

International Competence in Finnish Vocational Education and Training:

An Analysis of the Qualification Requirements

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| <p>Abstract</p> <p>This Master's Thesis studies how internationality is expressed in the qualification requirements of Finnish vocational education and training (VET). It explores the use of selected terms and expressions as well as reports their frequencies within the documents. Students of VET need to be equipped for the international world of work which many of them enter upon graduation. This study examines if students can attain international skills through the qualification requirements, in addition to the state of internationality of the qualification requirements. The phenomenon is examined through the conceptual framework of intercultural competence (IC) and analyzed with content analysis. There are altogether 164 qualification requirements out of which 74 are analyzed in detail. The analysis consists of a quantitative and a qualitative section. The quantitative section documents patterns and popularities within the selected expressions and the qualitative section deepens the analysis in exploring the use, meanings, and relations of the expressions. An expert interview is used as support for the inferences made from the analysis of the qualification requirements. Findings showed that direct indications to internationality and culture were overshadowed by expressions of language skills. Nevertheless, they were deemed the most important terms and their use was analyzed in more detail. The analysis revealed that internationality is referred to in traditional ways, and that modern understanding of internationality might not yet be recognized. Under a half of the qualification requirements contain internationality, to varying degrees, and with different emphases.</p> | |
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| <p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Tämä pro gradu-tutkielma tutkii sitä, miten kansainvälisyyttä on ilmaistu suomalaisen ammatillisen koulutuksen tutkinnon perusteissa. Se tutkii valittujen termien ja ilmaisujen käyttöä sekä selvittää niiden yleisyyttä kyseisissä dokumenteissa. Ammatillisen koulutuksen opiskelijoilla täytyy olla valmiudet toimia kansainvälisessä työmaailmassa, jonka he kohtaavat valmistuttuaan. Kansainvälisyyden tilan lisäksi, tämä tutkimus tarkastelee opiskelijoiden mahdollisuutta hankkia kansainvälisyystaitoja tutkinnon perusteiden välityksellä. Ilmiötä tarkastellaan kulttuurienvälisen kompetenssin kautta, joka on tutkimuksen käsitteellinen viitekehys ja analyysi toteutetaan sisällön analyysin avulla. Yhteensä tutkinnon perusteita on 164, joista 74 analysoitiin yksityiskohtaisesti. Analyysi rakentuu kvalitatiivisesta ja kvantitatiivisesta osiosta. Kvantitatiivinen osuus kirjaa ilmaisujen kaavoja ja populariteetteja, kun taas kvalitatiivinen osuus syventää analyysin ja tutkii ilmaisujen käyttöä, merkitystä ja suhteita. Asiantuntijahaastattelua käytetään tulkintojen tukena. Tulokset osoittivat, että kieliosaaminen jätti varjoonsa suorat viittaukset kansainvälisyyteen ja kulttuuriin. Ne kuitenkin katsottiin tärkeimmiksi termeiksi ja niiden käyttöä analysoitiin tarkemmin. Analyysi paljasti, että kansainvälisyyteen viitataan perinteisellä tyylillä ja, että modernia ymmärrystä kansainvälisyydestä ei ole vielä tunnistettu. Alle puolet tutkinnon perusteista sisältää kansainvälisyyttä vaihtelevissa määrin ja erilaisin painotuksin.</p> | |
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List of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| 1 Introduction | 5 |
| 1.1 Justifications of the Study | 9 |
| 1.2 Internationality in VET | 12 |
| 2 Conceptual Framework: Intercultural Competence | 15 |
| 2.1 Intercultural Competence: Its Origins and Education | 16 |
| 2.1.1 The Origins and the Nature of the Concept | 16 |
| 2.1.2 Intercultural Competence in Relation to Education | 19 |
| 2.2 Related Terms: Culture, Intercultural Encounter and Competence | 22 |
| 2.3 Models and Definitions of Intercultural Competence | 26 |
| 2.4 Assessment of Intercultural Competence | 36 |
| 2.5 New International Competence | 41 |
| 3 Methodology | 44 |
| 3.1 Data | 44 |
| 3.1.1 Qualification Requirements | 45 |
| 3.1.1 Expert Interview | 51 |
| 3.2 Method | 52 |
| 3.2.1 Qualitative Content Analysis | 53 |
| 3.3 Applying Qualitative Content Analysis to Qualification Requirements | 56 |
| 4 Findings | 58 |
| 4.1 Quantitative Section | 59 |
| 4.1.1 Vocational Qualifications | 60 |
| 4.1.2 Further Vocational Qualifications | 66 |
| 4.1.3 Specialist Vocational Qualifications | 71 |
| 4.2 Qualitative Section | 75 |
| 4.2.1 Culture | 80 |
| 4.2.2 International | 83 |
| 4.2.3 General Inferences | 86 |
| 5 Discussion | 89 |
| 6 Conclusions | 94 |
| References | 98 |
| Appendix A | 105 |
| Appendix B | 111 |

International Competence in Finnish Vocational Education and Training:
An Analysis of the Qualification Requirements

1 Introduction

In the summer of 2018 I completed an internship at the Finnish National Agency for Education. I worked in the department of vocational education and training, and my tasks involved different assignments within the international development of vocational education and training. During the three months of my internship I discussed the possibility of a thesis topic with my instructor a few times. Towards the end of the internship I received a task in which I examined how internationality is expressed or worded in the written documents that contain qualification requirements of VET. It was a small report but sparked an idea. Consequently, I suggested to my instructor if I could develop this task into my master's thesis. We also discussed the topic with my supervisor and it was decided that I would continue the work I had started on the small report into my thesis. The small report functions as the basis of this thesis, but the idea and the study have been developed since. My instructor told me that the qualification requirements have not been extensively studied before, and that there would be a need for that kind of work. This gave me an additional drive for this thesis; doing something that has not been done before in this scope, and that would come in use for someone else also motivated me greatly.

The working life has certain demands when it comes to international or intercultural skills, and as professionals of their own field students of VET must be able to meet these demands. I wanted to find out if meeting these demands is something students are able to do within VET, if they are able to acquire intercultural competence during their studies. I specifically wanted to find out if internationality is included in the documents containing qualification requirements. I am of the opinion that it should be included in them, perhaps to a

larger extent in some qualifications than others, depending on the nature of the subject.

Nevertheless, every student should have an equal chance at acquiring international skills, and including internationality in the curriculum is an effective way to making sure that happens.

To give my study some additional depth I conducted an expert interview with a VET teacher, which offers support for the analysis of the qualification requirements.

The initial idea of finding out how internationality is expressed in the qualification requirements is still the first thing I determined in my study. This included determining what kinds of expressions are used in reference to internationality; do they describe traditional international skills (such as language proficiency or cultural knowledge) or modern international skills (such as resilience or curiosity). In addition to this I further examined if some subjects include more expressions of internationality than others, and which expressions appear often and which seldom.

Based on these aims I determined four research questions:

1. How often is internationality expressed in the qualification requirements?
2. Which expressions appear frequently, which infrequently?
3. What kinds of expressions are used to indicate internationality and how do they relate to each other?
4. What kinds of understandings and relevancies with regard to internationality can be inferred from the qualification requirements?

This phenomenon is studied through the lens of intercultural competence which is the conceptual framework of this study. Intercultural competence as a scholarly concept has its origins in the 1950's. Thus, it is not a new concept but still one that is topical today.

Intercultural competence disperses across academic fields and approaches. It has a plethora of definitions, and many scholars have attempted to model it. There is no consensus among

academics of its definition. However, many models describe similar factors, such as attitudes, knowledge, and skills (e.g. Deardorff, 2004, 2006, Byram 1997, Barrett et al., 2013). It has also received much critique, and might I say for good reason. For example it has been criticized for placing too much emphasis on the individual in intercultural encounters, and not paying attention to for instance situational factors. Despite the critique intercultural competence is a concept through which we can begin to understand the dynamics of intercultural encounters and social differences of people we cross paths with. It can also help us to recognize, and perhaps acquire, or at least enhance, our own intercultural, international, or social competence. It already has some foundation in education which is the context of the present study. Discussion around the assessment of intercultural competence is varied and important. Some (e.g. Borghetti, 2017) ask if there is any need for assessment or certification and some (Deardorff, 2006) promote it. These issues along with the models of intercultural competence as well as the critique posed against it are discussed in chapter 2.

The data of this study comprises of the documents containing the qualification requirements. Additionally, as mentioned before, one expert interview with a VET teacher was conducted as support. Qualification requirements are written documents that are specific to vocational education and training. Each vocational qualification has a qualification requirement. The documents for example include the qualification title, composition of the qualification, qualification units contained in the qualification, targeted learning outcome, and evaluation of competence. There are altogether 164 of these qualification requirement documents. Their lengths vary; some are 20 pages while others several hundred pages long, depending on the broadness of the qualification. The interview on the other hand, was conducted with a teacher from a Finnish VET institution, who is involved in international activity. It serves as support for the analysis, and as an example of how internationality is dealt with in one VET institution. The data is discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

The method that was chosen for this thesis is qualitative content analysis and more specifically its summative approach. It offers a sort of combination of qualitative and quantitative strategies, which are both important in regard to the research questions of this study. Identifying word or expression counts and patterns will help to determine specific trends in expressions and if some expressions are more popular than others. Furthermore, analyzing the terms and the meanings behind them can offer insight as to how internationality is used in the qualification requirements. In the summative approach the initial phase is the quantitative step where the frequency of selected words is counted. What makes it a qualitative approach is the following phase in which the latent information is analyzed. This approach attempts to explore usage and understand contextual use of the words or content (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The method of this study is discussed in chapter 3.

The analysis started with the quantitative section. For the purpose of identifying expression counts, a term list was determined. Each term was searched and the instances counted in each qualification requirement, which were in pdf format. They were then put into an Excel sheet. The following phase included the coding process of qualitative content analysis in which the terms, or codes, were arranged according to relations and hierarchies. In depth inferences were also made from the coding process and two codes were discussed in more detail with example phrases. Additionally, parts of the interview were introduced shedding light on similarities with the praxis. The findings of the analysis are discussed in chapter 4. The final two chapters, discussion and conclusions, explore the results of the study, and offer implications for further research.

In the following sub-chapters I first offer justifications for this study, and discuss why this topic is worth studying. There are several reasons why this study is worth-while, and I want to explain those reasons further. Later on I discuss what internationality means in

vocational education and training (VET). Giving an introduction to the internationality of VET will help to understand the current state and thus set the scene for this study.

1.1 Justifications of the Study

This study examines how internationality is expressed in the qualification requirements as well as how internationality is interpreted into teaching. A look at related research reveals that higher and general education have often been in the center of similar studies, but vocational education and training has been studied less frequently. The documents that contain qualification requirements have been studied even less and possibly not to the same extent as this study as it includes almost half of the 164 Finnish qualification requirements, thus offering a wider comprehension of the documents. Furthermore combining the conceptual framework of intercultural competence with a study of vocational education and training seems to be exceptional. Personally I find it important to study internationality and intercultural competence in VET because students who graduate with a VET qualification are professionals and ready to enter the working life. The working life has certain demands when it comes to international or intercultural competence, and as professionals of their own field students must be able to meet these demands. It is thus worth studying if students have the possibility to acquire or develop that competence. For these reasons this study is unique and begins to fill a niche that has previously existed. The findings of this study will be significant for educational policy because they will give an insight to the state of internationality within the qualification requirements.

It is well known that intercultural competence has been studied within many fields, with different approaches and from different angles. So why is it worth discussing again? In addition to the fact that intercultural competence and vocational education and training are a rare combination in academic work, intercultural competence is also a topical concept despite

its long history. The world in which we live in now is interconnected in many ways, from immigration and international travel to international markets, digital networks, and social media. One no longer has to leave his/her home country or home even to encounter internationality or interculturality. It is crucial for everyone to be able to communicate with people from all kinds of backgrounds whether they are ethnic, economic, gender, educational, and so on. In order for people to understand each other, get along with each other and work with each other it is important that they possess competence with which that is possible. One could almost even argue that instead of intercultural competence we could discuss social competence; something that covers not only culture but other diversity factors. However, for now, scholars' focus in intercultural competence is on diversity that generates from culture and ethnicity.

Spitzberg and Changnon's (2009) points made already ten years ago would support my personal statements. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) predicted that cultural diversity will become conspicuous within the global marketplace, and thus make intercultural competence an immensely crucial skill. The skill of managing the interconnectedness of the society is something that employers also seek. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) thus claim that pursuing research in how to be an interculturally competent communicator is essential. (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 4-5) Spitzberg and Changnon's (2009) predictions have come true, however the diversification of societies and global markets certainly has not come to an end, on the contrary diversity seems to be ever increasing. This is one of the crucial reasons why intercultural competence is still worth further application to new topics and why its link to VET should be studied as well; what does this diverse world mean for the students and future professionals that VET produces?

Ragnarsdottir (2016) presents that migration and globalization have produced diverse societies and transnational communities which relates to my notion of the possibility of

encountering internationality without leaving one's home. According to Ragnarsdottir (2016) the contacts between people and social groups are not only based on proximity but also on absence and imagined closeness. (Ragnarsdottir, 2016, p. 76) To put Ragnarsdottir's (2016) point into other words I would say that nowadays it is possible to have intercultural encounters without physical proximity. Different modern technologies produce opportunities where it is possible to interact with people from around the world. Such situations are different from the "traditional" intercultural encounters only in the sense that physical proximity does not exist. That does not make them any less intercultural, rather it means that the "amount" of intercultural encounters and the possibility of them is larger. This is something that education and VET need to recognize (and perhaps it has been recognized in some cases), that internationality is not only something that is encountered once you go abroad.

Emert and Pearson (2007) have also stressed a similar responsibility: they argue that educational systems are responsible for equipping students with the relevant skills and knowledge so that they may become productive members of the society. In order to promote global literacy VET institutions should build intercultural learning possibilities that foster enhancement of culturally applicable knowledge, skills, and attitudes both in the classroom and outside of it. (Emert & Pearson, 2007, p. 67) Hastjarjo and Nuryana (2018) share Emert and Pearson's (2007) views because they argue that vocational education institutions need to provide their students with certain competences in intercultural interaction and communication, because workers and professionals need to possess intercultural communication competence if they desire to have a bigger role in the businesses and industries on international level (Hastjarjo & Nuryana, 2018, p. 1)

The mobility program Erasmus+ has also recognized the importance of intercultural and international skills in VET, as it has released a report about strategical internationalization

of VET (2017). The report reminds that internationalization is also a value in itself, and not only a labor market value. The entire society benefits if our citizens and professionals have acquired competences that are needed in the international business world and our diverse European and global societies. (Erasmus+, 2017, p. 7) Thus it is not only beneficial and necessary for the individual to acquire intercultural competence, but also it will benefit the society if more people are interculturally competent.

As a conclusion it can be noted that intercultural competence and internationality in relation to VET is a worthy topic to study. Because of the interconnectedness of the world, diversification of societies, and global nature of the working life it is important that students with VET qualifications are equipped with intercultural competence. Educational institutions have a big role in this process, and some argue that it is their responsibility to provide students with skills that match the needs of the changing society. I would agree with this because I argue that schools might have the best capacity to offer every student an equal chance at gaining intercultural competence. Furthermore by ensuring that equal chance we are closer to producing professionals that are able to maneuver in an interconnected, diverse world and working life. Because of the justifications presented in this chapter, innovative studies such as this one are needed to explore the challenges and opportunities of how internationality and intercultural competence are included in VET and more specifically in the qualification requirements.

1.2 Internationality in VET

This chapter discusses what internationality means within the VET context. It is important to know what internationality currently means in VET in order to better understand how it is worded or expressed in the qualification requirements. A sense of international actions in VET institutions will clarify the content of the qualification requirements as well. It

is also important to discuss the current state of internationality in VET if it is to be developed. Mapping out existing actions and strategies will help to create new solutions.

There are multiple ways of compartmentalizing the international elements in VET. Tran and Dempsey (2015) propose six key elements of internationalization in VET: “1) student mobility, 2) recruitment onshore and offshore, 3) staff mobility, 4) internationalization of programs, 5) transnational institutional partnerships and industry networks, and 6) the involvement of aid, consultancy and development activities in the developing region.” (Tran & Dempsey, 2015, p. 2) Egetenmeyer, Rueffin and Blachnio (2011) on their part identify four different types of internationalization within VET institutions based on a Finnish study conducted by Mahlamäki & Susimetsä (2009): 1) “Educational institutes with home based internationality (includes international subjects and language studies in the curriculum)”, 2) “educational institutes that have internationalized at the rate of their local working life partners (international subjects and international students form a central part of the curriculum)”, 3) “educational institutes strongly involved in international networking processes (broad international networks and work in different international projects)”, and 4) “international educational institutions (international activities follow international strategies)”. (Egetenmeyer et al., 2011, p. 21)

These two lists are by no means the only ones, nevertheless it can be said that three major themes dominate these lists: student (and staff) mobility, home-based internationality and regional and international networks and working life partners. Egetenmeyer et al.’s (2011) list also mentions internationality within the curriculum. However, it too is limited to language studies and international subjects. What is meant by international subjects remains unclear. Student and staff mobility and working life partners as well as home-based internationality to some extent are possibly already reality in many schools and VET

institutions. Nevertheless internationality needs to also become a part of the curriculum if equal possibilities for internationality are to be ensured.

Siltala (2013) discusses internationality in the Finnish context, and states that it has been noted in practice that internationality accumulates often to the same students, even from educational level to another. Thus international activity can even grow the existing differences between students and student groups. Even the different ways of home-based internationality are not an automatic solution since students who do not go study abroad are neither involved in other possibilities of internationality such as home-based internationality. Instead internationality should be planted into the normal operations of the school rather than emphasizing its separateness. (Siltala, CIMO, 2013, p. 24) One of the ways of planting internationality into the normal operations of schools would be to have it in the qualifications requirements and as extension in teaching. Thus also equal opportunities of internationalizations could be secured.

Korkala (2013) highlights this same point because she argues that internationality should be made a part of the work done on curricula if it is to be made concretely visible in the activity of the schools. Linking internationality with local curricula is far from the desired level. Issues are linked in some ways, but the ideal situation where international contents would show in the curricula is not the reality in most of the educational institutions. Even if the education provider is an active international agent, the work done on curricula is often overruled by other operations. Internationality can also be seen as such a mundane matter that documenting it to the curricula has not been considered necessary. (Korkala, CIMO, 2016, p. 17)

It can be concluded that traditional actions of internationality are present especially in the Finnish context. Student and staff mobility, home-based internationality and working life

parties locally and globally are some of the strategies of how internationality is ensured in VET institutions. However it is also safe to say that internationality has perhaps not yet found its way to the qualification requirements or at least that it is not utilized in schools and it is often dethroned by other functions. Perhaps internationality is perceived to be such a mundane issue that it is no longer considered necessary and new, innovative ways of introducing it to the curricula have not been found yet. That is something where the work should continue because the nature of internationality is changing and it should be recognized in educational institutions as well.

2 Conceptual Framework: Intercultural Competence

As the idea for this thesis started to formulate it became clear that choosing an applicable theory that could cover this particular topic would be quite difficult. The basic idea of this study was to find out how internationality is expressed in the documents containing qualification requirements. It was therefore challenging to find such existing theory that would explain this phenomenon. The theory should always reflect the topic of the study, and consequently looking for a theory that would explain interculturality or internationality through some sort of document analysis seemed impossible. Focusing solely on some kind of written document theory did not seem like a good idea either, because then the study would have lost its dominant character: internationality. Therefore instead of a specific theory I decided to use rather a conceptual framework which is the lens through which the phenomena are studied. I selected intercultural competence, IC for short, to serve that role. Intercultural competence has been studied in relation to education and assessment, and is a topical concept in educational contexts. Finding out if internationality is expressed in the qualification requirements will help determine if students have the opportunity to acquire intercultural competence, and to become aware of the current state of internationality in the qualification

requirements. Thus, having the concept of intercultural competence as a conceptual framework makes the most sense in this study.

Intercultural competence, as I will come to demonstrate, is a contested and complex concept with no consensus of definition. It might be a challenging prospect, having such a concept as the framework for a thesis. I have, however, decided to tackle it and shape it suitable for this study. Since there is no commonly agreed definition or description, I argue that it is open for tackling. This chapter is dedicated for that challenge and introducing intercultural competence as the conceptual framework of this thesis. First I discuss the history of intercultural competence and what it is in relation to education. In the second section I present relevant terms, which are related to intercultural competence and help understand the concept. In the third sub-chapter I discuss how intercultural competence is understood through different models. After that I discuss the assessment of intercultural competence. Lastly, I bring forth the discussion of new international competence, which is an important topic in the relation of intercultural competence and education. Along the way some critique is also introduced because this, as many other concepts as well, is not without fault, and those faults should be recognized equally as much as the good aspects.

2.1 Intercultural Competence: Its Origins and Education

This section discusses the nature and origins of intercultural competence as a concept and in education as well as how it has been used in the Finnish context. Understanding the origins of this concept is crucial since it is such a dynamic one. The past can also play a part in what the concept's present is and how we understand it today. In addition it is important to comprehend what its short-comings and assets are.

2.1.1 The Origins and the Nature of the Concept. In the field of education the concept of intercultural competence is not new, according to Cushner and Mahon (2009).

They explain that Comenius in the 1600's proposed an accomplished college that supported understanding between people from different backgrounds and was based on the idea that if knowledge was to be gained, a diversity of mindsets was fundamental. (Cushner & Mahon, 2009, p. 305) Gardner's concept of a 'universal communicator' from 1962 is likewise an early notion, although not as old as Comenius'. It refers to an individual's intercultural qualities, such as the capacity for intercultural communication and characteristics which strengthen this success: extroversion, stability, integrity, socialization in common values and "special intuitive and even telepathic abilities" (Rathje, 2007, p. 254).

Currently Comenius' ideas, according to Cushner and Mahon (2009) are conceptualized in terms such as intercultural education, which has gained attention in the early 1900s. Now an abundance of terms exist that refer to culture in education, such as multicultural education and global or international education. (Cushner & Mahon, 2009, p. 305) Similarly, according to Rathje (2007), it has been also already a half a century since Gardner's remarks and still scholarly and professional attention draws also to this notion that some are more capable in intercultural encounters than others. Rathje (2007) also clarifies that in its earlier times intercultural competence research was applied in student exchange or international aid programs. Since then a more diverse field of research has developed. (Rathje, 2007, p. 254-255)

It does still seem, especially in education that student exchange is perceived to be the most common way of "acquiring" intercultural competence, as Rathje (2007) indicated it was in earlier times. Other ways, such as online international networks, might be often overlooked and mobility emphasized unreasonably in my view. It is unreasonable to emphasize mobility for various reasons; it does not guarantee intercultural competence, mobility may not be an equal chance for students, and the idea of mobility is often loaded with stereotypes. Dervin (2017) also poses critique against the emphasis on exchange in Finland: According to him the

notion of intercultural competence is used in a lax manner in Finland and it is often a victim of what Dervin (2017) calls “uncritical groupthink”. It means that a systematic idea exists according to which one is going to be more open-minded, more tolerant, and not going to have any stereotypes anymore when one studies abroad. “And so basically, you’re not going to be a human being anymore...” (Dervin, 2017, p. 9) Dervin (2017) claims there are set up discussion and presumptions about the relations between student exchange and interculturality, which often lead to romantic perceptions. (Dervin, 2017, p. 9-10)

Dervin (2015) also sheds light on the history of interculturality in education. He explains that the concept of interculturality has been well-known in education since the 1960’s in the USA, since the 1970’s in Europe and more recently other parts of the globe. Like Cushner and Mahon (2009), Dervin (2015) also asserts that the concept has various names; it has sometimes been termed multiculturalism, transculturality or globalization. Dervin (2015) points out that interculturality, like many other concepts in education, can often be ambiguous, imagined and empty at the same time, and that it conveniently means either too little or too much. He further explains that interculturality, which is fundamentally interdisciplinary, has been constructed by borrowing concepts, ideas and techniques from other research fields. Dervin (2015) also reports that in research and practice, interculturality is used in various fields, such as language education, communication studies, education, and the like. Thus it disperses across industries, subindustries, languages, and systems. Sometimes it maintains its meanings, sometimes it modifies them, instilling and expanding a combination of biases, stereotypes, and prejudices. (Dervin, 2015, p. 3) This fact makes intercultural competence a challenging concept to define and apply. However, that is also why I think it is open for tackling and in need for fresh attention, since it is spread across fields and has multiple meanings. At the same time one still has to be careful not to spread stereotypes or prejudices as Dervin (2015) points out sometimes happens with this concept. To me it is

important to give an account that derives from the real life, and does not neglect aspects that might be overlooked if a phenomenon is overly conceptualized or theorized.

2.1.2 Intercultural Competence in Relation to Education. Intercultural competence is often linked with foreign language education, and for instance McConachy and Liddicoat (2016) emphasize intercultural competence's role in it. They point out that in recent decades there has been discussion about the development of intercultural competence as an educational necessity in different contexts such as foreign language education. It has been recognized in foreign language education that students need to be supplied with the skill that allows them to efficiently maneuver in intercultural interactions that takes place in one or more languages. The increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of contemporary communication especially demands the ability to mediate across cultures. This, according to the authors, is of higher importance than ever. (McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016, p. 13) I also agree that foreign language learning is a crucial aspect of intercultural competence however I would not emphasize it as much as McConachy and Liddicoat (2016) do. Language learning is one of the more outdated views on how people understand the obtaining of intercultural competence. Especially young people learn languages outside the classroom as well. Today the attention should be drawn to other ways of developing intercultural competence than only language learning. One may learn the language but at the same time overlook the culture or other aspects that should be taken into account. I am not of the opinion that foreign language learning is not important, on the contrary. My point is that foreign language learning (especially in schools) does not have to be emphasized as much in relation to IC and that more innovative and broader ways of developing IC should be considered (see also Dervin, 2010; Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999).

While McConachy and Liddicoat (2016) emphasize language learning which is an important existing part of education Cushner and Mahon (2009) still stress the difficulty of

introducing the concept of intercultural competence at schools. They point out that for decades, education has pursued to meet the needs of a changing society with more or less successful outcomes, however, concepts of intercultural understanding and competence are still not central to the institutional mission. They further clarify that there is no exact plan of action when it comes to building intercultural competence. It is particularly slow and complicated to introduce the concept of intercultural competence at schools, despite the fact that culture and intercultural interaction are natural, existing parts of education. (Cushner & Mahon, 2009, p. 304-305)

I would stress the points that Cushner and Mahon (2009) make about introducing the concept at schools, and schools attempting to address the needs of a changing society. Mobility or language education should no longer be the only options to gain international experience. The nature of international and intercultural skills is changing (this is something I talk about more in chapter 2.5) and thus the ways of acquiring it have to change too. Perhaps it is beneficial for schools and students if intercultural competence is a tangible part of the curriculum. This might not be an easy task to achieve, as Cushner and Mahon (2009) point out, but only through continuous efforts in introducing it can the best practices be found.

Taking a closer look at the Finnish context (which is worth paying attention to since this study is particular to Finnish VET) Dervin, Paatela-Nieminen, Kuppala and Riitaoja (2012) reveal that multicultural education, when compared to other countries, has a brief history in Finnish teacher education and educational sciences. The Finnish context actually implies some sort of lack of success in multicultural education, Dervin et al. (2012) explain. This is especially because multicultural education policies link exclusively with immigration and international cooperation. There is a widespread idea that diversity is a new phenomenon in the Finnish context. This idea ignores Finland's ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities as well as the diversities embodied in social class, gender, worldviews, and areas of living.

Dervin et al. (2012) say that “The ideas of a homogenous Finnish society and Finnishness are mainly illusions constructed through nation-building, and schooling has had a central role in this construction”. (Dervin et al., 2012, p. 2)

As a Finn I recognize Dervin et al.’s (2012) notion and believe that it might show in education as well. Finland may not be considered a very diverse country and even some Finns themselves might think that our diversity is only due to immigration or the so called “different colored others”. However, and I believe this should be considered when talking about intercultural competence at large, diversity does not only mean difference in the country or culture of origin. Differing backgrounds in economy, education, gender, religion, social class, and so on make people diverse in addition to culture or ethnicity. This idea Dervin (2017) terms intersectionality: when we look at intercultural encounters, in addition to race, ethnicity or culture we should also consider factors such as socioeconomics, politico-historical categories, power relations, and the linguistic backgrounds. (Dervin, 2017: 17) Perhaps, as I suggested earlier, we should not be talking about *intercultural* competence, but rather about *social* competence. Thus the emphasis from culture would be removed and other diversity factors would come forth. This should be also taken into account in education as well, because it is possible to acquire intercultural (or social) competence at home also, and not just through for example student mobility and meeting people from different cultures. Dervin (2017) touches also on this point and says that the phenomena do not just take place outside of national borders or when you are talking to somebody from the outside. It also happens inside our communities. (Dervin, 2017, p. 20)

Based on the sources presented here it can be concluded that ideas of intercultural competence have emerged as early as the 1600’s, but it has come to concrete terms in the 1960’s. Thus it has a long history in research and education as well. What it means today varies by field, approach, and application. It is a concept that is complex, ambiguous, and

multidimensional even. Even though it has been around for a long time, introducing it at schools has not been easy, and especially in Finland it has been restricted to international mobility and immigration. Nevertheless the fact is that diversity is all around us in many ways, it does not only appear in cultural differences. It also certainly is not decreasing, which is one of the many reasons why intercultural competence should find its way to school curricula. This is why it is important to keep developing this concept and finding innovative ways of making it a part of education.

2.2 Related Terms: Culture, Intercultural Encounter and Competence

Next, I present three terms which are closely related to intercultural competence. Especially the first one, culture, as a word is likely to be familiar to most. Still, it is worth discussing in this context, and keeping in mind what aspects the term entails. Intercultural encounter and competence are discussed later on in this section. They are also terms which might sound simple enough, but I want to give a brief outlook into them since they are regularly discussed in relation to intercultural competence. Furthermore, since intercultural competence is such a complex term, it might be of use to comprehend these related terms as Barrett, Byram, Lazár, Mompoint-Gaillard and Philippou (2013) also suggest.

It should be noted that most existing frameworks of intercultural competence do not offer any definition of culture with exceptions such as Barrett et al. (2013) (Borghetti, 2017, p. 4). Although I maintain that intercultural competence should not be restricted to culture or cultural diversity, and other factors such as age or economic background should be taken into account in intercultural encounters, I do still believe that the concept of culture should be discussed in some detail. Culture is a fundamental part of intercultural competence, and many of its definitions rely on the descriptions of culture. Consequently it is worth reminding the reader of the complicated nature and description of the term.

Fortman and Giles (2006) declare that culture, similarly to intercultural competence, is omnipresent, multidimensional and complex. It is the foundation that tells us how to respond to people, objects, and events in our environment without conscious thought. Despite its pervasiveness, it is difficult to establish a definition for culture. Its existing definitions are as widespread and varied as are cultures themselves. The fact that individuals and especially scholars tend to portray culture through their own particular lens may explain the extensive range of definitions. As a consequence, definitions vary by the approach of the individual. (Fortman & Giles, 2009, p. 91-92)

Barrett et al. (2013) also remind that culture is a notorious term due to difficulties of defining it. Unlike Fortman and Giles (2009) they do not blame the various scholarly interpretations for this fact. They bring up interestingly that difficulties in defining it are due to cultural groups being always internally incoherent and absorbing a variety of diverse norms and practices, which often change over time and are contested and executed by individuals in personalized ways. (Barrett et al. 2013, p. 5)

According to Fortman and Giles (2009) culture represents a system with which a group of individuals organizes and interprets the world and their place in it. Scholarly opinion varies, but most of the current research recognizes that norms, beliefs, perceptions, and values are some of the underlying factors people consider when they describe culture. (Fortman and Giles, 2009, p. 92) Birukou, Blanzieri, Paolo, and Giunchiglia (2009) likewise explain that most definitions acknowledge that culture consists of elements that are shared and/or learned by a group of people while the content of culture differs in descriptions. Birukou et al. (2009) see the content of culture as a set of traits such as behaviour, knowledge of facts, ideas, beliefs, norms, and so on. (Birukou et al., 2009, p. 3)

Nevertheless, Barrett et al. (2013) confirm, much like Birukou et al. (2009), that distinctions between the material, social and subjective features of culture can be drawn. According to Barrett et al. material culture entails the physical productions (e.g. tools, goods, clothing, and foods). Social culture refers to the social establishments of the group (e.g. language, religion, laws, rules of conduct, and folklore). Subjective culture comprises of the beliefs, norms, collective memories, values, and practices which members often use as a frame of reference for relating to the world and making sense of it. (Barrett et al. 2013, p. 5) This kind of description of culture is perhaps the most common or at least quite traditional. One often hears people defining culture with this sort of tripartite description of material, social and subjective aspects of culture. Nevertheless, with this sort of definition it is important not to take certain laws, rules, attitudes or values as all-embracing truths and to remember that culture is also specific to the individual.

Rathje (2009) takes a strong critical stand when talking about culture. She asserts that the concept is loaded with implications of belonging, deprivation, inclusion, and overdoing. When the term is unreasonably politicized it magnifies each simple folkloric aspect. This small term, according to Rathje (2009) carries excessive burdens of social order and all kinds of illusions so that its use in reasonable discussion is hardly adequate anymore. (Rathje, 2009, p. 39) It is true that culture is often used in a stereotypical manner and its use might reinforce prejudices. The term needs to be used cautiously and it has to be realized that it is not an explanation for all kinds of behavior and difference. For instance students must be perceptive of culture (as well as other backgrounds and factors) that may affect their encounters with different people whether it is in the world of work or while traveling for example. It does benefit them to recognize and be aware of how difference is created. However, perhaps most importantly, I personally would urge students and everyone else to keep in mind that culture,

with all its dimensions, do not explain all kinds of behavior or difference and that it may reinforce stereotypes and prejudices.

I still would not go as far as saying that its use in reasonable discussion is no longer adequate as Rathje (2009) suggests. The term is complex enough already and the need for high-flown definitions is not as pressing in my opinion as Rathje (2009) asserts. Scholars can use declamatory descriptions but “ordinary” people must be able to understand the term and its trouble spots as well.

In addition to culture, Barrett et al. (2013) describe also two other terms, intercultural encounter and competence, which are important in understanding intercultural competence. In an intercultural encounter, persons or groups of people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations encounter each other. Such encounters may take place virtually through social media for example or face-to-face or. They may involve people from different countries, different regional, linguistic, ethnic or religious backgrounds or people from different lifestyles, genders, social classes, sexual orientations, ages or generations and so on. Barrett et al. (2013) write: “An interpersonal encounter becomes an intercultural encounter when cultural differences are perceived and made salient either by the situation or by the individual’s own orientation and attitudes.” (Barrett et al. 2013, p. 7) It is interesting that Barrett et al. (2013) insist on using the term ‘intercultural’ while describing that such an encounter may involve people from also other backgrounds than cultural. Again, I might suggest the use of the word ‘social’, and in this case ‘social encounter’, since other factors, in addition to culture, are also taken into consideration.

Competence, Barrett et al. (2013) demonstrate, is used in diverse ways; it is used for example in everyday use casually as a synonym for ‘ability’, and it has a more technical purpose within vocational education and training. For present purposes, Barrett et al. (2013)

point out, competence is understood not only as a matter of contextually applicable skills, but also as a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding, and skills, which are put into use through action in any relevant situation. According to Barrett et al. (2013) competence is the ability to successfully respond to situations which present tasks, challenges or difficulties for the individual. Intercultural encounter is one such situation. Competence is always exposed to enhancement or further learning, since situations may vary in different ways. Therefore, intercultural competence is a mixture of attitudes, knowledge, understanding, and skills put into use through action. (Barrett et al., 2013, p. 7) These four dimensions come to play in the following chapter with the definitions and models of intercultural competence.

Culture, although a contested term, is an important part of intercultural competence. It has not been discussed in many instances in relation to intercultural competence (Borghetti, 2017), although it perhaps should be. Perhaps its pervasive nature is to blame for this; why explain something that is all around us? I would say that paying attention to culture and its essence, even for a brief moment, is still important, especially in relation to a term that so heavily relies on it. Furthermore, since this study discusses intercultural competence in relation to education and assessment, it is worth to remember the nature of culture. Everyone can benefit from being aware of how culture affects our encounters, and how differences are perhaps created through culture. At the same time we need to remember the other side of it, which may cause stereotypes or prejudicial behavior.

2.3 Models and Definitions of Intercultural Competence

This section discusses various models which define intercultural competence. These models give a more elaborate idea of what intercultural competence is (or might be depending on the context), and how it has been understood by different scholars. In this chapter I introduce such models that will give the reader a versatile understanding and which are most

relevant in regard to the present study. Since this study focuses on intercultural or international competence in VET and its possible role in teaching, I picked such models that, according to their creators, may be beneficial in education or assessment. I start by giving a general description of models by various scholars and move on to presenting a few models in detail, which relate to education and are thus relevant for this thesis.



Figure 1+2: Screenshots of List of Concepts and Factor Labels Associated with interpersonal, Communicative and Intercultural Competence (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 36-43)

These two pictures are taken from Spitzberg and Changnon's article *Conceptualizing Intercultural Competence* (2009). The list is several pages long and it would not be purposeful to include all of it in this work, however, here are two excerpts of that list, demonstrating what kind of factors have been associated with intercultural competence. The purpose of this is to give the reader a concrete sense of how manifold the concept is. Based on the excerpts alone it can be concluded that there is a plethora of different factors, concepts,

and characteristics which have been linked to intercultural competence over the many years of its existence.

In her 2004 study, Deardorff gives an extensive outlook of different definitions of intercultural competence and models aiming to define intercultural competence in various ways. She accounts for over 20 models and definitions of intercultural competence by various scholars and other authors. They vary from early definitions such as Tewksbury's 1957 model of 21 characteristics of a Mature International Person and Hanvey's oft-cited dimensions of global education from 1976 to later ones such as Bennet's (1993) influential Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and Fantini's (2000) four dimensions of intercultural competence. Deardorff (2004) concludes that there is no indisputable accord of the use of terminology within the models and definitions. Many academics agree that intercultural competence is constituted by knowledge, skills, and attitudes, still further descriptions vary by scholar. Additionally, some scholars add other specific dimensions such as motivation and adaptability. (Deardorff, 2004, p. 52)

Despite of the vast amount of differing models, Dervin (2015) stresses that a few models of intercultural competences have become popular in the recent decades and are used across the borders of their original fields. These models are the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity by Bennett (1993) (which was also acknowledged by Deardorff (2004)), Intercultural Communicative Competence by Byram (1997) and the Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence by Deardorff (2006). Dervin (2015) says that they have been influential not only in his own context but also worldwide and in his opinion they deserve to be increasingly evaluated. (Dervin, 2015, p. 75) Out of these three popular models, one is especially interesting in relation to the present study: the Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence. It is a model that according to Deardorff (2006) can benefit the assessment of student outcomes of internationalization.

The representation of intercultural competence, presented in Deardorff's (2006) figure, offers a visual framework in which intercultural competence factors are arranged. This framework can be entered from different levels. Possessing factors from the lower levels, however, enhances the upper levels. Throughout this process it is important to be conscious of the learning that occurs at each level as well as the process skills necessary for obtaining intercultural competence. (Deardorff, 2006, p. 244)

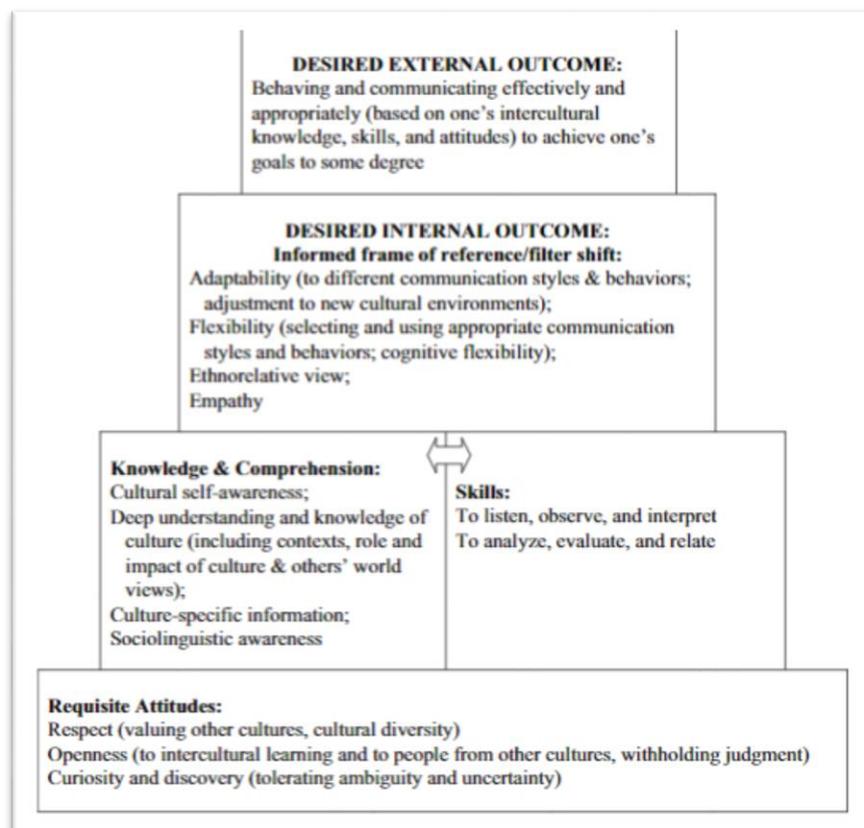


Figure 3: Screenshot of the Pyramid model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006, 2009)

The pyramid model of intercultural competence provides degrees of competence (the scope of intercultural competence as an external outcome grows greater the more components are acquired/developed), and while it offers some description of the definition, it is not limited to the elements that are included in the model. This model allows for specific indicators

within a context/situation to be developed, as well as contributes to the general assessment of intercultural competence. It thus adopts both specific and general definitions of intercultural competence. In regard to outcomes, the model moves from the intrapersonal to the interpersonal, meaning that a shift from the individual level of personal attributes or attitudes to the interactive cultural level occurs. The skills that are defined in this model come in use when knowledge about one's own and other cultures is obtained and handled. The importance of attitudes and comprehension of knowledge is also emphasized in this model. (Deardorff, 2006, p. 245)

The Pyramid model of intercultural competence is in my opinion an applicable and a considerable model. There are two aspects that I am drawn to; it can be entered from any level (openness), and it considers both inter- and intrapersonal aspects. Although again, the cultural aspects are emphasized, I think this could be expanded to include other diversity factors as well. Perhaps this could work well when combined with self-assessment in education. What I criticize in this model is the notion of "effective and appropriate communication". To me that indicates some sort of competition between individuals in an intercultural encounter. This indication does not advocate for a positive experience. Instead the outcome should be personal growth and learning through new experience. Dervin (2015) also opposes the notion of "effective and appropriate communication". To him the emphasis on the individual, which happens through this notion, is problematic. He claims that the interaction or the relationship are not considered. There can be a bias in the demanded outcome of behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately. How can it be determined what is interculturally effective and appropriate in education, especially since they are co-constructed and negotiated. (Dervin, 2015, p. 77).

Barrett et al. (2013) also point out the great number of lists of components that have been produced by over five decades of scholarly research which has examined the essence of

intercultural competence. Barrett et al. (2013) provide the following list of components which they intend to be rather exhibitive than exhaustive. It also focuses on such components that lend themselves to development through education, which is why this model is also relevant for this thesis. According to Barrett et al. (2013) intercultural competence can be divided into five components, which can be seen in Deardorff's (2004, 2006) model (as well as in many other models such as Byram's (1997) Intercultural Communicative Competence); attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills, and actions.

“The attitudes involved include features such as:

- Valuing cultural diversity and pluralism of views and practices
- Respecting people who have different cultural affiliations from one's own
- Being open to, curious about and willing to learn from and about people who have different cultural orientations and perspectives from one's own
- Being willing to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty” (Barrett et al., 2013, p. 9)

“The knowledge and understanding, which contribute to intercultural competence, include features such as:

- Understanding the internal diversity and heterogeneity of all cultural groups
- Awareness and understanding of one's own and other people's assumptions, preconceptions, stereotypes, prejudices, and overt and covert discrimination
- Knowledge of the beliefs, values, practices, discourses and products that may be used by people who have particular cultural orientations
- Understanding of processes of cultural, societal and individual interaction, and of the socially constructed nature of knowledge” (Barrett et al., 2013, p. 9)

“The skills and actions involved in intercultural competence include skills such as:

- Multiperspectivity – the ability to decentre from one’s own perspective and to take other people’s perspectives into consideration in addition to one’s own
- Empathy – the ability to understand and respond to other people’s thoughts, beliefs, values and feelings
- Skills in critically evaluating and making judgements about cultural beliefs, values, practices, discourses and products, including those associated with one’s own cultural affiliations, and being able to explain one’s views
- Plurilingual skills to meet the communicative demands of an intercultural encounter, such as use of more than one language or language variety, or drawing on a known language to understand another (‘intercomprehension’)” (Barrett et al., 2013, p. 9-10)

Deardorff (2004) seems to suggest that when someone has acquired knowledge, skills and, attitudes, they can claim to be interculturally competent. However, while Barrett et al. (2013) remind that all these components are necessary for intercultural competence, they also point out that obtaining these alone is insufficient for proclaiming someone interculturally competent. People often have attitudes, knowledge, and skills but fail to use them. If one wishes to be interculturally competent these components need to be applied through intercultural encounters. (Barrett et al. 2013, p. 10)

Egekvist Lyngdorf, Du and Shi (2016) similarly to Deardorff (2004) and Barrett et al. (2013) note that models and definitions usually determine four dimensions of intercultural competence: knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors. They also require the ability to interact with others appropriately and effectively in intercultural contexts. (Egekvist et al., 2016, p. 33) Deardorff’s (2004, 2006) and Barrett et al.’s (2013) models have two things in common. As Egekvist et al. (2016) note, they determine similar dimensions (knowledge, skills, attitudes etc.), and emphasize the effective and appropriate behavior. Dervin (2015) on the other hand criticizes the emphasis of attitudes, skills, knowledge, and behaviors. To him,

they contain problematic elements, and their acquisition is challenging to evaluate. “As we need to rely on discourse and/or action to examine these aspects, one can only note their enactments.” (Dervin, 2015, p. 77)

Dervin (2015) further discusses how the current intercultural competence industry is overly protecting the individual, and not allowing individuals to get used to discomfort. He says that accepting some degree of ‘pain’ and discomfort is an important aspect of intercultural competence. However, the present industry is trying to create ‘interculturally correct’ situations or educational content. Dervin (2015) suggests that students need to be faced with encounters that will help them in testing their resistance to discomfort and possible failure (Dervin, 2015, p. 83), which he attempts to promote with his own model of intercultural competence. I can agree with Dervin’s (2015) criticism. I would argue that many of us can note from all kinds of personal experience, intercultural encounters included, that mistakes can be learned from, sometimes even better than from straightforward successes, even if they might involve more discomfort.

Dervin’s (2010, 2017) own model is a post-modern model of intercultural competence based on Holliday et al. (2004). This model is also relevant for this study since, according to Dervin (2010) it can also be used for student assessment and also as a self-assessment tool for students. Dervin (2010) explains that it is affected by post-modern thinking, theories, and diction of dialogism and composed of three elements; two *savoir faire*s (could be interpreted as know-how; *Savoir faire I*: detect identification, *Savoir faire II*: paying attention to discourses) and one *savoir réagir/agir* (could be interpreted as behavior; *Savoir réagir/agir*: controlling one’s emotions/behaviors) and which form a whole. There are no levels, so no progression, therefore it is open, flexible, and should be modified and adjusted to students’ needs. Every component (1-3) is voiced in the first person in order for students to use the model in self-assessment. To each problem a solution is proposed so that students can check

the acceptability of their actions, reactions or strategies acceptability and determine objectives themselves. The a to c sections that follow each component suggest reflections and questionings necessary for enriching of competence. (Dervin, 2010, p. 12-13)

To Dervin (2017) intercultural competence is “Becoming aware of, recognizing, pushing through [imposing], presenting/defending and questioning (assumptions about) one’s identification and diverse diversities as well as those of other, an (re)negotiating them in a ‘satisfactory’ manner with and for our interlocutors in specific contexts and as infinitum.” (Dervin, 2017, p. 49) With this model Dervin (2017) wants to say that intercultural competence is an unstable concept. To him it is about testing a given situation, testing oneself, testing the other and questioning. (Dervin, 2017, p. 49) Dervin has posed a lot of reasonable critique towards intercultural competence, he has not, however, abandoned the concept. Instead he has tried to reshape it and enhance it. While being aware of its pit-falls he has made a model that is innovative and up to date.

Dervin et al. (2012) point out how there is a lot of critique towards the knowledge-based approach, to intercultural competence, in which cultures are seen as the explanation for all. In other words, multicultural encounters take place only through the encounters of national cultures. (Dervin et al. 2012, p. 5) Rathje (2007) has termed this position as ‘international’ approach to IC which interprets intercultural interaction context as something that involves individuals from different national cultures. The opposing position, according to Rathje (2007) is the ‘inter-collective’ approach which interprets the encounter as interaction between individual members of specific collectives who have their own distinctive culture. According to Dervin et al. (2012) scholars, who might represent this ‘inter-collective’ view, are now suggesting that intercultural competence should permit judgement towards the concept of culture and the lack of power balance it may produce. These scholars, Dervin et al. (2012) explain, consider the fact that encounters occur in distinct contexts such as a school

and with specific interlocutors such as parents or teachers. (Dervin et al. 2012, p. 5) I have previously touched upon the importance of other background factors, not only cultural or ethnic, and the same point also applies to this inter-national/inter-collective concept. Perhaps we again should consider using social competence instead of intercultural competence.

Borghetti (2017), in my opinion, offers an excellent definition of intercultural competence which summarizes the previous models and definitions nicely. To her, cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects form an essential whole of intercultural competence. They influence how we understand and interact with diversity. Education and/or experience can also enhance these aspects. Recent advancements in studies of IC are taken into account in this definition. In such studies a link is imagined between intercultural competence and communication as well as postmodern rhetoric about the view of multiple, hybrid or fluid identities. Thus, intercultural competence is about how individuals place themselves according to for example their gender, age or social status in interactions. It is also about how aware they are of these placement methods. IC can also reveal an individual's ability and willingness to negotiate and recognize his/her own identities as well as another's. Such a definition bases on the distinction between the aforementioned cognition, affect, and behavior. (Borghetti, 2017, p. 2) This is a definition that does not overly emphasize the individual, takes into consideration the situation and the interaction and notes the importance of other background factors in addition to culture. Although this is not a model in similar sense as Deardorff's (2004, 2006) or Dervin's (2010) models, but as a definition it is profound and modern.

As a conclusion I want to report Dervin's (2015) suggestion for a different kind of approach to intercultural competence. To Dervin (2015) the realistic approach to intercultural competence "accepts that intercultural phenomena depend on playfulness and dreams and they must be recognized and accepted" (p. 84). Most models of intercultural competence

promote the ‘success only’ element which is a problematic feature of our time. The approach that Dervin (2015) proposes accepts failure and promotes its beneficial aspects for future learning and self-criticality. Intercultural competence is often referred to as some kind of technology that is used to control intercultural encounters and to prevent failure. Dervin (2015) gives an example of performance artist Marina Abramovic (as cited in Dervin, 2015) who explains what failure could mean to intercultural competence while talking about her art: “You never know how the experiment will turn out. It can be great, it can be really bad, but failure is so important, because it involves a learning process and it enables you to get to a new level and to other ways of seeing your work.” (Dervin, 2015, p. 84-85)

2.4 Assessment of Intercultural Competence

The previous chapter presented various models of intercultural competence, many of which suggested that they are applicable in education. Therefore it can be deduced that some sort of assessment is needed. This study focuses on the role of intercultural or international competence in VET and suggests that it should be introduced in the qualification requirements and furthermore in teaching. This is another reason why it is worth discussing the ways in which it can be assessed and recognized or if it can be done in the first place. This section offers an outlook into the discussion surrounding the assessment of intercultural competence starting first with a description of what might be good ways of “acquiring” intercultural competence.

Some authors discuss the best ways of becoming interculturally competent. For example, Byram and Feng (as cited in Egekvist et al., (2016)) reveal that experiential learning and hands-on experiences are more efficient than class room learning about culture. Egekvist et al. (2016) point out however that research on intercultural competence shows that face-to-face encounters do not automatically lead to intercultural competence. They refer to Illeris (as

cited in Egekvist et al., 2016) who argues that even though practical experience is considered preferable, it is seldom enough for someone to construct a structured understanding. In order to develop a personal attitude and overview, analytically oriented, critical and conscious reflections are needed. Thus, the best way to develop competences is to combine practical experience and theoretical schooling. (Egekvist et al., 2016 p. 45-46)

I share Egekvist et al.'s (2016) views. Someone can consider him/herself interculturally competent, but not only because they went on exchange. An exchange period might be the true hands-on experience but it does not automatically foster intercultural competence. Furthermore not everybody has an interest or a chance to go abroad, and they can gain a lot from education at home as well. Teaching can offer insights that practical experience might not; exchange can teach someone how to conduct oneself in intercultural encounter within a specific culture whereas education can help someone understand a wider context outside specific cultures. I advocate for multifaceted learning, and I would encourage schools and educational institutions to include internationality in their teaching also as some sort of theoretical education. But when theoretical learning takes place, assessment must also take place. Thus, what is learnt can be certified and acknowledged and furthermore, students will learn to word their competence.

There is still certain disorientation surrounding the assessment of intercultural competence. Deardorff (2009) clarifies that there is often confusion and apprehension as to how to apply actual assessment of intercultural competence. Those who undertake such assessment frequently respond with avoidance, uncertainty, or feeling overwhelmed without knowing where or how to start. Deardorff (2009) argues that grasping the definitions, processes, pitfalls, and resources related to assessment of IC can help to ease the uncertainty. (Deardorff, 2009, p. 477-478) Fantini (2009) shares this view when reminding that “its

assessment depends on the clarity of both its definition and conceptualization". (Fantini, 2009, p. 457-458)

Deardorff (2009) says that one of the initial steps in assessing intercultural competence is identifying what it is that is to be assessed, in other words defining the actual concept of intercultural competence. According to Deardorff (2009) once a definition has been chosen, it is necessary to develop a process that provokes specific and measurable outcomes and indicators within assessed context. (Deardorff, 2009, p. 478) Given the amount of definitions it might be hard to come to one in relation to assessment especially for someone who is not immersed in the field as much as scholars might be. Therefore, I would propose a review of at least the most popular definitions and choosing one that is most relevant for the field at hand.

Fantini (2009) and Deardorff (2009) believe that the assessment of intercultural competence is possible, however, Borghetti (2017) does not advocate for assessment. She says that assessing intercultural competence is an issue which is characteristic of a global society where something must be "proved", in other words assessed and/or certified so that it becomes real. The consequence of this for individuals is that even personal and private preferences need to be made apparent. Such preferences in the case of IC might be "empathy" or "positive self-image" and so on. (Borghetti, 2017, p. 1) Borghetti's (2017) critique is relevant. Still, on the other hand, especially in the case of education I would stress that some kind of assessment and maybe even certification of competence is needed. That is how students can learn to word their competence and also employers can learn to recognize it.

Borghetti (2017) still presents several ethical issues related to the assessment of intercultural competence. One of them, a similar issue that has been brought up earlier in this chapter, relates to the large count of models which describe intercultural competence in different manners. Borghetti (2017) notes that a seemingly applicable solution may be to note

which specific model is being used in the assessment. However, some critical questions about IC remain open, which is why this solution is not sufficient on an ethical level, according to Borghetti (2017). Such questions challenge the characteristics of IC components and the relations among them. (Borghetti, 2017, p. 4-5)

The challenge of determining what an intercultural competent achievement entails in a specific task is a further issue to Borghetti (2017). Surely, even when evaluations are limited to external communicative outcomes, notions such as ‘effectiveness’ and ‘appropriateness’ are far from being explicit (Borghetti, 2017, p. 6), a point that also Dervin (2015) contests. Zotzmann (2016) also asks what specific competences and sub-competences mean in concrete terms. According to her such non-abstract abilities cannot be taught or examined through performance or certified as outcomes. Rather they are highly context-specific attitudes based on individuals’ judgement of the situation they are in. “Individuals might be more or less reflective, more or less open-minded, depending on an infinite number of situational, psychological, emotional, sociocultural, and other factors by which human beings are influenced.” (Zotzmann, 2016, p. 246) Fantini (2009) is also wary of this fact and says that the most common dimensions of intercultural competence, awareness, attitudes, skills, and knowledge, are challenging for assessors to evaluate. Educators are used to assessing knowledge and perhaps even skill whereas the assessment of attitudes and awareness is not usual. However, Fantini (2009) also maintains that since all four dimensions are important components, all four must be addressed and assessed. (Fantini, 2009, p. 459)

Wahyudi (2016) discusses different methods of assessment and refers to Deardorff (2006) according to whom it is best to combine quantitative and qualitative methods when assessing intercultural competence. Interviews, observations and judgements by self and others are some examples. Using only quantitative methods is problematic since they struggle to simplify the complicated phenomena of intercultural competence to a set of measurable

objects which is typical for a positive paradigm. (Wahyudi, 2016, p. 146) Earlier it was also pointed out that Deardorff (2006) instructs to choose a process that produces measurable outcomes, but, if we think about her pyramid model for example, is it possible to measure empathy or effective communication? Perhaps the traditional style of assessing something that is measurable should be discarded in the case of intercultural competence. Perhaps new strategies such as the ones Wahyudi (2016) suggests are more plausible.

Borghetti (2017) also offers some tools of assessment that are less problematic in her opinion. She explains that in light of challenges inflicted by IC assessment one less controversial method could be to focus on tests involving low thresholds and to embrace a shift from assessment-of-learning to assessment-as-learning. According to Borghetti (2017) assessment that is pedagogical or formative in nature is gathering special awareness. Also, other assessment styles such as portfolios and autobiographies are being applied. Borghetti (2017) is of the opinion that this can restrain the problem and make assessment a practice where participation and teacher-student trust play important roles. (Borghetti, 2017, p. 9)

The assessment of intercultural competence is a challenging dilemma and there is most likely no right or wrong answer yet. I personally believe that if intercultural competence is to become a part of education it should be somehow assessed. Upon assessment it is important to become aware of the pitfalls and quirks of this concept as Deardorff (2009) suggests. I also agree that aspects of IC are not easily subject to quantification. Borghetti (2017) and Wahyudi (2016) offer some good options which have a more sort of qualitative approach. My own suggestion would be self-assessment, because it might be impossible for an outsider to assess someone else's own personal competence. The self-assessment can be done in cooperation with a teacher who is up-to-date and has personal intercultural experience, but the assessment derives from the student's own self. Perhaps Dervin's (2010) IC model could be applied in such assessment strategy.

2.5 New International Competence

I have previously suggested that intercultural competence is in need of fresh attention and the critique posed against it in the previous chapters indicate to that as well. This section offers a new angle for intercultural competence and introduces modern international skills. It discusses what international competence traditionally has been linked with, and what modern internationality could be according to the *Hidden Competence* report by Demos Helsinki. The report is extensive and in my opinion gives a comprehensive review of traditional and modern international skills. These traditional and modern international skills are worth discussing in relation to the focus of the study, which is intercultural or international competence in VET. Identifying these new international skills is important because the role of traditional international skills has become outdated, and the ways of acquiring them have changed. Students need to be able to identify these skills, teachers may need to be able to assess such skill and employers need to be able to recognize them.

The think tank Demos Helsinki (in cooperation with CIMO) conducted a study in 2012 which identified modern international skills and discussed their relevance in relation to traditional international skills as well as what they mean for the world of work. According to the results, traditional international competence is easy to understand. It consists of a few easily describable components: language skills, cultural knowledge, and tolerance. (Demos, 2013, p. 15) This is something that the models of IC also recognize. However, as I have previously suggested, the report notes that the traditional definition of internationality seems to have lived its days, it is too narrow (Demos, 2013, p. 15).

Through the study, it was found out that a new group of international experts is emerging. In this group of people, skills such as curiosity and interest towards global issues are combined. They are people who with their open-mindedness have a possibility to

recognize new markets, understand the needs of different people and cooperate across different boundaries. They are also people that any company should recruit. The challenge is that many employers do not recognize these new international experts. Furthermore the experts may not understand their own potential. Therefore they are sort of hidden. (Demos, 2013, p. 7) These are further reasons why the assessment of intercultural, or international, competence could be justified. It would help students to recognize their competence and word it, and additionally employers would be able to recognize it better.

At the same time, half of Finnish employers connect international competence to factors such as empathy, resilience, ability to solve problems, confidence, self-esteem and trustworthiness. Such factors are also important recruitment criteria but recognizing them is challenging. It seems that international competence is a good indicator with which other positive qualities can be identified. (Demos, 2013, p. 7-8) However, this is not happening yet. This is because the international expert has been traditionally seen as someone who is mobile, has language proficiency and understands different cultures. Other dimensions of internationality have not been recognized yet. International competence can no longer be solely constructed through these traditional skills. They are no longer enough to describe the international expert (Demos, 2013, p. 8, 13). Similarly to earlier notions in this study, the report also points out that international experts today do not necessarily go on exchange or work abroad. Instead they consume a lot of international media and culture. They may also produce content themselves and use global services. They interact with different global peer groups and receive international influences constantly. This is the large group of experts whose international experience and competence has not previously been recognized. (Demos, 2013: 8)

According to Demos (2013) while expanded international competence has not been previously defined, traditional international competence has made itself sort of unnecessary.

Not because it does not exist but rather because there is so much of it (Demos, 2013, p.23) much like the concept of culture presented in chapter 2.2. Therefore, international competence as a phenomenon might not be as inspiring anymore to companies and employers, the report explains. It is hard to notice special value in something that is present in all operations. An understanding of new international competence is therefore needed. (Demos, 2013, p.23) Demos (2013) are of the same opinion as I have presented before that internationality is much more than mobility, language proficiency and cultural knowledge.

How does one recognize an international expert, Demos (2013) ask? They can be for example recognized by the fact that they consume international media and culture and look for information from international arenas often with other languages than their mother tongue. (Demos, 2013, p. 39) The participants of the study were also asked to determine if they perceive themselves as international. A third of the respondents that see themselves as international functions internationally in many ways: they travel, communicate, produce, and consume. These people are also most likely to use different new services. Among these people are the ones that absorb new phenomena early. Almost 80% of them works or studies with other than their native language at least once a week. They also read and use the internet in languages other than their native one. 40% of them writes and produces content in another language than Finnish. 60% of students belonging to this group have spent a period of time abroad in the form of work, internship or student exchange. This group consumes and produces content, travels, networks and is active; they are global experts. (Demos, 2013, p. 42) Such factors presented here could be taken into account in the qualification requirements as well and perhaps when considering new ways of teaching internationality students could be consulted, as Demos (2013) has in their study, on how they perceive internationality. This could help to recognize new aspect of internationality.

Thus, we have the components of new international competence as presented by Demos Helsinki (2013). This competence needs to be recognized in qualification requirements as well. It may be easy to be convinced that internationality is only about language skills and mobility but as Demos (2013) have demonstrated that is no longer enough. If we want our students, future professionals, to be successful in the world they enter upon graduation, we need to provide them with tools that are needed in that world. Furthermore, we need to help students recognize their own competence and potential as well as make the competence of future employees visible to employers. Identifying such competence in qualification requirements is one such way with which the international or intercultural competence of future professionals can be recognized.

3 Methodology

This chapter presents the data and method of the study. First, the data, namely the documents containing the qualification requirements, is discussed. The expert interview is an additional part of the data, and it is briefly introduced after the qualification requirements. The first sub-chapter discusses the qualification requirements, giving a short general description of them followed by an introduction of the specific documents used in this study. The second sub-chapter discusses the expert interview. In the second part of this chapter, the method of this study is introduced in detail. First, I will give a short insight to the history of the method followed by a general description of its use and its different approaches. The approach that was used in this study is discussed in more detail. After the description of the method, I discuss how the method was applied to the data presented in the previous chapter.

3.1 Data

In this sub-chapter I discuss the documents containing the qualification requirements. First, I give a short description of what kind of texts can be used for data in qualitative content

analysis (the method of this study, discussed in chapter 4) after which I offer an introduction to what kind of documents qualification requirements are. This I do so that the reader has an accurate understanding of the character of these documents. They have quite a specific outlook and are constructed in a distinct way. After the brief description I introduce the specific qualification requirements used in this study and discuss why they were chosen. There are altogether 164 documents which is a large amount, especially since their lengths may be up to several hundred pages. The topic of this study is already broad and including all 164 documents would make it perhaps too broad. That would not be purposeful and consequently only about half of them were analyzed.

3.1.1 Qualification Requirements. Qualification requirements are written documents determined by the Finnish National Agency for Education. Each vocational qualification (including basic vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications) has a qualification requirement in which specific aspects are determined such as composition of the qualification, learning outcomes and evaluation.

Domas White and Marsh (2006) ask what kind of data can be used for content analysis. They explain that most essential is that the data offer applicable indication for testing hypotheses or answering research questions. (Domas White & Marsh, 2006: 27) Domas White and Marsh (2006) have described data or text that is suitable for content analysis more specifically:

“The text has meaning, often established through relationships or implicature that may not be linguistically evident, and draws on frameworks within the recipient for understanding (coherence). The writer or speaker of the text intends for it to convey meaning related to his attitude and purpose (intentionality). Conversely, recipients of the message understand the text as a message; they expect it to be useful or relevant (acceptability). The text may contain

new or expected information, allowing for judgments about its quality of informing (informativity). The situation surrounding the text affects its production and determines what is appropriate for the situation and the culture (situationality). The text is often related to what precedes and follows it, as in a conversation (one interpretation of intertextuality), or is related to other similar texts, for example, others within a genre, such as transcripts of chat sessions (another meaning of intertextuality).” (p. 28)

As data for a study, qualification requirements check all the boxes, so to speak. They have coherence; they function in a specific context and require framework from the recipient for understanding. They have intentionality; the documents convey a specific meaning to the reader. They have acceptability; readers of qualification requirements expect them to be useful and relevant and if they are familiar with the context they are expected to understand them. They have informativity; the documents contain sometimes both new and expected information and are subject to judgements of quality. They have situationality; the documents are produced according to for example laws or regulations, political decisions or general trends of the educational field of the time. Finally they also have intertextuality; previous qualification requirements are often related to other additional documents and previous qualification requirements. Thus, qualification requirements make for feasible data for this study and furthermore for qualitative content analysis.

The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) accounts that the national qualification requirement, each education provider’s locally approved curricula, and the student’s personal study plan comprise the qualification system of vocational education and training. For each vocational qualification (including vocational qualifications, further qualifications and specialist qualifications), The Finnish National Agency for Education determines the national qualification requirement. The composition of studies and objectives, core contents, and assessment criteria for study modules are determined in that process.

Additionally the composition of the local curricula is described in the national qualification requirements. They are composed in cooperation with organizations, trade unions, the Trade Union of Education, and student unions. Other representatives of working life as well as National Education Training Committees and local tripartite bodies take part in the curriculum work as consultants. (EDUFI, n.d.)

With the Finnish VET reform the qualification structure changed in the beginning of 2019 so that the previously 360 qualifications decreased by over half to 164 qualifications. It means that there are now new wider qualifications while some quite narrower qualifications have disappeared. Also the qualification requirements of vocational qualifications reformed in August 2018. The vocational qualifications are 180 competence points. Out of these, 145 competence points are vocational units and 35 are common units. (EDUFI, 2018)

The content of the qualification requirements has been legislated to include the qualification title, composition of the qualification, qualification units contained in the qualification as well as the credits for each unit, vocational qualification requirements or targeted learning outcome, and evaluation of competence. (EDUFI, 2015, p. 27)

2.14. Ravitsemispalveluiden tuotteistaminen, 20 osp (106280)

Ammattitaitovaatimukset

Opiskelija osaa

- hyödyntää asiakastuntemusta ja kauden raaka-aineita
- tuotteistaa työryhmässä eri vuodenaikoihin sopivia ruoka- ja juomatuotteita tai palveluja
- hinnoitella työryhmässä ruoka- ja juomatuotteita tai palveluja
- tuottaa tai päivittää työryhmässä markkinointimateriaalia
- toteuttaa suunniteltuja ruoka- ja juomatuotteita tai palveluja
- arvioida omaa osaamistaan ja toimintaansa työyhteisön jäsenenä.

Arviointi

Opiskelija hyödyntää asiakastuntemusta ja kauden raaka-aineita.

| Opiskelija | |
|---------------|--|
| Tyydyttävä T1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • noudattaa työaikoja • kerää ja hankkii tietoa eri lähteistä • kehittää työryhmän jäsenenä uusiin tarpeisiin sopivia ruoka- ja juomatuotteita tai palveluja • hyödyntää työryhmän jäsenenä kausiluonteisuutta ideoinnissaan |
| Tyydyttävä T2 | |
| Hyvä H3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • noudattaa työaikoja • kerää ja hankkii itsenäisesti tietoa käyttäen monipuolisesti eri lähteitä • kehittää uusiin tarpeisiin sopivia ruoka- ja juomatuotteita tai palveluja • hyödyntää oma-aloitteisesti asiakasryhmien tuntemusta ja kausivaihtelua tuotteistamisessa |

Figure 4: Screenshot from the Vocational Qualification in Hotel and Catering Services

The picture above demonstrates what a qualification requirement looks like. It is from the vocational qualification in hotel and catering services. From the picture some distinct parts of the qualification requirements are noticeable, such as vocational competence requirement (ammattitaitovaatimus), evaluation of competence (arviointi) and the targeted learning outcomes are listed under the vocational competence requirements.

Koramo (2012) from EDUFI asserts that the goals of internationalization are taken into account in the qualification requirements which are composed by the Finnish National Agency for Education. The qualifications, the competence areas, the competence requirements, and the evaluation criteria all include competence needed in the increasingly international working life. That includes vocational competence as well as linguistic and cultural knowledge. (Koramo, EDUFI, 2012, p. 7) Whether this is still the case and to what extent, I determine through the analysis of the qualification requirements.

Egetenmeyer et al. (2011) present a model of international occupational skills developed by The Cologne Institute for Economic Research. It has identified the aspects presented below within international qualifications:

1. “International basic qualifications: language skills (reading, writing, speaking, subject-specific terms), international subject-specific knowledge (knowledge about foreign markets, international business rules, international laws, international regulations, international agreements, e.g. General Agreement on Trade in Services)
2. International key qualifications: intercultural knowledge (knowledge about culture, history, politics, social attitudes), international dispositions (openness, tolerance, flexibility, empathy and adaptability)”. (Egetenmeyer et al., 2011, p. 23)

These are the kinds of competence or skills I attempted to identify in the qualification requirements. Based on the above list and Demos Helsinki’s *Hidden Competence* (2013) report I have created the following list of codes and expressions which I use in applying the qualitative content analysis to these qualification requirements:

1. Language skills

- communication (kommunikointi)
- language (kieli)
- English (englanti)

2. Subject-specific internationality

- foreign (country) (ulkomaat)
- international (kansainvälinen)
- global (globaali)
- EU

3. International / intercultural competence

- culture (kulttuuri)
- multinational (monikulttuurinen)
- sexuality (seksuaalisuus)
- history (historia)
- politics/policy (politiikka)
- attitudes (asenteet)
- background (taustat)
- ethnicity (etnisyys)
- identity (identiteetti)

4. International / intercultural dispositions

- openness (avoimuus)
- tolerance (suvaitsevaisuus)
- flexibility (joustavuus)
- empathy (empatia)
- adaptability (sopeutuvuus/mukautuvaisuus)
- curiosity (uteliaisuus)
- productiveness (tuottavuus)
- resilience (sitkeys)
- identity (identiteetti)
- looks for information (etsii tietoa)

There are altogether 164 qualification requirements, including vocational qualifications, further qualifications and specialist qualifications, which is such a large

amount meaning that analyzing all of them extensively would not be sensible given that the scope of a master's thesis is still quite limited. Therefore I chose to analyze 74 qualification requirements out of the total 164. I came to this selection by first going through all of the documents roughly and determining which qualifications had no expressions, which had less than ten expressions and which qualifications had expressions only in the common units. Common units are shared with all of the vocational qualifications (but are not included in further or specialist qualifications) and do not vary by qualification. Consequently I wanted to analyze such expressions that show in the units that are specific to each field and qualification. There were 15 of those qualifications that had expressions only in the common units. Qualifications that had fewer than 10 expressions were 37 and qualifications that did not have any expressions were 32. There were also six qualifications for which a qualification requirement document was not available. Thus altogether 85 qualification requirements (and six that are not available), a little over half of the total 164 documents, were left out of the analysis, leaving 74 qualification requirements ready for analysis. The qualifications that were used as data in this study are listed in appendix A.

3.1.1 Expert Interview. The expert who was interviewed for this study is a teacher at a Finnish VET institution. He has a long history in international matters both before VET and within it; he for example, is the teacher responsible for international relations within his subject. Therefore, he was an appropriate interviewee because the understanding of international matters was an important factor of the interview. I contacted him through the international coordinator of his VET institution. In this study he appears anonymously.

The expert interview was conducted as a face-to-face encounter in Finnish as that is the mother tongue of both the interviewee and interviewer. It lasted about 35 minutes and was recorded with an audio recorder. The questions posed were open questions and the interviewee was encouraged to speak freely and ask additional questions. The recording of the

interview was later on transcribed and the transcription was translated into English for the purpose of the study. Parts of the interview are discussed in the findings chapter. In the interview excerpts in chapter 4 “Q” stands for question and “A” stands for answer. Only the expert’s answers are cited because the questions were posed by me.

3.2 Method

Next, I discuss the method that was used in this study, namely qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is a research method with various strategies and means of conducting. Consequently, it is important to give an account of the different procedures of this method and to explain how the method was applied in this study. Qualitative content analysis presented itself as a good method for this study dominantly because of the nature of the qualification requirement documents. Also, later when the research questions started to form, they reinforced the decision of qualitative content analysis as method for this study. Presented here are the research questions as a reminder:

1. How often is internationality expressed in the qualification requirements?
2. Which expressions appear frequently, which infrequently?
3. What kinds of expressions are used to indicate internationality and how do they relate to each other?
4. What kind of understandings and relevancies with regard to internationality can be inferred from the qualification requirements?

Qualitative content analysis and its summative approach allows for the counting of expressions while still keeping the emphasis on the qualitative style of the method which is why it was suitable for analyzing the documents and giving answers to the research questions at hand.

3.2.1 Qualitative Content Analysis. According to Weber (1990) content analysis is a research method that uses a set of strategies to make logical inferences from text. The inferences are for example about the message of the text. The methods of this inferential process range by the theoretical and relevant interests of the researchers. (Weber, 1990, p. 9) Elo and Kyngäs (2007) agree with Weber's definition since they explain that "content analysis is a method of analyzing written, verbal or visual communication messages" (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007, p. 107)

Weber (1990) demonstrates that content analysis can be used for various objectives such as to:

- "disclose international differences in communication content;
- code open-ended questions in surveys;
- identify the intentions and other characteristics of the communicator;
- reflect cultural patterns of groups, institutions, or societies;
- describe trends in communication content." (Weber, 1990, p. 9)

Elo and Kyngäs (2007) assert that, as a research method content analysis is an objective and systematic instrument for describing and quantifying phenomena as well as a method for analyzing documents. With content analysis, a researcher can make reproduced and logical deductions from data to their context. Its purpose is to provide new insights, knowledge, a portrayal of facts and a practical guide for action. Its aim is to gain a concise and broad depiction of the phenomenon. (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007, p. 108)

In content analysis. the words of the analyzed text are arranged into fewer content categories, which, according to Weber (1990) is a main idea of the method. Either several words or only one may conclude a category. Similar meanings are shared between the words,

phrases or other units of text that are grouped in the same category. This similarity could mean synonyms or connotations for example, depending on the purposes of the researcher. It is important that the classification procedure is reliable in the sense that it is consistent so that valid inferences can be made from the text. (Weber, 1990, p. 12)

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) point out that recently the potential of content analysis as a qualitative method has been acknowledged which has led to its increased application and popularity. (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278) According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005) research that uses qualitative content analysis concentrates on language's communicational attributes and focuses on the substance or contextual meaning of the text. The analyzed data can be in verbal, print, or electronic form and it can be collected from for example open-ended surveys, interviews, or print media such as articles or manuals. However, qualitative content analysis, in addition to counting words, examines language intensely in order to organize large amounts of text into adequate number of categories that present comparable meanings. Either manifest or latent communication can be represented in the categories. The goal is to gain insight and awareness of the present phenomenon. (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278)

3.2.1.1 Analytical Steps. Elo and Kyngäs (2007) explain that the preparation phase begins with the choosing of the unit of analysis, which can be a word or a theme. A unit of meaning can contain more than one sentence and it can have several meanings. That being said, it may pose difficulties and challenges to the analysis process if such unit is used. Similarly, an analysis unit that is too narrow can result in disintegration. The unit of analysis may also be for instance a letter, a word, a sentence or a portion of pages or words depending on the research question. (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007, p. 109)

In the beginning, the researcher has to determine whether to analyze only the apparent content or also latent content. The aim and the research question guide the researcher in the decision of choosing which content is analyzed. The purpose nevertheless is to become deeply involved in the data, thus the written material is read through several times. If the researcher does not become completely familiar with the data, no insights or theories can manifest from the data. (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007, p. 109)

The following step is to arrange the qualitative data, and this process involves open coding. While reading the text, headings and notes are written into it during this step. The data is read through iteratively and new headings are added into the margins. These headings characterize all the features of the content. The headings are collected on to coding sheets and at this stage categories are freely created. (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007, p. 110-111)

3.2.1.2 The Summative Approach. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) describe an approach of qualitative content analysis: summative content analysis. This approach relevant approach in relation to this study, since it allows for the counting of expressions as well as the analysis of latent data. This twofold analysis is important in regards to the qualification requirements because the aim is to find out in what amounts is internationality expressed in the documents and if some qualification requirements entail more expressions than others.

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) explain that in a study that uses the summative approach certain words or content in the data are identified and quantified. This is done so that the contextual use of the words or content is understood. The aim is to explore usage, not to deduce meaning. The analysis of the presence of specific words or content is frequently called manifest content analysis. This sort of analysis that concentrates only on counting amounts would be quantitative. However, the summative approach goes further and includes also latent

content analysis. In this process interpretations of the content are made, and the focus is on exploring meanings of the content. (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1283-1284)

The initial phase in the summative approach includes searches for incidents of the identified terms, either by computer or by hand. For each term repetition counts are calculated. The purpose of the calculating is to pinpoint patterns in the data and to contextualize the codes. This makes it possible to interpret the context of the term or phrase. The aim is to investigate the usage of words or the meanings that the words might normally possess. (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1285)

The summative approach is most relevant and specifically suitable for this study because it in a way combines quantitative and qualitative methods. Both the quantification and the analysis of use of terms are important, however, the emphasis in the analysis is on the qualitative aspect of the approach. Identifying amounts and patterns of terms in the data will reveal if some qualifications include more expressions of internationality than others. It will also reveal what kind of terms are used most often and if some terms are used seldom or not at all. The qualitative analysis of the terms will reveal if expressions refer to traditional or modern internationality. It will also give insight on the use of the expressions, if they are subject specific terms that refer to for example international decrees or laws or if they are more general terms that refer to for example the understanding of cultural backgrounds. Thus the summative content analysis will answer the research questions.

3.3 Applying Qualitative Content Analysis to Qualification Requirements

The documents containing qualifications requirements were in pdf format. They are publicly available in electronic form in the eRequirements section of studyinfo.fi webpage. Every document was downloaded from that website. The documents were in Finnish (only four of them are translated into English at the time of conducting this study) and were

analyzed in Finnish. Therefore the original term list and the original titles of the qualification requirements were likewise in Finnish and were translated into English after the analysis.

I opened the documents in Adobe Acrobat Reader program and used the search tool of the program to search for each term in each qualification requirement. A shortened version of each term was used in order for every variation to be included in the counting. For example for international (kansainvälinen) and culture (kulttuuri), shorter versions of ‘internat’ (‘kansainv’) and ‘cultur’ (kulttuur) were used. I counted every instance of each term from the whole document with the exception of the common units of the “basic” vocational qualifications. They were the same and shared with each vocational qualification and I determined it to be not purposeful to look for expressions in them. If a qualification had an international unit (meaning that an expression indicating internationality was included in one or more unit titles) I only counted the first instance of that title. Otherwise every expression and term was counted even if they were repeated in the same form in different places of the document. I made three excel sheets, one for vocational qualifications, one for further vocational qualifications and one of specialist vocational qualifications. I wrote in each qualification title and every term. Once I had counted the number of instances for a term in each qualification I marked the number in its designated cell.

| 1 | Qualifications | Language skills / competence | | | Subject-specific international competence | | | |
|----|---|------------------------------|-------------|-----------|---|---------------|------------|--------------------|
| 2 | Vocational Qualifications (VQ) | Communication | Language | English | Foreign (country) | International | Global | EU |
| 3 | VQ in the Vehicle Sector | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 4 | VQ in Food Production | 3 | 14 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | VQ in Horse Care and Management | 26 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | VQ in Hairdressing and Beauty Care | 3 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | VQ in Education and Instruction | 211 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | VQ in Logistics | 6 | 16 | 18 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | VQ in Natural and Environmental Protection | 0 | 37 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 3 |
| 10 | VQ in Pharmaceutics | 0 | 49 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 12 |
| 11 | VQ in Agriculture | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 | VQ in the Tourism Industry | 0 | 60 | 0 | 10 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| 13 | VQ in Seafaring | 16 | 28 | 26 | 0 | 35 | 0 | 0 |
| 14 | VQ in Music | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 15 | VQ in Cleaning and Property services | 3 | 224 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 16 | VQ in Construction | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 17 | VQ in Hotel and Catering Services | 32 | 275 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| 18 | VQ in Circus Arts | 3 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| 19 | VQ in Social and Health Care | 133 | 403 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20 | VQ in Arts and Design | 0 | 11 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 21 | VQ in Building Maintenance Technology | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 22 | VQ in Dance | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 23 | VQ in Technical Design | 0 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| 24 | VQ in Information and Telecommunications Technology | 11 | 35 | 19 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 25 | VQ in Information and Communications Technology | 0 | 40 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 26 | VQ in Safety and Security | 0 | 14 | 6 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| 27 | VQ in Equipment Maintenance | 0 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 28 | Total | 478 | 1319 | 98 | | 24 | 121 | 3 15 |

Figure 5: A screenshot from one of the excel sheets used in the analysis.

Once the counting of the instances was completed I identified total expression counts for each term and each qualification requirement as well as how many expressions each qualification “level” had in total. For each qualification level I also identified three qualifications that had the most expression counts and from each “top three” qualification I identified the three expressions that appeared most frequently. Lastly I made some inferences of the frequencies or the patterns of the expressions.

After the counting, or in other words the quantitative section of the analysis, was done I moved on to the qualitative section and deepened the analysis. I applied the open coding process of qualitative content analysis in order to identify relations, links and hierarchies in the terms, or codes. The codes derived from the original categories and expressions used in the quantitative section as well. Finally I chose two codes that I deemed most important for the analysis, ‘culture’ and ‘international’. I presented ten example variations for each code, and constructed a similar hierarchical arrangement as for the categories. Additionally, I also presented ten example phrases in which different variations of each code come up, and analyzed the meanings and messages behind them. After this the analysis was complete.

4 Findings

In this chapter I analyze the findings of the qualitative content analysis. The analysis of qualification requirements is divided into two sections: quantitative and qualitative. The first section starts with an overall analysis of the internationality within the documents. Then the analysis moves on to discuss each qualification “level”, vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications, in more detail. Out of each level three qualifications that had the most expressions are brought to forth. As explained before, there were altogether 74 documents included in the analysis. Discussing every single

document in detail would make this section unreasonably long and perhaps even tedious. This is the reason why only three are presented from each qualification level. In addition to this, each code category is discussed in relation to each qualification level. The qualitative section deepens the analysis with the coding process after which two codes and their example phrases are discussed in detail. Throughout both phases inferences are made from the analysis.

It is also worth noting again that the analysis, although divided into quantitative and qualitative sections, is by no means an extensive statistical analysis. Rather the purpose is to give an overview of patterns and popularities within the expressions and codes while keeping the main focus on the qualitative side of the analysis.

4.1 Quantitative Section

Out of the 74 qualification requirements, 19 qualifications have international units. In other words, these are units that are dedicated to some sort of international functions in the subject or field. 15 of them express straightforward internationality while 4 indicate it indirectly. Examples of such units are the units of ‘*international* security operations’ in the vocational qualification in safety and security, ‘working in an *international* production’ in the specialist vocational qualification in stage and theatre technology, ‘transports in *foreign* traffic’ in the vocational qualification in logistics and ‘*cultural diversity* in education and guidance work’ in the further vocational qualification in education and guidance.

There were also at least 9 qualifications that, based on the title of the qualification, could be perceived to have internationality but in fact do not have it at all. Such qualifications are for example the further vocational qualification in massage, the further vocational qualification in customs or the further vocational qualification for music producers. The fact that some qualifications do not include internationality at all could be explained with them being second or third level qualifications and that they have equivalents in the first or second

level qualifications that include internationality. When internationality is included in for example the vocational qualification in education and guidance perhaps it is not needed in the specialist vocational qualification in education and guidance. Students may have already attained internationality from the vocational qualification and when they continue to further or specialist qualifications internationality is not needed in them. This is possible, however, I would not advocate for this. Of course, some fields contain more internationality than others but there is no harm in including it in the second and third level qualifications. That being said, there are also such qualifications that have internationality in multiple “levels”, an example being the vocational and the further vocational qualifications in cleaning and property services.

The six most popular expressions throughout all the 74 qualification requirements were ‘independence’ with 3895 instances, ‘language’ with 2169 instances, ‘culture’ with 1348 instances, ‘flexibility’ with 683 instances, ‘communication’ with 607 instances, and ‘international’ with 589 instances. It is certain that language and communication are valued in the qualification requirements. Presumably, the use of independence and flexibility are not international in nature. They are valuable traits on their own and students in VET are encouraged and often required to be independent and flexible in their work, even without the international indication. Although not the most popular codes, it is still positive that ‘culture’ and ‘international’ are among the most used ones. They are codes that have a direct indication to internationality, and whose use can be perceived to be international in nature.

4.1.1 Vocational Qualifications. Altogether the 25 vocational qualifications had 7554 expressions. The vocational qualifications had most expressions out of the three different qualification levels. This could be the result of the longer length of the documents. They are often several hundred pages long. They are also sort of the “basic” or “first level” qualifications at which students start when they enter VET. Thus, I think, it is justified that

they have the most internationality expressions. It might be the case that not every student proceeds to further or specialist qualifications and thus they need to be given a chance to acquire internationality at the basic level.

Out of the 25 documents the vocational qualification in social and health care had the most expressions to internationality with 1042 expressions. The term that was most popular in this qualification was 'language' with 403 instances, the next most popular was different variations of 'culture' with 134 instances and third was 'communication' with 133 instances. This makes sense since in the field of social and health care the student interacts a great deal with patients and thus patient communication and understanding of patients' cultural backgrounds are important skills.

The vocational qualification that had the second most expressions was the vocational qualification in cleaning and property services with 815 expressions. 'Independence' was the term that had the most instances with 407 instances. Second was 'language' with 224 instances and third was 'culture' with 84 instances. This qualification to have the second most expressions of internationality might be surprising because maybe it is not readily perceived to be a field that would need a lot of internationality. Nevertheless, this is a good example that any field can include internationality.

The vocational qualification in hotel and catering services was in the third place with 775 expressions. It, again, had the most instances with the term 'independence' with 358 times. Second most instances had the expressions of 'language' with 275 counts and third was 'flexibility' with 51 instances. This qualification has, so to speak, earned its place in the "top three". Hotel and catering services field is one of those fields where internationality should be included given its aspects in international customer service for example. It is still surprising

that ‘internationality’ or ‘culture’ were not among the three most popular terms because it can be argued that this field is naturally quite international.

The analysis included four code categories: language skills, subject-specific internationality, international / intercultural competence, and international / intercultural dispositions. The following is an analysis of each category in the vocational qualifications.

| Qualifications | Terms |
|---|------------------------|
| Vocational Qualifications (VQ) | Language skills |
| VQ in the Vehicle Sector | 30 |
| VQ in Food Production | 17 |
| VQ in Horse Care and Management | 38 |
| VQ in Hairdressing and Beauty Care | 27 |
| VQ in Education and Instruction | 226 |
| VQ in Logistics | 40 |
| VQ in Natural and Environmental Protection | 37 |
| VQ in Pharmaseutics | 57 |
| VQ in Agriculture | 5 |
| VQ in the Tourism Industry | 60 |
| VQ in Seafaring | 70 |
| VQ in Music | 1 |
| VQ in Cleaning and Property services | 227 |
| VQ in Construction | 0 |
| VQ in Hotel and Catering Services | 307 |
| VQ in Circus Arts | 9 |
| VQ in Social and Health Care | 536 |
| VQ in Arts and Desing | 11 |
| VQ in Building Maintenance Technology | 0 |
| VQ in Dance | 7 |
| VQ in Technical Design | 9 |
| VQ in Information and Telecommunications Technology | 65 |
| VQ in Information and Communications Technology | 58 |
| VQ in Safety and Security | 20 |
| VQ in Equipment Maintenance | 38 |
| Total | 1895 |

The category of language skills included variations of ‘communication’, ‘language’ and ‘English’. This is the second largest category. In the case of vocational qualifications one reason for this could again be the length of the documents. But also, if one looks at the

qualifications, most of them are such that require the student to have strong language and communication competence.

| Qualifications | Terms |
|---|--|
| Vocational Qualifications (VQ) | Subject-specific internationality |
| VQ in the Vehicle Sector | 2 |
| VQ in Food Production | 5 |
| VQ in Horse Care and Management | 4 |
| VQ in Hairdressing and Beauty Care | 0 |
| VQ in Education and Instruction | 1 |
| VQ in Logistics | 12 |
| VQ in Natural and Environmental Protection | 12 |
| VQ in Pharmaseutics | 13 |
| VQ in Agriculture | 0 |
| VQ in the Tourism Industry | 18 |
| VQ in Seafaring | 35 |
| VQ in Music | 0 |
| VQ in Cleaning and Property services | 0 |
| VQ in Construction | 6 |
| VQ in Hotel and Catering Services | 13 |
| VQ in Circus Arts | 16 |
| VQ in Social and Health Care | 0 |
| VQ in Arts and Desing | 8 |
| VQ in Building Maintenance Technology | 0 |
| VQ in Dance | 1 |
| VQ in Technical Design | 5 |
| VQ in Information and Telecommunications Technology | 2 |
| VQ in Information and Communications Technology | 0 |
| VQ in Safety and Security | 9 |
| VQ in Equipment Maintenance | 1 |
| Total | 163 |

Subject-specific internationality included different variations of the terms ‘foreign (country)’, ‘international’, ‘global’ and ‘EU’. They are usually expressions that indicate to for example international networks, international markets and partners and international or EU laws. Here the vocational qualification of seafaring has the most expressions and most of them are indicating to seafaring laws and regulations. Fields such as circus arts and the

tourism industry also have several instances for these expressions and they are no surprises in this category.

| Qualifications | Terms |
|---|---|
| Vocational Qualifications (VQ) | International / intercultural competence |
| VQ in the Vehicle Sector | 3 |
| VQ in Food Production | 5 |
| VQ in Horse Care and Management | 10 |
| VQ in Hairdressing and Beauty Care | 52 |
| VQ in Education and Instruction | 186 |
| VQ in Logistics | 3 |
| VQ in Natural and Environmental Protection | 145 |
| VQ in Pharmaseutics | 3 |
| VQ in Agriculture | 26 |
| VQ in the Tourism Industry | 44 |
| VQ in Seafaring | 32 |
| VQ in Music | 25 |
| VQ in Cleaning and Property services | 84 |
| VQ in Construction | 8 |
| VQ in Hotel and Catering Services | 36 |
| VQ in Circus Arts | 41 |
| VQ in Social and Health Care | 235 |
| VQ in Arts and Desing | 72 |
| VQ in Building Maintenance Technology | 7 |
| VQ in Dance | 32 |
| VQ in Technical Design | 0 |
| VQ in Information and Telecommunications Technology | 0 |
| VQ in Information and Communications Technology | 4 |
| VQ in Safety and Security | 12 |
| VQ in Equipment Maintenance | 9 |
| Total | 1074 |

This category included expressions of ‘culture’, ‘multinational’, ‘sexuality’, ‘religion/conviction’, ‘history’, ‘politics/policy’, ‘attitudes’, ‘backgrounds’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘identity’. Some of these overlap in for example expressions such as ‘cultural backgrounds’ or ‘culturohistorical’. They indicate to how the student for example takes into account cultural backgrounds, manages his/her attitudes or identity and recognizes how religious beliefs may affect their work. This is the category that has third most instances after language skills and

international /intercultural dispositions. This is a positive finding, indicating that international and intercultural factors are taken into account in the qualification requirements. The number of expression between different fields varies from zero to over 200 which is a big gap, but it is a fact that perhaps some fields do not need to include internationality as much as others, for example the vehicle sector compared to education and instruction.

| Qualifications | Terms |
|---|---|
| Vocational Qualifications (VQ) | International / intercultural dispositions |
| VQ in the Vehicle Sector | 205 |
| VQ in Food Production | 29 |
| VQ in Horse Care and Management | 371 |
| VQ in Hairdressing and Beauty Care | 94 |
| VQ in Education and Instruction | 106 |
| VQ in Logistics | 153 |
| VQ in Natural and Environmental Protection | 218 |
| VQ in Pharmaceutics | 216 |
| VQ in Agriculture | 167 |
| VQ in the Tourism Industry | 103 |
| VQ in Seafaring | 261 |
| VQ in Music | 30 |
| VQ in Cleaning and Property services | 504 |
| VQ in Construction | 240 |
| VQ in Hotel and Catering Services | 419 |
| VQ in Circus Arts | 63 |
| VQ in Social and Health Care | 271 |
| VQ in Arts and Design | 118 |
| VQ in Building Maintenance Technology | 119 |
| VQ in Dance | 38 |
| VQ in Technical Design | 142 |
| VQ in Information and Telecommunications Technology | 147 |
| VQ in Information and Communications Technology | 290 |
| VQ in Safety and Security | 59 |
| VQ in Equipment Maintenance | 57 |
| Total | 4420 |

The last category included the expressions of ‘openness’, ‘tolerance’, ‘flexibility’, ‘empathy’, ‘adaptability’, ‘curiosity’, ‘productiveness’, ‘resilience’, independence’ and ‘looks for information’. Most of these terms can be said to indicate to modern internationality (which

was discussed in chapter 2) for example, ‘curiosity’ and ‘resilience’. Although this is by far the largest category within vocational qualifications, only one term dominates this category. ‘Independence’ is a term that is used extensively in all of the qualification requirements overshadowing others in this category. It is clear that VET students need to be able to do their work independently. That is a skill that also employers seek. Although the use of that term is exhaustive it does not necessarily mean that it is used explicitly because it might be perceived as an international skill. It is also a valued skill without the international implication which I think is the reason why it is used in this extent. I hypothesized that perhaps these new international skills such as ‘resilience’ and ‘productiveness’ are not yet recognized in the qualification requirements. Perhaps that is justified; it might be difficult to include expressions of ‘curiosity’ in the middle of subject-specific assessment criteria in, for instance, the vocational qualification in food production.

4.1.2 Further Vocational Qualifications. There were altogether 24 further vocational qualifications included in the analysis. They could be said to be the “second level” of the three qualifications. Altogether the further qualifications had 1800 expressions and in addition to being the second level they are also in the “second place” out of the three levels, so to speak.

From the further qualifications the further vocational qualification in cleaning and property services had the most expressions with 260 expressions. Its most used expressions were ‘language’ with 89 instances, ‘independence’ with 70 instances and ‘flexibility’ with 46 instances. Again the same expressions dominate and most likely for the same reasons as proposed above. It is again perhaps surprising to see this qualification in cleaning and property services so high in the ranking, because it might not be readily perceived to entail internationality. That is nevertheless again a positive indication, pointing to the fact that internationality can be included in all kinds of fields.

The further vocational qualification in education and guidance had the second most expressions with 208 expressions. The three most used expressions were ‘culture’ with 72 instances, ‘language’ with 66 instances and a big gap to the 11 instances of ‘flexibility’. It seems natural that this qualification has a large amount of international expressions.

Particularly the extensive use of different variations of culture, as well as language, is logical in such a field because it includes a lot of interaction with people. Thus the student must be able to have good communication skills and take into account for example cultural backgrounds.

Third was the further vocational qualification in textiles and fashion industry with 124 expressions. Its most common expressions were again ‘language’ with 63 instances, ‘independence’ with 16 instances and ‘global’ with 11 instances. Again the use of language and independence expressions as such may not be intended as specifically international expressions, since those are values on their own as well. However, the term ‘global’ is a new matter. In this case it indicated to following global trends or looking for information globally, which can also be seen as modern internationality which was discussed in chapter 2. Perhaps they were not consciously intended as such but nevertheless they can be perceived to be international in nature.

| Qualifications | Terms |
|--|------------------------|
| Further Vocational Qualifications (FVQ) | Language skills |
| FVQ in Motor Vehicles Sector | 19 |
| FVQ for Community Interpreting | 59 |
| FVQ in Animal Care | 20 |
| FVQ in Horse Care and Management | 9 |
| FVQ in Fishery | 17 |
| FVQ in Education and Guidance | 72 |
| FVQ in Intellectual Disability Services | 36 |
| FVQ in Business | 18 |
| FVQ in Physical Education and Coaching | 21 |
| FVQ in Nature-based Services | 16 |
| FVQ in Agriculture | 6 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| FVQ in Tourism Services | 21 |
| FVQ in Seafaring | 22 |
| FVQ in Mental Health and Intoxicant Abuse Welfare Work | 3 |
| FVQ for Guide Services | 29 |
| FVQ in Service Logistics | 8 |
| FVQ in Household and Cleaning Services | 90 |
| FVQ in Horticulture | 13 |
| FVQ in Sami Crafts | 64 |
| FVQ in Parish and Funeral Services | 7 |
| FVQ in Arts and Desing | 13 |
| FVQ in Textiles and Fashion Industry | 66 |
| FVQ in Information and Library Services | 7 |
| FVQ for Entrepreneurs | 1 |
| Total | 637 |

Once again the language skills category is the biggest one. Perhaps, quite simply, it could be concluded that language skills are valued in many of the qualifications. This is of course a good thing; it is important for students to be competent in communicating not only in their own but in other languages as well. I have suggested earlier that when it comes to intercultural competence language skills are perhaps overly emphasized. I am cautious to make the same indication here, because it possibly is the case with qualification requirements that it is simply required of the qualifications to include language skills to these extents. Thus, in this case it would not be reasonable to argue that language skills are overly emphasized.

| Qualifications | Terms |
|--|--|
| Further Vocational Qualifications (FVQ) | Subject-specific internationality |
| FVQ in Motor Vehicles Sector | 3 |
| FVQ for Community Interpreting | 0 |
| FVQ in Animal Care | 4 |
| FVQ in Horse Care and Management | 12 |
| FVQ in Fishery | 6 |
| FVQ in Education and Guidance | 1 |
| FVQ in Intellectual Disability Services | 1 |
| FVQ in Business | 42 |
| FVQ in Physical Education and Coaching | 2 |
| FVQ in Nature-based Services | 4 |
| FVQ in Agriculture | 11 |
| FVQ in Tourism Services | 0 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| FVQ in Seafaring | 17 |
| FVQ in Mental Health and Intoxicant Abuse Welfare Work | 1 |
| FVQ for Guide Services | 11 |
| FVQ in Service Logistics | 14 |
| FVQ in Household and Cleaning Services | 0 |
| FVQ in Horticulture | 4 |
| FVQ in Sami Crafts | 0 |
| FVQ in Parish and Funeral Services | 2 |
| FVQ in Arts and Desing | 26 |
| FVQ in Textiles and Fashion Industry | 19 |
| FVQ in Information and Library Services | 4 |
| FVQ for Entrepreneurs | 21 |
| Total | 205 |

There is not much subject-specific internationality in the further vocational qualifications, at least in comparison with the other categories. Many of these further qualifications had equivalent vocational qualifications which might explain the lack of expressions in this category: if such expressions are already mentioned in the “basic level”, perhaps they are not perceived to be necessary in the further level.

| Qualifications | Terms |
|--|---|
| Further Vocational Qualifications (FVQ) | International / intercultural competence |
| FVQ in Motor Vehicles Sector | 5 |
| FVQ for Community Interpreting | 4 |
| FVQ in Animal Care | 1 |
| FVQ in Horse Care and Management | 2 |
| FVQ in Fishery | 10 |
| FVQ in Education and Guidance | 111 |
| FVQ in Intellectual Disability Services | 50 |
| FVQ in Business | 8 |
| FVQ in Physical Education and Coaching | 14 |
| FVQ in Nature-based Services | 21 |
| FVQ in Agriculture | 5 |
| FVQ in Tourism Services | 14 |
| FVQ in Seafaring | 5 |
| FVQ in Mental Health and Intoxicant Abuse Welfare Work | 16 |
| FVQ for Guide Services | 56 |
| FVQ in Service Logistics | 0 |
| FVQ in Household and Cleaning Services | 52 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| FVQ in Horticulture | 17 |
| FVQ in Sami Crafts | 22 |
| FVQ in Parish and Funeral Services | 58 |
| FVQ in Arts and Design | 33 |
| FVQ in Textiles and Fashion Industry | 8 |
| FVQ in Information and Library Services | 5 |
| FVQ for Entrepreneurs | 1 |
| Total | 518 |

This category is the second largest when it comes to further vocational qualifications. This is a positive notion. It reveals that internationality and interculturality is included more in these qualifications than when we compare it to the same category in vocational qualifications which was third.

| Qualifications | Terms |
|--|---|
| Further Vocational Qualifications (FVQ) | International / intercultural dispositions |
| FVQ in Motor Vehicles Sector | 34 |
| FVQ for Community Interpreting | 10 |
| FVQ in Animal Care | 17 |
| FVQ in Horse Care and Management | 2 |
| FVQ in Fishery | 2 |
| FVQ in Education and Guidance | 24 |
| FVQ in Intellectual Disability Services | 7 |
| FVQ in Business | 6 |
| FVQ in Physical Education and Coaching | 12 |
| FVQ in Nature-based Services | 8 |
| FVQ in Agriculture | 21 |
| FVQ in Tourism Services | 31 |
| FVQ in Seafaring | 0 |
| FVQ in Mental Health and Intoxicant Abuse Welfare Work | 2 |
| FVQ for Guide Services | 13 |
| FVQ in Service Logistics | 6 |
| FVQ in Household and Cleaning Services | 118 |
| FVQ in Horticulture | 34 |
| FVQ in Sami Crafts | 1 |
| FVQ in Parish and Funeral Services | 16 |
| FVQ in Arts and Design | 31 |
| FVQ in Textiles and Fashion Industry | 31 |
| FVQ in Information and Library Services | 13 |
| FVQ for Entrepreneurs | 1 |

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| Total | 440 |
|--------------|------------|

This category is again among the largest ones and again it is explained by the fact that ‘independent’ dominates the category. On the other hand, another term is also used frequently in this category in the further vocational qualifications: ‘flexibility’. Its nature and use is probably similar to ‘independence’; it is presumably not used as an indication to internationality but simply as something that students should possess in their work.

4.1.3 Specialist Vocational Qualifications. Altogether 25 specialist vocational qualifications were analyzed. They are the sort of “third” and final level in the three qualification types and are also in the third place in total expression counts. Altogether the specialist qualifications had 1323 expressions.

The specialist vocational qualification in arts and design had the most expressions with 180 expressions. Again ‘language’ has the most instances with 44 counts in this qualification. Second is, perhaps surprisingly, ‘history’ with 41 instances and third comes ‘culture’ with 29 instances. It seems not a surprise that this qualification has the most expressions out of the 25 further vocational qualifications. Even from by title it can be perceived to have internationality. ‘History’ is an interesting addition to the most common expressions. In this case they were indications to utilizing the field’s cultural competence and history in designing or valuing culturohistorical objects or sights.

The specialist qualification that had second most expressions was the specialist vocational qualification in textiles and fashion industry with 113 expressions. It had, perhaps not surprisingly, most expressions in ‘language’ with 44 instances. ‘International’ had 27 instances and ‘foreign (country)’ had 17 instances. ‘International’ and ‘foreign (country)’ appear for the first time in the most used expressions, perhaps indicating that expressions to direct internationality are scarce in the qualification requirements. It is still a positive notion

to see two quite strong indications to internationality in this particular qualification. These expressions indicated to, for instance, being able to work in an international environment, reviewing options of internationality or utilizing foreign expert networks. This is also the kind of internationality that could be said to be modern, although perhaps such use was not conscious.

The specialist vocational qualification in patient immobilization had third most expressions with 110 expressions. Its three most common expressions were ‘independence’ with 62 instances, ‘language’ with 13 instances and ‘religion/conviction’ with 12 instances. These three expressions make sense in regards to the nature of this particular field. Here a student is in close interaction with a patient therefore he/she must have excellent communication and language competence, he/she must be able to sometimes work and make decisions independently and they need to be aware of how religious background affects the relationships with the patient. These are all important to the field, even if they are international skills or not, and I would guess that in this case they were not specifically intended as international skills although they can be such also.

| Qualifications | Terms |
|--|------------------------|
| Specialist Vocation Qualifications (SVQ) | Language skills |
| SVQ in Stage and Theatre Technology | 17 |
| SVQ in Horse Care and Management | 5 |
| SVQ in Massage | 6 |
| SVQ in Hairdressing and Beauty Care | 11 |
| SVQ in Patient Immobilisation | 19 |
| SVQ in Leadership and Business Management | 4 |
| SVQ in Fishery | 11 |
| SVQ in Rehabilitation, Support and Guidance Services | 47 |
| SVQ for Bakers | 3 |
| SVQ in Aircraft Maintenance | 7 |
| SVQ for Driving Instructors | 3 |
| SVQ in Business | 39 |
| SVQ in Sports Facilities Maintenance | 5 |
| SVQ in Nature-based Services | 8 |
| SVQ in First-level Management in the Hotel and Catering Sector | 10 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| SVQ in Media | 7 |
| SVQ in Mental Health and Intoxicant Abuse Welfare Work | 1 |
| SVQ in Court Interpreting | 53 |
| SVQ in Horticulture | 5 |
| SVQ in Sami Crafts | 4 |
| SVQ in Arts and Desing | 51 |
| SVQ in Textiles and Fashion Industry | 45 |
| SVQ in Coaching | 4 |
| SVQ in Care for the Elderly | 6 |
| SVQ for Business Advisors | 4 |
| Total | 375 |

For the first time, the language skills category is not the largest. It still is the second largest and thus its importance is still inevitable. There is nothing new to deduce from this.

| Qualifications | Terms |
|--|--|
| Specialist Vocation Qualifications (SVQ) | Subject-specific internationality |
| SVQ in Stage and Theatre Technology | 21 |
| SVQ in Horse Care and Management | 14 |
| SVQ in Massage | 17 |
| SVQ in Hairdressing and Beauty Care | 9 |
| SVQ in Patient Immobilisation | 3 |
| SVQ in Leadership and Business Management | 6 |
| SVQ in Fishery | 11 |
| SVQ in Rehabilitation, Support and Guidance Services | 3 |
| SVQ for Bakers | 45 |
| SVQ in Aircraft Maintenance | 1 |
| SVQ for Driving Instructors | 3 |
| SVQ in Business | 52 |
| SVQ in Sports Facilities Maintenance | 5 |
| SVQ in Nature-based Services | 11 |
| SVQ in First-level Management in the Hotel and Catering Sector | 0 |
| SVQ in Media | 3 |
| SVQ in Mental Health and Intoxicant Abuse Welfare Work | 6 |
| SVQ in Court Interpreting | 6 |
| SVQ in Horticulture | 62 |
| SVQ in Sami Crafts | 1 |
| SVQ in Arts and Desing | 18 |
| SVQ in Textiles and Fashion Industry | 51 |
| SVQ in Coaching | 57 |
| SVQ in Care for the Elderly | 4 |
| SVQ for Business Advisors | 4 |

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| Total | 413 |
|--------------|------------|

The subject-specific category is largest in the case of specialist qualifications. This perhaps could be explained with this being sort of the most expert level of the three qualifications and thus it might require more internationality that is specific to the subjects.

| Qualifications | Terms |
|--|---|
| Specialist Vocation Qualifications (SVQ) | International / intercultural competence |
| SVQ in Stage and Theatre Technology | 8 |
| SVQ in Horse Care and Management | 12 |
| SVQ in Massage | 4 |
| SVQ in Hairdressing and Beauty Care | 16 |
| SVQ in Patient Immobilisation | 19 |
| SVQ in Leadership and Business Management | 6 |
| SVQ in Fishery | 1 |
| SVQ in Rehabilitation, Support and Guidance Services | 8 |
| SVQ for Bakers | 9 |
| SVQ in Aircraft Maintenance | 4 |
| SVQ for Driving Instructors | 4 |
| SVQ in Business | 11 |
| SVQ in Sports Facilities Maintenance | 0 |
| SVQ in Nature-based Services | 11 |
| SVQ in First-level Management in the Hotel and Catering Sector | 15 |
| SVQ in Media | 6 |
| SVQ in Mental Health and Intoxicant Abuse Welfare Work | 9 |
| SVQ in Court Interpreting | 10 |
| SVQ in Horticulture | 9 |
| SVQ in Sami Crafts | 15 |
| SVQ in Arts and Design | 79 |
| SVQ in Textiles and Fashion Industry | 8 |
| SVQ in Coaching | 9 |
| SVQ in Care for the Elderly | 53 |
| SVQ for Business Advisors | 2 |
| Total | 328 |

This international / intercultural competence category is the third largest with specialist qualifications. It is again a somewhat positive notion that the instances of internationality and interculturality are indicated at least to this extent in the qualification

requirements. On the other hand it is also a shame that this has not once been the largest category of the terms indicating internationality.

| Qualifications | Terms |
|--|---|
| Specialist Vocation Qualifications (SVQ) | International / intercultural dispositions |
| SVQ in Stage and Theatre Technology | 2 |
| SVQ in Horse Care and Management | 8 |
| SVQ in Massage | 13 |
| SVQ in Hairdressing and Beauty Care | 1 |
| SVQ in Patient Immobilisation | 69 |
| SVQ in Leadership and Business Management | 2 |
| SVQ in Fishery | 3 |
| SVQ in Rehabilitation, Support and Guidance Services | 13 |
| SVQ for Bakers | 6 |
| SVQ in Aircraft Maintenance | 1 |
| SVQ for Driving Instructors | 1 |
| SVQ in Business | 4 |
| SVQ in Sports Facilities Maintenance | 3 |
| SVQ in Nature-based Services | 2 |
| SVQ in First-level Management in the Hotel and Catering Sector | 5 |
| SVQ in Media | 4 |
| SVQ in Mental Health and Intoxicant Abuse Welfare Work | 0 |
| SVQ in Court Interpreting | 4 |
| SVQ in Horticulture | 5 |
| SVQ in Sami Crafts | 0 |
| SVQ in Arts and Design | 32 |
| SVQ in Textiles and Fashion Industry | 9 |
| SVQ in Coaching | 5 |
| SVQ in Care for the Elderly | 6 |
| SVQ for Business Advisors | 1 |
| Total | 199 |

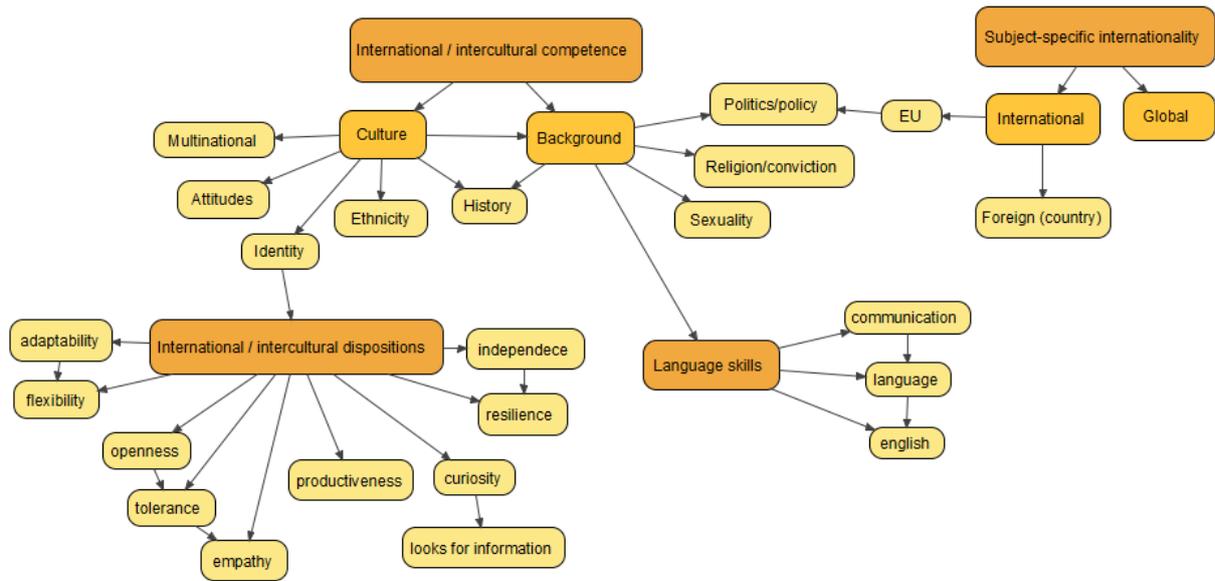
This is the smallest category and the reason for this again is probably based on the fact that new international dispositions such as ‘curiosity’, ‘productiveness’ and ‘resilience’ are not recognized and their implementation to qualification requirements might be challenging.

4.2 Qualitative Section

Now the analysis is deepened into the qualitative section. Here the relations of the codes and their use are discussed in more detail and certain presumptions are made. During this section the expert interview is introduced as support for various inferences. This section starts with general deductions of the internationality in the qualification requirements based on the quantitative section and it later on moves to the more detailed analysis of the terms or codes, focusing finally more specifically on two codes, 'culture' and 'international'.

Some qualifications contain internationality only with a legislative indication, with for example expressions of understanding international laws or EU regulations. They leave out general international or intercultural expressions of for example knowledge of cultural differences. Example of a qualification that only has legislative international expressions is the further vocational qualification in seafaring with expressions such as "professionally following the *international rules* of seaways", "using the *International Code of Signals*" and "following *international agreements*". An example of such qualification that mostly has general international or intercultural expressions is the vocational qualification in social and health care with expressions such as "taking into account the *cultural background* of the patient' and "working with people from *different cultures*".

None of the qualifications have expressions that indicate modern international skills, such as curiosity or resilience. This was expected, because such terms might be difficult to implement in the middle of a subject-specific assessment criteria for example. I would guess that the experts who write the qualification requirements do not feel that it is important to include such expressions in the documents because they can be hard to link to specific fields. This I think is justified; the documents are first and foremost meant as instructions on how to for instance assess a student's performance in different aspects of specific subjects. Terms such as curiosity and resilience are valuable traits in a student but perhaps including them in the qualification requirements is not high in the priorities at the moment.



Map 1: Relations between the codes

The above image represents the hierarchy and relations of the categories and the codes. The hierarchy starts with the categories ‘international / intercultural competence’ and ‘subject-specific internationality’ which I have deemed equally important, despite ‘language skills’ being the largest category as demonstrated in the previous part. Perhaps language skills have traditionally been closely and even easily linked with internationality which is something the interview might indicate as well (although it is only one person’s point of view):

Excerpt 1:

Q: “well how about if we consider the qualification requirements then and internationality in the school so from teacher’s point of view how do you think internationality or international skills are shown in the qualification requirements or are they?”

A: “in the in the basic qualification units language studies or the portion for languages has decreased and that way maybe internationality might not be emphasized as much.” (personal communication, May 5, 2019)

Excerpt 2:

Q: “yeah but maybe in the actual qualification requirements it [internationality] is not visible in your opinion?”

A: “not as much and I hope that sort of there would be more language emphasis and stuff like that.” (personal communication, May 5, 2019)

From the excerpts it can be noticed that the expert readily links internationality to language skills and language studies. I discussed the emphasis of language education in relation to intercultural competence already in the second chapter and that perhaps it is currently overly emphasized because that alone does not guarantee international or intercultural competence. That is why the categories of international / intercultural competence and subject-specific internationality are at the top of the hierarchy. They are the categories that specifically relate to internationality while others might have different indications in addition to internationality. In my opinion neither of them is more important than the other and are equally meaningful in VET. There is also a reason why ‘language skills’ was the biggest category despite the expert saying that language education has decreased. He refers to additional or optional languages such as Spanish or Italian, whereas the analysis focused on more general indications to language and language communication.

The codes within ‘international / intercultural competence’ can be divided into two sub-categories, ‘culture’ and ‘background’. Under ‘culture’, there are codes such as ‘multinational’, ‘ethnicity’, ‘attitudes’, and ‘identity’. Under ‘background’, there are codes that refer to background factors such as ‘politics/policy’, ‘religion/conviction’, and ‘sexuality’. ‘History’ relates to both because expressions such as ‘historical background’ and ‘culturohistorical’ are mentioned multiple times. ‘Language background’ was also mentioned multiple times which is why ‘language skills’ is linked under the sub-category ‘background’.

The codes within 'language skills' are also arranged from wide to specific: from 'communication' to 'language' to 'English'. The position of 'language skills' also reflects the suggestion that language skills should not be emphasized as much.

Disposition to me refers to factors of identity which is why 'international / intercultural dispositions' are linked under 'identity'. These codes are linked based on their likeness. It could be said that 'adaptability and flexibility' are similar attributes while 'independence' might lead to 'resilience'. 'Curiosity' most likely drives someone to 'look for information' and it could be said that 'openness', 'tolerance', and 'empathy' go hand in hand. It seems that only 'productiveness' does not relate to any other expressions.

The other major category, 'subject-specific internationality', has two sub-categories, 'global' and 'international' which entails 'EU' and 'foreign (country)'. Out of those two, 'EU' relates also to 'politics/policy' with expressions such as 'knowledge of EU policies'. 'International' and 'global' here are sort of the umbrella codes, especially 'international' for 'EU' and 'foreign (country)'. Additionally it might not always be clear how 'international' and 'global' differ in definitions and they are possibly used synonymously in some occasions, which is why their placement is equal.

Despite 'language skills' being the largest category as indicated in the quantitative part, I have deemed 'international' and 'culture' the two most important codes in the qualification requirements, and they therefore deserve more examination. They are the codes that indicate internationality in the clearest ways and reveal the true nature of what kind of variations are used upon referring to internationality in the qualification requirements. They are also among the six most popular codes. 'Language skills', while being the largest category, do not indicate to anything else than the knowledge and usage of different languages and communication in languages. The use of 'independence' and 'flexibility' (two other codes

that were most popular) is similar; they are most likely not intended as references to international competence. ‘International’ and ‘culture’ on the other hand are used in varied ways and with multiple variations. In most instances they indicate to the traditional understanding of international skills. However, since it was established that perhaps some modern international skills are not yet recognized or necessary in the qualification requirements, it is now worth focusing on these two codes that are the most direct, existing indications to internationality.

An interesting observation is that the qualifications that entail more ‘culture’ are more humane or service-like whereas the qualifications that entail more ‘international’ are perhaps more technical. Good examples of the qualifications that are high in ‘culture’ counts are the vocational qualification in social and health care, the vocational qualification in education and instruction and the specialist vocational qualification in arts and design. Examples of the qualifications that are high in ‘international’ counts are vocational qualification in seafaring, specialist vocational qualification in business and specialist vocational qualification in horticulture. It also seems that those qualifications that have many instances for ‘culture’ have few or no expressions for ‘international’ and vice versa, those qualifications that are high in ‘international’ are also low in ‘culture’.

4.2.1 Culture. ‘Culture’ is used more frequently throughout the qualification requirements than ‘international’. There are multiple different usages of ‘culture’, and the picture below depicts some of them. The following are 10 example phrases that include the code ‘culture’. They are of course taken from the qualification requirements and translated into English. These examples are from the assessment criteria sections of different qualifications as is a majority of the total term counts presented previously.

1. “*takes into consideration* the effects of language, *culture* and views in interaction”

2. “works with people from *different cultures* and develops his/her *cultural knowledge*”
3. “takes into consideration the client’s *cultural*, religion and ethical *habits* in interaction”
4. “utilizes *knowledge of different cultures* and views in his/her work”
5. “applies interactional and customer service skills in a *multicultural community* with discretion and professionalism”
6. “uses *intercultural differences* variedly as strengths - -”
7. “utilizes the *cultural competence* and history of his/her field as manager and expert”
8. “relates *positively to different cultures* and respects the local culture”
9. “respects the procedures of *different cultures and groups*”
10. “recognizes *culture as a changing phenomenon* in his/her work - -”

A more profound inspection of the expression of the code ‘culture’ reveals that many other skills that can be deemed international are sort of hidden in many of the phrases or are indirectly apparent. All of these example phrases can reveal for instance empathy, tolerance, openness, and adaptability. Thus, even though many of these codes of ‘international / intercultural dispositions’ did not directly appear in the documents they are inherently a part of some indications to cultural competence.

There might be some problematic points as well. In example phrase 2 it is said that the student “develops his/her cultural knowledge”, but how can that knowledge be developed if it is not clarified what such knowledge is? Similarly example phrase 4 declares that the student “utilizes knowledge of different cultures”. This is an important skill of course, but perhaps it should first be identified what that knowledge is specifically and if it is something that could be taught in some way. Additionally in reference to expressions such as “taking into account a

client's cultural habits" I wonder if it would be useful to give the students some insight as to what such habits could be. This would possibly require some sort of theoretical education, but since VET focuses on the practical that might be challenging. According to the expert who was interviewed there is no need for theoretical education:

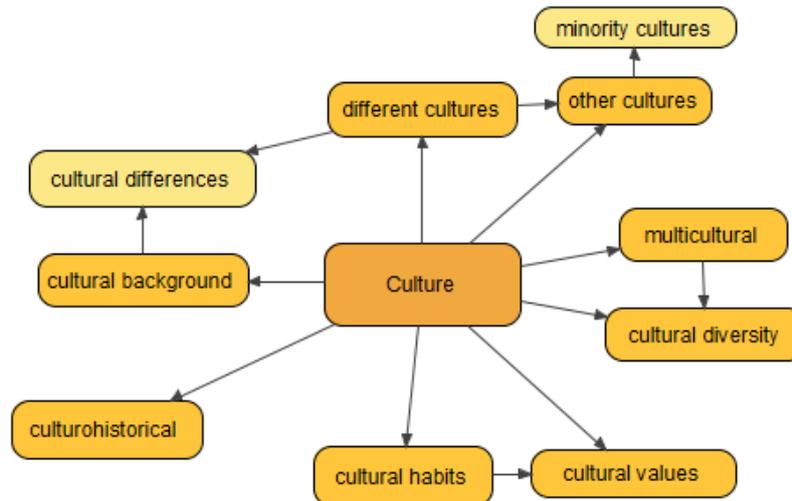
Excerpt 3:

Q: "In your opinion is there a need for more theoretical international education for example?"

A: "From my own experience no not necessarily - - I don't see that our fifteen to eighteen-year-olds are interested in the theoretical side but they are more practical actors in this age group who get interested in internationality and in a way through their studies they can gravitate to university of applied sciences or to university to continue with the theoretical foundation." (personal communication, May 5, 2019)

Perhaps this is true in other VET institutions as well. Furthermore, perhaps it is already clear for the students what this cultural knowledge is and what cultural habits they need to be aware of.

Aside from some problematic notions it is apparent that students are encouraged to be culturally aware and open. Culture might be the dominant expression, but other aspects have also not been overlooked in the example phrases since for instance language, views, religion, and ethnicity are mentioned. The expressions often seem to convey the feeling that culture has a traditional bearing, meaning that it is something that results from the country of origin. However, perhaps, as with new international skills, more modern implications for culture are not yet recognized or necessary in the qualification requirements. It is nevertheless a positive indication that culture is expressed so variedly in the qualification requirements.



Map 2: Different variations of ‘culture’

Also, many of the expressions of ‘culture’ are linked to each other either in similarity or hierarchically (depicted in the map above). ‘Different culture’ and ‘other cultures’ do not seem to have any difference in content and thus are positioned equally. ‘Minority cultures’ is located under ‘other cultures’ because it is a more specific expression. ‘Cultural background’ can also indicate to ‘cultural differences’ as does the expression ‘different cultures’, which is why ‘cultural differences’ is linked to both. ‘Multicultural’ and ‘cultural diversity’ are similar expressions and are sometimes used interchangeably. ‘Cultural habits’ and ‘cultural values’ have different meanings but are both descriptions of something that culture entails. ‘Culturohistorical’ is the only term that has no likeness or links to the other sub-codes. This shows that there are wider and more specific usages for the code culture and again indicates that culture is used quite variedly in the qualification requirements.

4.2.2 International. Similarly to ‘culture’ there were multiple different variations of the code ‘international’ which express internationality in varied ways. Generally the code ‘language’ was the most popular expression, but in the case of the specialist vocational qualifications, ‘international’ was the most frequently used expression. In the map below

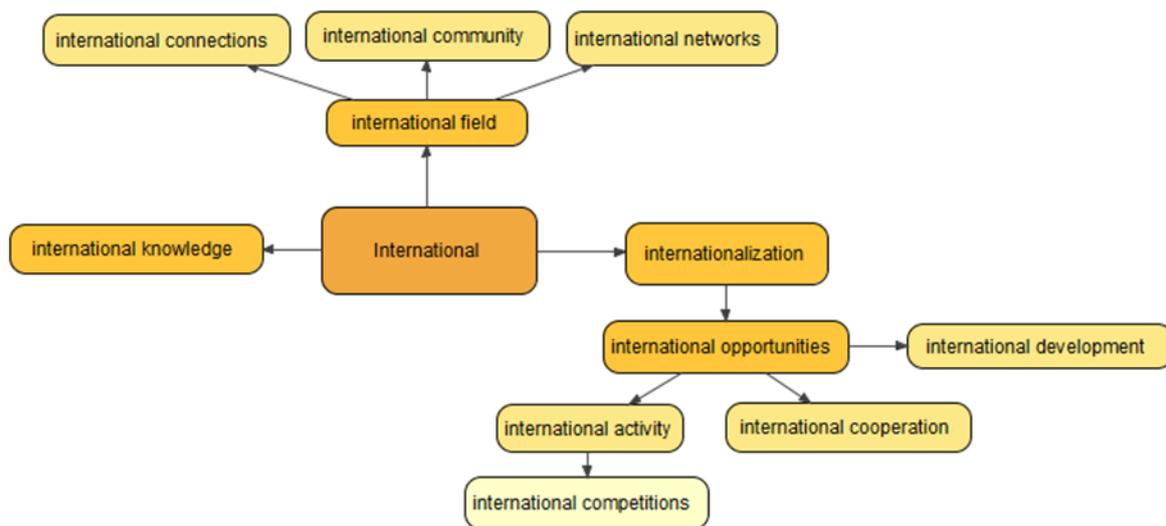
there are 10 of such different variations. The following are 10 different example phrases which are again translated into English from the qualification requirements.

1. “gathers information about *international community and network*”
2. “applies the *international knowledge, research and development* of his/her own field in his/her work”
3. “utilizes the *international network* in his/her work”
4. “communicates appropriately in different interactional situations also in *international work communities* - -“
5. “familiarizes his/herself with the field’s methods and work culture in an *international operational environment*”
6. “draws up and documents an executable action plan for *internationalization*”
7. “evaluates the *international competition* activity of the field - -“
8. “networks with *international actors* important to his/her field”
9. “follows the *rules that guide the international operations* of his/her sport”
10. “actively gravitates to *international activity* - -“

Similarly to the example phrases of ‘culture’, these example phrases can entail unapparent indications to other international skills. They can reveal for example the tendency to network and to look for information which also links with curiosity. Independence and perhaps even resilience can be indirectly expressed as well in for instance example phrases 3, 8 and 10.

The aspect that dominates these example phrases, and overall many of the phrases that included the code ‘international’, is networks or communities, especially professional ones. Whether it is about gathering information about, utilizing or working in them, indeed a certain kind of networking skill seems to be a common assessment criterion. As mentioned

previously many qualifications that have a high number of ‘international’ are such that refer to legislative aspects of internationality such as example phrase 9. Although only one such example is in the phrases it seems to be another major theme overall in phrases that include ‘international’. Another interesting notion arises from example phrase 4 with the expression “communicates appropriately”. This is something many scholars have criticized in relation to the models of intercultural competence. Perhaps in such occasions it would be useful to clarify what is such appropriate communication.



Map 3: Different variations of ‘international’

The code ‘international’ and its variations can also be arranged, but not so much according to similarities as ‘culture’ but more hierarchically. This arrangement is depicted in the map above with some example expressions. Three sub-codes are ‘international knowledge’, ‘international field’, and ‘internationalization’. ‘International knowledge’ stands on its own while ‘international field’ is arranged into three more specific and similar expressions of ‘international connections, networks, and community’. The process of internationalization can produce ‘international opportunities’ which is why it is located under ‘internationalization’. It is then arranged into three similar expressions of ‘international

activity, cooperation, and development'. 'International activity' additionally entails a fourth dimension of 'international competitions'.

4.2.3 General Inferences. What connects the two codes is their practical nature and application to real life situations. This is of course characteristic of VET, nevertheless it is worth noting. It is also a positive aspect, because students can thus obtain a practical application to intercultural skills. What seems to dominate these two codes is some sort of notion of tolerance and openness; tolerance of different cultures, international communities and openness towards cultural differences and international opportunities. An aspect of knowledge is also present; knowledge of cultural habits and international knowledge in a student's field. This is also a significant factor in many intercultural competence models as well. Knowledge is one of the easier aspects to assess as well although in many cases it is not clarified how the knowledge of different cultures for example can be obtained.

The two codes also both indicate a traditional understanding of culture and internationality in the qualification requirements: cultures as national cultures deriving from the country of origin and internationality as something that is seen in networks and work communities. A similar indication is noticeable through the interview as well:

Excerpt 4:

A: "but on the other hand what is great here in *name of institution* is that we have made a locally available qualification unit named 'work in international environments' so for a lot of folk it offers a chance to sort of achieve and select internationality in their own study path"
(personal communication, May 5, 2019)

A: "but this 'working in international environments' it's more about you go to a foreign culture foreign country with a foreign language how do you adapt to that how do you

communicate flexibly and move things forward and those are the assessment criteria.”

(personal communication, May 5, 2019)

This reveals that internationality to this expert is about getting to know a foreign culture in a foreign country and communicating in a foreign language, which is the traditional understanding of internationality as discussed on several occasions previously. This notion is not a negative one, rather it simply shows that this is how internationality is understood in the qualification requirements and by this expert. A positive notion on the other hand is this qualification unit itself, to which the expert refers to. It is a unit that is locally available to everyone regardless of the qualification or field, and it gives a chance to become involved with internationality. It does promote mobility, which is another traditional aspect of internationality, but by no means a negative one. In addition to mobility as one of the most popular strategies of internationality, home-based internationality was mentioned in chapter 1.2 as an existing feature in VET. It was also discussed in the expert interview:

Excerpt 5:

A: “I am very satisfied with internationality in our business qualification especially through the local qualification unit what it enables leaving [abroad] regardless of the field and also when a lot of visitors come and they are taken into education a lot the on-the-job learners who come from abroad and so many are introduced to home-based internationality.” (personal communication, May 5, 2019)

Mobility and home-based internationality, at least in this specific VET institution, are existing, and seemingly the most popular strategies for internationality. Most likely the case is similar in many other Finnish VET institutions interested in internationality. Even though the analysis shows that internationality is included in the qualifications at least to some extent, perhaps utilizing it or maximizing it in the documents has not been recognized. Or it could be

a fact that teachers and students also might feel that there is no need for a more profound international teaching. We can only speculate for now and hope that future research might examine this further.

During this analysis the apparent indications to internationality have been under inspection; the tangible terms and expressions that are written in the text of the qualification requirements. Along with this arises another matter, how is such internationality conveyed to the students. The expert asserts that there might not be a need for the teacher to specifically convey internationality in teaching, especially in his teaching context:

Excerpt 6:

Q: “so how about if we think about every day teaching if we don’t think about mobility or exchange or stuff like that so is it sort of possible or easy or hard to convey internationality to students or is it of course it may not always be necessary?”

A: “no but I’d say that internationality it is a part of these youngsters’ everyday life internet social media what not - - so for example marketing communication campaigns, you can’t as a teacher when you teach, surely they get acquainted follow what’s happening in the world and it is searched a lot through English so there are these kinds of we don’t operate only in Finnish markets in when we look at trends or something else it is automatically wider the perception and automatically the international aspect is related to it.” (personal communication, May 5, 2019)

This is true in today’s world and a similar point was also brought up in the introduction. Internationality seems to be an inherent part of many functions presently and perhaps it comes so naturally to students that teachers might not feel obligated to specifically teach or convey it in teaching. This of course depends greatly on the field. As the expert points out, in marketing everything functions already on a global scale but perhaps in another

field there might be a need for more specificity. This has been done in qualifications such as the specialist vocational qualification in horticulture, the specialist vocational qualification in coaching and the further vocational qualification in nature-based services which all include international units within the qualification.

5 Discussion

This chapter discusses several findings which were revealed by the quantitative and qualitative sections of the analysis along with the expert interview. At the same time this chapter also answers the research questions of this study.

1. How often is internationality expressed in the qualification requirements?
2. Which expressions appear frequently, which infrequently?
3. What kinds of expressions are used to indicate internationality and how do they relate to each other?
4. What kind of understandings and relevancies with regard to internationality can be inferred from the qualification requirements?

The conceptual framework section demonstrated how intercultural competence is not without flaws. There are for example objections to culture being an explanation to all, intercultural encounters focusing too much on the individual and not considering situational factors and models promoting “effective and appropriate communication” (e.g. Dervin, 2015, 2017). It could be argued that the traditional understanding of IC which entails these notions is outdated and in need of fresh attention. Similar factors are also present in the international expressions of the qualification requirements although perhaps not as dramatically. Perhaps the topic of internationality of the qualification requirements similarly needs revisiting and fresh attention. Hopefully these findings offer such a new point of view.

The first major finding and the answer to the first research question was that under half, 74 to be exact, of the 164 qualifications entail internationality. This was revealed in the initial stages of the analysis when it was decided which qualification requirements would be analyzed in more depth. A majority of the qualifications entail no or a minor amount of internationality. The type or character of the 74 qualifications requirements on the other hand is varied, meaning that all kinds of qualifications entail internationality, from technical subjects to arts and humanities. Earlier it was asserted by Koramo (2012) that the goals of internationalization are taken into account in the qualification requirements. Furthermore, she reports that in addition to evaluation criteria the competence areas and requirements include competence that the international working life demands. (Koramo, EDUFI, 2012, p. 7) Presently it would seem that this is not the case; under half of the qualification requirements take internationalization into account, and in many cases the international competence is included only in the evaluation criteria.

Another initial finding was that out of those 74 qualification requirements 19 include one or more international units. That is a small amount but perhaps this is nonetheless a positive finding. Personally I did not expect there to be as many qualifications that would include international units. A similar finding reveals that in some qualifications the international expressions only refer to legislative factors such as international laws. Furthermore, qualification requirements that entail large amounts of 'international' often have few or no instances for 'culture' and vice versa, those that frequently express 'culture' have few instances for 'international'.

Modern international skills, such as the ones Demos' (2013) report suggests, are not included in the qualification requirements at all, which is an answer to the second research question. Codes such as resilience, curiosity and productivity scored zero in every analyzed qualification requirements. They might not yet be recognized or perhaps as direct implications

they are hard to word in the documents. They might still be present in other phrases as the in-depth analysis of the example phrases revealed. For instance, ‘resilience’, ‘curiosity’, ‘independence’, and ‘openness’ seemed to be indirectly indicated on many occasions. ‘Independence’ as a direct implication on the other hand was a term that was popular among the documents, but it might not mean that it was intended as an international skill but is simply a trait that is valued and necessary in many VET subjects. The most frequently used expressions were ‘language’, ‘communication’, ‘independence’, ‘flexibility’, ‘culture’, and ‘international’.

The biggest term category was ‘language skills’, meaning that the codes in that category were used more frequently than codes in other categories. This category did not include optional languages, but focused on general language communication and English. Consequently, it is apparent that language skills are valued in the qualification requirements, although the expert interview revealed that optional language skills have decreased. However, this shows that more specific international or intercultural indications are secondary. In chapter 2 McConachy and Liddicoat (2016) emphasized the significance of language learning in intercultural competence which I opposed. It would seem that language skills are still strongly seen as one of the most prominent ways of developing intercultural or international competence, as McConachy and Liddicoat (2016) stress.

Nevertheless, expressions of ‘culture’ and ‘internationality’ are among the most used ones and two categories, ‘international / intercultural competence’ and ‘subject-specific internationality’ were deemed most significant. This finding also answers the third research question. They were divided into sub-categories and the two remaining major categories found their placement naturally as secondary. Some codes were linked based on connotations or as being synonyms. Most codes were grouped based on their similarity. The codes are used variedly but their understanding seems to be traditional: internationality is something that is

encountered either in foreign countries in foreign languages or at home with people from foreign countries. Thus, internationality is seen as something that generates from national cultures, a similar notion that is present in many traditional models of intercultural competence as discussed in chapter 2. Additionally, the expert interview revealed that a similar understanding is present in at least one VET institution; internationality is something that is reached through mobility or encountering people from other countries at home. This might indicate to the fact, which Dervin et al. (2012) introduce, that Finland's diversity is still seen as resulting from the so called "different colored others" and immigration. Furthermore, other factors such as generational, social or economic backgrounds are not often perceived as diversity or recognized in competence.

Another major finding and answer to the fourth research question is that the modern nature of internationality is not yet recognized or perhaps it is challenging to include in the qualification requirements. Internationality seems to have a traditional nature in the qualification requirements; it is most of all language and communication proficiency, mobility, and comprehensions of cultures from other countries.

Even though the "amount" of internationality is not large in the qualification requirements the interviewed expert asserts (based on his experience) that there is no need for any kind of theoretical education of internationality. Egekvist et al. (2016), however, pointed out that practical experiences should be combined with theoretical schooling because analytically oriented, critical and conscious reflections are needed in developing competences, personal attitudes and world views. Perhaps this is still something VET should consider.

Furthermore, according to the expert, there is not always a need to convey internationality to the students in actual teaching. In many fields internationality is nowadays such an inherent part of different functions (such as marketing) that it comes naturally. This is

likely to be true and perhaps there is no need to preach, so to speak, about internationality constantly. Still, because internationality and interculturality are such ambiguous and omnipresent concepts, as demonstrated previously, it could be beneficial to make oneself aware of internationality from time to time, and furthermore, for students to recognize the expanded internationality.

On the other hand, some of the example phrases refer to for instance cultural or international knowledge, and it feels logical to ask whether such knowledge should be somehow educated or taught. Knowledge, along with skills, understanding and attitudes are the most commonly agreed aspects of intercultural competence and identified in many IC models. There could be a chance of utilizing such models in teaching in order for students to become more aware of what kind of knowledge or skills are beneficial in all aspects of internationality or interculturality. Of course, the teaching and assessment of understanding and attitudes is challenging, as pointed out by Dervin (2015) and Borghetti (2017). In that case, students' self-assessment or self-reflection can be included in teaching, as Dervin (2010) advocates with his postmodern model of intercultural competence. There are many opposing opinions about the assessment of IC but having reviewed different models and assessment techniques in chapter 2, I personally believe assessing IC in VET according to the qualification requirements would be beneficial. That would for example help students word their skills and competence which would benefit their job seeking experiences.

Presently interculturality is an ambiguous and complex concept and internationality has become a mundane aspect of our lives. Simultaneously, they are challenging concepts to define and such inherent parts of the everyday that it might be tedious to use energy on such concepts especially in specific tasks such as writing the qualification requirements. This fact can be noticed from the results of the study. Cushner and Mahon (2009) reminded in chapter 2 that implementing intercultural competence at schools and into teaching is also a

challenging task. Precisely because of these points intercultural competence needs fresh attention and new ways of implementing so that the outdated views and perhaps even controversial ideas of the concepts do not continue to pour on to the present and future professionals of VET. Perhaps developing the notion of social competence would be one such solution.

6 Conclusions

In this Master's Thesis I have studied the qualification requirements of Finnish vocational education and training and especially how internationality is expressed in them. The phenomenon was examined through the lens of intercultural competence, the conceptual framework of this study. The analysis was conducted as qualitative content analysis, with the summative approach that combines quantitative and qualitative strategies. Major findings of the study reveal that internationality is included in under half of the total 164 qualification requirements, and that internationality is indicated in a traditional manner. Furthermore, direct indications to internationality were overshadowed by different expressions of 'language skills' but were nevertheless among the most popular codes.

It can be concluded that internationality is an existing part of some qualification requirements (which type also varies from technical to humanities) but by no means all. Perhaps it is not necessary to include it in every single qualification. I cannot be the judge of that, but I do encourage it to be included in all fields in some ways. The working life the VET students enter is such a diverse and global one, and any student, whether they are mechanics or business students, can find themselves working in an international company at home or half way around the world. That is when they lean on to their education, and if that education has failed to provide the skills that are needed in that interconnected and diverse world of work, the professionals won't be able to thrive. Presently, the students that are completing any

of those 74 qualifications that entail internationality can have a chance to develop that international competence.

It would seem that internationality is not expressed to its fullest extent in the qualification requirements at least if we understand it through the lens of intercultural competence. Intercultural competence is most commonly attitudes, knowledge, skills, and understanding. In the case of VET it is often knowledge and understanding. Furthermore differences deriving from cultural background seem to be often in the center, as with intercultural competence traditionally. I have previously brought up the suggestion of using social competence instead of intercultural competence. Perhaps this solution would be a more logical one within VET instead of attempting to implement specific intercultural competence in every qualification requirement. That is if these sort of competence expressions are to be increased. Social competence would allow more room for expressions and it would not be limited to expressions of culture. This might be more easily applicable to the qualification requirements.

Another suggestion arises from this notion: perhaps there would be a possibility to construct an additional common unit that would be compulsory and that would be centered on developing social competence. In addition to traditional aspects of language learning and mobility this could include education about communication across diversities and backgrounds. Students would get to learn how individuals position themselves socially in interactions (for instance according to their gender, age or social status), their awareness of such positioning and their ability and willingness to negotiate and recognize the others' various identities as much as their own, as Borghetti (2017) suggests. As for the assessment, which might be a challenging prospect, perhaps a tool such as Dervin's (2010) could be used where the student would be able to self-assess and self-reflect his/her own development.

Some possibilities for further studies would be to examine in depth how the internationality of the qualification requirements actualizes in teaching. In this study the expert interview gave a brief glimpse to one teacher's and institution's point of view. In the future it would be interesting to have more insight as to how teachers interpret internationality from the qualification requirements and further to their teaching. Moreover, it would be interesting to hear teacher's opinions on the state of internationality in the qualification requirements and see if teachers have the competence to teach international skills.

When there is only one person conducting such a wide analysis, there is always the possibility that something might not be noticed or that mistakes are not recognized. For perfect results, perhaps an iterative analysis would be ideal. However, since the scope and timeline of a master's thesis are quite limited, that was not possible. Every measure of making the analysis as accurate as possible was, on the other hand, made. Furthermore, since the scope is limited, it was not possible to include more expert interviews, which might have given a deeper insight to the perceptions of teachers. Now one interview serves a sort of support which already offered additional understanding. Still it would have been interesting to relate the opinions of multiple teachers with the analysis of the qualification requirements. It was also a challenge to conduct a study with no precedent, because one could not really follow a ready-made example or take influence. For instance, finding a suitable theory, or in this case conceptual framework, posed a challenge at first. Nevertheless, I believe such a prospect should not stop anyone from conducting a reasonably ambitious study as this one. Thankfully, I was able to offer fresh attention to a contested concept by combining it with the analysis of qualification requirements.

It is my understanding that a study of this scope and specificity has not been previously conducted in Finnish academia. Therefore, I believe that this study has offered valuable information regarding the state of internationality in vocational education and

training, particularly its qualification requirements. I hope that Finnish vocational education and training can benefit from the findings of the study. Furthermore, I hope it inspires other researchers to tackle the concept of intercultural competence with a new kind of focus and continue to develop it in relation to education and VET.

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Appendix A

List of the 74 qualifications

Vocational qualifications:

- Vocational Qualification in the Vehicle Sector (Autoalan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Food Production (Elintarvikealan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Horse Care and Management (Hevostalouden PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Hairdressing and Beauty Care (Hius- ja kauneudenhoitoalan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Education and Instruction (Kasvatus- ja ohjausalan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Logistics (Logistiikan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Natural and Environmental Protection (Luontoalan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Pharmaceuticals (Lääkealan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Agriculture (Maatalousalan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in the Tourism Industry (Matkailualan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Seafaring (Merenkulkualan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Music (Musiikkialan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Cleaning and Property Services (Puhtaus- ja kiinteistöpalvelualan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Construction (Rakennusalan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Hotel and Catering Services (Ravintola- ja cateringalan PT)

- Vocational Qualification in Circus Arts (Sirkusalan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Social and Health Care (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Arts and Design (Taideteollisuusalan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Building Maintenance Technology (Talotekniikan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Dance (Tanssialan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Technical Design (Teknisen suunnittelun PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Information and Telecommunications Technology (Tieto- ja tietoliikennetekniikan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Information and Communications Technology (Tieto- ja viestintätieteiden PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Safety and Security (Turvallisuusalan PT)
- Vocational Qualification in Equipment Maintenance

Further qualifications:

- Further Vocational Qualification in the Motor Vehicles Sector (Ajoneuvoalan AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification for Community Interpreting (Asioimistulkkausalan AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Animal Care (Eläintieteiden AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Horse Care and Management (Hevostalouden AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Fishery (Kalatalouden AT)

- Further Vocational Qualification in Education and Guidance (Kasvatus- ja ohjausalan AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Intellectual Disability Services (Kehitysvamma-alan AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Business (Liiketoiminnan AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Physical Education and Coaching (Liikunnan ja valmennuksen AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Nature-based Services (Luontoalan AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Agriculture (Maatalousalan AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Tourism Services (Matkailupalvelujen AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Seafaring (Merenkulkualan AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Mental Health and Intoxicant Abuse Welfare Work (Mielenterveys- ja päihdetyön AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification for Guide Services (Opastuspalvelujen AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Service Logistics (Palvelulogistiikan AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Cleaning and Property Services (Puhtaus- ja kiinteistöpalvelujen AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Horticulture (Puutarha-alan AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Sami Crafts (Saamenkäsitöissä AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Parish and Funeral Services (Seurakunta- ja hautauspalvelujen AT)

- Further Vocational Qualification in Arts and Design (Taideteollisuusalan AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Textiles and Fashion Industry (Tekstiili- ja muotialan AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification in Information and Library Services (Tieto- ja kirjastopalvelujen AT)
- Further Vocational Qualification for Entrepreneurs (Yrittäjän AT)

Specialist qualifications:

- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Stage and Theatre Technology (Esitys- ja teatteritekniikan EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Horse Care and Management (Hevostalouden EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Massage (Hieronnan EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Hairdressing and Beauty Care (Hius- ja kauneudenhoitoalan EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Patient Immobilisation (Immobilisaationhoidon EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Leadership and Business Management (Johtamisen ja yritysjohtamisen EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Fishery (Kalatalouden EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Rehabilitation, Support and Guidance Services (Kuntoutus-, tuki- ja ohjauspalvelujen EAT)

- Specialist Vocational Qualification for Bakers (Leipomoalan EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Aircraft Maintenance (Lentokonetekniikan EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification for Driving Instructors (Liikenneopettajan EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Business (Liiketoiminnan EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Sports Facilities Maintenance (Liikuntapaikka-
alan EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Nature-based Services (Luontoalan EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in First-Level Management in the Hotel and
Catering Sector (Majoitus- ja ravitsemisalan esimiestyön EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Media (Media-alan EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Mental Health and Intoxicant Abuse Welfare
Work

(Mielenterveys- ja päihdetyön EAT)

- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Court Interpreting (Oikeustulkkauksen EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Horticulture (Puutarha-alan EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Sámi Crafts (Saamenkäsityömasterin EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Arts and Design (Taideteollisuusalan EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in the Textiles and Fashion Industry (Tekstiili- ja
muotialan EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Coaching (Valmennuksen EAT)

- Specialist Vocational Qualification in Care for the Elderly (Vanhustyön EAT)
- Specialist Vocational Qualification for Business Advisers (Yritysneuvojan EAT)

Appendix B

Interview questions

1. What is your own background within matters of internationality?
2. From a teacher's point of view how does internationality or international skills appear in qualification requirements, or does it?
3. So, in your opinion, they do not appear in the qualification requirements?
4. Would you say that students have an equal opportunity at getting involved with internationality?
5. Can you estimate how many students get involved with internationality?
6. Would you say that there is enough of internationality [in your educational institution]?
7. Do you think that there is a need for a more theoretical teaching of internationality?
8. How is assessment handled in your qualification unit?
9. Is it easy or difficult to convey internationality to students in everyday teaching?