



VET4FOOD

VET Training for Food Sustainability

Cooperative Learning

How to Use Cases to Build a Path to Food Sustainability in Vocational Education

In our handbook [Edutainment Techniques and Digital Tools Handbook For Vet Teachers](#) we have explored several innovative teaching methodologies, including **cooperative learning**, that is an instructional approach where students work together in small groups to achieve common learning goals.

In preparation for the international exchange between students from the three different schools taking part in the VET4FOOD project, we want to delve into the **use of real cases in classroom**, within the broader methodology of cooperative learning. Reality tasks and cases can represent useful tools for teachers, who face the challenge of not only conveying the complexities of food systems but also inspiring change among students. Learning with cases is an established approach used across disciplines where students apply their knowledge to real-world scenarios, promoting higher levels of cognition.



In a [previous article](#), we have seen the importance of Bloom's Taxonomy in covering all student skills, from the most practical to the most abstract and complex: planning lessons around real cases engages students in **higher-order thinking skills across multiple levels**. But how does it work?

Setting:

In a classroom setting, students often **collaborate in groups** to analyze case studies, which are narratives depicting characters and situations. These cases present **real-world challenges** or disciplinary problems, for which students **develop solutions** while receiving guidance from the instructor.

Example of a case:

In a rural community, local farmers are facing challenges such as unpredictable weather, soil degradation, and declining crop yields. Consumers are increasingly interested in sustainable food options. The local government initiates a program to promote sustainable food systems, tasking a team with developing a plan to support farmers and transition towards sustainability.

Suggestions to guide students' reflections:

- **Identifying challenges:** What challenges do farmers face in transitioning to sustainable agriculture?

- **Analyzing solutions:** How can sustainable farming practices address these challenges?
- **Promoting community engagement:** How can the community be engaged in supporting sustainable food systems?
- **Collaborating for impact:** How can partnerships be formed to promote sustainability?
- **Evaluating success:** How will the success of the program be measured?

To arrive at an agreed conclusion, students will need to collaborate with each other - cooperative learning-reflect, compare and problem solve. These aspects are precisely what make cooperative learning and cases work with respect to sustainable food issues: food sustainability is a multifaceted issue with real-world implications, and it is only through the comparison and analysis of different perspectives that a holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities can be achieved.

