252) wrote as follows: "...in dialogue a person not only shows himself outwardly, but he becomes for the first time that which he is - and, we repeat, not only for others, but for himself as well. To be means to communicate dialogically. When dialogue ends, everything ends."

Now I return to the topic of criteria-based competence assessment. Criteria-based competence assessment provides a significant opportunity for broader edification in the area of work and vocational education. When we are in dialogue on competence, in other words, on what we really consider important and valuable in work, we have a chance to edify ourselves. And because we are in dialogue on issues we consider important, we are also in an ethical relationship. And as I mentioned right at the beginning of the article, this is not a method but an attitude, which is open to things.

Together with others, we can discuss the kinds of qualities our work presents and how we could improve our work. Sustainable development, and the diverse ways in which it manifests in our work, may be one of these things. This is how ethics are always associated with work.

### **Infinite existence as a beginning for meaningful work**

Where will I ultimately take this? Firstly, I will conclude that in the topic of work, truth is always an event, which we, as the workers, study together. The way in which rationalism and empiricism regard expertise becomes questionable. The worker becomes an expert. And, thus, the learner becomes an expert too. The truth is not something to cut off, a clause to be carried under a glass dome. The truth - paraphrasing Alain Badiou (2012, 18) - is always a novelty, "something very rare and exceptional".

Thus, in accordance with the above, knowing is always relative to some extent. Naturally, I understand that there are always those with more skills. There are those who are more skilled at what they do and also those who are better at expressing things. However, this does not mean that there would be an entitlement according to which only those who we now consider the most skilled have the right to speak. Equally, there is also no law to say that all words already have their final meaning. With new actors come new words and new ways of talking about work, to express work and to edify ourselves.

Vocational education is a cultural phenomenon that promotes and carries edification. And work is as well. In order to attend to vocational training and

work with an edifying approach, we must allow everyone to speak about what they do. We must share our thoughts. Together we use language, words to explain what is happening. Together we look for a new direction. So, always to form newly, to reform. Re-forming continues.

Vocational education and work are, thus, areas of infinite existence, joyful play and shared cultivation. We do not have to define things as complete. Issues are alive. We are alive. At work - and in vocational training - we are always researching and developing. Thinking is not grasping in the sense of halting. When thinking handles concepts, it is on the case. Issues are alive. (Heidegger 1968, 211–212.)

The thought process described above does not differentiate between practical and theoretical. Infinite existence is meaningful existence in which every thought is an act and every act is a thought. As linguistic beings, we are always also corporeal beings. And vice versa: when we have a body, we have a language. Language is a complex and diverse phenomenon, which no one owns. Therefore, no one owns us.

We can once more bring up competence assessment as an example. In the thought process I describe above, the “object of assessment” is not abstracted, abstract and separate from the thinkers, an object that could be analysed from the outside. It is always a perceived, living thing at hand. When we discuss the object of assessment or the quality of action, we try and ascertain the event of the object, but also what we bring to the event. Thus, we try and clarify our own thinking, together with others. The idea of the “objectivity” of the assessment is, therefore, doomed. This does not mean that the shared discussions on the assessment could not be better and more precise. Here and now.

Work and vocational education are part of the hubbub of languages and entering into language. We, vocational education operators, should reflect on our ideas about thinking, knowledge and language, and, thus, our ideas about being a human. Thus, we can become more aware of how we work and develop our work.

## Epilogue

Since I described above the essential connection between work and edification, but also questioned in various ways the possibilities for objectivity in criteria-based assessment, it may be a good idea to tell the background to my article. What is the self that interprets himself “edified” in this article?

I may have also been writing philosophical text. Some jester might even ask what I know about work?

Let me tell you what could be the deep-running strength that steers my thinking wish and wishful thinking. It urges me to produce meanings for my text. A whole other thing is whether the meanings I intend to convey to my reader really carry the meaning I imagine them to do. But let me tell you...

My parents were farmers without formal education. However, I could never say they were uncultured or uneducated. Their view of life was broad, open and diverse. They developed their work and ways of working, within their village community.

I worked with them for the first 20 years of my life, maybe periodically longer. The truth is, I had had enough of the binding nature and arduousness of farming. I do not have so romantic views of countryside.

But what I took away from it was a strong belief in the edifying nature of work. The edification work offers is connected to our abilities to put what we are doing into words. Expressing work in words is always also linked to the assessment of the quality of work and work customs. This was self-evident for the work I experienced on the farm.

We are always told myths about men who do not talk. I have, for years, been part of groups of men who have not been to schools. Back then, I was not formally educated or well-read either. I can tell you that we did talk. Language was a way to express and assess work in diverse and transparent ways. Feelings were always there in these conversations, how else?

In exactly the same ways, women gave words to their work in cowsheds and other work environments and tasks important to them, including on fields and while knitting. They discussed work in their interactions. The discussions developed work. The investigative and developing work practice was in their hands. From hands it turned into words. Everyone talked about work. Many also read a variety of literature.

Work and skills are connected to one another. Through language, they always involve edification. Along with discussion comes sophistication. Vocational education cannot avoid this. There is also ethics - and philosophy. At their purest.

\* I use the word "edification" to translate Finnish word "sivistys". Word "sivistys" has plenty of connotations. It might be translated as "education", "civilisation", "culture", in German "Bildung" and so on. I have chosen word "edification" to foster the meaning of development of reflective ability of human being as (s)he is in dialogue with people and with his/her surroundings. It has a plenty to do with ethical abilities, openness in front of unknown and willingness to do the research - with other people. This can be done even if you do not have a school system. Language is one basic medium for such work.

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## ETHICAL COMPETENCE PERMEATES THROUGH TEACHING

■ Annica Isacson, Jani Siirilä and Niklas Rosenblad

Which one of your teachers has made the biggest impact on you? What was s/he like? Was s/he smart, funny and inspiring? Would you say you liked this particular teacher because s/he was ethical?

Rarely we think of ethical questions in this context. However, we dare to propose that a good teacher experience is connected to the feeling of an ethical teacher. We may initially think that good teachers are fair, but at the heart of the matter is that those teachers have made the ethical decision to defend equality and fairness in their work. We can also say that good teachers genuinely care. Fundamentally, that means that those teachers' set of values are based on a firm belief in human dignity.

In this article, we examine the current and future guidelines for ethically competent teachers. How do we understand an ethically competent teacher? How does the code of ethics manifest in teachers' set of values, competence and actions?

### Ethically competent teacher

The Trade Union of Education in Finland, OAJ, has defined teachers' ethical principles, which are based on the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Ethically competent teachers have the ability to construe the diversity found in dignity, fairness and society. Poor professional competence cannot be compensated by good ethical principles or the other way around.

According to OAJ, accountability provides the basis for professional ethics and ethical principles for vocational teachers. Furthermore, knowledge and professional expertise as well as general knowledge, non-discrimination and personal growth are also central.

Although teachers' professional practices are steered by laws, decrees and standards, professional ethics are not based on force or external supervision; instead, they come from an internalised understanding of the moral demands of the profession.

According to Campbell (2003), ethical teachers are above all ethical individuals whose moral virtues, such as fairness, respect, trust, honesty and kindness, are evident in their actions and interaction with students. The code of ethics define their teaching.

The ethical dimension of being a teacher includes high learning goals, fairness and the demands of objectivity, as well as, the democratic definition of clear boundaries. Personal growth, teaching social skills and mutual responsibility as well as democratic decision-making are at the core of it. The ethical dimension also includes ecological responsibility and respect for students' value systems. The desire for change, the challenges of the profession and a critical approach to your work are all part of the code of ethics for teachers. Teachers take genuine responsibility of their students' learning and invest in knowing about their students and consider interaction with their students effortless. Ethics is at the heart of developing professional competence, and teachers also justify their pedagogic practices theoretically. Teachers are the researchers and developers of their own work. (Patrikainen 1997, 175.)

Finnish teachers typically see themselves as operators who also have a moral responsibility for their students' overall education, which includes social and emotional knowledge and skills (Tirri 2014). Emotions are of crucial importance for achieving the most important objective of all educational establishments and work communities i.e. learning. There is no area of learning where emotions do not play a role. Emotions have an impact on directing attention, concentration, memory, reasoning and energy levels (Isacsson, Raatikainen & Ekström 2019).

Empathy is connected to our ability to see things from other people's perspective. To achieve fair decision-making, everyone must feel that they are part of shared decisions. Empathy releases the ability to feel compassion, listen, help and understand different perspectives. Ethical justification means to have the skills to analyse issues logically and consistently as well as to be able to take into account ethical viewpoints to support decision-making. Moral consideration is connected to the ability to recognise and analyse competing and contradictory interests. Everyone's rights should be secured and no party should suffer injustice. Relying on the truth is essential. Ethical questions are seldom black-and-white; they are complex and concern many people. It is important to have sufficient knowledge of a situation, so that the teacher can weigh the advantages and disadvantages and the different alternatives to solve it. Teachers need courage to intervene in challenging situations and interpersonal skills to find constructive solutions. (Edupedia 2019.)

The analysis of ethics in teaching must be widened to include questions of broad and well-rounded education. Is there enough room for these contemplations in the day-to-day of vocational education? Ethics as science of good life is above-all a practical discipline, because the purpose of life is not to implement a goal separate from life. A good life as a goal actualises itself through action. (Knuuttila 2001, 30.)

According to Aristoteles, humans are essentially good and aim for a dignified, good life. This perspective is linked to the view of humans as individuals who continue to learn and develop in accordance with the principles of life-long learning. It is not possible to achieve a happy life without virtues. According to Aristoteles, virtues are acquired characteristics, which can be developed within communities through the means of social interaction and educations (Noponen 2011, 33). Ethical teachers support learners' growth towards dignified, good life.

### **Ethical competence is realised in everyday situations**

Ethics defines the basis for teachers' interaction with students, colleagues and the entire organisation. Thus, human encounters present teachers with major ethical obligations. A strong professional code of ethics is a core resource in solving communication problems and difficult situations. Teachers' ethical stance defines how they steer and assess students.

Teachers' ethical sensitivity is also highlighted in mentoring situations in which a student may be dealing with a crisis. Ethical reflection must also be applied when intervening with, for example, a student's unauthorised absence.

It must not be forgotten that the interaction between a teacher and a student provides a basis for the transfer of ethical value systems. Teachers' conscious and subconscious influence on students' worldview is cross-generational.

For teachers, life means being in the crossfire of different expectations and demands. It increases the ethical sensitivity of the work. Vocational teachers must be aware of their own prejudices. For example, unethical profiling and classification of students is known to thwart learning motivation and the development of vocational identity (Rosenblad 2018).

Vocational teachers' code of ethics becomes highlighted also with regards to issues related to work-based learning (Rintala et. al. 2015). Teachers may have an autonomy in approving and coordinating places for work-based learning and maintaining a mentoring relationship with the workplace instructors. Mentoring is not automatically implemented equally at all workplaces, and students may experience unequal treatment in relation to one another. Equal recognition and acknowledgement of skills is also important in the process of personalisation.

Pedagogic love is a key virtue in a teacher's profession. Pedagogues do not indulge in flattery nor do they withdraw from situations. Ethically competent teachers strengthen community spirit because it increases students' experience of inclusion. Friendliness means concrete deeds, not just thoughts or words. Teachers must have theoretical and practical

wisdom which allows them to help their students. (Lindstedt 2008.) This is closely related to teachers' personal reflection on where the boundary of personal and private is drawn; the boundary which teachers and instructors should not cross.

### Ethically competent teacher of the 2020s

What does it mean to be an ethical teacher in the 2020s? According to Ojanen (2008), broad and well-rounded education - to follow J.V. Snellman's thinking - means participating in the humankind's most crucial challenges and tasks of one's time. The most burning issues and challenges of our time have been outlined in the Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development which envisions the kind of Finland we want to live in in 2050.

According to the commitment, in the future, education and research will establish a basis for solving the society's and the entire humankind's major challenges. The precondition for smart and long-term activities is to bring together competence, knowledge, skills and creativity. Furthermore, the aim of education and upbringing must be to ensure that current and future generations have the capabilities, knowledge and skills to support a sustainable way of life and solutions. The effects of our activities must be assessed long into the future. Instead of promoting short-term interests, we should examine and evaluate the impacts of our decisions for future generations. A perspective which spans over generations calls for an understanding of the big picture and analysis of the impacts of mutual decisions as well as accountability. (Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development 2016, 3.)

In the 2020s, ethical issues must be examined on both local and global level (table 1). This will inevitably lead to the expansion of teachers' ethical dimension. It requires changes in our worldview, critical thinking and how we understand well-being. Building a sustainable future in the teaching profession means the ability to look at ecological and social questions together. Teachers are expected to have the skills to approach topics for which straightforward solutions cannot be found, such as climate change.

For ethically competent teachers, ecological sustainability manifests in actions that prevent the loss of biodiversity and climate change. In the activities of ethically competent teachers, economic sustainability comes across as cautious consumerism. Happiness and well-being are achieved primarily through immaterial things. Social sustainability abides by dignity, which is evident in social participation and active citizenship. Connections and communication between people are cherished and social engagement supported. Teachers' activities endorse physical and mental safety and aim to ensure that no one is left outside the community. Ethical teachers understand the impacts of their own actions on other people, nature and the society. They act transparently in their daily lives and in accordance with their own understanding.

Ethical dimension	Life orientation	Well-being paradigm	Way of thinking	Worldview
I	Individual	Accumulation of material goods	Atomistic thinking	Egocentric
My family				
Friends and relatives				
My nation	Collective			Human-centered
People in Western world				
All people				
Human beings and animals	Planetary	Harmony, coherence, consciousness	Systems thinking	Ecosystem-centered
Human beings, animals and plants				
Ecosystems				
Planet Earth				

Table 1. Teachers' ethical dimension in the 2020s  
(Salonen & Åhlberg 2012; edited by Isaccson & Siirilä 2019)

## FOR CONSIDERATION

1. What is an ethically competent teacher like?
2. How do you observe ethics in your actions?
3. What kinds of ethical challenges do you see today and in the future?
4. What kind of a teacher will you be in the 2020s?

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