

PLEASE NOTE! THIS IS PARALLEL PUBLISHED VERSION /
SELF-ARCHIVED VERSION OF THE OF THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE

This is an electronic reprint of the original article.
This version *may* differ from the original in pagination and typographic detail.

Author(s): Karttunen, Jari; Seppänen, Hannu

Title: Meaningful vocational training in Finland supporting each student's individual path to working

Year: 2021

Version: Published version

Please cite the original version:

Karttunen, J., & Seppänen, H. (2021). Meaningful vocational training in Finland supporting each student's individual path to working. *Evolving Pedagogy*. Published 23.8.2021.

URN: <http://urn.fi/urn:nbn:fi:jamk-issn-2489-2386-14>

Meaningful vocational training in Finland supporting each student's individual path to working

Authors: Jari Karttunen and Hannu Seppänen

Introduction

The reform of vocational upper secondary education in Finland started in 2017 by submitting a new act on vocational education and training (VET). At the beginning of the year 2018, the full reform of VET was launched throughout the country by new legislation of VET (Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta 531/2017). The aim of the reform was to update the entire VET. One of the intentions of the reform was to increase possibilities to study at workplaces by putting forward a new training agreement model and by increasing on-the-job learning possibilities (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017). The education providers are at different stages about possibilities of the law and its implementation. Awareness of working life opportunities for VET also varies widely (Ammatillisen koulutuksen viestintästrategia 2019).

The reform of VET coordinated the education provision with an emphasis on customers and competences. The core of VET is to recognise the broad range of students and tailoring learning to correspond to individual skills needs to become a professional, as the aim of the VET is taking into account the needs of the labour market and individual learners (Ministry of Education and Culture 2020; Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2020a; Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2019a, 7, 29). From the perspective of working life, VET should address the needs of different customer groups: on one hand, one's work life acts as an important customer and a partner for VET education providers; on the other hand, the students are customers (Ammatillinen koulutus 2018).

The new legislation of VET provides VET education providers wider possibilities for individual decision making and more freedom to create. The autonomy of the VET education providers has increased and it sends a strong signal to develop VET education in order to respond to the transformation of work life and skills.

The reform of the VET was made to respond more swiftly to the changes in work life and operating environment and to adapt to individual competence needs. This has meant that the responsibilities of a work community are broad, demanding and somewhat complex when it comes to learning-at-work. This includes particularly the responsibilities of a workplace instructor and the supervisor. A deep ethical view has to be taken into the practices guiding students and their learning at workplaces. Students are interested in the morale of the workplace that is connected and intertwined with good and sufficient performance of instructing the students at work. This can also be seen as one of the attraction factors for inviting new students to learning-at-work. The present and future of working life requires a new kind of competences and at the same time, there are different financial resources available for education. Vocational training has become performance-based, with a degree completion being part of the funding (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017).

The work-based component of VET studies is 80% or more in Finland and has been seen as one of the quality factors of Finnish VET education. Finland is amongst the one-third of OECD countries that during the last 6 years have reviewed and improved the certification of VET systems to align the skills and certification of VET systems with labour-market demand. This has been done in cooperation with work life and enterprises. (OECD 2020, 247-252.)

Finland has earned a reputation as a country with a high standard of education. For many consecutive years, Finland has been at the forefront of the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) surveys. This has also created a demand for education export. A high achieving VET education can now also be seen as one product to be exported. Preliminary sales strategies for export and the first steps have been made for exporting workplace instructor training. The advantages of selling workplace instructor training can be seen as part of developing company processes based on assessment and creating added value for the customers in working life. Organising the training can also be seen as an investment in lifelong learning of the employees and to deeper commitment to the employer (Walker 2015). In Finland, nearly 70 per cent of upper secondary students study in VET education programmes. This high percentage also includes a high number of adult students. By comparison, whereas VET students in other European countries are on average 17 years old, the age of the average VET student in Finland is 28 (OECD 2020, 250).

In this article, we structure the current VET and its role of individual study paths in VET. We take a look at the current legislation and guides of VET in Finland that strive for high quality of learning at work. VET in Finland is a customer-oriented practice and it requires good cooperation between student, VET teacher and workplace instructor. We describe the processes and cooperation between teachers and workplace instructors and structure them into practical skills and actions in the vein of the legislation and guides of VET. In the end, we present our situational awareness of the current situation and our requisite conclusions. In this article, we use a Personal Competence Development Plan (PCDP) as the translation of *Henkilökohtainen osaamisen kehittämissuunnitelma* (abbreviated as HOKS in the documents in Finnish). At the end of the article, we take a look at the VET teachers implementing the new VET education and conclude by reflecting on providing some improvements for the implementation of learning-on-the-job practices and their quality.

Students and their individual study paths

VET education is based on continuous learning. The core characteristics of the reform were firstly to increase working life-based learning methods which enable response to the transformation of working life and secondly to augment individual learning pathways in working life (Finnish National Agency for Education 2019; Ministry of Education and Culture 2017; Valtioneuvosto 2017). This has created a demand to train and upskill more workplace instructors with sufficient acquirement to plan, guide and assess the process of a student's learning at workplaces.

All students in VET study according to the PCDP. In VET, the student can acquire skills in full or in part in working life, by doing work (Opetushallitus 2020a). This enables the student to flexibly acquire competence in the form of an educational institution, an education contract

or an apprenticeship, whichever is the most suitable for the student and their individual study path formulated in cooperation with their teacher.

The key principles of VET education legislation are competency-based orientation, customer-orientation and working life orientation. The teacher identifies and acknowledges prior knowledge. It can be previous studies, work experience or skills acquired in hobbies. Competence-based practice as such does not recognise time-bound teaching and learning, but for each student, the study time and the way to acquire the missing competence in different learning environments is individual (Työelämässä oppimisen uudet mahdollisuudet 2019).

The training providers offer VET studies as full-time studies as well as multimodal studies. Different age students study together and have the same degree criteria and ways to show their skills. In Finland, pursuing a degree is seen as access to working life. A full professional degree is desirable for young students in order to obtain employment and a postgraduate qualification. Finns still strongly rely on Protestant Christian ethics, which are characterised by hard work and diligence. In 2014, a survey made by the Ministry of Employment and Economy stated that more than 30% of respondents described themselves as employees with these qualities (Pentikäinen, 2014, 23).

For an adult student, the needs to acquire vocational skills are dependent on the student's individual or the company's goals as well as needs of special skills and workmanship. An adult student may increase their skills by completing parts of the degree or by deepening their skills with a vocational or specialist vocational degree.

Prior to the signing of the student's training agreement or apprenticeship, the student's PCDP is prepared in which the student's skills, qualification requirements and workplace duties are combined. The plan defines what professional skill requirements of the qualification are learnt and assessed in the workplace. The teacher and student prepare the plan together (Opetushallitus 2020b).

The personalisation of studies is at the core of a teacher's work. It requires a wide range of knowledge and skills from the teacher. First of all, the teacher should familiarise themselves with the current legislation of vocational education as well as the basics of the degree. This requires the teacher to master skills of conversation, negotiation, guidance and counselling. The teacher should also identify the student's individual needs and provide them with appropriate study paths. The plan includes clear records of what, where and when the missing skills are acquired and when the student displays their skills on screen. The teacher must master the basic skills in a digital student management system and be able to record the plan in the system with sufficient accuracy. The teacher's responsibility is also to give the student career guidance during their studies (Finnish VET in a Nutshell, 12). The work of VET teachers has expanded from teaching to holistically managing students' individual study paths and counselling.

Learning is carried out in various environments, such as working life, the educational institution and virtual environments. Furthermore, learning is carried out flexibly at the student's own pace. A student may start their studies at any point during the semester. This includes a summer period when the student has the opportunity to acquire skills, for example, by working in the field with a training contract or an apprenticeship (Opetushallitus 2020b).

Diversity of learners and special educational support

VET in Finland is an inclusive education for all and supports equal opportunities. Due to this principle, special educational support is available for students in any vocational qualification programme. Nearly nine percent of VET students need special support and arrangements for their studies. The number has gradually increased since 2004. Eighty-six percent of students with special needs study in general learning environments and study groups. Just 1.2 percent of students receive the intensive special support provided by VET (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2019b). As early as 2016, ahead of the VET reform, Rätty stated that new thinking of possibilities and perspectives should be provided to develop special support and arrangements including adult students with special educational needs (Rätty 2016a, 132; 2016b). As the legislation of VET in 2018 combines the education of adults and young people into one, there are new opportunities to develop individual special support and arrangements. This is accomplished through the process and actualisation of PCDP.

Training for workplace instructors also involves skills for instructing and guiding students with special needs and learning disabilities. Reflecting on the implementation of the reform of vocational upper secondary education, Niemi & Jahnukainen (2018) write about VET students who have study-related needs for support. They stress the increase of the possibilities to study at workplaces by putting forward a new training agreement model and the addition of on-the-job learning possibilities. These benefit students with special needs in their VET studies. Niemi & Jahnukainen also suggest that VET education providers should assess students' opportunities to study in learning environments outside the VET colleges in order to find meaningful, interesting and individually designed pathways and places for learning on the job.

Furthermore, they stress the importance of workplace instructors. They should be trained to meet differently able students, including persons with physical or mental disabilities. This can be achieved through realisation of the pedagogical goals of work-based learning by the instructor, the supervisor and the workplace. There is a strong call for a sensitive guidance and for a plan for long-term guidance and support that benefits the learner (Niemi & Jahnukainen 2018). The implementation of the reform of vocational upper secondary education concerning individual pathways for learning-on-the-job for students with special needs can be seen in a state of initiation. The workplace instructors need more skills and information to meet differently abled students and their special needs.

The project Oppijan oikeus – opettajan taito (The Learner's Right: Teacher's Skill) involves nine universities including five universities of applied sciences offering professional teacher

education. The project identifies skills needed in different professional roles with regard to specific support and guidance of VET studies. Furthermore, it is bringing deep insight to the skills needed for collaboration, consultative work and networking. (Right to learn – Skills to teach 2018) The project will create vital information for VET teachers to further develop the performance of workplace instruction, learning-at-work, networking and cooperation and the good practices of the aforementioned to benefit students with special educational needs. However, in 2020, the Ministry of Education and National Board of Education stated that the possibilities of a three-leveled support for vocational studies should be explored. This is based on the basic education model and is seen as a quality factor. (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2020b.) Should this model be applied to vocational education, it puts more stress on the skills needed for collaboration, consultative work and networking, both on the teachers' side as well as workplace instructors.

The knowledge of instructing a student with special needs should also be perceived as one's right to learn as well as to strive for inclusion in studies and work life. The Ministry of Education and Culture stresses that the development of the access to employment leaves a lot to be desired. The ministry also states that more data on students and their learning paths should be produced in order to implement the reform of the VET (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2019a, 33).

Acquisition of competence in working life

The student's individual study path gives a student the possibility to pursue the majority of VET studies within working life. A student acts as an equal member of the work community. The student's learning community is increasingly transforming from VET colleges to workplaces (Opetushallitus 2020 b).

The acquisition of missing skills includes tasks trained under the guidance of a VET teacher and the workplace instructor. The timing of the acquisition of expertise is planned separately and written in a PCDP. The student has the right to receive feedback on their development of competence for the completion of the degree and during the acquisition of knowledge. The feedback related to the acquisition of expertise should be distinguished from feedback on the completion of the degree. The demonstration of competence must be clearly distinguished from the acquisition of competence. (Opetushallitus 2018).

The supervisor at the workplace has an obligation to select a workplace instructor, who is qualified and suitable for the student by their skills, education or work experience and who has been trained and instructed to act as an instructor (Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta). The reform of vocational upper secondary education, with its intention to increase the possibilities to study at workplaces, has also created an increasing demand for sufficient guidance skills of workplace instructors.

In a training agreement, a student cannot be employed. The agreement is based on a PCDP prepared with the student, on the basis of which the workplace instructor and the teacher agree on the acquisition of competence. (Molempi parempi – oppisopimus ja

koulutussopimus, Parasta palvelua -kehittämishanke). Another way of learning a profession is an apprenticeship. It is VET-based on a fixed-term employment contract made with an employer, and takes the form of on-the-job learning combined with theoretical instruction on courses. This means that an employer trains employees to pursue a VET degree or a certain unit of it. In an apprenticeship, a student works at least 25 hours per week. An apprenticeship student receives a salary for their work. The student's work duties are planned to support learning. Of the apprenticeship training, an average of 80% takes place in the workplace and the remaining 20% in an educational institution or e-learning online. The liaison between theoretical studies, practical know-how and skills support one another and the aim of becoming a skilled professional (Mikä on oppisopimus 2020).

The quality of workplace learning

Current legislation of VET and its implementation focuses on goal-oriented and systematic activity as well as ensuring the quality of VET. The teacher ensures that the student has sufficient capacity for learning in working life. The workplace instructor and the VET teacher plan the individual objectives for the student's workplace learning. The division of tasks between teacher and workplace instructor plays an important role in order to succeed. They should also have skills to structure special learning support and support the professional growth of the student. (Muistilista opettajille 2019)

The workplace instructor acts as a guide to learning as they have received formal information about VET via the teacher and the supervisor. Teacher provides support in training and assessing, orientates the workplace trainer in the qualification requirements and provides guidance for organising competence demonstrations at the workplace. The instructor informs other colleagues about vocational education and training. Workplace instructors demonstrate their competence by preparing for the familiarisation, guidance and feedback situations of practical work (the teacher and the networks supporting the workplace tutor).

To become a qualified workplace instructor, it is desirable to attend a vocational training that consists of five competence points. The content is regulated by the National Board of Education. The training may be executed as classroom learning or via e-learning. This training is also provided as an optional vocational qualification unit in all vocational upper secondary qualifications (ePerusteet 2020).

During the year 2020, the Finnish government provided funding worth 2.5 million euros to train more workplace instructors in order to increase the number of qualified instructors in VET (Amke 2019a). This has sent a strong signal to develop VET education and its customer-orientation equivalence of work life, development of co-operation and reciprocal actions to support learning and promotion of employment. Workplace instructors master the forms of providing vocational education and training and with vocational qualifications: vocational upper secondary qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications. The quality of workplace instruction is controlled by providing

and increasing the training of qualified workplace instructors (Työelämässä oppimisen ohjaaminen 2021).

The duties of a workplace instructor include orientating the student to the work community, work duties and working life. Workplace instructors participate in the planning, implementation and assessment of the apprenticeship and competence demonstrations. Instructors guide students in a goal-oriented manner and give feedback on the student's competence improvement. In addition, instructors guide students in cooperation with the education provider, teacher or other employees in the workplace. Each instructor is a contact person between the education provider and the workplace (Työelämässä oppiminen –tietopankki 2019). The instructor should take elementary precautions at the student's arrival and prepare their arrival in the workplace. The student is a future professional studying the skills for the job. Especially for younger students, an instructor is an example, not only of a professional, but also of an educator.

Getting to know the student's skills and competencies helps the planning of student's tasks at the workplace. The teacher may bring the workplace instructor general information about studies, learning goals and practical arrangements. The starting point for orientation is when a student visits the workplace for the first time (Arviointiopas työpaikoille 2019). Instruction requires workplace instructors to master both guidance and mentoring skills. The workplace instructor discusses and gives feedback on development and competence objectives achievement. In addition, the instructor supports the student in preparation for the skills demonstration. Mentoring entails advising, listening, supporting and encouraging students. Regular meetings with students helps their learning process. An instructor's mentoring skill is to observe possible critical points and provide feedback. The instructor is there for the student to receive constructive feedback on the student's work tasks (Muistilista ohjaajalle 2019).

Assessment discussions and decision of grades

The competence demonstration refers to the activity in which the student shows practical skills at the workplace. Each student's competence demonstration is designed individually. The demonstration of professionalism is designed individually with the student. The competence is displayed in the working environment. The planning is carried out by way of the student, the workplace instructor and the teacher. However, it is the teacher's responsibility to plan what is required for the degree of competence demonstration. In the competence demonstration, the students perform key work tasks for part of the degree and shows their skills to the workplace supervisors while working and discussing and justifying their activities and choices. The workplace instructor supports the student and takes notes on the student's competence. (Arviointiopas työpaikoille 2019. Ohjaan.fi)

The education provider nominates the assessors and ensures that the acting working life representatives, in their role as assessors, are familiar with their task. Two evaluators, a teacher and a workplace instructor, carry out the evaluation and decide on it (Osaamisen arviointi ammatillisessa koulutuksessa). Once sufficient competence has been achieved, the

student will finally display their competence in the workplace on competence demonstration. The duration of competence demonstration may vary from a few work shifts to an entire week (Arviointiopas työpaikoille 2019. Ohjaan.fi).

After the demonstration, the teacher and the workplace supervisor make a joint assessment of the student's competence. The student is assessed according to national assessment criteria. The student makes a self-assessment of their competence in evaluating the evidence, however this has no impact on the evaluation itself. The student has the opportunity to renew or increase the grade of a part of the degree. In connection with the evaluation of the competence demonstration, the teacher asks the workplace supervisor for feedback about the cooperation (Arviointiopas työpaikoille 2019 Ohjaan.fi).

The situational awareness of VET in Finland

From the point of view of the VET teachers, the time since the VET reform in 2018 has been quite stressful and demanding, given that there has been an enormous amount of changes as well as cuts of finances and resources. Wenström (2019) sees the teaching staff as the solution in the implementation of the changes. Wenström stresses that the VET teachers are the best specialists in their own work and its development after the full reform of vocational education and training was completed (Ibid. 66). This applies to the cooperation between the working life, workplaces and VET education providers.

The continuous learning and individual learning pathways in working life also play an important role in including everybody in studies and working life. Since 2011, the implementation of the education as well as Youth Guarantee serve Finland in pursuing the goal within the world's most talented nations. This goal has proved to be challenging (Lähteenmäki-Smith 2013, 19). In Finland, VET has been a slightly more popular choice amongst young people compared to the general upper secondary education. In 2019, 51 percent of the applicants sought a spot in VET, whereas 49 percent sought general upper secondary education (Vipunen 2019; National Board of Education 2019, 8). Some of the VET providers faced a drop of applicants from 2018 to 2019 whilst the reform of vocational upper secondary education was implemented. The accomplishment of the reform raised some criticism and negative media coverage about the reform and the reduced resources of the VET. This had a direct effect on the appeal of VET. In 2019, applicants were offered an average of 80,000 starting places in VET. A total of 72,100 applicants applied through the national joint application system (Vipunen 2019).

Finnish education policy sees formal education as a core value in the transition to employment and pursuing a good life. Therefore, young people under the age of 25 are guaranteed a place in education and employment, with the objective of preventing prolonged youth unemployment as well as the risk of social exclusion. This is implemented by offering support at an early stage with objectives to prevent the social exclusion and marginalisation of young generations (Nuorisotakuu 2019). The intentions of the VET reform together with strategic and leadership intents will strengthen a long-term guidance for quality management in VET (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2019b).

Amisbarometri 2019 (Barometer for VET 2019) published by The Finnish Association for the Development of Vocational Education and Training AMKE stated that 66% of respondents anticipate the need for workplace guidance training to increase the same time that learning at workplaces increases (Ågren 2019). This includes an important notification as well as vital pieces of information in exporting the workplace instructor training to other countries and applying to work cultures.

The situation of the skills of workplace instructors still leaves a lot to be desired. Even though there is an obligation by law for the workplace supervisor to select a qualified workplace instructor for a VET student, reality reveals darker shades: a sufficient amount of trained instructors still leave a lot to be desired. Even though the reformed learning-at-work practices strive for a better quality of VET learning and employment, *Opetusalan Ammattijärjestö OAJ*, the Trade Union of Education, published a survey for VET teachers about the experiences of the implementation of the reform. Every third teacher saw flaws in instructional skills of workplace instructors. Almost half of the respondents estimated that workplace instructors lacked some of the profound assessment skills of the students (OAJ 2019). The cooperation between VET institutions and work life needs to be closer. The workplace instructors should be provided with further training. The continuous learning pathways can facilitate this task. The know-how of VET teachers and their pedagogical knowledge can benefit this development challenge.

Conclusions

The new legislation of VET in 2018 brought up a new discourse in Finland: customer orientation in VET education. This is slightly problematic as customer orientation has not been amplified in the context of VET nor has it been defined in educational sciences (Karusaari 2020, 166). Work-oriented and work-based vocational pedagogy are the guidelines of the VET. The definition of customer orientation could be the key to understanding and defining pedagogy in relation to the customer orientation, nor has a competence-based benchmark been thoroughly defined in the context of VET.

In order to improve the implementation of learning-on-the job practices and its quality, the VET teachers should be provided with sufficient resources to develop and create good practices between the workplaces and the VET providers. New forms of collaboration should be developed and the responsibilities of the different parties should be redefined. In many cases, the responsibility of cooperation between these partners lies very much on the education providers. The teachers should make initiatives on how to improve this, or even conduct research on the matter. Furthermore, collection of data should be improved to develop the collaboration of the learning-on-the-job and the students' guidance at workplaces. The following are our suggestions of four key points for the evolution of high-quality workplace instruction.

Firstly, a good quality instruction is enabled by the education provided for workplace instructors and supervisors. To ensure a good quality as well as good practices of the workplace instruction, every one of the personnel instructing students at workplaces should complete VET education in workplace instruction. This would compliment the

objectives of new VET training in Finland and its outcomes. The providers of these educational programmes should make sure that these can be completed in English as well.

Secondly, instructing and supporting the student and their individual study and learning plan requires a sufficient amount of human resources at the workplace. Thirdly, a collaboration between school, the VET teachers and the workplace requires new practices to implement the above. To strengthen the cooperation between VET education and working life, a Nordic construction industry actor, Peab, is recruiting a teacher to enhance this work in Finland (Peab 2019). The full reform of VET made a cut of 690 million euros and has had a profound effect on how and with which resources learning-at-work can be developed later on. VET providers as well as working life both recognise the responsibilities of implementing the learning-on-the-job approach. However, the challenge is the collaboration and creation of effective practices which lead to restricted resources on both sides. In 2020, an allotment of 2.5 million euros was added to VET's funding to increase and improve the training of workplace instructors (Opetushallitus 2019). This could be seen as an opportunity to develop the current challenges mentioned above. And fourthly, although the transition of a student to achieve employment is important, this should not overshadow the other role of VET, which is to develop students' growth into being civilised people and members of society. This dual role is intertwined in the current legislation.

Eventually, the transformation of new thinking patterns takes time and so does creating new practices and cooperation. The VET teachers have taken the ride of a steep learning curve to overtake the new legislation as well as the actions of increasing possibilities to study at workplaces and on-the-job learning possibilities. Therefore, the core roles and responsibilities of a teacher, workplace instructor and supervisor at work should be crystal clear prior to a student's best possible learning-at-work as a transition to working life. Workplace instructor training is vital in this task being implemented jointly with the VET provider, with clear objectives and mutual motivation for the benefit of the student. Multi-professional support of the VET teacher and the workplace instructor fulfils students' best possible outcomes on their individual learning paths and helps students to grow into professionalism and being part of a working community.

The core characteristics of the VET reform, responding to the transformation of working life and augmenting individual learning pathways in working life, can only be ensured by quality assurance of instruction of the learning-on-the-job approach. According to the references and material of this article, the two key areas for improvement are providing additional training for workplace instructors and the cooperation between workplace and VET providers. This can be accomplished through deepening and strengthening the skills of a workplace instructor to instruct the students with different abilities and backgrounds effectively.

This can be made possible, for example, through degree-specific workplace counseling (Acting as a workplace instructor, Työpaikkaohjaajana toimiminen 30 cr) studies. The workplace instructors are able to plan on-the-job training and demonstration of

competence, guide the student and give feedback on students' development, assess each student's competence on display, act as a member of the work community and evaluate their own activities as a workplace instructor.

The goal of the current government programme is to jointly develop operating models and procedures for the personalisation and apprenticeship and training of the contract service process. This is done by the Ministry of Education and Culture to support VET providers to achieve this goal. Through common policies, the ministry ensures that full-time study days and weeks are realised and that teaching, guidance and study support are adequately targeted at students who need special educational support for their earning and studies.

Compulsory education is expanding and secondary education will become free of charge for young people covered by the extended compulsory education. The Compulsory Education Act will enter into force on 1 August 2021, but the provisions concerning the obligation to apply entered into force on 1 January 2021. The obligation to apply for and continue in secondary education practically affects those young people who are in the 9th grade of basic education in the spring of 2021. From this final age group on basic education, the extension of compulsory education will apply to all young people moving from primary to secondary education (Oppivelvollisuuden laajentaminen, OPH 2021).

The work of a VET teacher has changed in great measure. Teachers should be acquainted with the current legislation and know the qualification requirement and its application to customer orientation in VET. They should also be familiar with the various options for acquiring competence and maintaining and acquiring working life contacts. The teacher benefits greatly from having knowledge of customer relationship management when acting with student customers and working life customers. A change from group-based teaching to individual planning of studies can be seen as a key factor of high-quality VET education and responding to the needs of a skilled workforce in a cost-effective manner.

An additional challenge to all of the above was the Covid-19 pandemic. The lockdown of VET institutions in spring 2020 was not a pedagogical decision. It seems that the teaching staff has acquired new skills for remote teaching in various environments. A giant step forward has been made in developing meaningful e-learning experiences. Special educational support has also been generated for distance learning. This has enabled the students to pursue the competences needed for employability. The VET teachers have been shown to be resilient and creative in educating future professionals. The core of VET customer orientation, skills and competences has not been overshadowed by the exceptional circumstances caused by the pandemic.

Authors

Jari Karttunen works as a Senior Lecturer at JAMK University of Applied Sciences working at the [Vocational Special Needs Teacher](#) Education as well as the further educations for teaching staff. He has trained workplace instructors and supervisors in guiding students with special educational needs. jari.karttunen@jamk.fi

Hannu Seppänen works as Vocational Teacher, Worklife Coordinator Teacher at Keski-Uudenmaan Koulutuskuntayhtymä and Yhdessä Parasta! -Regional Project Coordinator. He is trained workplace instructors in social and health care and service field. hannu.seppanen@keuda.fi

References

- Amke 2019a. Ammatilliseen koulutukseen luvassa maltillisia panostuksia. Published September 18, 2019. Retrieved 8 May 2021 from <https://www.amke.fi/ajankohtaista/uutiset/uutinen/ammattilliseen-koulutukseen-luvassa-maltillisia-panostuksia.html>
- Amke 2019b. Vieraskielinen ammatillinen koulutus. Ammatilliset perustutkinnot, jotka voidaan järjestää englanniksi tai venäjäksi. Published April 5, 2019. Retrieved 5 December 2020 from https://www.amke.fi/media/grafiikka/2019/vieraskielinen_ammattillinen_koulutus_2019_2.pdf
- Ammatillinen koulutus 2018. Työelämän näkökulma 03/2018. Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö. Published 03/2018. Retrieved May 11, 2021 from <https://minedu.fi/documents/1410845/7131162/AM+reformin+p%C3%A4%C3%A4linjat+ty%C3%B6el%C3%A4m%C3%A4n+n%C3%A4k%C3%B6kulma+FINAL.pdf/4df85e27-6b7e-4d38-a437-1939e12fc51b/AM+reformin+p%C3%A4%C3%A4linjat+ty%C3%B6el%C3%A4m%C3%A4n+n%C3%A4k%C3%B6kulma+FINAL.pdf>
- Ammatillisen koulutuksen viestintästrategia 2019. Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö. Published 11.3.2019. Retrieved 7 May 2021 from <https://minedu.fi/documents/1410845/13805345/Viestintästrategia+ammattillinen+koulutus+11.3.2019.pdf/1d968bdd-7db7-8651-8d2f-006d10a536be/Viestintästrategia+ammattillinen+koulutus+11.3.2019.pdf>
- Arviointiopas työpaikoille 2019 Retrieved 8 May 2021. Ohjaan.fi [https://blogit.gradia.fi/parasta_osaamista/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2019/08/Arviointiopas_ty%C3%B6paikoille NETTI.pdf](https://blogit.gradia.fi/parasta_osaamista/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2019/08/Arviointiopas_ty%C3%B6paikoille_NETTI.pdf)
- Eperusteet. Työpaikkaohjaajaksi valmentautuminen 5 osaamispistettä. Rakennusalan perustutkinto. Koodi: 101040. Opintopolku. Retrieved 16 December 2020 from <https://eperusteet.opintopolku.fi/#/fi/esitys/1724170/ops/tutkinnonosat/1724057>
- Finnish VET in a nutshell. Finnish National Agency for Education. Retrieved 2 April 2021 from <https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/finnish-vet-in-a-nutshell.pdf>
- Karusaari, R. 2020. Asiakaslähtöisyys osaamisperusteisessa ammatillisessa koulutuksessa. Acta electronica Universitatis Lapponiensis 273. Retrieved 2 May 2021 from <https://lauda.ulapland.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/64059/Karusaari.Riitta.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

- Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta. Finlex 531/2017. Retrieved 8 May 2021 from <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2017/20170531#Pidp447122560>
- Lähteenmäki-Smith Kaisa 2013. Komission Sosiaalisen yhteenkuuluvuuden suosituksen täytäntöönpano Suomessa. Kansallista toimintapolitiikkaa koskeva selvitys. EU Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion. Rambøll management consulting.
- Mikä on oppisopimus 2020. Oppisopimuskoulutus. Retrieved 8 May 2021 from <https://www.oppisopimus.fi/opiskelijalle/oppisopimuskoulutus/>
- Ministry of Education and Culture 2017. Reform of vocational upper secondary education. Retrieved 8 May 2021 from <https://minedu.fi/en/reform-of-vocational-upper-secondary-education>
- Ministry of Education and Culture 2020. Reform of vocational upper secondary education. Retrieved 8 May 2021 from <https://minedu.fi/en/reform-of-vocational-upper-secondary-education>
- Molempi parempi – oppisopimus ja koulutussopimus. Esite työelämälle. Parasta palvelu -kehittämishanke. Retrieved 5 May 2021 from <https://trello.com/c/rwImI975/38-molempi-parempi-tv%C3%A5-v%C3%A4gar-samma-m%C3%A5l-ty%C3%B6el%C3%A4m%C3%A4lle-arbetslivet>
- Muistilista ohjaajalle 2019. Ohjaan.fi. 5/2019. Retrieved April 18 2021 from https://blogit.gradia.fi/parasta_osaamista/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2019/08/Muistilista_ohjaajalle_NETTI.pdf
- Muistilista opettajille Ohjaan.fi. 5/2019. Retrieved April 18 2021 from https://blogit.gradia.fi/parasta_osaamista/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2019/08/Muistilista_opettajille_NETTI.pdf
- Oppivelvollisuuden laajentaminen. Opetushallitus 2021. Retrieved April 18 2021 from <https://www.oph.fi/fi/kehittaminen-ja-kansainvalisyys/oppivelvollisuuden-laajentaminen>
- Osaamisen arviointi ammatillisessa koulutuksessa. Opetushallitus. Retrieved 5 May 2021 from <https://www.oph.fi/fi/koulutus-ja-tutkinnot/osaamisen-arviointi-ammattillisessa-koulutuksessa>
- National Board of Education 2019. Finnish VET in a Nutshell. 3. uudistettu painos. VET in Finland series published by National Board of Education and Ministry of Culture and Education. Retrieved 16 September 2020 from <https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/finnish-vet-in-a-nutshell.pdf>
- Niemi, A.-M., & Jahnukainen, M. (2018). Tuen tarve, työelämäpainotteisuus ja itsenäisyyden vaatimus ammatillisen koulutuksen kontekstissa. Ammattikasvatuksen aikakauskirja, 20(1), 9–25. Ammatillisen koulutuksen tutkimusseura OTTU ry. Retrieved 2 May 2021 from https://akakk.fi/wp-content/uploads/Vuoden-artikkeli-2018_Niemi-Jahnukainen.pdf
- Nuorisotakuu 2019. What is the Youth Guarantee? Retrieved 5 May 2021 from <https://nuorisotakuu.fi/frontpage>

- OAJ 2019. Uudistus ilman resursseja. Selvitys opettajien kokemuksista ammatillisen reformin jälkeen. Opetusalan Ammattijärjestö OAJ 13.9.2019. Retrieved 5 May 2021 from <https://www.oaj.fi/contentassets/f82267bcbdb949858fe33524ee3d2b57/uudistus-ilman-resursseja.pdf> =
- OECD 2020. Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing Paris. Retrieved 5 May 2021 from <https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>
- Opetushallitus 2018. Näytöt ja osaamisen arviointi -opas. Retrieved 5 May 2021 from <https://eperusteet.opintopolku.fi/eperusteet-service/api/dokumentit/4614532#:~:text=N%C3%A4yt%C3%B6t%20ovat%20osa%20tutkinnon%20j%C3%A4rjest%C3%A4mist%C3%A4,N%C3%A4yt%C3%B6ss%C3%A4%20opiskelija%20osoittaa%20osaamistaan.>
- Opetushallitus 2019. 5. Ammatillinen koulutus. 5.1. rahoitettava toiminta ja rahoituksen yleiset perusteet. Julkaistu 19.12.2019. Retrieved 10 January 2021 from https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/05_ammattillinen_koulutus-002.pdf
- Opetushallitus 2020a. Työelämässä oppiminen. Ammatillinen koulutus. Työelämässä oppiminen. Retrieved 10 January 2021 from <https://www.oph.fi/fi/koulutus-ja-tutkinnot/tyoelamassa-oppiminen>
- Opetushallitus 2020b. Henkilökohtaistaminen. Koulutus ja tutkinnot. Ammatillinen koulutus. Retrieved 10 January 2021 from <https://www.oph.fi/fi/koulutus-ja-tutkinnot/henkilokohtaistaminen>
- Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2019a. Ammatillisen koulutuksen vaativan erityisen tuen kehittämisryhmän ehdotukset. Kehittämisryhmän loppuraportti. Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriön julkaisuja 2019:23. Retrieved 5 May 2021 from <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/161647/OKM%202019%2023%20Ammatillisen%20koulutuksen%20vaativa%20erityinen%20tuki.pdf>)
- Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2019b. Kohti huippulaatua. Ammatillisen koulutuksen laatustrategia vuoteen 2030. Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriön julkaisuja 2019:29. Retrieved 5 May 2021 from http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/161772/OKM_2019_29%20Kohti%20huippulaatua.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2020a. Retrieved 5 May 2021 from <https://minedu.fi/amisreformi>
- Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2020b. Ammatillisen koulutuksen laadun ja tasa-arvon kehittämisohjelma. Hankkeet ja säädösvalmistelu. Oikeus osata -ohjelma. Published 9.6.2020. Retrieved 5 May 2021 from <https://minedu.fi/oikeusosata#1>
- Osaamisen arviointi ammatillisessa koulutuksessa. Koulutus ja tutkinnot. Ammatillinen koulutus. Arviointi ja todistukset. Osaamisen arviointi. Retrieved 5 May 2021 from
- <https://www.oph.fi/fi/koulutus-ja-tutkinnot/osaamisen-osoittaminen-ja-arviointi#a3c30a0b>

- Pentikäinen Leena (submitted) 2014. Katsaus suomalaisen työn tulevaisuuteen. Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriön julkaisuja. Työ ja yrittäjyys 30/2014. Retrieved 5 May 2021 from <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/documents/1410877/2859687/Katsaus+suomalaisen+ty%C3%B6n+tulevaisuuteen+09092014.pdf>
- Right to learn – Skills to teach 2018. Information about the project. Häme University of Applied Sciences. Retrieved 5 May 2021 from <https://www.hamk.fi/projects/right-to-learn-skills-to-teach/?lang=en>
- Rätty Kaisa 2016a. Erityinen tuki elinikäisen oppimisen mahdollistajana ammatillisessa aikuiskoulutuksessa. Helsingin yliopisto Käyttätymistieteellinen tiedekunta Opettajankoulutuslaitos. Tutkimuksia 383. Yliopistopaino Unigrafia Helsinki.
- Rätty Kaisa 2016b. Erityinen tuki mahdollistaa ammatillisen aikuiskoulutuksen laajemmalle kohderyhmälle. AMKE blogi 13.04.2016. Retrieved 10 January 2021 from <https://www.amke.fi/ajankohtaista/blogi/kirjoitus/erityinen-tuki-mahdollistaa-ammattillisen-aikuiskoulutuksen-laajemmalle-kohderyhmalle.html>
- The teacher and networks supporting the workplace tutor? Ohjaan.fi. Retrieved 8 May 2021. <https://ohjaan.fi/en/roles-and-tasks/the-teacher-and-networks-supporting-the-workplace-tutor/>
- Työelämässä oppiminen – tietopankki 2019. Retrieved 10 January 2021 from <https://trello.com/b/wsHJryxf/ty%C3%B6el%C3%A4m%C3%A4ss%C3%A4-oppiminen-tietopankki>
- Työelämässä oppimisen ohjaaminen 2021. Verkkokoulutus. Ohjaan.fi. Retrieved 08 May 2021. <https://ohjaan.fi/tyoelamassa-oppimisen-ohjaaminen-verkkokoulutus/tyoelamassa-oppimisen-ohjaaminen-verkkokoulutus-ilmoittautuminen/>
- Työelämässä oppimisen uudet mahdollisuudet 2019. Uudistutaan yhdessä! Mikä on muuttunut? Koulutuksen järjestäjän ydinprosessit ja yhteinen osaaminen. Retrieved 10 January 2021 from <https://trello.com/c/0oUHD6HZ/130-uusity%C3%B6el%C3%A4m%C3%A4ss%C3%A4-oppimisen-uudet-mahdollisuudet-opas>
- Valtioneuvosto 2017. New Vocational Education And Training As Of 1 January 2018. Government proposal 2017. Retrieved 10 January 2021 from https://valtioneuvosto.fi/documents/1410845/4203924/OKM_uusi_ammattillinen_koulutus_Englanti_200417.pdf/8af1d772-883f-4a90-bcd6-3bbfab9a337a/OKM_uusi_ammattillinen_koulutus_Englanti_200417.pdf
- Vipunen 2019. Haku ja valinta. Retrieved 10 January 2021 from <https://vipunen.fi/fi-fi/yhteiset/Sivut/Hakeneet-ja-hyv%C3%A4ksytyt.aspx>
- Walker Katarina 2015. Työpaikkaohjaajakoulutusta maailman markkinoille. In publication: Suomalaisia ammatillisia tutkintoja maailmalle. [Ammattillinen koulutusvienti](http://www.ammattillinenkoulutusvienti.fi). Koulutusvientikokeilun koordinoitihanke VETFI. Retrieved 10 January 2021 from <https://www.ammattillinenkoulutusvienti.fi/>
- Wenström Sanna 2019. Enthusiasm as a driving force in vocational education and training (VET) teachers' work. – Defining positive organization and positive

leadership in VET. Academic dissertation. Faculty of Education at the University of Lapland. TActa electronica Universitatis Lapponiensis 269. Retrieved 7 May 2021 from <https://lauda.ulapland.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/64034/Wenstrom.Sanna.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

- Ågren Satu 2019. Ammattiosaamisen barometri 2019. Ammattiosaamisen kehittämissyhdystys AMKE ry. Retrieved 8 May 2021 from https://www.amke.fi/media/julkaisuja/2019/ammattiosaamisen_barometri_2019.pdf

ARTICLE URN: <http://urn.fi/urn:nbn:fi:jamk-issn-2489-2386-14>