Education system, evaluation and education policy in Finland

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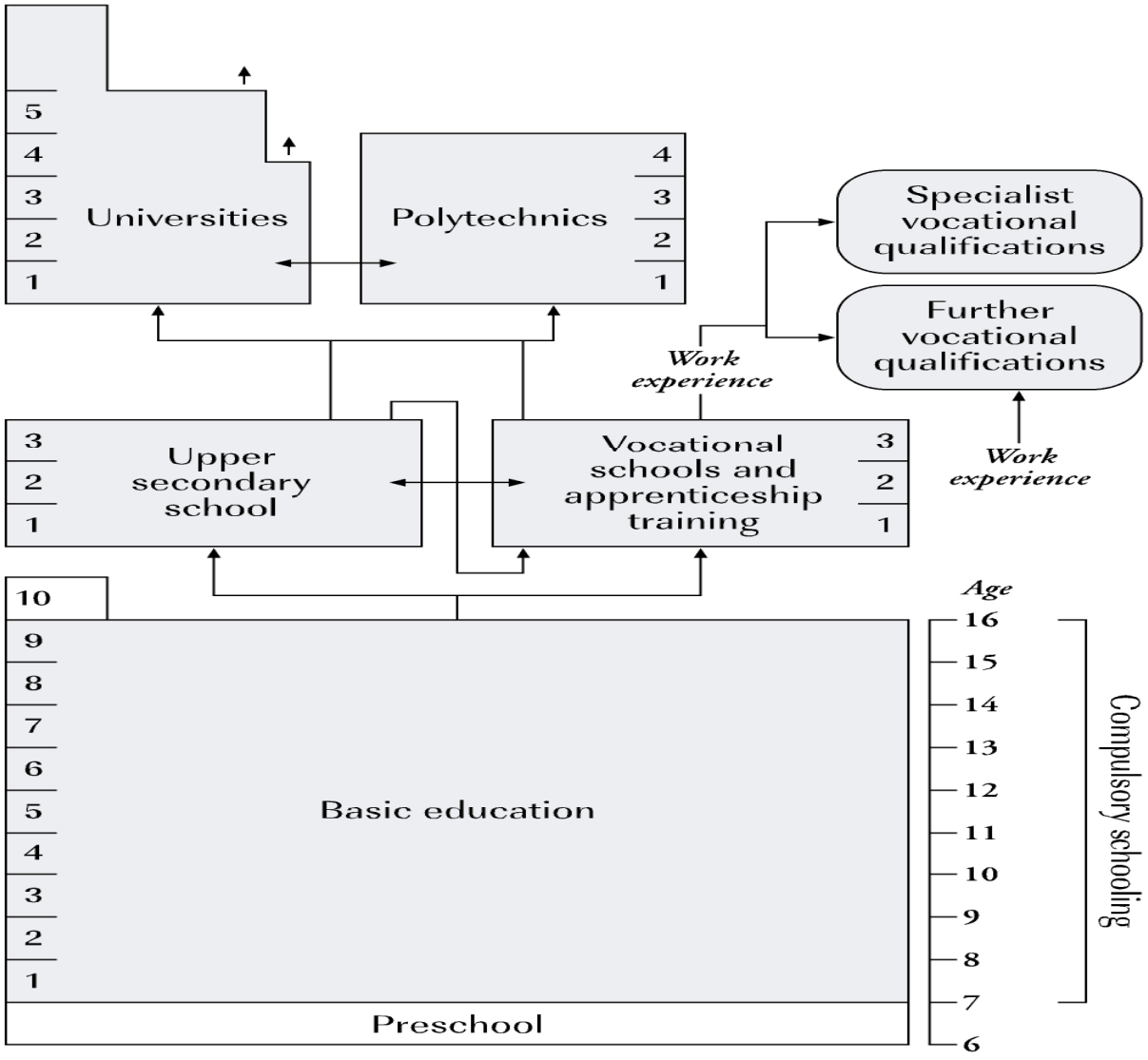
The Finnish education system



The Finnish Comprehensive School

Compulsory education for 9 years

No tracking or streaming

Basically, same programme for all

Homogeneous quality over all schools

High cognitive standards for all students

Well-being of students balanced with other aims

Support of the society

Almost all students go to public schools

Trust on teachers

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Principle of equity

Equal access to education for all, irrespective of gender, region, ethnicity, age or socio-economic background
(conservative view)

Equal opportunities to learn:
no tracking or streaming
(liberal view)

Equal learning outcomes:
special education for low-achievers
(radical view)

Comprehensive and inclusive education
- practice and philosophy
- no tracking or streaming, education is free of charge
- special support to low-achievers

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Meeting the heterogeneity of students

Early recognition and prevention of learning problems

Special education, inclusive by nature

Guidance and counselling for all

Multi-disciplinary and –sectoral cooperation

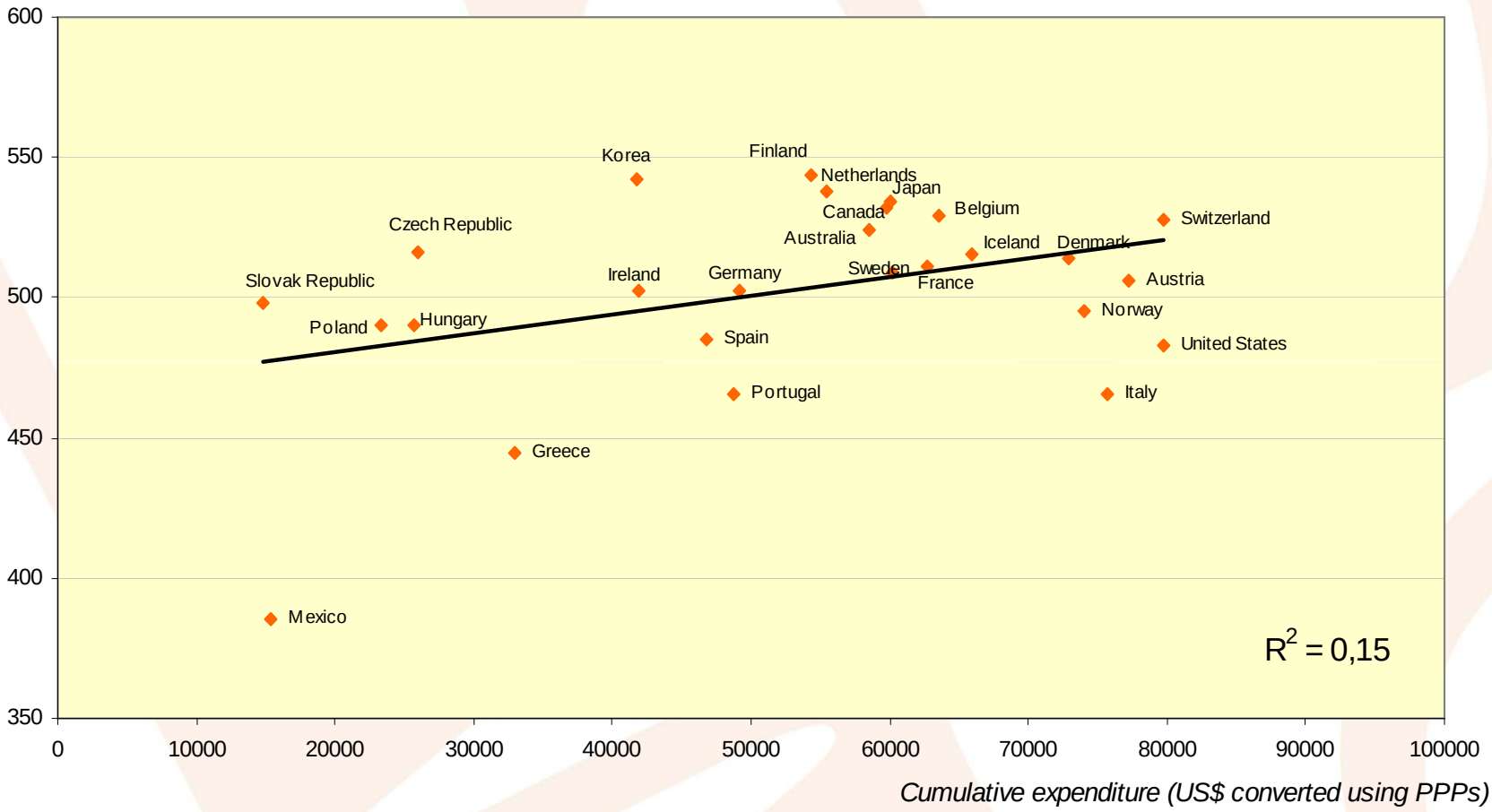
Transition from day care to school

Flexible curriculum

Health care, school meals, libraries

Cooperation with parents a challenge

Student performance and spending per student



Source: OECD PISA 2003 database, Table 2.6.

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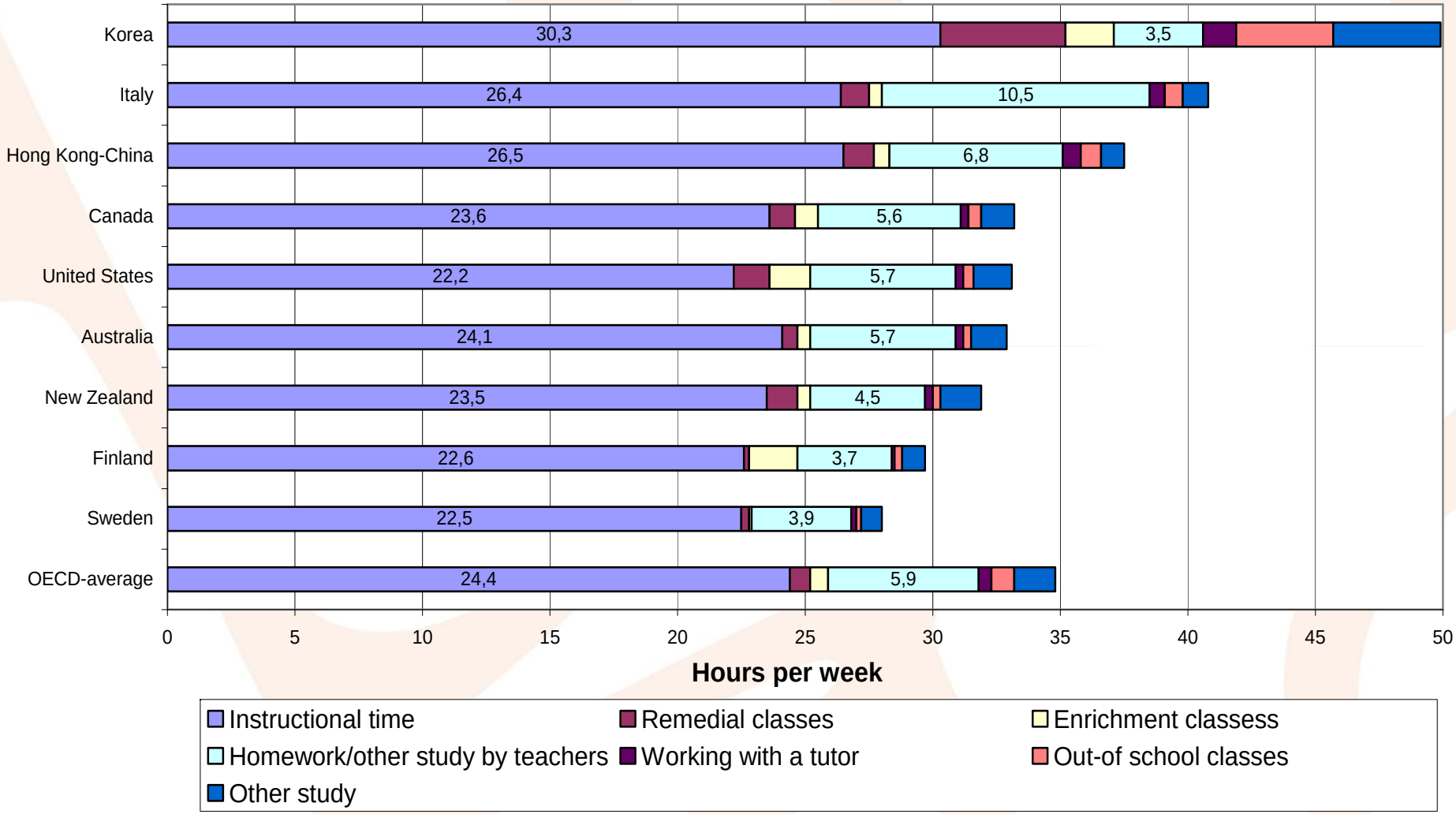
Student learning time in nine countries



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Standards and evaluation

Uniform national evaluation criteria for each subject at the 9th grade (recommendation)

Sampling-based national assessment in the core subjects

No nation-wide tests/examinations in the comprehensive school

No school inspections after the early 1990s

Self evaluation of schools, teachers and students

Quality, trust and outcomes

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Teacher education

All training at university level

Master's degree for all

Research-based teacher education

Combining educational science and subjects to be taught

High popularity of the profession

Highly motivated and multitalented students

Growing flexibility of the models

In-service training

Teacher education (cont.)

Postgraduates programs for
- *Special education teachers
- *Student counsellors
- *School heads (not compulsory)

Special education courses for all teachers

Re-organization of the programs
- *Bologna process: 3+2+4 –model
- *Common base for all teachers
- *Mobility of students, teachers, and teacher educators

Students below the 5th percentile on mathematics scale in Finland

>56 % below 5th percentile on the reading scale
>64 % below 5th percentile on the science scale
>54 % boys

Very low
- *self concept in mathematics
- *interest in and enjoyment of mathematics
- *level of confidency with mathematical problems

Very high
- *anxiety in mathematics

Lower
- *educational resources and cultural capital at home

Less developed
- *some learning strategies

Average or higher
- *teachers support
- *student-teacher relations

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Challenges of the knowledge society

Skills for lifelong learning for all

Student's attitudes, motivation and self confidence in mathematics; girls in particular

Prevention of early school leaving and drop-outs; 10-15 % have not upper secondary degree

School climate, well-being of students and engagement in learning

Equity - socio-economic, ethnic, gender, age

Develop comprehensive education policy under economic constraints

Growing immigrant population

Talented students