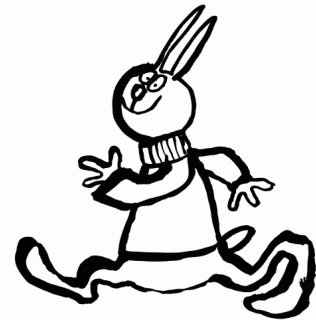




## FACILITATING THE LEARNING PROCESS

### Material for Mentor Teachers

Facilitating the Learning Process is the largest study module (14 ECTS credits) in professional teacher education. It begins with familiarization with the work of a vocational teacher and vocational learning environments, as well as the setting of personal goals.

Students have different starting points for developing their teaching and guidance skills: some have worked as teachers for years, while others are just beginning their careers in education. What is essential is that, in addition to the goals set by the School of Professional Teacher Education, students also set personal goals for developing their teaching and guidance competence. From the institution's perspective, beginning teacher trainees who come from other sectors of working life can be seen as a valuable resource, bringing fresh perspectives to the development of the institution's work-life-oriented pedagogy.

### Competencies and Learning Objectives Promoted in the Study Module

Facilitating the Learning Process is an essential part of a teacher's professional competence. The central phenomenon behind teaching and guidance work is **learning**. High-quality teaching and guidance, as well as their development, are based on a conscious understanding and sufficient theoretical knowledge of learning, the construction of competence, and the human being as a learner and builder of their own expertise. Facilitating learning is always practical in nature, whether it takes place in an educational institution, workplace, or virtual environment. Understanding the principles of learning and having theoretical control over one's actions—based on a conscious view of learning—is a core competence for teachers.

In addition to understanding the general principles of learning, a teacher must also recognize **individual differences among learners**. As students' cultural backgrounds become more diverse, teachers are required to adapt to learners' needs, respond to varied learning requirements, and adjust guidance activities within the limits of available resources.

Today, teachers are expected to have the skills and willingness to continuously develop their teaching and guidance in diverse learning environments, adapting to the specific demands of each situation. Planning learning environments and situations, formulating objectives, selecting content, choosing methodological solutions for guiding learning, and managing interaction all require situational sensitivity, creativity, and flexibility.

Based on the above, the Facilitating the Learning Process study module promotes, develops, and assesses vocational pedagogical competence, facilitating of learning competence, working life competence, interpersonal competence and competence in learner diversity. **The learning objectives** of the module are that the student:

- Understands the theoretical and ethical foundations of vocational learning
- Is able to act in various vocational teaching and guidance situations in accordance with the learning objectives and the documents that define teaching
- Can analyze and justify their own facilitating learning practices
- Can plan and implement meaningful, learner-centered learning processes in line with the learning objectives and guiding documents
- Is familiar with different vocational learning environments and can operate in them in a pedagogically sound manner
- Understands the goals and functions of assessment as part of the learning process and can plan and implement assessment that supports students' continuous learning
- Understands the possibilities of digitalization in guiding learning and can evaluate the suitability of the solutions they use
- Recognizes the impact of changes in working life on vocational education and develops pedagogical solutions that take these changes into account
- Builds a sustainable future through their teaching work in collaboration with working life
- Can engage with learners in a dialogical, constructive, and respectful manner, and apply accessibility principles in their teaching and guidance
- Can consider learners' individual starting points and goals, and support their agency and equality in diverse learning environments

## Study Methods in the Course

From the student's perspective, the Facilitating the Learning Process course includes various forms of work. Students:

- Work on course assignments independently and in learning circles, and share the results within their learning circle and during guidance days at the School of Professional Teacher Education.
- Participate in guidance days and online activities.
- Study literature related to teaching, guidance, and assessment of learning.
- Familiarize themselves with the learning environments of the institution, the teacher's work, and student groups, and set personal goals for the course.
- Act as a resource in developing and implementing work-life-oriented pedagogy in the institution.
- Implement a sufficiently extensive and pedagogically justified teaching module, which includes planning, implementation, and assessment tasks.
- Act as peer mentors and provide feedback to another student 2–4 times.

## Guidance and Assessment of Facilitating the Learning Process

The work in the Facilitating the Learning Process study module is guided and assessed based on the defined learning objectives and the personal goals recorded in the student's individual study plan. *The teacher educator from the School of Professional Teacher Education is responsible for the assessment decision*, which is made using criterion-based evaluation on a pass/fail scale. The assessment is based on observations of the student's activities (learning tasks, participation in learning sessions and online work), as well as guidance and assessment discussions held between the mentor teacher, the student, and the teacher educator.

The teacher student receives guidance and feedback from their **mentor teacher** at the institution where the practicum takes place. These mentors play a significant role, especially in the planning, implementation, and assessment of teaching and guidance tasks. **Peer tutors** and **teacher educators at the School of Professional Teacher Education** also provide guidance and feedback. For successful guidance, it is essential to foster an accepting, safe, and encouraging atmosphere, support the student's self-assessment, and provide feedback that values the student's initiative, experiences, and self-direction.

The planning and implementation of the teaching module is assessed through open and continuous dialogue between the student, the mentor teacher, the peer tutor, and the teacher educator. The main purpose of the assessment is to support the student's growth as a teacher and professional development. Time should be reserved during teaching sessions for learning discussions, which should include:

- the student
- the mentor teacher (the student's mentor at the institution)
- the peer tutor (another student in professional teacher education)
- the teacher educator (the student's instructor from the teacher education program)

### **Mentor Teacher**

Students who are not working in teaching roles during their studies will familiarize themselves with vocational education learning environments and complete learning tasks related to the planning and implementation of a teaching module at an educational institution. The mentor teacher working at the institution is responsible for guiding the planning and implementation of the teaching module. The mentor teacher is the student's closest collaborator in getting acquainted with the learning environments and completing the planning and implementation tasks. They are familiar with the organization's practices, and their subject matter expertise and pedagogical experience are available to the student. The mentory relationship is a collegial partnership, where both parties learn from each other. A student who is active in working life brings current professional expertise to the institution. With the support of the mentor teacher, the student has the opportunity to plan, implement, and assess learning guidance, and also receives feedback from an experienced colleague. The mentor teacher helps the student structure and conceptualize their actions, both before and after teaching situations. They encourage the student to experiment and evaluate the effectiveness of their guidance principles.

### **Peer tutor**

Students who are simultaneously enrolled in professional teacher education and who work in the same institution or nearby area, or who study in the same group or regional learning circle, act as peer tutors. Students support each other's development by observing teaching, planning and—when possible—implementing teaching together, and participating in feedback discussions. The peer tutor observes teaching and provides written feedback 2–4 times.

### **Teacher Educator at the School of Professional Teacher Education**

The teacher educator monitors and supports the student's learning process, helps the student deepen their pedagogical thinking, and discover new perspectives on facilitating learning. The teacher educator's guidance can be provided in various ways. They conduct guidance and assessment discussions either after observing teaching in person at the institution or based on the student's video recordings.

## **Competencies to Be Assessed and Assessment Criteria**

Using learning tasks and observations, vocational pedagogical competence, facilitating of learning competence, working life competence, interpersonal competence and competence in learner diversity are assessed based on the criteria outlined in a separate form. The form also describes the qualitative level of acceptable competence for each area. The assessment decision is made using a pass/fail scale.

A big, big thank you for your guidance and your contribution to developing the competence of new colleagues!