

**NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS
ON HOLISTIC VOCATIONALISM**
DISCUSSION PAPER



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This discussion paper has been developed on behalf of the Education Committee of IG Metall. For this purpose, IG Metall's Department of Education and Qualification Policy deployed a project group. The draft result was discussed by the Education Committee.

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In the framework of the Erasmus+ project "Level-up – Workplace Tutor goes Europe," the guiding principles on an extended modern vocationalism were translated into English and adapted to the European VET situation in order to discuss them at European level and establish the relevance for the European VET discussion.

Foreword

The principle of vocationalism of work and qualification is of central importance for good work and a good, secure life. Professions and vocations aim at a broad and subject-specific qualification of employees. They are described in the form of needs profiles for qualified occupations and ensure the practical relevance and applicability to both employees and employers in the form of qualification bundles and competences. Professions offer employees a greater amount of safety in the choice of employment. They make an important contribution to the retention of the employees qualification and job safety.

Vocationalism is thus the precondition for and the result of good work and education. From the perspective of the trade unions, it is a key element of an emancipatory educational concept that enables apprentices and employees to reflect their working conditions, to recognise the social and ecological consequences of their work, to accept their rights and entitlements and to contribute to shaping their work. Vocationalism is part of personal development.

However, the vocational alignment of work and education is no foregone conclusion. Whilst, in the context of the need for and development of skilled workers, there is a broad consensus to train young people, to enable further training of employees and to continue to develop occupations, there is also a strong tendency towards de-professionalization of labour and qualifications. Qualification increasingly follows the dictate of short-term exploitation of skills. Working conditions, hours, incomes, qualification and education are rendered a variable residual value in financial market-driven capitalism.

Three main challenges of education policy have been addressed in the discussion of the guiding principles:

1. The share of precarious employment continues to increase. Temporary employment, part-time employment, subcontracted employment and service contracts are now complemented by crowd working which involves the worldwide tendering of fragmented orders. Precarious work fosters a requirement-oriented and market-driven organisation of qualification processes and an educational concept that parts from cohesive knowledge. The guiding principles for an extended modern vocationalism intend to make a contribution to an alternative to these trends by offering quality dimensions and deducible consequences of action in companies and society to secure, strengthen and develop vocationalism.
2. Although dual training is currently viewed as a key to reducing youth unemployment in Europe, the calls for shortening training periods and modularising content do not subside. In particular, key European institutions promote a concept of employability in training that is not tied to the vocational concept but to a market-conformist fragmentation and defibration of qualification and employment. This endangers the future opportunities of today's youth. The guiding principles engage in this discussion and develop a vocational concept that protects from the above-mentioned risks and improves employment opportunities.
3. The number of young people who undertake a university degree is increasing all around Europe. However, labour market projections highlight that although the industry is seeking engineers of certain disciplines, that in the future it will be particularly skilled workers with medium qualification levels who will be sought. This highlights the risk that in the future there will be more and more university graduates who will be unable to find appropriate employment opportunities.

It is thus necessary to create integrated vocational education that takes the whole education system into focus, reacts rationally to the skills shortage, shapes permeable transitions between vocational and higher education, recognises professional experience at university and creates new educational pathways along the provision of lifelong learning. Further training and higher education should offer equal access to expert and management careers.

However: Independent of how the debate surrounding academisation is conducted in the future, the share of university graduates will continue to increase, and consequently this means that the share of academics in companies will rise. Dual university degrees (with a greater share of in-company practice phases and a fixed curriculum as opposed to mere "internship" phases) thus represent an important field of action for trade unions and other actors of vocational education.

The quality of the renewed guiding principles for an "extended modern vocationalism" is the fact that it relates vocational and higher education to one another. The core of the idea of vocationalism is extended to university education and thus represents an extended concept of a modern vocationalism.

The discussion paper thus opens up new ideas for the creation of equal and permeable transition paths between companies and universities. This includes ideas for new learning pathways and the design of in-company learning processes. It also accounts for the reciprocal relationship between vocational qualification and the organisation of work. The guiding principles are thus intended both as an educational but also as a political concept.

IG Metall started the debate around the idea of an “extended modern vocationalism” in 2014 and developed guiding principles. But until the Level-up! Project it had never been discussed on more than a national level. So we initiated a discussion in the context of the Level-up! Project. In the framework of the European network debate, we have introduced the concept of holistic vocationalism to the European stage. For our debate, it was important to find out how such a concept is perceived by other countries, with differing VET landscapes and traditions than Germany, with similar but also widely differing challenges when it comes to vocational education policy and perspectives of young people on the labour market.

Is the approach of holistic vocationalism relevant in other countries? Can it offer solutions to problems that exist there? Is it theoretically transferable as a guiding principle of reforming VET policy and if so, what modifications would it require?

What does the concept of holistic vocationalism mean against the background of the current shift of policy paradigms in Europe, away from “streamlining” vocational education and towards holistic vocational education according to the model of dual training or, as it is more often referred to at the European level: work-based learning? Can it act as a guiding mechanism to finding answers to growing youth unemployment, especially in the South of Europe, to how to deal with increasingly diverse and heterogeneous learners in VET, with the continued need for more and better work-based learning and further training?

And what does all this mean to our main target group, VET personnel and, more specifically, in-company trainers across Europe? The debate is open!

1. The need for a concept of an extended modern vocationalism

The present guiding principles aim to extend the concept of vocationalism to higher education. We thus establish common principles for the design of learning processes in dual as well as higher education. Dual university degrees show that vocational and academic learning do not have to contradict one another. The guiding principles lay the foundation for holistic and unified vocational education policy.

WHAT IS VOCATIONALISM?

Vocationalism refers to comprehensive, relatively permanent principles and measures related to education and work.

- Typical characteristics of vocationalism of education include quality criteria for teaching and learning processes (see the 15 criteria of the present concept). They form the basis for learning and practising an occupation. Securing this quality requires societal and political regulation (such as the consensus principle).
- Typical characteristics of vocationalism of work are quality criteria such as work organisation that promotes qualification. Such quality criteria ensure long-term retention and continued development of complex qualifications.

Long-term tendencies of change of work and education require the continued development of quality criteria. This is why we differentiate between traditional and modern vocationalism. With regard to the application of such criteria (company-based dual training *and* higher education), we refer to extended modern vocationalism.

The idea of *traditional vocationalism* assumed that individuals would remain in their learned profession throughout their working life.

The concept of *modern vocationalism* presented a milestone on the way to a new understanding of occupation and vocationalism. Modern vocationalism assumed that specialised individual occupations were bundled in the form of core occupations, moving the orientation towards work and business processes into the focus of learning whilst promoting independent acting and conveying of comprehensive professional competence. Until today, the concept of modern vocationalism forms the guiding principles for IG Metall in the design of occupation profiles.

The recently developed extended modern vocationalism builds on this concept. The guiding principles respect the special features of dual training in companies and studying in higher education. It roots in the assumption that the development of a comprehensive professional competence is possible and meaningful, necessary even, both in dual training as well as in higher education. For this purpose, it establishes common quality criteria.

In this context, the guiding principles also aim to be a compass for trade union action and a common reform perspective for higher education and dual training. The aim is to contribute to more transparency regarding the intended objectives of education policy.

2. What are the challenges?

The guiding principles aim to offer answers to central labour and education policy challenges:

- **Deregulation, increasing precariousness and taylorisation of work**

Deregulation of work poses a threat on all qualification levels. Atypical employment such as temporary and subcontracted work are on the rise. Comprehensive work is increasingly fragmented. A growing number of employees – be it with dual training or higher education background – is threatened by underqualified employment and loss of qualification. Employment opportunities for un- and semi-skilled workers continue to decrease. New manufacturing concepts can continue to increase the polarisation of qualification requirements. The winners of these processes stand in stark contrast to the losers.

- **Academisation of the working world**

Due to the rising number of university graduates, the hitherto prevailing criteria for the selection and hiring of employees are changing. The conditions for staffing, remuneration and career opportunities are newly defined. Bachelor and master degrees are increasingly competing with dual training certificates. At the same time, many university graduates are not sufficiently prepared for the working world. They criticise the insufficient vocational qualification in higher education.

- **Threat to the “regulated occupation” (occupational concept) through European education policy**

European education policy – the Bologna Process (in higher education) and the Copenhagen Process (in vocational education) gave impetus towards more comparability and social permeability. However, certain imbalances remained: In spite of the now positive emphasis on dual training, European education policy remains oriented predominantly towards the more school- and higher-education-focussed Anglo-Saxon VET system. This has resulted in a one-sided fixation on learning outcomes. The conditions of learning processes and their design are not considered in this debate. There is also still a tendency to fragment education into detailed and modular learning segments. This poses a threat to the emancipatory character of education.

The opportunities to acquire good education remain difficult. Many obstacles impede successful individual education paths. The number of companies offering training is decreasing, the number of young people without job opportunities across Europe continues to be extremely high, too many young people leave school without certificates, there are still many training programmes and university degrees that have an extremely high share of dropouts, the quality of vocational learning suffers from too little resources at the various places of learning. Acquired qualifications are often not sufficiently sought after on the labour market, the traditional separation of general and vocational education remains. And: precarious working conditions endanger vocationalism.

However: The new threats also offer new opportunities.

Companies use the diversity of certificates and degrees for new career paths. Social permeability and openness of academic education is on the rise. The introduction of national qualification frameworks has made a great contribution to the comparability of higher education and vocational further training.

Extended modern vocationalism improves employment and education opportunities of individuals. It contributes to good work and good education and can impact on the safeguarding of social cohesion. It supports a policy of societal progress. Extended modern vocationalism aims at inclusion. It opposes the exclusion and discrimination of people based on their social and ethnic origin, their gender or their disabilities.

Work as a profession has equal value and equal dignity for all people.

3. Our perspective: A unified vocational education

At the core, the guiding principles for an extended modern vocationalism combine four interconnected objectives:

- **Safeguarding and strengthening vocationalism**

Acquiring vocational qualification is a key to good work and a good life, for securing employment opportunities and good incomes. Occupations are a shield against de-qualification and increased precariousness of labour. Vocationalism thus has to be protected and strengthened.

- **Development of vocationalism**

Social, economic, ecological and technological change deems it necessary to continue to develop vocationalism. Digitalisation of work (Industry 4.0) necessitates the re-orientation of the relationship between experience and science orientation in the context of work. Planning and shaping professional biographies has become more complex, changing requirements to vocational education of university graduates are a cause that calls for reform.

- **Permeability and equivalence**

The paths between vocational and higher education remain closed to many in spite of formal opening. Qualifications are unequal with regard to hiring, remuneration and career opportunities. Social and professional permeability ought to be improved, the recognition of equivalence in education and on the labour market is of central importance.

- **Embedding vocationalism in higher education**

The majority of students are seeking employment outside of academia. However: they are often insufficiently prepared for the working world. This is why universities should also orientate towards the concept of modern and extended vocationalism.

4. Extended modern vocationalism as an educational concept

The guiding principles of an extended modern vocationalism aim at common quality criteria for dual training and academic vocational education.

The quality criteria are derived from IG Metall's concept of vocationalism and described in 15 principles:

1. Vocational learning requires a broad technical qualification

The concept of vocationalism aims to integrate fragmented training paths and to abolish professions and university degrees that are too narrowly designed. Vocational qualification should not be tied to specific products, techniques or areas of expertise. A broad technical qualification enables individuals to cope with various occupational requirements beyond individual workplaces, companies or sectors. A broad vocational and technical qualification lays the foundation for new professional pathways and facilitates the expansion of one's own professional field.

2. Vocational learning conveys knowledge, vocational competence and enables practical experience

Vocational learning is always activity-oriented. It aims at the acquisition of holistic vocational competence. Vocational learning also aims at the application of acquired knowledge in different contexts. Learning tasks are to be designed holistically and involve planning, decision-making, execution, reviewing and evaluation (concept of complete action). Knowledge, action and experience are interconnected. Preconditions and consequences of one's action are reflected. Apprentices and students learn to understand relationships and think within systems.

3. Vocational learning is oriented towards work and business processes

Vocational learning is process- and problem-oriented. It has subject-specific / technical and organisational as well as economic and social dimensions. Process- and problem-oriented learning is oriented towards real and occupation-centred work and business processes. It conveys the knowledge and methods necessary for the solution of problems and requirements. It aims at an understanding of holistic work processes and lays the foundations for active participation in the shaping of those processes. It relates to up- and downstream work and business processes and involves the systemic processes of holistic production control. Organisational and societal framework conditions are also subject of learning. In the academic sector, problem- and process-oriented learning can take different forms, for example in projects with occupational assignments.

4. Vocational learning takes place through the accomplishment of (occupation-specific) tasks

Occupation-specific development tasks should unfold the learners' abilities step by step, taking into account their needs and possibilities. Learners should be enabled to solve increasingly comprehensive and complex professional problems. A mere addition of fragmented modules cannot do justice to this need.

5. Vocational learning is exploratory and inquisitive learning

Vocational learning is not restricted to prescribed information, solutions and methods. It should also constitute exploratory and inquisitive learning. Learners explore their professional practice independently, as an individual or in a group. They search, discover and develop – for all intents and purposes also new and alternative – problems, solutions and methods. Exploratory and inquisitive learning is done autonomously. It enables learners to acquire occupation-specific knowledge, rules and procedures. This also involves the critical reflection of procedures and methods applied.

6. Vocational learning is education

Vocational learning is part of personal development. A holistically designed education process results in the reflection of vocational, social, economic and societal experience. It involves working and learning interests. Vocational learning takes place in a conflicting area: company-specific and societal norms and requirements, economy and ecology, subjective needs and social interests. The societal and ecological consequences of employment are subject of vocational learning. Vocational learning should enable to differentiate between personal, company-specific and societal interests. It is about balancing interests, acting autonomously and representing mutual interests.

7. Vocational learning is social learning

Vocational learning is social learning, part of professional socialisation. Learners are not left alone, they are embedded in learning and practical communities of fellow learners, teachers and trainers and colleagues. Practice and learning from experienced professionals is of central importance for vocational education. Only the social fabric opens the complexity of the occupation. Dialogue develops social norms and values of work and product quality, cooperation and representation of interests.

8. Vocational learning aims at the reflection and shaping of work

Qualified vocational education and innovative labour market policy depend on one another. The guiding principles for an extended modern vocationalism are closely interconnected with the union concept of good work. It aims at the competence of co-determining health- and qualification-promoting work. It is open to social, economic and ecological alternatives in manufacturing. Vocational education enables to formulate political interests regarding work, discussing alternative development pathways of work organisation and techniques with colleagues and representing those interests in the framework of co-determination.

9. Vocational learning involves the reflection and shaping of educational and professional pathways

The concept of extended modern vocationalism enables learners to independently and proactively plan educational pathways and one's own biography. It lays the foundations for a constructive handling of voluntary and involuntary career changes. Vocational learning enables learners to independently shape professional pathways. This also includes the retention and continuous adaptation and development of one's own qualification and taking on responsibility for one's own health. It leaves room for building and maintaining social and familial relationships and assuming societal responsibilities.

10. Vocational learning prepares for the professional role

Extended modern vocationalism prepares learners for development opportunities, challenges and contradictions of their future professional role. Framework conditions and requirements of professional life are to be reflected in the educational process and different possibilities of action to be discussed. The own working conditions ought to be known well and can be influenced: this involves, amongst others, work contracts, working hour agreements and remuneration as well as qualification entitlements. Professional socialisation in dual as well as academic training involves the recognition and change of discriminatory male and female work and professional worlds. Vocational learning conveys the perspective of a gender-equitable working world. Vocational learning prepares for a well-balanced change between different roles in family, profession and society.

11. Vocational learning promotes and develops identity

Professional identity involves the confident coping with acquired competences in the chosen domain and a stable professional self-confidence. Learning and experience, gained in the medium of the profession, in learning and working communities, convey the necessary vocational competence and confidence. The development of professional identity forms a counter-weight to eroding forms of employment. It prepares for constructive and competent coping with changes in working and living contexts. It protects from loss of confidence in case of unstable employment, threatening job loss or professional descent. Professional identity enables the rejection of unreasonableness in professional life and the individual and collective representation of interest.

12. Vocational learning integrates experience and knowledge orientation

The guiding principles for an extended modern vocationalism intend to intertwine experience and knowledge orientation in dual training and academic studies at different levels. A merely cognitive or knowledge-based access is not sufficient in order to develop vocational competence. It has to be enriched with sensual experience, emotions as well as the insights gained in professional action. Vocational learning at university is to be combined with technical-scientific learning to become a sensible entirety. This involves a science-oriented analysis and reflection. Both orientations are equally important, they are not hierarchical. On the contrary, they should reciprocally enrich one another.

13. Vocational learning aims at a specific theory-practice-relationship

The interrelation between practical action and theory-guided knowledge is characteristic for extended modern vocationalism. Interrelation thereby means: Both are referenced to one another and interrelated where possible. Practical action can be explained by theoretic understanding, thus becoming more effective. Practice is thus experienced as changeable. Practical action is relevant to theoretic knowledge: It is enriched and developed. Many theoretic questions arise from the reflection of practice.

14. Vocational learning has different places of learning

Different places of learning are necessary for such a theory-practice-relationship, just as the cooperation of the places of learning. It enables an immediate and conscious relationship between theoretical and practical learning. The connection of practical learning under real conditions and theory—led reflection are of central importance for vocational learning. Learners require space and time for this. Vocational learning needs the company as a place of learning.

15. Vocational learning does not exclude anyone

Extended modern vocationalism aims at inclusion. People who are disadvantaged because of their social or ethnic origin, their gender or disability receive equal development opportunities. The respective special characteristics and experiences are not perceived as deficits but as potential in the learning and working process. This means that vocational learning must be differentiated according to duration, method, didactics and content-related focus. Only by doing so can it satisfy the heterogeneity of learners, their potential and their respective learning and support requirements. Supporting those involved on the way to full qualification is the aim of IG Metall and Level-up! not a lower qualification.

5. Extended modern vocationalism as a political concept

Extended modern vocationalism is tied to objectives: it should broaden and improve employment and education opportunities of individuals. It should make a contribution to better work and better life. It should achieve greater equality in education and support societal progress.

The guiding principles aim at a unified vocational education policy. This requires an understanding of the relevant actors in society regarding political goals, foci of action and measures that are necessary in order to realise the guiding principles.

Extended modern vocationalism offers employees the chance to better fulfil occupational requirements and open up new education pathways. Status differences between general and vocational education are outdated. Vocational further training can become more successful if it represents an equivalent alternative to university degrees. Better vocational qualification of students is an opportunity. Transitions between work and education as well as between vocational and academic education can be shaped more permeably.

Vocationalism as an education concept requires a supplementary political concept.

- **The guiding principles for an extended modern vocationalism should contribute to broadened and improved opportunities of individuals (vocationalism for lifelong learning)**

This means:

1. Creation of new education pathways and development of occupational profiles.
2. Creation of new and additional perspectives for individual professional biographies.
3. Companies should offer training placements for all applicants and students and create and secure equivalent expert and management careers.
4. In-company and societal framework conditions for lifelong learning must be developed further.

- **The guiding principles for an extended modern vocationalism should contribute to securing and promoting the quality of work (vocationalism as a contribution to good work)**

This means:

1. Extended modern vocationalism aims at good work beyond hierarchies.
2. Vocationalism requires the establishment of supportive conditions for learning and working, working contents that promote qualification, cooperative forms of work and equivalent expert and management careers.
3. Vocationalism supports good working conditions. This includes securing appropriate remuneration.
4. Strengthening, retaining and developing vocationalism is a way of combatting growing de-qualification and increased precariousness of work.
5. Labour market policy needs a new focus. Vocational qualification ought to be moved to the focus.
6. Vocationalism ought to be conserved and further developed also in new processes and the re-organisation of work (e.g. Industry4.0)

- **The guiding principles for an extended modern vocationalism should contribute to safeguarding social cohesion and promoting societal progress (vocationalism as a contribution to a more equal society)**

This means:

1. Educational obstacles ought to be removed. This also applies to economic and social privileges resulting from education. Extended modern vocationalism can facilitate overcoming wrong corporative thinking.
2. Vocationalism supports a policy towards improved equality of opportunities and education, towards equivalence of vocational and general education as well as increased social and professional permeability.
3. Extended modern vocationalism aims at increased participation in the working world, in education and society.
4. It raises awareness of gender equality in the working world and in society. It addresses the issue of a good work-life balance.
5. Extended modern vocationalism represents vocational organisation of labour. It is a counter model to the Anglo-Saxon-influenced European education and labour market policy that reduces education to functionality.
6. Extended modern vocationalism supports the social and technological innovative capacity of the economy. It secures employment opportunities and opens up perspectives for a societally and ecologically sound economy.

6. Guiding questions for stakeholder consultation

The aim of the stakeholder consultation was to reflect the relevance and applicability of the guiding principles in Europe, both at national level in other countries but also with regard to European education policy. We aimed at getting feedback from VET actors across Europe on how they view the concept of vocationalism, whether it is relevant in their national VET systems, what it can offer at national and European level, etc.

The guiding questions below served as orientation for the stakeholder consultation process that each partner organised in their country and that was jointly held at the corresponding multiplier event in Germany (see chapter 10). They were intended as a guideline and modified to specific aspects of the current national VET debate.

1. Do you feel the concept of vocationalism can be a response to the current challenges of VET policy? In your country? At European level?

“Yes we do. The concept of holistic vocationalism could provide an answer to many VET challenges in Europe.” Finland

“I think that the concept offers very interesting insights on the implementation of dual training which is a major issue in Spain at the moment.” Spain

“There is some very interesting input but I do not see how the principles can be implemented in our system, which is very different.” Hungary

2. Do you agree with the challenges listed in the guiding principles? Which current challenges of VET policy in your country / at European level do you see, and do you feel that vocationalism can offer anything in terms of response?

“Some of the challenges are the same all over Europe. The trend to a growing “normality” of atypical employment and youth unemployment seem to be major issues across the continent. I believe that vocationalism, or the concept thereof, can influence the quality of training but in order to solve Europe’s challenges, we need to take into account structural issues such as legislation regarding industrial policy and social partner relations.” Ireland

“We have been trying to solve similar challenges of VET in many ways, and apprenticeship systems seem to be a good approach, especially to youth unemployment, but VET systems cannot be transformed at the blink of an eye so the question is, what aspects of vocationalism can be transferred to our reality and not if it can be an answer to our challenges.” Hungary

“We recognise similar challenges but I do not share the same pessimistic outlook when it comes to atypical employment. In Finland, young people seem to seek such forms of employment, be they temporary or part-time, often combining them with other jobs or freelance work, enjoying the greater flexibility. So this does not seem to be such a negative trend here.” Finland

3. Do you think that the concept of vocationalism can give impetus to the current debate surrounding work-based learning in Europe? In your country?

If yes, which aspects do you regard as particularly important in the reform process towards strengthened work-based learning?

“Strengthening dual training is a major issue in Spain, we feel that the criteria for holistic vocationalism can offer a good compass for ensuring the quality of implementing such new programmes.” Spain

“Even though we have implemented similar quality criteria offered in the principles in Finland already for a long time, we must put renewed emphasis to the guiding principles of vocational education and training due to the reformed VET legislation.” Finland

4. Do you think that an extended modern vocationalism offers answers to the problem of youth unemployment? If so, how?

“Solving the problem of youth unemployment is a major issue. We have been trying in many ways, more dual training is one of them but an education system cannot be transformed like that and the extended modern vocationalism concept is very oriented towards the German system so it can offer some input more than real orientation.” Portugal

“Yes, by offering standards of good work and good training that not only formulate young people’s entitlements to opportunities but also the shape they should take in order to give them real chances.” Ireland

5. Do you agree that vocationalism can offer an alternative to increasingly requirement-oriented, fragmented vocational education systems (emancipatory education versus employability)?

Do you see a need for that in your country? At European level?

“Yes, we agree. The concept of vocationalism strengthens vocational identity and prepares for the professional role. It allows differentiated learning paths and lifelong professional development”. Finland

Do you think the fifteen quality criteria could serve as a quality compass for (in-company) trainers and other VET personnel? If so, what consequences would that entail in their daily work? Do you think existing qualification programmes should and could be modified to achieve this? If not, what do you believe are the obstacles? Or is there no need?

“The 15 quality criteria offer good advice to trainers how to shape their training in order to make it good and successful.” Portugal

“Yes, I will definitely use some of those indicators to implement them in my daily work.” Hungary

“Yes, but there is a certain danger of becoming too theoretical to be relevant to trainers’ everyday work.” Ireland

6. In principle, do you agree with the 15 quality criteria of vocationalism?

Do you think they are applicable in your country? Are they already applied? In what form? Which would you rate more relevant and why?

“Yes, and they are already applied in Finnish VET. In Finland the main emphasis has been on the learner’s path but recently we have identified the necessity to focus on both the learner and the company.” Finland

“Yes, but they are somewhat theoretical and repetitive.” Spain

“Yes, but in practice, only half of them are applied in in-company training in reality.” Portugal

7. The guiding principles also aim to be a compass for VET policy and a common reference for reform of VET (both higher education and dual training).

Do you agree with this notion and what reform do you deem necessary in this context? In your country and at European level?

“Finland is currently in the process of reforming the VET system and, as I said previously, I believe that the criteria offered in this paper can be a good orientation for quality assurance in the introduction of work-based learning here, especially in the cooperation with companies.” Finland

“Yes, the guiding principles are relevant in the introduction of dual training which is a major issue currently in Spain. They may have to be adapted to our reality somewhat, but in essence they seem to be universally applicable in their greater orientation.” Spain

8. Do you think vocationalism offers a central guideline for future education policy in your organisation / your country / Europe?

“I think that vocationalism strengthens our views on our VET policy and I envision it to provide answers to many European level challenges in work-based and lifelong learning.” Finland

“No, the challenges and especially the realities of our education systems are so different that it would be too far fetched to call them central guideline but they can offer valuable input.” Hungary

“The guideline offers interesting input as it uncovers some of the central pillars of successful dual training. For example the right framework conditions in the training companies. So yes, using them as orientation in that regard, they have the potential to uncover problems/ gaps on the way to successful implementation of dual training.” Ireland

9. Extended modern vocationalism creates new opportunities for a policy of permeability and equal opportunities. Do you agree?

Are permeability and equivalence of education a relevant issue in your country? How do you rate the applicability and meaning for VET policy in Europe (both nationally and at European level)?

“Not necessarily. It is more about the real structures in place than about quality dimensions in that regard.” Finland

“It is a major issue but I do not see how the guiding principles can offer a real response to solving it at the moment.” Hungary

10. What policy recommendations would you contribute in the context of this debate? For your own country? And at European level?

“It is important to get the political and economic structures in place. This needs to be safeguarded by real legislation. For example the works council system I have talked about, there need to be entitlements. No pilot projects and model programmes. Those structures are a lot more central to the success of dual training than people realise.” Ireland

7. The European view

The following articles offer an additional insight into the national situation in some of the other project countries by giving flashlight reports of the current transformation processes regarding dual training in the respective countries.

8. Extended modern vocationalism: a Finnish point of view

In Finland, discussions took place with relevant stakeholders, and here is the summary of the aspects that we would like to add to the European discussion and debate. We can recognize the same kind of challenges of education in Finland that are outlined in the IG Metall discussion paper. Temporary and part-time employment, however, seem to attract young adults more than permanent employment contracts. This seems to have become a trend that the employers need to take into account when recruiting new people. Also, a trend in Finland seems to be that a person may have several temporary and part-time contracts or he/she can have a micro company or a trade name of her own, and the income comes from various sources. Many young adults do not want to commit themselves to long contracts, whereas a permanent job is a goal for most middle-aged people. We seem to be facing a generation gap in many aspects concerning education and working life in modern Finland.

A major reform of upper secondary vocational education and training has taken place in Finland since the beginning of the year 2018. The new legislation and reform give VET providers both a huge challenge and a great opportunity to improve and create new ways to implement customer-orientation and more flexibility in the learning paths for individuals. One of the targets of the reform is to strengthen interaction between VET institutions and working life and to increase workplace learning and practical ways of completing qualifications at workplaces.

The reform has aroused a worry on the other hand: is it possible to increase on-the-job learning in the working life's point of view? Workplace tutors in many of the small companies may not have enough time to train learners as much as might be needed. In Finland, the dual training system, as known in Germany, does not exist. The vocational education and training is organized by VET institutions, and the training can include on-the-job learning in various amounts, based both on the needs and available opportunities of the working life and the individual goals and needs of the learners.

We have a current aim to shorten training periods and make more modular contents. It is all supported by the new legislation. The need springs from working life and the trade unions have all taken actively part when forming the new legislation of VET in Finland. Company representatives, when interviewed in professional magazines or newspapers, have stated that the traditional VET system with long study schemes to complete a qualification, does not work anymore. One needs to have basic skills for a vocation, but further education should comprise of building up one's skills using various sources. And from that point of view, extended modern vocationalism makes sense in Finland as well.

In Finland, we already have learning paths that combine vocational studies with studies at universities of applied sciences. Instead of first studying a basic vocational qualification for two or three years, and after that, four years in a university of applied sciences, one can choose to study in a combined programme that takes only about 5 years to complete. This is also a solution to the tendency that the number of young people who undertake a university degree, is increasing. At the same time, they lack practical skills. People, who have completed a vocational qualification and a university degree of applied sciences, have a great advantage on job markets.

What we would like to point out, what seem to be essential skills in modern working life, are interaction skills and apprehension of cultural diversity, as well as entrepreneurship education. Co-operation with all education levels, be it comprehensive schools, VET institutions, universities of applied sciences or universities, would bring more profound vocational and professional understanding and skills to all parties. All students would benefit in co-operating with the students of other level and with the working life.

The working life is the main benefactor of vocational education and training, in our opinion. In Finland, we have a lot to learn from the German dual education system that seems to spring from the needs of the working life. We need more dialogue between working life and VET institutes, both on national and especially on regional and local level. The new legislation in Finland requires that teachers co-operate with companies more than ever, since we need to find ways to increase joint learning facilities or places of learning, and to take better into account the needs of the working life.

The clientele of VET is becoming more diverse: comprehensive school leavers (post 16 years of age) form only 20-25 % of the students of VET institutes, whereas the main groups are adults with no previous secondary education, people wanting to change profession, professionals aiming to strengthen and deepen their professional competence, unemployed people and immigrants or asylum seekers. The profession of vocational teacher is also in transformation.

9. Dual vocational education gaining pace in Spain

November 2017 marks the fifth anniversary since dual VET was first introduced in Spain and developed through 'training and apprenticeship contracts' established by law (Royal Decree 1529/2012).

Since then, dual VET, understood as alternating training periods in an education institution and the workplace, has been progressing in its implementation and development. Pilot experiences in some regions have given way to consolidated projects throughout the state, reaching 24.000 apprentices, 10.000 companies and around 900 education centres; although positive, these figures remain low, with barely 3% of students pursuing this type of vocational training.

Alliance for dual VET

The Alliance for dual VET ([Alianza para la FP Dual](#)) is a state network of companies, centres and institutions committed to developing dual VET in Spain; it is promoted by the Bertelsmann Foundation, together with the Princess of Girona Foundation, main business organisations (CEOE-CEPYME) and the Chamber of Commerce of Spain. The Alliance, started two years ago by five institutions, has already more than 650 members, many of them companies. Its aim is to improve the legal framework of dual VET and increase the prestige of VET in general.

The III Alliance forum for dual VET, held in October 2017, gathered together prominent state representatives, regional administration agents and members of the alliance to review progress and discuss future challenges to make dual VET a smart choice.

Clear legal framework for dual VET

One of the most repeated demands at the October forum was the need for a new regulation within the education authority dual VET, building on experience gained from pilot experiences carried out since 2012. The focus should be on selected issues: the minimum elements that any dual VET programme must comprise; the necessary training requirements of company tutors; the possibility that companies add additional content to official curricula; defining the role and joint responsibility of companies; and compulsory remuneration of apprentices. In the opinion of most of the forum's speakers, having a common and clear setting could add a new impetus to dual VET in Spain.

The working group established by the Alliance presented in its paper its proposals for a new legal framework of dual VET. The Ministry of education is consulting with all stakeholders to reach the necessary level of consensus to publish a new dual VET regulation.

On the 16th of May 2018 the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport presented to the social partners -representatives of the Spanish trade unions UGT, CCOO and CEOE- the Document of Basic for Dual Vocational Training system in Spain, which will be submitted shortly for approval to the Sector Conference on Education and will start a review of the rules of this modality of Vocational Training studies.

This work, which got the unanimous support of the National Commission for Vocational Training on April 26, establishes some aspects such as the need for economic compensation to students in a better adapted contractual model, strengthening work of educational tutors and company tutors, the recognition of the work of enterprises, a greater coordination between the educational center and the production center through the training programme and the detailed pedagogical report of learning results in professional experience held by the students.

These important points will enable a better review of existing regulatory rules and adaptation to the evolution of dual vocational training system which involves a substantial increase in the number of students.

Educational institutions providing vocational training under the dual system may develop measures to increase the participation of companies and business associations. It is also intended that these institutions manage visits of students and teachers to companies or work centre collaborators.

Within the framework of that action and the respective actions, the expenditures eligible for funding will be those generated by calls for proposals for projects, creating quality labels for SME's, centre and company mentors, professional counselors, visits of students and teachers to companies, and teacher mobility to business headquarters.

Good time for VET in Spain

In this context, it should be taken into consideration that more than 800.000 students are undergoing vocational training in Spain. For the last few years, with the approval of Royal Decree 1529/2012, a specific methodological modality was introduced so that the stay at the company is not the final conclusion of so much knowledge acquired in school, but the simultaneous coexistence of teaching and learning between the school and the company.

Currently there is a combination of more than 24.000 students, 900 schools and 10.000 companies involved in this project already deployed in other EU countries with remarkable success.

The Autonomous Communities have been working since the approval of this decree in the development of this increasingly popular educational offer among Spanish families for its training quality and high rates of employability.

10. Adapting the German model: opportunities and challenges in Hungary

Traditionally, students in Hungary obtain their first vocational qualification in school-based VET in public education. As part of the restructuring of the VET system, as of September 2013 the 4 to 5 year-long vocational school programmes were replaced by a uniform 3-year programme, the so called 'dual VET model.' The proportion of practical training in these new programmes is significantly higher, while that of vocational theoretical education and particularly general education were reduced. As a result, chances to develop fundamental skills and key competences in vocational schools where disadvantaged learners are overrepresented has been drastically reduced.

The structure and content of vocational training is shaped by a framework agreement signed by the Government and the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in November 2010. The Government's goal is to make VET easy to adapt to the changing needs of the economy and of the demands of the labour market. Consequently, the Chamber has a decisive role in and responsibility for the current development of vocational training. The strategic aim of strengthening the dual model of VET, increasing the role that business organizations play in vocational training and thus providing work experience in real-life situations through practical training all point to the right direction. However, the vast majority of business organizations are not prepared for meeting that role; that is, they are not ready to provide efficient, methodologically grounded provision of practical training, and they lack the necessary human resources and technological background.

It is a severe problem that young people who enter the VET system are not properly prepared to pursue their studies; an increasing number of students start their vocational training with alarming skill deficiencies in mathematics, writing or reading comprehension. Vocational schools, on top of their primary tasks, are unable to compensate for these disadvantages and prevent students from dropping out eventually. The only way to change these trends could be to improve primary school and kindergarten education.

The "new" vocational school model rests on the assumption that transition from training to work is a one time act in one's lifetime. However, this is not the case and increasingly less so. Young people at the age of 17 graduate from their vocational training but they may need to attend further training or re-train themselves in the long run. The radical reduction of the number of general education hours in VET, however, leaves them with very underdeveloped key competences that are essential for lifelong learning, such as communication, problem solving, IT skills and learning to learn.

Adapting the dual system may have a great potential; however, if VET policy neglects the development of key competences in vocational education and training, the high number of disadvantaged students with very poor educational outcomes in vocational schools will increase the number of dropouts from the school system and the labour market.

11. Applicability of the German model of VET – A reflection from Ireland

It is the view of the partners that the German model of VET can be extended across Europe however to do so there needs to be action at political and social partner level.

The German system is built on agreements reached after the Second World War and involves the establishment of a Works Council System. This system allows for issues regarding Vocational Education and Training to be addressed at the workplace level and acted upon. It is a system unique to Germany and designed for a specific purpose.

The European Community attempted to extend this system across Europe by the issuing of Directive EU Council Directive 94/45/EC. The success of this directive has not been uniform. For example, Ireland is a small economy where the majority of companies employ less than 50 workers, which means they are exempt from the directive making it useless.

In addition, Works Councils in Germany are only fully successful where there is a high degree of trade union membership. This does not exist in many countries in Europe.

The partners believe that it is necessary that there is a need to not only encourage workers to join a trade union but to also make it a prerequisite for the establishment of Works Councils.

The partners recommend that an analysis of the effectiveness of EU Council Directive 94/45/EC be carried out and a new directive issued to include all employments and not just those over a specified employee threshold. The partners also believe that the new directive should list the subjects proper to the Works Council and these should include Education and Training.

While the above suggestions will allow for the extension of the German Model at employment level it will not deal with the issue at national level. In Ireland, there was an experiment with Social Partnership that took place at national level involving:

- The Government (as a Government)
- The Government (as an employer)
- The Employers
- The Trade Unions
- Representatives of other Civil Society organisations

These discussions dealt not only with pay rates but broader society issues. This system could be used to deal with Vocational Education and Training thus providing resources for the local Works Council.

The partners believe that the above can be a method of extending the German system across Europe.

12. “Holistic Vocationalism” – A short flashlight on the Multiplier Event in Germany

The German Multiplier Event on the subject of “Holistic Vocationalism” took place in Frankfurt in Germany on the 29th of May 2018. The Conference was divided into two parts. After the introduction of the project by the project coordinator, Thomas Ressel from IG Metall, head of the sub-department of Education and Qualification Policies, spoke on the subject of Holistic Vocationalism and why a vocation means more than a job. He presented the mission statement of IG Metall on the subject.

Level-Up
Erasmus+
Bilddungs- und Qualifizierungspolitis

Vocation is more than a Job – It's about good work and a good life!

Vocation and Job – is it the same?

- Wikipedia:**
 - Job is an Anglicism, which means a temporary, rather short-term job without special qualifications or an opportunity for individuals to earn income.
 - The opposite of job is vocation.
 - While the working content and the qualification are essential in the vocation, the job is mostly about earning income.
- Job:**
 - Do usually not require any special qualifications
 - Mostly with short duration/temporary limited.
- Vocation/Occupation:**
 - Permanent, training-requiring activity
 - Vocation means: Passion, dedication and conviction

Thomas Ressel, Head Sub-Department of Education and Qualification Policy | IG Metall Vorstand

The union concept of vocation

- Vocations can be defined as complex bundling of work abilities of persons to enable them to manage and design challenging tasks in specific areas of work
 - Vocational education is socially regulated (law, professions, vocational training regulations)
 - Vocations are offered on special labor markets
- Vocations describe the potential of individuals to be able to unfold professionally, socially and personally in working life and in society
- Vocations describe structures of social division of labor and cooperation.
- Vocations are changeable and can be realized in different forms.
- From a trade union perspective, the vocation concept is linked to the concept of “good/decent work”

Thomas Ressel, Head Sub-Department of Education and Qualification Policy | IG Metall Vorstand

Vocation of education and work

- Vocationalism sets quality standards for teaching and learning processes
- Vocationalism sets quality standards for good work.
- Description of the benefits of dual training in a presentation by the German Ministry of Education:

Arguments in favor of dual training
 Advantages for young people:

- Practical experience
- Personal development
- High social status
- High level of education
- High level of earnings

 Advantages for industry:

- Highly qualified employees
- High level of productivity
- High level of loyalty
- High level of motivation
- High level of commitment

Thomas Ressel, Ressortleiter Bildung und Qualifizierungspolitik | IG Metall Vorstand

Quality standards of vocationalism from a trade union point of view

Vocational Learning:

- requires a broad professional qualification, provides knowledge, ability to act and enables practical experience,
- is oriented towards work and business processes and happens through the accomplishment of (job-typical) tasks,
- is education and social learning,
- Aims at the reflection and und design of work and learning and career paths,
- prepares for the professional role, promotes and develops identity,
- combines experience and science orientation and aims for a special theory-practice relationship,
- does not exclude anyone.

Thomas Ressel, Head Sub-Department of Education and Qualification Policy | IG Metall Vorstand

Vocational Training: a trade unions field of action

- Labor policy approach:**
 - Creating good work, demands on work
- Basis for in-company personnel development:**
 - Careers, Living Learning
- Labor market approach:**
 - Stable employability, flexibility and mobility
- Socialization theory approach:**
 - Personality development, becoming an adult
- Sociopolitical approach :**
 - social integration, political maturity, social security

Thomas Ressel, Head Sub-Department of Education and Qualification Policy | IG Metall Vorstand

Thinking Occupation on european level – is it possible??

- Work and business processes as a basis for the training content of vocational education
- Occupation and personal development as a basis for training
- European occupations increase mobility for the European labor market – transparency
- The plurality of educational systems may persist
- Developing European „core occupations“ in social dialogue?

Thomas Ressel, Head Sub-Department of Education and Qualification Policy | IG Metall Vorstand

There was a lively discussion about what vocationalism means in different countries and whether it could be useful to agree on European core occupations. In the discussion, it was important to what extent job descriptions influence personality and how much one defines oneself through one’s occupation. There were big regional differences. While in Germany, the occupation makes up a large part of a person’s personality, it plays less of a role in other countries without the dual system. In most other countries participating in the project, people would define themselves over their job description when they are high-educated for example a doctor, an architect etc. The lesser the qualification the more important it would be to define your work over who you work for (e.g. “I’m working for Alstom” rather than saying “I’m a welder”).

The idea of European core occupations was welcomed as an idea. However, there are doubts about the feasibility of political implementation.

The main points of the discussion were:

■ **Is holistic vocationalism an outdated concept of occupational sociology?**

Whilst in Germany, holistic vocationalism is viewed as a prerequisite for broadly-trained, confident individuals who can actively shape and define their professional and personal lives, some countries, for example Finland, raised doubts about whether this concept is less relevant in today's world where young people often prefer to be professionally independent, work for more than one employer, work in groups of freelancers and autonomously and flexibly shape their professional careers. This point was followed by an interesting debate about whether holistic vocational education would be even more relevant to such modern professional careers by providing young individuals with a broad foundation for such flexible and independent forms of work. Whilst everyone agrees that anybody should receive holistic education and training as a basis for their professional lives, doubts remained about whether a more modular approach would not better match young peoples' needs for a more flexible and individualised career and whether the increasing need for lifelong education and training was sufficiently considered in the German approach to holistic vocationalism.

■ **What can holistic vocationalism offer to combat youth unemployment in Europe?**

Another major point that was discussed in the context of what the concept of holistic vocationalism can offer the European debate was the issue of youth unemployment. It is a widely accepted point that the dominance of the dual training system in Germany and Austria is a major key to the relatively low levels of youth unemployment in those countries. However, there was also a discussion about other economic factors that influence the unemployment rates. At the same time, there was an unanimously shared notion that secure and paid employment during training on the basis of training contracts is a major advantage of the dual system as opposed to school-based systems. The participants of the event also discussed the lack of such a regulated legal framework in initiatives to promote dual training in their countries. This was often fragmented and not universally regulated so that the actual standards of pay and job security varied widely depending on scheme and / or employer.

In the afternoon, the conference went to visit the area's biggest provider of vocational education and training. After an introduction to the company, the group had a tour around the organisation in which the German dual training system was presented at a practical level. In the end, a discussion took place about the importance of learning guidance in vocational education and training. Everyone agreed that with the transformation of work we are facing and the challenges of the digitalization of worksites the role of learning guidance will become more important.

13. Political recommendations

The political concept of an extended modern vocationalism offers a number of fields of action and political recommendations in various policy fields, education policy, labour market policy, corporate policy to name but a few. For the purpose of our discussion we are focussing on education policy in this chapter.

- Development of a qualified work orientation and career guidance in general education;
- Strengthening competences in the area of professional biographies in initial and further training;
- Consideration of higher education guidance in initial training;
- Reform of university curricula and academic further training along the lines of extended modern vocationalism;
- Continued development of dual and part-time university degrees;
- Continued development of vocational further training as an equivalent alternative to higher education;
- Development of vocational learning paths at the interfaces of initial and further training and academic education;
- Reciprocal recognition and accreditation of competences acquired in vocational and academic education;
- Strengthening adult education.

Accompanying policies to enable and support the above should include:

Concepts for more transparency, coordination and planning of resources in vocational and higher education in order to avoid growing competition between the two educational sub-sectors;

Development of holistic legal regulation for further training including the financing thereof. The aim should be comprehensive support for adult learners;

Development of legal regulation for better coordination of vocational and higher education. Extension of co-determination rights of employees in education and training matters in order to improve the quality of in-company learning processes.

Formulation of cornerstones for the creation of a European education and labour market. This should be based on the concepts of extended modern vocationalism;

Glossary

Academisation

Academisation refers to the growing share and relevance of students in the education system and graduates on the labour market. This – often politically promoted – international trend of academisation is explained by a growing relevance of science-related education and work contents. The attractiveness of academic degrees is partially rooted in the greater societal acceptance. Parallel to this trend, we witness a trend of increased occupationalisation of academic education (e.g. expansion of polytechnics / universities of applied science, expansion of dual university degrees, objectives of the Bologna process, etc.)

Professional identity

Professional identity spans a relatively permanent awareness of professional competence (the own ability to master and shape complex tasks), a self-confidence that is rooted in this awareness and an awareness of resulting entitlements and obligations.

The precondition for vocational identity are long-term learning and socialisation processes in recognised occupations, in training and professional experience in different areas of work.

Professional socialisation

Professional socialisation is the process of acquiring competences, norms and values through active confrontation with professional learning and working tasks in learning and working communities. This process spans the internalisation of group-related and societal norms and values and, in parallel, the formation of an independent personality. During this process, collective and individual criteria and values of work and product quality, of cooperation and representation of interests are formed.

Professional socialisation (as a process) and professional identity (as one result of this process) constitute protection and resistance potential against underqualified and precarious work.

Experience orientation

The guiding principles view company-based dual training and university education as a, respectively differently shaped, connection of experience and science orientation. The guiding principles assume that vocational learning should be activity- and work process-oriented in both areas.

Vocational learning should allow for and promote experience.

Independent learning and acting requires the integration of sensual perceptions, emotions and intuitions as well as exploratory procedures and empathy. This requires an environment that enables such learning. Only by allowing this, can individuals form a personal learning and working style as the precondition for the development of professional competence and identity. Experience orientation as a sole criterion of vocational learning is insufficient (see science orientation).

Science orientation

The guiding principles view company-based dual training and university education as a, respectively differently shaped, connection of experience and science orientation.

The guiding principles assume that vocational learning should be activity- and work process-oriented in both areas.

Vocational learning should – with different objectives and methods in mind – integrate scientific results, theories and methods.

In the case of company-based dual training, it is not about learning the system of scientific disciplines but the consideration and integration of scientific insights in the solution of occupation-specific problems and about utilising practical experience for developing questions to sciences.

In the case of academic learning, acquiring critical handling of systems, methods and knowledge of the respective science represent a central element of the solution of professional tasks and problems.

Science orientation spans a large range: from understanding systematic contexts and principles of certain areas of application to a familiarity with the latest state of knowledge of a certain discipline and related disciplines as well as an autonomous development of scientific questions and methods.

Science orientation as a sole criterion for vocational learning and working would be insufficient (see experience orientation).

Inclusion

Disadvantaged and excluded individuals receive the same participation and development opportunities.

Inclusion is a concept that does further and includes further objectives than integration. Whilst integration – in vocational education – relies on the potential advantages of joint learning, inclusion emphasises various preconditions and additional terms. This includes the dissolution of often deeply-rooted stereotypes, the acceptance of diversity and according educational offers, specific support structures and according resources and, last but not least, the provision of financial means.



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