

**Jonne Parkkinen & Jari Kolehmainen**

“One must know a little bit about everything”: The various roles and competences of the regional development specialist

Regional development offers an interesting field to study the competences related to professional work. Along with the trends affecting work, the wideness and complexity of the field of operation sets demands for the competence needed. In this article, we advance the understanding of the work of regional development specialists and their competences by using the angle of work life research and leadership studies. The article answers the question: What kind of competence is required while working as a regional development specialist in network-like environments? The empirical data were gathered in six focus group interviews in South Ostrobothnia. The data were analysed abductively using qualitative content analysis. The results show that the regional development specialists are multitalents whose expertise is based on understanding the bigger picture and the strategic intentions of the area. The four roles of the regional development specialists presented in the article also affect the competence needed while doing professional work. The main contribution is related to the competence needs of regional development specialists working in multi-actor, network-like environments.