Aspects of Language Teaching and Training – Example of Finland

Workshop for language teacher trainers in Budapest
18. November 2013

Laura Helminen (M.A.)
Research Assistant
RULE, University of Tampere
Getting started

1) Structure and methods of language teacher education
2) Language learning in Finland (state of art outlook)
   - current issues
   - case example of a project (KIELITIVOLI)
3) Fields of development in the Future
Who is a language teacher?
Teachers in Finland – trusted professionals

Teaching is a popular profession in Finland. The applicant numbers are many times higher than the intake to teacher education programmes. Consequently, the qualification situation is relatively good among teachers. There are many reasons behind this popularity. The teaching profession has a high status in Finland. Teachers are also autonomous in their work, as the system is based on trust rather than control.

**Teachers are autonomous professionals**

Finnish teachers have a lot of professional freedom and opportunities to influence their work and the development of their schools. They decide on the teaching methods, the teaching materials used as well as pupil and student assessment, often in cooperation with other teachers. Most teachers also participate in developing education, principals and teachers conduct so-called development talks annually, where they discuss the past year and the objectives for the coming year.

**Who are the teachers?**

A big proportion of Finnish teachers are female. This is the case particularly in pre-primary education, where more than 90 per cent of the

**Teachers are recruited in an open process**

In Finland education providers are responsible for employing their teaching staff. They also determine the types and number of posts needed. The recruitment is an open process and the vacant posts are advertised in newspapers, professional journals and relevant websites.

Each education provider decides who is responsible for appointing new teachers. It may be the education committee or another equivalent committee,
1) How to become a language teacher?

Masters Degree (300 ECTS)

- Language studies
  - Major (120 ECTS)
  - Minor(s) (60 ECTS)
  - LTL

- Pedagogical studies (60 ECTS)
  - basic studies (25 ECTS)
  - practical training (35 ECTS)
  - EDU

- Additional studies and modules
  - special pedagogics, media pedagogics, module in multiculturality etc.

Locations:
- Tampere
- Jyväskylä
- Helsinki
- Turku
- Oulu
- Joensuu
LANGUAGE STUDIES
(ENGLISH PHILOLOGY)

GENERAL CORE STUDIES (20 ECTS)
BASIC STUDIES (30 ECTS)
INTERMEDIATE STUDIES (50 ECTS)
ADVANCED STUDIES (80 ECTS)

Bachelor (3 years)
Pedagogical studies (25 + 35 ECTS)
Masters (5 years)

Pedagogical studies (25 + 35 ECTS)
Didactics (15 ECTS)

Practical training (10 ECTS)

School administration etc. (5 ECTS)

Applied training (5 ECTS)
How this is realized?

* Cooperation with teacher training schools or field schools
* Cooperation between universities and different schools (flexibility)
* Trained teacher trainers
* Collegial learning
* Research and experiments
* Reflection
* Discussions in interdisciplinary groups
* Taking part and organizing in school culture events
* Feedback
* Attendance at school cultural events
* Going to lessons
* International cooperation
2) Language Learning in Finland

- A1 English (90.5 %)
- A2 (25, %)
- B2 (14.9 %)
- 3 languages 48, 6 % (2000) → 40.2 % (2010)

- English as “global lingua franca”
- Lack of options
- Traditional form-based teaching unappealing

The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland (SUKOL)
Language learners’ skills today vs. competencies required

**Learner’s skills**
- better skills in reading, writing and listening than speaking
- Basic or good “formal” language skills (in English)

**Competencies required**
- Knowledge in different languages
- Globalisation of industry, construction and services
- Broad-based knowledge in communication: interpersonal skills, (inter)cultural knowledge, networking
- ICT-competence
Actions have been taken

PROJECTS

* Multiculturalism skills within school communities (MOKU)
* Language teaching (KIELITIVOLI)
* ICT in teaching & learning
Kielitivoli – elinkästä iloa kielistä!

Kielitivoli on Opetushallituksen tukema valtakunnallinen hanke koululaisten vieraiden kielten opiskelun monipuolistamiseksi.

Hankkeen tavoitteena on rohkaista peruskoululaisia ja heidän vanhempiaan valitsemaan englannin ja toisen kotimaisen kielen lisäksi myös muita vieraita kielitä lukujärjestykseen – mahdollisuuksien mukaan jo peruskoulun alaluokilla, jolloin oppiminen on lapselle helpompaa.


Kielet tutuksi pelien kautta
Outcomes of the project

- Area-wide school networks
- Attention in media
- Materials for schools and teachers
- Increase of language clubs
- Language "showers"
- Language evenings for parents and children
- Better informing of language supplies
- Language learning pathways
- Increase in language teaching
- In-service training
- Distance teaching
3) New National Core Curriculum (2016)

* Clearer guidelines on comprehensive language education
* More incentives and implementation of integrated language teaching
* “Every teacher is (also) a language teacher” – “All teaching is (also) language teaching” → Cross-curricular language sensitivity
* Plurilinguality and interculturality
After producing reference documents such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages taught as "foreign" languages, the Council of Europe’s Language Policy Unit proposes a new instrument, in the form of this Platform, enabling member states to benefit from the experience and expertise of other member states in formulating their programmes relating to languages of schooling and all language teaching.

More
The chart below illustrates the different statuses of languages in school and the relations among them: the languages taught are first or second/foreign languages for learners; they are studied as a specific subject or or serve as an instrument of learning in other subjects.

The purpose of the Platform is notably to offer reference tools that can be used to analyse and construct curricula for languages of schooling which are...
STRENGTHS
- Master’s qualification
- Highly qualified teacher trainers
- Coherence and consistency of basic education
- Clear standards
- High ethical orientation and commitment
- Cooperation between universities and training schools / field schools

WEAKNESSES
- Lack of resources in communities
- Lack of interest in learning languages (other than English)
- Correspondence of training and reality
- Supply of (continuous) in-service training

OPPORTUNITIES
- Awareness of language and culture and regarding them as richness
- Varied ways of teaching languages
- Use of ICT
- Value of multiculturality
- Cooperation and integration
- International cooperation

CHALLENGES
- Promotion of less learned languages
- Electronic matriculation exams
- Compulsory language learning vs. freedom of choice
- Ensuring continuity of language learning and of positive effects of projects
- Updating training with changes of reality
- Cooperation in research
- Networking

Language learning, teaching and training
“Fruit for thought”

- Attention to languages in more varied ways
- Formal & informal language learning
  - “The presence of languages” – languages as resource
- Technology and multimodality in new learning environments
- Cooperation and integration of languages with content
- Advantage of multicultural groups
- Language and performance profiling and documentation
- Intercultural connections
Thank you for listening!
Questions?

”Languages IN education & FOR education”
Some useful links

ARTICLE: LANGUAGE TEACHING OUTSIDE THE BOX
http://researchandstudy.uta.fi/2013/10/04/language-teaching-outside-the-box/

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/langeduc/le_platformintro_EN.asp

CURRICULUM REFORM IN FINLAND

TEACHERS IN FINLAND
http://www.oph.fi/download/148962_Teachers_in_Finland.pdf

FINNISH NATIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION
http://www.oph.fi/english