

Experiences of Finland in Providing Quality Education

Equal Opportunity in Access to Quality Education

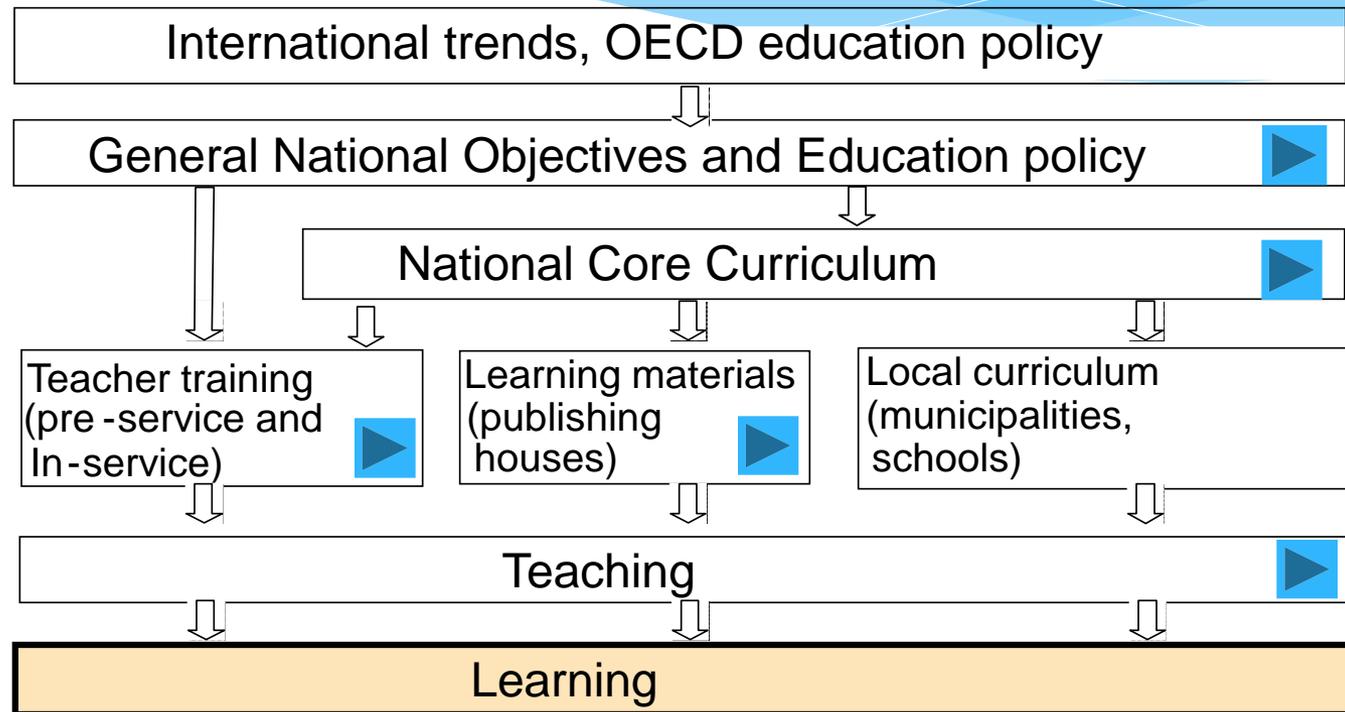
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Structure of Finnish Education



Comparison of Finnish education policy with the global educational movements

(Hargreaves, Earl, Shawn & Manning, 2001; Sahlberg, 2004)

Global Education Reform Movement

Education development in Finland

Standardization

Standards for schools, teachers and students to improve the quality of outcomes

Flexibility and diversity

School-based curriculum development, networking through steering by information and support.

Literacy and numeracy

Basic knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics and science (= prime targets of education reform).

Broad knowledge

Focus on broad learning; equal value to all aspects of individual's growth in personality, moral, creativity, knowledge and skills.

Consequential accountability

The school performance is closely tied to the "inspection" and ultimately rewarding or punishing schools and teachers.

Trust through professionalism

Culture of trust that values teachers' and headmasters' professionalism in judging what is best for students and in reporting on progress of their learning.

Cornerstones of the Finnish Education Policy

- * Long-term & consistent
- * A vision of a knowledge-based society
- * Responsibility and decision-making power at local level
- * Culture of trust (no national exams, no inspectors, no public ranking of schools)
- * Equality and equity in education:

Equality and equity in education

- * compulsory from the age of 7 to 16
- * supportive measures
- * free, no tuition fees
- * free lunches
- * free lunches
- * free books and other materials
- * free school health care
- * free transportation to school



Basic Education

- Basic education is provided free of charge comprising all learning materials and a warm lunch daily.
- The school year stretches to 190 working days, starting in mid August and ending in early June.
- The maximum duration of a school day is five lessons during the first two years and up to seven lessons from 3rd to 9th year (19 – 30 lessons per week).



Upper Secondary Education

- * Half of the age group chooses the Upper Secondary School; the other half continues to vocational studies.
- * The National Matriculation Examination consists of exams in the mother tongue, the second national language (FIN/SWE), foreign languages, mathematics, humanities and sciences.
- * Four of the exams have to be passed for the matriculation certificate, which provides eligibility for universities and higher vocational education.
- * For more information: www.ylioppilastutkinto.fi/en/

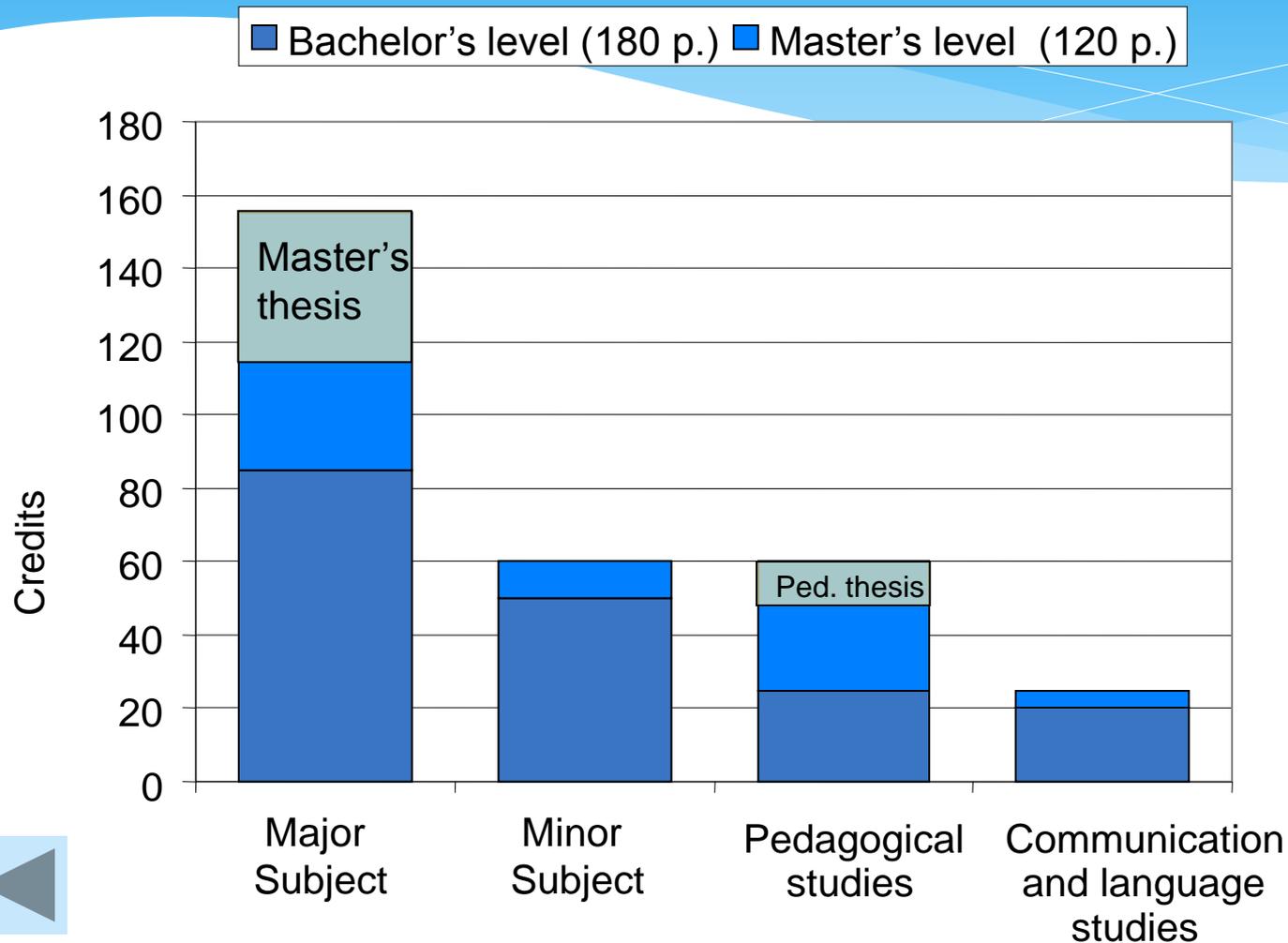
Finnish Teacher Education

- * There are five teaching categories in Finland:
 1. Preschool teachers, majoring in educational sciences
 2. Class teachers, majoring in educational sciences
 3. Subject teachers, majoring in various school subjects
 4. Special education teachers, separate degree requirements
 5. Vocational education teachers, separate degree requirements
- * Entry to teaching is competitive, only 10-15% of the applicants are accepted on national level.
- * Teacher Education is aligned with the Bologna Process.

Class and Subject Teachers

- Class teachers are qualified to teach all subjects during years 1-6.
- Class teachers' degree requirement is a Master's degree (300 ECTS, European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) majoring in education sciences.
- Subject teachers teach classes 7-9 in basic education, on upper secondary level and in vocational education.
- Subject teachers' requirement is a Master's degree (300 ECTS) majoring in a subject taught at school.
- Subject teachers minor in pedagogical studies, (60 ECTS credits)
- Teaching practice, 20 ECTS, is included in subject teachers' studies.

Structure of the Master's degree/ Subject Teacher: 3 + 2 years (300 p.)



Subject Teacher Education

Subject teacher Master's 300 ECTS

Subject studies	Educational studies	
Subject department(s) 240 ECTS	Department of Teacher Education 40 ECTS	Teacher Training school & other schools 20 ECTS
Major Subjects 180 ECTS Minor subjects 60 ECTS General Studies	Didactics/ Pedagogy Seminars Research	Orientation practice Basic practice Advanced practice

Contents of the pedagogical studies: 60 ECTS credits, equal to one study year

- * Education (20 %)
 - * Psychology
 - * Special education
 - * Social, historical and philosophical background of education
- * Subject pedagogy and didactics/(50 %)
 - * Organization of education: on national and local level, curriculum
 - * Science of learning, teaching methods, motivation, evaluation, use of ICT
 - * Educational research and pedagogical thesis
- * Teaching practice (30 %)

Structure of pedagogical studies for teachers

60 ECTS credits

BACHELOR'S LEVEL	25 ECTS credits	MASTER'S LEVEL	35 ECTS credits
1st period	18 ECTS credits	3rd period	17 ECTS credits
Psychology of development and learning (4 cr)		Social, historical, and philosophical foundations of education (5 cr)	
Special education (4 cr)		Evaluation and development of teaching (7 cr)	
Introduction to subject teaching (10 cr)		Applied practice (5 cr)	
2nd period	7 + 6 ECTS credits	4th period	12 ECTS credits
Basic practice in Teacher Training School (7 cr)		Teacher as a researcher -seminar Part 2: Pedagogical thesis (4 cr)	
<hr/> <hr/>		Master's level practice in Teacher Training School (8 cr)	
Master's level studies in 2nd period			
Teacher as a researcher -seminar Part 1: Research and methods (6 cr)			

Bridging the gap between theory and practice

- * Main content Educational Sciences, composed of three core areas:
 - * Theory of education
 - * Pedagogical content knowledge
 - * Subject didactics and practice
- * Research-based approach in teacher education:
 - * Research based content knowledge
 - * Research on teacher education
 - * Research participation
- * Interchange between theoretical studies and practice:
 - * Teaching practice, pedagogical seminars, bachelor's thesis, master's thesis

The Structure of Subject Teacher Training at Teacher Training Schools

1. **Introductory practise** (mid September)

- * An initial and familiarizing approach to school work . Classroom observation and debriefing.

2. **Basic Training Period** (October-December) (7 credits ~ 185,5 h):

- * Teacher in the classroom setting, obtaining basic skills.
- * The student teacher observes and evaluates lessons in teams; teaches himself supervised by a mentor (= the supervising teacher); group discussions; virtual and personal feedback sessions.

3 . **Field Training Period** (January) (4 credits)

- * Observation and own lessons in, e.g., adult education institutions / primary & secondary schools/ multicultural settings. Lessons, teamwork, a minor study or essay.

The Structure of Subject Teacher Training at Teacher Training Schools

4. **Advanced Practice** (March-May) (9 credits)

- * The student teacher plans his own lessons, self-evaluates, utilizes ICT, analyses, reflects on and develops his teaching. Regular and immediate feedback and debriefing with the supervising teacher, the group and peers.

Teacher Education Development Programme : The teacher education programmes should help students to acquire:

- * high-level subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, insights to the nature of knowledge,
- * academic skills as research skills; skills to utilize ICT, skills needed in developing the curricula,
- * social skills, as communication skills; skills to co-operate with other teachers,
- * knowledge about school as an institute and its crucial role in the society (school community and partners, local contexts and stakeholders),
- * moral knowledge, as about the social and moral code of the teaching profession,
- * skills needed in developing one's own teaching and the teaching profession.