

TTnet thematic workshop

Results of the TTnet project on:

“Professionalisation of VET teachers for the future - PROFF”

(May 2002 – May 2003)

Session 1: Updating teachers' qualifications and competences

An example of innovative practice: TUKEVA, To research, to develop and to train - TUtkaa = to research, KEhittää = to develop; VAhmentaa = to train (Juhani Nieminen)

Background

Finnish Vocational Adult Education Centres provide initial and continuing vocational training and education for employed as well as unemployed persons, including apprenticeship training. Many programmes conducted under the auspices of the Finnish National Board of Education lead to formal qualifications.

The training services are funded by the labour and education authorities as well as by the private sector. The teachers are experts and professionals from the working life and have close contacts there. However there are persons who have worked as teachers for many years and need to update their vocational competence. Many teachers have short-term contracts. There are many pedagogically incompetent teachers because of the short-term and project-oriented contracts.

Based on experiences received from previous single training programs among teachers at the vocational adult education centres the idea of a wide and multiform educational program Tukeya was created and presented in 1998. There were representatives of universities,

polytechnics, vocational teacher education colleges, educational authorities and adult education centres who designed the Tukeva-project.

The main principles of the project originate from working life. Studies are conducted by universities, polytechnics and vocational teacher education colleges. Studies are defined, measured and assessed at the same way as other higher education studies.

Aims

- To raise the level of teachers' competencies by creating a large number of academic degrees, increasing knowledge and skills of personnel within different kinds of educational institutions providing vocational training.
- By developing teacher students' workplace organisations they raise the status of vocational adult education centres and improve their competitive position in the market driven situation.
- The aim is to develop models of implementation and materials, new methods and contents, to develop new learning environments, to develop blended learning solutions, to disseminate new models.
- To develop collaboration between the participating individuals and organisations by building new networks between educational institutions and working life.
- To improve the vocational teachers' access to continuing education.
- The aims of the research which is a part of Tukeva-project is to have an in-depth analysis of the traditional and new dimensions of teachers' work, the impact of the project on individual, organisational and social level.
- The research aims to find out how the quality and impact of Tukeva project can be improved on individual, organisation and social level.

Legislation

The academic degrees follow the national legislation. The implementation is in line with the legislation which rules the universities, polytechnics and vocational teacher education colleges.

Content of CVET provision

1. University level studies in pedagogics, business and economics, technology
2. Pedagogical vocational teacher education
3. Polytechnic level studies in different departments
4. Research and development projects

Duration

1998 - 2006

Mode of delivery

All traditional and modern methods are utilized. Because all teacherstudents are working the aim is to use flexible methods and arrangements which can be combined with other duties. To

improve productive results the assignments and tasks are integrated as much as possible with the students' work and organisations.

Target group

Vocational teachers at vocational adult education centres, HR-people at enterprises and organisations which are part of the networks of the vocational adult education centres.

Number of participants

1500

Admission requirements

Personnel of vocational adult education centres and their partner organisations.

Trades

Pedagogics, business and economics, technology, hospitality management. These were the trades which were mostly wanted based on a survey among potential students. Most of the studies are in pedagogics. The studies include bachelor and master degrees, pedagogical competences, post graduate studies, single credits.

Geographical coverage

Whole Finland except one part from the Province of Eastern Finland

Stakeholders

Individual teacher students, students from various enterprises and organisations, employers of the students, the students' organisations, the organisations in charge of developing new methods and contents

Funding

European Social Fund, Ministry of Education, Provinces of Finland, National Board of Education, employers and individual students.

Because the project has national, transnational and private funding it is rather complicated to administrate. The project is a long one and include many partners and actors. It has required a lot of work and efforts and co-operation between those involved.

Certification/validation/accreditation

At the end of the project there will be more than 500 pedagogically competent vocational teachers, at least 250 academic degrees, dozens of polytechnic degrees, tens of thousands study credits at the university and polytechnic level, some postgraduate degrees.

Skills/Competences developed

Formal academic qualifications, development work at organisations through their employees' developmental projects, education providers have developed their courses and contents

Career opportunities

Advanced possibilities based on new qualifications, salary raisings, f.ex. teachers receive 10 % salary raise for the formal pedagogical diploma.

Examples of teacher career pathways within the programme/training provision/project

Better positions eg. from teacher to department manager or principal, new positions in other schools or companies, improved self-confidence

Teaching material, tools and resources developed in connection with the education programme/training provision

New eLearning programs and materials, Metodix a web-based environment for scientific research, methods and learning

Evaluation

There is on-going evaluation, steering groups, quality criteria for educational implementations, a follow-up evaluation project

Results so far:

Originating from the working life:

- there have been participants from different educational organisations, private companies and other organisations;
- there are many assignments and tasks which are integrated in students' everyday work;
- the level and view point of work have become wider and deeper;
- it is very demanding to study and work at the same time. If the student doesn't have support from the work place it is difficult to continue the studies for a long time;
- teacher students' position at work has improved. Some have changed their jobs after receiving new qualifications for better positions. This can be problematic for employers.

Collaboration, development of organisations and new models:

- collaboration in developing the Tukeva project has been fruitful. They have developed f.ex. Metodix , a net-environment dedicated to scientific and applied research as well as to learning of different research methods;
- the actors in charge of administration in this project have developed their skills and working models.

Cross-scientific dimension, general educational requirements, study credits:

- in pedagogics students have been able to choose studies from different faculties;
- there are general criteria how different prior studies are validated as part of the program;
- it has been tough for many students to adapt to the schedule including work and studies especially if the students have not studied for a long time;
- the heterogenous groups of students have been a challenge to educational institutions. There is a wide need for counselling and tutoring.

Blended learning solutions:

- it is challenging to create new blended learning models and define equal academic requirements compared to traditional education and training;
- because of this large Tukeya-project some faculties have recruited new personnel. It is challenging to recruit new personnel for a new project and try at the same time integrate new methods and staff with the traditional administration fluently;
- virtual study packages have been developed but a lot needs to be done in the future to refine them.

Improved access to education:

- the project has enabled higher education studies for some students who hadn't have the chances without this project because of the lack of certain prior studies;
- some students were left out because of funding problems in one part of the country;
- because of economical restraints the face-to-face meetings have concentrated in the southern and western parts of the country. It has been more time consuming and expensive for people from the northern and eastern parts to participate.

ESF-requirements to divide the country into different areas have caused administrative problems. The Tukeya project is divided into four separate subprojects. The size of the subprojects differ but each project requires as much administrative work in spite of the size of the project or number of participants.

The follow-up research shows that the impact of the project has varied in vocational adult education centres. If the leaders of the organisation have supported and showed interest toward the teachers' studies the impact has been deeper. If the teachers have studied on their own the benefits are mainly on individual level.

Innovative dimensions

Participants are mainly satisfied with the achievements. The co-operation between universities and polytechnics has increased especially in regard to accreditation of studies from various educational organisations.

The networks which have been built are nation- and sector-wide. There is co-operation between educational authorities, educational organisations from secondary level to adult education to polytechnics and universities, labour unions, private companies.

There are new ways of organising continuing education which have been tested in this project.

The project provides possibilities for piloting new working methods and contents in participating organisations. This can be an asset in the rapidly changing and competing society and world.

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