

The Uniqueness of Finnish Education

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Abstract: *This article Learn more about Finnish education. Information about how children are educated and raised, the level of education of the teacher and the evaluation system there. The Finnish education system has been proven to be amongst the best in the world, scoring consistently at the top of different international studies (PISA, The UN Education Index, etc.). In Finland, school authorities cooperate actively with organisations for teachers, students and principals. This cooperation, the development activities have strong and broad-based support.*

Keywords: *Education, journey, children, teacher, FINEES, PISA, cooperation.*

INTRODUCTION

Education in Finland has long been celebrated for its uniqueness and success. Finland consistently ranks high on international assessments such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), garnering attention for its distinctive approach. What sets this system apart, and how does it provide quality education accessible to all? Why are schools in Finland so successful? Let's delve into the key features that distinguish Finnish education.

Literature Analysis And Methodology

The Finnish education journey begins with an emphasis on holistic development. Children enter daycare or preschool, where, alongside learning essential life skills, they engage in play and outdoor activities. This early focus on communication and cooperation lays the foundation for a well-rounded education. Preschools, funded by tax money, are not only affordable but also contribute significantly to the development of social and cognitive skills. As students progress, typically at age 6, they enter a mandatory year of pre-primary education. There they continue to build fundamental skills such as alphabets while maintaining a healthy balance of play. This approach ensures that the students retain the joy of learning, setting a positive tone for the years to come. Finnish students enjoy school days that are notably shorter than those in many other countries. Rather than adhering to lengthy hours of instruction, the Finnish system places value on quality over quantity. The reasoning behind shorter school days lies in recognizing the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between academic pursuits and other experiences that contribute to a comprehensive education. Students in Finland have the time and freedom to engage in extracurricular activities, pursue personal interests, and simply relax. This intentional focus on a balanced lifestyle acknowledges that education extends beyond the classroom, encompassing the development of social skills, creativity, and personal passions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In tandem with shorter school days, Finnish students experience minimal homework requirements. The Finnish system recognizes that overloading students with homework may lead to stress, fatigue, and diminished enthusiasm for learning. Instead, the emphasis is on meaningful, purposeful assignments that reinforce key concepts and allow students to apply their knowledge independently.

The impact of shorter school days and minimal homework affects the behavior of Finnish students. The approach for the education is more curious and enthusiastic, unburdened by excessive academic demands. This freedom allows for the cultivation of creativity, critical thinking, and a genuine passion for learning. The holistic approach to education prepares students not only for academic success but also for the challenges and opportunities that life beyond the classroom presents.

Due to the shorter school days, the “iltapäiväkerho” (afternoon club) plays a pivotal role in the educational landscape. Specifically designed for the youngest students, schools offer these after-school programs to provide a structured environment during the afternoon hours. In addition to school-based options, various external providers, including the church, extend iltapäiväkerho services. These programs are designed to foster a supportive and engaging atmosphere, offering activities that blend learning with leisure. This arrangement not only accommodates parents who work in the afternoon but also ensures that families have diverse options. Children benefit from a safe and enjoyable environment where they can spend time with friends until their parents are available to pick them up. Central to the education in Finland is the role of teachers. The teaching profession is valued and sought after. Educators in Finland undergo extensive training, most holding master’s degrees. This commitment to teacher education is reflected in the autonomy granted to teachers in the classroom. Within broad federal and municipal guidelines, teachers have the freedom to tailor their methods and curriculum to suit the needs of their students. This autonomy fosters creativity, innovation, and a personalized approach to learning. The relationships between teachers and students are further informal, making learning easier and more pleasant. Most often teachers and students address each other on a first name basis.

Finnish teachers are highly educated and strongly committed to their work. Teacher education is highly respected and very popular in Finland. Teachers are required to have a Master's degree, and their initial education includes teaching practice. The Finnish education system is based on trust in teachers and teacher education. Since the quality of teacher education is consistent, teachers have extensive freedom in developing their own work. This means teachers have the power to decide which teaching methods and learning materials they want to use, for example. There is no national evaluation or registration of teachers in Finland. Class teachers teach pupils from grades 1 to 6 and specialised subject teachers teach in grades 7 to 9. Unlike many education systems worldwide, Finland places minimal emphasis on standardized testing. Instead, teachers are primarily responsible for assessing and evaluating students’ performance. This reduces stress and promotes a more holistic understanding of student progress. Only once students reach the end of their upper secondary studies do they partake in a nationwide standardized test. The so called Ylioppilaskirjoitukset in Finnish.

The assessment and evaluation of learning outcomes at schools is encouraging and supportive. The assessment and evaluation of learning outcomes at schools is encouraging and supportive. The Finnish school system does not have a national testing mechanism, there are no school ranking lists and no inspection systems exist. The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) is responsible for evaluating early childhood education and care, education and training nationally. The evaluation activities comprise national learning outcome assessments, thematic and system evaluations and evaluations of quality systems, including audits of higher education institutions. FINEEC also supports providers of early childhood education and care, education and training as well as higher education institutions in evaluation and quality management matters. FINEEC’s evaluations are based on independence, trust, openness and interaction. One of the hallmarks of the Finnish education system is

its commitment to equality. Education is a right and responsibility for everyone, provided free of charge. Special support is available for those in need, ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed. Even meals at school are provided free of charge.

In line with the modern era, technology plays a crucial role in education in Finland. Integrated thoughtfully, technology supports learning without overshadowing traditional teaching methods. This balanced approach ensures that students are well-equipped for the demands of the digital age. School supplies are provided to the students, guaranteeing equal opportunities for learning to everyone. This means books, computer, and other materials needed for studies are provided completely free of charge to all students.

The Finnish education system is successful because of its unique combination of shorter school days, minimal homework, teacher autonomy, and equality. By focusing on holistic development, fostering strong teacher-student relationships, and maintaining a commitment to equal opportunities, Finland has created a model that continues to inspire educators worldwide.

In conclusion. For the most part, libraries in Finland provide their services free of charge. Finnish people are among the most active library users in the world by international standards. Finland's robust literacy rate, which is virtually 100 per cent, is one reason why Finnish students perform so well in different school subjects and at various stages of education. Nearly three in four Finns aged between 25 and 64 have at least an upper secondary school certificate (a completed matriculation examination or vocational qualification) and one in three has a higher education degree. To be able to progress to further studies, you must have completed primary and lower secondary (compulsory) education.

Only approximately one per cent of each age group leave lower secondary education without a certificate, and more than half of them complete their education in one way or another at a later stage.

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