



Can VET combine high esteem and social inclusion?

NORD-VET Conference June 7-8 th

Associate Professor Lene Larsen

Department of People and Technology, Roskilde University

How is the problem definition?

- Lack of skilled workers
- Too many students in general education
- Too many drop outs
- Inequality between different educations
- Social inequality

Why low/falling esteem: a fact or a discourse?

- Facts:
 - Compulsory education
 - Including weak learners
 - Including not motivated students
 - Educational hierarchy
 - Not a choice between a number of – horizontal – educational possibilities

The character of VET

- Lack of training places
- Workshop culture
- Learning environment
- Different youth culture
- Blind alley/dead end?

Education or social work?

- Discourse:
 - Social inclusion: education becomes (more or less) social work
 - Teacher or social worker?
 - Teaching or caring?
 - VET as a learning place or a drop in center?
- The image of apprenticeship as a social policy measure affects the image of it

Innovations to social inclusion

- SE
 - Apprenticeship tracks as regular part of the gymnasium (Y 11)
 - Individualized trajectories
 - But recognized as a route for weak learners
- NO
 - Apprenticeship as an integrated part of the educational model (2+2)
 - Local training agencies (LTA) (Oplæringskontor) (Voluntary local member firms)
 - Certificate of practice scheme (2006) (weak learners)

Innovations to social inclusion

- FI
 - Promoting linkages between educational institutions and the world of work
 - More work based learning (curriculum reforms)
 - Increased participation – but many drop outs
- DK
 - Individual support: Mentors, contact teachers, psychologists
 - Training centres (in stead of training places)
 - Breakfast etc
 - Separation of young and adult people

Innovations to raise the esteem

- EUX (hybrid og VET and gymnasium; "Craftsman with cap" (DK)
- Technical general studies (NO)
- DM i Skills (Danish Champion in skills)
- Skills competitions (FI)
- Individualized trajectories (SE)
- Supplementary courses in general education (NO)
- Better access to higher education

Conclusion

- Do the new apprenticeship programs first and foremost work as a supplement or an alternative to other educational pathways?
- How does it affect the esteem if/when they work as a supplement?
- How does it affect the esteem if/when they work as an alternative?

How to combine high esteem and social inclusion?

- Political and structural level: from qualifications til participation
- Institutional level: transitions from primary school, coorporation with local society
- Teaching level: Belonging and participation not (only) acquisition of skills

Questions to discuss

- Which innovations can/should be added?
- How to research in this dilemma? What kind of theoretical framework could be relevant and useful?
- Which educational model can be an answer to the question: How to combine high esteem and social inclusion?