Learning and Teaching Foreign Languages in Finland
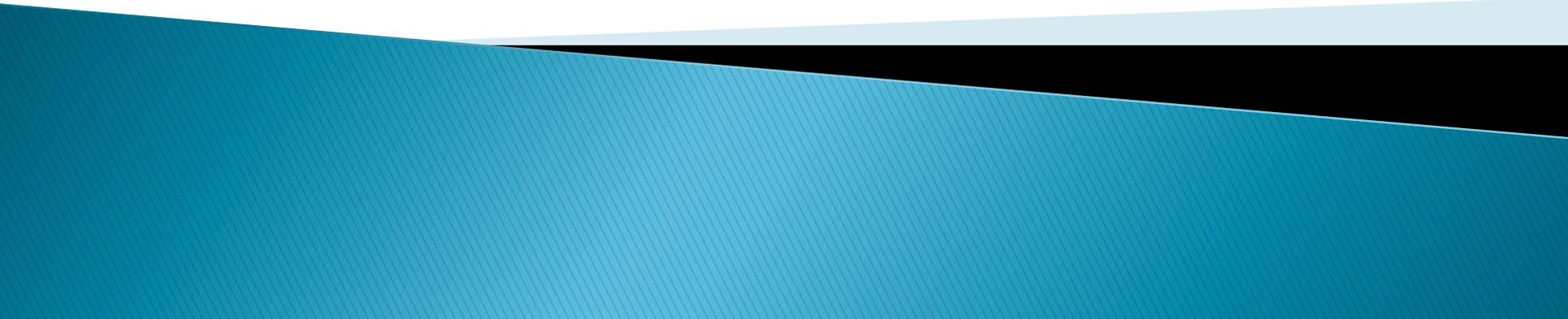
Skills Taught and Learned

- Listening
- Vocabulary
- Reading
- Speaking/conversation
- Grammar and structures
- Writing

English

Swedish German French

Listening

▶ At school in classes
  ◦ Students work individually
  ◦ In English **once a week** one lesson (**45 minutes**)
  ◦ Teaching materials include listening comprehension exercises
    · Pieces of news
    · Lectures
    · Short articles read and recorded
    · Interviews
    · Video clips
    · TV programmes
    · Films

Matriculation Examination Listening: 1/3

◦ Types of Exercises included:
  - *Multiple choice questions*
  - *True/False statements & correcting mistakes*
  - *Open questions*
  - *Dictation*
  - *Filling gaps*
  - *Summarising the main contents orally*
    - *Pictures*
    - *Key words*
  - *Writing a summary*

◦ Pronunciation exercises:
  • Listen and repeat
  • Practising words in pairs
  • Reading aloud in pairs

Challenges:
Intonation
Rhythm
Stress

▸ At home
- ◦ Teaching materials include student recordings (MP3)
- ◦ TV programmes and films
  - • Subtitles used in Finland
  - • Students are **encouraged** to watch their favourite programmes and films **without the subtitles**
- ◦ Following YLE News in English
- ◦ Listening to (our Swedish) radio programmes
- ◦ Following the sites of foreign news agencies

Olen opetellut suomea.
— Onpa vaikuttavaa.

Vocabulary

- Finnish used in the exercises
- Students work individually after they have read (and listened to) the text in class:
  - Teacher gives
    - the vocabulary worksheets included in the teacher's material
    - the vocabulary worksheets she/he has made
  - Students work on the vocabulary exercises in the book

▶ **Types of exercises included**:

◦ *finding expressions in the text and writing them down*

◦ *translating sentences/short extracts from the text*

◦ *synonyms and opposites*

◦ *word formation exercises*

◦ *paraphrasing*

◦ *crossword puzzles*

◦ *combining a word and its meaning/synonyms/opposites*

◦ *explaining a word in one's own words*

Reading

- Students read a text in advance at home
- After listening to the text
  - Students work on a reading comprehension exercise
    - *Open questions*
    - *Multiple choice questions*
    - *Summary*
    - *Translation*
    - *Explainig words*
    - *Synonyms*
    - *Opposites*
    - *Paraphrasing*

Reading difficult texts

▸ The texts in matriculation exams require **interpretation**:
  ◦ What type of text is it?
  ◦ Potential readers?
  ◦ The aim of the text
  ◦ Style
  ◦ What? Who? To Whom? Where? Why? What followed?

Speaking and conversation

- **"What we do we can be done orally"**
- Teachers make their own exercises too

- Exercises strictly based on the text:
  - *Summarising the text with the help of tips:*
    - *Pictures*
    - *Key words*
    - *Questions*
  - *Vocabulary Games: Alias, Naughts and Crosses*
  - *Making up dialogues using the expressions/vocabulary in the text*
    - *Tips in Finnish*
    - *Pairs correct themselves*
  - *Talking crossword puzzles*
  - *Pair translation*

Speaking and conversation

- **Applied exercises:**
  - **Discussion in pairs**
    - *Discussion exercises on the themes of the text*
      - *Expressing one's opinions*
      - *Argumentation*
      - *Being polite*
    - *Role plays*
  - **Group discussion**
    - *Games*
    - *Role plays*
    - *Dramatising the text/ a situation*

National oral test

- Voluntary
- Includes a course
- Test tasks from the National Board of Education
- Evaluation by two teachers or one teacher + recording

Grammar and Structures

- Written exercises
  - *Translation*
  - *Filling in the gaps (tips given)*
  - *Multiple choice*
- and oral exercises
  - *Choosing phrases and making sentences*
  - *Translation in pairs*
  - *Grammar games (naughts and crosses)*

Writing

- Writing a different type of texts:
  - *Making up dialogues*
  - *Writing a letter to one of the characters in the text*
  - *Writing a piece of news on the basis of the text*
  - *Argumentative text on one of the topics/themes in the text*
  - *Identifying with one of the characters and writing from her/his point of view*
  - *Descriptive text on the basis of the text*