Research exercise: Comparative Education System Analysis Between Finland and the United States: A Case Study

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Comparative Education Analysis Between Finland and the United States: A Case Study

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Research Questions:
- What changes have been made in the educational system in Finland that have contributed to improving performance on international assessments?
- What changes have been made in the United States educational system that are similar to the changes that have been made in Finland?
- What are the factors contributing to the success of the changes in Finland that could be replicated in the United States?

PISA Rankings 2000-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>United States</th>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>29</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Why Finland:
- The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) was first administered in 2000.
- Finland continuously ranks at the top of PISA (an international standardized test), contrary to their practice and philosophy of no national standardized tests.
- The United States ranks either at or below average in all categories.
- PISA low in-school and between-school performance variance in Finland.

Finland’s Part-Time Special Education System:
- Implemented in every school and fully funded by the government.
- Students in part-time special education do not need to be formally identified with a special need, such as ADD, ADHD, dyslexia, etc.
- Focus on early intervention places most students using part-time special education in early and elementary education.

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United States’ Response to Intervention (RTI):
- Only a handfull of public schools offer RTI services.
- Do not need an Individual Education Plan to receive support from RTI.

Further Research:
- Research regarding teacher education in Finland and the United States.
- Conduct interviews with:
  - Experts in comparative education
  - Educators and scholars from Finland and the United States
  - Berry Summer Thesis Institute 2015