

SICI WORKSHOP

## “Inspecting the Future”

### 1. What are the main innovations in Estonian school education?

- One of the most important developments in the field of education is the implementation of the new national curricula in basic schools and upper secondary schools.
- According to the new national curricula, which were approved in 2010, schools have to bring their curricula into agreement with the state curricula by September 2013 at the latest.
- **Changes:**
  - 1) Basic and upper secondary school curricula are separated (the separation of basic and upper secondary schools is prepared simultaneously).
  - 2) Learning content has been decreased.
  - 3) General competencies have been expressed more clearly (virtue competence, social competence, self-determination competence, study competence, communication competence, mathematics competence, entrepreneurial competence).
  - 4) Competencies in subject fields have been expressed more clearly.
  - 5) The freedom of choice for upper secondary school pupils has been increased, the number of mandatory subjects has been reduced, and upper secondary schools are responsible for conducting studies in 3 directions (natural and formal sciences, humanities, and freely chosen subjects e.g. economy).
  - 6) Emphasis shifts more strongly from teaching to learning.
  - 7) Formative assessment can be used from grade 1-6 (the results of students are described and no grades are given).
  - 8) The graduation conditions for upper secondary schools will change (2014): a research paper, a complex exam (school exam) and three state examinations covering Estonian, one foreign language and mathematics will be compulsory for pupils graduating from upper secondary schools.
  - 9) The graduation conditions for basic schools will change (2014): a creative work and 3 exams (Estonian, mathematics and an optional third subject) will be compulsory for pupils graduating from basic schools.

### 2. How are these innovations being introduced and what are the change strategies being used to promote the changes?

- Instructional materials on methodology have been composed and made available on a website.
- Every textbook on a field or a subject of study contains a large amount of articles, where teachers can find recommendations for teaching.

### 3. What is the role of inspection in relation to these changes?

- The ministry will first of all conduct a study on how the curricula have been implemented.
- The implementation of the new state curricula can become a long-term priority of the topical state surveillance (e.g. 2016/2017)

### 4. Will this involve a change to previous approaches to inspection? If so what is the nature of this change?

- It is expected that the surveillance will be preceded by studies on the implementation of the curricula, educational counseling and sharing of experiences.
- The surveillance has to be preceded by an analysis of a possible methodology, as well as developing the respective methodological material.

# The Implementation of The National Curricula in Estonia: Changes for The External Evaluation

## 1. MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS

- Changed graduation conditions for basic and upper secondary schools
  - Formative assessment introduced in grades 1-6
  - Orientation shift from teaching to learning
    - Decrease in learning content
  - Separation of basic and upper secondary school curricula
- Increased freedom of choice for upper secondary school pupils
- Three main directions for studies (natural and formal sciences, humanities, and freely chosen subjects e.g. economy)
- Clearly defined general (entrepreneurial competence etc.) and subject field competencies

## 2. STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE THE CHANGES

- New instructional materials on methodology made available on a website
- Supporting textbooks for teachers issued on every field or subject of study

## 3. THE ROLE OF THE STATE INSPECTION

- Prior implementation study by the ministry
- Curricula implementation as a possible long-term priority of the thematic state control (e.g. 2016/2017)

## 4. NEW APPROACHES TO INSPECTION

- Surveillance proceeded by studies on the implementation of the curricula, educational counseling and sharing of experiences
- Analysis and development of new methodological material