



Ritva Kipinä (in the picture) from Valkeakoski Vocational College is a lecturer in Beauty Care. In this interview she talks about operations in the Taitaja competition and how vocational competence is developed in competitions. Next spring Ritva Kipinä will be the Head Judge in the finale of Taitaja2021 in Oulu, Finland.



Ritva notes: “By participating in the Taitaja competition I challenge my own vocational and pedagogical competence. By participating in the competition, I get a chance to see different ways to implement learning methods, how the vocation changes and develops, to test my own competence, and to network with the different experts in the field. The benefits can also be seen in the practical work of vocational teaching.”

### Different Roles in the Taitaja Competition

Ritva Kipinä got her first taste of the Taitaja competition at the end of 1990s when **Beauty Care** became a part of the competition in Finland. She has been a competitor’s guardian or trainer and a judge in many of the competitions. She also organised the practicalities for the Beauty Care field in two Taitaja competitions, meaning she was the skill manager in those two competitions. In 2005 in the World Championship competition in Helsinki Ritva was one of the supervisors taking care of the field specific arrangements. She has also been in the audience in national and international competitions. For several years Ritva has been a member of the guidance group for the Beauty Care field. In addition to all this, Ritva has participated in the entrepreneurship competition in the Taitaja competition for a few times as well.

### How does the Taitaja event increase vocational competence in Beauty Care?

According to Ritva Kipinä, the Taitaja competition increases knowledge on the diversity of work tasks and competence requirements in Beauty Care. The examination of the field specific evaluation points and criteria makes us think if in vocational education and training we consider the things affecting the work in the field as comprehensively as we could. One example in Beauty Care is ergonomic working and hygiene. By taking the new or changing requirements into consideration in vocational education and training, we can further elaborate the services offered at work places. By improving the quality of vocational education and training we also get better quality work at work places.”

### How can participation in the competition benefit the student?

Ritva says that “the student who participates in the competition will get some kind of training and coaching for the competition. Individual coaching makes it possible to make your own competence even more professional. By challenging your own competence and demonstrating it in the competition, you gain self-confidence that will carry to the future. Participation **improves field-specific competence**, but especially other **transversal skills**, which are needed in the future working life and life in general. By having the Taitaja competition in your CV you gain activity points and **improve your chances of finding employment**. Operators from different fields visit the Taitaja competition, so it is also possible to get to know potential employers in the field.”

**Ritva’s tip to the competitors:** “Usually the student has good memories from the Taitaja competition, even if they didn’t win.”

Ritva brings up one more point: “the Taitaja competition is the biggest marketing event for vocational education and training. Some of the future professionals choose their careers by watching the competitors’ work. Marketing events such as the Taitaja competition is needed to give young people information about different types of work tasks and future possibilities. Field specific development requires networking and new innovations for the ways how the tasks are implemented.”

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