Finnish Curriculum System

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Summary Overview

National Core Curriculum forms a coherent basis for the provision of education
Background: Education in Finland
Reforms in Finnish Basic Education

• Divided parallel education system with consequent achievement gap until 1970

• 1970 first national curriculum – strongly centralized

• 1985 curricular reform – more decision making to the municipality-level

• 1994 curricular reform – school-based decision making

• 2004 Curricular reform – stronger national basis
  ▪ National criteria for pupil assessment

• 2010 Reform of early intervention and learning support strategies
For education and learning

National Core Curricula
Government’s Decree
on the General National Objectives and Distribution of lesson hours
Education Act and Decree

Current Framework: Curriculum System in Finland 2011
Broad conception of the curriculum

♦ Curriculum is a strategic document which reflects our best understanding of humanity, society and learning
♦ Curriculum covers all areas of school life, not only school subjects
♦ National core curriculum outlines
  • Common values
  • Mission and structure of education
  • Conception of learning
  • Principles for organizing instruction
  • Principles for student assessment
  • Support for learning and student wellfare
  • Objectives and core contents of subjects
Important features of present curriculum system in Finland

- Two-layer system
  - National core curriculum – national framework
  - School/Municipal curriculum – local conceptualization
- All these are created in an open, extensive and interactive process – curriculum is more a process than a product
- Curriculum is a professional, pedagogical tool for teachers and school principals, for municipal education leaders and for national education authorities
Opportunities & challenges

◆ Good interaction between national, local and school levels
◆ Teachers are valued experts in the curriculum development and they have broad pedagogical autonomy
◆ Curriculum process emphasized at school level
◆ Strengthening the educational use of ICT is one of the central challenges in development
◆ Schools’ central role in enhancing the sense of coherence and subjective well-being needs to be harnessed
Education Reforms 2010 - 2017

- Pupils’ right to be supported in their school attendance, wellbeing and learning is guaranteed by law – inclusion by a three-level support system through curriculum reform 2010
- Early years education and care will be strengthened from 2013 onward
- Basic education (pre-primary year, primary 1-6 and lower secondary 7-9) core curriculum will be reformed between 2012 – 2014 and implemented between 2015 – 2016
- Upper secondary education core curriculum will be reformed between 2013 – 2015 and implemented between 2016 - 2017

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Future directions: Basic Education Reforms

Strengthening the sustainability (quality, equality and coherence) of basic education

- by developing school culture and working methods in order to enhance pupils’ active and responsible role in schools
- by developing flexible working structures and the use of ICT in learning in order to combine formal and informal learning
- by developing schools’ welfare services and by strengthening extra curricular activities in schools in order to improve the wellbeing of pupils
- by enhancing competences needed in the future
F = future orientation, responsibility
K = knowledge and skills, learning to learn
E = engagement, collaboration, dialogue
I = identity, self-efficacy

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Thank you!