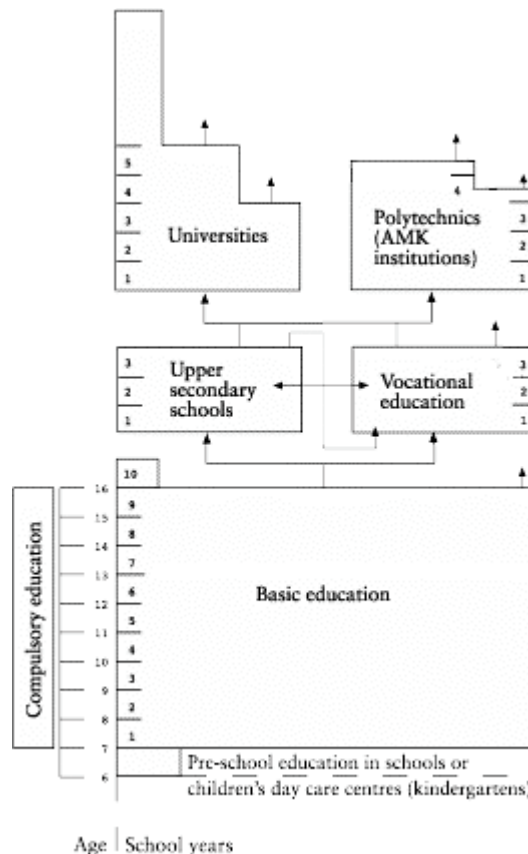


**CRITICAL THINKING AND CAREER EDUCATION:
 SITUATION ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

FINLAND

1. Please, introduce in short structure of your education systems (school levels, age groups and etc.)



2. Is professional career education introduced in your education? If yes, how? In what way? What age groups?

Professional career education is included as an own subject in the comprehensive school during the last three years (ages 14-16). In upper secondary schools and in vocational and adult education, professional career education is arranged when needed, every student has a possibility to have educational guidance and a chance to talk about his or her own studies, goals and plans. Personal study plan is made for every student together with the trainer, and its realisation is followed regularly.

3. Is critical thinking skills' development introduced in your education? If yes, how? In what way?

Teaching in schools

We generally think the necessary study skills include the following: self-knowledge, information retrieval, working in a group, interaction, dialogue, self-expression, coordination, binding, taking responsibility, giving and receiving feed-back, problem solving, determination, decision making, self-evaluation, reflection and critical thinking.

In Finland it is thought that one meaning of mathematics from the point of maturation and development of personality is the strengthening of consistent and critical thinking as well as logical argumentation.

Lions-Quest –programme is used in 36 countries, in Finland also many teachers have been taught in recent years. According to the programme, the skills taught for coping with life include decision making, creative thinking, communication skills, self-assertion, controlling feelings, problem solving, critical thinking, human relations, sympathy, and how to get over stress. This programme is used in the basic school level.

Comprehensive school

Self-evaluation of pupils in the first grades is a compulsory course of action, and it will be used in the upper levels of comprehensive schools and secondary schools in the future. During the school year the pupils are evaluated both by their parents and themselves. The purpose of this is to develop realistic and critical thinking regarding one's progress. The parents also have a possibility to express their opinions and hopes, and they can participate in developing the school society.

Refugee training in Finland: To receive the goals mentioned above pupils must also learn how to receive and criticise different kind of knowledge from the world and people. Evaluation of one's own activities and thoughts and critical thinking then become the central elements of multicultural education. For example in the teaching of Finnish as the mother tongue, different views of the world could be discussed through folk stories or, for example, in addition to Finnish festival days, say, Vietnamese New Year's party could be celebrated.

Each school decides on its special emphasis themes, which run from the first through to the last grade. These themes are taken into account in everyday work in order to reach the total aims of the school it has set for its education task. The special themes in schools are e.g. experience of responsibility, critical thinking, problem solving, social skills in the neighbourhood, citizen skills in the society, observing the nature in the surrounding areas, settling down in the place of residence, the control of concepts, ability to use of communication tools.

University studies

Critical thinking is a central skill of thinking and necessary in academic studies. The critical thinker tries to evaluate what he/she had read, heard and seen. He/she bases conclusions on logical thinking and the knowledge connected with the theme. Critical thinking skills can be improved. The skill of critical thinking is closely connected with the knowledge of the scientific field in question, and that is why very specific instructions cannot be given.

In Finland the rules to the critical thinking are:

- Think clearly, so that you definitely understand. Leave no doubts.
- Concentrate fully on thinking of the subject
- Think about the subject as integrated as possible considering different aspects
- Think about different possibilities
- Try to take into consideration all the information you can find on the subject or the problem
- Be aware of your preconceptions, expectations – don't let them influence your conclusions too much
- Don't make conclusions if you are not sure
- Be open to new suggestions and perspectives
- Don't form your opinion or conclusion until you can support your arguments well

These principles of critical thinking can be adapted in many situations: when reading a (study) book, articles, newspapers or web-sites, when listening to lectures or speeches as well as when trying to solve problems.

Critical thinker is:

- honest to himself and others
- resists all kinds of leading and manipulation
- asks many questions to get more information
- bases conclusions on evidence
- intellectually independent

In every university there are separate courses on critical thinking, values, moral and ethics. In addition, critical thinking is integrated in many subjects.

Adult education

Adult education serves society in many ways. Critical thinking, open discussion and producing new knowledge will be combined in the communication. In addition to this self-evaluation, the continuous development of evaluation and self-motivated information gathering has important roles.

Teacher training

Many teachers' guidebooks and instructions include chapters on teaching critical thinking. For example teachers' curriculum includes ethics, which aims to give adequate knowledge of the subject to the teachers so that they are able to teach it especially in the lower grades of primary school. The chapter of ethics consists of:

- ethics as a concept
- history of ethics as a subject in schools
- curriculum of ethics and didactical principles
- liberty of religion and its meaning in school practice
- moral and its development
- human, nature and future
- critical thinking and its advancement

Vocational and university teachers' training includes also the presenting of critical thinking, its development and encouragement to use it.

Lifelong learning

Central goal of information society is that citizens as children, young, adult and senior citizens could communicate in many ways suitable to one's age and way. They can as use all the communication tools that the present information technology gives possibilities for.

4. Are critical thinking and career education issues/subjects developed in your institution? How? In what way?

The trainer in charge in each course has the responsibility of career education subjects. Every student has a personal plan of education, which is made at the beginning of the course, and its fulfilment is followed together with the student. If needed, plans can be amended. In studies we use methods that direct to critical thinking: group work, cooperative learning, self-directed information gathering etc.

5. Please grade the development of professional career education:

a) in your country?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

b) in your institution?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. What do you think how we could improve the above stated situation?

To bring the theories into practice we still need education and material that help clarify the subject. In addition, it is very interesting to get comparable information from other countries and other kinds of institutions, as well as to think and develop something new together.

7. * What educational materials (programs, textbooks, methodical materials, brochures and etc.)do your schools use to develop critical thinking and career education?

Books, videos, distance learning material, guide books.