

General Education Reimagined: Connecting Learning with the World of Work, November 19 2025

Children Need Experiences of Work Today to Dream of Tomorrow's Professions

Inge Timoštšuk and Kaidi Nurmik

1

Early Work-Related Experiences

Early work-related experiences help children build the general skills needed for an unpredictable future.

Early work-related experiences in primary school develop self-management and collaboration skills, which contribute to agency formation needed for an unpredictable future.

"The child whose father did everything for them in the autumn—told them where to put their jacket and when to take their bag off—finds it much harder in class now. They can't get their notebook out of their bag and don't remember which one it is..."

Policy Recommendation

Education systems should support schools in integrating work-life themes into primary learning.

To inform teachers' practices one can use outcomes of the EU-funded project WISH that will start next month which will provide practical examples and tools to integrate work-life topics and general skills.

2

Connections Between Learning and Real-Life

Connections between classroom learning and real-life make learning more meaningful.

When students see links between school and real life, learning becomes more personally relevant and motivating.

"We had one parent working in Postimees [an Estonian daily newspaper]. When we had a Media unit, he came and talked about advertising."

Policy Recommendation

Teachers need stronger and more up-to-date understanding of the changing world of work. This could be supported through study visits to workplaces, roundtables on work-life topics, or job-shadowing programmes.

The WISH* project will develop training modules for pre- and in-service teachers.

*WISH: Bridging Work-Life and Primary Education: Integrating Work-Life Topics and Key Competencies into Teaching Practice

3

Family and Community Involvement

Family and community involvement broadens horizons.

Workplace visits, inviting parents, professionals, and community initiatives provide authentic learning and can reduce inequality.

"We visited a student's home where the family runs a farm. We explored farm life, observed horses and sheep, and learned about the growth of sea buckthorn and its uses."

Policy Recommendation

Foster school–community cooperation through recognition schemes, quality labels, or local awards for organisations that collaborate with schools.



WISH Project Website

Visit the WISH project website for more information about integrating work-life topics in primary education.



Nurmik & Timoštšuk (2024)

Integrating Work-Life and Student Work-Related Experiences in Classroom Learning—The Perspective of Primary Teachers. *Social Sciences*, 13(12), 649.



Näkk & Timoštšuk (2024)

Teachers' perspectives on the relationship between students' learning and work-related habits in primary school. *Social Sciences*, 13(12), 681.



Uppin & Timoštšuk (2024)

'They were surprised that such jobs even exist...' Supporting students' career awareness during learning activities at museums and environmental education centres. *Social Sciences*, 13(12), 696.

Contact Information

Inge TimoštšukProfessor of Primary Education
inge.timostsuk@tlu.ee**Kaidi Nurmik**Junior Research Fellow
kaidi.nurmik@tlu.ee