

# L2-learners in Finland

How to support functional  
bilingualism and L2 students?

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## Financial support from the government

- 86 % of the costs of organizing the instruction:
- Teaching Finnish or Swedish as a second language
- Instructional support with mother tongue
  - 3 hours/week for 4 persons group (if there are less than 4 learners, in one group can be 2 persons)
  - Learners: less than 6 years in basic education in Finland
- Mother tongue teaching
  - 2 hours/week/4 persons
  - Learners: the language can be mother tongue or an additional tongue which is learned for example abroad

## Preparatory classes

- Total costs financed by government
- Duration 1 year
- Groups of 10 learners
- Children 6-9 years
- Children 10-12 years
- Children 13-16 years
- Mainly Finnish and maths, also some environmental studies, history and English
- Arts, music and p.e. integrated with other classes
- Preschool, primary school, secondary school & upper secondary school
- + Preparatory vocational education and training

## L2 teaching

- Organization varies depending on location
- 1-5 hours per week
- During the Finnish language and literature lessons
- Own curriculum: aims, contents, evaluation
- One syllabus of subject "Mother tongue and literature"
  - Other syllabuses: Finnish as a native language, sign language, Sami language, Swedish language, Romani language
- Qualified teachers: Finnish language and literature teachers
- Heterogeneous groups
- Lots of materials nowadays available
- Preschool, primary school, secondary school & upper secondary school, vocational education and training

## Finnish as L2 = S2

- To students whose Finnish skills are not on the level that they could attend successfully in the Finnish as native language class
- Immigrants, ex-patriots, adopted children
- Only criterion is the level of the language
- Aim 1 = functional bilingualism
- Aim 2 = possibilities to further education

## L2/L1?

- Teachers evaluate the language level
- The parents decide

## Mother tongue teaching

- 2 hours / week
- Usually after the school
- Really heterogeneous groups
- Not much materials available
- Teacher qualifications: pedagogical studies, subject studies of the language

## Support in mother language

- Science, maths, history
- Contents of the subjects in mother tongue
- Little groups or two teachers in a bigger class simultaneously

## Support in Finnish

- Science, maths, history
- Contents of the subjects in Finnish
- Little groups or two teachers in a bigger class simultaneously

## Linguistically responsible teaching

- One aspect in curriculum for preschool, primary school, secondary school & upper secondary school
- Teachers must pay attention to the language they use during the lessons and the whole school day
- Everyday language, academic language and subject specific language

## Awareness of languages

- Children from preschool to high school
- Raising the students' awareness of languages

➔ plurilingualism

## General, intensified & special support

- earliest possible support to prevent the emergence and growth of problems
- three categories: general support, intensified support and special support
- general support:
  - for everyone
  - a natural part of everyday teaching and the learning process
- intensified & special support:
  - based on careful assessment and long-span planning in multi-professional teams and on individual learning plans for pupils

## General, intensified & special support

- If general support is not enough?
  - pedagogical assessment
  - a plan for the intensified support
- If intensified support is not enough?
  - new and more extensive pedagogical statements
  - the education provider collects information from teachers and the school's welfare group
  - education provider makes an official decision concerning special support
  - an individual education plan

## Facts of Finnish Education

- National core curriculum leaves room for local variations
- Education is free at all levels
- Every pupil and student has the right to educational support
- Support to language minorities and migrants
- Life-long learning in focus
- Educational autonomy is high at all levels
- Quality assurance is based on steering instead of controlling
- The most common pre-service requirement is a Master's degree
- Continuing teacher education is encouraged

*National Board of Education & Ministry of Education and Culture*

## Curriculum

- National Board of Education organizes, supervises and supports the curriculum designing
- National Board of Education: objectives and learning outcomes of the different subjects
- Each education provider: the local curriculum based on the national curriculum

## National Board of Education & the Ministry of Education and Culture

- The Ministry of Education and Culture:
  - education policy
- The Finnish National Board of Education:
  - the implementation of the policy
  - develops educational objectives, content and methods for all educational levels (with the Ministry)
- Local authorities:
  - administration
  - allocation of funding
  - local curricula
  - recruitment of personnel (principals recruit to schools)



## Associations

- L2 teachers' associations (national & local):
  - training, meetings, lobbying, promotion of interests
- Preparatory teachers' meetings
- L2 teachers' meetings
- Own language support teachers' meetings
- Native language teachers' meetings
  - materials, ideas, guidance and support
- Parents' associations:
  - fundraising & happenings



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*Děkuji! Kiitos!*