

Summary

Digitalisation of teaching and learning environments in general education – Summary of stakeholders' opinions
Report on the impact workshop

The promotion of digitalisation encourages critical assessment of previous practices and development of new kinds of approaches and practices in the entire education system, including general education. The National Audit Office of Finland organised a workshop for the stakeholders to discuss the challenges, problems and development opportunities related to the digitalisation of general education.

The workshop came to the conclusion that the overall steering of digitalisation must be improved in cooperation between all actors to enhance the collaboration and clarify its rules of play, and to ensure high-quality digitalisation competence. Based on the workshop, central government should assume an active role in the overall steering. It should set a foundation and framework for the collaboration, specify the guidelines together with the other actors, ensure the knowledge base for common development and operations, particularly on the national and meso level (e.g. regionally), and coordinate the operations. According to the closing statement of the workshop, the collaboration calls for a foundation and framework because, in the midst of big changes, the availability of digitalisation becomes a question of democracy and equality.

The workshop proposed improving the strategic steering of digitalisation by

1. cooperating to define guidelines for the contents of digitalisation to steer the implementation of digital policy and the knowledge management in networks,
2. defining a more specific national ambition for digital competence in general education,
3. drawing up a roadmap with compiled research related to competence and teacher training from the perspective of digitalisation.

It was stated at the workshop that, in addition to strategic development actions, improving the overall steering of digitalisation requires that the structures for implementing and steering the digitalisation are strengthened and that the operating models are clarified. In the workshop, it was proposed that

1. the digital policy and its implementation should be developed by identifying all relevant actors and by engaging them with the development work and by ensuring the flexibility and continuity of development,
2. the operations of networks should be reconciled on different levels by introducing new kinds of structures, if necessary, and developing the old ones,
3. the municipalities should define a target path for the digitalisation competence of principals and teachers to encourage and enable competence development, to support the operating models already in use (tutor teachers, teacher training forum), and to introduce new ones (e.g. development plans for teachers).

It was stated in the workshop that it is also necessary and possible to rationalise the use of resources based on and steered by the development of the strategy and structures. It was proposed in the workshop that

1. networking to enhance digitalisation should be promoted and that the capability of networks should be strengthened by supporting them financially, even as independent actors, more widely and strategically than at present,
2. state aid funding should be developed to separate a small percentage from the project funding of digitalisation for launching, steering and supporting the operations to be supported.

The workshop also proposed that, in order to promote the development and strengthen the knowledge base for managing the development,

1. the research directed at digitalisation should be developed to become more cross-disciplinary, and its focus should be expanded from technology to pedagogy,
2. the research and survey data related to digitalisation should be utilised more efficiently by utilising even regional and local data in a more diversified manner.