



Editorial: Autumn 2025

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Our journal remains a relevant publication channel for research on vocational education and training (VET). We are happy that many VET researchers, particularly from the Nordic countries, choose to submit their manuscripts to us. In addition to manuscripts, we also receive proposals for special issues, which put focus on current topics of interest in VET. This year we will publish no less than five issues, which will be our 'all time high'. Two of these issues are special issues, focussing on academisation and academic drift of VET and on VET, migration, and inclusion. Still, the main part of the contributions is published in 'normal' issues such as this one, with articles covering many different aspects of VET. In this issue we present five new research articles from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. These articles include studies of the balancing between training for critical thinking and employability, leadership and knowledge sharing, citizenship education, self-regulated learning, and the role of skills competitions in VET.

The five articles

The first article, *Lärare på bygg- och anläggningsprogrammet och balansakten att utbilda för kritiskt tänkande och anställningsbarhet* (Teachers within the Building and Construction programme, and the balancing between training for critical thinking and employability), by **Mikael Larsson** and **Maria C. Johansson** reports on a study based on qualitative interviews with vocational teachers within the



building and construction programme in Sweden. The article's baseline is that identities are of importance for vocational didactic positions and actions, and it describes teachers' perceptions of how VET is viewed, the importance of vocational teacher training, and how the teachers' own vocational identities are linked to different didactic positions regarding employability and critical thinking. Theoretically framed with the sociology of Bourdieu, and the concepts of capitals and habitus, the results point towards the significance of paying attention not only to vocational identities or vocational habitus but also what vocational backgrounds these originate from. The authors point out that flexible identities of teachers in VET should be considered as assets for critical thinking.

In the second article, *Leadership and knowledge sharing in vocational education and training*, Øyvind Glosvik and Dorthea Sekkingstad from Norway explore the relationship between management practices and knowledge types and practices of sharing knowledge in school leadership in VET in Norway. The authors build upon three categories of management practices, drawing on empirical qualitative data from a sample of management groups at five upper secondary level schools. The results show that the three practices of management are overlapping, categorised as 'management of operations', 'leadership through system and plan', and 'systemic leadership.' The 'management of operations' approach is most prevalent, as the three practices focus differently, one is teacher centred, the second focuses on an organisational perspective, yet the third is pupil centred. The main contribution provides insight into the impact school management can have on collective learning at schools in a perspective of organisational learning theory.

The third article is written by Eva Knekta, Christina Ottander, Katarina Kärnebro, Kristina Ledman, and Torbjörn Lindmark from Sweden. In *Not willing to participate in society? Vocational students' perspectives on citizenship education*, they discuss the problem that VET programmes, in Sweden as well as in other countries, do not seem to contribute to students' willingness and abilities for active citizenship, even if this is part of the curriculum. The study puts focus on Swedish VET students' perspectives on such education for active citizenship, that is, participation in society, and students' expectations for the future concerning such participation. A questionnaire was distributed to all students in grade three of all vocational programmes in one Swedish municipality. The findings showed that most students found citizenship education important, but the expectations of participation in society in the future varied, depending on the type of activity, with minor differences in views between students on different VET programmes. These findings are discussed in relation to different types of citizens and action – individual, collective, direct, and indirect – with the conclusion that 'there seem to be urgent needs for VET to foster students' development not only as personally responsible citizens but also participatory and social justice-oriented citizens' (p. 75).

The fourth article is written by **Frank Egeland** and **Stefanie A. Hillen** from Norway. The title of the article is: *Selvregulert læring i yrkesfaglig opplæring: Erfaringer og refleksjoner fra skolens praksis med pandemien som kontekst* (Self-regulated learning in vocational education and training: Experiences and reflections from school's praxis in the context of the pandemic). Based on the question *How did teachers design their digital teaching practice to create space for pupils' self-regulated learning and responsibility for their own development?*, the article examines teachers' experiences with pupils' digital work during homeschooling and the challenges they faced regarding pupils' behaviour, responsiveness, and responsibility. This article highlights the importance of *self-regulation* (SR) and *self-regulated learning* (SRL) in VET, drawing on the Norwegian curriculum reform *Knowledge Promotion Renewal LK20*, which emphasises life-coping skills, self-responsibility, and self-regulated learning. In addition to SR and SRL, the article discusses the concepts of responsibility for one's own learning and responsibility for oneself. The analysis combines qualitative interpretations with descriptive and inferential statistical correlation studies. The findings show that pupils must be able to regulate themselves before they can learn to work in self-regulated ways – both in school and in their future professional lives. Teachers who encouraged participation, independence, and shared responsibility strengthened pupils' learning, while strict control limited autonomy, motivation, and outcomes. The article underscores the need to support pupils' self-regulation in educational settings and beyond.

In the fifth and last article, **Henriette Duch** from Denmark writes about skills competitions. In *Ikke bare "endnu en mursten i muren": Pædagogiske perspektiver fra en praksis omkring Skills* (Not 'just another brick in the wall': Educational perspectives from a practice around Skills), Duch argues that in apprenticeship training, the focus revolves around the interaction between the apprentice and the vocational school. However, schools and skills training are two different arenas, whose conditions are often described as challengingly different. This difference sometimes limits the trainee's connection to social coherence in practice. In this context, there is significant competition over who succeeds best in learning and practising their skills. The competition based on 'skills' leads her to ask what pedagogical practices are established around them. Events such as national championships in Denmark, European Championships (EuroSkills), and World Championships (WorldSkills) are organised around skills. Duch explains that in Denmark, one can see banners on vocational school buildings, and posts on social media promote their students' participation in skills competitions. Schools have developed extensive pedagogical approaches centred on skills in collaboration with these skills organisations. However, not only schools and competition are at the core of the question of social coherence: apprenticeships, where skills are learned and practised, are relational practices of crucial importance beyond competitions. Duch's article examines how one can

learn from skill-pedagogy and identify potential for further development. Based on Wenger's learning theory and approaches to work pedagogy, interviews with teachers and students from masonry and carpentry education are analysed. The main findings suggest that teachers play a vital role in helping students achieve their goals. For students, both school, skills activities, and apprenticeships are key arenas for developing their learning and sense of quality. It is concluded that a pedagogy around skills like this can benefit all students, not just those who participate in skills championships.