



New Qualifications and
Competencies in TVET

Individual Learning Pathways

Submitted by **Omnia, Finland**

BILT Innovation and Learning Practice



Following major TVET reforms in Finland that came into effect in January 2018, the Finnish TVET system began to offer individual learning pathways in order to enhance students' success and make TVET more attractive. As a result, students follow a learning pathway at their own pace, which can be at different learning locations. Teachers and tutors play an important role in this process, and accordingly, their role is changing as they become more mentors and coaches.

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- Start date: 01/2019
 - Type of implementing institution:
Joint Authority
 - Target group: TVET students

Omnia, Finland

Omnia is a large and modern provider of education that offers a wide range of services with a focus on supporting lifelong learning. The institution is promoting inclusion, skills and the well-being of citizens and boosting the vitality of municipalities, communities and enterprises of the Espoo region in Finland.

Description of activities

The 2018 reform of the Finnish TVET system requires all TVET providers to guarantee individual study programmes with individualized learning times to achieve a TVET qualification. A guiding principle is that 'competence counts', while the time used for studies does not matter: a student may choose the most suitable study path according to their goals and only needs to acquire missing competences. Accordingly, Omnia wants to offer different learning environments to acquire competences, meaning that students can choose how and where they want to study (school environment, work-based learning, or online learning). Another key idea is continuous competence development, as more than half of TVET students in Finland are between 20–60 years old.

At Omnia, different developer-teacher roles were created to support these processes. These developer-teachers offer peer support in their work community by helping, advising and encouraging colleagues to face everyday challenges and changing situations. They also support the management of Omnia.

The new roles include the following:

- Pedagogical Peer Coaches, who are responsible for Omnia's pedagogical development. They encourage and inspire colleagues to explore and adopt new pedagogical approaches.
- Qualification Coordinators, who ensure the quality of personal competence development plans and the assessment of competencies. Additionally, they work with learners to ensure their application process is completed smoothly.
- Digital Tutor Teachers, who act as a peer support network for colleagues and promote effective online pedagogical practices.
- Work life Cooperation Coordinators, who develop opportunities for collaboration through building external partnerships.

- International Exchange Coordinators, who work with faculty and learners to increase international exchange opportunities and improve the quality of those experiences.

Added value

What current challenges does your initiative address?

As working life undergoes fundamental changes, TVET needs to adapt more to individual student needs, and also to anticipated future needs of working life. Additionally, teachers' and trainers' work is becoming more diverse. They need support from colleagues and their institution, as their role changes and they perform more as tutors and mentors within individualized learning pathways. This transition requires new teaching skills and materials. While traditional teaching and pedagogy are challenged, the reform also provides the opportunity to create a new culture of learning.

Why is this initiative a success?

The Finnish education reforms resulted in education becoming more competence-based, and customer-oriented. This has promoted and increased learning in the workplace and provides flexible learning options including how and where students can study. The emphasis on supporting teaching and training staff has promoted skills development and expansion, as the role of the teacher has changed to encompass new competencies and skillsets.

What is the added value of this example?

Various points highlight the added value, including:

- Increased flexibility for students, which improves the quality of studies
- Competent and relevant education for students and the work life
- Students are offered more support and guidance
- Closer cooperation with external stakeholders to allow students to practise real-world tasks in actual workplaces
- Improved overall quality of TVET and consistent operating methods by TVET providers
- Implementing shared leadership at the TVET provider, organizing the work of a large organization together
- A teacher peer support network is important, allowing the sharing of effective practices and inspiring each other

Impact on curricula

What implications does this example have for current or future curricula?

In Finland, the personalization of learning pathways requires more flexible curricula that are able to respond to individual learners and the competencies they need to acquire.

How does this example impact TVET systems?

The Finnish reform of the TVET system which resulted in the creation of individual learning pathways has an impact on local and national levels.

How does this example respond to industry and social demands?

TVET programmes correspond better to the local needs of the labour market because more learning takes place at work. The possibility for flexible studies enhances social inclusion, as more target groups can be reached.

Transferability

Which components of this practice may have practical value to other UNEVOC Centres/TVET institutions?

This example has shown what benefits TVET providers can receive when they form closer ties with the private sector, in order to create opportunities for students to practise what they have learned. This also benefits industry, because it has access to the workforce and can train learners using current technology and best practices. A renewed focus on improving support for teachers, particularly as they transition to new roles, is also beneficial and can serve as one method for other TVET stakeholders to consider.

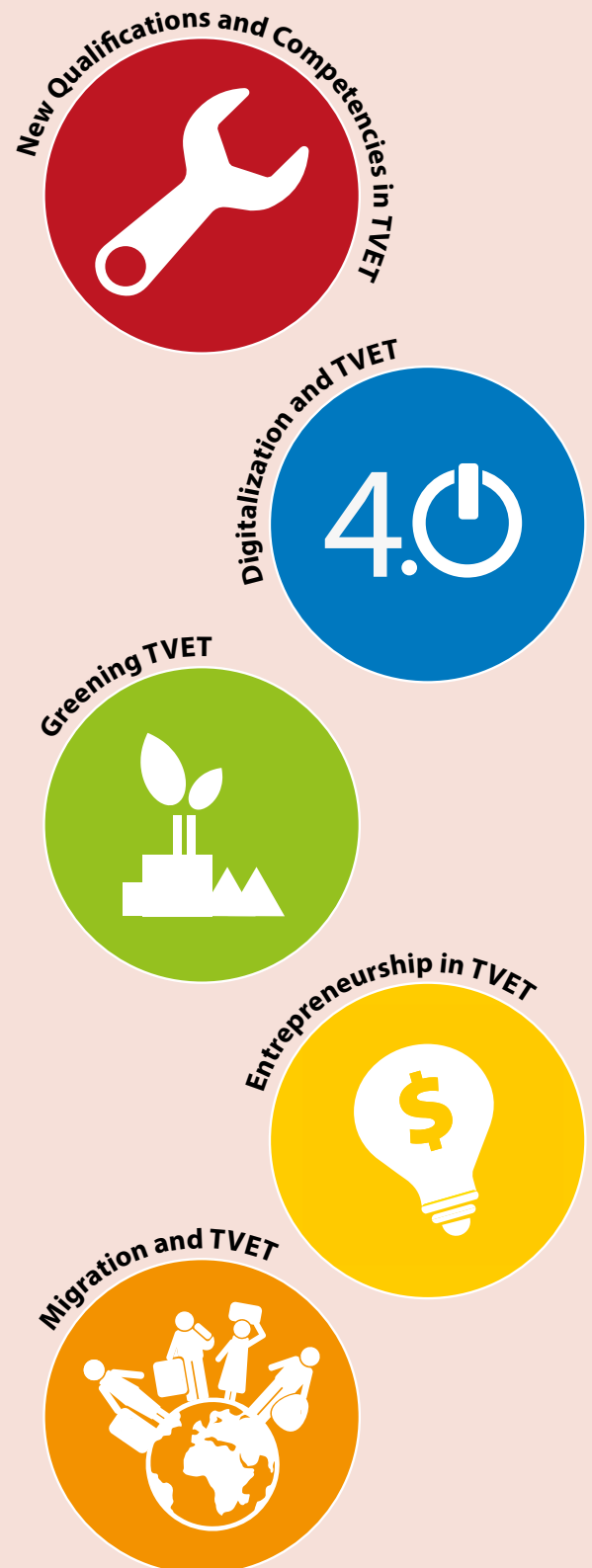
What challenges do you see if transferred to another context?

The biggest challenge will be attempting to replicate the scale of the Finnish educational reforms, which were country-wide. Such changes elsewhere will require human and financial resources and investment to complete. Additionally, a comprehensive system to support teachers and provide opportunities to learn new teaching skills is required, and ensuring this reflects the changing role of teachers and instructors in such an individualized TVET system is a key element.

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- More about Finnish VET system:
<https://www.oph.fi/en/education-system/finnish-vocational-education-and-training>

Part of the BILT project involves collecting Innovation and Learning Practices that address systemic challenges within the five work streams of the project, with the purpose to understand what elements lead to their success and can be transferrable to other contexts.*

Access more BILT Innovation and Learning practices in the thematic areas of:



*UNESCO-UNEVOC does not endorse any of the practices included in this database and is not responsible for their management or implementation.



The Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) project focuses on consolidating the European UNEVOC Cluster. To do this, BILT seeks to strengthen the European UNEVOC Network and to enlarge its membership through the addition of new, active members. One important element of BILT is a bridging and knowledge exchange between European UNEVOC Centres and TVET stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific and African regions, which begins in 2020.

At its core, BILT addresses TVET challenges in five thematic areas, or 'work streams' that participating UNEVOC Centres and other TVET stakeholders collectively engage with. Within BILT these are:

- New Qualifications and Competencies in TVET;
- TVET for digital economies;
- Green and sustainable TVET;
- TVET as a stimulator of entrepreneurial cultures; and
- TVET opportunities for the integration of migrants and refugees.

The work stream 'New Qualifications and Competencies' serves as an overarching topic for BILT, underpinned by the four other thematic areas of Digitalization, Greening, Entrepreneurship, and Migration. In addressing these work streams BILT will share information, generate new knowledge, and provide a platform for regional cooperation in TVET to support implementation efforts at national and institutional levels now and in the future.

In addition to regular knowledge exchange within Europe via thematic project activities and expert groups, BILT will hold annual bridging events with Asian and African UNEVOC Centres and TVET stakeholders. The participating institutions will disseminate results of ongoing activities during 'BILT Learning Summits', which also provide networking and planning opportunities for future BILT events.

BILT is a collaboration between UNEVOC Network members, co-ordinated by the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for TVET, in partnership with the German Federal Institute for Technical and Vocational Training (BIBB), and implemented with the financial support of the German Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF).

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