Late Arrivals and Preparatory Studies in Finland

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Contents of this presentation

✧ The school system
✧ Preparatory studies after the compulsory education / after the school age
✧ Other support
✧ The shift in pedagogy (mainstreaming, support for learning, multilingualism, the core ideas in the curricula)
Two-tier national administration

Ministry of Education and Culture
- Education policy
- Preparation of legislation
- State funding
- Permissions to organize education

Finnish National Agency for Education
- National development agency
- National core curricula & qualification requirements
- Support for evidence-based policy-making
- Support for reform and development
- Services for learners
- Supporting internationalization
Central steering → Local decisions

**NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**
- Educational priorities
- Minimum time allocation
- National core curricula
- Size of state subsidies

**LOCAL**
- Educational priorities
- Local curricula
- Allocation of subsidies
- Class size
- Recruitment
- Teacher "evaluation"
- Quality assurance
Rethinking competences

National Goals for basic Education and Transversal Competences

✧ knowledge
✧ skills
✧ values
✧ attitudes
✧ will
Language is learned in usage (authentic use)

Learning language, skills and contents

- Language in meaningful action → challenges, engages, supports
- Learning in interaction → collaboration, being socialized

Previous knowledge and experiences → Building on these

Assessment and feedback → to be aware of the language and the learning strategies

Goal: the independency of the student

Requires language awareness of all the (subject) teachers!

Chamot et al. 1996; Cummins 1996; Bunch et al. 2012

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Underlying educational understanding is based on equity

http://interactioninstitute.org/illustrating-equality-vs-equity/
Learners with migrant background

✧ One of the current issues in Finnish educational discourse
✧ A heterogeneous group – multiple background issues
✧ The difference in learning results of students with migrant background and Finnish/local students seem to be one of the biggest in Europe.
✧ Especially boys are in risk of dropping out
✧ A school responsive to the special needs of the students is the most powerful way to integrate young immigrants into the society.
Late arrivals
→ Multiple choices

1. To finish the compulsory education
   ✦ preparatory studies for the comprehensive school → integrating to the normal class
   ✦ Voluntary additional basic education, 10th grade
   ✦ comprehensive education for adults

   → The comprehensive school leaving certificate

2. After finishing the compulsory education (but limited language and other skills)

   Preparatory studies for
   ✦ the general upper secondary / high school
   ✦ the vocational training
How to choose the path?

✧ The age of the student settles the path: the statutory school age is till the July of the year when the student turns 17

✧ at the school age the students belong within the scope of the preparatory studies for the comprehensive school / basic education

✧ Students aged 17 > will receive the services of the employment office and will be treated as adults

✧ It may be a huge challenge to complete the compulsory education in the allocated time even if the students have the right to receive sufficient support in learning

✧ For example in Jyväskylä 99,9 % the immigrants arriving to the final phase of the compulsory education will be guided further to the comprehensive education intended for adults (with no school leaving certificate)
1 a) Preparatory education for basic education

- Finnish (or Swedish) and the other subjects
- one year
- intensified support after preparatory education
- Finnish/Swedish as a second language education
- pupil's own mother tongue education
Focus on earliest possible support

- **Special support** (Extensive assessment and individual plan)
- **Intensified support** (pedagogical assessment and learning plan)
- **General support**
Student support

- Student psychologists and health nurses help students in problematic situations.
- Teachers can provide children with short-term remedial education.
- Children who have difficulties in learning and concentrating receive special needs education.
- Schools maintain contact with homes.
1 b) Voluntary additional basic education, 10th grade

✧ Schools may also provide additional education, “tenth grade” after completing the comprehensive school.
✧ gives students the chance to improve their grades and determine which field of study interests them.
✧ lasts one year.
1 c) The comprehensive education for adults
2 a) Preparatory studies for general upper secondary (LUVA)

- 25 courses
- 1 year
- Arranged in general upper secondary schools

(municipality, community or foundation with the permission from the Ministry of Culture and Education to arrange general upper secondary education)

After completing basic education or studies corresponding to the basic education syllabus abroad
**Preparatory studies for general upper secondary**

The studies include:

- Finnish or Swedish language studies
- other language studies
- mathematical and natural science studies
- knowledge of society and culture
- student **counselling**

During preparatory education it is also possible to do basic education studies or upper secondary courses.

The individual educational needs of every student are taken into account.
Preparatory studies for general upper secondary: aims

✧ To strengthen the student’s multiliteracy skills
  ▪ To develop and exploit linguistic diversity
  ▪ To appropriate knowledge through multimodal expression and interpretation of meanings
  ▪ To deepen the understanding of concepts, the ways of thinking and using language in different school subjects
  ▪ To strengthen the ability to search and apply information and to use information technology

✧ Learning to learn: independently and in collaboration; self- and peer evaluation skills
Participation in the upper secondary schools

- The preparation is arranged in the general upper secondary schools
  - To support the two-way integration of the students
  - To develop the practices of the upper secondary school

Mind the gap
2 b) Preparatory education for vocational training

- pre-vocational preparatory education for immigrants (VALMA)
- Helps to improve language skills and other abilities needed for studying (according to one’s individual study plan)
- lasts between 6 and 12 months
- Preparatory education includes:
  - Finnish or Swedish language
  - mathematics
  - information technology
  - natural sciences
  - social studies
  - cultural knowledge.
  - study and career skills (+ information about different occupations and vocational studies)
After the preparation studies - On the secondary education...

✧ More independency and self-direction is expected from the students
✧ Contents are abstract and it may be a struggle to survive the studies
✧ Remedial resources might be narrow
✧ The role of the teacher in the classroom is crucial:
  ▪ What kinds of pedagogical practices able the immigrant students to show their potential, skills and knowledge regardless of their limited command of the schooling language?
  ▪ How to exploit the multilingual resources to enhance learning?
  ▪ How to differentiate the tasks and texts in a sensible way?
  ▪ How to motivate the students?
Support multilingualism, enhance achievement!

- The core issue in curricula
- To enhance achievement in every subject; also the target language
- To enrich the cultural and linguistic experience and language awareness of all learners
- Requires language awareness of all the subject teachers (underlined in teacher education!)

- See e.g. Cummins 2017
- Maledive.ecml – Teaching the language of schooling in the context of diversity
Reza
17 years
Guidance and counselling

✧ Subjective right
✧ Part of the curriculum
✧ Collective and individual approach
✧ Develops learning skills (study methods)
✧ Supports self-confidence, participation and personal growth
✧ **Focus on transition points**
  - further education?
  - Counsellors provide career selection guidance
Student’s voice

✧ Mainstreaming: no strict sorting in groups according to the language skills
✧ Teachers with different cultural and language background needed
→ To prevent negative attitudes and racism
→ To enhance motivation
→ To support everyone’s learning
→ To support multilingualism
→ To support participancy and two-way integration

https://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/art-2000005663439.html
References

- http://minedu.fi/en/basic-education
- https://www.oph.fi/english/education_system/basic_education

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