



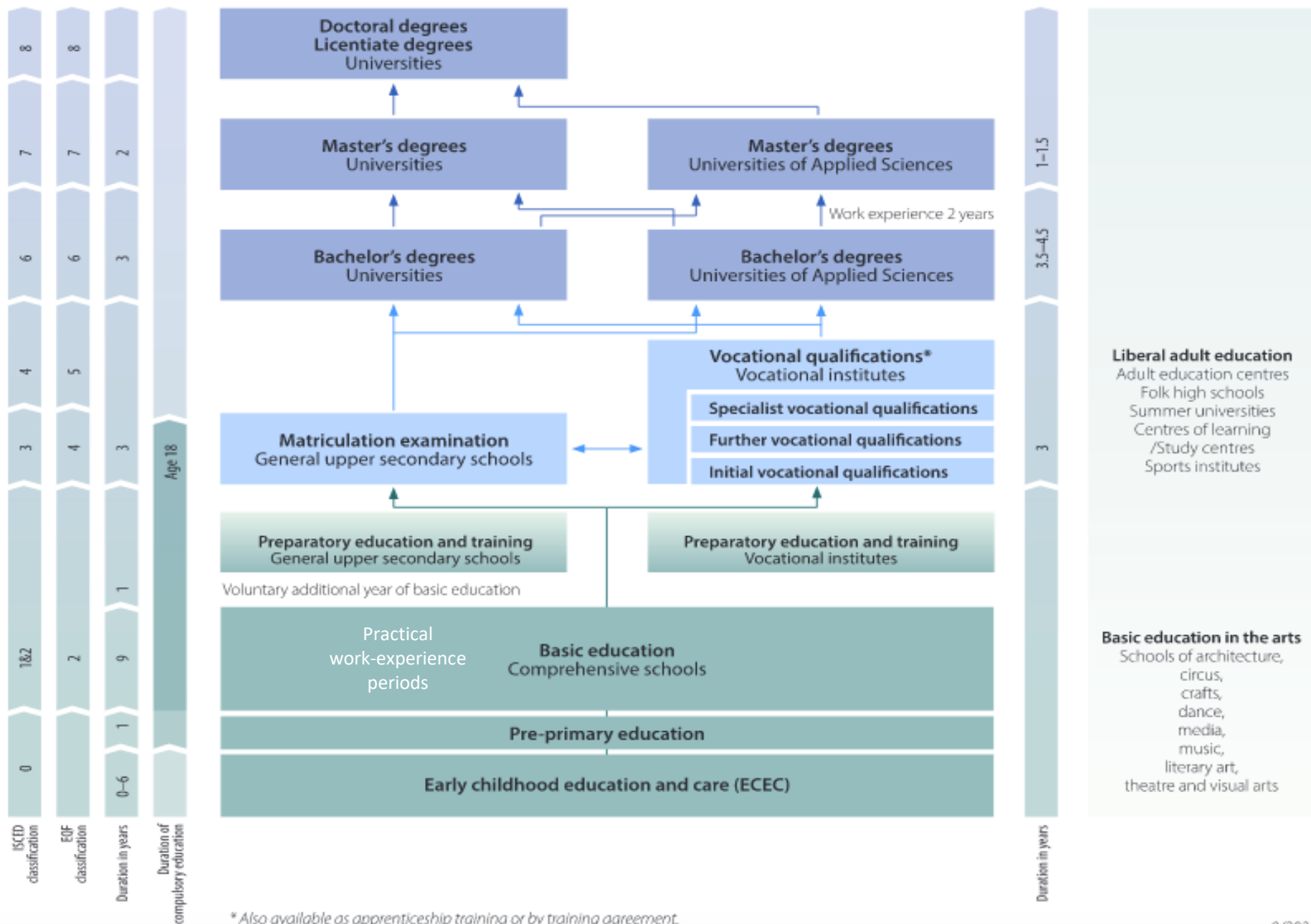


# Practical work-experience period as a student entitlement in Finland

*Jaana Kettunen & Raimo Vuorinen  
Finnish Institute for Educational Research,  
University of Jyväskylä, Finland*



# EDUCATION SYSTEM IN FINLAND





# Career Education

- The Basic Education Act (628/1998, § 11) states that every pupil is entitled to adequate career guidance services (§ 30)
- Career education is a compulsory element in the curriculum
  - in grades 1-6, guidance is embedded in the work of the classroom teachers
  - during grades 7-9 (ages 13-16), comprising 76 hours of scheduled activities in students' timetables.
  - In addition, there is an entitlement for individual guidance and group counselling, and practical work-experience periods (TET) in companies/workplaces.





# Extension of compulsory education in 2021

- Providers of comprehensive school education will have a duty to intensify guidance and counselling in years 8 and 9 of compulsory school with a focus on preparing students for the next phase of studies.
- Before the end of the final year of comprehensive school education, students need to apply to for upper secondary education, transition phase education or another kind of education within the scope of compulsory education. The obligation to apply will continue until the student has found a place to study.





## Extension of compulsory education in 2021 (2)

- Once learners have completed comprehensive education, the provider of comprehensive school education remains responsible for guiding, supporting and supervising the learners' performance of compulsory education until they begin their studies in the next phase of education.
- When a student starts in upper secondary education, the provider of the upper secondary education or vocational education becomes responsible for guiding, supporting and supervising the student.





# Career Education

- The National Agency for Education draws the core curriculum (2016) which sets key learning objectives for learning within comprehensive education, including career education
- The local institutions are required to have an institutional curriculum, which includes a description of co-operation with the local labour market and business community
- The instruction in the other school subjects is to include modules that connect the knowledge and skills provided by the subject to the demands and possibilities of working life.
- The emphasis is on the promotion of CMS as an explicit competence area, not only on the choice of next school level.



# Links between career education and transversal competences in the national core curricula in Finland – whole school approach

(Finnish National Board of Education 2014)



## Objectives for Career Education, grades 7-9

- Engagement and active citizenship
- Learning to learn
- Lifelong learning
- Self-awareness
- Setting goals
- Focus on working life
- LMI in career planning
- Cultural awareness and internationalisation



## Objectives for transversal competences in comprehensive education

- *Thinking and learning to learn (C1)*
- *Cultural competences, communication (C2)*
- *Self management in daily life (C3)*
- *Multiliteracy (C4)*
- *Digital competences (C5)*
- *Working life competences and entrepreneurial skills (C6)*
- *Engagement, influencing sustainable future (C7)*



# Career Education in practice

- In general, guidance services are provided and co-ordinated by full-time school counsellors, who must have legally defined qualifications and are employed by the schools.
- They are in charge of the timetabled career education sessions, group activities, individual guidance and co-operation with employers and stakeholders.
- School counsellors co-operate with group tutors who support their own students on daily activities. Also, all teachers are expected to instruct their students in study skills in particular
- Although career education has similar status as other subjects in the curricula, the students are given no credentials.
- Formative evaluation is based on students' self-assessment as well as on interactions, guiding and encouraging feedback in conjunction with different guidance activities.





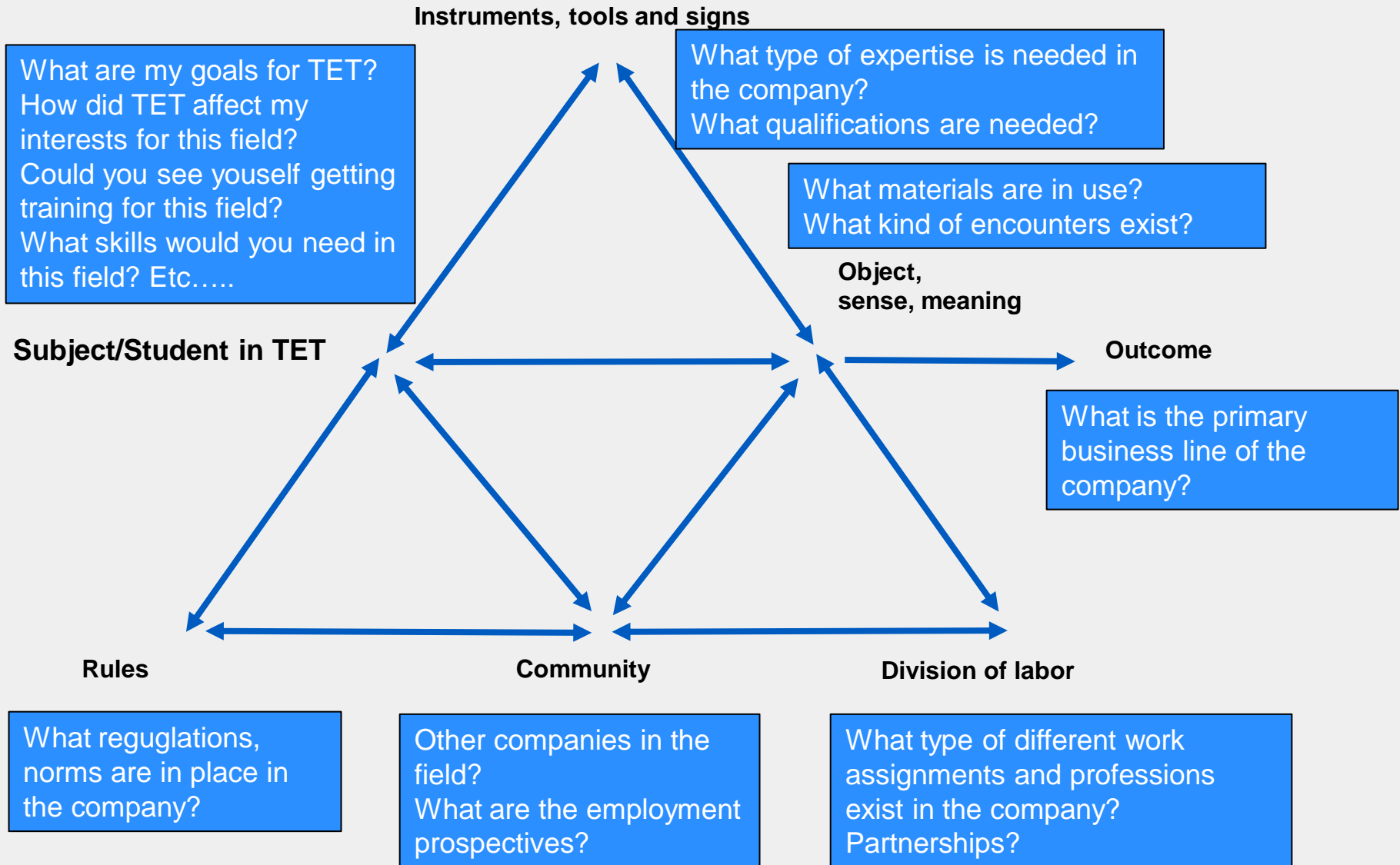
# Introduction to working life (TET)

- cooperation with employers an integral part of the pedagogy

- A compulsory element in career education for all 13-16 years old students in comprehensive education in Finland.
- The TET periods are organised as a basis for students' educational and occupational choices.
  - **In the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and 9<sup>th</sup> grade, each student joins a local company/organisation for a week, so as to gain personal experience with working life and professions**
    - Students are informed about the “job offerings” and are encouraged to contact directly their potential employers for more details on their foreseen responsibilities and apply for those they are interested in.
    - Prior to their introduction to a working environment, students set up a plan along with their school counsellor. After the end of their TET period, students can share their reports and experiences based on a common reference structure so as to compare them and enable knowledge exchange and mutual learning.
    - During the TET period student obtain knowledge about working life, the links between different fields of education and industry, the qualifications needed and the respective study opportunities. They become aware of their own possibilities to have influence on the planning and decisions concerning their own future.

# Indicative case: General model of an activity system as a pedagogical framework for assignments during TET...

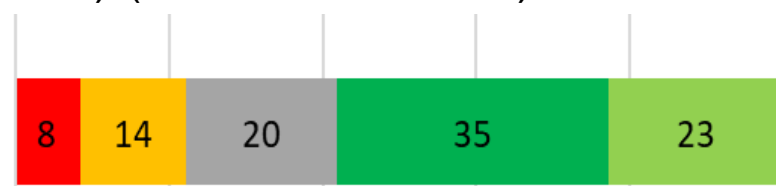
(Engeström, 1987, p. 78).



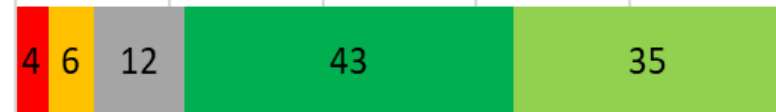


## Student experiences of the practical introduction to working life (TET/CEE) (n=13702 – 14379)

I had opportunity (TET) to familiarise with different jobs and working life (x = 3,5)



During the TET i gained more information about working life (x = 4,0)



The TET experience was useful when I made choices on studies after basic education (x = 3,1)



0 % 20 % 40 % 60 % 80 % 100 %

- Fully disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither disagree or agree
- Somewhat agree
- Fully agree



## Students

- information about the work practice vacancies
- information about different occupations and local companies
- information about the initial vocational study



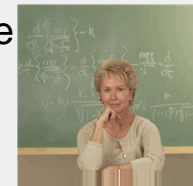
## Companies

- chance of being introduced to schools
- informs about the work practice vacancies
- can easily maintain and update own information
- material for the periods
- foster the co-operation



## Study counsellors

- info about work practice vacancies
- material for the periods
- motivates to collaborate



## Parents

- basic information about the work practice period
- information about the initial vocational study programmes in upper secondary

<https://peda.net/tet>



# National core curriculum

## – local adaptations

- As Finnish education is highly decentralized, schools and teachers have autonomy in planning and implementing career education in the classrooms.
- Although the overall structure and objectives are well defined in the national core curriculum implementation is not specified in detail.
- It follows that activities tend to reflect teachers' own conceptions of career education and CMS acquisition, including their understanding of the changing world of work.



**Table I.** Finnish Guidance Counselors' Conceptions of Career Management Skills (CMS).

Dimensions of variation	Categories			
	Information-based knowledge	Personal skills development	Interpersonal skills development	Autonomous application of skills
Awareness of CMS	Unfamiliar	Vague	Good	Comprehensive
Emphasis	Opportunity awareness	Self-knowledge	Decision making	Transition learning
Promotion of CMS	Guidance counselor	Individual teachers	Coordinated effort among teachers	Collaboration beyond school
Teaching practice	Experts provide information	Experts interact with students	Students collaborate	Students become active agents
Assessment	Not needed	Non-systematic	Needs improvement	Requires joint investment
Attitude	Skeptical	Hesitant	Positive	Committed

Note. CMS = career management skills.

Table 1. Finnish Guidance Counselors' Conceptions of Career Management Skills (CMS).

Kettunen, J., Lee, J. & Vuorinen, R. (2020). Exploring Finnish guidance counsellors' conceptions of career management skills. *SAGE, Open*, 10(4), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020968778> Open access

# National strategy

- The new National Strategy for Lifelong Guidance 2020-2023 states that in order to strengthen career management skills, it would be necessary to launch a project describing these skills and how these skills can be promoted in different contexts.
- In addition, a structuring would be needed on how individuals can track the development of their own skills.
- The strategy also emphasizes a new review of these skills in the initial training of tutors and teachers.



# Thank you!



Dr. Raimo Vuorinen  
Finnish Institute for Educational Research  
University of Jyväskylä  
Tel. +358-50-3611909  
Email: [raimo.vuorinen@jyu.fi](mailto:raimo.vuorinen@jyu.fi)  
<https://ktl.jyu.fi/en/staff/vuorinen-raimo>

Dr. Jaana Kettunen  
Finnish Institute for Educational Research  
University of Jyväskylä  
Tel. + 358 40 805 4255  
E-mail: [jaana.h.kettunen@jyu.fi](mailto:jaana.h.kettunen@jyu.fi)  
<https://ktl.jyu.fi/en/staff/kettunen-jaana>