



Kristiina Volmari, Seppo Helakorpi & Rasmus Frimodt (Eds)

# **COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK FOR VET PROFESSIONS**

Handbook for practitioners



**CEDEFOP**

European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training



FINNISH NATIONAL  
BOARD OF EDUCATION



Kristiina Volmari, Seppo Helakorpi & Rasmus Frimodt (Eds)

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ISBN 978-952-13-4117-5 (paperback)  
ISBN 978-952-13-4118-2 (pdf)

Vammalan Kirjapaino Oy  
Sastamala 2009

## PREFACE

The objective of making European vocational education and training globally competitive and attractive has put teachers, trainers and leaders in vocational education and training in the spotlight. For example the Council Conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (“ET 2020”) emphasises that “there is a need to ensure high quality teaching, to provide adequate initial teacher education, continuous professional development for teachers and trainers, and to make teaching an attractive career-choice”. The Council Conclusions also acknowledge the importance of leadership of education and training institutions.

The Cedefop’s study *Defining VET Professions*<sup>1</sup> carried out with the Teachers and Trainers network<sup>2</sup> – TTnet – revealed serious discrepancies between the training of professionals in vocational education and training and their work realities. Based on research and interviews with practitioners in 17 European countries, the study produced a systematic inventory of the activities and competences of teachers, in-company trainers and leaders in VET. This inventory was further validated by practitioners and stakeholders in 21 European countries.

Building upon the data and outcomes of the above study, work has been taken forward by the TTnet networks and has resulted into this handbook. The handbook has been produced to support practitioners and decision-makers, such as teachers, trainers and administrators, in their efforts to support the professional development and well-being of VET professionals and organisations. Existing descriptions of the competences of teaching professionals mainly encompass those working in general education. This handbook is an attempt to capture the fast-evolving and complex activities and competences required of those working within vocational education and training. The handbook and its competence frameworks hope to contribute to a wider understanding of the roles and responsibilities of VET professionals in the development of vocational education and training. The handbook also points to areas where the VET professionals need to be supported, either through pre-service and in-service training.

The handbook has been edited and printed by the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE). It reflects the views of the TTnet national networks.

Aviana Bulgarelli  
*Director of Cedefop*

Timo Lankinen  
*Director General of FNBE*

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1. The study “Defining VET professions” was supported and co-funded by Cedefop under service contracts Nos 2006–0094 and 2006–0100
  2. The Teachers and Trainers Network (TTnet) was set up by Cedefop in 1998 to foster cooperation between key national and European actors involved in the training and professional development of VET teachers and trainers.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following institutions and persons from the TNet networks for their contributions to the Defining VET Professions project and this handbook.

Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung – BIBB, Germany. Herold Gross	Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional, Portugal Emilia Andrade
Calmar International Ltd, Ireland Nora Byrne	ISFOL – Area Risorse Strutturali e Umane dei Sistemi Formativi, Italy Pietro Checcucci, Giulia Governatori, Daniela Carlini, Cristina Di Giambattista and Arduino Salatin
Centre INFFO, France Françoise Dax-Boyer and Bruno Thiberge	National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education, Czech republic Richard Veleta and Hana Čiháková
Comenius University, Slovakia Juraj Vantuch, Michal Rehúš and Vojtech Vatolík	Observatory for Educational Development - Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary Krisztina Meszaros, Tamas Köpeczi-Bócz and Lidia Vinczéné Fekete
The National Centre for the Development of Vocational Education and Training in Denmark Rasmus Frimodt	Riga Technical University, Humanitarian Institute, Latvia Anita Lanka
Employment & Training Corporation, Malta Joseph Cutajar and Antoine Barbara	Tallinn University, Estonia Heidi Paju and Hans-Kasper Kivilo
Finnish National Board of Education Finland Kristiina Volmari	University of Greenwich, Department of leadership and professional development Ken Marsh and Janet Taylor
FOREM, Belgium Maryse Menu	VDAB, Belgium Ruben Bellens and Eddy Donders
HAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland Seppo Helakorpi and Tauno Tertsunen	Vytautas Magnus University, Centre for Quality of Studies, Lithuania Ausra Fokiene and Kestutis Pukelis
IFAPME, Belgium Laetitia Van Cauwenberghe	

Special thanks go to Mara Brugia and Rocio Lardinois de la Torre (Cedefop) for their support and feedback throughout the project.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 European education policies and realities

The following sections attempt to set the scene by giving an overview of the current European priorities that affect the VET professions. It also briefly outlines the professions dealt with in this handbook and the educational context that they operate in.

### 1.1.1 VET professionals in European education policies

Teaching professionals have been in focus for a number of years and recognised as key actors. The Council Conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training 2009<sup>3</sup> emphasises the importance of teachers, trainers and educational leaders for the quality of education and training. One of the priority areas for European cooperation in education and training in 2009–2011 is the professional development of teachers and trainers. The focus is on the quality of initial education, early career support for new teachers and on raising the quality of continuing professional development opportunities for teachers, trainers and other educational staff.

The qualification requirements and training for VET professionals vary considerably from country to country. Thus a coherent competence framework for teachers, trainers and leaders could support the development of vocational teaching and training in Europe. There seems to be a fairly widespread interest in standards and definition of professional profiles which define basic skills and competences that VET teachers and trainers need to have<sup>4</sup>.

This interest relates to the introduction of the European qualification framework (EQF). The development of EQF and the national qualification frameworks (NQF) can be seen as a signal of a more positive attitude towards competence frameworks and a realisation of their utilisation in developing the professionalism of both individuals and their working communities.

This handbook aims at providing a coherent framework capturing the core activity and competence areas of the VET professions as well as the skills and competences that have emerged more recently, such as the role of teachers and trainers in counselling both students and their parents. In addition to supporting the professional development of individuals and whole organisations, the framework, by bringing transparency into the professions, can both raise the esteem of the professions and contribute to the attractiveness of the professions. Thus it serves as an “advertisement” for the professions. It can particularly support the development and the quality of VET in contexts that do not provide as much structural support as in training organisations. For example trainers in small and medium-sized enterprises carry out their training in isolation, not being able to rely on support from a pedagogical leader or counselling services.

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3. Council of the European Union 2009.

4. Cedefop 2009.

### 1.1.2 VET professionals and their working contexts

In this handbook *teachers* encompass teaching professionals who work in educational institutions providing both initial and continuing vocational education and training. Teachers are in charge of delivering the theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to the learners. They also have the main responsibility for the learner and their overall progress. In some countries the same activities are performed by trainers in training centres providing continuing vocational training.

*Trainers* work in enterprises or institutions providing initial and continuing training. Compared to teachers the trainers' profile is more diverse. The training activities of trainers, for example, vary from full-time teaching to occasional training activities. Similarly, their responsibility for the learners and their progress may vary.

*VET leaders* refers to one or several persons in charge of VET institutions, such as vocational upper secondary institutions and further education colleges or training centres providing continuing vocational education and training. These persons have the overall responsibility for the running of an institution.

This handbook attempts to take into account both the world of initial and continuing vocational education and training. Initial vocational education and training (IVET) refers to training that leads to an initial (upper secondary) vocational qualification. The qualification can be taken in an institution-based system or in apprenticeship training. IVET is in most cases education and training for young people aged 16–19, but can also be adult education.

Continuing vocational education and training refers to education or training taken after initial education and training or after entry into working life. CVET aims at helping individuals to improve or update their knowledge and skills, to acquire new skills for a career move or retraining and to support their personal or professional development<sup>5</sup>. CVET is provided by a variety of organisations. These can be public or private and regulated by public administration or by the market. In many countries social partners play an important role in CVET.

## 1.2 Future visions of vocational education and training

The future is always difficult to predict. The advances made within technology make any predictions challenging. We can, however, with a certain degree of certainty foresee the following changes in future within education and training, both in training institutions and work-based training<sup>6</sup>.

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5. Cedefop 2008.

6. See eg Helakorpi 2008.

In future there will be more:

- recognition and emphasis on informal learning
- collaboration within and between educational institutions and world of work
- networking of institutions and with local and regional stakeholders
- international perspectives in training
- use of ICT and digital networks
- need for holistic perception
- need for learner autonomy and self-directed learning
- competence requirements for pedagogical, networking and communication skills for teachers and trainers
- use of new media in education and training
- interaction between education and the society
- organisational competence development

In future there will be less:

- emphasis on individual competence development
- formal training
- fixed and inflexible systems
- hierarchy
- classroom teaching
- differences and lower barriers between general, vocational and higher education and training

Today's educational institutions are predominantly too inflexible and traditional in their organisation. As such they are not suitable as a context for provision of learning as it is understood today. Similarly, many companies are structured in a hierarchical manner that does not allow for a modern approach to training. This is especially true for sectors with a long historical tradition.

For example new learning environments place challenges on both students and teaching staff. A learning environment is a place, space, community or activity that aims at promoting learning. Examples of new learning environments are eLearning, mobile learning and collaborative learning. The emphasis on the openness, flexibility, individuality of learning and the freedom to choose when and where to learn require new ways of thinking and approaches from the facilitators of learning, the teachers, trainers and leaders. The adoption and development of new learning environments may be a precondition for raising the attractiveness of VET and assuring that VET systems develop according to the general societal development and do not become obsolete and inferior to other educational pathways.

The many changes in the operating environment of the educational institutions force the institutions to change their ways of operating. The most notable changes have been the advances in technology and the consequent explosion of information available. The fast changes have also made it necessary for individuals to adapt to new situations for example in their jobs. We can talk about a completely new paradigm where education and training

tied to one place and time will diminish and the students will participate and learn in different kinds of networks and learning environments. This poses a challenge for recognising and validating learning, for example (see also Appendix 1.)

The visions of future are of a system of learning where the learner can acquire learning in a variety of networks, including virtual networks beside formal education. Particularly eLearning provides new opportunities for studying and for personalising and individualising the studies. The objective of personalisation has become pivotal in discussions on the future of education and education policies<sup>7</sup>. Today it is recognised that “one size fits all” ideology applied to learning and the structure of the education institutions does not correspond to the needs of the individuals and a knowledge-based society. A traditional education and training system provides individuals with almost identical competences, while at the same time the labour market would need professionals with varying skills and knowledge. Thus the education and training should produce professionals who, within the requirements of their qualifications, have been able to specialise and personalise studies to suit their capabilities, interests and future aims.

The short reflection on the future of training, its operation environment and the challenges arising from these serve as a background for an analysis of the competence descriptions of the professional within vocational education and training.

### 1.2.1 Changes in the operating environment of education and training

When we consider the competences of VET professional and how these have evolved, we must also look at the changes that have enforced the renewal of expertise. Both initial and continuing education and training must renew itself to correspond to the demands of a knowledge-based and networked society. The changes are global. Globalisation is a multi-layered phenomenon that has economic, political, social and cultural dimensions.

For workers working life is becoming more and more complex as working patterns diversify and an increasing number of transitions need to be managed successfully throughout the career. With the rapidly changing economies and restructuring, the workers must cope with new ways of working, including enhanced exploitation of ICT and changes in their working status, and be prepared for lifelong learning<sup>8</sup>.

Problem-solving autonomously or in teams, managing and further enriching information and knowledge as well as the need to have up-to-date skills and knowledge become more pronounced in all jobs. Organisations are becoming less integrated and work more and more mobile and more distributed. Work can be done almost everywhere: in the customer's premises, while travelling, in cafe's and at home<sup>9</sup>.

The development is not only technological, there is also a change in valuations and the adoption of new operating models. The key word is partnership. Partnerships and net-

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7. See eg OECD 2006.

8. Joling & Kraan 2008.

9. Andriessen & Vartiainen 2006.

worked or collaborative ways of working can bring added value to operations as knowledge is shared and innovated in networks. Professionalism and expertise are no longer understood as personal properties, but closely tied to communities, organisations and networks (see also Appendix 1). Consequently also interpersonal and social skills become more pronounced<sup>10</sup>.

An international perspective has become more prominent in the last decades. Within the European Union, the Copenhagen process and the resolutions and declarations made during this process strongly steer the developments in VET. In European education policies there is a strong emphasis on learning mobility and peer learning.

The new way of thinking in society at large and in all kinds of organisations today is that change is a continuous process. This requires flexible organisations and working cultures that are based on trust and professionalism. Such cultures are challenging for both management and staff. They are particularly challenging for the world of education and training, where the individuality and autonomy of the teaching and training professions have been obvious. At the same time the operations have been characterised by strict procedures and processes.

The developments in the surrounding world require changes also in the valuations, conception of the human being, operations, management and staff policies. Thus, current questions are related to new professionalism and competences, continuous change, being in control of one's work, intensification of work, physical and psychological well-being and need for change in leadership cultures. The reorganisation of work has further led to the social dimension of work communities. Today we talk about learning organisations<sup>11</sup> and participatory leadership<sup>12</sup>.

### 1.2.2 Internal pressures to change

Cultures of operation change slowly. During history, educational institutions, such as VET institutions and training centres have settled into certain ways of working. Today, however, change is inevitable. Like other public organisations these institutions need to network with each other and other stakeholders in VET, in particular with the labour market. The new pedagogical trends emphasise the learner's role in the organisation of learning. Virtual networks and eLearning are part of the enormous change that education needs to cope with. Educational institutions are no longer places where learning is facilitated, but rather a place to learn meta skills such as learning to learn, acquiring information, problem-solving as well as innovative and collective ways of working. This requires that educational institutions become creative, innovative and intelligent organisations, that is, that they renew themselves continuously, can anticipate changes and learn quickly.

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10. Wilson 2006.

11. Learning organisations are organisations which enable people to learn continually, both individually and as a collective. A learning organisation continuously develops and transforms itself (see, eg Senge 2006).

12. Leadership is a much used concept. In this handbook leadership is understood as one or several persons who are in a position where they have overall responsibility for their organisations and can influence developments in these. The concept distributed leadership underlines the fact that these roles are shared by various professionals such as directors, deputy directors, financial managers etc (See also Pont et al. 2008).

The pressure to change the institutions and their way of working is closely linked to the change in the conception of learning. The new conception has meant a shift from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred approach. The learner learns by constructing knowledge from the information and experiences he or she has acquired. The world around us changes fast and with it also information becomes outdated and is replaced by new information. Thus, it has become more important to understand than to remember things by heart. Important skills are related to retrieving information and to master meta-skills such as problem-solving, understanding how things are connected, critical thinking and learner autonomy. Learning is life-long and life-wide, taking place all the time and in a multitude of contexts.

The new contexts, such as virtual environments and learning in teams, mean that skills needed for collaborative ways of working become more important for both the learners and the facilitators of learning. Thus for example teachers in intelligent and learning organisations need expertise that differs drastically from that in a traditional school. They need to be able to adapt to changing contexts and to develop their professionalism also through sharing their expertise with colleagues.

Also the more pronounced role of the world of work and the different professional fields in vocational education and training has had an impact on the work and competence requirements of VET professionals. To be able to answer to the needs of the labour market, vocational education and training is expected to be future-oriented, that is, to be able to foresee changes and developments in the different fields and in society. This is only possible if there are close links and cooperation between the educational institutions and the enterprises. VET professionals must be familiar with the realities in the workplace and the people in the enterprises must be aware of what is going on in education.

### **1.3 Background of Handbook for professionals in vocational education and training**

This handbook is based on the results of two Cedefop TTnet projects: The Defining VET professions pilot project was carried out in 2006 and the Defining VET professions project in 2007. The projects focused on analysing activities, knowledge and skills of VET professions and to identify the main trends in the development of VET professions. This objective should be seen in the light of the Copenhagen objectives and consequently the project aimed at increasing mutual understanding and transparency of VET teachers' and trainers' competences and qualifications by fostering the development of a coherent framework to support teachers' and trainers' career development and training through a common basis of qualifications and competences.

From the outset six main profiles were selected – three from the IVET area and three from the CVET area. The data was collected in interviews of altogether 176 VET professionals in 17 countries<sup>13</sup> composed mainly of;

- teachers
- trainers
- training managers
- principals
- e-learning tutors
- training consultants

The distribution of the interviews was decided in each country. Thus, the interviews were not equally distributed on profiles and countries. Consequently, the interviews in for example Germany, Denmark and Ireland concentrated on trainers, while the focus in the interviews in Lithuania and Finland was on teachers. Nevertheless, the interview results displayed significant similarities within occupational activities though still dependent on the functions that VET professionals carry out and the target groups they deal with. To ensure the validity and representativeness of the resulting competence frameworks, a two-stage validation process was executed throughout the project:

1. the data collection grid was validated in different countries especially with social partners and a few representatives from each of the profiles
2. the outcomes of the analyses were validated by stakeholders in 21 countries<sup>14</sup>

The interviews were complemented with a desk research at national level consisting mainly of existing national standards, country-based information contained in Cedefop's database on VET systems as well as other available literature and statistics on the national VET contexts – both from an initial and continuing perspective. In addition, the results of relevant national and transnational studies were included.

In the analysis of the interviews and background research, many similarities between the six profiles surfaced. Consequently, it was decided to merge the six profiles into three generic ones regardless of the setting (IVET or CVET). The three generic profiles were VET teachers, in-company trainers and leaders. The three profiles have been defined in Section 1.1.2.

Based on the research as well as the experiences from the pilot study mentioned above, four main areas of activity common to the studied professions were chosen to structure the interviews and subsequently the overall analysis of the collected data: Administration, Training, Development and quality assurance and Networking.

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13. Denmark, Germany, France, Czech Republic, Hungary, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, France, Italy, Estonia, Slovakia, Portugal, Malta, Belgium, Ireland, United Kingdom.

14. Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom.

The activity areas of Administration and Training can be considered the operational dimension of the work of VET professionals, while Development and Quality assurance and Networking can be considered the strategic dimension of their work (Figure 1).



*Figure 1. Activity areas of VET professionals.*

These four areas constitute the core competences<sup>15</sup> of VET professionals found in all training contexts where VET professionals are involved. The weight and importance of the different areas vary from national and occupational context to another. Also the boundaries of the activity areas overlap and require adaptation in different contexts. For example in the case of leaders, the administrative responsibilities would generally be more prominent in decentralised systems and marketing of more weight in continuing vocational education and training (CVET). In the case of teachers, networking with the world of work in turn would be enhanced in VET systems based on close cooperation and links with the labour market.

The most remarkable changes in the activities of VET professionals include internal and external networking and adopting new approaches to learning. Consequently, teachers, trainers and leaders need to work in teams and networks. This requires the experts to possess cooperation skills. Teachers, trainers and leaders will also have to possess the skills to mentor, guide and teach a learner who is learning in varied environments. They also have an important role in transferring tacit knowledge and professional ethics. In essence, they have to have practical skills in pedagogy.

This handbook aims at offering an inventory or framework of the activities that the professions are involved with today. The expertise, the knowledge, skills and experience required to successfully carry out these activities have also been identified. In addition, the handbook outlines what the competence frameworks can be used for.

15. Competence is in this handbook is used to denote the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and/or personal development.

## 1.4 Use of competence framework and handbook

Competence descriptions and frameworks can be used for many purposes. As the frameworks in this guide are based on a transnational data collection, they also enable a comparison between the requirements in different countries. Comparison in turn enables mutual learning and learning from peers, which are seen as powerful tools within the European Union for improving the quality of education and training.

A competence framework is a generic description of the skills, knowledge and wider competences that teachers, trainers and leaders should possess to enable vocational education and training at a high level. Such a framework can be used when curricula or training programmes are designed for the initial and continuing training of teaching professionals. The competence framework can also help the professionals and the institutions to:

- reflect on professional effectiveness
- determine and prioritise areas for individual and institutional professional growth<sup>16</sup>
- assist staff in their personal and career development planning
- assist the individuals and the collegial community in assessing and developing institutional competence, for example in recruitment
- recognise and validate informal and non-formal learning
- raise the status and recognition of the professions by making visible the demands set on the professions.

In the present institutional context, it should be kept in mind that a competence framework is not necessarily a description of the competences required by all individual practitioners. As the world becomes more and more complex the need to share knowledge and expertise within organisations becomes necessary. Therefore, in addition to supporting the assessment of oneself, a competence framework can be used to assess the organisation's competence.

To sustain and develop the competence in the organisation, it must be continuously assessed and reflected on. Future competence requirements need to be anticipated. It is essential that the organisation continuously renews itself and that the expertise of the individuals and innovations are shared and thus further developed.

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16. Examples of assessment tools based on the competence frameworks can be found at <http://openetti.aokk.hamk.fi/seppoh/osaamismittarit/english.htm>.

When developing and assessing competence the following assumptions should be taken into account:

- Competence is both individual and collective (*collaborative learning and expertise*)
- Competence is accumulated both in formal education and in informal contexts (*experiential learning*)
- Competence is not only about knowing but about controlling and mastering one's work. Social interaction also becomes more pronounced (*team learning*).
- Competence means flexibility, tolerating uncertainty and a positive attitude to change
- Competence requires continuous assessment and development. The assessment is both self-assessment and external assessment.
- Competence is context-dependent (*triological learning*). Thus its assessment is linked to the prevailing valuations and the operating environment.

Looking at the list above, it is clear that the new professionalism, is completely different from what has traditionally been understood as professionalism. The biggest change is that the “new professionalism” is both reflective and collective.

The world of education and training is involved in the rapid changes taking place in society and this is inevitably reflected in the activities and competence requirement of leaders, teacher and trainers. The developed frameworks aim at showing the activity areas of the different professions as well as the competences and skills needed and required to successfully carry out the activities. In addition to serving as tools for individual and organisational development, the frameworks further feed into a wider international discussion on the requirements for VET professions, their working conditions and continuing training.

## 2 TEACHERS

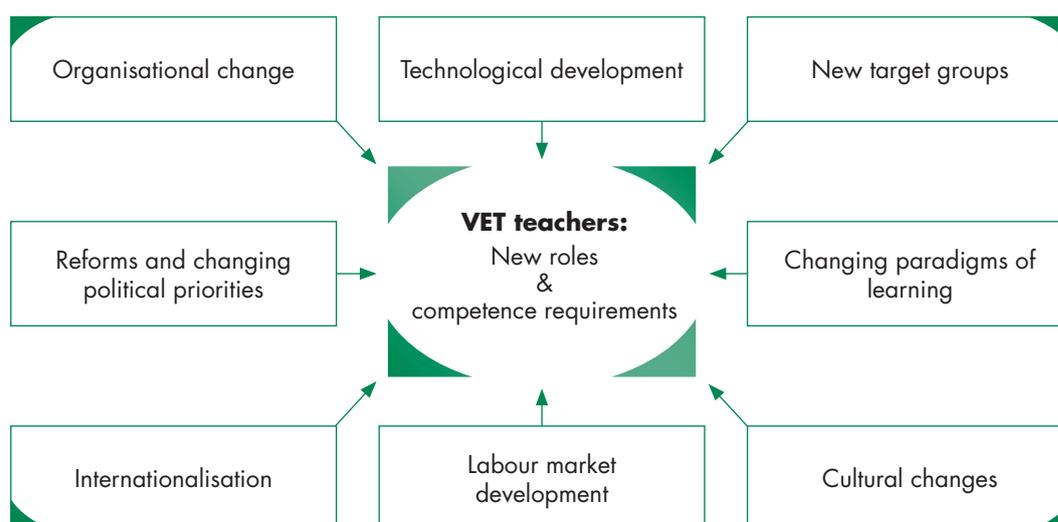
When we talk about teachers in VET, we generally refer to teachers of vocational subjects, such as electronics, construction and nursing. The framework can, however, also be used for teachers of common core subjects such as languages, mathematics and science. The latter types of teachers are commonly thought of as experts only in their own subject matter without a connection to the vocational fields. These common core subjects, however, need to be taught taking into account the vocational context. Thus for example the language teachers need to have an understanding of the field or fields in question, although the depth differs from that of the teachers of vocational studies.

In this handbook *teacher* refers to teaching professionals who work in educational institutions providing both initial and continuing vocational education and training. They are responsible for the learners and their overall progress. In some countries trainers in training centres have a similar professional profile and thus *teacher* in this handbook also refers to such trainers.

A formal qualification, professional and pedagogical, is generally required of VET teachers in most European countries. Particularly for permanent teacher positions, the pedagogical qualification is becoming a legal requirement. Routes to qualified teacher status can be pedagogical training taken before entering the profession or during employment as a teacher. The latter route seems to be the most common for VET teachers.

Teachers' careers are generally "flat", that is, there is no career progression within teaching. It is common that teachers with career ambitions become leaders or administrators.

Being a teacher is very challenging. A good teacher needs to possess a wide and deep knowledge and understanding of the professional field, of human growth and development and how to steer this growth by means of education and training. Further, the teachers need to have adopted the ethical responsibility of the profession. Finally, a teacher operates in a multi-dimensional context and must understand the dialogue and interlinkage between education, labour market and society to be able to promote the learners progress in life (Figure 2, page 20).



**Figure 2.** Working context of VET teachers (modified from Cort, Härkönen & Volmari, 2004: 15).

There seem to be little differences in the realities, challenges and concerns of VET teachers in Europe. The challenges in the context outlined in Figure 2 were identified in a European conference in 2001. Also the teachers interviewed for this handbook in the different countries expressed similar concerns. The teachers interviewed asserted that they had increased workloads, especially administration tasks, involvement in quality assurance tasks and managing the learning environment. In addition, the interviewees frequently mentioned the increase in disruptive behaviour among the students. The most remarkable differences seem to be connected to external assessment and esteem. It could be clearly seen in the interviews that in many countries VET teachers are still considered a “lower class of teachers” compared to their colleagues in general education. Consequently their job satisfaction and well-being at work can suffer. The interviews also pointed to the fact that teachers in education and training systems that rely on external inspections found these very stressful. It could be argued that the pressure is linked both to the stressfulness of the whole inspection procedure and the lack of trust an inspection system can be a symptom of.

The main responsibility of VET teachers and trainers is to train the students for a profession. Thus, they are required, in addition to mastering learning-related matters, to be able to foresee future competence requirements. A prerequisite for this is a strong knowledge of the development in the labour market and the ability to analyse these. The training is nowadays often done in collaboration both within the organisation and the world of work. Consequently it is not enough anymore that the teachers and trainers can teach. The competences include for example the skill to analyse phenomena within work, the society as well as development trends and integrate these into their training tasks. In future, teachers are also likely to operate more and more in different networks and utilise information networks in their work. For example tutoring and guiding the students can take place in a virtual environment.

The activities of teachers vary from sector to sector. There are also differences related to whether the teachers work in initial vocational education and training (IVET) or continuing vocational education and training (CVET). The activities can further be those of one individual or a team. Therefore we should talk about “teachership”<sup>17</sup>, emphasising the distributed responsibility for training. Thus it is important to note that the description of a teacher’s activities and competences need to be adapted for the use according to the needs of different contexts and institutions.

The description of a teacher’s activities and competences help to understand the challenges of the profession as well as to assess how these competences can best be fulfilled. Recognising competence is also important to support teachers to specialise and develop their professional skills and knowledge to best benefit themselves and their working communities.

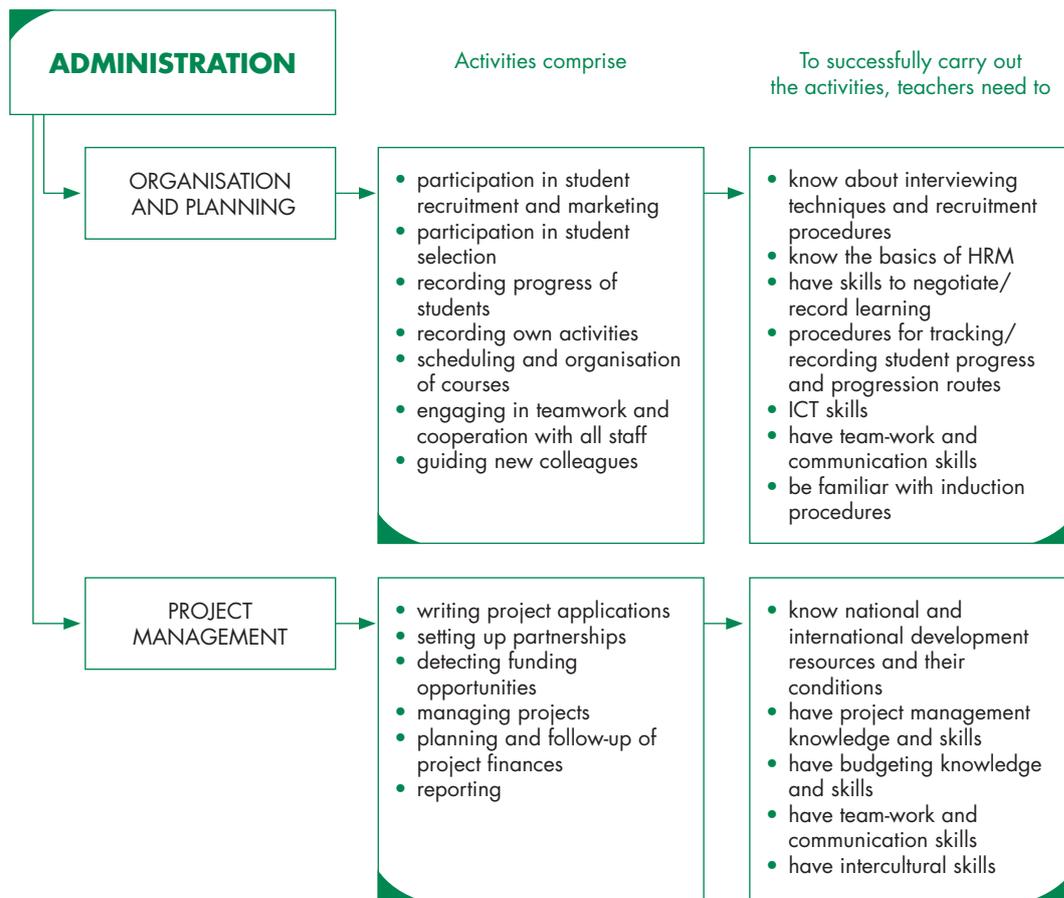
The teachers’ main areas of activities and competences are similar to those of the other profiles presented in this handbook, that is, Administration, Training, Development and Quality assurance and Networking. Of these, it is obvious that the area of Training is the most central. However, with the general trend of raising the quality of education and of making training more effective and accountable, there is increasing pressure for the teacher to be more and more involved also in the other activity areas.

## **2.1 Administration**

The pressure to make education systems more efficient and effective, and the development of on-line administrative tools, has meant that part of the administrative activities have been transferred to teaching staff. Good examples of this are the different systems for recording and follow-up of students’ progress, time sheets etc. Increased attention to accountability has further meant that teachers have to record the use of their working time. More and more development activities are funded externally, meaning that teachers also need to manage projects, including their financial management. The administrative tasks and the required skills and knowledge can be found in Figure 3, page 22.

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17. Teachership in this handbook is used similarly to leadership in that it emphasises the distribution or sharing of tasks and responsibilities. Thus teachership is understood as one or several persons who are in charge of teaching or facilitating learning.



*Figure 3. Administrative activities and required skills and knowledge of VET teachers.*

As can be seen in Figure 3, the administrative activities and tasks of VET teachers are numerous. As teachers' workloads are commonly defined as teaching hours, these administrative activities are additional tasks.

The teachers interviewed for the "Defining VET professions" study asserted that their "administrative" workloads had increased. The VET teachers often felt that this additional workload had the detrimental effect of leaving limited time for pedagogical issues.

## 2.2 Training

Training used to be about simply telling the students how things were and showing them how to do things. Not anymore. Several issues have been identified that have affected the training activities. The main changes have been

- new target groups in VET,
- changing paradigms in educational theory,
- diversification of learning environments and
- fast changes in education structures and priorities and the labour market<sup>18</sup>.

VET teachers have to deal with more diverse target groups than before. Student groups can comprise learners of different ages, different learning backgrounds and different cultures. The conception of learning has also changed: the focus is now on the individual learner and the teachers have become “learning facilitators”.

Learning environments today range from virtual environments to real-life environments in enterprises. Consequently, we should not speak of lessons anymore. Instead we should speak of learning processes or “learning events” that the teachers are in charge of. Further, to be able to provide learning that is relevant and that provides the learner with skills valid today and in future, the teachers are expected to know what is going on in the enterprises and to be able to support learning that takes place in the enterprises.

Teachers’ tasks related to training can be grouped in to activities related to Planning, Facilitating and Assessing or evaluating the learning event or process (Figure 4, page 24).

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18. Cort, Härkönen & Volmari 2004 and VET teachers and trainers in Finland 2006.

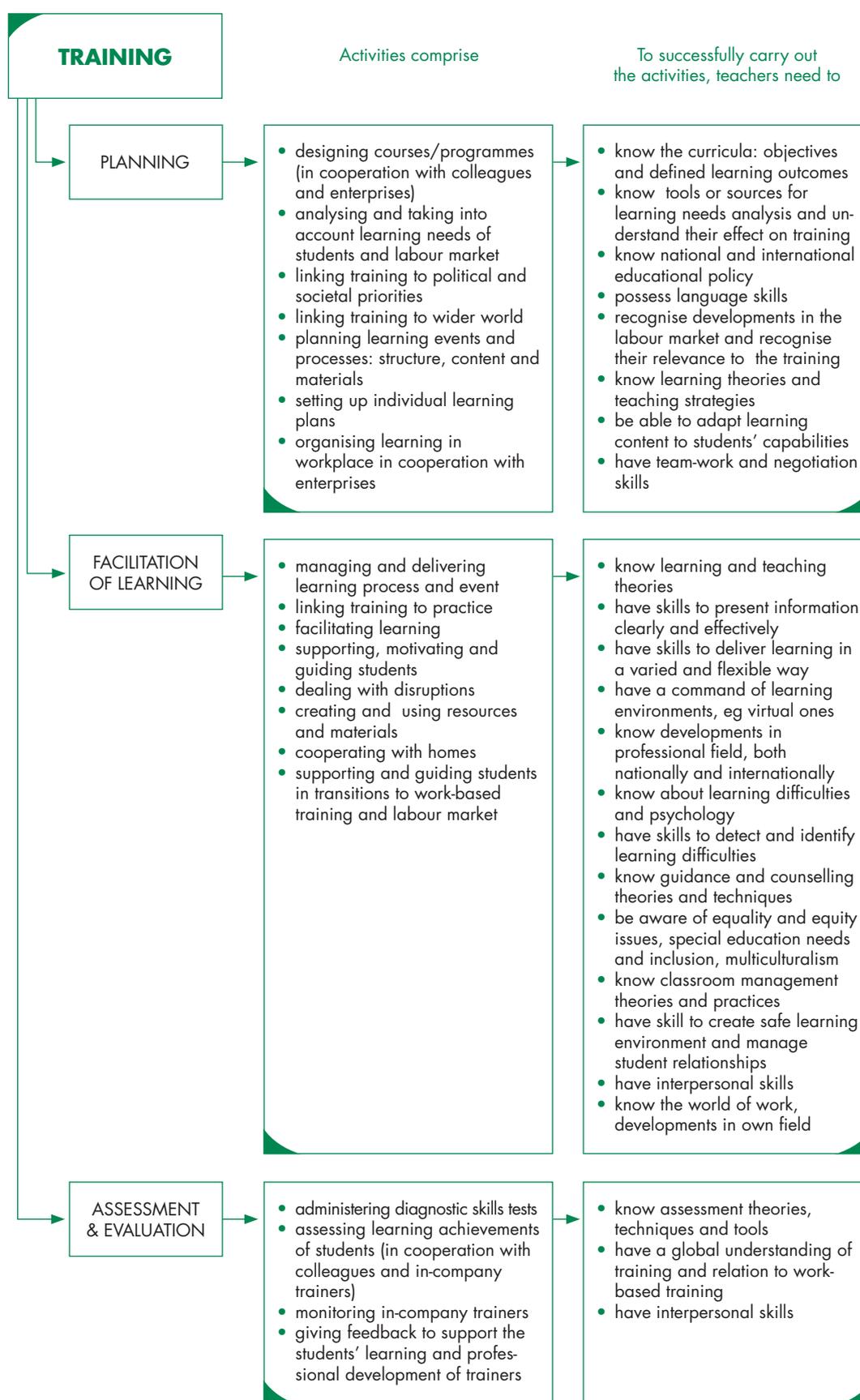


Figure 4. Training activities and required skills and knowledge of VET teachers.

In the interviews carried out in the data collection process, two areas emerged in which the teachers felt they needed more training or new competences. These were dealing with difficult students and new contexts of assessment and evaluation. Many of the interviewees reported that they did not feel adequately equipped to deal with the disruption and the lack of motivation that they felt in their classrooms. They also felt that assessment and evaluation have become more complex. In addition to assessing the students “academic” work, the teachers are increasingly involved in assessing their prior learning and performance in real-life situations. Also the pressure to individualise and support the learners means that the teachers need to be able to guide the learners to become reflective learners, able to assess their learning styles, needs and so on.

### **2.3 Development and quality assurance**

This activity area of development and quality assurance comprises development of the teachers’ own professionalism as well as the development of their institutions. Responsibility for one’s own continuing professional development (CPD) has been recognised as part of a teacher’s work for a long time. Thus teachers are expected to continuously keep up to date on new methods and technology.

A more recent area of activity for teachers is the demand to take responsibility and be involved in the overall development of one’s own institution and its quality assurance. All identified teacher interviewed, acknowledged quality assurance (QA) as an important area. They, however, commonly also felt QA to be complex.

Quality assurance is often perceived as something difficult and theoretical. This would explain part of the reluctance on the teachers’ side and their opposition to the increase in their workloads it has brought about. However, quality assurance is generally about practical things. Quality assurance can for example be about regularly reviewing teaching and training materials to ensure that they meet with students’ or clients’ needs. Today teachers are typically also expected to participate in audits and external evaluations carried out in their institutions.

Taking responsibility of one’s own and the institutions professional development requires the ability to analyse feedback or evaluation results and use this as a basis for professional reflection. The teachers further need to detect the direction of improvement and take corrective actions. Thus the main competences connected to quality assurance for VET teachers are: the ability to produce accurate records, the ability to contribute to the annual quality cycle and the ability to reflect on and evaluate professional performance. (Figure 5, page 26.)

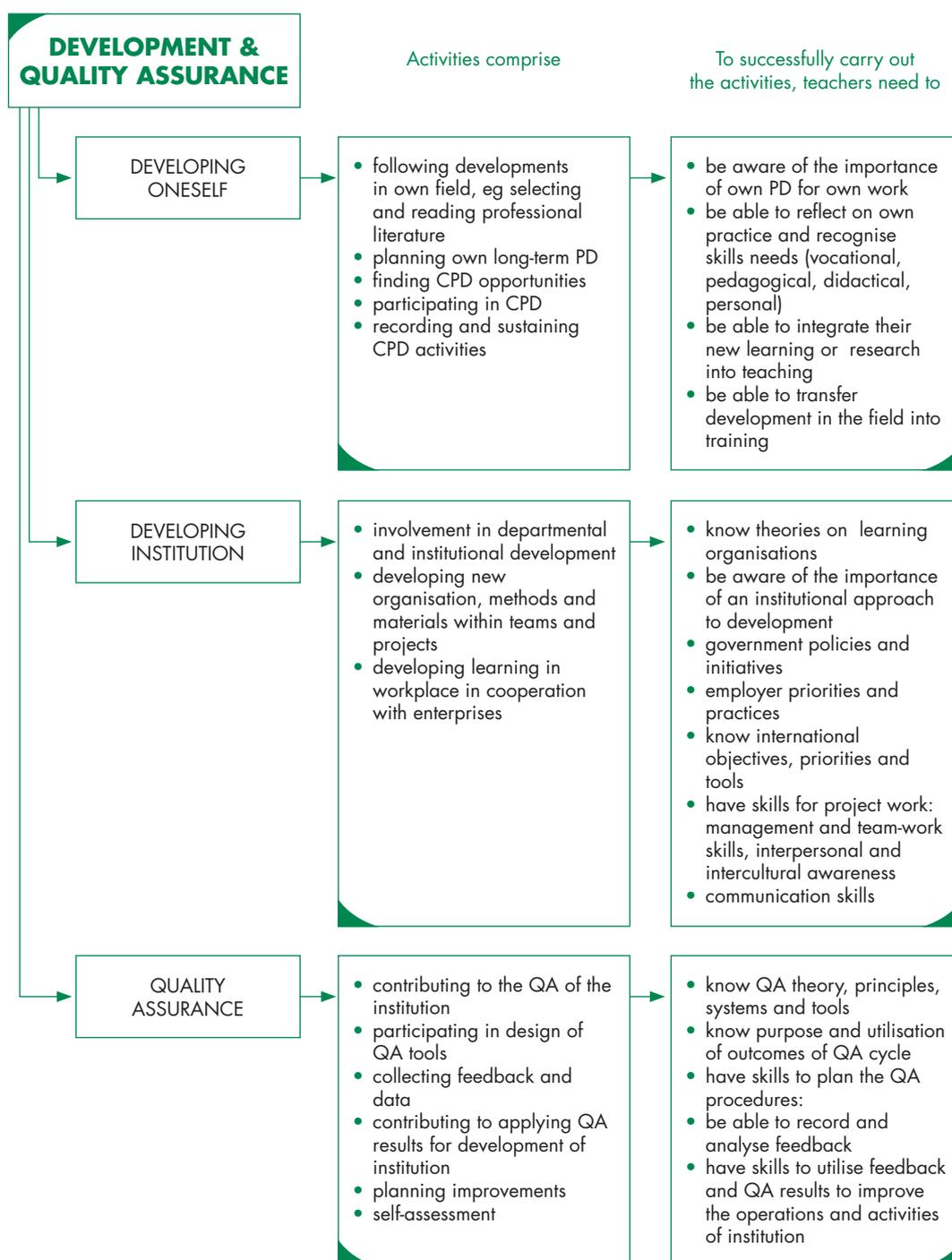


Figure 5. Development and QA activities and required skills and knowledge of VET teachers.

According to the interviews, the most challenging areas within Development are quality assurance and institutional development. Even if all interviewees reported involvement in QA processes, they did not commonly feel confident or motivated about their involvement. Although QA is sometimes included into initial teacher training, the majority felt ill-equipped and disengaged from this role. Several also reported that they were not informed of the use, purpose or consequences of the quality assurance activities.

Institutional development was rarely seen by the interviewed teachers as their responsibility. This would indicate that the collegial working cultures that institutional development requires are not common. Creating such a culture or atmosphere is to a great extent a leadership issue (see also 4.3). Vital are also interpersonal and communication skills for all members of the community.

## **2.4 Networking**

Networking can be regarded as the most recent addition to the activities of VET teachers. With the increased pressure to cooperate with the labour market and include an international dimension to learning, institutions can no longer be isolated from their context. Further, to be able to survive amidst all the demands and changes, organisations need to adopt more collaborative approaches in their operations.

Vocational education and training institutions are expected to equip young people leaving vocational training with immediately useful skills. In order to keep up to date with new technologies, new working practices and future trends in professions, teachers need to be aware of what is going on in the labour market and the enterprises<sup>19</sup>.

High-quality education and training requires the inclusion of an international dimension. This means a new focus in the teaching content and an increased attention to international mobility. For teachers, competence areas of critical importance include language skills, knowledge of other countries, knowledge of trades and trade requirements in other countries and intercultural communicative skills<sup>20</sup>.

Internal collaboration is a prerequisite for institutions to become learning organisations. As a result, developing ways to share knowledge and expertise have become central issues. Also organisational changes have led to the introduction of new working practices, such as flexibility, modularisation and interdisciplinary teaching, that challenge the traditional roles of VET teachers. The role of the VET teacher is no longer to work autonomously but rather to cooperate with other teachers to plan, coordinate and carry out teaching together.

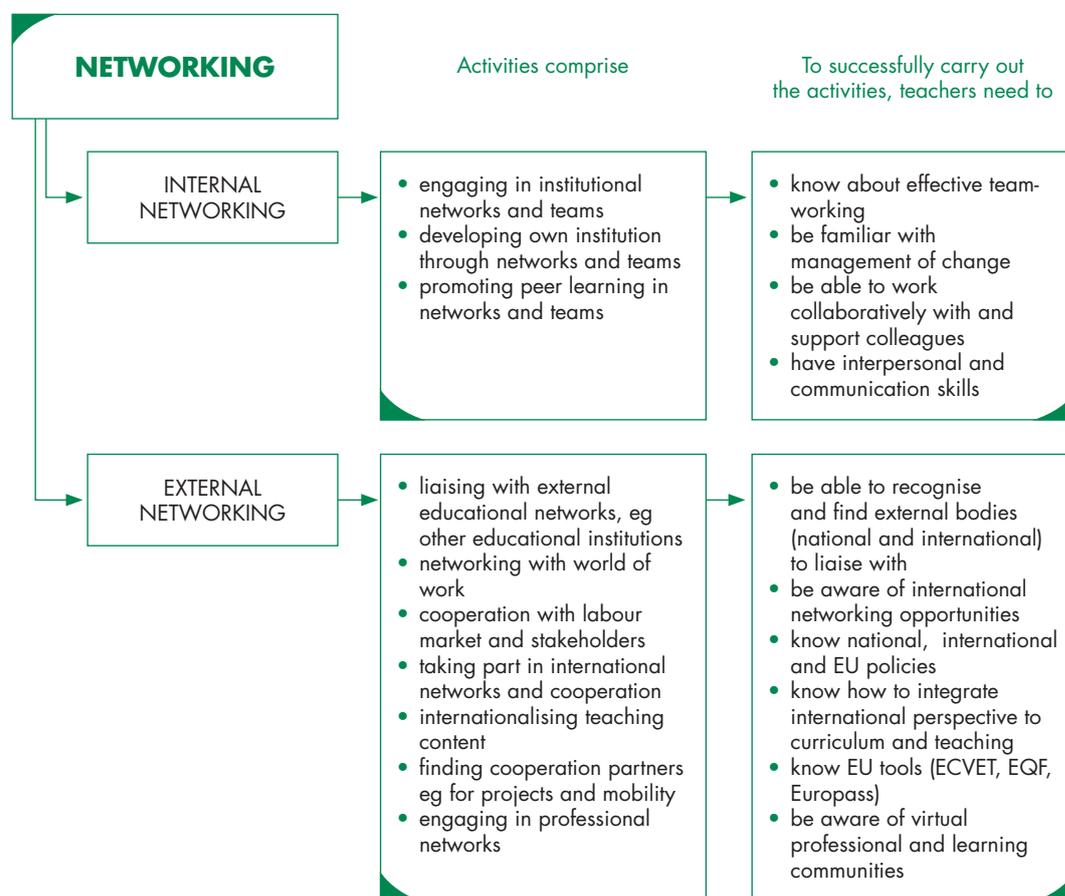
The networking activities of teachers can be classified as internal and external networking. The internal networking is related to the conceptions of learning organisations and shared

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19. See eg Cedefop 2009.

20. Cort, Härkönen & Volmari 2004.

expertise. The external networking in turn relates to liaising with professional networks, the world of work and internationalisation (Figure 6).



*Figure 6. Networking activities and required skills and knowledge of VET teachers.*

The VET teachers interviewed reported that collaboration and advice from colleagues, especially concerning subject specialist issues was the basis of the most significant network. They felt that they received the most support, creativity, and practical advice from their most immediate colleagues. Internationalisation was not seen as significant.

Apart from a minimal amount of external networking in connection with placement issues, the vast majority of the VET teachers in our sample were not involved in any external networking. International activities appeared minimal, being often in the hands of a few enthusiastic members of staff.

### 3 IN-COMPANY TRAINERS

The merging of the IVET and CVET trainer profiles made visible the many similarities between the training professions but also highlighted some of the differences. The in-company trainer in IVET in most cases trains young people 16–19 years old and generally in apprenticeship systems or systems with apprenticeship as an optional part of the training provision in VET. In CVET, in-company trainers usually work with adults either as continuing professional development (CPD) or as a part of an educational programme aimed at adults. However, the number of similarities in core activities, skills and knowledge was surprisingly evident and the generic areas identified in the interviews were not as difficult to merge as anticipated.

One of the main differences between the two profiles is the position in the national VET systems. Whereas IVET trainers usually perform their training in a (more or less) regulated training system, CVET training is generally quite unregulated. However, for both types of trainers, in most EU countries the profession has no formal acknowledgement in terms of national legislation and no formal compulsory requirements to hold a specific qualification. Trainers in CVET have to face new demands from learners and the learning needs changed by globalisation and financial crisis. Naturally, these changes have implications on the occupational paths and hence for initial and continuing training. The interviews executed in the framework of the project indicated that trainers in CVET increasingly found themselves in a position where they have to master not only fundamentals of learning and teaching but have to become full-scale learning facilitators with the affiliated competences to take on this role successfully. Similarly, the trainers involved in IVET have to cope with issues related to modern youth culture and the challenges of retention, conflicts in the workplace and generally to act as a mentor or coach in addition to the regular training role. This was evident throughout the interviews and we will revert to this in the following. In general, the interviews highlighted the new competence needs for trainers in IVET and point towards the need for an overall enhanced focus on CPD and the importance of providing the professionals whether in IVET or CVET with the adequate level and character of competences to match the needs of the learners and of the VET system as a whole.

The trainers interviewed for the data collection were full-time or part-time trainers in SMEs or larger enterprises involved in either IVET or CVET<sup>21</sup>. In general, the interviews showed that part-time trainers – whether in IVET or CVET – have generally a workers/craftsman's qualification and often a further technical or commercial qualification and some years of working experience. Their part-time training is usually executed within the general workload and they are accountable primarily to the training manager (in larger enterprises) and to the general manager in SME's.

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21. Full-time trainers can concentrate fully on training activities whereas part-time trainers only are partly involved in training and working with the core activities of the company in the rest of the working time.

According to the interviews, the full-time trainers generally have a qualification on Master's level as well as a pedagogical qualification – even when it is not compulsory. They are in most cases involved in training in large enterprises with own training department and a professionalised training provision. They have a long working experience and extensive experience in training apprentices and trainees. Usually these trainers are recruited within the company and are also accountable to the training manager or the general manager according to the size of the company. The interviews showed generally that the trainer's general working conditions are the same as those of the non-training staff. In other words, there are no special conditions for trainers. Trainers generally have more working hours and higher salaries than non-training personnel. However, this is not due to their training duties but to their higher age, longer occupational careers and the fact that they generally hold a position of responsibility. As a rule, training functions are not given any special treatment.

The task of in-company trainers is in general related to the planning, organisation, execution and supervision of the training. The trainers are increasingly in charge of responsibilities that earlier belonged to teachers only. Such responsibilities are for example training needs analysis, guiding and counselling and quality assurance. In addition to the professional aspect of all kinds of trainers, trainers involved in IVET play an important role in the professional socialisation of young people. They can strongly influence learners' attitudes and serve as models for social conduct and communication style. They also contribute to teaching vocational ethics and 'virtues' such as punctuality, orderliness and tidiness. As mentioned, in that sense trainers face a number of challenges linked to the general youth culture and to the educational world focusing on the importance of recruitment and retention.

But how to include these challenges and changes in the tasks of the trainer in the discussion of the learning needs and necessary competences of an in-company trainer? The trainer has to cope with the pedagogical and didactical requirements of in-company training, frequently without appropriate training for the tasks. The competence requirements have broadened with need for trainers to be learning supporters and facilitators. Thus, personal competences such as autonomy, responsibility, inner motivation, initiative and flexibility as well as inter-personal skills have become more important and must receive more attention both in terms of CPD but also on relation the daily quality assurance of the trainer's work.

Based on the data collection and analysis, it generally seems that there has been a change in the trainer profession – regardless of whether the trainer works within IVET or CVET - over the last years with a paradigmatic shift from teaching and 'passing on' knowledge to self-directed learning that is sometimes accomplished in teams. Active participation on the part of the learner<sup>22</sup> is expected and supported. The learner's level of motivation is regarded as key to successful training and to the level of support provided by company trainers. This trend is also evident in relation to teachers, but the difference is mainly related to the peda-

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22. Frequently called apprentice in dual training systems.

gological background of the teacher in comparison with the trainer's limited qualifications in this area. Therefore, this development highlights the challenges for a trainer without the proper pedagogical tools to handle the learning situation.

According to a large part of the interviewees, there has been a trend over the last ten years in how trainers and learners themselves view responsibility and participation. Although overall legal responsibility for in-company training still lies with the respective employer, trainees/learners have been given more saying in their training. This is of course also largely in line with the general societal trend toward giving individuals more freedom and responsibility.

From the perspective of organisational development the trainers' familiarity with modern approaches to methods, techniques and didactics may enable them to a possible role of "change agents" within the companies' innovation processes. All this points to the crucial need for continuing training giving the trainers needed competences to solve the challenges at hand and to live up to the demands from the company, the industry, the educational system, the labour market and the society as such<sup>23</sup>.

In the following, a competence framework for trainers is presented, focusing on the most recorded scope of activities and the corresponding competences. Consequently, trainers may find themselves doing some of the activities from one area and all of the activities listed in another area.

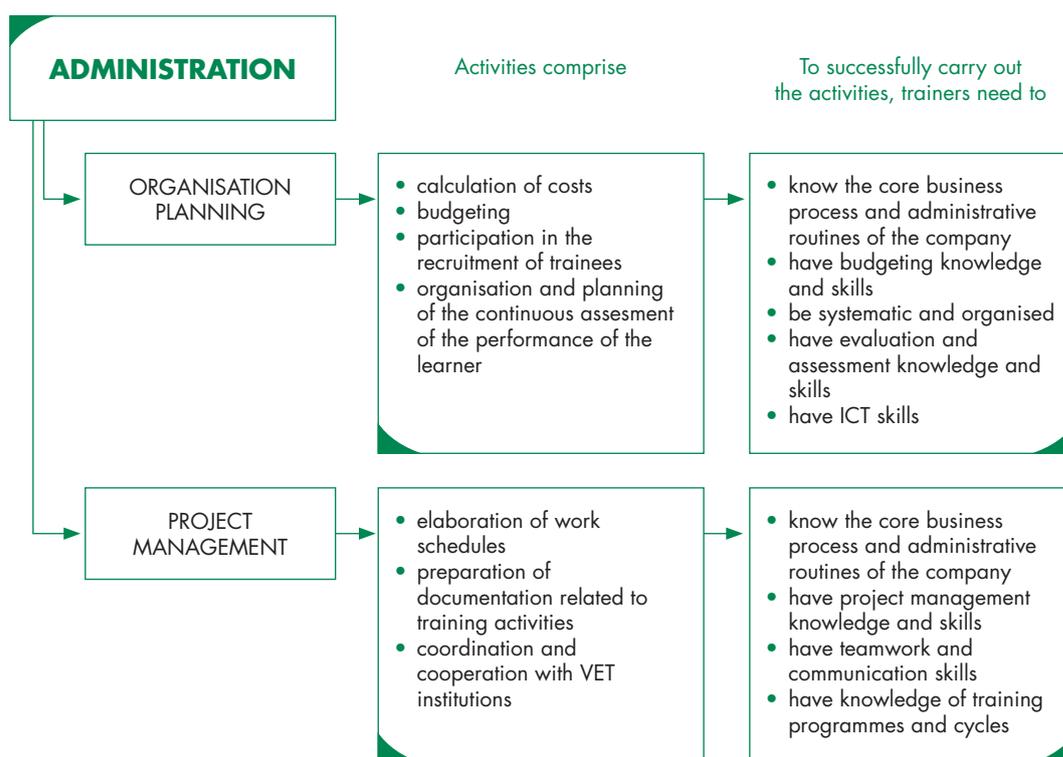
The description of the tasks and related skills and competences provides the reader with a more thorough understanding of the variety and diversity of tasks, the trainer faces in his/her daily professional life. The trainers' main areas of activity are divided into four parts namely Administration, Training, Development and Quality Assurance and Networking. Under each part we will make a short introduction to the area prior to the actual illustrations of activities and required skills and knowledge.

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23. Volmari, Frimodt & Marsh 2007.

### 3.1 Administration

Trainers are involved in a variety of administrative tasks in addition to their training-related responsibilities (Figure 7). It seems that the number of administrative tasks have increased in recent years as well as the diversity of the different types of assignments. This put additional pressure on the trainer and on the skills needed to live up to the expectations from the employer and the educational system. However, it seems that the part-time trainer generally speaking has fewer administrative responsibilities than the full-time trainer and thus can dedicate more of his time to the actual training.



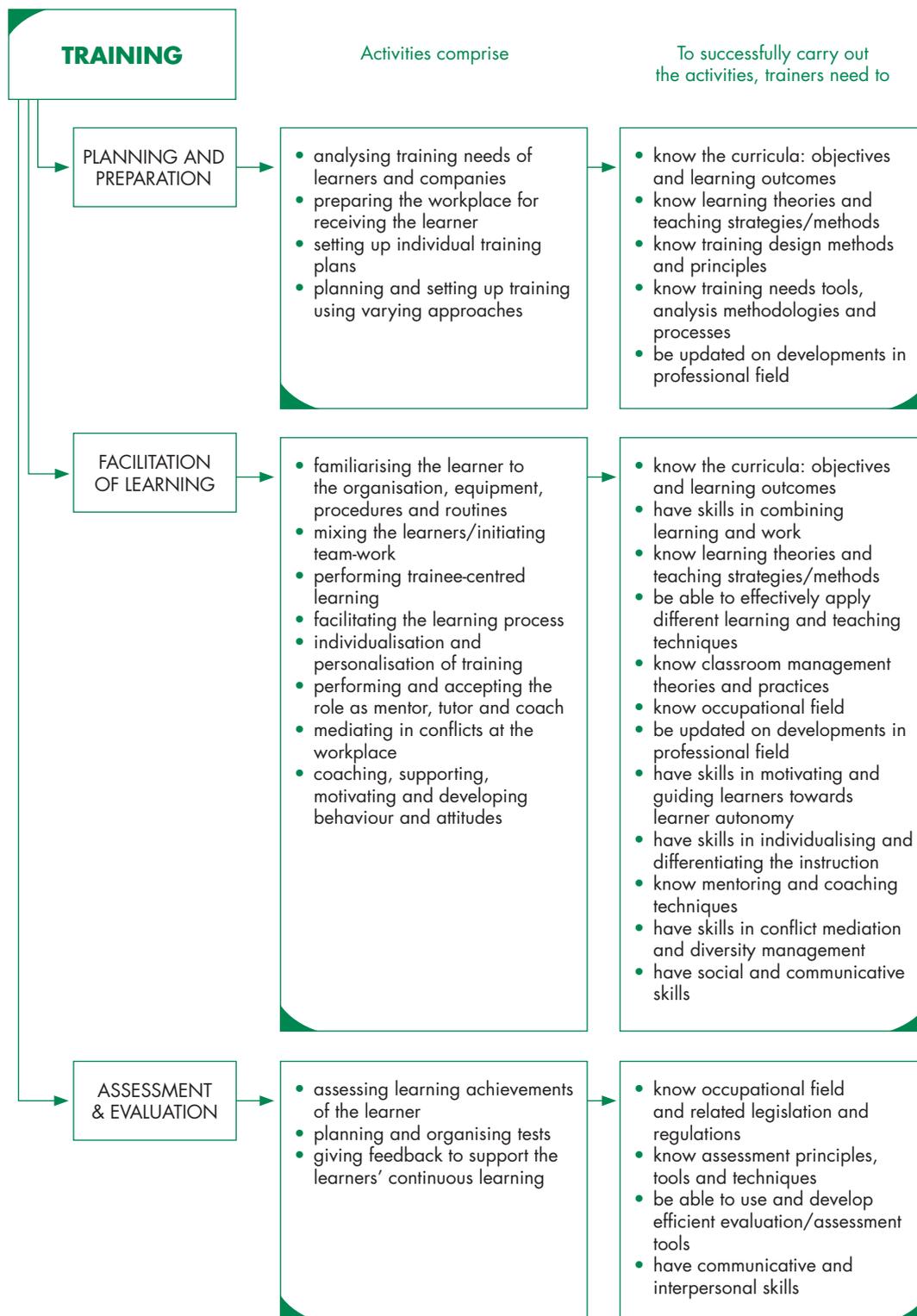
*Figure 7. Administrative activities and required skills and knowledge of VET trainers.*

As can be seen above, the administrative tasks and responsibilities of the in-company trainer are quite numerous and diverse evolving in general around planning and organisation, finances, Human Resource Management (HRM) and general administration. In larger companies with full-time trainers, the trainer may also supervise subordinates who provide parts of the training at the workplace. The main competences needed to perform the tasks are project-management and organisational competences, that is, in terms of organising training and teamwork as well being able to evaluate and co-ordinate with different parties. In addition, the trainer needs communicative and social competences for example in order to communicate the social value of in-company training and social responsibility issues internally and externally as well as the general communication with learners, VET schools etc.

### **3.2 Training**

The training function has changed immensely in recent years. It used to be fairly simple and related to the actual teaching of learners. Nowadays, the trainer has an increasingly personal tutoring role with guidance, support and counselling functions. The trainer is the person with the contact and direct interaction with the learner and is thus in a position of confidence on one side, and an “authority” position with responsibility for the learners behaviour and conduct on the other. This attaches great importance to the pedagogical skills of the trainer. As such, it seems quite alarming that only a few trainers have a pedagogical background and that only very few of the interviewed trainers report the usage of innovative methods and the adequate knowledge to plan alternative educational approaches and use pedagogical tools to support the learner. Even more alarming is the lack of pedagogical training requirements for trainers in most European countries with only a few exceptions.

Above all, it seems that the trainer generally always must possess professional matter mastery in his professional field at a higher or corresponding level as the skills and competences aspired as the outcome of the training. In relation to the professional competence, the trainer must have occupational didactical competences, that is, to prepare effectively the relevant knowledge and skills for training processes of learners, combining learning and work, identifying opportunities in the work process/context for learning. In addition, pedagogical competences are decisive in order for the trainer to guide and motivate learners to productive self-directed learning and in the evaluation and assessment processes of the learners. (Figure 8, page 34.)

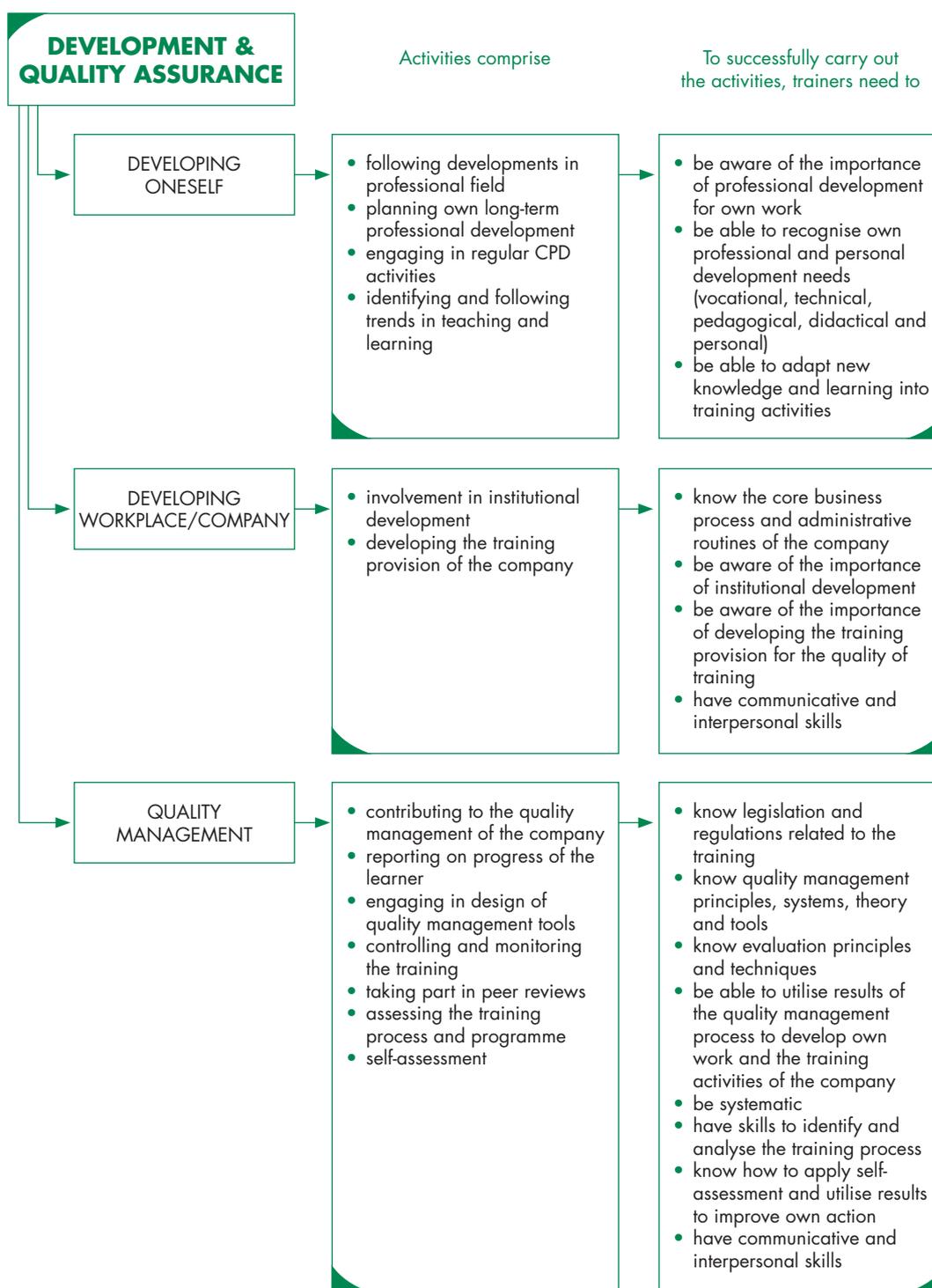


*Figure 8. Training activities and required skills and knowledge of VET trainers.*

The broadened training role with an increased number of activities and responsibilities in relation to the learner is especially important in the light of the enhanced focus on prevention of drop-out in VET. This is of course mostly related to trainers within IVET settings but may also occur in CVET. Studies have shown that the mentoring and coaching of the learners increase quite dramatically the retention level and the general satisfaction with the in-company training part of the educational programme among learners and thus raising the attractiveness of the working place. Consequently, the possibility of recruiting the best learners after the completion of the placement is enhanced. Therefore, it is of outmost importance that companies emphasise these specific skills among the training staff and ensures that the trainers have an adequate level of mastering mentoring and coaching techniques – either through focusing on these in the recruitment process or providing the necessary CPD for the trainers.

### **3.3 Development and quality assurance**

According to the interviews performed, it seems that quality assurance (QA) in general does not seem to be a big task for the regular trainer. However, the importance attached to the QA process and the trainer's role in it, seem to differ very much from country to country but even more so from enterprise to enterprise. A general trend, however, is that QA more and more affects all practitioners and that activities related to QA are increasing. In order for the trainer to take part in quality assurance, he needs a thorough knowledge of evaluation and assessment and the competences to apply it in practice. The QA principles and procedures must be respected and the trainer must possess the ability to implement the necessary changes in the training based on the feed-back and assessment both from the learners and from external bodies. This calls for an enhanced approach to the area of professional development. The fields of both development and quality assurance are transversal in the sense they are important in order to qualify or improve all other professional areas. Consequently, a coherent and broad-minded view on CPD for the individual trainer is a decisive factor in the general quality enhancement and professionalisation of the trainer profession which is a necessary prerequisite for efficient retention efforts as well as the work to raise the attractiveness of VET and consequently recruit the best employees. (Figure 9, page 36.)



*Figure 9. Development and quality assurance activities and required skills and knowledge of VET trainers)*

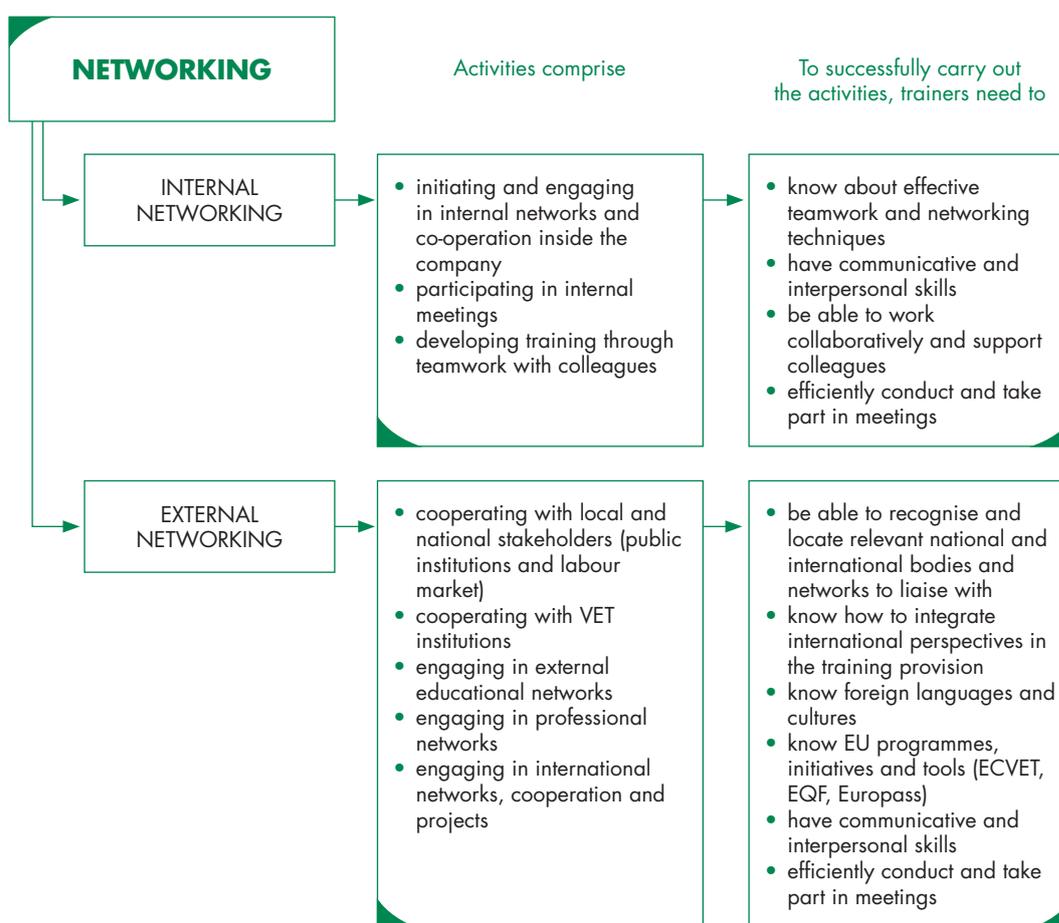
In practice, quality assurance is applied in many ways in the companies. The interviews indicated for example the extensive use of logbooks serving as a “support system” for trainers, learners, companies and vocational training centres. Such support systems are used to varying degrees all over Europe. According to the interviews, it seems that the use of logbooks or individual electronic training plans increases with company size – as is also the case with a general coherent approach to the quality assurance issue which can be said to transcend the training issue. A quality assurance culture impacts the general quality of training and thus influences the company’s public image as well as the reputation as an employer – a very important factor especially for local companies whose business is affected by this public image on the local level.

One of the main conclusions from the data collection and the analyses was that there was a general feeling among trainers of a need for special and continuing qualification in modern learning and training methods as well as quality assurance methods. In many cases the trainer is not provided with the continuing training he needs and wants and that can potentially influence the quality of the training. This goes for the other activity areas as well. As long as the diversity of the tasks and the whole training profession is enlarged, there is a constant need of upgrading the existing skills.

### 3.4 Networking

The interviews generally confirmed that establishing and maintaining networks are seen as important parts of the trainer's tasks and responsibilities. According to the size of the company this part of the profession can be equally important from an internal as well as an external perspective (Figure 10). The trainer should be able to establish, maintain and manage relations with partners and other external stakeholders (schools, enterprises etc). The trainer must keep a close relation to his professional area in order to keep himself updated on developments in his field and to be able to include these in the training curriculum.

Internally, the trainer must interact with colleagues and management in order to direct the training activities towards the needs of the enterprise and of the management as such. Interaction is further vital for improving the performance and general quality of the training. This is important and should ideally be a two-way process where all trainers in the company benefit from each other's experiences and input<sup>24</sup>.



**Figure 10.** Networking activities and required skills and knowledge of VET trainers.

24. Frimodt, Marsh & Volmari 2006.

The interviews highlighted the issue of so-called institutional or community competences (community of practice) where all the necessary competences can be found collectively within the internal working community. Through internal networking and internal CPD, the individual trainer can specialise and nurture the needs with the help of colleagues experienced in that exact area.

Networking today comprises an international perspective as well. However, the interviews confirmed that among trainers there is a very limited activity on the international level. Language was mentioned as one of the major barriers but it seems that the trainer in general do not feel adequately prepared to establish and maintain networks outside his home country. This is something to highlight in a future perspective. Globalisation and the general internationalisation of VET introduced through the Copenhagen process makes it imperative to integrate an international dimension in all parts of the educational system. If trainers generally do not feel equipped for this, training systems ought to ensure that there is a provision of continuing training focussed specifically on providing trainers with the competences necessary to feel more at ease with international perspectives and hence be more proficient language-wise.

## 4 LEADERS

Leaders are in this handbook understood as one or several persons in charge of VET institutions and organisations, such as vocational upper secondary institutions and further education colleges or training centres providing continuing vocational education and training. The leaders have the overall responsibility for their institutions or organisations.

The work and responsibilities of principals in VET institutions and directors in organisations providing continuing training are very similar. The main differences lie in the level of autonomy and responsibility. Thus directors of CVET organisations are generally more autonomous regarding finances. Their work also tends to be more market-oriented, with responsibility for marketing the training provision as well as assessing client needs and satisfaction. Moreover, CVET directors are commonly steered less by legislation and policies than the principals in initial vocational education and training.

The ideology of leadership in education and training has changed. It became clear in the interviews of principals and directors of training institutions that there is a clear shift from the ideology of the captain steering a ship towards one of shared expertise and leadership and learning organisations<sup>25</sup>. Traditionally the role of a manager was to manage things and whose central concepts and goals were connected to the goals and tasks of the organisation. Central to this were administration, regulations and actions. The new ideology of leadership means management that empowers people. It is not possible to anticipate all changes anymore, and thus, people have to be able to act independently in different situations for which they must be empowered. Principals and directors with a leadership orientation have a personal and active role in dealing with concerns and situations. They ought to be visionaries, encouragers and innovators.

The status of leaders in education and training is high in many European countries and consequently considered an attractive position. A contributing factor is that the salary is often higher than in a teaching position. In countries with local autonomy the leaders can have more responsibilities, which is likely to contribute to an increase in esteem. As with teachers, leaders do not really have any career progression after having been appointed to their post. An exception is for example Lithuania where principles can progress from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> manager category.

The qualification requirements for leaders of vocational institutions vary greatly. The scale goes from higher education degree, for example Master's degree, to no degree requirements. Further, management training seems to be required more often than teacher education and experience.

The leaders are very much affected by the overall developments in the societal context. Thus for example changes in policies, organisational structures, labour market or paradigms of learning mean that the leaders in education and training need to have “their ear constantly to the ground” and react to these developments (see also 1.2). The interviews

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25. See also Jameson 2005.

indicated that flexibility and autonomy in organisation and education is on the increase<sup>26</sup>. This means that also the possibilities of changing something in VET are increasing. Thus leaders and their organisations are becoming increasingly free to decide on investments and the contents of training. This gives more room for experimenting with new approaches and thus opportunities to contribute to pedagogical innovation.

To maintain a balance in a changing world and under the increasing pressure on the educational institutions places great demands on the leadership. This has been noted also in a recent OECD study on school leadership:

School leadership practice has been greatly influenced by changes in education governance and school contexts. On the one hand there are moves towards decentralisation and autonomy coupled with greater accountability; on the other, new approaches to teaching and learning processes and increasingly varied student populations are changing leadership roles and responsibilities.

As a result of these trends and factors, school leadership has changed dramatically across OECD countries. It is now increasingly defined by a demanding set of role including administrative and managerial tasks, financial and human resources, public relations, quality assurance and leadership for improved teaching and learning<sup>27</sup>.

How do leaders cope with the many changes? It is quite certain that no one person can have all the competences to fulfil what is required from a leader in education and training. Instead a new type of leadership is required. We talk about distributed and empowering leadership when the whole organisation takes responsibility for the different parts of the organisation. In learning organisations the core competence and expertise residing in the organisation must be lead and nurtured. The above-quoted OECD report concludes that the increased responsibilities of the leaders have created the need for distributed leadership within and in between schools. The authority to lead should not be limited to one person but distribute to persons with different roles. Therefore leadership should be delegated more to the middle management and set up leadership teams.

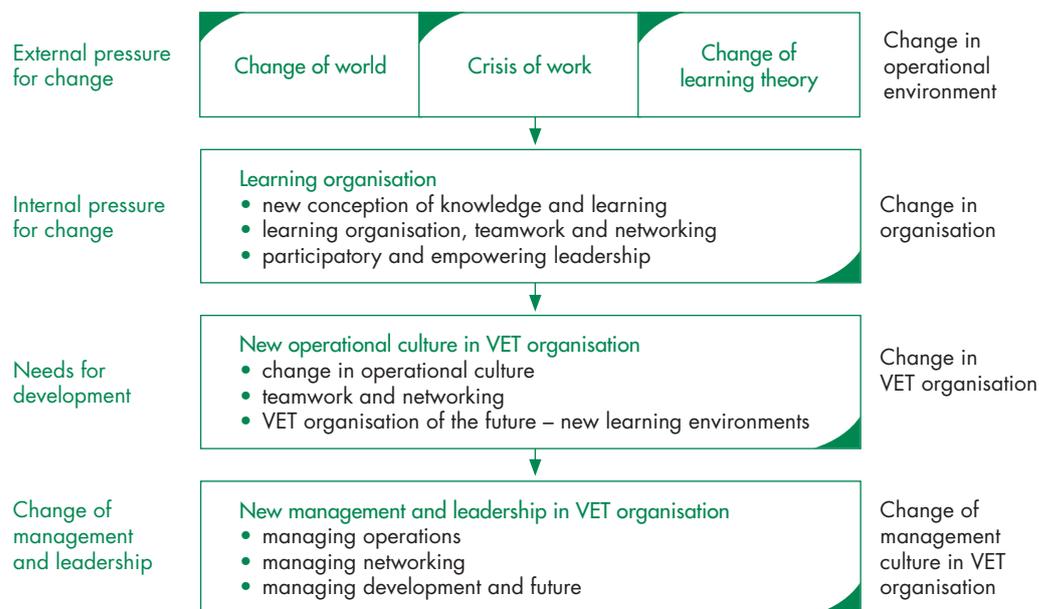
The importance of leaders in managing change and development has been recognised. Supporting innovation and development also means that leaders need to provide opportunities for the whole organisation to network internally and externally. Recognising and managing competence are success factors in networked and learning organisations. As there are many kinds of knowledge and skills in organisations, managing competence means matching the right responsibilities and activities with the right competences. Competence is combined and reconstructed in an organisation. Further, mobility within the teaching profession is increasing, meaning that the leaders also have to make sure that there is a development continuum, a “corporate memory” and transfer of tacit knowledge, so that expertise and innovation do not disappear with changes in the staff.

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26. See also Eurydice 2007 and Pont et al. 2008.

27. Pont et al. 2008: 32.

The changes in VET are today very rapid. With the increasing decentralisation of education and training systems, activities of leaders are more expansive than before. VET leaders are also more independent and carry more responsibility than earlier. The change in the administration of organisations providing VET can be perceived as a chain of effects with different contributing factors as shown below (Figure 11).



**Figure 11.** Dimensions of pressure on school management and leadership.

A VET organisation is influenced by global changes as well as trends in working life and educational policy. These together with the renewed concepts of knowledge and learning have led to the concept commonly known as the “learning organisation”. Changes in VET institution involve developments both in social practices and the learning environment. Together these changes pose demands on the whole school management, not only to the principal or director but also to the heads of units and teams and the staff as a whole.

One of the main challenges for leaders of VET organisations is that the expansion of duties has made it difficult for the leaders to devote as much time to developing their organisations and to being pedagogical leaders. The interviews confirmed the fact that leaders are very much the administrative heads of their institutions. Their administrative burden has grown with the increasing reporting required by the different authorities and particularly with the pressure for forward planning, such as drawing up strategies and visions for the future. The directors and managers of training organisations providing continuing training further need to devote much of their time to marketing their training provision and eventual consultancy services to prospective clients. Both principals and training centre directors are responsible for the reputation and growth of their organisations, although this responsibility is more pronounced in the case of the latter.

The principals' and training directors' role of as the pedagogical leaders, on the other hand, has diminished both due to the lack of time and due to teachers having become more autonomous. Leading an autonomous staff consisting of experts in their fields could be considered one of the toughest leadership cases: the staff need to be supported and encouraged at the same time leaving room for their individual development and visions. Consequently the challenge is to enable the leaders to devote more of their efforts and time to the tasks that could be considered the most important, namely pedagogical leadership and development and innovation.

#### **4.1 Administration**

Although principals and directors of VET institutions are evolving from operative managers to leaders with total responsibility for the results and strategies of their institutions in most countries, administrative duties and bureaucracy still take up most of their time.

Principals and directors are also responsible for drawing up various reports and plans. They supervise budgeting and have in most countries overall responsibility for the finances. Principals and directors are also responsible for buildings and premises, for human resource management (HRM) policy and leading the organisation and its staff.

However, managing and leading an institution is also about leading the organisation into the future. This requires first and foremost visionary skills and ability to follow the changes in education and training and the operating environment. This entails interest in acquiring new information and reflecting on the future (Figure 12, page 44).

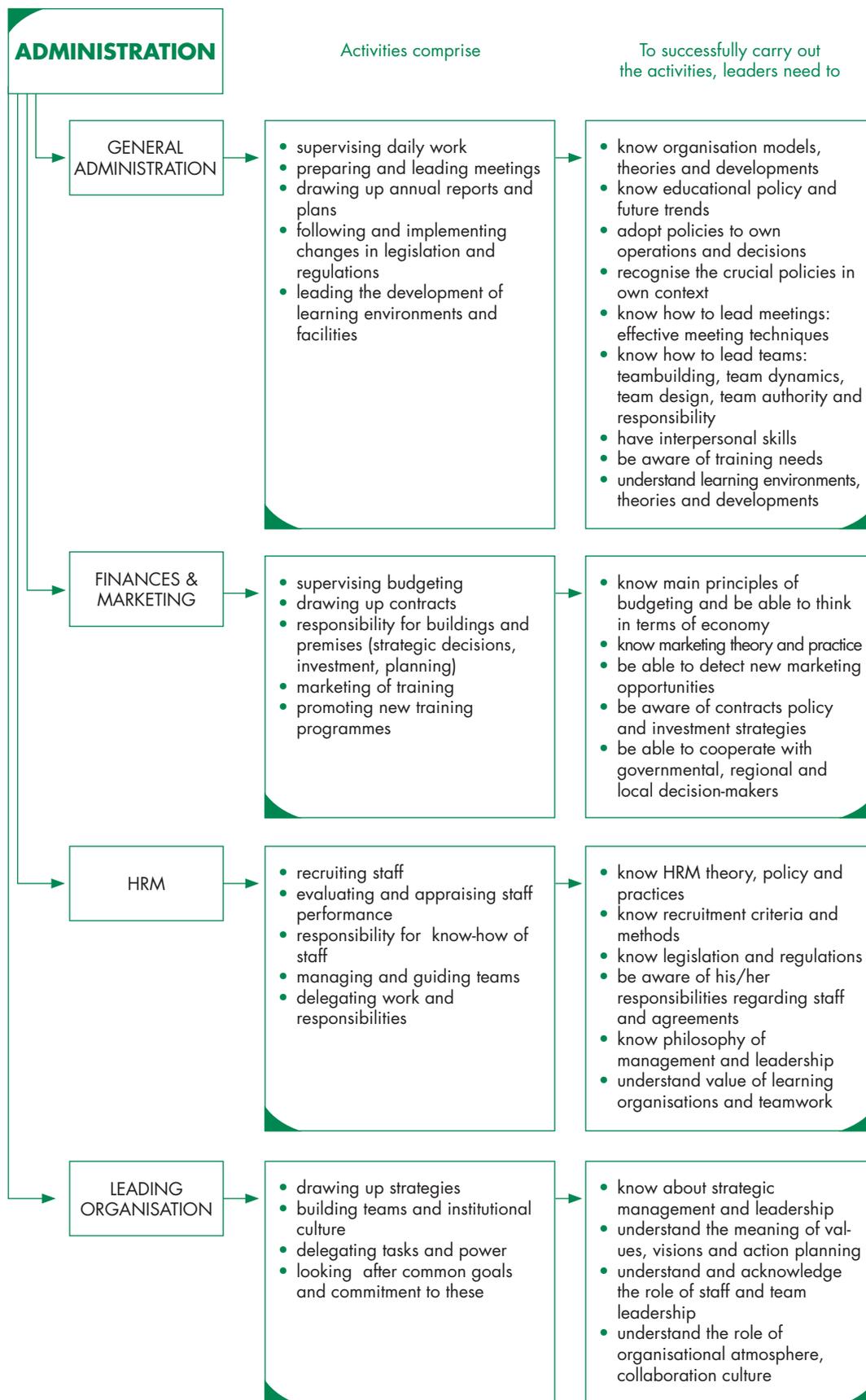


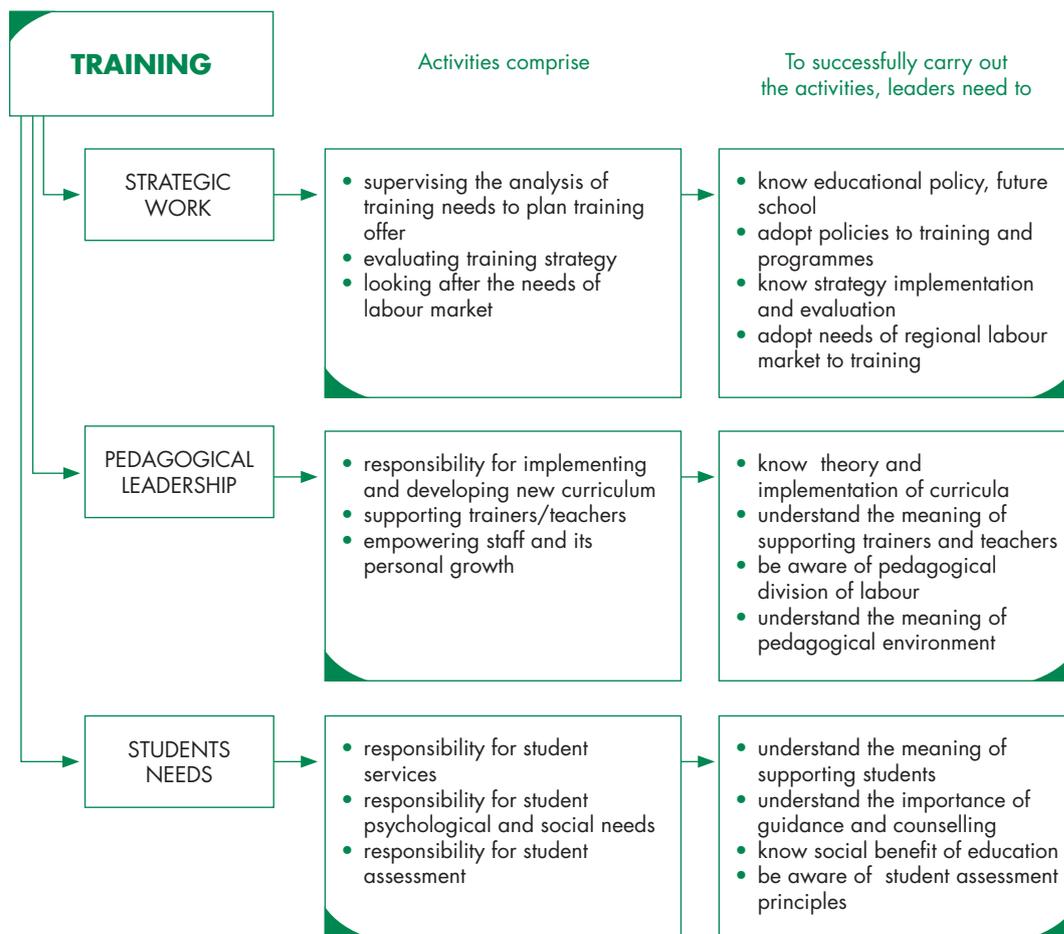
Figure 12. Networking activities and required skills and knowledge of VET leaders.

The interviewed principals and directors reported being overburdened by administrative and bureaucratic tasks. The growth in administration is a result of the big changes in education systems and structures, such as the pressures coming from the EU and its policies and priorities which reach the local level through the national education administration. Also the increasing business-like ideologies adopted in education and training mean more administration, such as drawing up of different strategies and visions for the future.

In many countries part of the administrative responsibilities are delegated to vice principals or heads of units, such as planning of teachers work load and timetables. In the case of financial duties, the operative work is in most cases carried out by a financial expert, leaving the leader with the overall responsibility and control as well as budget planning. Human resource management, including recruitment, is commonly totally in the hands of leaders.

## **4.2 Training**

Although principals and directors are not necessarily directly involved in training activities, they must be aware of trends in education and learning theories. They also need to take the labour market needs into account when planning the training. They are responsible for the implementation and development of a new curriculum. Principals and directors are also responsible for student advisory services and students' social needs (Figure 13, page 46).



*Figure 13. Training activities and required skills and knowledge of VET leaders.*

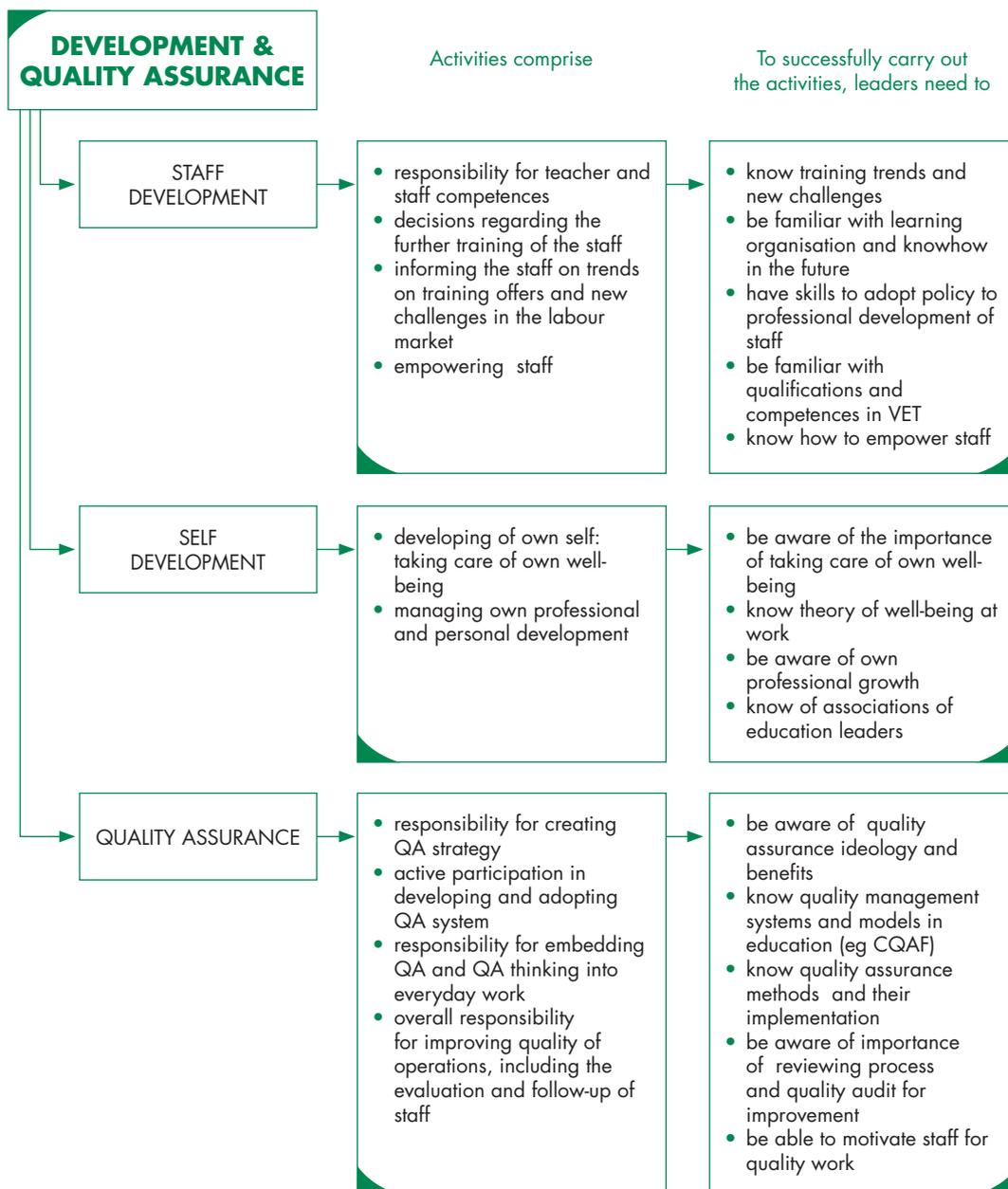
The competences required for pedagogy and pedagogical leadership are similar to those expected from a teacher. However, the leaders need wider competences, for example knowledge of the trends and priorities in the national and international context, as well as leadership skills.

Pedagogical vision and ability to detect weak signals in the surrounding context are prerequisites for developing an innovative school that attracts students. Judging from the interviews, however, it seems that this work has unfortunately been buried under other management duties.

### 4.3 Development and quality assurance

Managing development requires a development-positive way of working and the adoption of the ideology of learning organisation. This requires skills to support both the development of one's own work and the work of the whole working community. VET leaders

must themselves have a readiness for continuous learning. In addition they should encourage staff and colleagues to become autonomous, innovative and to share information and knowledge. Leaders must recognise the problems arising and to be able to solve these creatively. Pedagogical leadership entails being familiar with the education process and a readiness to develop it further. The leaders must be able to plan, to anticipate the future and evaluate and adopt a quality approach. Developing one's own work and working community requires visions of developments in society, reflection on one's own values and establishing and maintaining an ethical basis for the work – the specific ideology of the VET institution or training centre.



*Figure 14. Development and QA activities and required skills and knowledge of VET leaders.*

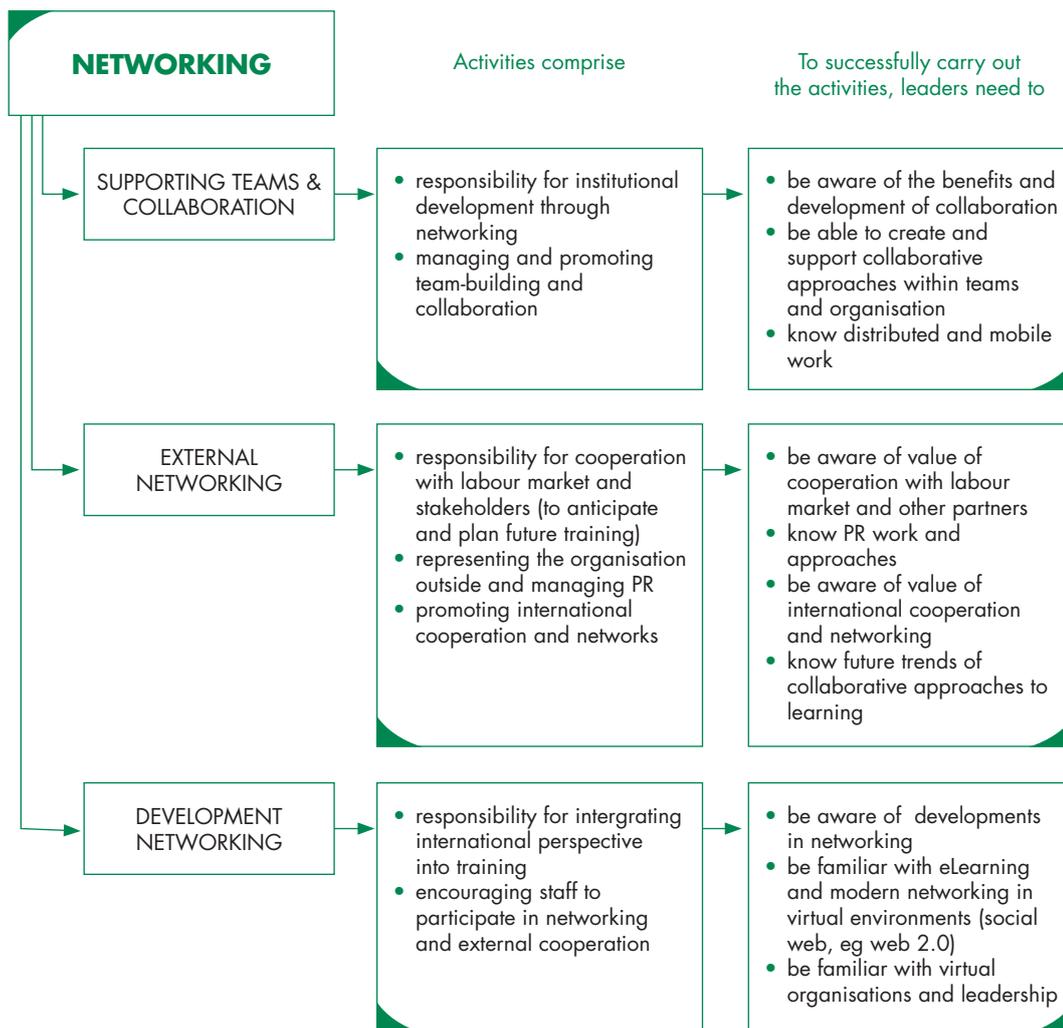
As can be seen in Figure 14, the competences required for developing the organisation demand a wide and deep understanding and sensitivity of both education and training and the surrounding world. Further, the responsibilities demand future-oriented skills and knowledge, such as strategic thinking, anticipation of future as well as leadership skills. The leaders also need an understanding of their staff, their uniqueness, strengths and how to support new competences and skills for example through recruitment and organisational structuring.

The interviews revealed that the integration and embedding of a true QA culture into the institutions is a challenge across Europe. The alarming finding was that many leaders did not possess the required knowledge and understanding of QA ideology and methods. If the leaders lack the understanding and knowledge about QA issues, integrating and embedding QA thinking into the operations of the whole organisation seems an impossible task.

#### **4.4 Networking**

Managing networks is an important competence area which encompasses several dimensions. These dimensions are students, colleagues, partners and different types of clients. The cooperation networks in education are the world of work, universities, other higher education institutions and other educational institutions, both in general education and vocational education and training, including partner institutions abroad. Also the environments for networking are various. The environments can for example be face-to-face, international, or virtual collaboration environments.

The starting point for managing the different stakeholders and clients is always that you know them. The stakeholders and clients are primarily the students, but also the world of work, regional decision-makers and national and local education authorities. Principals and directors also manage public relations policy. (Figure 15, page 49.)



**Figure 15.** *Administrative activities and required skills and knowledge of VET leaders.*

In the interviews the most important partners nominated by all leaders were the world of work and other stakeholders such as chambers of commerce, professional associations, national institutions/administration. Networking among VET institutions was not very common, more commonly there is competition between the schools.

Although the interviewed leaders acknowledged the importance of supporting internationalisation, international activities were not as common as expected. Further, internationalisation was mostly understood narrowly as staff and student mobility and project work. There was little evidence of an international dimension being embedded into the curriculum or study programmes, thus providing the students with the skills to operate in an increasingly international context.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS: contribution of competence frameworks to development of VET

The interviews carried out for the Cedefop study *Defining VET professions* and the subsequent descriptions of the activities and competences required of VET professionals reveal that the distinction between the professions are becoming more and more blurred. Some of the concerns and challenges are such that affect all three professions. Particular challenges are the increase in administrative tasks and responsibilities, the individualisation of learning, supporting learner autonomy, the significance of networking and expansion of responsibilities related to quality assurance. A big challenge is the integration and embedding of a quality assurance culture into the workplaces and institutions. The administrative burden in turn takes a lot of time away from development and innovation. Finally, the significance of networking outside the organisations has become clear.

A particular concern is the low activity in international cooperation. More attention needs to be devoted to the efforts to internationalise VET institutions and other training organisations. All staff, leaders included, need an understanding about the international dimension and the skills to operate in an international surrounding.

The detected concerns deserve more attention by local decision-makers and policy-makers. In European education policies, teachers, trainers and leaders are generally seen as actors who implement reforms or policies designed at higher administrative levels. Teachers, trainers and leaders should, however, be increasingly seen as active developers and initiators of change and innovation. This handbook and its competence frameworks hope to contribute to a wider understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the VET professions in the development of vocational education and training. They also point to areas where the VET professionals need to be supported, either through pre-service and in-service training or resourcing.

The competence frameworks presented in this handbook are generic descriptions of the skills, knowledge and wider competences that teachers, trainers and leaders should possess to enable vocational education and training at a high level. It should be remembered that a competence framework is not necessarily a description of the skills and knowledge required by one individual. Instead, the activities may be performed by a team of people. Further, as the working contexts and realities of VET professionals vary and change, the frameworks should be modified accordingly.

Consequently, consideration is needed when using the competence frameworks described in this handbook. A lot can be gained from common competence frameworks that are relevant and focus on critical contents. A framework that is up-to-date and innovative will most likely contribute to for example teacher and trainer education in a positive way and be welcomed as a useful tool both by policy makers, teacher and trainer educators as well as local authorities. Frameworks should enable consideration of the professionals' individual capabilities, prior learning and experience as well as learning styles.

Further, it should be borne in mind that we should more and more talk about distributed expertise following the ideology of institutional competence. The ideology means

that VET professionals can specialise and together improve the competence profile of the whole organisation, thus developing a wide selection of learning opportunities for the students. Finally, competence frameworks are valuable tools for developing continuing and in-service training: living in a rapidly changing world skills acquired in initial training risk becoming obsolete and are thus in need for updating.

Competence frameworks can contribute to promoting a European area of education and training. This area should be known for high-quality education and training available to all its citizens, regardless of where they live.

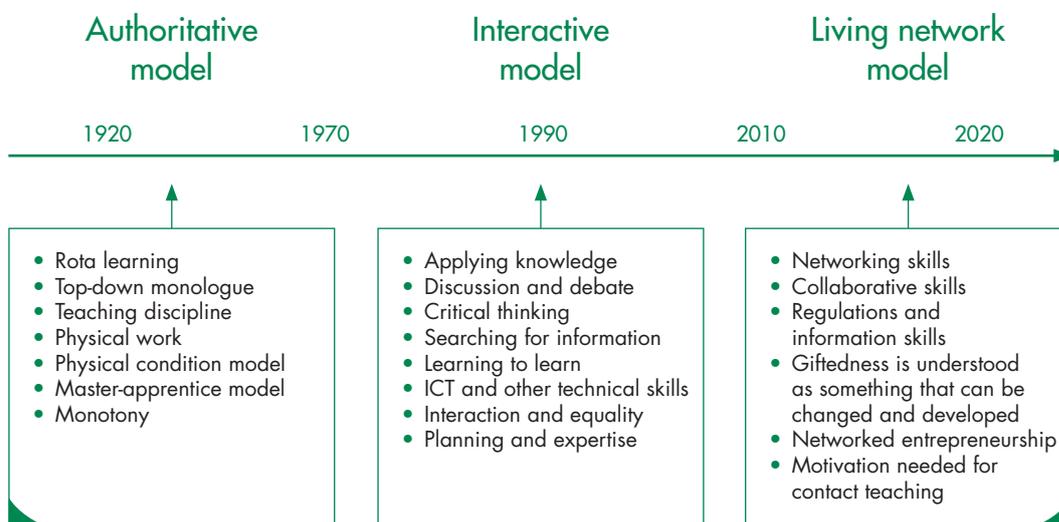
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## Appendix Developments in the paradigms of learning and professionalism

*Paradigms of education and learning (Kuosa 2008).*



## Paradigms of professionalism and expertise (Helakorpi)

Professionalism and expertise yesterday	Professionalism and expertise today & tomorrow
Profession-related expertise	Wide-ranging professionalism that crosses professional boundaries
Privilege of professionals to certain positions, competition between professions	Various professionals solving common problems
Autonomy of professionals in their work	Teamwork and networking of professionals
Professionals as authorities	Professionals interpret and analyse utilising their education and experience
Professionalism conforms to the ideal of objective science: the universal truth	Professionalism includes relativist information and conscious reflection on values
Hierarchy	Equal relationship between professionals and non-professionals
Stability	Dynamic professionalism, continuous renewal and development of expertise
Problem solving based on formulas and models	Situational analysis and creative problem solving, explorative and innovative approach
Client-orientation	Clients as partners, cooperation, client as a broader concept (including communities)



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ISBN 978-952-13-4117-5



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