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Implementing ECVET in Finland – Inspiring and strengthening learning-outcomes based approach in all VET

Hanna Autere
Finnish National Board of Education

International conference on ECVET experience and challenges in Europe and Latvia
December 16, 2015

For education and learning

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ECVET in Education Policy

Finnish Government Education and Research 2011-2016 development plan

- The vocational qualification system is to be developed so that it forms a clear and systematic entity from the perspective of the competence requirements of the working life.
- ECVET introduced in all vocational qualifications in 2015.

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Why ECVET in Finland?

- ECVET supports pedagogical changes
  - Learning-outcomes approach
  - Working-life approach
- ECVET fosters quality and transparency
- Mobility is a priority – individualisation of learning pathways
  - National mobility
  - Transnational mobility

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Steps towards ECVET implementation in Finland

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15 ECVET Necessary conditions for ECVET implementation (Cedefop 2012)

Starting point – 20 years of competence based approach

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Political objectives of Finnish Qualification System 1.8.2015

- Competences needed in working life /LO's (KSC's)
- Correspondence with needs of working life
- Responsiveness

Strengthening

- Clarity
- Logic and consistency
- Holistic approach

- Flexibility
- Optionality
- Individual learning and qualification pathways
- Validation of LOs

Integrated ECVET implementation

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Statutes by Parliament, Government and MoEC

National Qualification Requirements for 52 upper secondary VQs by FNBE in tripartite cooperation

VET provider's curricula
+ matters concerning all education,
+ qualification –specific matters

Individual study plan incl. assessment plan

- Student together with teacher and guidance counsellor
- Based on student's individual objectives and choices
- Updating during education

Other FNBE Regulations

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Design, assessment, validation and recognition of competences/learning outcomes in Finland

Design

- National qualification requirements decided by FNBE
- Preparation of qualification requirements in tripartite expert groups
- Qualifications divided into units
- Units composed on basis of functions in working life

Assessment

- Skills demonstrations or competence–based test.
- Assessment based on qualitative criteria and achieved learning outcomes
- Tripartite assessment
- Assessment criteria of each unit at three levels.

Recognition Validation

- Recognition of prior learning regulated by legislation
- Recognition based on learning outcomes - not on learning time
- VET provider decides on the recognition
- For theory and practice one mark in certificate

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Competence points

- Allocation of competence points to a qualification
  - all upper secondary VQ 180 competence points
  - ECVET recommendation 60 points/year
- Allocation of competence points to units in national qualification requirements
  - according to scope of competence ,not learning time or teaching time
  - criteria for allocation: scope, complexity and significance of competencies to a each qualification
- Vocational qualifications completed as competence-based qualifications cover only vocational units and their scope is not defined in points

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Vocational Upper Secondary Qualifications 1.8.2015

- 52 Upper Secondary VET qualifications/120 competence areas - Scope of **180 competence points** (3 years)

Qualification includes:

- **vocational units** (compulsory and optional) **135 cp**
- **common units** (compulsory and optional) **35 cp**
- **free-choice units** **10 cp**

- Vocational units based of functions of working life
- Fragmentary and narrow core subject units merged into broader competence-based common units
- Flexible learning pathways
- At least 30 competence points of required competence must be to acquired by on-the-job learning

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What competencies/LOs can be recognized as part of upper secondary vocational qualification?

Competencies achieved in Hobbies Military/Civil service

Competencies gained at work

Competencies achieved during studies at upper secondary general school

Competencies achieved during studies abroad

Upper secondary vocational Qualifications, 180 cp
Vocational units, 135 cp
Common units, 35 cp
Free-choice units, 10 cp

Units of other/prior vocational qualification

Competencies achieved during studies e.g. at
- Preparatory trainings
- Folk high school
- Higher education/university of applied sciences

Special competencies (fire work license, hygiene pass etc.)

Units of further or special vocational qualification

Finnish targets of assessments vs. learning outcomes described in terms of ”KSC”

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Example of Individual learning pathway

Saamelaisalueen koulutuskeskus
Sámi oahpahusguovddáš
Sääm mättáättâskuávdáš
Sää'mvuu'd škoou'l'jemkõõskõs

Normal path

Fast track

Qualification

Opportunity path

With time

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Similar processes and documentation with focus on LOs

ECVET process

Before mobility → During mobility → After mobility

On-the-job learning process

Planning on-the-job learning → On-the-job learning and assessment → Recognition of competencies

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Challenges and key factors in ECVET implementation and VET reform

Challenges

- Need to change thinking and working culture and methods
- Deep rooting in all VET takes long time
- Differences between VET providers
- Involvement of all stakeholders, especially teachers

Solutions

- Political commitment
- Focus on learning outcomes and process
- Integrating ECVET/LO approach all the way from statutes to the teachers and students work
- Long-term commitment and work
- Involvement of all stakeholders
- Both top-down and bottom-up approach
- Support activities: financial support, materials, training

ECVET lessons learnt

1. Keeping it simple and understandable
2. Focus on process and learning outcomes

Inspiring and Strengthening the Competence-based approach in all VET in Finland

– Support material for implementation

Guidelines for education providers

http://www.oph.fi/english/publications/2015/inspiring_and_strengthening_the_competence-based_approach_in_all_vet_in_finland

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