PLACING THE CHILD AT THE CENTRE OF OUR EDUCATION SYSTEMS

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Building sustainable and future-proof education systems

Irmeli Halinen
Head of National Curriculum Development (Em.)
Director of Educational Innovations, Metodix Oy
Education system has been developed coherently during the past 40 years.

Curriculum reform 2012 - 2017 covers all levels of education from Early Childhood Education and Care to Upper Secondary Education.
Child at the centre

- high quality teaching and learning processes, support and care
- good connections, respect and trust
ACCORDING TO BASIC EDUCATION ACT

- The main tasks of education are to
  - promote the healthy growth and development of all pupils
  - enhance their development as human beings and as citizens of a democratic society
  - create a solid basis for lifelong learning and sustainable well-being
- Education must be provided according to pupils’ age and capabilities, in cooperation with pupils’ parents.
IMPORTANT IN THE VALUE BASIS OF EDUCATION

Basic education is underpinned by the idea of the specific value of childhood. Each pupil is unique and valuable just as he or she is. Each pupil has the right to grow into his/her full potential as a human being and as a member of society.

To achieve this, pupils need encouragement and individual support as well as experiences of being heard and valued in the school community. They also need an opportunity to feel that the community cares about them, their learning and well-being. Equally important are experiences of participation and opportunities for collaboration in order to advance the welfare of the whole community.

(National Core Curriculum for Basic Education, 2014, 15)
Child at the centre
- children as owners of their learning and life
- playful, active, enjoyable and meaningful learning
THE MAIN GOALS OF THE CURRICULUM REFORM

- To enhance joy and meaningfulness of learning and the active role of learners > pupil/student agency
- To promote collaboration and dialogue in the school community and between schools and their surroundings
- To create a strong basis for lifelong and life-wide learning
- To enhance sustainable lifestyle and well-being
Learning together, helping each other, giving and getting feedback

Child at the centre

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Child at the centre

Providing rich learning environments

Providing space for thinking and inquiry
Providing space for creativity and childrens’ own visions

Child at the centre

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FOCUS ON PUPILS’ EXPERIENCES

Competences

Learners’ experiences

Learning process

School culture

Managing own life

Feeling valued

Understanding the world

Meaningful, enjoyable, sustainable learning

Coherence and well-being
WHAT IS THE STATE OF PLAY?

• Play is essential in early childhood education and care (0-6), and pre-primary education (6)
• Play is central in the primary years of basic education
• Play is important in lower and upper secondary years, and in adult education
• At school, play is embedded in lessons plus there’s free time (breaks) between lessons for playing
• Playful approach  
  • Creates space for learners own ideas and activities  
  • Allows teachers to be more in the role of mentors  
  • Sets some requirements on the learning environments
• In basic education, there’s no national examinations, no competition or comparison
WHAT SHOULD WE AIM FOR TO MAKE EDUCATION MORE SUSTAINABLE, READY FOR THE FUTURE?

• We should bravely rethink education – we should have trust, respect and collaboration instead of control and competition

• When reforming education:
  • We should listen and respect people’s experiences and ideas in education
  • We should think about the future much more
  • We should build on the strengths of the present system

• Teachers’ pedagogical autonomy - teachers should be trusted and supported
WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS HELPING ME LEARN AND ENJOY MYSELF AT SCHOOL?

THE RESULT OF DISCUSSION OF 550 STUDENTS IN HELSINKI 2013

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WHAT TRANSFORMATIVE ACTIONS CAN BE TAKEN TO TRIGGER/SUPPORT A SHIFT?

• Discussions and collaboration, thinking together:
  • How the world is changing? What is important to learn in this changing world? What kind of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes we want our learners to adopt?
  • What kind of world we want to build?
  • What are important values along which we want education to be organised?
  • What do we understand by learning? What is a good learning process like?
  • How the school should function in order to support all-round and sustainable development of both learners and the community/society?
  • What is important in pupil assessment?
EDUCATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Changes in the world unavoidably affect the pupils’ development and well-being. In basic education, pupils learn to encounter pressures for change openly, to assess change critically and to assume responsibility for making choices that build a sustainable future.

Global education as a part of basic education contributes to creating preconditions for fair and sustainable development in line with UN development goals.

Basic education exerts influence as a driver for positive change that contributes to society, both at the national and international level.

(National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014, s. 19)
Each pupil has the right to a good education and success in his/her studies. While learning, pupils are building their identity, their understanding of life and humanity, their worldview, and finding their place in the world.

Basic education supports the development of every pupil as a human being who strives for truth, goodness, beauty, justice, and peace. In individual growth, discrepancies between these aspirations and the current reality unavoidably arise. It is important to be able to address such discrepancies or conflicts ethically and with empathy, and to have the courage to stand up for what is good.

Becoming educated means that individuals and communities are capable of making decisions based on ethical reflection, empathy and knowledge.

(National Core Curriculum for Basic Education, 2014, 15-16)
THANK YOU!
CONTACT INFORMATION

- irmeli.halinen@metodix.fi
- irmelihalinen9@gmail.com
- +358 50 4099858
Next slides: more material for discussions
RETHINKING THE VALUE BASIS OF EDUCATION

- Uniqueness of every pupil, right to a good education
- Cultural diversity as richness
- School as a learning community
- Educated human being and active citizen
- Necessity of sustainable way of life

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RETHINKING THE SCHOOL CULTURE – SCHOOLS AS LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Learning community

- Wellbeing and safety in daily life
- Interaction and versatile working approaches
- Cultural diversity and language awareness
- Participation and democratic action
- Equity and equality
- Environmental responsibility and sustainable future orientation

Structure of school days
Other activities
Assessment and feedback

Learning environments and methods
School welfare activities, guidance and support
Subject lessons and multidisciplinary learning modules

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FOCUS IS ON MEANINGFUL LEARNING

• Integrative approach in order to improve the meaningfulness of learning
  • Transversal competences
  • Multidisciplinary learning modules
  • Formative assessment
• Pedagogical approach based on the defined learning conception
  • Strengthening student agency
  • Space for thinking
  • Positive experiences and emotions promote learning
  • Learning to learn
  • Collaborative, explorative, creative way of working
CHANGING ROLES OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

• **Teachers**
  • Talking less during the lessons
  • Focusing more on encouraging and guiding the students to think and talk, ask questions, look for information, and collaborate
  • Collaborating more with colleagues, other school staff, parents and experts outside the school

• **Students**
  • Working less individually and more with fellow students
  • Answering less to ready made questions, formulating more their own questions, looking for information, analysing, evaluating and sharing it, creating new knowledge and ideas
  • Learning better to plan, do, reflect and evaluate their own and common work and, slowly, take more responsibility on it
RETHINKING THE COMPETENCES IN BASIC EDUCATION

Transversal competences (promoting every pupils growth as human beings and as citizens) demand:
- knowledge
- skills
- values
- attitudes
- will/volition
RETHINKING PUPIL ASSESSMENT

LEARNING

Assessment of learning
Assessment as learning
Assessment for learning