



Editorial: Spring 2025

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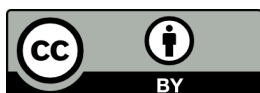
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This journal is published on behalf of the Nordic research network on vocational education and training (VET) – NordYrk. The NordYrk network is now, when this editorial is written in June 2025, gathered in Aarhus, Denmark, at its annual conference. VET researchers, teacher trainers, and teachers from VET schools, meet to take part of presentations of new research, development work etc. under the general theme of Nordic VET in a sustainable future. The contributions to the conference will hopefully result in new articles in our journal, on the important topic of sustainability, for dissemination beyond those who have been able to come to Denmark. The participants at the conference mainly come from the Nordic countries, but also from other countries in Europe, and beyond. Even if the NordYrk conference represents a considerable part of the Nordic VET research community, and a few representatives of other research communities, there are still many more who would benefit and learn from what is presented at the conference. Thus, the journal and the conference both have important and supplementary roles to play for building the network and for dissemination of new knowledge.

This issue of the *Nordic Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, NJVET, includes six new research articles from the Nordic countries. The first four articles – whereof two from Norway and one from Sweden and Finland respectively – are all articles that are or will be parts of doctoral dissertations on VET. We are



glad that NJVET has this function as a forum for publishing articles that are or will be part of theses, as it is important that new researchers in the VET field and their work are made visible and included in the network. In addition to these four articles, the issue also includes two articles from more experienced VET researchers, one autoethnographic study from Norway, and a study from Sweden on becoming a vocational teacher.

The articles

The first article of this issue is written by **Sandra Carlsson** and **Sara Willermark** from Sweden. In their text *Who's account(able)? Making sense of Instagram in vocational teaching practices* they explore how three vocational teachers in Sweden make sense of Instagram in their teaching practice. Through analysing their Instagram accounts over time as well as interviewing them Carlsson and Willermark show that initiatives, motivations, and approaches to using Instagram clearly differ among the teachers and that accountability and expectations on teachers are vague. The analysis uses technological frames as a theoretical lens to explore how teachers perceive the nature, the strategy, and the use of Instagram at an individual level and their text contributes demonstrations of how vocational teachers make sense of Instagram and how it can be linked to different levels of engagement that are rooted in diverse perceptions of their role.

In the second article, *Teachers' dialect use and the newly arrived learner in a technical VET programme in Norway*, **Unni Soltun Andreassen** and **Irmelin Kjelaas** from Norway explore VET teacher's dialect use as an obstacle to new speakers of Norwegian at the upper secondary level education. The student's oral competencies in speaking and comprehension of Norwegian are core vocational skills that are measured in school and are highly relevant and an integral part of their development of professional vocational competences. The methodological approach of the study is a linguistic ethnographical investigation. The principal findings show that the teacher's dialect use hinders the new Norwegian speaking students' oral comprehension and hence their learning and social belonging in school. The study draws on a theoretical framework of critical sociolinguistics and theory of language ideologies. The discussion of the findings concludes that there exists a hidden cultural bias regarding students' dialect proficiency and cultural and linguistic background, falsely assuming that knowledge of and familiarity with Norwegian dialect use is standard knowledge. This preconception should be challenged in order to improve the learning in VET of new Norwegian speaking VET students.

The third article is a contribution from Finland, *Practical nursing students' competence assessment in the workplace: A qualitative study*, by **Virpi Välimaa**, **Anna-Maria Tuomikoski**, **Jonna Juntunen**, and **Kristina Mikkonen**. The article examines the experiences and perceptions of practical nursing students, mentors, and

educators regarding the assessment of student competence in the workplace. It is based on data collected from six focus group interviews and five paired interviews with eight practical nursing students, 12 mentors, and eight educators in Finland. The authors emphasise that, although vocational competence requirements and assessment criteria play a crucial role in the learning and assessment process, these are perceived by different groups of participants as broad and challenging to comprehend. Therefore, the authors argue that assessment criteria must be formulated in a way that prevents different interpretations. Furthermore, they argue that demonstrating competence should be student-centred and supplemented by various tasks, such as simulations and written exercises, to meet the requirements.

The fourth article that also will be part of a doctoral dissertation is *Arbeidstakere i varig tilrettelagt arbeid (VTA): En dokumentanalyse av arbeidsinkluderingsbedrifters mål og planer for læring* (Workers in permanent adapted employment (PAE): A document analysis of vocational rehabilitation agencies' goals and plans for learning) by **Gry Fossan** from Norway. The article examines the goals and plans of Vocational Rehabilitation Companies (VRC) related to learning for their employees receiving permanent disability benefit and employed in the Active Labour Market Programme: Permanent Adapted Employment (PAE). Through document analysis the study describes the implementation of PAE and shows that the employees in PAE have opportunities to enhance their formal and informal qualifications. Furthermore, it is shown that the companies offer learning content that aligns with the demands of working life and the underlying democratic principles in the Norwegian employment model. The study has clear implications for decision-makers to recognise and explore the potential of PAE as an established arena that can contribute to formal competence for disabled workers who seek development opportunities in the labour market.

Finally, the issue includes two articles that are not part of dissertations. In *En historie om en lærlings læring på arbeidsplassen: Læreprosesser mot fagarbeiderkompetanse – fra novise til ekspert* (A story about an apprentice's learning in the workplace: Learning processes towards skilled worker competence – from novice to expert), **Arne Ronny Sannerud** from Norway presents an autoethnographic study based on his own experiences and learning processes as a plumber. These learning processes include learning of details in the craft as well as learning how the trade is part of a broader organisational context. The reflective analysis contributes to the discussion about learning at work and particularly the opportunities for deep learning in this context.

The last article is written by **Per Kristmansson** from Sweden. In Sweden, there have been policy initiatives aimed at increasing the number of qualified vocational teachers in the long run. However, there is a lack of research-based knowledge regarding how this can materialise in practice, as becoming a teacher is a personal choice. In *Motivation för karriärbyte: Om valet att bli yrkeslärare i Sverige*

(Motivations for career change: On the choice to become a vocational teacher in Sweden), Kristmansson enhances the research-based knowledge of what is necessary to facilitate transitions from a previous profession to the teaching profession. Drawing from careership theory analysis, Kristmansson's article empirically analyses the factors influencing the transition from working as a professional to qualifying as a vocational teacher in Swedish upper secondary schools aligned with vocational education. The qualitative data is based on free-text responses to an open-ended survey. The questionnaire that underpins the article was distributed to everyone who had been admitted and had taken at least one course in vocational teacher education at one of the ten higher education institutions offering this education in Sweden. The results identify five main themes, beginning with extrinsic motivational factors such as dissatisfaction with previous occupations and a desire for better working conditions, which also encompass embodiment and physical constraints. The article further identifies altruistic motivational factors, including contributions to shaping the industrial workforce based on personal work experience. Lastly, intrinsic motivational factors rooted in an interest in working with young people and personal development through pedagogically reflective teaching are highlighted. In response to the aim of discussing the influential factors behind the decision to become a vocational teacher, Kristmansson's conclusion aligns with previous research suggesting that intrinsic factors are the vital texture of human experience, which is probably why they become the most prominent factors in motivating changes in one's working life, that is, becoming a vocational teacher or not.

Looking forward to the autumn

For the autumn, we will publish at least two new issues of our journal. There will be one open issue, or possibly two, with articles on different aspects of VET. There will also be a new special issue on VET, migration, and inclusion. We look forward to all articles that will be published in these issues, and to new submissions based on presentations at the NordYrk conference that will become articles in coming issues, with new insights on VET in and for a sustainable future.