

## A Study of Young People's Experiences, Choices and Learning Careers throughout Vocational Education

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### Abstract

*Vocational Education in Norway follows a split model where the participants start out as students enrolled in a two-year school programme. Typically, a two-year apprenticeship at a workplace then follows. Statistics do however inform us, that one third of the students do not complete their vocational education within a five-year time span. The high dropout rate in upper secondary education is a major challenge in most European countries. This paper presents findings from a longitudinal study of the young people's experiences, assessments, thoughts from they begin their first year in a vocational program, and the following years towards adulthood. We have followed 32 students over six years from the time they started their vocational education. The method was an annual interview.*

*The objective of longitudinal research project is to provide a continuous description of why students drop out of upper secondary education, based on a study that follows students throughout all four years of upper secondary education. The intention has been to bring out the students' own descriptions, understandings and experiences related to the main research question: What choices do the students make in terms of education and occupation and what have influenced these choices? To analyse the data, we draw upon the concept «learning career» as introduced by Bloomer & Hodkinson (2000). Learning career refers to the development of a student's dispositions to learning over time.*

*The findings describe how students tend to change course choices, occupational aspirations, and dispositions to learning as well as approaches to studentship throughout this significant period of their life (Lyngsnes & Rismak, 2018). In the presentation, we describe findings from the study by using the three metaphors "stayers, movers and leavers". These categories describe the students' different learning careers. The category stayers describes those who have completed their planned education at the appointed time. Movers describes those who have changed courses along the way, and the category leavers describes those who do not complete upper secondary education.*

**Keywords:** Vocational education, learning trajectories, dropout.

### References

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