

How to become-create a wine expert

Didactical strategies for wine students and educators

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ABSTRACT

Motivation

Considering the rapid expansion of the general wine world and the growing public interest in wine knowledge, wine education institutions should modernize themselves and realign their didactics with actual scientific knowledge. This is relevant to improve the institution's competitiveness against other competitors gravitating around the wine education business.

More educators are needed for wine culture to be transferred professionally and passionately to a new and progressively expanding generation of wine believers. Unfortunately, didactics' state of health cannot be considered a good starting point for future teachers. Even though teaching and studying can still be approached with subjective methods, several fundamental objective approaches are considered to be essential for being a good teacher and a model student.

Goal

Contrary to popular belief, teaching and learning represent new concepts and practices that differ from those we regularly experience in classrooms, such as a one-man-show presentation for hours. This work suggests new didactical approaches for wine educators and students (*Weinakademiker* candidates), who already have an elevated preparation in the world of wine.

Methods

The world of research has been publishing groundbreaking knowledge in the fields of wine and didactics separately. This work connected these two fields and fabricated up-to-date recommendations for students and wine educators. In order to propose reliable background and didactical methods, publications exclusively originating from empirical studies and validated by peer-review-system were considered for this project.

It was impossible to create an exhaustive guide due to the magnitude of these fields and the very nature of this work. Nonetheless, the author hopes that future *Wineakademiker* candidates and educators could benefit from these concrete and approachable suggestions.

Results

This work presented a *current* definition of a wine expert. The following qualities are intrinsic to wine expertise and are based on current literature: Increased conceptual knowledge, decreased detection threshold, increased ability to discriminate wine-relevant sensory stimuli, and enhanced ability to verbalize different sensory stimuli.

Didactical strategies for students and educators were suggested to achieve a candidate's conceptual expertise without frustration and consequently possible abandonment of wine education. General didactic paradigms and specific methods adopted in science education were applied to wine didactics. Active recall, spaced repetition, and chunk formation are strategies that have been correlated with efficient learning for other similar fields. To achieve high individual expertise among candidates, a student-centered approach was suggested. For this purpose, an adapted, efficient way of direct instruction was explained. Even though educators' *speeches* are still relevant they should be well-prepared and structured, as this paper implied. Nevertheless, students' activities should be the essence of didactic sequences. This work argued that the personal connection to students, stimulation of associative learning, effective questioning, and testing-feedback mechanisms were empirically described as efficient didactic tools for achieving students' expertise. For these reasons, these strategies are strongly recommended for wine education as well.

This thesis described the importance of students' initial sensory calibration and suggested new didactic methods to achieve it in the classroom. Moreover, to improve the candidate's perceptual knowledge without the interference of conceptual knowledge, an adapted training tasting method with black glasses was recommended and elucidated.

Conclusion

As the world of wine is ever expanding, the growing public interest in wine knowledge is also. The pressure on wine schools will grow due to increasing competition between institutes. Receiving a high education level is of paramount importance for the next generation of students. The recommendations of this thesis could represent the first step for institutions to maintain and further develop their competitiveness and professionalism in wine education.