



FINNISH NATIONAL
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Improving teaching, learning and assessment: evidence from Finland

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Finnish VET education system: three types of qualifications

Specialist vocational qualifications

- indicate a command of the most demanding tasks in the field
- EQF 5

Further vocational qualifications

- indicate the vocational skills required of skilled worker in the field.
- EQF 4

Vocational qualifications

- indicate competence to enter employment in the field.
- EQF 4

Finnish VET education system: three ways for acquiring a qualification

- ◆ School-/curriculum based education
(initial vocational education)
- ◆ Apprenticeship training
 - qualifications taken as competence-based tests
- ◆ Competence-based qualifications



1. INNOVATION IN TEACHING METHODS

- ◆ Vocational qualifications consist of units (parts of qualification). Vocational units are composed on the basis of functions in working life and named according to activities at working life.
- ◆ Theory and practice (KSC) are expressed together within the same unit (in national qualification requirements).
- ◆ Theory and practice are studied together within the same unit.
- ◆ Theory and practice are assessed together within the same unit.
- ◆ There is a common one mark in the certificate for theory and practice.



1. INNOVATION IN TEACHING METHODS

- ◆ Challenges
 - ◆ VET providers' (outcome-based) curricula
 - ◆ Are the curricula outcome-based?
 - ◆ education and training in practice
 - ◆ Do teachers for common subjects plan the education/training together with vocational subject teachers, instead of giving lessons separately (in initial VET)?
 - ◆ Is theory also learned at workplaces?
 - ◆ assessment in practise
 - ◆ Are theory and practice assessed together?
 - ◆ Are the units assessed separately?
 - ◆ When are the learning outcomes assessed?

2. ORGANISATION OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- ◆ School-/curriculum based education (initial vocational education)
 - VET schools are equipped to enable real hands-on learning of working skills
 - minimum duration of on-the-job training periods defined
 - Pilot projects on extending on-the-job training periods
- ◆ Apprenticeship training
 - 20/80 – 80% of training should take place in working life
- ◆ Competence-based qualifications
 - no learning required
 - competence-based test in working life situations



2. ORGANISATION OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- ◆ Ensuring balance
 - between theory and practise
 - individualisation plan for each student
 - co-operation of teachers
 - link between school and workplace
 - individualisation plan for each student
 - possibility to change from school-/curricula based system to apprenticeship training
 - pilot projects on extending on-the-job training periods
 - apprenticeship training
 - competence-based examinations



2. ORGANISATION OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- ◆ Learning materials
 - No checking of learning materials at any time
 - however VET providers should arrange education and training according to national qualification requirements
 - Funding for learning materials that have low circulation

3. INNOVATION IN ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TOOLS

- The student makes her/his vocational qualification by **competence tests** in real working life situations
 - National requirements for qualification. Tripartite representatives (employers, employees and educators) have defined the requirements.
 - Skills written in requirements shall be demonstrated in competence tests.
 - Personalising of competence tests.
 - Personalising the study plan for complementary studies.
- The competence test is assessed by tripartite evaluators: representatives of employers, employees and educators

3. INNOVATION IN ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TOOLS

- ◆ Formative assessment is a part of learning/teaching process. Only summative assessment leads to validation and recognition of achieved learning outcomes.
- ◆ All units are assessed as soon as possible after studies/achievements
 1. assessment during education and training
 2. no "final exams" of the qualifications
- ◆ Vocational qualifications are assessed at three levels. In specialist and further vocational qualifications assessment is pass/fail.

3. INNOVATION IN ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TOOLS

	School-/curriculum based education	Competence-based qualifications
Methods for assessing learning	Verbal or written feedback on the progress of studies	
Methods for assessing competence	Vocational skills demonstrations: like competence tests	Competence tests: observation, interviews, surveys, group and self- assessment

3. INNOVATION IN ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TOOLS

	School- /curriculum based education	Apprentice- ship training	Competence- based qualifications
Qualification certificate	Qualification certificate 1) Vocational upper secondary certificate 2) Certificate of skills demonstrations	Qualification certificate 1) Learning certificate 2) Certificate from on-the-job training	Qualification certificate

Follow-up and evaluation of education and training

- ◆ on-going evaluation
 - learning achievements
 - themes vary annually
- ◆ studies after implementation phase
 - vocational skills demonstrations
 - on-the-job training
- ◆ state-of-play, annually
 - vocational skills demonstrations
 - on-the-job training
- ◆ follow-up project on the implementation of updated qualification requirements
 - vocational qualifications



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4. RESOURCES AND CONDITIONS FOR APPLYING INNOVATIVE TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

- ◆ Development of learning environments
 - funding on several projects since 2007
 - development of teaching and learning methods, approaches and practices
 - emphasis on funding in 2010
 - use of information and communications technology in teaching



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4. RESOURCES AND CONDITIONS FOR APPLYING INNOVATIVE TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

- ◆ Assessment guide
 - to support
 - assessment and its planning
 - validation and recognition of prior learning
 - VET providers, qualification committees, working life, learners
 - includes frequently asked questions and answers to them
 - will be published summer 2012



4. RESOURCES AND CONDITIONS FOR APPLYING INNOVATIVE TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

- ◆ Quality control in competence-based qualifications
 - Instructions to qualification committees concerning visits to VET providers (inspections)
 - since 4/2011
 - separate budget for every committee to cover travel expenses
 - 2 persons will conduct, assistance possible from National Board of Education
 - 2-4 visits/year
 - agenda for the visit (~1 day)
 - discussions with responsible person and other representatives of the VET provider
 - interview of learner(s)
 - interview of assessors (employer, employee, teacher/trainer)
 - (observation of competence-based test)
 - feed-back and memorandum

5. BENEFITS FOR THE LEARNER, 1/2

- ◆ Learning pathways
 - individual
 - recognition of prior learning
 - one only takes part in education and training that he/she needs
 - leads to reduction of learning time
 - guidelines for qualification committees are being prepared to enhance recognition of prior learning
 - flexible
 - qualification can be completed unit by unit
 - studies and working life alternate
 - pauses during learning pathways are possible

5. BENEFITS FOR THE LEARNER, 2/2

- ◆ Assessment
 - It only matters whether one can perform the tasks or not
 - mark in vocational qualifications: fair-good-excellent/fail
 - mark in specialist or further vocational qualifications: pass/fail
- ◆ Practical qualifications
 - theory is integrated into practice
 - if one has not yet acquired any qualification, as a competence-based test it is easy when a little or no "studying at school" is needed
- ◆ Employment
 - learners with work based qualifications are more eligible to employers