

The Finnish multicultural education policy of compulsory education.

What is the educational context the immigrant youth have been living in?

Marja-Liisa Mäkelä (KM, FM) University of Turku, Department of Education

Introduction

Transition period from compulsory school to further education can be problematic for the immigrant background youths. Statistics have shown in previous studies that these students continue education after compulsory school less often than the majority students. National curriculum guidelines give the educational structure to the schools how to take the children with immigrant background inconsideration. Finnish for foreigners studies, mother tongue studies, religious studies are the key actions the national curriculum guidelines for the schools. In Finnish school system the main emphasis is on equality between different students. However the minority groups are depicted in a very homogeneous ways and the measures to ensure the equality are homogenous as well. In studies done in multiculturally sensitive education systems the emphasis is more on the individual differences between minority students, the equitable of the education

Preliminary Results of the Document Data

Curriculum guidelines contain both actions and statements of equal education and equitable education. However the later the guidelines are, more emphasis is on equitable education. Below you can see some examples of the data:

	Equal Education	Equitable Education
1990-1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Values: human rights (UN), equality of gender, race and socio-economic background - Role of comprehensive school: support the personality forming of all students and give them support to achieve the needed skills for secondary education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role of the differentiated multicultural education: student has the right to grow an active member of his/her own ethnic culture and our Finnish culture. - Drawing on multiculturalism: the immigrant students' previous knowledge of language, the nature, manners, culture are used in school.
2000 ->	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Values: human rights, equality, nature reservation and acceptance of multiculturalism - Role of comprehensive school: offer the students the possibility to pass the basic level of education system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role of comprehensive school: It has to support all the students language learning and cultural identity forming - Teaching methods in all teaching: the different learning styles and the different development levels between genders need to be taken in to account - Role of the differentiated multicultural education: the basic education curriculum takes in to account the different student backgrounds (mother tongue, culture, reason to migration and the age of migration). Also special outcomes: support to become an active member in both language and culture groups. - Drawing on multiculturalism: the immigrant students' previous knowledge of language, the nature, manners, culture are used in school.

Preliminary analysis has shown, that the emphasis has been moved towards more equity, but even in the later 2000 decades guidelines contain many statements of equality between students.

Research Questions

1. How are the documents describing the measures the educational policy documents implement to schools? What is the difference between the 1990's documents and the 2000 decades documents?
2. Do the curriculum guidelines follow equal education or equitable education in their multicultural education policy?

Data and Methods

- Document data: Curriculum guidelines and official reports from the late 1990's to the 2000 decade (Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 1994; Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2004; Koulutus ja tutkimus vuosina 2011-2016)
- Interview data: administrates in Turku (Kouluvirasto)
- Content analysis

References

- Gay, G. 2010: Culturally Responsive Teaching. Theory, Research, and Practice. New York: Teachers Collage.
- Kilpi, E. 2010. The Education of Children of Immigrants in Finland. University of Oxford.
- Nieto, S. & Bode, P. 2008. Affirming Diversity. Boston: Pearson.
- Rokka, P. 2011: Peruskoulun ja perusopetuksen vuosien 1985, 1994 ja 2004 opetussuunnitelmien perusteet poliittisen opetussuunnitelman teksteinä. Tampere: Tampere University Press.
- Teräs, M; Lasonen, J. & Sannino, A. 2010. Maahanmuuttajien lasten siirtymät koulutukseen ja työelämään. Teoksessa Martikainen, T. & Haikkola, L. (toim.): Maahanmuutto ja sukupolvet. Helsinki: SKS

Acknowledgments

My dissertation is part of an research project: Transitions and educational trajectories of immigrant youth: A 4-year longitudinal study from compulsory to further education.

Funded by Academy of Finland, University of Helsinki, University of Turku.

Marja-Liisa Mäkelä: mllmak@utu.fi; tel. 02-333 8736