

# Firma invitada





# EL MODELO FINLANDÉS PARA LA FORMACIÓN CONTINUA DEL PROFESORADO

## FINNISH MODEL OF TEACHER EDUCATION FOR LIFELONG TEACHING CAREER

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### RESUMEN

El sistema educativo de Finlandia es considerado como uno de los mejores de acuerdo con las valoraciones del informe PISA. Muchos son los interesados en conocer las bases de dicho sistema el cual se construye sobre valores tales como la igualdad de oportunidades, la confianza por parte de la Administración educativa o la inversión en la formación docente como causante del éxito. Este artículo describe exhaustivamente el funcionamiento del sistema educativo de Finlandia haciendo hincapié en la formación del profesorado, con un recorrido que abarca desde las cualidades y los estudios de los docentes de los diferentes niveles educativos hasta el papel que juega la investigación educativa en este contexto.

**Palabras clave:** Sistema educativo; Formación del profesorado; Profesionalismo, Carrera docente; Política educativa.

### ABSTRACT

Finland's educational system is considered one of the most successful according to PISA results. There are many people interested in the basis of this educational system which is built on values such as equal opportunities, confidence on the part of the Administration or the investment in teachers' training as the cause of success. This paper analyses the educational system in Finland emphasizing in teacher training with an overview spanning from teachers' qualities and studies of different educational levels to the role of educational research in this context.

**Key words:** Educational system; Teacher education; Professionalism; Teaching career; Educational policy.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

During the last years as I worked at the Finnish National Board of Education (2001 – 2011), I personally met in Helsinki hundreds of foreign visitors. They wanted to know what is the Finnish "secret". They came to Finland as the Finnish education system had got much positive publicity

because of being on top in the international PISA education performance comparisons. The visitors were teachers, researchers, journalists, ministers, members of parliament, politicians and civil servants - from all over the world. However, it was interesting to notice that most visitors that time came from Japan and Korea, countries which also had performed well in PISA reviews.

One important issue was to tell to the visitors that in Finland developing quality education had needed several different efficient changes before becoming to be a system as it looks like today. Always my list of those important elements included the basic value – equity - which in practice means equal opportunities and fairness. Jukka Sarjala's (2013) explanation is that high-quality education was not so much the goal but the product when equality was promoted also in education to be the most important value in Finland. That is to say, values are the glue that directs all practical solutions at the national and local level.

Other important issues that I always took up were support and trust. Support for weak is an important equity issue. Trust is creation of what we know of each other, what is the history of our cooperation with others. There is no regular school inspection system in Finland. There is support rather than control. Administration trusts teachers and teachers trust administration. Also I told that it has been important to get university researchers to work with the state central education administration. This connection also bases on trust. The research community needs to trust that they are free to express openly their findings and explanations and, they are not treated or seen as lackeys or enemies of those who keep the power. During the years it also proved to be beneficial to increase openness and transparency of the preparation of national rules.

During my briefings I always wanted to tell that it had been essential to set high expectations to all students. It also demanded extra support to those who seem to fall behind others. I told that it was important to use funds cleverly to get the best possible return from your payment. I tried to explain that patience also belongs to the good qualities of those who decide of the direction of education. Though all ministers of education would like to have their ambitious "own historical" changes, it has been extremely beneficial in Finland that the main line of education policy has been saved unchanged for years making incremental changes to reach the ideal. After saying all that I had to explain that an important issue was to invest in teacher education. (Laukkanen 2013).

In this article I explain what are the requirements to enter to teacher education and what are the structures and the main contents

of teacher education in Finland. I also describe what are the professional and ethical demands and "standards" to teachers.

## 2. TEACHERSHIP IN FINLAND

Well educated teaching force is an important quality guarantee for any education system. Quality teachers persuade students' interest to studying and knowing. They give food for thought and imagination and know how to enhance learning. They open doors to the world. Investing in teachers is perhaps the best way to improve education quality.

Teachers need comprehension of the issues and subjects taught. However that is not enough that they need because being a good professional teacher also needs expertise in teaching, studying and learning. Teacher should improve students' abilities to understand and use theoretical knowledge for practical solutions. Teachers should also have understanding of education and learning theories and research. That is what teacher educators in Finland say.

It is problematic that teaching at schools is more and more hard. We have seen much news about teachers leaving their teaching jobs in many countries, though not yet in Finland. Same applies with the school heads. It is more and more difficult to recruit them and keep them in the posts. That is also true in Finland. Therefore for instance the European Commission (2012) has made special recommendations to the governments to handle this problem. However, these recommendations are technical and general, which is understandable because EC cannot give any school education binding advice to member countries.

Today teachers' work is more and more demanding because of continuous changes in society, because of behavioral problems in classes and because of for example that there are more and more parents who challenge teacher's choices. It is good to notice that all parents have some kind of understanding of who is a good teacher. Opinions differ, but many adults, like me, remember their own teachers who were strong personalities, and a little bit "strange". They made a big influence also on my mind. Some of them also were able to raise my interest in what they taught. I want to tell this because the personality is a very strong instrument for any teacher. My opinion is that all teachers can make their own charisma if they build their behavior on their true believes and characters. It is important that we have charismatic teacher individuals (hopefully in all schools) who can effectively inspire students to find new openings, practices and findings. Teaching is art, but that is not the whole truth.

In Finland teacher education researchers are quite unanimous of the present demands for teachers. Jouni Välijärvi (2006, 21 -22) describes the present situation in Finland with four points as follows:

- 1) Teachers' work is continuous intellectual, social and emotional cooperation with students, colleagues and parents. It is increasingly also cooperation with the rest of the society. Development of information systems has given possibilities to create new learning environments. Nowadays teachers can be seen more and more as knowledge workers. One of the special features in teachers' work is ethical consciousness of how to build connection to the new learning environments so that it best supports balanced development of students.

The ethical approach means that the best of each student is the highest criteria as teacher makes his/her decisions in teaching, Välijärvi (2013) explained as I asked him for a more precise explanation. Here I would like to mention that for certain students for instance using of ICT environment can really open valuable new possibilities to learn new things broadly, thoroughly and fast but that might not be the case for all. Therefore teachers should use differentiated approaches that are good for everyone.

- 2) At the same time also requirements to teachers grow. These requirements are often contradictory. Schools are asked to create readiness to use new learning environments as learning sources but at the same time to concentrate to practicing in traditional skills and knowledge. Also demands to take broader responsibility of social or character education might grow. All these developments make more and more stress to teachers.
- 3) In teachers' work professionalism is emphasized. Professionalism means that teacher has ability to work independently and autonomously trusting on his/her own competence. Professionalism means to be free from outside steering, but also to be able to recognize the changing demands of the society and be ready to cooperate with different actors.
- 4) In knowledge society and knowledge economy the basis is knowledge, that changes with more and more increasing pace. Therefore lifelong learning qualities and skills are utmost important for the teaching profession. Teachers need skills for their own choices, independent thinking, creative planning of

teaching and experimenting with different pedagogical choices.

In Finland the great public trusts that teaching profession bases on high moral and ethical principles. Teacher's Union also emphasizes that teacher's work must be based on a strong value base where essentials are human dignity, verity and fairness. As an initiative of the Teacher's Union an ethical council for the teaching profession was established in 2000. That independent organization published the first ethical principles the same year. (Niemi 2006, 84). Teachers' profession has accepted high ideals for their work.

However, I don't want to give an over romantic view from Finland. Theory and practice doesn't totally meet. Teacher's work also is often seen to be lonely work behind the closed classroom doors. But it is the same issue anywhere.

### **3. EDUCATION IN FINLAND<sup>1</sup>**

Preprimary education is not compulsory for children but, however 98 % of children participate in that education. Teaching is not divided into subjects. Teachers are educated at universities. There they get the Bachelor's level education.

Nine years long basic education, starting at the age of 7, is compulsory for all. Teaching heterogeneous groups is one of the big challenges that teachers have also at the lower secondary education schools. Using ability based grouping is not accepted. The government decides on general objectives and distribution of lesson hours. The Finnish National Board of Education decides on the National Core Curriculum. Curricula are made at municipal and school levels. All teachers study at universities to get a Master's Degree.

In general upper secondary education national ruling follows the same lines as in basic education. A specialty is that curriculum is constructed to last 3 years but the students may complete it in 2 to 4 years. After completed all courses students participate in national matriculation examination. Teachers are educated at universities. All of them have a Master's degree.

Initial vocational education and training (VET) for 16 to 17 year olds covers seven sectors of economic life, including 112 different study programs. Education lasts 3 years. Each vocational education student

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<sup>1</sup> Overall description of the Finnish education system, see: <http://www.oph.fi/english/education>

must spend at least 6 months at a real workplace engaged in on-the-job learning. In Finland VET is mostly institution based. Adults can get their vocational qualification by competence based tests. Vocational subject teachers are educated at polytechnics but some teachers have got their education at universities.

Finnish educational system is flexible and there are no dead ends. At the upper secondary education level one can study at the same time in both education sectors, general and vocational. It is possible to continue to tertiary education through either general or vocational lines.

Most schools are publicly run. In general education private sector is marginal. Teachers for the public schools are hired by municipalities. Teacher's posts are published in newspapers and individual teachers apply to the posts where they want to work.

Education is free of tuition fees at all levels of education. That is also the case at the tertiary education level. Learning materials, school meals, school transportation etc. are totally free in basic education. In upper-secondary education students pay their books and other learning materials.

#### **4. TEACHING FORCE**

In 1979, primary school teacher education was also upgraded to the level of the Master's degree. The purpose of this modification was to unify the core aspects of primary and secondary school education and to develop an academically high standard of education for prospective teachers. Teacher education for the secondary school level was also reformed expanding the scope of pedagogical studies. (Jakku-Sihvonen & Niemi 2006).

Competition for teacher education, specially for primary school teacher education, is really hard because only around 10 – 12 % of applicants are accepted. We also have seen that a career as a teacher in Finland is the most popular choice amongst those leaving upper secondary education (Liiten 2004). Thus, it is fair to say that teaching work is very attractive.

Why is the teaching profession that attractive? Teachers' salaries in Finland are only at the average level in international comparisons, so salary cannot be the explanation (OECD 2013, 388 – 389). My own explanation is that the high popularity is the result of four things. 1) Academic education is respected. 2) Finnish teachers enjoy

significant autonomy in organizing their work. 3) Teachers enjoyed considerable respect. 4) Teachers are satisfied with their position (Simola 2005). A review published in June 2012 revealed that teachers are the most satisfied professional group in Finland (EPSI Finland 2012).

It is also important to notice as Jukka Sarjala (2013) puts it out that teachers have since 1960's participated in development of school education through numerous piloting projects. Teachers' Union also has been taken to participate in preparation of changes in the Ministerial working parties or they have been heard. The Finnish National Board of Education Board of Trustees includes also a member from the Teachers' Union. For decays, ministers of education have understood that carrying out a reform will be really much easier if the experts from Teachers' Union have been involved. That all is to say that teachers' profession has much say in the Finnish education policy. Teachers have understood that they are heard.

## **5. HOW TO GET TO TEACHER EDUCATION?**

The basic requirement for applicants to teacher education (general education) is that they have passed Upper Secondary School and the National Matriculation Examination.

The entrance examination to teacher education in spring 2013 had two steps (University of Helsinki 2013a):

- 1) Participation in national entrance examination that based on given pedagogical material – a book that the applicants had to read and show in the test that they had understood its messages. All who wanted to apply to teacher education could participate in this test in a given day.
- 2) After the test the best performers were invited to an one day interview to the universities where the candidates had sent their application. This was organized and planned individually by each university so there are different variants.

At the University of Helsinki in 2013 the process was the following:

Around 20 minutes before the individual interview the candidate got a pedagogical text that was general or related to a school subject. The interview lasted 15 minutes and was based on the text mentioned and on the information given in the application form.

The interview team consisted of members from both of the faculty of education and the faculty of the subject area if the case was of subject teachers. They looked at 3 issues: motivation, interaction skills and how realistic are the candidate's plans. More generally said the interview tries to examine suitability to teacher's career.

At the University of Tampere (2013) the suitability testing included three elements: group activity, visual comprehension and media literacy and, an individual interview.

The importance of this kind of intake process can be seen for instance by the University of Tampere's primary school teacher selection. The upper secondary school report marks and the matriculation examination marks gave only 20 % of the possible entrance points. Thus 80 % could be gained by performing well in the entrance examination and the interview. This is to say that suitability to teaching work in Finland is a really strong criteria as students are taken to teacher education.

Finland has regulations on Bachelor's and Master's degrees that apply to all examinations. Master's degree includes:

- 1) good overall knowledge of the major subject or a corresponding entity and conversance with the fundamentals of the minor subject or good knowledge of the advanced studies included in the degree program;
- 2) knowledge and skills needed to apply scientific knowledge and scientific methods or knowledge and skills needed for independent and demanding artistic work;
- 3) knowledge and skills needed to independently operate as an expert and developer of the field;
- 4) knowledge and skills needed for scientific or artistic postgraduate education, and
- 5) good language and communication skills. (Degree 2004/794, 12 §, see in Lahtinen & Lankinen 2010, 626; Jakku-Sihvonen & Niemi 2006, 19-20).

## **6. PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS**

Primary school teacher education program takes five years. The major studies are in education science. There are also multidisciplinary studies in school subjects. For instance in mathematics at the University of Helsinki all student teachers must have 7 ECTS credits' studies. (ECTS means European Credit Transfer System. One credit means 25 – 30 working hours.) However around 12 percent of students take an

advanced cause of 20 ECTS credits. It is also possible to specialize in mathematics by 60 ECTS credits studies, which gives a primary school teacher the competence to teach mathematics also at the lower secondary level schools. Science studies represent 12 to 18 ECTS credits. During these studies teacher students participate in courses at the subject faculty. (Lavonen & Juuti 2012; Krywacki, Pehkonen & Laine 2012).

There are also many other options to specialise. Students may choose their studies fairly freely. (Väljjarvi and Heikkinen 2012, 36).

We can see that primary education teacher studies follow the general rule set for the Master's degree. In the University of Jyväskylä the primary school teacher education program for the Master's degree consists of the following studies (Asunta 2006, 140):

Language and communication studies	25
Basic studies in education	25
Intermediate studies in education	35
Advanced studies in education	80
Multidisciplinary school subject studies	60
Minor subject studies	60
elective courses	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300 CREDITS</b>

No 2 +3 including 12 ECTS credits for teaching practice

No 4 including 16 ECTS credits for teaching practice

One credit is around 25 – 30 hours of work.

Education is divided into two periods: Bachelor's education and Master's education. However, that division to two parts has no practical consequences for teacher students, because a teacher without a Master's degree cannot get any permanent teaching post in Finnish schools. Thus everyone continues to the Master's studies. During the both periods students have to make a written thesis. So before becoming a master each student has to produce two theses with academic standards.

Education consists of theory of education, pedagogical studies and some subject didactics. Education is looked from several perspectives: education sociology, education psychology, curriculum theories and practices, pupil assessment, pedagogical approaches and special needs education.

In principle each primary school teacher can take care of teaching of all school subjects. However in primary education there are also for instance foreign languages that can start at the first or the

second grade or latest at the third grade and it is important that for them there are teachers who are specialized in languages. As teachers have specialized in different school subjects a teacher "A" may decide (by negotiating with colleagues) to give certain lessons from his/her own class to another teachers "B" and equivalently take back care of certain lessons from the teacher "B's" class.

It is important here to notice that primary school teachers have the same academic status as subject teachers. They can continue to doctoral studies.

## **7. SUBJECT TEACHERS**

There are two ways of becoming a general secondary school teacher (University of Helsinki 2013b & c; Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2007; Välijärvi and Heikkinen 2012). The majority of students complete a Master's degree in their subject and after that they apply for teacher education. However some apply to teacher education already during their subject studies. Those who use that latter way they usually start teacher education after their second year of education. (Kansanen 2007). The Finnish Teachers' Union's opinion is that applying for teacher education early is more recommendable because it supports the teacher identity development. (OAJ 2008, 5). It is advisable to know that the Finnish Teachers' Union takes also teacher students to the members of the Union (Sarjala 2013).

Subject teachers teach at lower and upper secondary schools (general and vocational) and adult education. Subjects are for instance mother tongue and literature, second national language, foreign languages, mathematics, religion, history, social studies, geography, biology, philosophy, psychology, physics, chemistry, home economics, health studies, textile work, technical work, physical education, music and visual arts.

Those who study in the secondary teacher education line have to complete pedagogical studies which take the minimum of 60 credits. It means one year full time studies in the faculty of education. Studies are integrated to the Master's program or they are separate. These studies also include teaching practice minimum of 15 credits. Education is looked from several perspectives: education sociology, education psychology, curriculum theories and practices, student assessment, pedagogical approaches and special needs education.

## **8. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TEACHERS**

Initial vocational education at the upper secondary education level bases on completed basic education. It is institution based. Diverse vocational studies are the core but students have also compulsory studies and voluntary studies that are common for different professional study lines. Those studies include mother tongue, second national language, foreign language, mathematics, physics and chemistry, humanistic and society studies, health education and sports and arts. This is to tell that vocational education institutions need teachers from different subject areas.

Teacher education program for teachers who are responsible for vocational subjects consists of 60 ECTS credits, it is one year of full time study (Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences 2012). It includes basic studies in educational sciences, vocational pedagogy studies, teaching practice and other studies. Teachers are educated at Polytechnics (Vocational teacher education 2013).

Eligibility to studies requires: relevant university or polytechnics degree and, a minimum of three years' work experience in field corresponding to the degree. However, if there are no suitable tertiary education examination available in the area of teaching it is possible to enter to the teacher education with lower level studies. However, in that case the person must have five years' work experience in the field. (Valtioneuvoston asetus 2010).

## **9. GUIDANCE COUNSELORS**

Guidance counselors work at secondary education level (lower secondary, upper secondary general and vocational) (University of Jyväskylä 2013a). A guidance counselor's qualification can be taken by two different ways. A person with a Master's degree and pedagogical studies and twelve month's teaching experience can get the qualification with 1.5 years' studies. Another possibility is to start fulltime guidance counselor studies after Bachelor's degree and certain education science studies. This option takes two years and, at the end of the studies they get the Master's degree.

## **10. SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION TEACHERS**

Special needs education teachers work in pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary (both general and vocational) education (University of Jyväskylä 2013b). Becoming a special needs

teacher likewise has two optional lines. The first one is to study special pedagogy as the main subject and get like that a Master's degree. The other option is for primary school teachers and for those who have some other tertiary education degree or pre-primary teacher's education. They can have the qualification with one year's studying.

## **11. TEACHING PRACTICE**

Finnish teacher education integrates theory and practice (Niemi 2012, 34). The aim of the supervised teaching practice is to give to students professional skills: how to reflect their own doing, how to handle in social situations and, how to put into practice the research and evaluation theories that they have learned. This process forwards step by step giving the student teachers gradually more and more responsibility of the process.

Practicing is organized in university practice schools ("normal schools"), which belong to the organization of universities. Teachers of these teacher practice schools guide and supervise teacher students. Practicing is organized after normal school also in municipal schools that have made agreement and accepted certain principles of responsibilities with the local university.

Studying in university practice schools starts with observation of lessons. Those observations are discussed with the supervising teachers. Students observe also their colleagues teacher students. Students learn to plan their lessons and after realized lessons they get critics from their supervisors.

## **12. RESEARCH-BASED APPROACH**

Finnish teachers are well acquainted not only with various teaching approaches and methods but also with educational research. That is one of the benefits of that teacher education is carried out in university departments of teacher education within faculties of education. Pertti Kansanen explains this by arguing that "[t]he basic aim of every teacher education program is to educate competent teachers and develop the necessary professional qualities to ensure lifelong teaching careers for teachers" (Kansanen 2003, 89). This means that teachers must have a good basis for lifelong learning within their profession. Therefore, teacher education is research-based in Finland. "The aim of research-based teacher education is to impart the ability to make educational decisions

based on rational argumentation in addition to everyday or intuitional argumentation" (ibid, 90).

Finnish teacher education is to educate teachers for their lifelong teaching career. Lifelong learning policy includes all learning: formal learning (in educational institutions), nonformal learning (organized for example in workplaces) and informal learning (learning from work or from everyday settings). As Tynjälä and Heikkinen (2011, 27) describe those concepts they emphasize that teachers' learning and professional teacher development should be seen as a continuing process that combines formal, non-formal and informal learning throughout the career of an individual teacher. (See also Heikkinen, Jokinen & Tynjälä 2012).

"Behind this idea is the belief that initial teacher education is of paramount importance and any defects arising during it are extremely difficult to correct afterwards. In-service teacher education is naturally inevitable, but the basis for professional competence is laid during the initial teacher education." (Kansanen 2007, 131 – 132). This is to say, that if we want our teachers succeed well as long as they teach, teacher educators in Finland see, it is inevitable to arrange properly reasoned high level teacher education for all who participate in their programs. Universities are independent to decide on the contents of their teacher education curricula, but because of the Bologna process planning that changed the system, all universities share a common understanding of the teacher education structure, but also see quite similarly the philosophical basis and the contents of teacher education (Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2007).

Kansanen (2005 and 2007; Niemi 2012, 32 - 33) explains that research-based approach should be built systematically in teacher education programs. Building program systematically means that the program has some basic believes to guide its organizing and that there are principles to selection of the program contents. As earlier said, the Finnish universities have much common understanding of the research-based approach idea but they differ in contents and breath of their programs.

Research-based approach is a principle that combines all the studies in research in some way. Aim is to educate reflective teachers, who understand research-based evidence and see, how it connects to their own work. Research method courses are included in the program already from the beginning of studies. Idea is that teachers have general understanding of research methods and are able to use some of them actively. The goal of the teacher education program is not to give

professional researcher competences. However becoming teachers reach knowledge to think and act according to the research evidence. Also the teaching practice is connected to research. All practice periods are combined with theoretical studies that relate to the topic of the practice period.

Let's take here a very clear example from the University of Helsinki in 2005. Then for subject teacher education they had 4 modules (Meri 2005):

Module 1 includes psychology of development and learning, special needs education, and theoretical, psychological, and didactic basis of teaching and learning a subject. Module 2 includes seminar on teaching methods and planning and supervised teaching practice in Teacher Training School. Module 3 includes social, historical and philosophical basis of education. Furthermore there is a seminar on curriculum work and evaluation of learning and teaching. There is also teaching practice. Module 4 includes "Teacher as a researcher" seminar and teaching practice. Program structure has stayed almost unchanged for years. (compare Meri 2005; Niemi 2012, 34; Sahlberg 2011, 82). This tells that teacher educators are satisfied on the program structure. The practical subject contents of the curricula naturally has developed as new knowledge has appeared.

### **13. TEACHERS' CORE COMPETENCES**

Matti Meri (2005) says that core competences of a teacher are self-confidence, creativity, meta-cognitive skills, skills to direct interaction and ability to create teaching-studying-learning (T-S-L) environments. They include interpersonal, pedagogical and psychological, subject content and methodological and organizational competences.

"Interpersonal competences that student teachers should learn:

- 1) to interact productively, individually and collectively with pupils
- 2) to use the means of educational communication
- 3) to communicate clearly
- 4) to use non-verbal communication
- 5) to use a variety of media skillfully and appropriately

Pedagogical and psychological competences that student teachers should learn:

1. to know pupils/students as learners
2. to use the knowledge and the experiences of pupils when teaching
3. to treat pupils in an equal manner
4. to use pedagogical authority in teaching
5. to express feeling and emotions when teaching
6. to act pedagogically even in situations where I feel uncertain

Subject content and methodological competence means that student teachers should learn:

1. to set targets and aims with pupils
2. to plan lessons together with other colleagues and pupils
3. to use coherent teaching approaches when teaching
4. to individualize and differentiate
5. to produce T-S-L materials

Organizational competence demands that student teachers should learn:

1. to organize a motivating T-S-L environment
2. to use pupils' knowledge and experiences when teaching
3. to evaluate and control the T-S-L process and pupils' behavior
4. to guide the pupils to follow the common rules" (Meri 2013, forthcoming).

## **14. IN-SERVICE TRAINING**

The purpose of continuing teacher education is to maintain and update teachers' pedagogical skills. In Finland responsibility for teachers' in-service training mainly rests with employers. They have an obligation to provide teachers with a minimum of three days of training every year. That is arranged according to the agreement between the teachers union and the central authority of the municipalities. (Ministry of Education 2008; Asunta 2006).

In-service courses are organized by the schools themselves, by the municipal authorities, by universities' in-service training centers or by regional or national state organizations. For instance the City of Espoo (2012), a wealthy municipality in the capital area, organizes around 200 in-service programs in a year for different teacher categories. Those

include e.g. information technology, pedagogy, environmental issues and proficiency in the contents of various school subjects.

Most of in-service education organized outside the municipalities demands extra funding. The problem is that there are many municipalities which have not enough funds to pay travel costs, for substitute teachers and participation fees and, thus their teachers cannot enter to those rich courses.

Falling to the situation that almost all in-service education is organized only by the schools themselves is waste of the possibility to have in-service training. Finnish teachers are not equal with these services because of the wealth differences between municipalities. In-service training is one of the issues that Finland needs to find innovative new solutions for.

There also is some government funded free-of-charge in-service education to promote implementation of education policy reforms, for instance in curriculum changes. Some that kind of training the state organizes also for teacher educators.

In general, teachers are eager to development themselves in summer university courses or having other further studies in universities or elsewhere. However, in Finland, as anywhere, there can be seen the phenomenon that some teachers are very eager to attend much to various in-service courses and, also some teachers are not so ready to participate in them.

## **15. TEACHER'S PROFESSIONALISM**

Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan (2012, 3, 5) write that teacher's professional capital includes three elements: human capital, social capital and decision making capital. They also say that making decisions in a complex situation what professionalism is all about.

Human capital is often seen as the synonym of academic degrees or knowledge, but that is not the whole picture that we need. According to Beatriz Pont and Patric Werquin (2001) important also is ability to lead people, ability to work in groups, and skill to strive to commonly set goals. Important is also motivation and willingness to stick to work, ability to learn more and solve problems, ability to communicate efficiently and readiness to make analyses.

Social capital consists of networks and common norms, values and agreements, which enhance inner cooperation in a group and cooperation between groups (OECD 2001). Trust is the source and the product of social capital. Differing from human capital social capital is not seen as a quality of an individual but the social relations.

Making decisions in education is about to choosing between alternatives (Meri 2005). The decision can be unconscious and intuitive or conscious and rational. Important decision making chain is: planning – interaction – evaluation – process. Reflection includes: reflection-in-action (formative evaluation), reflection-on-action (summative evaluation) and reflection-for-action (prognostic evaluation).

Hannele Niemi (2012, 35) puts together what is demanded from highly academic and ethical teacher professionals: “1) Teachers have to take an active role in raising serious questions about what they teach, how they teach, and the larger goals for which they are striving. 2) Teachers need to view themselves as public intellectuals who combine conception and implementation, thinking and practice in the struggle for a culture of democratic values and justice. 3) Teachers have a right and an obligation to articulate educational needs and challenges in the society they serve. 4) They also have to be active in public debates and decisions affecting the development of schools and education. 5) As professionals, teachers cannot only be implementers of decisions, but must also be partners in the development. 6) Teachers are expected to be able to take an active role in evaluating and improving schools and their learning environments. 7) They are also expected to refresh their professional skills, to cooperate with parents and other stakeholders, and to be active citizens.”

My feeling is that in Finland most professionals in the education sector think in the same way. However, this is once again a case where the theory and practice does not totally meet. In Finland we don't see much public debate on education issues where individual teachers themselves would participate. My wish is that the active participation will see its bloom in the future, not only in Finland but also all over the world. This hope rises also from the fact that in many countries democratic right to express one's own opinion is not respected. We also should listen what our teachers tell.

## **16. THE FINNISH MODEL?**

An OECD report says that Finnish teacher education has at least four distinguishing qualities (Schleicher 2012, 39): 1) It is research based.

2) It has strong focus on developing pedagogical content knowledge. 3) It takes care of good training for all Finnish teachers in diagnosing students with learning difficulties and adapting teaching to different learning needs. 4) It has a very strong clinical component connecting theory and practice.

This is one possible highlighting expression of the Finnish teacher education model in nutshell.

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