RECENT DISSERTATIONS

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Examples of national basic education evaluation programmes from the perspective of the didactics of sustainable development. National tests 1993-1995 and evaluation of learning outcomes in 1998.

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Abstract

This research surveys the national tests organized in Finnish basic education years 1993-1995 and in 1998 from the viewpoint of the didactics of sustainable development. The research evaluates the factors having affected the national tests, the implementation of the goals of the tests and the implementation of the goals for teaching in the national core curriculum.

The purpose of the Finnish national tests was to survey the control of the most essential parts of subjects, to develop school-specific curricula and the self-evaluation of schools as well as to support teachers' work. The purpose was as well as to examine the problems emerged in the national tests and to produce proposals for improvement.

At the beginning of the 1990's schools were given responsibility to make school-specific curricula. At the same time the Government expected follow-up of the evaluation reform, which includes the national tests of basic education organized by the National Board of Education. The administrative processes connected with the national tests are examined on the basis of written documents and by interviewing the persons having participated in the work.

The goals of the national tests were comprehensive and universal, but they conformed to the national core curriculum. Learning corresponding with the subject-specific content-based goals set both by the National Board of Education and the researchers for the national tests could be measured best, but learning or activity conforming to the other goals could hardly be measured at all. All evaluation methods used in the tests were not applicable to questions.

The national tests reflect the strong position of subjects, but at the same time show a narrow concept of curriculum, test and evaluation. The national tests are to support the curriculum and studying and in their contents it would be important to change over from subject-specific tasks to those requiring understanding, interactive and problem-solving skills as well as pupils' own activity. It would be important to change over from result-centricity to development. Evaluation is to focus on the future, not on the past. Decentralization of administration, globalisation and international co-operation unify the activities of schools, which can be seen for example in the use of international tests. Globalisation and the European Union bring influential people to the school and extend its tasks.

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