



Editorial: NJVET and the NordYrk network

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NordYrk is a Nordic research network with its focus on vocational education and training. Our journal is published on behalf of this network, and the connection between *NordYrk* and the *Nordic Journal of Vocational Education and Training* is strong. The central activity in the network is the annual conference, which is arranged somewhere in the Nordic countries. In the beginning of June 2022, it was finally time to meet the network again. In 2020, the conference was canceled due to the pandemic, and in 2021 it went online for the same reason. Thus, meeting for the NordYrk Conference 2022, which was arranged in Norrköping, Sweden, by Linköping University, was long awaited. Interesting keynotes, amazing social activities, the surroundings in the 'industrial landscape' in central Norrköping, and not the least all presentations by participating researchers made the conference a memorable experience for everyone who was able to get there. One initiative worth mentioning is that a PhD student network, within *NordYrk*, was organised during the conference, to improve connections among Nordic PhD students in our research area. Now we are looking forward to the next conference, which will be held in Bergen, Norway, 7–9 June 2023, hosted by the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. Until then – keep reading all new contributions to our journal to remain updated on Nordic research on vocational education and training!

This issue includes five research articles, and we are glad to see an increase in articles from Finland in NJVET. Three of the five articles in this issue are from Finland, and two from Norway.



Five research articles

The first article is written by **Niklas Rosenblad**, **Birgit Schaffar**, and **Erika Löfström** from Finland. In the study *Immeasurability loss? An analysis of the impacts of accountability measures on counselling within VET*, the authors focus on the practice of counselling. They describe how the framework of accountability constitutes the counselling practice in VET. Based on observations of guidance counselling and interview materials, the authors elaborate on how the teachers and counsellors understand counselling and perceive the opportunities and challenges in it, and they are particularly interested in the tension between the immeasurable and the targets of measurement in counselling practice. The results show that quality assurance forces the practitioners to focus on the measured outcomes, with the result that the human interactions and conditions for meaningful learning in counselling are marginalised.

The second article is from Norway. In *Å tilrettelegge for elevenes yrkesinteresser: En surveystudie av yrkesfaglærernes kompetanse i yrkesdifferensiert opplæring* (A survey study of vocational teachers' competence for differentiated teaching adjusted to students' vocational interest), **Rønnaug H. Lyckander** reports on a comparison of teacher preparation in the two different educational pathways for vocational teachers in Norway: the bachelor programme, and the postgraduate programme in education. Based on cross-sectional survey data collected among vocational teacher graduates, the article explores the competence vocational teachers develop during their teacher education. The article indicates that the bachelor students experience being significantly better prepared for teaching in broad courses than the postgraduate students. Thus, it is discussed how differences and similarities between content and practice arenas in teacher education can explain teachers' experiences and whether both teacher programmes develop the competence needed to teach in the broad structure of Norwegian VET.

The third article, the second contribution from Finland, is written by **Piia Kolho**, **Elena Oikkonen**, and **Timo Pihkala**. In this article, *Entrepreneurship education practices in VET: The roles of the teacher and the local region*, they have focused on entrepreneurship education in VET. Entrepreneurship may be viewed as greatly relevant for VET students as many of them are likely to become self-employed entrepreneurs. However, previous research has shown that entrepreneurship, as a competence, has been challenging for VET teachers to address. Teachers in VET are largely oriented towards educating professional skills, not including entrepreneurial aspects. The authors have used quantitative methodology to analyse the versatility of entrepreneurship education practices in Finnish VET. The study investigates what role the teachers play forming the practices of entrepreneurship education. However, the study also investigates what role relationships with local business play and the findings indicate interesting results on how the regional context influences these practices.

Flerkulturalitet i opplæring av helsefagarbeidere (Multiculturalism in the training of health care workers) by **Oddhild Peggy Bergsli** is the second article from Norway and the fourth contribution in this issue. Bergsli puts focus on the need for multicultural sensitivity and communicative competence in health-care work in the multicultural society, and if and how such competence is developed in upper-secondary vocational education. The study, based on interviews with vocational teachers, shows that multicultural issues are rather absent in education and that the multicultural topics rarely are linked to the professional tasks, such as health-communication and diet. Thus, the conclusion is that relevant multicultural issues must be implemented in the vocational education for health workers to be prepared for a multicultural professional life.

Finally, **Sami Löfgren**, **Liisa Ilomäki**, and **Auli Toom** from Finland have conducted the study *Teachers' perceptions on relevant upper-secondary vocational graduate competencies and their development*, which thus is the fifth article in the issue and the third from Finland. This article explores the teachers' views of employability and competencies in the context of initial Finnish vocational education and training. The study methodology consists of semi-structured qualitative interviews with inquiries directed at a sample of teachers in engineering and building vocational subjects regarding competencies valued as pertinent for vocational graduates. The results show that teachers identify main areas of competencies of the vocational graduates. The first area of competencies is domain-specific knowledge and work-related attitudes as indicators of expertise and employability among vocational graduates. Secondly, the study respondents reflect on how self-directed learning sets new requirements of vocational teachers' competencies. Thirdly, it is argued that vocational education and training should balance between work-based and school-based learning, arguing that schools could be better suited to provide equal rights and opportunities for students.