



These students have successfully passed the matriculation exams



HIGH SCHOOL BY DISTANCE LEARNING?

In the City of Pori one important aim in the development of municipal education is the prevention of isolation. Pori High School of Adult Education is developing upper secondary education by distance learning giving general education irrespective of time, place or age.

The advantage in distance education is that it gives grown-up people the opportunity to get high school education in circumstances in which it's not possible for them to attend regular classes on weekdays due to long distances, child care problems, shift work, disability or other personal factors.

Pori High School of Adult Education has about 650 students. Part of them attends junior high school and thus gets the General Certificate of Education that enables them to continue in education. The majority of the students go to senior high school (upper secondary) and take part in the matriculation examination, which gives the formal qualification needed to get into university and other institutes giving higher education.

Pori High School of Adult Education has been a pioneer in providing distance high school education in Finland. In the year 1993 the first 50 distance students started high school and the majority of them succeeded in reaching their goal. They achieved the high school diploma and taking the matriculation examination. The students in distance learning did even better than regular students in humanities, natural sciences, foreign languages and mathematics. They had better skills to see the connections between various phenomena and events. Nevertheless, some students had to go to normal contact education and some students had to drop out. This system is, after all, very demanding and requires good basic knowledge.

The school year is divided into six periods, each of which lasts six weeks. The students have three contact lessons during one period and at the end of the period they have tests in 3-5 subjects they have. In the time between the contact lessons they study the course books with the help of all the extra materials. This materials have mostly

been made by the teachers themselves. Besides, they can contact the teachers via phone, fax or e-mail. If the students still have difficulties in some subjects they can attend the corresponding regular evening classes as the courses always run simultaneously. Of great help are also the www-sites on the Internet made by The National Board of Education. There are also radio courses for distance learners that students can borrow on cassettes from school.

In this system the teachers have to adjust their teaching methods to suit the distance learners and have to do a lot of extra work to develop systems that in the best way support students who are studying alone. For the teachers this work is demanding, but also rewarding.

In 1996 the National Board of Education began expanding this system to cover the whole country. The City of Pori and High School of Adult Education were asked to contribute in this project, which is supported by several municipalities, the National Broadcasting Company, the EU Social Fund and the many interest groups that provide material for distance learners.

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DECNET PROJECT



Stockholm/Malarregion together with Turku and Helsinki regions are working on a project to develop a Distance Education Collaboration Network in the Baltic Sea Region - DECNET.

The main aims of this distance education project are to increase the educational level, to develop business collaboration and trade, and to stimulate regional development in remote areas from capitols and university centres.

The first step of the project will be a feasibility study to clarify the prerequisites

according to technical, administration, didactic, tutor and economics in the regions and cities interested in joining the project. The next step will be to establish the technical prerequisites governing the concerned regions/cities.

Extension studies that span over several countries make heavy demands on administrative capacity. Regional study centres may need support to develop well functioning, supporting administrative facilities. An improved didactic level is also a pre-requisite for well-functioning network collaboration. The tutoring function needs to be both english-speaking and efficient for a successful development of a cross boarder network scheme. A creation of homogenous course-related study material for all the regions and cities will make resources more easily available for a further long-term expansion of the collaborative network.

The implementation of common course-related study material for all institutions in the network will be facilitated if such are based on demands and needs that are common to all the cities in question. The following fields meet these criteria: European Union studies, European languages, international trade and market economics, business administration, management, project management, environment management and media and IT.

Several of these courses and educational programs are available today but need to be revised and adapted for multi-national use. Other areas in demand are not at the moment adapted for distance study purpose and production of such material will be initiated within the framework of this project.

At the conference in Riga, held in May 1998, representatives from the ministry of Education, county and city administrations, Phare Multi-Count Distance Education programme, university, college, distance education centres from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania discussed the DECNET-project and expressed their interest to join the project.

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Student analysing the phosphate concentration in water



EDUCATION IN LAHTI

The city of Lahti in its strategic plans places special emphasis on the importance of efficient schooling in the building of the city success.

In the comprehensive school and the senior secondary school better than normal support is offered to those who need it as well as an encouraging educational environment various subjects for pupils who are seen to be specially talented. Higher education is being developed to reduce unemployment and also to serve the City's strategy in labour politics.

The comprehensive school, secondary schools and adult education are included in the city's organisation. Secondary and advanced vocational teaching as well as vocational training is under Lahti Region Educational Consortium. The university level teaching is the responsibility of the branches of Helsinki, Tampere and Lappeenranta Universities.

In Lahti, school system experiments are in progress regarding tuition and also the development of methods that reinforce the pupils' self-awareness, initiative, interpersonal skills and use of acquired knowledge. There is also ongoing cooperation between the secondary schools and the upper level schools in a widely based experiment with young people.

Salinkallio Comprehensive School

Salinkallio Comprehensive School is environmentally orientated upper level comprehensive school. In practice, it means that the environmental education is given besides teaching biology and geography.

In the near future, the school aims to form a special group of pupils, who are going to study the environmental theme integrated in several other subjects. This group will consist of pupils who have shown their special interest in environmental issues.

For several years the school has taken part in the fair of natural way of life, where pupils have worked e.g. as recycling guides, made an outstanding traffic research and created the basis for charting the environmental impacts of great public events. The school has traditionally had also a department of its own at the fair where the products made by the pupils were sold.

There is an environmental- and scientific club in the school. The pupils can make excursions, physical and chemical researches or study astronomy, photography etc. The school bears the responsibility for waste management. There are separate receivers for paper, energy waste and municipal waste in every classroom. In addition to this, the biowaste from the domestic science classroom are composted.

One of the main ideas of the school is to take the environment into consideration. The aim is to make pupils respect the nature and the environment around them and cherish and promote its well being.

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