



## Editorial: Autumn 2018

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We are making new progress with the *Nordic Journal of Vocational Education and Training*. The aim is that the journal will become a central channel for publishing research findings, and therethrough an important source of knowledge, on vocational education and training. The journal should be relevant for all researchers and practitioners in this field, in the Nordic countries and beyond. NJVET has recently received recurring financial support from The Nordic Board for Periodicals in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NOP-HS). NOP-HS is a sub-board of The joint committee for Nordic research councils in the humanities and social sciences (NOS-HS), and supports Nordic scientific journals in their area of responsibility. Therefore, we now have a new NOP-HS grant for two more years, which provides conditions for further development of our journal.

This is the second issue of our eighth volume. But it should be noted that the 2018 volume includes a third issue. The third issue will be a special issue on Challenges and Development in and of Vocational Teacher Education, where we are happy to welcome Ingrid Henning Loeb and Susanne Gustavsson from University of Gothenburg, Sweden, as guest editors. This is the first volume where we publish three issues in the history of NJVET.

### Five contributions

The present, second issue of 2018 contains five peer-reviewed research articles from the Nordic countries. One article is from Finland, two from Norway, and two from Sweden. The Finnish article is written in English, the other articles in Norwegian and Swedish respectively.



In the first article from Sweden, *Kollegial professionsutveckling för skolledare och lärare inom gymnasial yrkesutbildning: En fallstudie av en forskningscirkel* (Collegial professional development for school leaders and teachers in upper secondary vocational education: A case study of a research circle), **Anna Karin Fändrik**, **Mats Lundgren**, and **Nicola Nerström** describe how school leadership in a vocational secondary school used a research circle to establish collegial learning. The goal was to develop the teaching skills of teachers and, as a result, also develop the ability of students to assess their own knowledge and understanding, as well as their capacity to learn. The results are based on data from a qualitative case study in accordance with an action research tradition.

The article reflects a contemporary education policy debate on the role of teachers in relation to students' poorer study results. The teachers that participated developed and tested subject-specific self-assessment matrices in mini-research projects. Many of the students seemed to benefit little from using these matrices. Possible explanations may be that the students felt no motivation neither to improve their knowledge and skills nor to raise their grades. There did, however, seem to be differences between theoretical and vocational subjects. The research circle served to develop collegial learning among the participants and also played a role in the establishment of a school development group.

In the second article, *Deep learning evaluation in vocational teacher education: Conducted on the principles of authentic and dialogical collaborative knowledge construction*, **Sanna Ruhalahti**, **Helena Aarnio**, and **Heli Ruokamo** present results from Finland. The vocational education system is being challenged to achieve a greater amount of deep learning. To facilitate the inclusion of more deep learning in the teaching and learning process, curriculum restructuring is required. This article reports the results of a study that investigated the kind of authentic and dialogical collaborative knowledge construction toward which the DIANA model (Dialogical Authentic Netlearning Activity) directs vocational student teachers (n=76). The results indicate that using authenticity as the basis for a learning process enabled individual study circles (f=19) to define questions that were meaningful to them but mainly directed the learners toward superficial learning-oriented activities. Notably, despite engaging primarily in superficial learning-oriented activities, the results indicate that dialogical collaborative knowledge construction still directed the learners toward deep learning, demonstrating how learning changed and was enriched during the process. The framework redesigned for evaluating superficial and deep learning will facilitate the examination of vocational teacher education learning activities in the future.

The next two contributions are from Norway. In the first Norwegian article, **Klara Rokkones**, **Berit Stjern**, **Åse Strand**, and **Britt Karin Utvær**, also analyse findings from a study of VET teacher education. In the article *Yrkesfaglig praksis i bachelorutdanningen for yrkesfaglærere: En kartlegging av studentenes erfaringer* (Vocational practice in bachelor education for vocational teachers: A survey of the

students' experiences), the topic of the study is experiences of work-based learning among vocational teacher students. The authors analyse how the VET-students' practice may be in accordance with the proposed outcomes of the VET teacher education, drawing on survey data collected over a period of ten years. The survey results indicate that the work-based practice of VET teacher education contributes significantly towards the students' experienced relevance of teacher education and further enhances their learning about the professions within their study programme. The article concludes that work-based practice should contribute to relevance, coherence and supervision in vocational teacher education.

The second Norwegian article is a comparative study of VET teachers in Norway and Japan. In *Yrkesfaglæreres profesjonelle kompetanse: En kvalitativ undersøkelse med Norge og Japan som kontekster* (Professional competences of vocational teachers: A qualitative survey with Norway and Japan as contexts), **Bjørn Magne Aakre** explores the characteristics of vocational teachers' professional competences in Norway and Japan in a comparative perspective through a multi-methods approach with observations, interviews, written sources and survey data. The results are categorised into professional development and professional competences, indicating national differences between Norway and Japan concerning educational and vocational backgrounds, including degrees of professional autonomy and career development. Results from survey data show that causes of national differences in the professional competences of vocational teachers in Norway and Japan are due to cultural aspects, national educational systems, career trajectories and globalization.

The fifth and last article is a contribution from Sweden. In *Tävlingsdomarnas bäst praxis-bedömning av yrkeskunnskap i en yrkestävling* (Competition judges' best-practice assessment of vocational knowledge and skills in a skills competition), **Helena Tsagalidis** analyses assessments of vocational knowledge and skills in a context of competition, namely the Swedish Skills Competition. Tsagalidis draws on data from observations in shadowing the competition judges, including conversations with judges, exploring what vocational knowledge and skills are valued as important by the judges in the school competition. The results show that the judges' assessments in the competitions contribute to understanding of key qualifications, specific vocational knowledge and skills, in judges' views on professionalism and judicious action as key to understanding how vocational knowledge and skills can be described and valued.