Short input to the workshop: on possibility of comparative curriculum analysis

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Some questions arising

- Philipp‘s question: What is missing from the view of other vocational knowledge/curriculum approaches?

- Philipp‘s question: Are there additional indicators that are of importance when looking at the relation of vocational curriculum and vocational knowledge?

- How can the content/knowledge in VET curricula be best compared? Is an international classification of vocational knowledge possible, and what would be its benefit?

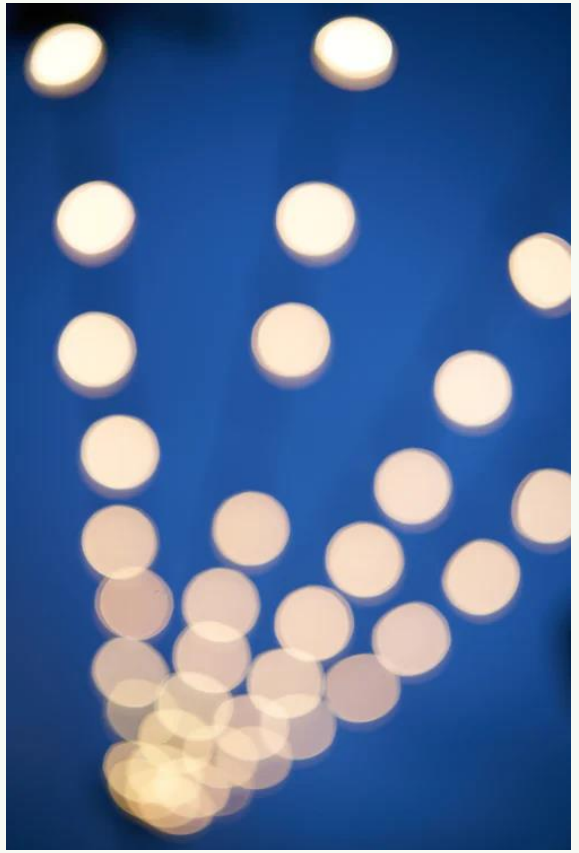
Some preliminary remarks

- Debates about vocational knowledge are distinct from (comparative) analysis of planned or enacted vocational curricula
- These are also distinct from studies of the received curricula / what learners actually learn.
- Having said that, these activities can usefully inform and feed into each other!
- Ideal types are probably helpful. While these may not correspond easily to findings on the ground, they do provide templates which we can evaluate against
- alternative perspectives from “beyond our experience”

Dialogue with others with different concerns and experiences is often useful!

Further comments on curriculum analysis

- To what extent are planned curricula embedded in normative assumptions about the purpose of education (including the vocational)?
- Agency – the role of teachers and their expertise differs considerably in different systems
- Curriculum authorities – the role of institutions and their capacity/expertise
- Curriculum ideas and their circulation and **recontextualization (selection, appropriation, transformation)** globally (e.g. Schriewer and Bruno-Joffre on Dewey; Allais on qualifications frameworks)
- **Ideas** about knowledge and knowing are but one factor in this complex dynamic (as are ideas about learning).
- And “knowledge” itself may be considered something to avoid (rise of functional analysis and nvqs in UK)



With vocational curriculum analysis it may be useful to start with the idea of occupational practice….

- How does occupational **practice** X or Y (i.e. being an electrician or customer service advisor) differ across countries?
- But need to use an understanding of practice that is more than "just what people do". What are the institutions, norms, relations, societal responsibilities and "goods" that make the practice what it is (Hager 2011)? Link to three perspectives model?
- In what ways can novices learn to participate in that practice? Mix of educational / workplace experiences.
- How are curricula constructed differently to offer opportunities to participate?
- This can inform the process of gathering data about the planned and enacted curriculum
- A analytical lens drawing on a conception of expertise can then be used later to unpick some distinctions and develop a comparative analysis of how that expertise is arrived at.

Reflections on Wolfgang Wittig's table (2022)

Table 4. Categories of vocational knowledge

Concept/dimension	Variants	Examples
Theoretical knowledge (knowing that)	Specialised and structured according to 'pure' disciplines	Physics, chemistry
	Specialised and structured according to 'applied' disciplines	Engineering, architecture
	Non-specialised	'Everyday' knowledge, taxi driver knowledge
Practical knowledge (knowing how)	Specialised and structured by context-independent purposes	Scientific literacy
	Specialised and structured by contextual purposes	Occupation-specific or firm-specific skills
	Non-specialised	General and basic key competences, e.g. literacy or numeracy, or job-related key competences, e.g. leadership

While I think the table above (categories of vocational knowledge) is helpful in bringing together some of the different sources of knowledge that could potentially be represented in the intended or enacted curriculum (or drawn upon in the course of vocational practice) I think it is problematic to start with a separation between know-that and know-how, and to not consider these in relation to acquaintance knowledge and 'know why'

Further reflections: KT / KH / AK / KW

- To become a competent physicist or historian you need to know how to make inferences between related propositions to be able to grasp the significance of any given proposition (Winch 2010; Derry 2014). But you can also only fully grasp the nature of scientific or historical inquiry by experiencing it, by engaging in labwork, fieldwork, evaluating documents (thus specialised forms of acquaintance knowledge are vital). This is all enhanced considerably by knowing why you are engaged in such activities – to grasp its purpose.
- The arguments above for history and physics are also applicable for a wide range of occupational areas, particularly those which have a high degree of explicit/systematised knowledge and patterns of individual formation (for example licensed occupations in health, engineering, construction).
- There are many other occupations where explicit or systematised knowledge is less prevalent, and other forms of know-how are more important for executing tasks.
- Important point is that the development of expertise is inextricable from notions of (specialised) practice

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