

Craft Education in Finland: Definitions, Rationales, and the Future

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Abstract

The status, content, and social factors influencing craft education in Finland, a standard subject in comprehensive schools, were examined during interviews with craft teachers, craft teacher preparers, and educational administrators. In this paper, the following areas are examined: How are crafts defined? What rationales and cultural and social factors keep craft education robust and what factors threaten it? What is perceived as the future of craft education?

Definitions of crafts in schooling varied among interviewees, with some arguing to maintain traditional divisions between art and craft, and between craft subjects of textiles and technical work, and others noting distinction in these subjects only in the materials and techniques used. Some interviewees associated art teaching with self-expression and craft with skill, materials, and techniques. The context for craft education affected by Finland's rapid change, after World War II, from a rural agrarian society to an urban and highly technological one, is understood as putting pressure on craft education to remain meaningful. Rationales given by

interviewees for teaching craft in schools fell into five categories: craft provides 1) cognitive development in several dimensions, 2) learning about living in the world, 3) Finnish traditions and culture, 4) social and individual growth, and 5) a break from the demands of academic subjects. All interviewees seemed to agree that teaching crafts in Finland is changing in terms of how teachers are prepared, who writes curriculum, the content of the curriculum, and the configuration of craft in the comprehensive school curriculum. Some interviewees portended a decline in craft education in public schooling, while others embraced change as part of nation building.

Description of the Study

Mason, Nakase, & Naoe [1] have established that in Britain and Japan, strong traditions of handcraft education in the general education of children are struggling to survive. In Britain, where these authors conclude that craft education is particularly endangered, the current focus of the government on 'technologies that are understood to contribute to industrial processes and the economy' combined with the devaluation of crafts as 'practical' relegate craft education to a nonessential position. In the U.S., while ceramics remain firmly entrenched in high school curricula, there is evidence that their presence in elementary schools is weakening, due in part to the elimination in some states of arts specialists and to attitudes that crafts are unimportant [2]. Further, crafts other than ceramics, such as metal, textile arts, wood, and basketry, seem decidedly scarce in most middle school (grades 6–8 or 7–8) and high school (grades 9–12) curricula.

In their forthcoming book, *Educational Value of Making, Issues in Design Technology*, Mason and Houghton argue that, 'Making is inherently pleasurable in itself and a critically important biological drive,' and that, 'the pleasure children experience in handling and 'crafting' physical materials is inextricably linked to the tool making and ceremonial (artistic) functions' of human activity that play 'an essential part in human evolutionary development' and are 'crucial to human survival' [3]. In her article, 'The Pleasure of Meaning and Making', Ellen Dissanayake similarly concludes that 'making things' is a fundamental human need. Her 1990 book, *What is Art For?* is a lengthy treatise on the importance of the arts as a human endeavor, a claim she substantiates historically [4]. The research of Mason, Nakase, and Naoe indicates that British teachers agree with Japanese teachers that the importance of craft in education is that it 'gives students a sense of pride and achievement [5].' They are divided as to whether it should include historical, technological, and cultural inheritance. Craft in education, then, is important, but there is debate about how it should be taught.

In Britain, Mason, Nakase, & Naoe found that craft could be located either as part of the Fine Art or the Design curricula, noting the location was based on whether or not the craft was taught 'for imaginative self-expression and intellectual speculation,' or 'functional and utilitarian needs [6].' In the U.S., craft media (traditionally clay, fibers, and jewelry), when taught, are most often found in the art curriculum, but wood, when taught, is found in vocational education. The term craft for art-oriented U.S. educators connotes a concentration on process, devoid of rigorous ideas. A survey of secondary teachers in England and Wales conducted by Mason indicated that art teachers associated craft with three-dimensional art work, whereas design and technology teachers associated the term either with the making aspect of problem-solving in design or derided it as 'old fashioned [7].'

Within this international context, several questions led this study of craft education in Finnish comprehensive schools, conducted during fall 2000. How are crafts defined in Finnish schooling? What is the status of craft education in Finland? What rationales and cultural and social factors keep craft education robust and what factors threaten it? What is perceived as the future of craft education in Finland? The study was conducted through interviews with craft teachers, teacher preparers, and administrators. For most of the interviews, I visited the school where the teacher worked. A second source of information has been materials in print: research by other scholars as well as curriculum publications translated into English.

Description of the Setting

In Finland, handicrafts are firmly established in comprehensive schools (ages 7–15), with a minimum of three curriculum hours required in the upper stage (grades 7–9) and eight in the lower stage. Art is a separate subject, also compulsory, with minimum curriculum hours of three and six at lower and upper stages, respectively (please see Tables 1 and 2). 'Curriculum hours' are the

cumulative weekly hours taught over the entire lower or upper stage of comprehensive schooling. For example, three hours in handicrafts average one hour per week for three years or three hours per week for one year. The school or municipality governing the school can decide how to distribute the hours. In many upper stage schools that I visited, seventh graders typically took a year-long class that met the upper stage requirement. Handicrafts have an established presence in Finnish comprehensive schools, although, as we shall see, their shape and content is changing. Handicrafts are not a mandated high school curriculum subject and because they are not regularly taught in high schools, they are not part of this study. Finland also has a widespread system of craft centers offering after-school and weekend classes. These are funded by the national government as part of its educational system. Separate centers offer art, sports, and other subjects and all classes are undertaken as enrichment, not requirements. Students often take classes at a craft center for several years.

Craft education in Finland is composed of textiles (sewing, needlework, weaving, and occasionally craft sculpture) and technical work (wood, metals, and electronics). Students in technical work learn to use large machines in their work such as lathes, saws, drills, and benders. From the interviews conducted, it appears uncommon for students to make a project completely by hand such as a hunting knife. Ceramics, jewelry (when taught), and sculptural casting are part of the art curriculum.

Handcraft teachers in public schools are trained separately from art teachers. Textile teachers are trained at the University of Helsinki in the Division of Craft Sciences, located in the Department of Home Economics [9]. Technical work education is taught at the Rauma campus of the University of Turku in western Finland, where the 750 students in the Department of Technical Work Education constitute one fourth of the total enrollment of the campus. Teachers in craft centers usually received their training in a

particular craft subject, not in one of the craft education subjects. The craft center teachers I interviewed held degrees from polytechnic schools rather than universities [10].

For this study, sixteen teachers were interviewed: six upper stage textile teachers, two lower stage textile teachers, four upper stage technical work teachers, one upper stage art teacher, and three teachers at arts and crafts schools). Teachers came from the greater Helsinki area, Rauma (a town on the west coast of the country), Tampere (Finland's second largest city), and Rovaniemi (a small city on the Arctic Circle). Additionally, twenty-one university teacher preparers were interviewed. Four of these were affiliated with the University of Art and Design Helsinki and two with the University of Lapland's craft sciences area; the rest were from the University of Helsinki's Division of Craft Sciences and the University of Turku at Rauma's Department of Technical Work. Two administrators from the Finnish Board of Education also gave interviews. All interviews were conducted in English. In most cases, the interviews were conducted in schools, which permitted viewing facilities, seeing student work, and sometimes observing classes. In the following sections, I will present findings from three areas of the study and discussion about each. The areas are definitions, rationales, and the future.

A. Definitions

When I conceived the study, I had in mind the teaching of certain media: fibers, ceramics, metals, jewelry, and wood. This was based on my perceptions of the use of the word in the U.S., although I was well aware of the negative associations of craft as less intellectual than art, a minor form of art, and of the general avoidance of the term in U.S. schools. Markowitz [11] confirms the negative connotations of the term 'craft' in her article, 'The distinction between art and craft.' The term art, she notes, has a positive evaluative connotation that the term craft lacks. 'Craft' and 'handmade' take on positive (sometimes elitist)

Table 1

Lower Stage Comprehensive School, Grades 1–6, Approximate ages 7–12 [8]

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Subject	Minimum curriculum hours over six years
Mother Tongue (Swedish or Finnish)	32
'A' Language (Foreign language or second national language)	8
Optional language	4
Mathematics	22
Environment and nature study	15
Religion or ethics	8
History	3
Arts and skills, of which the following are minimums:	44
Music	6
Art	6
Handicrafts	8
Physical Education	12

Table 2

Distribution of hours at the Upper Stage of Finnish Comprehensive Schools (Grades 7–9, Approximate ages 13–15 or 16)

Subject	Minimum curriculum hours (compulsory) over three years
Mother Tongue (Finnish or Swedish)	8
'A' Language (Foreign language or second national language begun at the Lower Stage of Comprehensive School)	8
'B' Language (Language begun at the Upper Stage of Comprehensive School)	6
Mathematics	9
Biology, Geography	7
Physics, Chemistry	6
Religion or Ethics	3
History, Social Studies	6
Music	1
Art	2
Home Economics	3
Handicrafts, Technical work, Textile Work	3
Physical Education	6
Pupil Guidance	2
General Education Subjects, Minimum Total	70
Elective Subjects, Maximum Total	20

connotations when they are used as labels to distinguish objects from industrial products (particularly in a marketing context), but 'craft' is always lesser than 'art.'

In American English dictionaries, the term 'craft,' as related to art, denotes special skill in making or doing, an art or occupation requiring special skill, manual dexterity, or skilled artistry, and membership of a craft occupation (a guild) [12].

The *Nykysuomen sanakirja* (Dictionary of Contemporary Finnish) gives the following definitions of *käsityö* (Finnish for 'handcraft,'): '1. Work made by hand or with tools held with the hands; 2. A product made by hand; 3. A school subject' [13]. Koskennurmi-Sivonen notes that skill, not revealed in the lexical definition of *käsityö*, is a common connotation of the Finnish word [14].

I asked Finnish craft teachers whom I interviewed how craft instruction differs from art instruction. Their responses were varied. Several expressed the sentiment conveyed in one teacher's words, that 'There is a high border between craft, technical work, and art in teacher education'. One teacher indicated that textile teachers don't want to claim they are too close to art, because they don't want the Ministry of Education to collapse the art and craft subjects, while several teachers observed that joining textiles and art would result in too many media to learn competently. Some teachers cited the importance of maintaining traditions: that the separation of textiles, technical work, and art in Finland is very special. Their histories are different and Finnish people think of art and craft as two different areas. Others felt that techniques and materials are the main distinction between art and craft, with the development of ideas seeming similar. One teacher said that the boundaries between art and craft are an artificial Euro-American concept, noting there are no such boundaries in some cultures.

About half of the teachers in my survey and an administrator in the state department of education understood art as focused more on self

expression than craft, and craft as emphasizing materials more than art does. From observations and finished craft projects, it appears that many upper stage textile and technical work projects are technique driven, with students' expressive choices limited to fabrics and colors in textiles and wood and paint in technical work. More advanced students almost always choose what they will make: a denim jacket, for example, or a skateboard. They commonly select and modify existing patterns for these projects, as well as choose materials. Self expression comes into play in choosing the object and materials to make it.

Skill, notes Koskennurmi-Sivonen, seems to be one of the distinguishing factors between traditional craft and art, but most artists can be considered skilled. Citing Scheffler, she makes a distinction between 'critical skills' and 'facilities' (or 'routinizable skills') [15]. 'Facilities' are manual routine skills; critical skills are those needed to complete an idea. Both 'facilities' and 'critical skills' have to do with 'know-how,' but contemporary artists and 'artistic craftspeople do not want to rehearse their manual routine skills (facilities) in the belief that critical skills can be reached and conveyed without routine skills. Indeed, it is by means of interesting ideas and critical skills that an artist or craftsperson develops an individual style.' This seems to capture the distinction in the Finnish National Curriculum between art and craft subjects, and the distinction that some of the craft teachers made.

The distinction between craft as referring to well-made functional objects and art to expressive objects is echoed in the U.S. connotations of craft. Markowitz has found that craft objects tend to connote 'practical or utilitarian functions, while paintings and sculptures have, depending on one's view, only an aesthetic use [16].' She distinguishes between aesthetic and semantic characters. Aesthetic qualities are understood as properties in the object: beauty, formal qualities, evocativeness. Semantic character has to do with the work's interpretation. Markowitz notes that perhaps interpretation is central to our response

to artworks in part because we do not know what else to do with them. That we do not customarily interpret benches, cups, or scarves may have something to do with their utilitarian function [17]. Yet, there are objects considered craft that have semantic characteristics – for example, craft objects that are titled and embroidery – blurring the distinction between art and craft. Markowitz ultimately points to a Cartesian dualism in the distinction between art and craft. Metaphysical reasoning has lost ground but the history of the distinction lingers. These distinctions are borne out in the teachers' responses to defining craft and in my observations of what is taught as craft. They are also reflected in the inclusion of art criticism and visual communication as components of art and not craft in the Finnish national curriculum [18]. These explanations, although they complicate understanding the use of the term 'craft,' indicate the complex connotations surrounding the term in English and in Finnish.

B. Rationales

I asked interviewees why crafts are taught today. Pentti Takala (2000), a head administrator in the state Department of Education until his retirement in November of 2000, responded, 'You learn to think using your hands' and 'you learn, in craft and arts, by going deeper in your brain'. Other subjects are affected, he continued, because your brain is enhanced through your hands and through aesthetic appreciation: 'craft teaching is not only practical, it means the capability to learn'. This rationale for craft education replaces the earlier one, Takala continued, of teaching craft because it educates for the practical necessities of living in a home. This cognitive learning approach was echoed in some of the rationales given by teachers, who also mentioned honing concentration, psychomotor development, open-ended problem solving, and learning consequences. Cognitive reasons given by interviewed craft teacher education faculty were similar.

Another set of rationales given by teachers, faculty, and administrators had to do with knowl-

edge of the world and other subjects: learning about the natural environment and living in the world. Specific knowledge areas named included sustainability, learning about the nature of beauty, economics, integrating subjects, learning to be a smart consumer, learning to manage daily life, and caring for the home. Clearly, these latter reasons given by teachers continue the historic rationales for craft education in Finnish schools, to educate for daily life in the home. Teachers also rationalized craft education as learning for skills and jobs because students practice measuring and basic skills, thinking creatively, and problem solving.

Another category of rationales for teaching craft had to do with teaching traditions. As a small country and a country long dominated by other sovereignties, Finland is remarkable in its economic success and in its independence and distinct traditions. One of these honored traditions is self-reliance. As one interviewee related, people have been raised with standards of doing and *sisu*, or perseverance (especially in the face of adversity). Because Finnish design is a mark of national distinction and was an economic factor in the country's recovery from the Second World War (a circumstance mentioned by teachers interviewed), interviewees often mentioned learning good design. A teacher relayed another tradition when she poetically said, Finland was 'built with our own hands'. The crafts continue these traditions of making.

Other types of reasons given by teachers were social and individual growth. Social reasons centered on learning to be a member of a community and learning to work with others. Individual reasons emphasized were learning self-esteem and confidence, doing something satisfying, feeling in control of one's life, and learning to express oneself.

The final set of reasons for teaching crafts that were given by some interviewees involved crafts as a break from the rest of schooling. Necessities of a break stemmed from what was perceived as the stress of academic subjects, the intellectual orientation of schools, and that children and

adolescents enjoy the making involved in crafts [19]. According to the Finnish national curriculum framework for craft education, 'the aim [of craft education] is that the student acquires essential skills to manage in everyday life [20].' Techniques, managing in a technical environment, and manufacturing products 'that are aesthetic, of good quality, and functional' are cited as additional aims of craft education. Also listed are cultural traditions and 'craft culture,' developing 'the skills of the hand and thought', and teaching working skills and values [21]. Clearly, interviewees' responses were similar to those given in the national curriculum document, with social, personal, and recreational reasons being additional.

If we look historically to rationales for art education in the U.S. (which includes craft subjects), we find some similar rationales. Korzenik offers four traditions for teaching art in schools. The first tradition identified is art making as study skills – that is, for intellectual development. Art making as job skills is the second identified tradition, which later, under the influence of John Ruskin, encompassed moral development so that students could resist the negative forces of industrialization. The third tradition is art making for the spirit, centered on the feelings and imaginative life of the child, and mid-twentieth century, on mental health and the student's emotional and spiritual experiences. Art making for understanding others and ourselves is the fourth tradition. The focus here is on educating students about themselves in relation to others so that students develop a broadened understanding and acceptance of diverse cultures, genders, ages, classes, and racial and ethnic backgrounds [22].

Finnish interviewees' rationales for craft education such as 'learning to think using your hands' and increasing the capability to learn, honing concentration, and engaging in open-ended problem solving relate generally to U.S. traditions of study skills as well as job skills. Learning self-esteem and confidence, engaging in satisfying activities, self-expression, and feeling control in one's life relate generally to U.S. traditions of artmaking for the spirit. Learning

social skills of working with others, becoming a member of a community, and sustainability relate to the U.S. tradition of understanding others and ourselves, but the emphasis is quite different. In the U.S., particularly in teaching craft media in elementary and middle schools, learning about traditional arts of other nations and cultures is currently heavily emphasized. In Finland, the emphasis is on Finnish tradition and culture. The category of rationales given by interviewees that I have coalesced under teaching traditions bears this out. Helping students understand the importance of Finnish design in craft and continuing traditions of making things for oneself rather than buying them emphasize Finnish culture rather than world cultures. The emphasis on educating for daily life in the home in Finnish craft tradition relates to job skills but in Finland it is life skills that are emphasized in craft education.

In making these comparisons, I am by no means wishing to indicate that U.S. and Finnish traditions and patterns are the same, although similarities are in part attributable to the European foundations of schooling that both countries share. Korzenik believes that our histories are important in determining our biases in education (a bias can be a strength and is not a mere weakness). 'We each carry within us our own history of art... memories of places... even of some pictures... We may recall some teachers and even what they said [23].' Furthermore, Korzenik argues that traditions sometimes become rival rationales. Efland builds a case that during economic downturns, education for skills is favored and during times when the economy is perceived as healthy, education for personal growth and social awareness is favored [24]. Finland has been in a period of great change for the last half century: it has changed from a rural agrarian population to an urban highly technological country. In the early 1990s, the economy suffered a downturn of tremendous proportions and was rescued only by the phenomenon of Nokia industry. Whether Efland's argument could be adapted to understanding trends in Finnish education is beyond

the scope of this paper. (Efland also spent time in Finland in the 1990s as a Fulbright scholar, so he may have insights about this.) But craft education in Finland is changing: the largest of these changes has moved technical work and textile education into the combined single curricular subject, craft education, and the people whom I interviewed were keenly aware of the changes in rationales. These rationales move away from teaching crafts as skills needed for the home and some teachers relayed anxiousness about future changes that might affect craft education. In technical work education, electronics appears to be increasingly emphasized at the teacher training college, an emphasis that had not yet filtered down to the classrooms I observed. The technical work education faculty looked to the technological revolution as their future.

Korzenik also found in her historical research that there is a 'two-part legacy' in U.S. education, education that trains the mind and that which trains the mind and the hands. The latter is thought of as inferior; and art in the U.S. is associated with it, thus its prestige and priority are lower. Indeed, she concludes, children and adults who are good with their hands are sometimes thought to be intellectually less able [25]. While rationales for craft education in Finland gathered from teachers, administrators, and teacher education faculty indicate a breadth of desired outcomes for the subject, as well as traditions that hold the subject in place as part of the national curriculum, there was innuendo that mind skills are valued more in the technological urban society that Finland has largely become than hand skills. It is possible that such social valuing influences the trend towards electronic technology in technical work teacher education. How the national curriculum for comprehensive schools will transmogrify based on these trends is subject of much speculation among Finnish educators.

C. The Future

The teaching of craft in Finland is historically rooted in function and learning skills necessary to

the success of the state and nation of Finland. Huovio reports that the founding of arts and crafts at the tertiary level occurred during a time when the famine of the 1860s meant that all aspects of the nation, even the arts, had to contribute to the economic health of the nation. The inclusion of crafts in education (which were not called crafts but textiles and technical work), then, occurred for functional reasons: so that people would be able to make the things that they needed [26].

After the Second World War, Finland changed rapidly from a rural society to an urban one. The country is now one of the most technologically advanced in the world. More people live in cities than in the countryside. This has meant that the rationales for the inclusion of crafts in the curriculum have to be reconsidered. In the 1990s, 'technical work' and 'textiles,' which had been two separate subjects in the curriculum were joined as *käsityö*, or 'crafts.' This has caused much discussion and may mean changes in how the subjects are taught. In considering the future of craft education in Finland, I will discuss three areas: whether craft education is in jeopardy, changes in how crafts are taught, and joining crafts and art.

Craft education in jeopardy?

Mason, Nakase, & Naoe [27] have established that in Britain and Japan, strong traditions of handcraft education in the general education of children are struggling to survive because they are perceived as 'practical' and not important to the economy. The data for my study is, importantly, less empirical than that collected by Mason on middle schools in England, since the source is interviews and written materials. Based on the interviews, some Finnish university faculty and craft teachers think that there is a threat that schools may not have the resources to continue to dedicate a line to textile education. Three even suggested that the future of craft will be in arts and crafts centers, not public schools.

Teachers also perceived a gradual change in the teaching force at least at the elementary level, with classroom teachers taking over the teaching

of textiles. Textile teachers sometimes teach at more than one school—and the schools may be located 100 km from each other. Additionally, sometimes the teachers must be part time or take on additional subjects [28].

According to Pentti Takala in the state Department of Education, no one in the Ministry of Education, where decisions about national curriculum are made, is talking about deleting käsityö from the curriculum. Still, teacher education programs in textiles and technical work are now mandated to prepare students in a second teaching subject. (Art teacher preparation does not currently require a second teaching subject, although there is pressure from the Ministry of Education to change this.) This can be any subject taught in the school curriculum and available at the university: languages, history, mathematics, sports, art, etc. While this is common in Education Colleges across the United States, it is a more recent phenomenon in Finland. In light of one arts and crafts center administrator's comments that graduates of craft teacher education programs are often not advanced enough to teach the advanced students at the center, a second teaching content area obviously further dilutes preparation.

Changes could also occur in who prepares teachers. According to one interviewee from higher education, vocational high schools are interested in preparing teachers. Currently, only universities are authorized to do this. Thus, potentially, all municipalities could prepare teachers. This would make access to acquiring craft teaching certification easier (currently, 10–25% of applicants are accepted to the craft teacher preparation programs each year [29]), and could ease the shortage of qualified teachers. It would also mean greater diversity in the way teachers are prepared and in the quality of candidates. Such diversity has obvious positive and negative possibilities.

Two other interviewees from higher education indicated that there is talk about locating teacher education in polytechnics, a system of higher education in Finland where teaching over research is emphasized and theoretical research is not an

authorized part of faculty job descriptions. Teacher education was recognized in the 1980s as having a strong research base and education of all teachers includes learning research practices.

Changes in how crafts are taught

Teachers currently write their own curricula, as per changes in the state curricula of the mid-1990s. Two people closely involved with craft education curriculum changes both indicated that this will change with the upcoming revisions, with more guidance coming from the state. Some teachers thought that the recent amalgamation of textiles and technical work into one subject foreboded changes in the current system. It is important here to emphasize how different the subjects textiles and technical work have been in Finland – as different as social studies and language arts. Several interviewees expressed how special the separate traditions are to Finnish education – special bordering on unique. Interviewees also feared that in combining the two subjects in the curriculum as käsityö, it would be easier to cut curricular hours. According to one Department of Education official, over the nine years of Comprehensive school, instruction in the subject is planned to change as follows:

- The planning of projects – visualizing and technical aspects – will increase during the school year. Looking and appreciating could become part of this phase, but it doesn't happen as much as in art instruction.
- There will be a decrease in making projects.
- There will be an increase in self-assessment, in which the student addresses questions such as, why did I do this in this way? and why did I design it this way? Instruction will also guide the student in learning to be honest in their self-evaluations.

The skills developed from these approaches are projected to increase as the student gets older. It was argued that these different skills better address living successfully in today's society.

Whether, and how, these projections will take form remains to be seen over the next few years: first in the new curriculum, which is being rewritten now, and second in the teachers' interpretations of it. Any significant change will likely occur gradually, not suddenly.

Based on my observations of what teachers are actually doing in their classes, if these changes came into effect, they would more significantly alter what technical work teachers do than their counterparts in textiles. Currently, many textiles teachers have students keep journals to aid their planning. A few of those I visited approached teaching through themes, such as 'trees' or 'the sea.' Classroom bulletin boards included reproductions of these themes by adult artists. The technical work teachers did not use journals, where the emphasis was on skills and learning to use machines. Expression took various forms: in both textiles and technical work, choosing what to make and materials to use; in textiles, however, these choices are more common and there are more of them to make. Where sewing projects might involve the same degree of expressive choices that building a stool would in many textile media, the objects students undertake in textiles tend to be less standard: fabric dyeing or felt making would involve many expressive decisions that electronics cannot and the teaching of metals does not.

My observations on the degree of difference in expressive emphasis in the two subjects concurred with what some teachers described: technical work seems to be concentrated on techniques, materials and machines – more than on design, motivation, and self esteem. Textiles are closer to art because their teaching is focused more on expressions about the person and the culture. This is due to several factors. Ones I observed included,

- Large pieces of equipment such as table saws and lathes in the technical work classrooms necessitates an emphasis on learning to use the machines safely in the 7th grade.

Because children are exposed to sewing machines in elementary level education, the teaching emphasis in middle level grades does not have to be on safety.

- The emphasis on machinery and safety in technical work also means that teachers may resort to having all students at the beginning level make the same project (stools or pencil holders).
- While students in textiles had more choices available to them and themes such as 'nature' and self-expression were more noticeable, how a student makes a choice was rarely explored.

Middle school students are, almost always, beginning craftspeople. Safety and the learning to correctly use equipment are necessary components of the technical work curriculum. The media of textiles are, as some textiles teachers observed, closer to the media traditionally used in art classrooms, that allow more individual choices at middle school levels. In terms of choices, a standard level that I observed involved picking a color or fabric based on a student's preferences. 'Free' projects, where the student could choose from several possibilities, might result in making a fashionable shirt or a cute stuffed animal. The students were neither asked to reflect on how they made their choices nor on what cultural influences affected them. If we don't learn to reflect on our choices, what is the educational value of making them? The art curriculum includes art appreciation and interpretation that the crafts curriculum does not. In today's Finland, where craft knowledge is no longer necessary for the practical daily living skills it teaches, but is valued in part for the traditions it continues, it hardly makes sense not to include aspects of appreciation and interpretation.

Still, Mason and Houghton [30] conclude that, 'practical knowledge (knowing how) is as necessary to integral life-experience as the scholastic or academic forms of knowledge (knowing that) more commonly associated with schools. Making is important for children's development because of the emphasis on sensory perceptions and

motor actions'. Mason and Houghton call on the work of Schon and Sternberg & Caruso [31] to support their conclusion that knowledge is gained through working with the hands and that practical knowledge helps in making decisions. Their conclusion affirms what Finnish Department of Education official Takala said, 'You learn to think using your hands' and 'you [go] deeper in your brain'. It seems necessary to say that this dimension of craft education should not be lost, and, moreover, that it should be further researched and appreciated in the hierarchies of what is valued as learning in schools.

Joining textiles and art

Some faculty and some teachers interviewed felt that the combined study of art and craft is the realistic future for arts and crafts education. Faculty of the textiles teacher education and crafts sciences divisions at the University of Helsinki were divided in their support for this possibility, with some arguing the importance of maintaining the substantial history of textiles as distinct. Textiles teachers in the schools more often were willing to see a similarity between textiles and art, though some worried about the difficulty of teaching too many media well. Textiles teaching majors undertook a wide variety of teaching minors. Technical work teaching faculty at the University of Turku at Rauma were much more adamant about maintaining the autonomy of their subject and a distinction from art. They willingly embraced the second area of teaching expertise, indicating mathematics, science, sports, or history were encouraged, but not art because it didn't seem to have relevant overlap.

The argument that crafts and art are similar except for media underlies the way art is taught in the U.S. Most U.S. teachers approach teaching art through expressive traditions, while fewer combine the expressive approach with teaching other art subject content (art in culture, for example). Art as therapy, an underlying teaching rationale for a substantial number of teachers, extends the expressive approach. What is lost if crafts and art collapse into one subject in Finland? Crafts have

the potential to extend our understanding of the relationship of the arts to cultures beyond self-expression. Crafts as taught in Finland include emphasis on skill building. While students are given choices, in structured classes (which all Finnish seventh graders take), these are limited, as previously discussed. This relegates craft teaching to studio craft as opposed to art craft [32]. Studio craft emphasizes skill in creating functional objects for living; art craft emphasizes the expressive dimensions. Although the focus of what I observed in Finnish middle schools was on making, the possibility that cultural traditions can become part of the craft curriculum, as indicated with Finnish Department of Education personnel, may be a difference between craft and art worth developing and preserving. Such an approach makes the subject no less intellectual than art (which alludes to an ages-old bias towards art as more intellectual than craft, discussed by Dormer and by Markowitz [33]. The Ministry of Education will, ultimately, decide the issue.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have described historical and current aspects of craft teaching in Finland, particularly projects, definitions and rationales divisions. The pressures and changes for craft education in the future encompass the structure of the curriculum, how teachers are prepared, who prepares them, and the autonomy of technical work, textiles, and even crafts as subjects. There are other pressures experienced in crafts that were not the subject of this paper, including gender issues, technology, and who does research and what its bases are. Although the pressures and conditions of change in craft education differ from those in the United States, the U.K. and Japan, craft education in Finland is in a state of change. Whether the changes are negative or positive, from the perspective of those invested in the teaching of crafts, depends on several factors:

1. how important it is to maintain an emphasis on making

2. how important the teaching of reflection and interpretation skills and heritage, culture, and historical understandings are
3. how important maintaining the separate traditions of textiles, technical work, and art are including the rationale of how unique this is to the Finnish educational system
4. how important one understands a subject to be for its economic value or for its human development value

Because the traditions of craft education in Finland are strong, it is worthwhile for anyone interested in this area to attend to the structure, changes, and rationales for changes of the subject in Finland.

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6. Mason, Nakase, & Naoe, Op.cit., p. 11.
7. Mason, Nakase, & Naoe, Op. cit., p. 9.
8. Tables 1 and 2 are modified from National Board of Education, The Education System of Finland 1994 [pamphlet], National Board of Education/ Opetushallitus.
9. This is a relatively recent development that no one I spoke with thought good. Formerly, textile education was located in the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Helsinki. Faculty with whom I spoke indicated that home economics and textiles are two different subjects and that home economics is not associated with craft. Over the past twenty years, there has been talk about locating craft teacher education at the University of Art and Design Helsinki. Textile education and craft sciences faculty seem to be divided on whether this union would be good or not.
10. Recent changes in the educational system mean that in the next few years, teachers at craft centers will be required to hold teaching degrees.
11. Markowitz, S. [1994] 'The distinction between art and craft.' *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol 28, no. 1, pp. 55-70.
12. Random House Webster's College Dictionary [1991]. Random House Publishing Company; and The American Heritage College Dictionary, Third Edition [1997, 1993] Houghton Mifflin Company. Aircraft and ships are also referred to as "craft," but do not have any bearing on arts and crafts as researched in this study. Also, craft can mean cunning and deceit (as skill in evasion or deception; guile).
13. Koskennurmi-Sivonen, R. [1998] *Creating a Unique Dress: A Study of Riita Immone's Creations in the Finnish Fashion House Tradition*, p. 49. Artefakta/Akatiimi. Koskennurmi-Sivon used the *Nykysuomen Sanakirja (The Dictionary of Contemporary Finnish)* [1996, 1967] WSOY.
14. Koskennurmi-Sivonen, Op. cit.
15. Markowitz Op. cit., p. 56. Markowitz cites the work of I. Scheffler [1965] *Conditions of Knowledge: An Introduction to Epistemology and Education*. Scott, Foresman and Company.
16. Markowitz Op. cit., p. 60. In noting that aesthetic response is 'marked by contemplation rather than action', Markowitz asks, 'Why cannot one contemplate how it feels to pour (to wear, etc.)?' (p. 60).
17. Markowitz, Op. cit., pp. 60-61.

18. National Board of Education. [1994] Framework Curriculum for the Comprehensive School 1994. Finnish National Board of Education/ Painatuskeskus

19. Mason and Houghton's earlier cited argument that making is a 'crucial to human survival' (Mason & Houghton, Op. cit.) is supported by the extensive research of a team headed by Mason on the status of craft education in Britain and by the work of other researchers (see, for example, Dissanayake, E. [1992] 'The pleasure and meaning of making.' *American Craft*, Vol. 55, no. 3, pp. 40–5; and Gell, A. [1992] 'The technology of enchantment and the enchantment of technology.' In Coote, J. & Shelton, A. [Eds], *Anthropology and Aesthetics*. Clarendon Press, pp. 40–46).

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25. Korzenik, Op. cit.

26. Huovio, I. [1996] 125 Years of Higher Education in Arts and Crafts. On-line: www.uiah.fi/presentation/history/125years.htm. According to an unpublished paper by Juhani Peltonen (n.d.), Sloyd Education in Finland, craft education has been a part of teacher training since the 1860s. He further notes that the development of sloyd (the Swedish term for craft education) is different in Finland from other countries in that it is not based on folk handicrafts,

but rather 'followed academic patterns' established in the 1860s and 1870s by Cygnaeus, the so-called 'father of Finnish primary school', who insisted that craft be a compulsory school subject for all pupils (p. 3). It was taught 'in accordance with Fröbel's educational views,' 'to work with work,' and 'to develop various aspects of their [students'] personality' (p. 3). Sloyd was included in the curriculum because it 'would help pupils to apply entrepreneurship [sic], practical skills and knowledge, and dexterity to their work' (p. 3). Thus, the rationales for sloyd historically lie both in vocational skills and in personal growth.

27. Mason, Nakase, and Naoe, Op. cit.

28. I do not have concrete data to support, or refute, these observations.

29. Although this figure is low, it is mitigated by the number of repeat applicants: Finnish students, across the university system, often apply several times before gaining admittance to their program of choice.

30. Mason and Houghton, Op. cit.

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33. Dormer, P. Op. cit. and Markowitz, Op. cit.