

Tablet computers replace traditional textbooks in a Finnish school

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Tablet computers in a classroom.

This autumn, the schoolbags of pupils attending the Savonlinna Teacher Training School of the University of Eastern Finland are much lighter than before, thanks to tablet computers. Approximately half of the school's pupils and teachers now use personal tablet computers instead of traditional textbooks. The project includes a group of first graders who began their school path this autumn, as well as all of the school's seventh grade students. The seventh graders continuing to general upper secondary level will be among the first Finnish students to complete their matriculation examinations electronically.

The purpose of this extensive experiment is to move from traditional

textbooks to [electronic learning](#) materials and tools, and to develop school pedagogy and learning from the viewpoint of the digital age information society.

"In similar projects carried out earlier, traditional textbooks still played an important role. However, we now want to take real steps to prepare for the changes the traditional print industry. The purpose of this three-year experiment is to take the school as a whole to the digital age," says Dr Mikko Ripatti, Headmaster of the Savonlinna Teacher Training School.

The new pedagogy is built around two leading principles: Firstly, the time used for formal teaching should be decreased and, respectively, the time used for individual learning increased. This calls for a problem-based approach in teaching, co-teaching and collaboration, and planning skills. Secondly, the traditional boundaries of the classroom have expanded beyond the classroom walls both physically and virtually. This means that versatile and critical information skills and [thinking skills](#) are becoming of key importance for learning.

At the moment, Finnish publishers do not offer [digital textbooks](#) for the grades 1–9, and the school has acquired various programmes and apps for the purposes of teaching. The teachers can also either independently or together with their [pupils](#) install a variety of programmes on the tablets.

Provided by University of Eastern Finland

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