



FINNISH NATIONAL
BOARD OF EDUCATION



Curricular balance based on dialogue, cooperation and trust – the case of Finland

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Reform of general education

- The entire general education system is due for reform in terms of objectives, lesson-hour distribution, the National Core Curricula and local curricula.
- The transfer of early childhood education and care into the administrative sector of the Ministry of Education and Culture needs to be taken into account.
- Cooperation with vocational education development is needed, especially in questions concerning new competences
- The work will be carried out as a whole between 2012 and 2017.
- Several core curriculum documents will be drawn up concurrently.
- Each process of drawing up a core curriculum document involves broad-based co-operation with stakeholders and working with experts, as well as support for local curriculum development in many different ways.



General education reform: Curriculum development work 2012–2017

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

NCC for pre-primary, basic and
voluntary additional basic education

Local curricula

NCC for general upper
secondary education

Local
curricula

**NCC Preparatory
education for
general upper
secondary school**

Local
curricula

NCC for basic education for
adults and NCC for general
upper secondary education
for adults

Local
curricula

NCC for basic
education in the
arts

Local
curricula

NCC = National Core Curriculum

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TEACHING AND LEARNING

SCHOOL-SPECIFIC CURRICULUM
and annual plan based on it

LOCAL CURRICULUM ↔ MUNICIPAL LEVEL

*Local
needs*

Quality criteria

*and
policies*

Teacher
training

Learning
material

National Core Curriculum 2014

Government Decree 422/2012 governing the general national objectives and distribution of lesson hours in basic education

Basic Education Act and Decree



Curriculum reform - continuing national learning process



- 1970: comprehensive school, obligatory national curriculum
- 1980: first national core curriculum and local curriculum
- 1990: loose core curriculum, local curriculum processes
- 2000: more strict core curriculum, advanced local curriculum processes
- 2010: ?



Accountabilities within the curriculum process

School level

- Pedagogical leadership
- Goals leading the development of the school culture
- Realization of the school-based curriculum

Education provider level

- Strategic leadership and management
- Decisions on the local curriculum
- Organization, resourcing, monitoring and development of local efforts

National level

- National Core Curriculum
- Education Acts and Decrees, Government Decrees
- Education policy guidelines
- Development Plan for Education and Research



Curriculum process is essential element in Finnish educational steering system

- Reform of the National Core Curricula and local curricula provides an opportunity - a common framework, time and structures - to discuss the changes taking place in today's world and to develop schools and teaching
- Education both builds our future and addresses future challenges
- Change requires strong leadership and a great deal of shared thinking



Importance and success of reform in local level (education provider level)

- Change in the operating environment needs to be taken into account while also bearing in mind that we shape change ourselves and make choices influencing the future.
- The school plays a key role in building the future.
- Learning-to-learn skills are more and more important at any age.
- Finnish schools have people, especially principals and teachers, with huge potential of wisdom, knowledge and skills, which form an excellent foundation for building the future.



The core of change

In this world, our doing, knowing and being have changed (Pirjo Ståhle, 2009)

- **Doing** – all important and most influential outcomes are produced by cooperation and networks
- **Knowing** – more and more decentralised both technically and socially
- **Being** – our identity is hard-pressed in a world of constant change and global information flows

Key questions of reform

- What do we mean by a civilized person in the future? What types of competencies will be needed? What kind of work will produce the desired education, learning and competences? (Vision)
- How will change be realised in municipal and school cultures and in every lesson? (Implementation)
- What types of skills will teachers and other school staff require to be able to work so as to promote education and learning for the future?
(Education and guidance)
- How could we develop the National Core Curricula and local curricula as tools for guiding and supporting the work of individual teachers and school communities? (Documents)



Premise for the curriculum planning

- **Knowledge-based** **Shared vision**
- **Analyses-based**
- **Future-oriented** **Commitment**
- **Cooperative, interactive**
- Premise for planning the core curricula involves:
 - Estimating the changes in the operating environment
 - Analysing the current state
 - Findings of research, evaluations and development projects
 - International material – what could we learn from others?
 - National policy guidelines

National policy guidelines include:

- Education Act and Decree
- Government decree
- Government Programme and the Development Plan for Education and Research



Applying the findings of development projects

- Findings of recent national development projects to be utilised in outlining the national core curriculum:
- Intensified and special support (KELPO)
- Pupil and student welfare service structures
- Guidance counselling
- Education provision in hospitals (SAIREKE)
- Supporting the basic education provision for Romani children (ROKU)
- Multiculturalism skills within school communities (MOKU)
- Language teaching (KIELITIVOLI)
- ICT in teaching



Legislative changes and new development tasks to be considered

- Early Childhood Education Act and the possibility of pre-primary education becoming compulsory
- Pupil and Student Welfare Act and amending the sections on school discipline
- Promoting equality, particularly between men and women
- Entrepreneurship and skills for working life
- Facilitating democracy, empowerment and influence
- Enhancing social skills and good manners



Partnership based and transparent planning process 2012–2016

- The national core curriculum is outlined by multidisciplinary working groups supported by online consultation groups (FNBE personnel, teachers, principals, researchers, provider personnel)
- Website [OPS2016](#) – information and support material
- Open feedback – Nov 2012 and April 2014
- Seminars for teaching personnel together with regional state organizations and teacher training units during the whole process
- Cooperation with teacher training and publishers
- In service education courses for local process leaders, funded by FNBE
- Research funded by Ministry of Education and Culture



Example

What?



How?

- If you want to build up curiosity, allow questions.
- If you want to develop problem-solving skills, link topics to real-life problems and encourage pupils to seek solutions together.
- If you want to promote understanding, connect topics from different subjects together.
- If you want to educate citizens who will build society, promote everyone's involvement and participation, give them opportunities to influence and advance positive – not negative – critical thinking.
- If you want to consolidate a learner's self-esteem and motivation for learning, give constructive and honest feedback. Never show a learner up.

