



What can Swedish initial VET learn  
from Finland, Norway and Denmark?

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# Swedish initial VET



Integrated in the  
gymnasium since 1971

Typically 85 % school-based  
15 weeks at a workplace



# Learning from Finland...



## *Similar strengths*

-School-based VET promotes equal access to higher education

-Life long learning embedded in school curriculum

-*Similar challenges:* Building stronger ties between initial VET and the world of work

...how to increase the popularity of VET among young people?



What is the secrets behind the growing attraction of initial VET since 2000?

**School-work ties:**

More work-based learning in national curriculum.

Skills demonstration and stronger partner participation in VET.

**Vocational guidance:**

Increased counselling about VET and working life at comprehensive schools.

**Access to Applied higher education and HE**

**Image:**

State campaigns: Enlarged information about VET as "no dead end", skill competition etc.

**Quality:**

High requirements of teacher education in VET .

Culture of trust that values teacher professionalism.

How to enhance the unique character of vocational training for skilled occupations in school based VET?

Learning from Norway and Denmark



# Learning from Norway

## Reform 1994 –

Introduced a mixed "2+2" system,  
school-based VET plus apprenticeship

Updated the relevance of  
apprenticeship for young people

Fewer but broader VET-programs  
created new flexible pathways to HE.

...how to improve access  
to workbased learning  
during the school-based  
part of VET?

**Challenge:** More theoretical  
courses and less contacts with the  
labor market during the first 2  
years increase the distance  
between school and work.

# Recent innovation - **in depth study project** (PTF – Prosjekt til fordypning)

School-based education

PTF



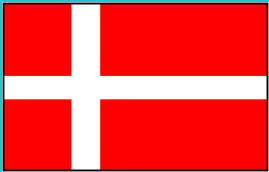
- PTF takes place during the school based part of VET

- Gives VET-students an early introduction in authentic work methods within occupations

Apprenticeship

- Increase VET-students motivation

- Curriculum provides space for cooperation between school and enterprises



# Importing Danish-style apprenticeship in Sweden?

## **Why does it work in Denmark?**

- Strong institutional networks support apprenticeship
- "Occupational self-governance" – employers and unions involved in the governance of VET.
- Strong fit between VET and specific occupations.
  
- **Sweden: Apprenticeship possible - but no quick fix**
- It has taken a long time to develop apprenticeship in Denmark and Norway.
- Labor market relations different in Sweden
- Attitude: Apps. often presented as a measure to handle social problems – affects the esteem.



## **Implications (1):**

### The future of apprenticeship in Sweden

Apprenticeship valued and positioned very differently in the Nordic countries –

Apprenticeship in Sweden is more likely to be successful if anchored in the tradition of voluntary agreements between the labor market partners...

...but the forms of cooperation need to be developed in several areas.

Gradually build up the experience of learning in the workplace - in different social and regional settings.

## Implications (2)

Similar trends in the Nordic countries to bridge the gaps between apprenticeship and general education to give "double access" and widening the scope of work based learning in tune with changes in working life.

**Key competences/**  
Combining vocational and general education

Access to higher education

**High esteem of VET**

Access to skilled employment