



How were the students turned into decent teachers by the free-time activities at the teacher college of tornio in 1921-1945

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' professional training and socialization was strict and disciplined already at the beginning of the 19th century in Finland. A teacher's job was not just to teach in the classroom; the requirements insisted that after the school day the teachers continued their work by offering activities to the villagers. The purpose of this research is to show how the prospective teachers of the Finnish early primary school were socialized for this demanding job in the college of Tornio. The teacher college of Tornio was founded in 1921 and its purpose was to educate women from northern Finland. This research answers the following questions: 1) What kind of free time activities did the teaching staff offer for the teacher students? 2) What kind of behavioral expectations were leveled at the students' free time activities? This research is mainly based on the archive sources, which were carefully studied using the pedagogical history method. The ideals and values of the Finnish culture have always reverberated to teacher education.

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Introduction

The Law of Compulsory Education Increased Need for Teachers

Before the foundation of the elementary school of Finland in 1866, the church together with the parents took care of children's upbringing. In the 1840s, the discussion about the education of the children was active. It was partly due to the development in other Northern countries because the legislation had already been executed in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden (Ahonen & Rantala 2001; Cavonius 1957). The elementary school was founded in 1866. That meant that the school/education was separated from the church even though they were still connected. (Isalo 1968.) The education lasted for four years on the country side and for six years in the cities (Nurmi 1981, 39). Building the schools on the country side was slow because of the high expenses. But during the years, the number of schools increased. In the school year 1880, there were 28 765 pupils in the elementary schools and in 1901 the amount was 111 765. In 1898, the residential areas were divided into school districts and the communities were obliged to build a school if there were more than 30 children in one district. (Rantala 2001, 153) In 1920, the law of compulsory education covered children aged from 7 to 12, urging to build new schools. This law embodied also a regulation about two year lower primary school. (Nurmi 1981, 14–15; Rinne 1973, 97.)

The need for educating the teachers was urgent in Finland. According to the founding father of the Finnish elementary school, Uno Cygnaeus, the teacher colleges must provide the right kind of education: there have to be strict rules and discipline and all students have to be moral and Christian. (Cygnaeus 1910, 201.) The teacher college was located on the country side and it was meant for both men and women but they would study in separate divisions (Cygnaeus 1910, 21; Halila 1949, 326; Nurmi 1966, 23). The Herbart-Zillernism education method had influence on the education at Finnish teacher colleges, which aimed at improving the strong moral Christian

character. The teaching should expand into multiple activities. The teacher's main role was in teaching and the core subjects were religion, literature, and history. (Lahdes 1961, 7, 28–32; Isalo 1989, 236–237; Tamminen 1998, 19–20.) One important educational issue was also patriotism. The civil war in Finland ended in 1918 and after that the patriotic activities were extremely popular in the teacher colleges. (Heikkinen 1990, 83–96; Rinne 1989, 194.) Patriotism was part of the teaching and free-time activities (Halila 1949; Halila 1963; Heikkinen 1995, 406–407; Kuikka 1978, 137, 146; Kuikka 1985, 81–83, 97; Rinne 1989, 84).

Previous studies demonstrate that in the Finnish teacher colleges the leisure activities have been relatively vivid. The colleges offered the after school activities which were of help to the prospective teacher's work and were suitable for their image required from "the model citizen". (Halila 1949; Halila 1963; Heikkinen 1990, 83–96; Hyyrö 2006, 330–337; Kuikka 1985, 81–83, 97; Nurmi 1965; Nurmi 1996; Rantala 2005; Rinne 1986; Rinne 1989, 194.)

Requirements for the role of the lower elementary school teacher were high. He/she was a model citizen for the pupils and for the other people as well. The teachers had to be well-behaving and civilised people. They had to have a healthy way of life and be hardworking. Additionally, they were expected to be moral and Christian. Patriotism was also required (Nurmi 1965; Nurmi 1996, Rinne 1986; Rantala 2005.) Salo (1924) points out that the model citizen meant also being fluent, well-dressed, well-behaving, religious, and patriotic. And above all, the teachers should give an impression of a civilized person. According to Salo (1924) teacher's job was to teach not only the pupils but also their parents how to raise children.

Research Questions, Data, and Method

The purpose of this research is to examine the free time activities in the college of Tornio. How did the students spend their spare time? And what skills did they gain? Three main questions are posed to this research: 1) What kind of free time

activities did the teaching staff offer for the teacher students? 2) What kind of behavioral expectations were leveled at the students' free time activities? The data was collected from Provincial of Oulu where the archives of the college of Tornio are kept. All data was studied carefully using the pedagogical history method (Kalela 2000, 169–170; Kuikka 2001, 158–161; Renvall 1965, 199, 204).

The research concentrated on the time period between the year 1921 when the teacher college of Tornio was founded to the year 1945 when the war time ended in Finland (Paksuniemi 2009).

The Fellow Corps and the Girl Scouts

In 1922, the students of the primary teacher college of Tornio arranged a meeting to found an association which purpose was to get the students act together as fellows but also to light the patriotic and national spirit from the moral-Christian basics. All of the students were members and some of the teachers participated in the activity as well. The association celebrated in the evenings once a month with different themes such as honouring famous Finnish people or Finnish literature, poetry, folk ensemble, and independence. There was not any regular teaching at that day with celebration in the evening so the students, who were in charge of it, could concentrate on the decorating the hall and practicing the program. The students gave music, speech, dance, and gymnastics performances to the other students and teaching staff. They dressed in their national dresses which typified generally the living areas they came from. A change took place in the 1930s after which the residents of Tornio were allowed to participate in the evening celebrations twice in a school year. There was a small fee which was used for a student trip. The teaching staff invited the teacher college of Haparanda from Sweden for a visit in 1935 and thus, the formal friendship between these two institutes begun, even though, it ended during the wartime. (OMA, TSeA, Ja:2; Ja:3; Ja:4.)

In 1932, another leisure activity started, namely, the Girl Scouts and the students named the organization "Rocket". Two of the college teachers were leading the activity. The difference compared with the amount of members of the Fellow Corps is that only a few of those were members of Rocket. The Rocket got together less than 10 times in a school year and its actions were similar to the scout activities world widely. Its functioning was low and the members dropped out of the activity. In 1939, the Rocket affiliated with the local scouts and the college teachers were not involved in the activity anymore. Some of the students continued the activity but that ended after a few years. (Yearbooks 1932–1940.) Similar scout activity took place in other teacher colleges of Finland, too (Halila 1949; Halila 1963; Hyyrö 2006; Nurmi 1996; Rinne 1989).

The students were brought up patriotic, which shows that the purpose was to raise all the Finns into basic values of the same kind. It was less than ten years since the civil war ended in Finland; therefore the togetherness was the main goal. Salo (1928) highlights this attitude in the schoolbook he wrote: *"For the existences of a nation an important thing is that we demand to breed for the patriotic spirit"* (Salo 1928, 14–15). Another well-known Finnish author and educational writer, Soininen, encourages elevating the patriotism in one of the main themes of education and advises: *"Patriotic celebration may rise from a noble inspiration"* (Soininen 1923, 27, 80–86). Both Salo's and Soininen's schoolbooks were used in the college of Tornio (Paksuniemi 2009, 78–82), which shows that their advice was executed in action.

The Morning Prayers and the Christian Association

According to the College Committee's recommendation, the teaching at Finnish teacher colleges has to improve their students' Christianity and morality (The College Committee 1922, 197). At the college of Tornio, this was carried through morning prayers and Christian celebrations (OMA, TSeA, Jb:6). The morning prayers have a long tradition in the school system of Finland and were included in religious instruction (Pyysiäinen 1994, 118). The basics for the morning prayers were defined in 1872: It should include a prayer, a hymn, or other spiritual song and reading the Bible or other speech. One reason for its steady status is that Finnish school system was built on a Christian bases. The church and the ministers took mainly care of the educating people till 1866 when the law of compulsory education came into effect. Its purpose was to separate church and school. This change did not happen rapidly and the Christianity was still strongly influencing the teaching for a long time. (Kähkönen 1984, 93; Nurmi 1989, 9; Nurmi 1981, 38–39; Iisalo 1968, 123–139.)

At the college of Tornio, this morning ceremony was held every morning. The students and the teaching staff gathered for this event before the school started at 8 am. The ceremony included a prayer, bible reading or other speech, and a hymn. The principal of the college used to lead the ceremony but in the 1930s the teacher of religious instruction was also in charge. (OMA, TSeA, De:1.) This service was done every day in order to familiarize the prospective teachers with this routine and its importance: thus, they could continue it at their work (Cygnaeus 1910, Halila 1949).

Even though the schooldays were long and the homework took time the students had also time for the association activities in the evenings. The students founded a Christian association in 1928 with the teachers' help. Its purpose was to occupy them with the Christianity-based activities. The participation in the activity was voluntary but almost all of them were members. Some of the teachers were involved with the activity as well; they helped the students organize the activity. The association kept meetings regularly in which they decided about the activities. The students gave performances at the meetings too. They sang songs, gave speeches, and planned ceremonies for Sundays. In addition, they invited guests to the college to perform. The students held a Sunday ceremony at the college weekly but that changed and the students and teaching staff participated in the Sunday service at the local church. (OMA, TSeA, Jb:6.) *For example, the meeting that was held on the 13th of April 1930 the participants sang the hymn number 494 and prayed. After that, the decisions were made relating to the affairs of the association: the officials were selected and a membership fee of 3 marks was set. The next meeting was to be arranged at Easter. In the spring, a call lecture was decided to arrange, in which the Christian Associations of Tornio and Lower Tornio were to be invited. The occasion would take place at the college if the manageress gave a permission. After common affairs, the hymn number 115 was sung and one of the students read from the Book of Vilks: 'Jesus, teacher'. At the end, the hymn number 113 was sung and the closing prayers were said.* (OMA, TSeA, Jb:3)

The Christian association modified the students' Christianity. Cultivating this ideology was connected to the ideal of a moral-Christian citizen which the primary school teachers were also expected to epitomize and which had a strong influence in the society (Heikkinen 2003, 130–131; Iisalo 1989,

152, 159–161; Lahdes 1961, 7, 28–32; Launonen 2000, 165; Melin 1980, 132; Rinne 1989, 138–142; Stormbom 1991, 119–121; Suutarinen 1992, 225–226; Tamminen 1998, 19–20). As a consequence, the Christian activities such as the morning ceremonies and the Christian association offered were common in other teacher colleges in Finland as well (Hyyrö 2006; Nurmi 1965; Nurmi 1996; Rantala 2005; Rinne 1986).

The Herbart-Zillernism education method and its requirement of moral-Christianity influenced the free time activities (Lahdes 1961, 7, 28–32; Iisalo 1989, 236–237; Tamminen 1998, 19–20). The strong prominence of Christianity in the society along with the Christian roots of the school system influenced partly as well. (Iisalo 1968)

The Behavioral Expectations leveled at the Free-time Activities

The students of the college of Tornio were trained up for the teacher's role during their leisure time as well. According to Soininen (1923), a teacher's status was so difficult to achieve and therefore, it was really important to practice for that during the leisure, also (Soininen 1923, 50–51). The college teachers controlled the students' manner of speaking. The students had to speak standard language and speaking in dialects was forbidden. (OMA, TSeA, Ca:1.) Speaking proper Finnish showed that the teachers belonged to the higher class but, at the same time, give an example to the pupils (Salo 1929, 14, 18).

The teachers had their eye on the students and the absences from the classes were not allowed. Even though the young people of that time used to go dancing as a hobby, it was not considered suitable for the prospective teachers. It did not fit the image of a decent teacher. Nevertheless, a few students went dancing without permission. They broke the moral norm and being caught meant thorough examination. A student recalled: *"Going to the evening parties and dancing was strictly forbidden. I heard that some girls did go and once I went too. Unfortunately, Soiluse's (who was the doctor of the college at whose house some of the students took a room) domestic help was there and who knew me and told my grandfather. This was how our sins were informed to the manageress too. We were examined. We stood in line behind the door of the chancellery. We were asked in one by one. Then, the whole gang was asking the one who exited the room: What did they say? I had my turn as well. – Even you were there even though you were not allowed to? I cried: - Yes, I was. – Who else was there? – I cannot say! – But you have to! And so I nicely listed the scapegoats, tearfully. Behind the door, I was hauled because I had told the names. I was a great perpetrator. After that, I did not attend those parties during the time I studied at the college (OMA, TSeA, Lk. 2, 24.)* In addition, some of the students from the college of Heinola were not very lucky. They were caught from the same action resulting in severe notice and lowering the grade of exactitude in one's school report (Nurmi 1995, 216–217).

In the 1930s, a letter from the National Board of Education pointed out that the students of the Finnish colleges were not allowed to participate in political actions. The teaching staff discussed the issue in their meeting and came into a conclusion that the students of their college had never done so. (OMA, TSeA, Ca:3.) It was the time of the Great Depression and that made the political groups act (Nurmi 1989, 18). Teachers should be patriotic but not political. Actually, the political activity could cause problems of getting a permanent job (Rantala 1999; Rantala 2002).

The archive material shows that the students of the college of Tornio followed the rules very strictly. Pirhonen (1970) explains that the discipline did not give any chances to break the rules because the students were under teachers' control all the time (Pirhonen 1970, 73). That college was not the only one with the strict rules as it was common all over Finland (Hyyrö 2000, 57; Nurmi 1995, 216–217). According to Rinne (1989), this behaviour could be called "the spirit of teacher colleges" (Rinne 1989, 179): it consisted of pedantry, prejudice, and strict control. Heikkinen (LÄHDE), for his part, specified that the spirit of teacher colleges was about discipline, the sense of duty, and Christian-moral ethos.

One reason why the students were well watched by the teachers is that the teachers' behavior was watched by the people. An elementary school teacher lived among the people but had a special status because of his/her education. Even so, or because of that, the people had their eye on a teacher also on his/her free time. The teacher's decency and purity were kept watch carefully in Lapland. If an elementary teacher behaved unseemly to his/her position, the villagers reported it to the district inspector of the Lapland district and the matter was trashed out at a board meeting. (Jurama & Karttunen 1990, 32.) So it was reasoned that the students were socialized for the teacher's role and demands of "the model citizen" during their study years.

Discussion

The data shows that the teacher college of Tornio offered good possibilities for the students to the activities of different kinds. The participation in the activities was voluntary despite the morning prayers. Furthermore, each student joined the associations and thus, the number of the participants was high. The activity was led by the teachers who stayed on the back and let the students plan and carry out the activity. It was important practice for the teacher's job.

The study points out that morality, Christianity, and patriotism affected the free time activities in the lower primary school teacher college of Tornio. These themes were part of the image of the teacher to which the students were educated to fit. These activities were provided by the Fellow Corps, Christian association, and the Girl Scouts. Patriotic activity was one of the leisure activities. It influenced the Girl Scouts and Fellow Corps. The patriotism got highlighted during the war time 1939–1945. These kinds of free time activities reflect the ideologies of the Finnish society and the demands for the teacher. The activity was similar to what the other teacher colleges in Finland had (Halila 1949; Halila 1963; Heikkinen 1990, 83–96; Hyyrö 2000; Hyyrö 2006; Kuikka 1985, 81–83, 97; Nurmi 1995; Rinne 1989, 194).

The well-organized leisure activities are explained by the Herbart-Zillernism education method which was influencing the Finnish school system (Lahdes 1961, 7, 28–32; Iisalo 1989, 236–237; Tamminen 1998, 19–20). Besides, the teaching staff wanted to have the students under strict control during the students' free time because of the ideal of the teachers being "the model citizens" prevailing during the time period on which the research focused. That included Christianity and patriotism (Halila 1949; Halila 1963; Heikkinen 1990, 83–96; Hyyrö 2006, 330–337; Kuikka 1985, 81–83, 97; Nurmi 1965; Nurmi 1996; Rantala 2005; Rinne 1986; Rinne 1989, 194; Salo 1924, 25, 147, 155–161).

The fact that the students spend most of their leisure at school shows that their life was well controlled during their

study years. This control expanded even further because they needed to behave like model citizens for the rest of their free time as well. The socialization to the teacher's profession and the development of the professional identity is even nowadays a life-long process during which one adopts the profession-related information, skills, and extrinsic features. Hardly any other profession has had or will have such a long-lasting and thorough training that the teacher's profession has as training for a teacher's profession starts already at the elementary school. Already when starting the teacher education, the prospective teachers have the certain beliefs and conceptions of teaching, learning, and school. The ideal of a teacher changes over time, but the teacherhood has always been associated with virtues, the characteristics that a teacher pursues. If a teacher was to "much watcher" (see also Simola 1995), as the present article shows, the work of today's teacher is not any easier. Along with many traditional status-related demands, a modern teacher has to fulfil the requirements of new, gallant role model of an efficient teacher and continuous development.

Archive sources

Oulun maakunta-arkisto (OMA) [Provincial Archives of Oulu]
Tornion seminaarin arkisto (TSeA) [Archives of the College of Tornio]

Ca:1 Opettajakunnankokousten pöytäkirjat 1921–1928 [The Minutes of the Teaching Staff Meetings in 1921–1928]

Ca:3 Opettajakunnankokousten pöytäkirjat 1936–1945 [The Minutes of the Teaching Staff Meetings in 1936–1945]

De:1 Työjärjestykset 1922–1957 [Timetables 1922–1957]

Ja:2 Toverikunnan pöytäkirjat 1922–1935 [The Minutes of the Fellow Corps 1922–1935]

Ja:3 Toverikunnan pöytäkirjat 1935–1940 [The Minutes of the Fellow Corps 1922–1935]

Ja:4 Toverikunnan pöytäkirjat 1940–1948 [The Minutes of the Fellow Corps 1922–1935]

Jb:3 Kristillisen yhdistyksen jäsenluettelo 1930–1939 [The Membership list of the Christian Association 1930–1939]

Jb:6 Kristillisen yhdistyksen toimintakertomus 1928–1969 [The Report of the Christian Association 1928–1969]

Lk. 2. Lehmäkirja ["The cow book", a diary written by the students]

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