The Finnish core curriculum, information literacy and guided inquiry

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Overview of the presentation

• Thesis title “Information literacy in the curriculum and in teaching the seventh grade: a research of schools and school libraries and the roles and attitudes towards information literacy and information seeking”
  • How IL is presented in teh curriculum?
  • How IL is understood?
  • Does librarians have a role to play?
  • In this presentation I will take up following issues:
    • school library situation in Finland at present
    • issues rising in earlier literature about IL conceptions
    • a look at the Finnish core curriculum
    • a look at guided inquiry
Starting point and why…

- The present knowledge society is setting new demands to all fields of the society, not least the educational arena.

- Some research facts:
  - Students information literacy skills are worse than generally thought.
  - Teachers often see this, but are often unable to tackle these issues.
  - Finnish high school students think they are not that well of with IL skills when entering the university.
  - Not dealing with these issues before higher education is setting huge demands on universities.
Finnish school libraries

- The school libraries have for a long time been hanging in the air with no legal support or financing.
- The legislation concerning school libraries is merely suggestive in nature.
- The situation has developed for the better some during the last years but has left many schools and municipalities to an uneven situation.
- There is no current statistics of school libraries in Finland.
- First doctoral thesis on school libraries was defended and published in December 2011 by Dr. Eeva Kurttila-Matero with title ”School library: a tool for developing the school’s operating culture”
The Finnish core curriculum

- Given by the National Board of Education
- Municipality level implementation

- Teachers in Finland are very independent actors
- The text books follow the curriculum and the text books are the mostly used material
- The curriculum comprises of two parts: the general part and the subject specific part
- The general part has also cross-curricular issues
- IL issues are there but the definition is missing creating a problem in how to understand IL
The cross-curricular themes

1) Growth as a person
2) Cultural identity and internationalism
3) Media skills and communication
4) Participatory citizenship and entrepreneurship
5) Responsibility for the environment, well-being and sustainable future
6) Safety and traffic
7) Technology and the individual
Subject related part of the curriculum

- IL issues can be found also in subject plans, but not in all subjects.
- Some subjects have more IL emphasis.
- Why?
- The discourse analysis will give a more detailed look at the curriculum.
- Christine Bruce’s ”7 faces of information literacy” – model will be the basis of the analysis.
Teachers and information literacy in earlier research

- The information skills learned in teacher education are hard to transfer into teaching these skills to students (Lundh & Sunding 2006, Merchant & Hepworth 2002)
- The term information literacy is hard to grasp (Limberg & Hultgren & Jarneving 2002, Moore 1999, Probert 2009)
- Teachers see shortcomings in students skills but are often missing solutions and tools to address this (Tanni 2005, Limberg & Folkesson 2006, DaCosta 2010)
- Teachers have a tendency to go very far in guiding students, as long as naming web pages to be used (Bruce, 1997; Limberg & Folkesson, 2002; Merchant & Hepworth, 2002, Tanni 2005)
- “Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach.” (Prensky, 2001)
Inquiry

- Inquiry learning, according to John Dewey, incorporates the experience, action and thinking.
- "education is not an affair of telling and being told" but an active, constructivistic process.
- Day to day experience and research has shown that often information searching during lessons is about searching facts or "right answers"
- Dewey's phases of reflective thinking: suggestion, intellectualization, guiding idea, reasoning, action (Kuhlthau, Maniotes, Kaspari, 2007)
- Constructing knowledge is one of the aims in the Finnish core curriculum
Guided inquiry

- The method is based on constructivistic learning philosophy as is the learning in Finnish schools
- Based on the research of Carol C. Kuhlthau and
- … her information searching process (ISP) model (Kuhlthau, 2004)
- As the information seeking is at the same time a learning process (Limberg, 1997), it is important that this kind of thinking would make it also actively to schools and different learning situations
- Information searching model is not necessarily in active use during lessons.
- The information searching process raises confusing emotions that should be understood and to be learnt from
- This is why guided inquiry was chosen to be presented here, as an collaborative partner to teachers of this study
A summary of the presentation

Anu question?

THANK YOU!

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Scoop.it:
http://www.scoop.it/t/school-libraries-for-information-literacy-and-learning
Sources: