

ECER 2022 YEREVAN

AUGUST 22-26, 2022

EDUCATION IN A
CHANGING WORLD:

THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL REALITIES ON
THE PROSPECTS AND EXPERIENCES OF
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH



ECER 2022 - European Conference
on Educational Research
Annual Conference of EERA
At Yerevan State University

Why Civic engagement and Critical Thinking are important Topics in VET teacher education

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2. September 2022

Contribution to the Session:
EERA Network: 02. Vocational Education and Training (VETNET)
“Current Challenges of Vocational Teachers in Six European Countries”

VET and emancipation - historical

- The duty to obey – tradition of medieval times and industrial line production (-1960th)
- Humanization of the workplace and lean production (1970-2000)
- Formative capacity as part of VET (1990- ...)
- Further Encouragement towards free self-determination



VET and emancipation - actual

- Team-oriented, creative and dedicated workers are needed
- Participation in planning processes, for example with Metaplan-techniques, is more common
- Hands, brains and hearts are wanted in the worklife to solve problems



Critical thinking - a goal in European education policy

- ‘reasoning and analysis skills’,
‘questioning’,
‘multi-perspectivity’ and
‘understanding the present world’
should be part of education (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017, 55)
- Critical thinking enables the problematisation of current conditions in society, a critical voice in society, and hence participation in discussions in arenas (e.g. political, trade union, and work settings)
- But: „As researchers have pointed out, there is an unequal distribution of knowledge in educational institutions: not all offer young people opportunities to develop qualitative, extensive and empowering civic knowledge” (Rönnlund u.a. 2019).

Vocational Education – still an education for the class of servants?

- “Why should they have knowledge as apprentices about the economic background and the supply chains? They should only watch and document the effectiveness of the processes” (Representative of the entrepreneurs in a negotiation for the renewal of training regulations for office clerks in Germany 2013, vgl. Elsner & Kaiser 2013)
- In this mentality it is most important, that VET teachers “help” young people to get included in the work life – or that they support the adaptation into the employment system.
- This shapes the mentality of VET teachers:
 - as 'master craftsman' in his/her occupational field;
 - as 'member of occupational network' and 'gate-keeper to the occupation';
 - as 'promoter of entrepreneurship and of scientific development of the occupation' (Heikkinen 1997, S. 415).

What is taught in VET?

That is dominant for years

Vocational education

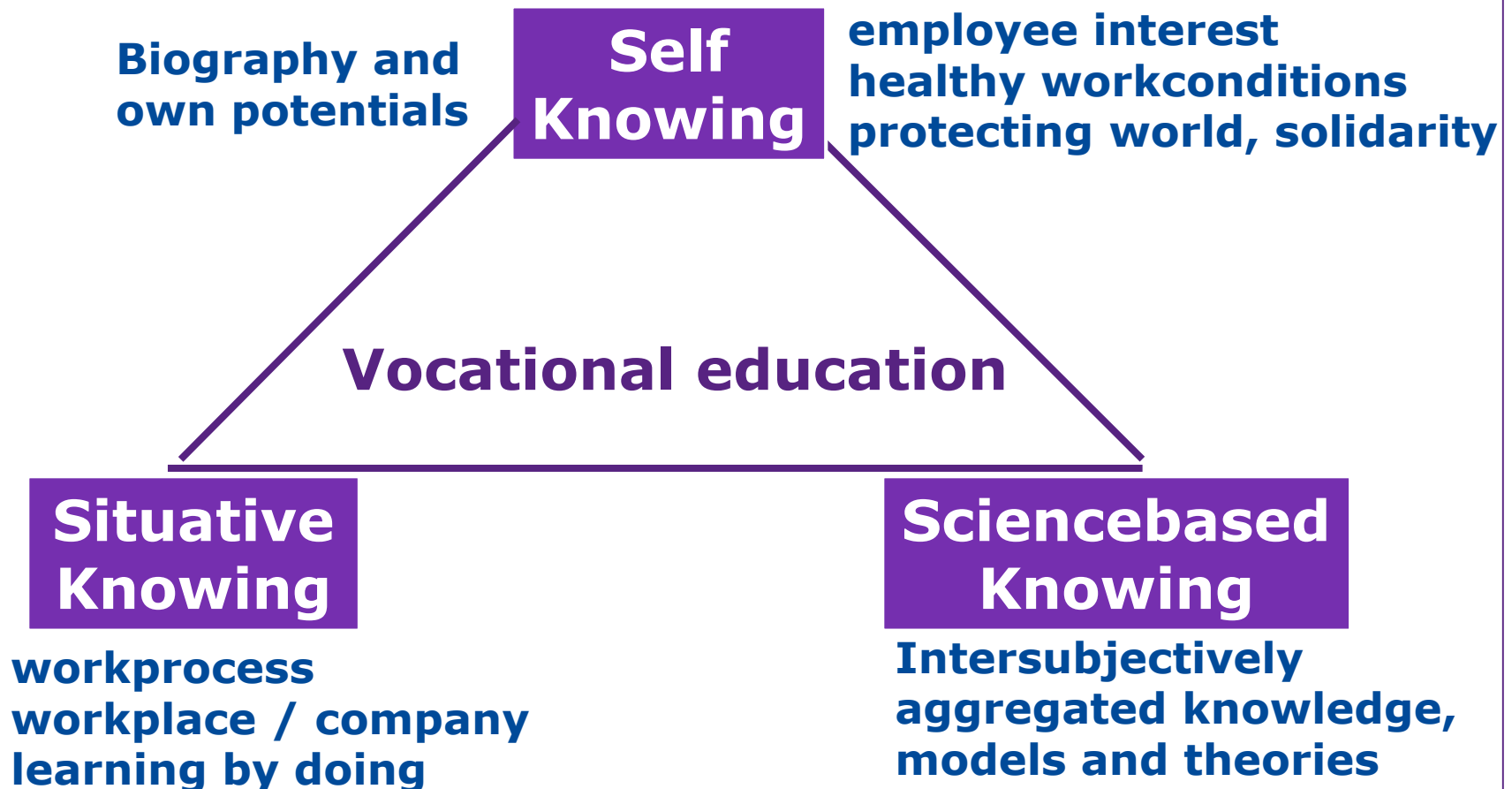
**Situative
Knowing**

**workprocess
workplace / company
learning by doing**

**Sciencebased
Knowing**

„As 'investment in human capital' the qualification process in the enterprises is conceived and not as an educational process of the subjects working there" (T.W. Adorno 1966)

What should be taught in VET?



Why Civic engagement and critical thinking in VET teacher education?

- Lively democracies rely on emancipative, self-confident individuals (tradition of Enlightenment)
- Learning settings in democracies should take that in account
- Bildung in that tradition is inseparable (education for autonomy is a right for learners in VET as well)
- Fostering cognitive dissonance in VET teacher education (Palomares Montero & Marhuenda Fluixá, 2020 & Kaiser 2020)
- **Encouraging students to reflect their experiences, their mentality, their cognition, emotion and action**
- **Offer time for self-reflection and space for experimental learning and Open and authentic communication in study programmes**



A study at the University of Valencia underlines that we can help students to use higher Levels of Reflective thinking as Leung/Kember 2003 have defined

- **Routines:** mechanical and automatic activity that is carried out with little conscious thought.
- **Comprehension:** it involves learning and reading, but these actions are not related to other situations.
- **Reflection:** active, persistent and careful consideration of any assumption or belief founded in our consciousness.
- **Critical thinking:** it lies being more aware of why we perceive things, how we feel, act and do.

Findings of the study in Spain

CT allows students to become aware of their learning process and to overcome their own cognitive limitations.

It increases the possibilities of facing cognitive dissonances by allowing argumentation and evaluation of one's own beliefs and previous knowledge.

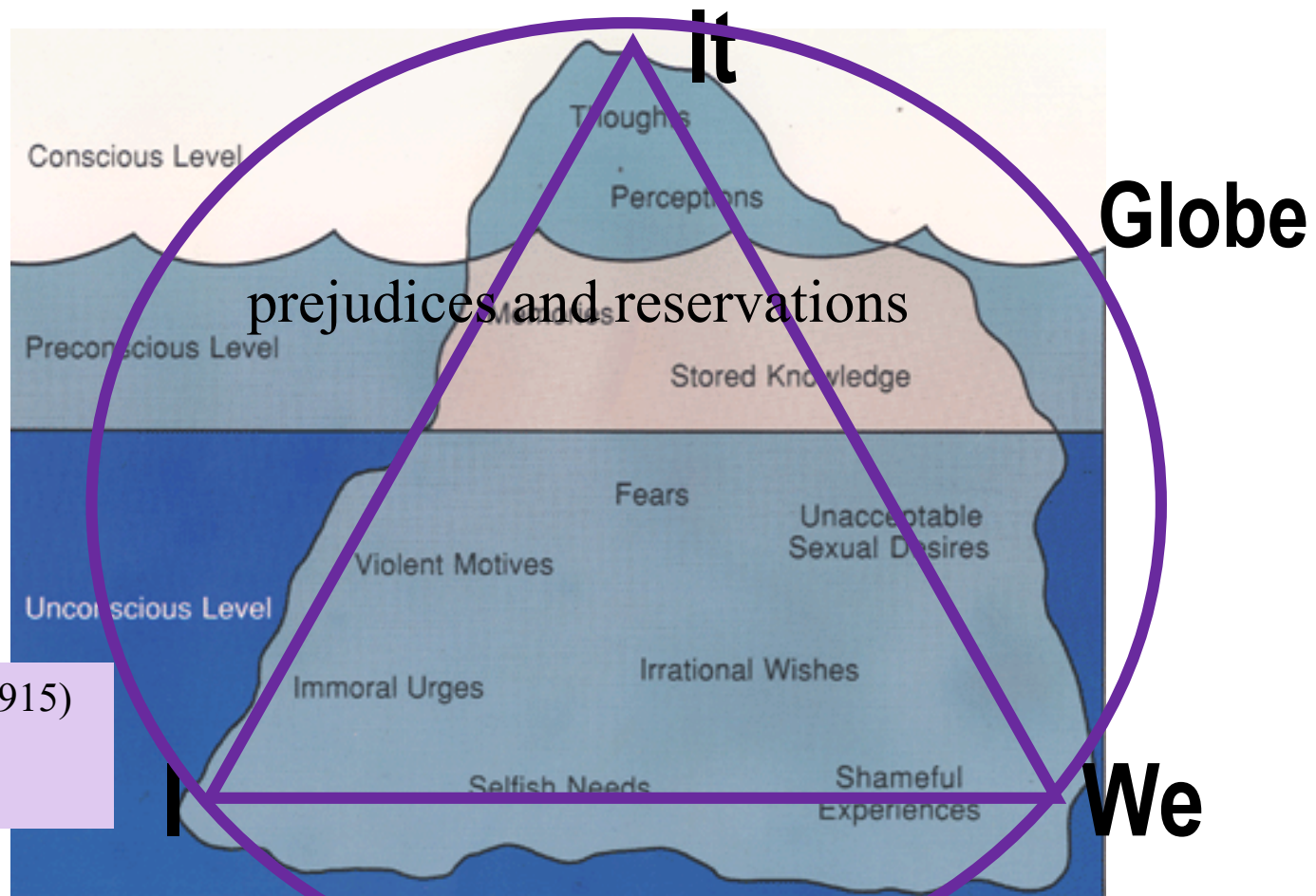
It has allowed achieving a self-regulated learning process, reflectively analyzing the phases of the learning process itself.

Training in the use of cognitive processes of reflective thinking could be positive to allow students for developing critical and practical professional criteria and position

Two approaches in VET teacher education in Germany are more focussed on self reflection and civic engagement

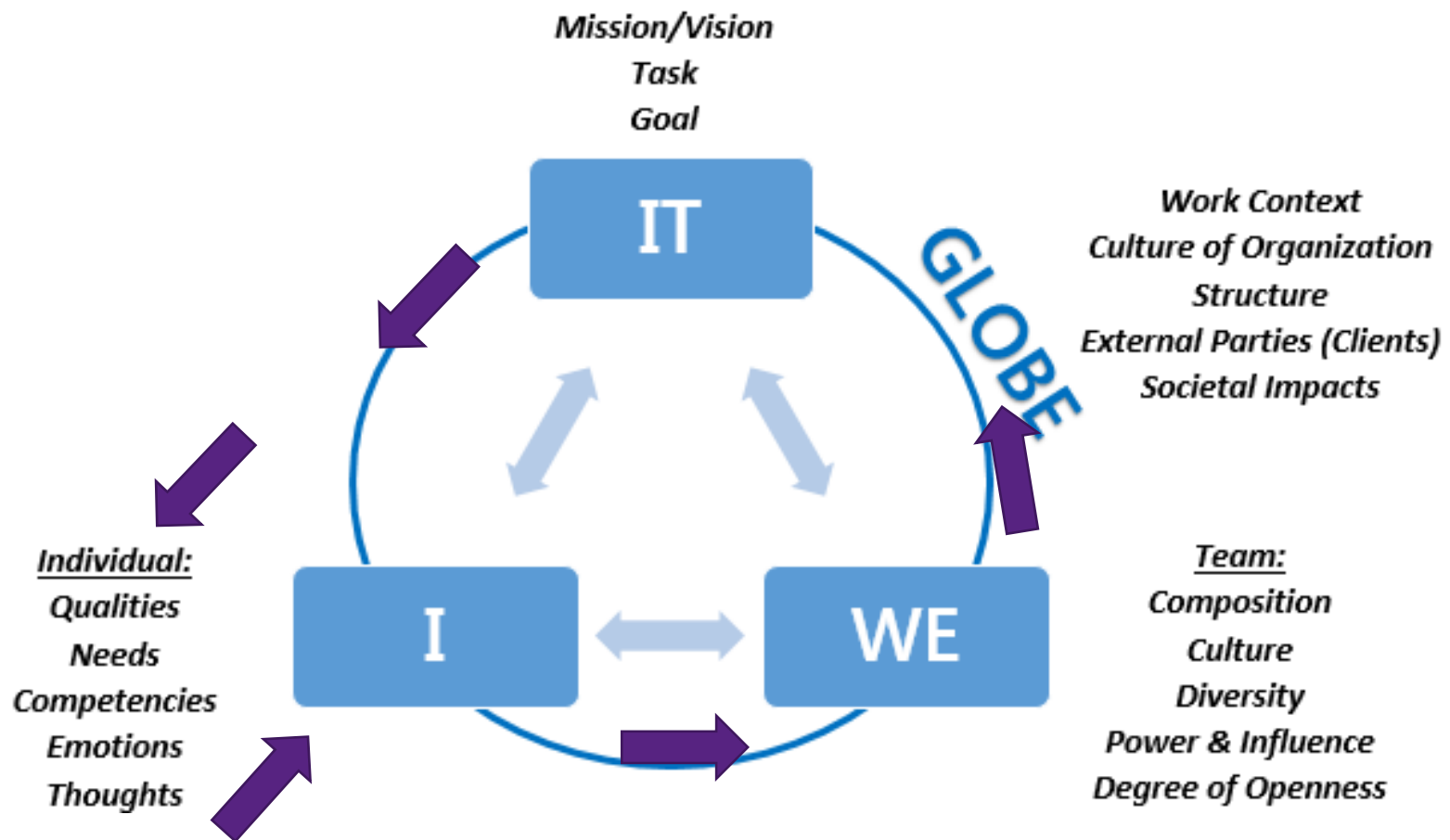
1. Get engaged in helping Refugees into an apprenticeship (Götz & Struck 2020)
 - students went to the place where the refugees are trained
 - students helped interviewed them and helped them to write an application
 - the refugees opened the perspective on life for the students, and sometimes their private homes 😊
 - the students changed their prejudices and reservations
2. Learning to be more sensitive for your own emotions and learn to create more lively learning settings (Kaiser 2018)

TCI and the Iceberg Theory I



Sigmund Freud (1915)
The unconscious.

TCI and the Iceberg Theory II



TCI and VET

Vocational skills and
knowledge

IT

GLOBE

Economic, social and
ecological environment

Self-confidence,
biographical
organisational
competence

I

WE

Collaboration,
teamwork,
solidarity

Training VET-students in TCI

- Learning TCI takes place in the second academic year
- Aims are:
 - Confrontation with own values and character,
 - Rethinking leadership (of teachers),
 - Experience creative learning settings),
 - Leading an own participative lecture

Training VET-students in TCI



Topics of the student teaching units

**we create good lessons and
a good school**

I always think that I am not perfect

My strength and weaknesses as leader

**Be different! – my ideas of
diversity**

**Turning big problems
into small ones - my
approach to
requirements**

What students told us about their learning

I realized that I'm the starting point and goal of the learning process

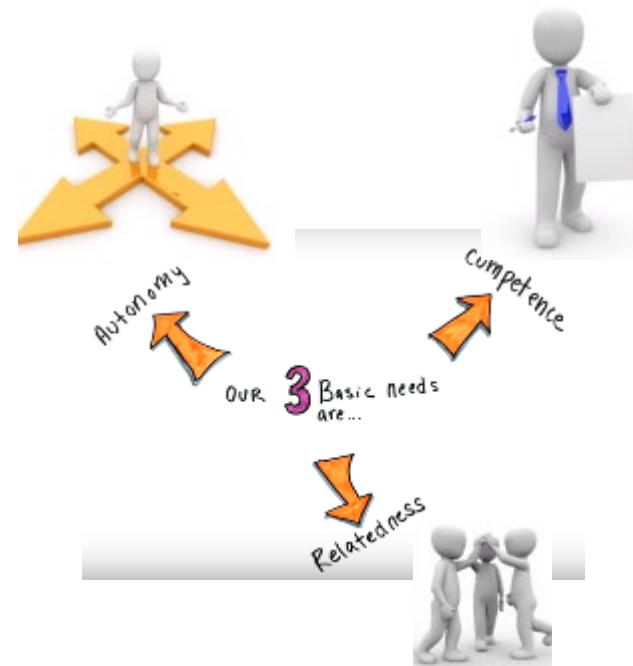
More and more I trusted in the power of the group. It was not my task to do everything.

To create leading topics is not an easy work to do.

I started to encourage my students to express their disturbances – it creates a trustful atmosphere

What we do to control the effects of TCI on students learning

- getting direct feedback from the students
- adopting scales of Deci and Ryans Self-determination theory to look at effects towards Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness of the students



We could see some positive effects of the innovative learning approaches in our VET teacher training

Conclusion

- To strengthen participation and development of character in VET we need to rethink our learning settings in VET
- First of all we have to strengthen the individual personality, that is confronted with many challenges and decisions nowadays
- This assumes new experiences in methods and to create challenges for the students to foster their levels of critical thinking during the academic phase of teacher training
- In the comparison of the participating countries we could see, that CT and CE are in relation to how long is the duration of the academic study and who is responsible for the programme – it is not standard.

Thank you for your attention



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