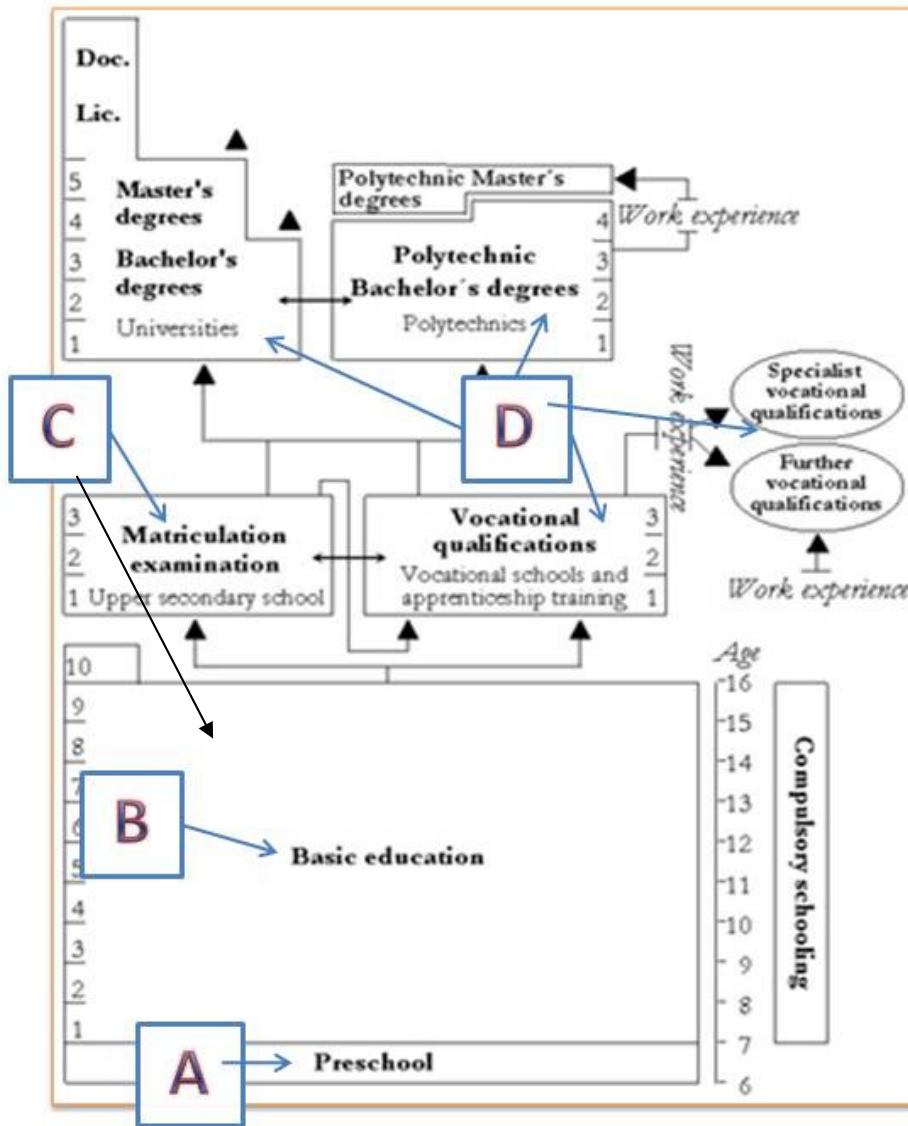


21.10.2007

**TEACHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN FINLAND**

The Finnish school system



Age	School	Teacher
0-6	Kindergarten	Pre-school teachers
6	Optional pre-school	Pre-school teachers or classroom teachers
7-15	Comprehensive school, 9 years	Classroom teachers and subject teachers
16-	Upper secondary school, 3 years	Subject teachers
16-	Vocational schools	Vocational school teachers
19-	Higher education	Teachers with higher academic degree

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**Generally**

Regardless of the age of students and the size of teaching groups, all teaching has objectives with respect to both education and teaching. The work of teachers has shifted from the distribution of knowledge towards the guidance of learning. In addition to teaching, teachers plan and develop teaching and work in cooperation with other teachers, students, their parents and the surrounding society in general. The work of Finnish teachers is very independent

**Teacher education at universities**

In Finland, the training of subject teachers has always been conducted at the university level. The training of class teachers was transferred over to be carried out by universities in the early 1970s. The training of kindergarten teachers in universities began in 1995.

As a result of the Bologna process, the degree structure of universities was reformed in 2005. Students first pass the lower academic degree (Bachelor's Degree), followed by the higher academic degree (Master's Degree). The studies are now measured using ECTS credits.

The lower academic degree consists of 180 credits, with an optimum study time of three years. The extent of the higher academic degree is 120 credits, with an optimum study time of two years.

Depending on the field, the extent of polytechnic (universities of applied sciences) degrees is between 180 and 240 credits.

Teachers of vocational schools and polytechnic colleges do their pedagogical studies at vocational teacher colleges (School of Vocational Teacher Education) that operate as part of polytechnic colleges. The vocational teacher colleges also provide training for vocational school student counsellors and special education teachers.

Teacher training studies for all teachers encompass 60 credits, consisting of studies providing vocational or pedagogical competences or studies promoting expertise in a particular subject.

**Pre-school teachers** get a bachelor's degree in educational science, the extent of which is 180 credits (ETCS). This degree qualifies to serve as a kindergarten teacher and as a pre-school teacher.

**Classroom teachers** get a master's degree in educational science (ETCS 300 cr). This degree qualifies to serve as a classroom teacher and as a pre-school teacher. The compulsory education in Finland lasts nine years, from the age of 7 to the age of 16.

**Subject teachers** get a Master's degree, the extent of which is 300 credits (ETCS). There are two possibilities to get in to the subject teacher education. The more common way is to start studying the subject at the university first and then later the pedagogical studies. After these pedagogical studies one is qualified to teach the subject in question. The other way is to apply directly to the subject teacher education. This direct selection to teacher education is getting more common, but so far it is only possible in few subjects.

**Special-education teachers** get a Master's degree in educational science (ETCS 300 cr). This degree qualifies to serve as a special-education teacher in comprehensive schools, and as a classroom teacher. **Vocational school teachers** as a rule get a degree at a university or at a vocational institute of higher education, then they work for a few years, and after that they do the pedagogical studies at a vocational institute of higher education to qualify to serve as teachers.