

Goals for Teacher Education

2016 - 2019

Teacher Student Union of Finland - SOOL

www.sool.fi

Goals for Teacher Education 2016-2019 -publication consists of the views of teacher students on how teacher education can be improved. The program is meant to be used to develop teacher education in Finland both locally and nationally. The program has been compiled by a working committee appointed by the board of SOOL (Teacher Student Union of Finland) and the program has been accepted by the general assembly of SOOL on April 17, 2016.

Goals for Teacher Education started off by looking at the values in teacher education. The publication acknowledges that the quality of teacher education is affecting the whole field of teaching and education. High quality teacher education is based on three factors: individuals need to be treated equally, they have to have equal opportunities to receive education and education has to be socially fair to everyone. The publication also states that in order to secure the availability of competent teachers and specialists in every part of the country it is important to have teacher education units in different regions.

Education should build a basis for lifelong learning and it should be seen as a solution for ecological, economical and cultural problems. Teacher education provides students with a range of skills that are needed in order to work and improve in global and multinational information society. Education should contribute to the students' values and at the same time help them to be active citizens and to be able to think critically. Growing to become a teacher requires time and support.

Sufficient amount of contact hours and face-to-face interaction must be preserved as teacher education cannot base on e-courses, mass lectures, and book exams. It is necessary for campuses to have enough classrooms in order to ensure the preserving of contact hours. However, it is also important to ensure flexibility in the studies. This can be achieved by having different ways for completing a course, increasing the recognition of previous studies as part of the degree, and by offering student counselling throughout the studies. There should be a chance for students to gain a double degree or study more than what they are required for their degree. In addition, students should be able to study subjects outside their own degree courses as minor studies. SOOL sees that every teacher student that studies at a university completes a master's degree.

The professors and university teachers should be experts on their own field and in addition they should have pedagogic competence. Teacher education is built on research and it builds a base for research-based teaching and encourages students to update their own skills. Teacher education should provide students with research-based understanding of phenomena-based teaching and learning. Education should contain courses that are arranged in cooperation with different fields of study and it should also contain cooperation between different professions. Teacher education should help students to improve their interaction,



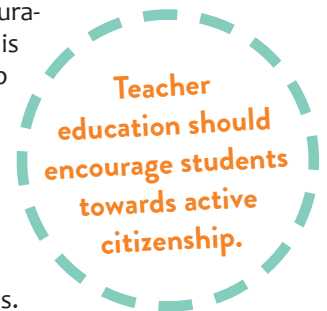


teamwork, and group managing skills. Special education courses should be included in teacher education so that learner's special educational needs are recognised at an early stage. Teacher education should also address the communication and cooperation between home and school as well as other institutions.

Students should be seen as experts of their own education and they should be included in the decision making related to their studies. Teaching should encourage the students to participate in their own community and give them a chance to have an influence on matters that are related to them. In addition, teacher education should encourage students towards active citizenship. This encouragement cannot be based solely on voluntary work in different organizations. Students should be encouraged to have interest in their rights and promoting and furthering the well-being of the student community should be rewarded with credit points.

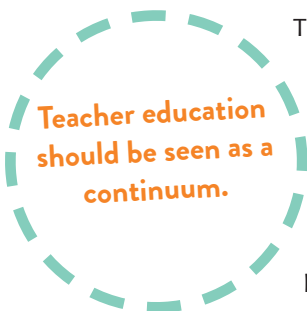
Teacher students are going to have an important role in building the future society. Teacher education should also familiarize students with entrepreneurship education which deals with improving attitudes, skills and life-control skills. Teacher education should emphasize sustainable future and eco-social sophistication. Teacher students require tools for human rights education and acknowledging the diversity and renewability of ecosystems. Eco-social sophistication should be visible in teacher education units and students should be encouraged on changing their habits to be eco-friendlier.

Teacher education should work on spreading the way of thinking where multiculturalism is valued and faced without prejudices. In addition to theoretical knowledge, it is important to provide the students with situations to face different cultures and help them to review their own thinking in critical ways in order to improve their competence in multicultural settings. All the teachers act as teachers of language and culture in addition to their own subjects.



Teaching teacher students to use Information and Communication Technology as a pedagogical tool should be based on widespread research and teacher students should be able to try different devices during their studies and teaching practices. Teacher education has to introduce the basics of programming to the students so that they are able to teach programming in schools. In addition, critical thinking and reading skills as well as sufficient knowledge about copyright laws should be introduced by teacher education.

Teacher education units should encourage students to include exchange studies into their programs and make it easier for students to complete their teaching practices abroad. Participating in university studies in Finland should be free-of-charge for degree students and exchange students coming from abroad, and their knowledge and skills should be utilised on shared courses. Finnish Universities and higher education providers should begin developing different methods to export the educational knowledge abroad due to the increasing demand for it.



The amount of teaching practices in teacher education must not be reduced and teacher students should have practice in every stage and subject that they are going to be qualified to teach. Teacher education has to offer students a variety of skills needed in the everyday work as a teacher. Instead of focusing merely on teaching, assignments related to other tasks of a teacher should be included in teaching practices.

Teacher education should be seen as a continuum to primary education, briefing education, and continuing education. Peer-mentoring offered at the beginning of a working career helps new teachers with the transition from their studies to working life and it helps them manage work-related stress. Every employer in the field of education should enable and encourage their workers to furthering their studies.

Teacher Student Union of Finland, SOOL, is a national umbrella organization of all teacher students in Finland. SOOL aims to promote the co-operation of future professionals of education in order to improve teacher training. SOOL also looks after the juridical and educational interests of its members and works to improve their studying conditions and social status.

