

Curriculum as a Catalyst for Intelligence Development: Insights from the Finnish Education System

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Abstract

This article aims to reveal how Finish education system seeks to develop intelligence among students in curriculum design. This study uses quantitative methodology. It examines official documents, to understand relevant educational plans and strategies

The finding uncover that intelligence development is integrated through several policies including analytical intelligence, research and mathematical abilities and life management skills. The curriculum does not focus global perspective at the expense of building identity and culture

This study finding leads us to describe intelligence development as comprehensive as it considers intelligence development as a set of cognitive, psychological and social set of skills that aims at preparing students for the future and for the global scene. They view that academic learning as an opportunity to achieve students welfare and prepare him to be a positive element in the society system.

By choosing Finland this study sought to uncover of the reasons behind the success of Finland educational system. Many countries around the world believe that a successful Education system is the one that develop successfully students intelligence as in the era of artificial intelligence it is not the information that is lacking but how to uses it in a creative manner to make something out it. for this reason, students I wonder that Finland is a model of education and. wonder that countries in general and developing countries in particular will benefit a lot by leaning form its model.

Introduction

The aim of this study is to investigate current research on the inclusion and awareness of intelligence development in curriculum design in Finland education system. The importance of integrating intelligence development into the teaching curriculum has been a subject of inquiry for a long time. However, the literature on this topic remains unorganized and unsystematic. This study seeks to synthesize the research on this subject to assess its current state, as well as its strengths and weaknesses.

The Finnish education system believes that students have the right to a physically, psychologically, socially, and pedagogically safe and secure learning environment (Section 40 of the Act on General Upper Secondary Education 714/2018). A depressed or disturbed student cannot be expected to perform well academically or maintain mental well-being. Psychological welfare is seen as a result of overall student welfare. It is supported by psychological care provided through school services.

However students protection and secure integration will not qualify students to face an ever changing environment unless it is combined with intelligence qualification to meet the world. This paper seeks to develop a perspective on intelligence development and its integration into curriculum design in Finland. This will be achieved by tracing documents on the subject, highlighting the importance of including intelligence development in curriculum, and evaluating its effects.

Research Question

The primary research questions that guide this study is: How has the role of curriculum design in intelligence development been approached by Finnish educators and government officials ? And how has it been conceptualized and implemented in Finnish schools?

Methodology of Research

This study is qualitative in nature. It aims to analyse the current state of intelligence development in curriculum design in Finland from a theoretical perspective. Data will be collected, analysed, categorized, and organized to reflect Finnish approach relevant to the inclusion of intelligence development in curriculum design. This study will not cover all possible procedure or principle with regards to Finnish curriculum design and intelligence development. Rather, it will focus on organizing what can be considered established norms of approaches related to this subject.

Significance of the Study

Undoubtedly, we are living in an era of significant changes in the distribution of information and how it is processed. This has affected the type of learning that is required. Teachers are no longer primarily responsible for imparting information; instead, their role involves guiding students in how information is treated.

Students are now required to learn how to process and evaluate information, rather than merely acquiring it. Therefore, a re-examination of the way information is presented and learning is conducted is significant. Consequently, intelligence—understood as the ability to perceive the world and effectively process information—is increasingly essential. Without this focus, the role of teachers risks becoming redundant or at least significantly diminished.

I. Guiding principles in Finnish curriculum Design:

A Curriculum is a process: this means that it is an ongoing improvement process and that the objective is not to set certain learning skills but to search for more needed ones. It is then more than an offer, it is a search for improvement. This could explain why Finland curriculum is being reaffirmed continually throughout the years. (Vitikka, Krokfors, & Rikabi, 2016).

B. Curriculum is Interactive: It is an interaction between national goals, municipal goals and school goals. (Halinen, I. 2018). National goals and municipal

goals are ever changing since it is subject to economic needs and scientific developments. In other words, curriculum is connected to national and municipal strategies and it is seen as a project that links many areas together. These strategies have to be communicated through a learning teaching ecosystem process. Vahtivuori et al.

2014, 24).

C. Curriculum is Societal: Curriculum is a societal construct, meaning that it reflects social values and approaches toward citizens' behavior and relationships among members of society (Björkgren et al., 2021). This includes empathy, collaboration, and tolerance. These key elements are essential for promoting peace and harmony among citizens.

D. Curriculum should serve students' welfare: This means that curriculum design in Finland aims to ensure students well-being (Sahlberg, P. (2015). Finnish Lessons are presented in such a way that students do not suffer or feel unhappy due to the workload of the program, for example. On the contrary, it aims to make learning engaging and adaptable to students' age and psychological needs. Ibid.

II. Curriculum Design seeks to achieve intelligence development

2. Developing analytical skills development: Through developing analytical skills, the Finnish curriculum ensures that while it is important for students to acquire the necessary skills to empower them in society and enable them to face challenges and seize opportunities, education goes beyond mere skills and knowledge. Finland focuses on students' analytical skills (Lavonen, J. (2021).

“What is most important is not only information itself, but how we view the world, how we perceive information, and how we use it in different contexts. For this reason, critical thinking and analytical skills are integrated into the curriculum so that students can develop higher-order thinking abilities, which are essential in the rapidly changing world (Finnish National Agency for

Education, n.d”

3. By developing social practices such as Democracy: The Finnish curriculum cherishes values that generally support the development of intelligence. Intelligence is linked to freedom, as it trains the mind to think freely, explore options, and expand imagination. Conversely, oppressed students may experience mental stagnation, as they become afraid to use their thinking abilities and instead wait for instructions. They may also fear making mistakes, correcting them, and learning from them, including identifying rules and methods that can be applied to other situations. Democracy and freedom are essential to the development of intelligence and reflect how students are likely to act as adults in the future. The Finnish education project states that:

“The underlying values of the National core curriculum for general upper secondary education are built on democracy” (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2020).

To encourage students to state their opinions and participate in decision making processes, schools have this objective achieved by creating democratic channels that guarantee students active in developing such approaches:

Approaches that promote participation and sense of community are systematically developed in interaction between the school community and partners. The education draws on cooperation and supports the formation of social relationships in student groups. (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2016)

c. By implementing students centered policies: Unlike many countries that use a teacher-centered approach, Finland considers students to be at the center of the learning process. It views the teacher as a facilitator who guides students through learning. The learning process itself is seen not as a lesson made up of information that must be memorized, but as an activity that must be carried out, from which lessons are drawn and knowledge is acquired.

During the learning process, the students interpret, analyse, and assess data, information or knowledge presented in different formats on the basis of their previous experiences and knowledge. They develop solutions and create new entities by combining knowledge and skills in new ways" *ibid*

D. By interactive learning methods: Interaction is an essential part of the learning process, as it enables the exchange of ideas and exposes students to diverse perspectives. This is achieved by strengthening learning outcomes and by continuously developing the learning process through feedback from both teachers and students (Finnish National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Schools 2019, 2019).

E. By developing metacognitive intelligence One of the important methods used to develop intelligence is guiding students to develop their own thinking skills by allowing them to use metacognitive strategies. By this, we mean helping students to go beyond information and knowledge to the intelligence beneath them by revealing connections and concepts, and encouraging them to apply them in different contexts.

In general upper secondary education, students are guided to observe connections between concepts, fields of knowledge, and competence as well as to apply what they have learned previously in changing situations. This also allows them to develop competences required for continuous learning. (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2019)

F. By developing thinking skills: These skills not only help to increase acquired knowledge and subject understanding, but also develop students' thinking capacities, such as critical, reflective, and creative thinking. This is because education decision-makers in Finland believe that learning is an ongoing process that continues beyond school, and that it requires independent individuals who do not rely on teachers to monitor or guide their learning. students are encouraged to think by encouraging "curiosity, persistence and problem- solving in varied

contexts.... students don't just learn what to think — they learn how to think and how to learn' (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2016)

A fundamental aspect of learning to learn is the development of critical thinking (Palsa & Mertala, 2020). This is supported through a module focused on interpreting texts. What is significant about this module is that it helps students analyze texts critically, question the intentions behind them, and use concepts to support their interpretations. It also encourages students to consider multiple perspectives by analyzing texts in context and taking into account cultural and situational factors. This leads to a deeper understanding not only of the texts themselves, but also of the underlying concepts and viewpoints, as well as how meaning is constructed and expressed.

3. By developing Emotional intelligence development: school is considered as a community whose members share the same vision and goals. For this, students, teachers and administration strive to create a harmonious atmosphere based on caring. Finnish National Agency for Education (2016) document states:

A precondition for building a community is that everyone participates in creating an atmosphere of caring. Practices that strengthen communal and individual learning are developed systematically.(ibid).

4. By broadening the scope of worldview: Finnish students develop their intelligence by being exposed to diverse views. Finnish education services support this development not only through local experiences but also through international ones.

Studies belonging to the syllabus shall be organised in such a way that it is possible for students to develop their international competence and skills for working life and entrepreneurship. (Section 13(3) of the Act on General Upper Secondary Education 714/2018.)

The aim is to widen the range of experiences encountered by students in order to enlarge their understanding of the world and equip them with the capacities

required needed through international activities. They are also encouraged to explore ways of improving globalization, human rights, cooperation, and future development. These activities are not designed as extracurricular programs but form an integral part of the curriculum.

5. By imparting daily life management skills: Managing daily life is another important aspect of the Finnish curriculum. Uljens, M., & Rajakaltio, H. (2017). It teaches students how to take care of themselves, recognizing that awareness of the world begins with the ability to manage one's own life. It aims to develop skills and attitudes that help students care for themselves in relation to health, time, safety, and the management of possessions, as well as make appropriate choices in situations of change and uncertainty. Independent individuals are thus encouraged to think autonomously while taking into account their own needs and interests.

6. By Personality building: through identity preservation, Emboldening and Goal orienting:

a. By developing goal-oriented learners: The objective is to make students “capable of goal-oriented, appropriate, and ethical interaction, both in public speaking and group communication situations, and to analyse, assess, and develop their interaction competence” (Finnish National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Schools, 2019).

b. By identity preservation: To have goals, students need to understand where they stand culturally and ethically; in other words, they need a sense of identity. For this reason, the Finnish program strives to build students' identity through the teaching of the Finnish language. It emphasizes “the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity for identities.” Language is seen as a means of widening intellectual growth and development, as it contains “tones of expression as well as literature and other cultural products.” Finnish National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Schools 2019, 2019).

7. By developing students' research skills: By developing students' research skills, the objective is to teach them how to find relevant and up-to-date information. Students are expected to “acquire information” and “evaluate critically the reliability of information” (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2019). This strategy is particularly significant given that we live in an age of vast information, both reliable and misleading. Therefore, the need for strong research skills to navigate such a context is clear.

8. Mathematical thinking:

For Finnish educational authorities, Math is not taught as a set of mathematical information but as a source of concepts and ideas that helps students develop their thinking and analytical skills. Students are encouraged to “use mathematical language in expressing their observations and reasoning” and to “present their reasoning and solutions both orally and in writing” (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2019, Mathematics syllabus section).

Conclusion

As a conclusion, we can say that the Finnish curriculum is comprehensive and integrative, as it covers all that is needed from the national, municipal, and school perspectives. Learning in Finland addresses both analytical and emotional intelligence, and emphasizes learning through experience as well as local and global values. It seeks to meet students' needs in a coherent and harmonious manner. Students' welfare both psychological and intellectual are deeply intertwined.

This study shows that Finnish education services do not limit themselves to teaching a set of subjects, but also aim to equip students with emotional and intellectual qualities that enable them to face the world and adapt to its demands. Intelligence is developed through identity preservation, personality building, daily life management skills, research skills, and mathematical thinking.

Developing thoughtful, intelligent, and creative life perspectives—referred to in the Finnish education system as transversal competences. Students are supported in developing their own views about their environment and are encouraged to make informed decisions about their future while taking into account “the connections between the environment, economy, technology, and politics,” and learning to produce and evaluate alternative future scenarios from the perspectives of individuals, communities, and ecosystems.

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