What’s worth learning?

Thoughts about European School system Curriculum rethinking process

PLACE: European School, Helsinki, Bulevardi 18, 00120 Helsinki
DATE: Saturday, 15th of August, from 10.00 to 16.00.
Mission statement

- The European Schools are official educational establishments controlled jointly by the governments of the Member States of the European Union. In all these countries they are legally regarded as public institutions.

- The mission of the European School system is to provide a broad education of high quality, from nursery level to university-entrance and offer an opportunity for pupils to stay connected with their Mother Tongue while being educated in a multi-lingual and multi-cultural environment, to become open minded citizens.

- Official website: www.eursc.eu
Educational principles

- Basic instruction is given in the official languages of the European Union. This principle allows the primacy of the pupil’s mother tongue (L1) to be safeguarded.
- Consequently, each school comprises several language sections. The curricula and syllabuses (except in the case of mother tongue) are the same in all sections.
- The conscience and convictions of individuals are respected. Religious education or education in non-confessional ethics is an integral part of the curriculum.
- To foster the unity of the school and encourage genuine multicultural education, there is a strong emphasis on the learning, understanding and use of foreign languages. This is developed in a variety of ways.
European Schools and 28 EU Member States

Article 5 of the Convention:
“Years of study successfully completed at the School and diplomas and certificates in respect thereof shall be recognized in the territory of the Member States…”
WHY RE-THINKING SECONDARY EDUCATION?

- All the 28 European countries have revised their curricula during the last decade (Eurydice)
- Last reform (a minor one) of the secondary cycle took place in 1994
- European Parliament resolution on the European Schools system (2011/2036(INI)) has put forward some recommendations on the educational aspects
- Discussion about the mission of ES
- Discussion about pupil repeat rate
- Discussion about the rationalisation of organisation of studies
- Discussion about the moment of creating options for basic/advanced courses
- Discussion about the offer and organisation of options in the upper secondary
- Discussion about language teaching
WHAT HAS HAPPENED

• Creation of the Working Group in 2012
• First decisions implemented in practise in September, 2014
• Independent external evaluation made by London Institute of Education was received in June, 2015
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
<th>INTERPARENTS</th>
<th>New Curriculum</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convention Principles</td>
<td>Partially met</td>
<td>Partially met</td>
<td>Partially met</td>
<td>Fulfilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Access</td>
<td>Partially met</td>
<td>Partially met</td>
<td>Partially met</td>
<td>Fulfilled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board of Governors’ Mandate</td>
<td>Partially met</td>
<td>Partially met</td>
<td>Partially met</td>
<td>Fulfilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands of the Modern World</td>
<td>Partially met</td>
<td>Partially met</td>
<td>Partially met</td>
<td>Fulfilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Curriculum Design</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Fulfilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant, Comprehensive, Coherent and Broad</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Fulfilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight Key Competences</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Fulfilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-discriminatory</td>
<td>Partially met</td>
<td>Partially met</td>
<td>Partially met</td>
<td>Fulfilled</td>
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</table>
“Our proposals are radical and fundamental, because they are designed to conform to the criteria set out above. This means that they require administrators, teachers, parents and students to change their longstanding thinking and practices.

Any change process within a system needs to be supported and introduced incrementally so as to allow ownership of those changes by all the stakeholders”
• The most important element of a curriculum reform is improving teacher capacity.

• This can be achieved in two ways:
  – recruiting teachers who already have the requisite knowledge base, skills and dispositions, or
  – developing pre- and in-service training programmes to compensate for the lack of knowledge, skills and dispositions required to teach the new programmes.
What’s worth learning?
Definition of competence (in this context)

• Competence is taken here to comprise knowledge, skills and attitudes.

• Key competences are those that serve for personal fulfilment, social inclusion and active citizenship and employment. They are multifunctional, transferable and prerequisites for successful life in a knowledge society.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Definitions of the EU key competences 1-3</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication in the mother tongue</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication in foreign languages</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology</strong></td>
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</table>
## Definitions of the key competences 4-8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digital competence</th>
<th>Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for work, leisure and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning to learn</td>
<td>Learning to learn is pursuing and persisting in learning, organising one’s own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social and civic competences</td>
<td>Social competence covers all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary. Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship refers to an individual’s turning of ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation, risk-taking and ethical values, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural awareness and expression</td>
<td>This refers to the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including music, performing arts, literature, and the visual arts. It includes an appreciation of the importance of this creative expression.</td>
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</table>
Eurydice analysis reveals that European countries have adopted different approaches to guide and support the development of the key competences approach. A number of countries or regions have launched, or are in the process of developing, national strategies to improve teaching and learning, either across the full range of key competences or by focusing on specific skills.

The majority of countries have developed national strategies for at least three key competences – almost all have put in place national strategies that address the development of digital and entrepreneurship competences.
The curriculum should be clarified and extended, especially with regards to the key competences.

Each competency needs to be broken down into knowledge components, skills and dispositions.

Teaching, learning and assessment approaches are derived from these curriculum standards. It is therefore important that the curriculum standard is not compromised in any way by whether it can or cannot be used as a testable construct or teaching approach.

These curriculum standards should be expressed at a level of comprehensibility so that teachers, parents and students are able to access them.

Teachers should undergo training programmes (pre-service and in-service) to deliver this new curriculum and its component parts.

The European Baccalaureate needs to be adjusted to accommodate these new curricular arrangements and to fit the demands of university and college entry procedures and their programmes of study.
Key competence 5: Learning to learn

• Learning to learn can be seen in basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT skills that are necessary for further learning.

• An individual should therefore be able to gain, access, profess and assimilate new knowledge and new skills. Individuals should also be able to:
  – learn autonomously,
  – be self-disciplined,
  – work collaboratively,
  – share what they have learnt,
  – organise their own learning,
  – evaluate their own work,
  – seek advice, information and support when appropriate
    – (European Communities)
Gap between theory and practise

• There are rich documentation of different theories about ‘Learning to Learn’ concept and there is plenty of literature about how to assess these competences.

• Many individual teachers do wonderful work in this area.. but in practise there is a lack of systematic approach to address Learning to Learn competences

• The gap between the skilful learners and less skilful learners remains rather important in most education systems.

• Something should be done!
Activity

• Are you familiar with a good Learning to Learn practise? Could you share it with others?

Or

• How to implement systematically Learning to Learn competences in our schools? (What, how, when, who? How to assess the outcome?)
References

• Assessing Learning-to-Learn - A FRAMEWORK, Centre for Educational Assessment Helsinki University, in collaboration with the National Board of Education in Finland Helsinki, Finland 2002
• Developing Key Competences at School in Europe: Challenges and Opportunities for Policy. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union
• LEARNING TO LEARN AS A KEY COMPETENCE AND SETTING LEARNING GOALS, Andrej Koren and Laura Rožman, International School of Social and Business Studies, Slovenia, 2013
• Learning to learn: What is it and can it be measured?, Bryony Hoskins and Ulf Fredriksson, JRC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2008