



Researching VET - Looking back to look ahead

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CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

Cedefop's EU research responsibility

The center

- analyses **trends** in vocational education and training and provide **comparative analyses** thereof across countries
- contributes, including through **evidence-based** information and analyses, to the **implementation of reforms and policies at national level**
- has a responsibility for carrying out **own research**; for **contracting** others to do research and to support **networking within the research community**



Cedefop research dilemma - 2014-15

- ☐ We lacked an overview over **main trends and developments** in European VET (is VET expanding or being marginalised?)
- ☐ We could see the **trees** but **not the wood** – we had detailed insights on specific issues but had failed to connect the dots...
- ☐ We focussed on labour market skills demand but **underestimated the VET supply side**
- ☐ We focussed on **structures** and **institutions** and overlooked the **content**





VET comparative research in Europe

VET comparative research in Europe today

- ✓ A tendency to focus on **particular dimensions** – for example governance structures and institutional aspects
- ✓ a too **weak focus on content** and **curricula**
- ✓ a tendency to compare countries on the basis of **predefined categories** (dual system-school based systems)
- ✓ the extensive research on the future of work (and skills intelligence) is **not mirrored by comparative research on VET**
- ✓ Fragmented research community **in need of networking and shared analytical references?**



PROMOTING LEARNING
FOR WORK

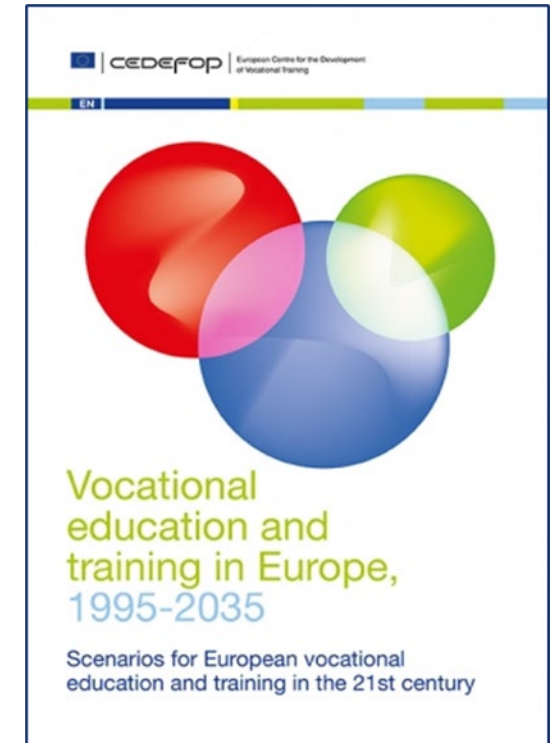
Think European, act local!



The potential role of Cedefop's Future of VET
strand of work

The potential role of Cedefop's Future of VET projects

- ✓ Look ahead by looking back – history + scenarios
- ✓ Initiate a **permanent strand of work** focussing on the future of VET – the third project to start **2023/24**
- ✓ Open up to a **more inclusive, less normative and more complete analytical framework**
- ✓ Open up to **networking of researchers**



A background image showing a young man with blonde hair wearing a dark blue beanie with a red pom-pom, focused on operating a DJ mixer. He is wearing a grey sweater. To his left, another person in a plaid shirt is partially visible. To his right, a man with a long beard and dark hair is looking towards the mixer. The scene is dimly lit with colorful bokeh lights in the background.

Towards an analytical framework for comparative VET research

Focussing on content, teaching and learning

VET is rooted in a **distinct mode of knowledge production and use** and is associated with a particular way of teaching and learning

- ✓ Emphasize **practical knowledge** (know how – skills)
- ✓ Often **implicit** and **situational** knowledge
- ✓ Vocational knowledge is acquired through **participation and socialization**
- ✓ Do not exclude **combinations with other forms of knowledge** (theoretical, academic)
- ✓ Learning takes place through practical experience
- ✓ Implies **active** and **problem-oriented** learning



**Epistemological
and pedagogical
perspective**

Focussing on the delivery of VET – the institutions and systems

VET is delivered in **institutions and systems** which have **evolved over time** reflecting political choice but also embedded in traditions

- ✓ **Institutional** characteristics and design – school or work-place
- ✓ **Governance** - centralized or decentralized
- ✓ **Funding** – public and/or private
- ✓ **Links to overall education and training system** – distinct or pluralistic
- ✓ **Permeability of systems** – dead ends or open pathways
- ✓ Interaction between **initial and continuing training** – of youngsters or **lifelong learning at all ages**



Education
system
perspective

Focussing on the the role of VET in society

VET operates in and serves a **wider context of work and society**

- ✓ The relationship to **occupations**
- ✓ How does VET **supply** meet labour market **demand**?
- ✓ The role of **social partners**
- ✓ The **status** of VET and the **currency** of VET qualifications
- ✓ The impact of **demographics and technology**
- ✓ The impact of **society shocks** – the fall of the Berlin wall, the 2008 Economic Crisis, Refugees, Covid.....



Socioeconomic
and
labour market
perspective

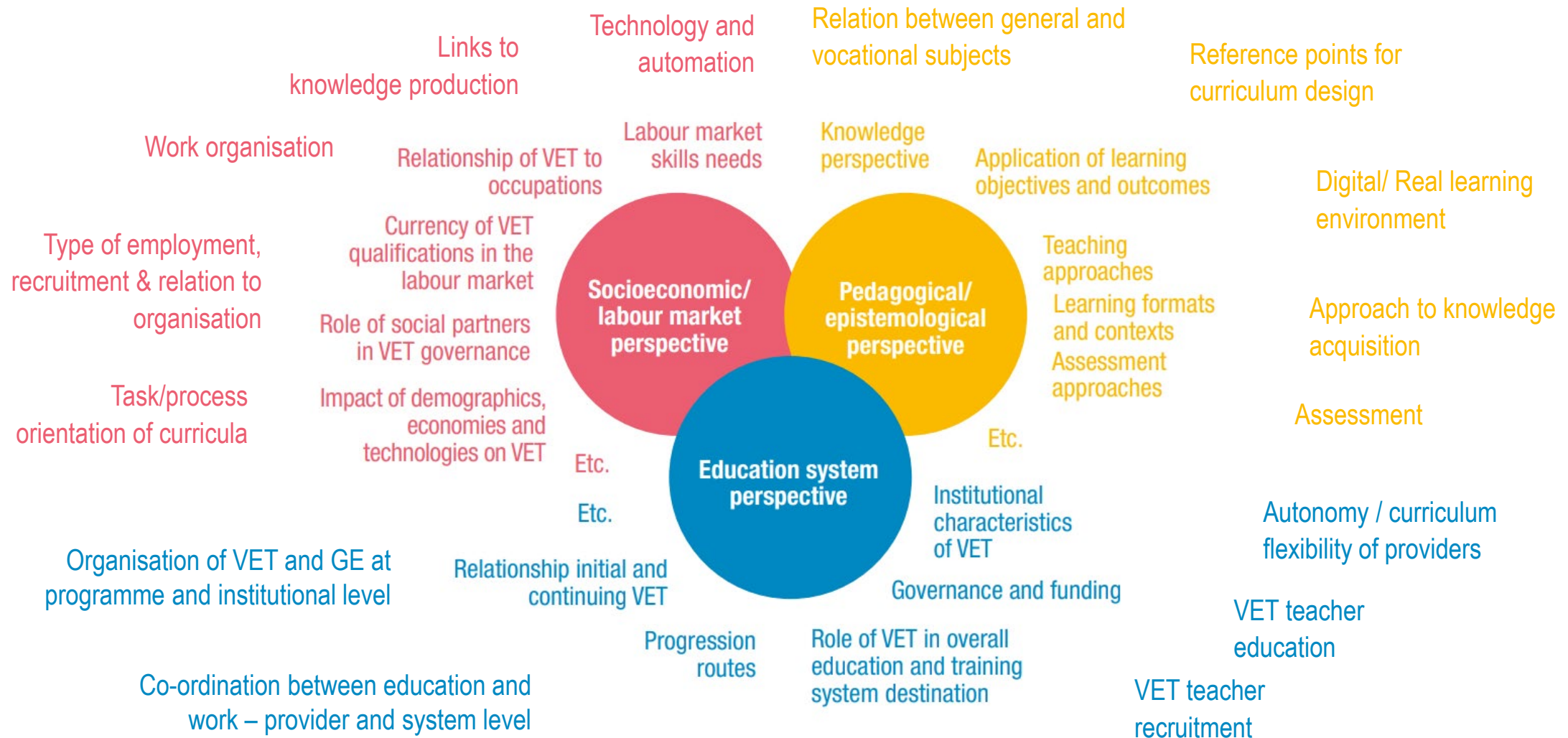
	Dimensions	Variants / Features			
Socio-economic perspective	1. Links to knowledge production	Mode 1 –disciplinary; aiming for universal knowledge		Mode 2 – applied, transdisciplinary	
	2. Technology and automation	Developmental – (Co-)Design of technology		Instrumental – use and application	
	3. Work organization	Discretionary Learning	Lean Production	Taylorist	Traditional or Simple
	4. Type of employment, recruitment & relation to organization	Sustainable, lifelong employment, commitment, employee commitment	Crowd working, marginal, short-term employment;		Entrepreneurship; start-ups
	5. Sources of funding	Mainly by companies	Mainly by the state – education budget		Mainly by the state – labour market / social security budget
	6. Learner status/ identity	Student	Apprentice or novice worker		Worker
	7. Occupational hierarchy	Semi-skilled workers	Skilled workers	Technicians/ professionals / para-professionals	Managers, entrepreneurs
	8. Governance	Low co-ordination – industry led		High co-ordination – led by organised business or business/trade unions	High co-ordination – state led
	9. Purpose	Entry into working life / entry level		Broad preparation for changing requirements across working life	Becoming a member of an occupation or (para-) profession
	10. Context of justification	Securing supply of skilled labour	Innovation and economic growth	Individual progression, work readiness and smooth education work transition	Equity and inclusion

Source: Authors

How to ZOOM in and out

Socioeconomic and labour market perspective

The three-perspective analytical model - overlapping lenses



An analytical framework for comparative VET-research (I)

Benefits:

- ✓ A **holistic approach** integrating components
- ✓ Can be connected to **different national and cultural** ideas of VET
- ✓ Allows to connect different levels of analysis; **zoom in and out**



Photo by Diane Helentjaris

An analytical framework for comparative VET-research (II)

Benefits:

- ✓ Allows for analysing **whole systems** or **parts** of them
- ✓ It is **flexible** and makes it possible to **connect to emerging trends and issues**
- ✓ Support **policy debates** and **development of scenarios**



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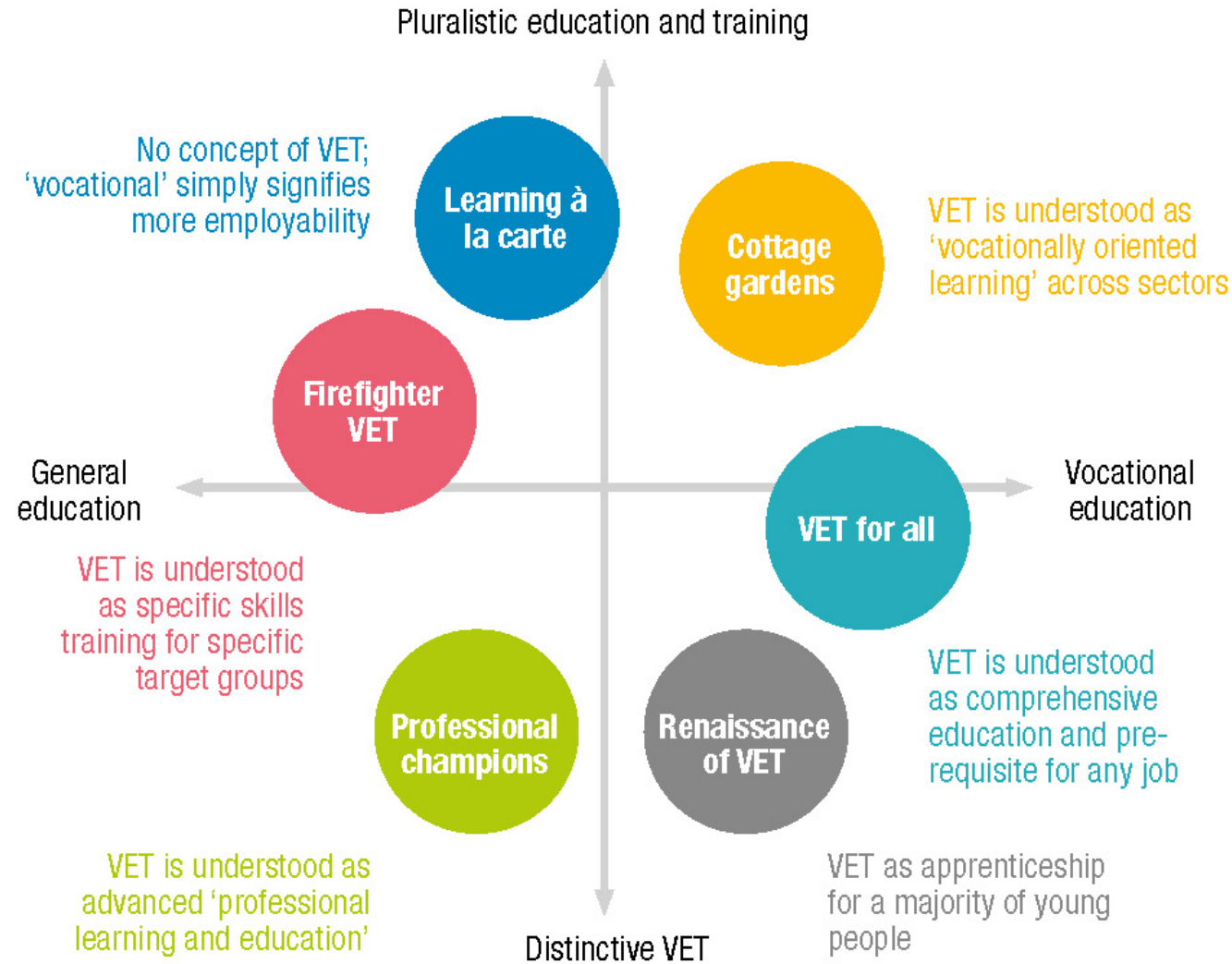
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Looking to the future – evidence based scenarios

- ❑ The analytical framework must provide **evidence and perspectives** to policy makers and practitioners
 - ❑ It must support **application**
 - ❑ Take forward the **tested scenario methodology**

Six Scenarios for the Future of VET in 2035



Source: Cedefop 2020

Triggering national debates....raising alternative questions through scenarios

- What do we understand by VET?
- How is VET positioned in ET and in society?
 - Which levels?
 - Relationship to higher educations?
 - Interaction with CVET?
- How is VET anchored to
 - Tasks and functions
 - Occupations
 - Competence areas?
- Which target groups are we addressing?
- What governance is needed and referred?
- Which are the risks following different paths?
- Etc.

HAVE BEEN ASKING
THIS CRUCIAL
QUESTION





**So, policy makers and
practitioners can make
informed choices for VET's
Future in Europe!**

The Future of VET Project Team



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Thank you

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