



Finnish Teacher Education

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Main cornerstones of the education policy

policy documents and publications,

e.g., Halinen (2008); Jakku-Sihvonen & Niemi (2006); Laukkanen (2008)

1. Common, consistent and long-term policy

- basic models for teacher education and compulsory education are 40 years old
- support to the development of broad literacy

2. Educational equality

- compulsory education free of charge, incl. books, meals, transport, healthcare
- well-organized special education

3. Devolution of decision power to the local level

- a headmaster is a pedagogical leader
- local authorities (together with the teachers) plan local curriculum, organise general assessment and use these data for evaluating the schools and for allocation of resources.

4. The culture of trust (national level – district – school – families)

- no school inspectors, no national exams (except Matriculation Exam)
- no private tutoring or preparation schools

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Comparison of Finnish education policy to the global education reform movement

(Hargreaves, Earl, Shawn & Manning, 2001; Sahlberg, 2004, 2011)

Global Education Reform Movement

Standardization

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

Literacy and numeracy

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

Consequential accountability

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

Education development in Finland

Flexibility and diversity

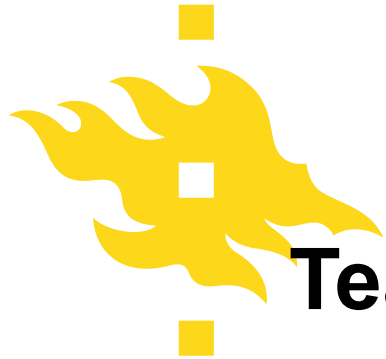
School-based curriculum development, networking through steering by information and support.

Broad knowledge

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

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.



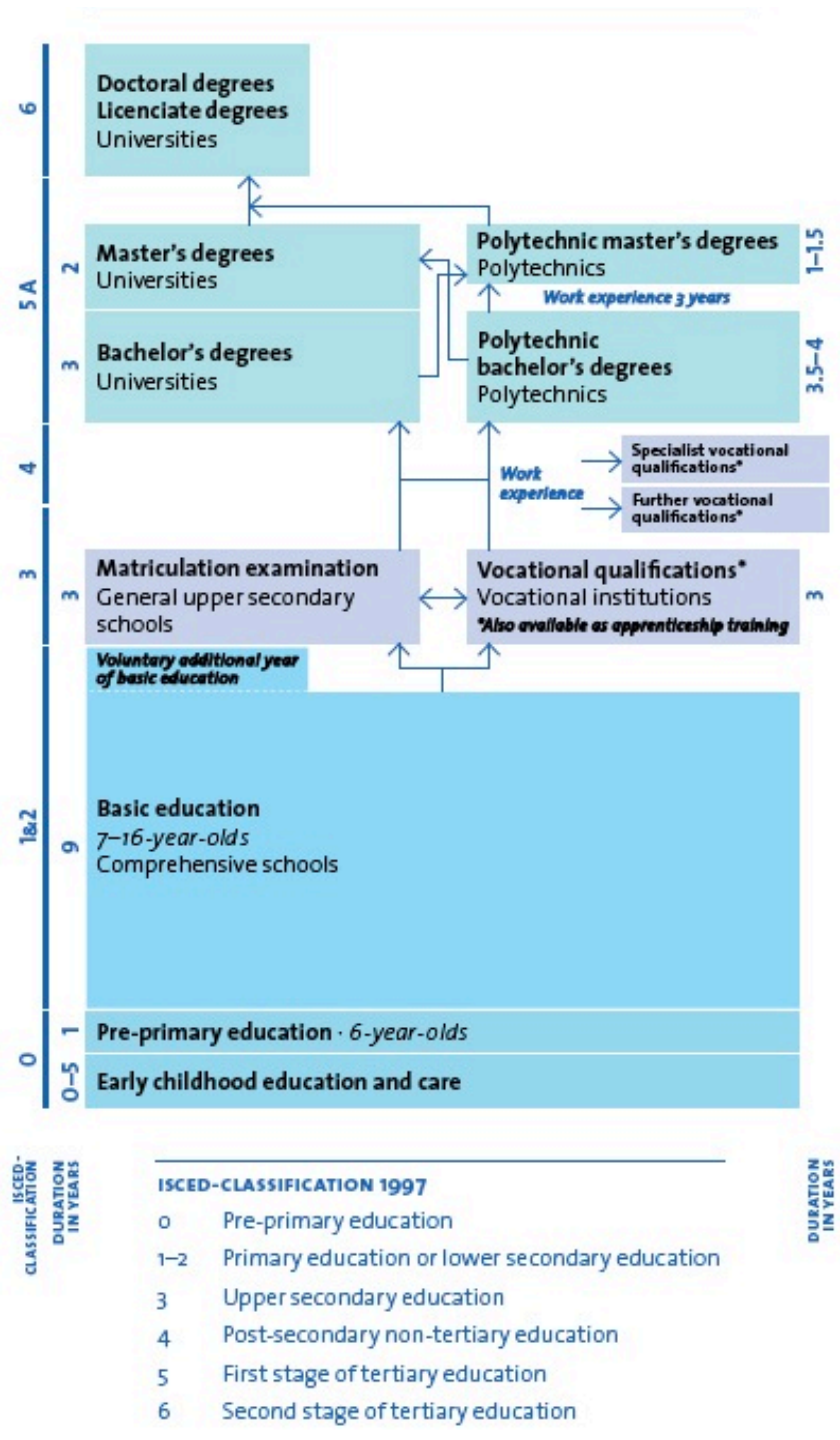
Teachers' autonomy / Culture of trust

- Teachers have a lot of autonomy in what they do.
 - They also work on the curriculum development.
 - They can choose teaching materials and methodology they use.
- No national exams in comprehensive school
- No inspection of schools
- Teachers rarely evaluated through external or formal measures
- No private tutoring or prep schools in the evenings.



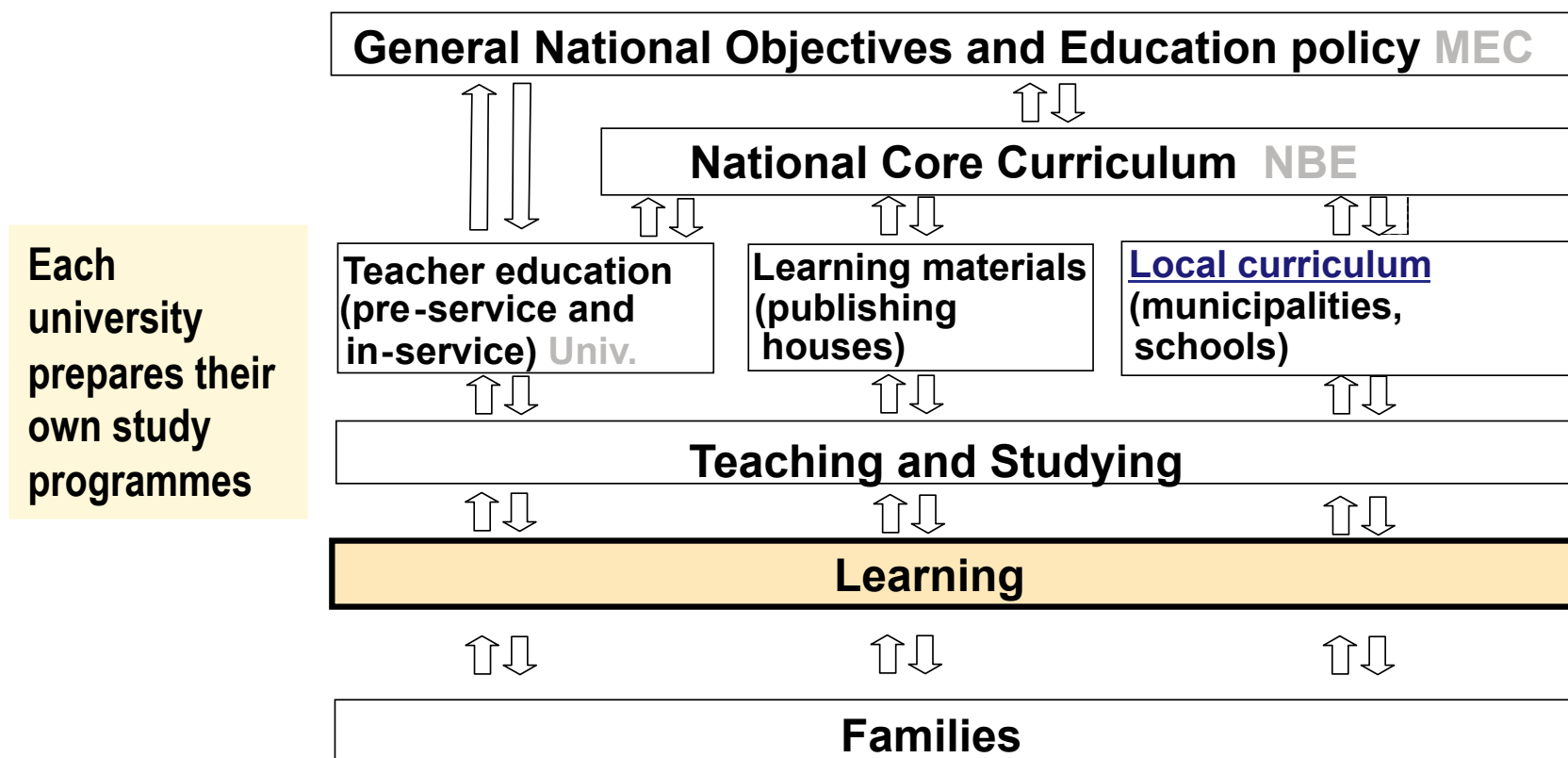
Education System in Finland

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Structure of Finnish Education





Teachers in Finnish schools

Secondary school teachers (subject teachers)

- usually teach in grades 7 to 12 (ages 13 to 19), but may also teach at primary school level (English, for instance)
- are qualified for teaching positions in all kinds of schools in their major or minor subject
- usually teach one major subject and one minor subject (e.g., maths and physics; English and French).

Primary school teachers (class teachers)

- usually teach in grades 1 to 6 (ages 7 to 13), but may teach at higher levels if passed enough subject studies
- are usually qualified to teach all 13 school subjects at primary school level.



Admission to teacher education programmes

Primary teacher education (2010): *Master's of education degree*

- About 1,600 applicants, 120 study places
- Two-phase entrance exam:
1) book exam, based on which 25% are invited to
2) an interview.
- The applicants need to have passed the matriculation exam.



Secondary teacher education (2010): *Pedagogical studies module*

- About 750 applicants, about 350 accepted.
- More study places (quotas~600) available than accepted applicants.
- Entrance exam consists of an interview and a written test
- The applicants need to have a study place in a subject faculty and a certain number of studies OR a completed Master's degree including studies in a school subject.



Student admission for subject teacher education programme

➤ Admission criteria

- ✓ Written entrance examination for
Subject Departments (English, Swedish...)**

- ✓ Entrance examination for
Pedagogical Studies**
 - text-based presentation**
 - interview**



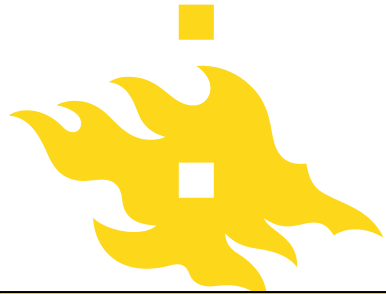
Primary and secondary school teachers

Primary school teacher

- 5-year programme (3 BA + 2 MA)
- Majoring in education
- Minor in school subjects (Finnish, maths, biology, geography, etc.)
- Minor in one or two other subjects
- E.g., class teacher minor in Finnish and music
- Are eligible for doctoral studies.

Secondary school teacher

- 5-year programme (3 BA + 2 MA)
- Majoring in one subject
- Minor in one or two other subjects
- Minor in education (= teacher's pedagogical studies)
- E.g., English major, French minor
- Are eligible for doctoral studies.



Teacher education at the University of Helsinki

University of Helsinki (11 faculties; 38,000 students; 7,400 staff members)

**Faculty of
Behavioural
Sciences**

**Dept. of
Teacher
Education**

**Teacher
Training
Schools**

**Faculty
of
Arts**

**Faculty
of
Science**

**Faculty
of
Biosciences**

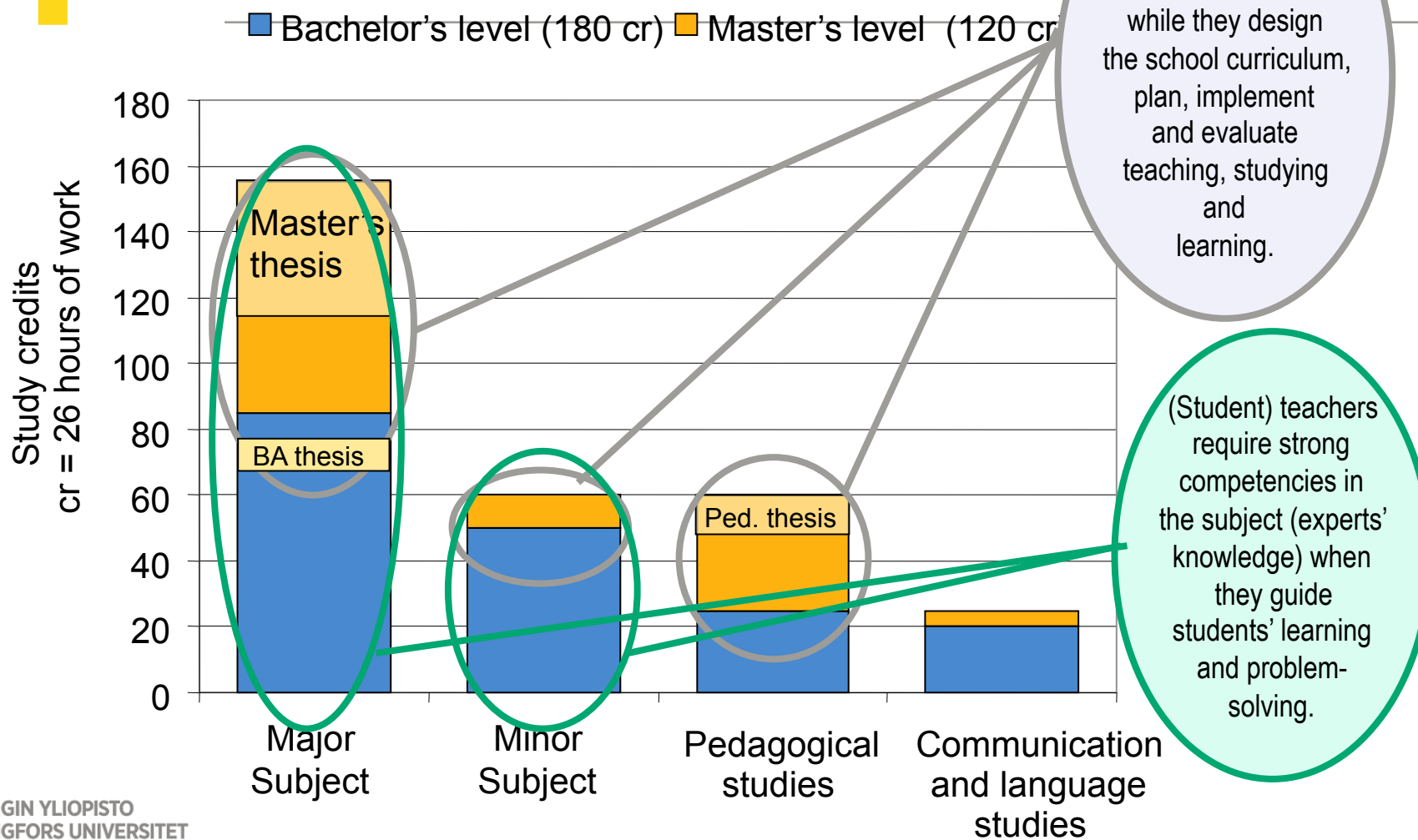
**Faculty
of
Theology**

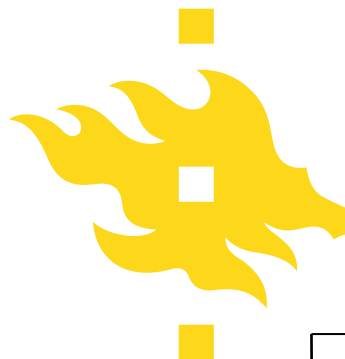
**Faculty
of
Social
Sciences**

**Subject teacher education:
pedagogical studies + subject studies**



Structure of the Master's degree of a subject teacher: 3 + 2 years, 300 ECTS





FACULTY OF BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES

Fields of study:

- educational sciences
- psychology
- speech sciences

DEPARTMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Fields of study: educational sciences, home economics, craft science

Six educational programmes:

- * class (primary) teacher education
- * craft science and textiles teacher education
- * home economics and home economics teacher education
- * kindergarten teacher and early childhood education
- * subject (secondary) teacher education
- * special education

TEACHER TRAINING SCHOOLS

Viikki Teacher Training School

- comprehensive school
(lower and upper levels)
- upper secondary school

Helsinki Normal Lyceum

- comprehensive school
(upper level)
- upper secondary school



Research-based teacher education

- Study programmes are structured according to the systemic educational structure.
- All teaching is based on research.
 - Teacher educators hold PhD's.
 - Teacher educators are required to research.
 - Their teaching is based on their own or others' research.
- Teaching gives student teachers an opportunity to practise argumentation, decision making and justification when inquiring into and solving pedagogical problems.
- Student teachers learn formal research skills especially at the MA thesis level.



Teachers' Pedagogical Studies

60 ECTS (1 ECTS \approx 26 hrs of student work)

Educational sciences
13 ECTS

Subject didactics
27 ECTS

Teaching practice
20 ECTS

BACHELOR'S LEVEL 25 ECTS

Study period 1

- Psychology of development and learning 4 ECTS
- Special education 4 ECTS
- Introduction to subject didactics 10 ECTS

Study period 2

- Basic teaching practice 7 ECTS
- Teacher as a researcher – seminar (Part 1: methods, research plan) 3+3 ECTS

MASTER'S LEVEL 35 ECTS

Study period 3

- Societal, historical, and philosophical foundations of education (including multicultural education) 5 ECTS
- Evaluation and development of teaching 7 ECTS
- Applied teaching practice 5 ECTS

Study period 4

- Teacher as a researcher – seminar (Part 2: pedagogical thesis) 4 ECTS
- Advanced teaching practice 8 ECTS

The teacher as a researcher seminar

➤ Thesis or a pedagogical product

➤ Thesis evaluation criteria:

- ✓ 1) Setting and defining the research area and topic
- ✓ 2) Extent of familiarisation with theories and use of literature
- ✓ 3) Collecting and analysing data
- ✓ 4) Reporting research results
- ✓ 5) Argumentation, reliability, discussion
- ✓ 6) Scientific presentation and language

In addition, the student's active contribution to the seminar.

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Key features of the teaching practice

Theoretical aspects are integrated with practice during the studies at all stages. The aims of the teaching practice are

- to mature as pedagogically-thinking teachers,
- to grow into the profession,
- to become aware of their practical theories and views on educational matters.

In teaching practice, there are four participants whose interaction with each other plays an important role:

- a student teacher him/herself
- peer student teachers
- supervisor from the university (university lecturer)
- supervisor at the school where teaching practice takes place



University Teacher Training Schools

- Organising teaching of “ordinary” school pupils
- Mentoring student teachers
- Educational research
- Organizing in-service education in cooperation with the Department of Teacher Education and other instances





In-service teacher education

- **The Finnish school system is not much engaged with in-service teacher education.**
- **Professional development of teachers is dependent on individual needs and willingness.**
- **Minimum 3 days per year (school/municipality organizes)**
- **Further education is optional (National Board of Education, Teachers' Union, Independent institutions, Universities)**
- **Doctoral studies > Doctor's degree**



Some further information

- * Finnish National Board of Education

www.oph.fi/english

http://www.oph.fi/english/sources_of_information/publications/brochures

- * Ministry of Education and Culture

<http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/?lang=en>

- * Department of Teacher Education, University of Helsinki

<http://www.helsinki.fi/teachereducation/>