

## ***Book Review***

### **What Are Finnish Teachers Made Of? A Glance at Teacher Education in Finland Yesterday & Today**

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Drs. Merja Paksuniemi, Satu Uusiautti, and Kaarina Määttä have answered to the call for scientific books explaining the Finnish education system by introducing the early phases of the Finnish education system. However, the book is not just historical but it extends the review to the present day. The authors name the Finnish teacher education as one of the key elements of the Finnish success – the miracle of PISA that many of us are aware of.

First, the book provides an interesting, hands-on example of the early teacher training in Finland, namely a description of how teacher training was organized at one teacher training college with a special education focus in the North-Finland: the Teacher Training College of Tornio. The description is complemented by the viewpoint of the former students of the college. In this book, they reminisce their studies along the operation period of the college but also during special circumstances, such as for example the Second World War.

The special feature of the Finnish education and teacher training seemed to be its ideological foundation that was adapted from Germany when figuring out how to enhance the independent development of Finland after its separation from Russia in 1917. The ideological foundation was quite concretely applied in practice: teachers were insisted to behave irreproachably also during their free time. The book also provides a picture of the changes that happened in the Finnish society after the Second World War, and how these changes affected teacher education and elementary education.

Given the strong historical description in the first sections of the book, Chapter 3 continues the discussion by analyzing modern teacher education in Finland and the modern principles of producing excellent teachers. The reader finds out how the teacher's profession is currently quite a popular occupation and teacher selection methods are under constant evaluation in order to find the best among excellent applicants. This feature is, I believe, extra-ordinary compared to many other countries struggling with difficulties in finding quality teacher material.

The analysis shows, that the demanding training program requires talent, engagement, and multiple skills both of teacher educators and student teachers. Like many countries, also Finland faces the new challenges of globalization and the authors actually provide a multidimensional analysis of the current education: they do not just highlight the what is good but also courageously discuss the present problems.

In all, "What are Finnish teachers made of? A glance at teacher education in Finland yesterday and today" makes an insightful and interesting contribution to the current literature. It opens the past, considers the presents, and looks for the future. I believe the book will be very useful to experts of various educational fields, students, researchers, and other interested.

*Review provided by Dr. Erika Sarivaara, Sámi Parliament, Norway*