



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO  
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET  
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

# WHAT CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN IN NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE YEAR 2030 – OPINIONS OF STUDENT TEACHERS

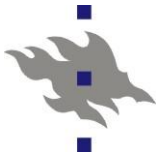
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Käyttätymistieteellinen tiedekunta



# 1 INTRODUCTION

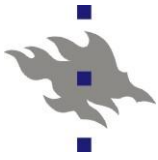
- Our world is changing fast, and so are day-care-centres and schools.
- Teachers and pupils must look for new values in the wide range of pre-school education and school activities
- Many of these activities have changed, or perhaps need to change. Some learning activities were simply unthinkable earlier, such as exploring and analysing complex information using multimedia.



- According Gardner (1999) the school as well as the church are exceptional institutions neither of them has undergone any basic changes during last hundred years even though has been enormous changes in the surrounding societies.
- School education needs new types of thinking and action models, which train pupils for the future (Gardner 1999).



- The researcher of the future, unlike the researcher of history, many still have an influence on the future so that a worst case scenario can be avoided (Kuusi, 41).
- In general, Finnish preschool educators highly value environmental objectives. Educators are more interested in language as a individual development and less interested in fostering for example sustainable development, future. (Reunamo & Nurmilaakso 2006, 198).



- The Core Curriculum points out that knowledge cannot be directly transferred to children through teaching.
- The central concept in the pedagogical approach stresses the importance of child centreness, in which children should be active learners and adults are simply guides.
- In recent years there has been signs of change. Teachers are beginning given permission to teach!



- Most of the cooperating teachers, student teachers and professors involved in teacher education believed that the teacher's role had changed from being a figure of authority conveying knowledge to being a guide and facilitator. (Yoon 2006)
- Some teachers and student teachers, however thought that the teacher's role had not changed.

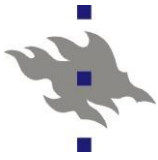


- Cooperating teachers and student teachers thought that recent world events had made them more concerned with personality education and student centered education.
- Professors felt that they had become more interested in reminding students of visions for the future, recovering the intrinsic nature of education, and emphasizing fundamental values.



- What does the future of teacher education look like?
- The same trend is noticeable in all countries. According to Yoon (2006, 350-351), who is from Korea. Teachers and student teachers reflecting on the goals of education tended to stress personality education, a result of the present situation in classrooms, where teachers have a hard time with student discipline problems.



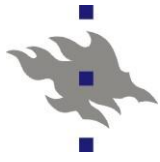


- Student teachers thought the goals of a teacher education programme should include: nurturing belief systems, teaching methods, vision, good personality and subject matter knowledge and meeting the demands of the society.
- In their opinions education programmes should provide experiences regarding personality education, progressive ways of thinking, teacher discourse, an in-depth inquiry of subject matter.

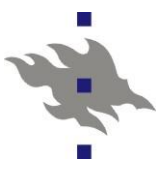


## 2 PROBLEMS AND METHODS

- The research questions of this study are as follows:
- 1. What should children learn in nursery and primary schools in the year 2030?
  - a) to use language fluently
  - b) to master language and communication
  - c) to work in groups and in one's environment



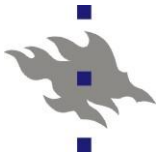
- 2. How does one progress in learning a language and in communicating in nursery and primary school?
- 3. What other skills should children learn?
  
- The research method was a questionnaire, and the data was gathered in October 2007. Altogether 76 student teachers answered. All studied at the University of Helsinki in Finland. Of the students, 24 were primary school, and 52 nursery school student teachers.



## **3 RESULTS**

### **1 What should children learn in nursery and primary schools in the year 2030?**

- The student teachers were generally of the same opinion that it is very important for a child to be able to use language in a group to communicate and to state his/her own opinion (94.8%).
- In their opinion a child should also enjoy communicating with other children (93.3%).



- The student teachers did not consider it so important for children to learn the letters in preschool even though they knew that knowing the letters predicts a child`s success in school.
- It was also not considered important for children to learn to read in preschool (68%).
- The student teachers felt that a child should be interested in reading (66.7%) and that a child`s self-image should be positive (94.7%).

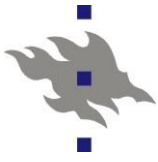


- The student teachers considered it is very important for children to be able to use language in communication.
- In the student teachers` opinion it will not be important for children in 2030 to speak many languages (92%).



## 3.2 How does one progress in learning a language and in communicating in nursery and primary school?

- The child centered philosophy has been adopted in Finland over the last decades.
- Many student teachers considered it important to play with language. For example children write plays and read, they tell their own stories and make their own written productions.



- Children also use books which train language and reading in pre- and primary school.
- According the responses, children`s writings should be clearly displayed around the classroom for them to see.
- Children tell stories; an adult writes the story.
- Children`s writings are discussed.





- Children`s drawings with writings are on the walls and they are discussed.
- Children`s writings and drawings are made into a portfolio during the year.
- Children`s own writings are displayed.
- The student teachers did not consider the use of computers so important.



## 3.3 What other skills should children learn?

- It is important to consider personal goals when planning activities in pre-school
- Every child`s personal learning paths must be clarified in pre-school
- Learning difficulties must be dealt with in pre-school There should be regular cooperation between pre-school and primary school education

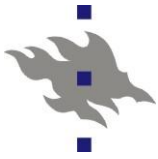


- Children enjoy learning
- Children can evaluate their achievements realistically
- It is important for all children to receive good feedback on their work

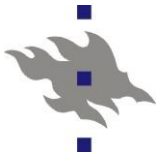


### 3 ANALYSIS

- The results of this study confirm the conception that kindergarten and primary school teachers think very traditionally.
- They did not take the use of computers into consideration and were of the opinion that speaking many languages would not be very important for children in 2030.



- On the other hand, young children need secure and sufficiently permanent surroundings for balanced development.
- Long-term relations and good daily routines are foundations for a healthy childhood. Perhaps it is because young children themselves change so quickly in the early years that they need relatively stable conditions for their upbringing.



- Our world is changing faster every day. As a result, children must have early experiences of change if they are to be more adaptable to such processes.
- The more children are used to participating in the processes of their surroundings, the more prepared they will be for that also as adults



- According to Yoon (2006, 350) professors and teachers interviewed by Yoon noted that their teaching philosophy and practice had changed since their first year of teaching.
- They felt they had come to deep realization that love for students was important and that they had come to love students more as their teaching experience increased.



- In their opinion, tomorrow`s teachers should be encouraged to feel love for their students and professionalism.



