

Thesis Paper: Value Management in Vocational Education and Training

The concept of ethics or value orientation is more relevant than ever in vocational education and training (VET). Especially when taking into consideration the educational environment in which threats are put on humanity. Especially in education, social and value issues in dealing with needs, problems and the valuable time of the clients / participants, this is an undesirable and indeed partly even dangerous development. A lived value orientation can counteract this trend.

While the basic and universal values like honesty, tolerance, justice, mindfulness, and freedom are difficult to operationalize, a core value orientation is defined in vocational education. Especially through professionalism and quality by means of the following aspects:

An ethic of vocational education and training places demands on the **conditions** (formation locations, staff resources, material resources), the **processes involved** (educational counseling, educational background, follow-up) and at the **actors involved** (managers, employees, consultants, lecturers and participants). In addition with an eye on the actors involved it is of high importance to keep the dimension of attitude or behavior in focus.

A. Cross-process requirements for personnel management / leadership

- Values must be lived by the executives. Only this can guarantee the penetration of all levels, from the counselling and training personnel to the counsel seeker and participant. Nevertheless, executives can also expect value-oriented acting of their employees towards the employer (reactive process). Executives actively reflect their own values and the consequences for the personnel.
- Management needs to ensure that adequate counseling and training staff are deployed. They are being paid an appropriate and performance-based (*possibly based on an existing collective bargaining agreement*) salary. Staff attends regularly training and continuing education measures in order to maintain quality.
- Management creates the conditions necessary for a professional and high-quality guidance and/or training (see below).
- Management develops needs- and action-oriented curricula.
- *Management staff respects the legal and tariff regulations. In the political sphere, it is committed to ensuring that the conditions for the awards and general funding of training measures (Labor Office) are (re-) designed.*
- *A gender mainstreaming is natural for the education. There is also the aspiration of a diversity management in the sense of non-discrimination.*
- *Educational and training facilities must be economically profitable in order to survive in the market. This is the core task of every management. A structurally sustainable value management does not have to be in contradiction. Rather, it may have positive qualitative effects with respect to marketing the organization in the outer environment and form a unique feature in internal affairs as a means of acquiring and maintaining qualified staff.*

B. For a professional educational consulting the following conditions need to be in place:

1. Counseling situation

For guidance situations, an open, bright reception area for the initial information and separate rooms for the interview will have to be provided. This setting will be reducing overall stress for those involved, and there should be sufficient time scheduled for the interview and disorders, e.g. by phone are to be avoided.

2. Information Management:

The guidance counselors need to have systematic access to current information, here up-to-date media should be available and used effectively. All secure data should be kept confidentially.

3. Access to guidance

Access barriers must be minimized, i.e. seeking guidance and advice should be possible in a personalized manner. Rooms for consulting people with disabilities must also be easy to reach.

4. Qualification of the consulting staff

Counseling staff must inhibit adequate professional, methodical and social competencies for the advisory activities. This is by means of additional training measures. In addition, the advisory staff has a value-oriented self-understanding, awareness and ability to show empathy in those seeking advice (attitude!).

5. Requirements for those seeking advice

There are certain expectations towards those seeking advice with regard to the potential success of the guidance process and the decisions with influence on the course of their lives. Seeking advice is voluntary, but certain willingness to compromise on possible suggestions and to follow them are a prerequisite. In addition, people seeking advice should have at least a rudimentary knowledge of German or English.

6. Requirements for the counseling process

The consultation process is characterized by an individual skills and needs assessment on the basis of tailored development and training opportunities. People who seek guidance and advice should potentially receive funding and/or financial assistance. *The educational and training services should be independent from the training organizations.*

C. For the implementation of the courses the following conditions must be met:

1. Equipment of the educational sites

The workshops should be technically up to date with regard to their equipment. Seminar rooms should have a modern media equipment that enables an action-oriented lessons. The cafeteria, lounge, restrooms, etc. should be bright, clean and inviting.

2. General dealing with the participants

The participants should in advance receive thorough information about the services they can expect, but also the obligations and limitations that come with it. An early information prevents disappointment and wrong expectations. The needs and desires of the participants should be regarded, where feasible.

A system of a regulated conflict management should be developed. These regulations are communicated with the participants.

Since many courses form a significant intervention in the social life of the participants, a social-pedagogical support should be available. Where appropriate, in individual cases, a psychological support should be made available.

3. Qualification of teaching staff

The teaching staff must be adequate for the activities of professional, didactical and social competence. Staff attends continuing education measures to improve their competences. The ability to action-oriented teaching using modern media is an essential quality feature. The teaching staff must show mindfulness and have a value-oriented self-understanding.

4. Requirements for participants

Participants should be willing to attend further education measures and actively participate in educational activities. They refrain from disruptive behavior that could affect the teaching staff and other participants. Participants have sufficient language skills to follow the training. They are willing to compromise regarding the end of the training measure.

5. Demands on the educational process

The educational process is characterised by participant centricity. That means the educational success of the participant is key and must be supported with all available means. Activity-orientation is an essential feature. The process must be adapted flexibly to the individual requirements.

6. Follow-up of program

After each training course a survey focusing on the satisfaction of the participants will be held. This also forms the basis for creating and verifying the achievement of objectives. The insights obtained, both positive and negative will be used for the continuous modification of existing courses and developing new courses ones.

D. In-Company-Training

Giving a value orientation must already part of the training of the trainers (principles of a value education, value communication).

The conflict management skills on the part of the trainees and apprentices must be systematically increased.

The neutral consultation when problems occur in the apprenticeship must be available for all participants at any time.

Complying to the training regulations (also regarding training content) must be guaranteed.

The legal framework (principles of labour law, rights and obligations) must not only be observed but be part of the apprenticeship.

*Note: * The passages in italics remained in the consultation process worthy of discussion.*