

# Pedagogical Principles in Professional Teacher Education

## Competencies of a Vocational Teacher

The competencies required of vocational teachers are advanced specialist skills that combine in-depth knowledge of their own professional field or discipline with extensive pedagogical competence. The duties emphasise simultaneous independent, collaborative and networked work, research-based development of pedagogical solutions and learning environments, and analysis of complex social, pedagogical and field-specific phenomena as the premise of a teacher's work. Becoming a pedagogical expert means learning about extensive phenomena and themes arising from teaching work. These have been compiled into study modules and units in the curriculum. The focuses of the curriculum were developed in collaborative networks that involved the staff of vocational schools and universities of applied sciences, alumni of TAMK's professional teacher studies, students and other stakeholders. In addition, the study modules and units draw on research on vocational education and pedagogy, future studies and regulations directing education.

Competency-based teacher education is based on recognising the prior competencies of the student, developing necessary competencies and continuous assessment during the education process. The assessment is based on the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the teacher education. The learning outcomes of the study units and the assessment criteria derived from them define the personal goals and learning activities of teacher students. The competencies of a teacher student are built individually and in various ways. The key learning and assessment environments of professional teacher education are the working and operating environments of teacher students, as well as the instruction, guidance and digital resources provided by the School of Professional Teacher Education. In addition to achieving the learning outcomes, the growth and development into a vocational teacher involves reflecting on and building one's own identity as a teacher, as well as finding potential for development and innovativeness. These are particularly supported by working with the personal study plan (PSP) and portfolio, development work, optional studies, teaching practice, and the principles of facilitation of learning, in which facilitation in peer groups and with the teacher tutor are important.

## Participatory Pedagogy

Participatory pedagogy is a broad approach combining various pedagogical strategies.

It allows use of various activating, explorative, problem-based or phenomenon-based pedagogical models and methods.

Participatory pedagogy emphasises the personal premises and goals of the student.

The focus of studies is on action, collaborative building of knowledge and competencies, and the discovery of alternative perspectives. The study process is flexible and adaptable. In participatory

pedagogy, supporting the student's own participation and agency is key. Participation and agency refer to the student's ability and opportunity to plan, direct, implement and assess their own learning and study processes.

The pedagogical methods used in professional teacher education allow for collaborative and cooperative studying in peer groups. In learning activities, the phenomena of teacher identity and learning are studied in a multidisciplinary and multiprofessional manner, and teacher students participate in the design of the learning activities. In seeking answers, teacher students make use of expert knowledge and communities, as well as digital learning resources, in addition to their own experiences.

Competencies can be gained in various ways in different environments, such as education institutions, workplaces, learning contexts arranged by the School of Professional Teacher Education, and in various digital environments. Learning is working life oriented as teacher students have an opportunity to investigate the phenomena in vocational teaching diversely and as part of teachers' professional networks.

### Assessment of Learning and Competencies

Assessment supports learning and is intended to direct the student's activity towards the future. In competency-based and participatory pedagogy, assessment is continuous and emphasises the activity of the student. Assessment is carried out as students' self-assessment, peer assessment and through interaction with the teacher tutor and the instructors of the study units. Various expert and professional networks may also be used to support the assessment. It is essential to assess and reflect on one's own growth and development as a teacher and the formation of own teacher identity. In these cases, assessment is seen as a mindset or operating philosophy, which is not only related to the actions of the student, but the purpose is also to investigate, develop and change their own actions and those of their community.

At the beginning of the education process, teacher students' existing competencies are assessed together with the teacher tutor, and they are compared to the learning outcomes of the study units. Based on this initial assessment each teacher student prepares a plan for development of the required competencies, participation in study units, studification, and study schedules (personal study plan, PSP).

The competencies described in the learning outcomes are demonstrated and assessed in the manner specified in the implementation plan for the study unit in question. The assessment is based on the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the study units. The assessment scale is Pass/Fail. Passing a study unit requires the student to demonstrate competencies according to the assessment criteria. In the assessment of competencies, peer groups and the work and practice environments of

teacher students can be used in different ways. The teachers of the study unit are in charge of the assessment.