



Language Learning and Teaching in Transition – Reforming the Basic Education Core Curriculum for English in Finland

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A national curriculum reform is work-in-progress for various stakeholders

- ◆ The new National Core Curricula for Basic Education to be implemented as of August 2016
- ◆ National guidelines leave room for local implementation
 - Devised in cooperation with researchers, teacher training colleges, interest groups (eg. local authorities, parents, working life, trade and student unions)
 - A top-down, bottom-up process → a shared understanding of the document
- ◆ Local implementation involves schools, teachers, pupils and, to some extent, the community at large



SCHOOL CULTURE

TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCES

THE CONCEPTION OF LEARNING
VALUES
LAW AND REGULATIONS

BASIC EDUCATION OFFERS A FOUNDATION FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING



MY ENGLISH SKILLS

ASSESSMENT

- Formative
- Summative
- Self & Peer

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

PEDAGOGICAL CHOICES

CONTENTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES



English in Finland in a nutshell

- ◆ The first *foreign* language for more than 90% of pupils
- ◆ A widely used language, but *not* a second language
- ◆ Aim: CEFR level B1.1 at the end of basic education (as of August 2016)
- ◆ At least 2/3 of pupils reach level B1.1 or above (*Härmälä et al. 2013*), BUT...
- ◆ Informal learning very common, especially among boys



The teachers operationalize the objectives of the teaching and learning of English (1)

- ◆ Language education: learning languages is a lifelong process; "every teacher is a language teacher"
- ◆ Growth into cultural diversity and language awareness: we have multi-layered linguistic and cultural identities; statuses of languages, global English; linguistic reasoning
- ◆ Language-learning skills: setting personal objectives, reflecting on learning and cooperating; development of language learning strategies



The teachers operationalize the objectives of the teaching and learning of English (2)

- ◆ Evolving language proficiency
 - Interaction skills: constructive use of language, taking initiative; cultural appropriateness of communication, negotiation of meaning, mediation
 - Text (spoken and written) comprehension: versatile, meaningful texts; multiliteracy that ties with
 - Text (spoken and written) production: different purposes, genres; vocabulary, structures, pronunciation, accuracy



Curriculum reform of 2016 and the trouble with English

- ◆ The serious question is, WHAT is the aim of teaching and learning of English? Whose English? For whom?
- ◆ Heterogeneous groups
- ◆ ICT
- ◆ Assessment
- ◆ Lessons learnt so far



.. And the work goes on..

Thank you!

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Picture by Marianne Markus,
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