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## **CLOSING DOWN SCHOOLS AND JOINING THEM TOGETHER AS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS, PUPILS AND STUDENTS**

### **Abstract:**

Many Finnish country schools were closed down since 1960s when the industrialization drew people in cities to work. Today, also big schools are closed down, building bigger units in hope of economic savings. (Autti & Hyry-Beihammer 2009; Korpinen 2010). Driving down schools have also become more common all over the world. (f. i. Kretchmar 2011; Jones 2005).

The practice schools of the Finnish Universities have also ended up in closing and moving. The New legislation concerning universities (2010) made the funding worse, and the universities save by closing their filial units separate from the mother universities. In 2012 both Oulu and Tampere Universities closed their filial units moving the action to main campuses. In 2016 the University of Eastern Finland decided to move the Savonlinna campus to Joensuu in 2018.

Our research explores the consequences of the decision. We focus on experiences of teachers, students and other personnel about the decision. The decision took months to make and that's why the respondents were asked to write about their feelings before and after the decision making by an electronic questionnaire.

We got altogether 108 answers (76 teacher students, 28 lecturers and professors, 4 other personnel). The length of the answers was between a few lines to long essays. The data was analyzed using content analyzes. (Attride-Stirling 2001). The analyzing is still going on but the preliminary results show strong emotions. During the decision making, a strong hope and belief about the campus remaining in Savonlinna was evident. After the decision the emotions went from grief to despair and rage.

The personnel felt overtaken in the decision making processes. Moving to the main campus felt oppressive. The students felt being betrayed because they had especially wanted to study in Savonlinna. Those whose studies were in the end can finish them in Savonlinna, but the new students have to start their studies twice; first in Savonlinna and later in Joensuu.

Because the decision cannot be changed, it is resisted in other ways. The personnel try to do only the most necessary and students aim in speeding their studies to avoid moving. The research was seen therapeutic as it offered a possibility to reflect what had been experienced. It was kind of saying goodbye to a difficult matter.

### **Keywords:**

teacher education

economic saving

content analyze

experiences of staff and students