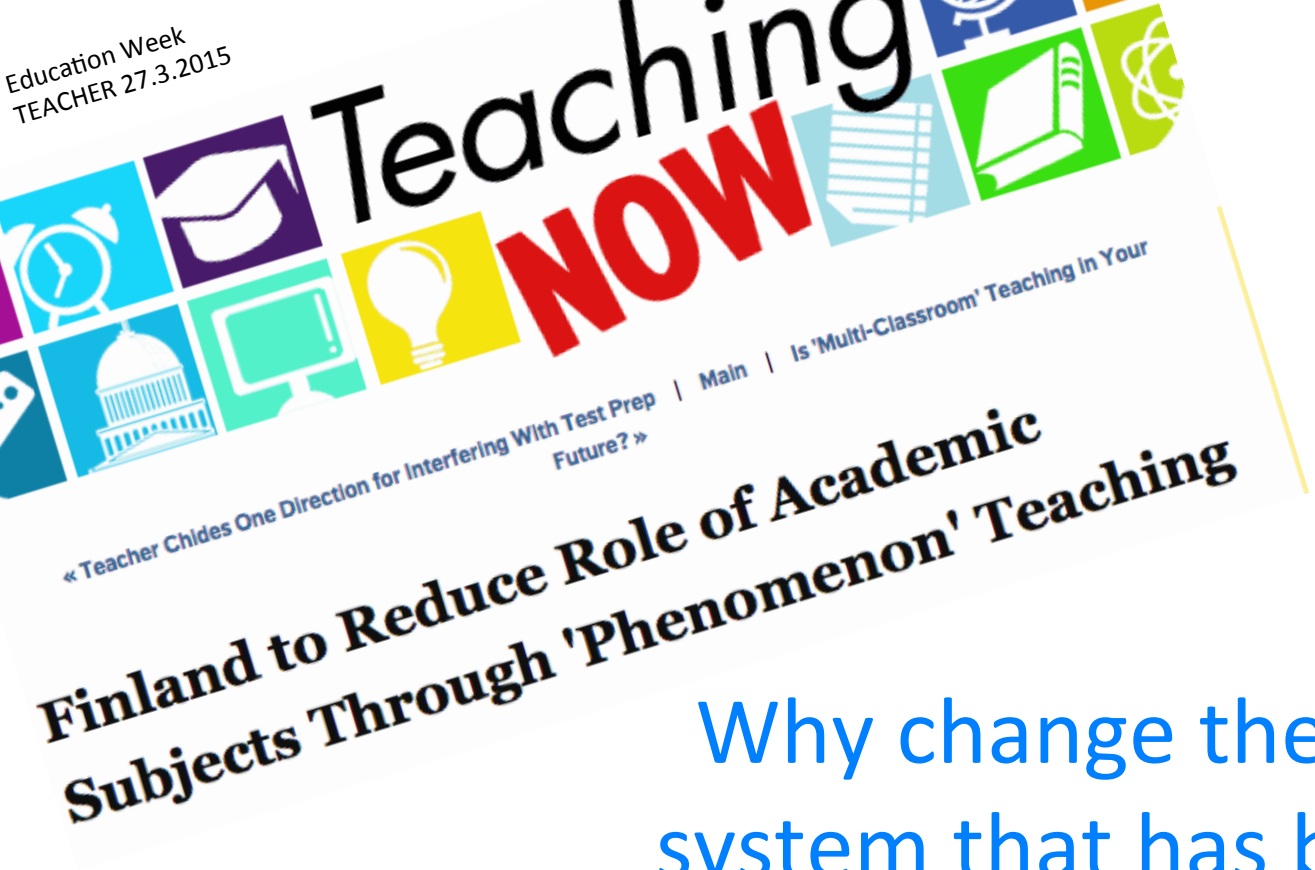


# Why change the education system that has been ranked as top quality?

## Finnish curriculum reform 2016

Learning Week, 1-5.6. 2015
European Commission
PhD Kari Kivinen

Ihre Story, Ihre Informationen, Ihr Hinweis? feedback@20minuten.ch

Schulreform

22. März 2015 20:36; *Akt: 23.03.2*

# Finnland schafft Schulfächer ab

*Französisch, Mathematik, Geschichte – Schulfächer gehöre Finnland bald der Vergangenheit an. Neu sollen Themen unterrichtet werden.*

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LE FLASH ACTU 08h47 Pérou: 14 pistes de trafiquants détruites

Tout le flash

# Le «modèle» éducatif finlandais remis en question

News > World > Europe

# Finland schools: Subjects scrapped and replaced with 'topics' as country reforms its education system

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éforme du collège • Les nouveaux programmes scolaires • Le palmarès des lycées • Bac 2015 •

# La Finlande, eldorado de l'éducation?

Education / Par Libie Cousteau, publié le 31/10/2013 à 08:41

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# Schulreform in Finnland: Weniger Fächer, meh

*Von Liisa Niveri*

Sunday, May 24, 2015

thesundaytimes

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DENNIS HAYES

# Why Finland's schools are top-notch

By **Pasi Sahlberg**

updated 11:10 AM EDT, Mon October 6, 2014

# Finland giving up excellent education system

From August next year, schools in Finland will follow a new curriculum that blurs distinctions between subjects. Students will still learn traditional subjects such as mathematics, English and history, "though with less distinct borderlines and with more collaboration in practice between them", the Finnish National Board of Education's

# High performing Finland

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Least Failed State (2014)<br>Finland #1<br>ffp.statesindex.org/ | Child Poverty Rate (2014)<br>Finland #2<br>www.unicef-irc.org | Global Gender Gap index<br>Finland #2 (2014)<br>reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/rankings/ |
| The Global Competitiveness Index (2014-2015)<br>Finland #4<br>www3.weforum.org/ | Global Competitiveness index (2014-2015)<br>Higher education & Training<br>Finland #1<br>www3.weforum.org | Corruption Perception index<br>Finland #3 (2013)<br>cpi.transparency.org/cpi2013/results/ |
| Overall Child Wellbeing index (2013)<br>Finland #4<br>www.unicef-irc.org | Global Innovation Index (2014)<br>Finland #4<br>www.globalinnovationindex.org | The UN Happiness index (2015)<br>Finland #6<br>unsdsn.org |
| Best country to be a mother index (2014)<br>Finland #1<br>www.savethechildren.org | PISA<br>In TOP 10 since 2003<br>www.oecd.org/pisa | OECD Universal basic skills summary (13.5.2015)<br>Finland #6<br>www.oecd.org |

# The quality of education

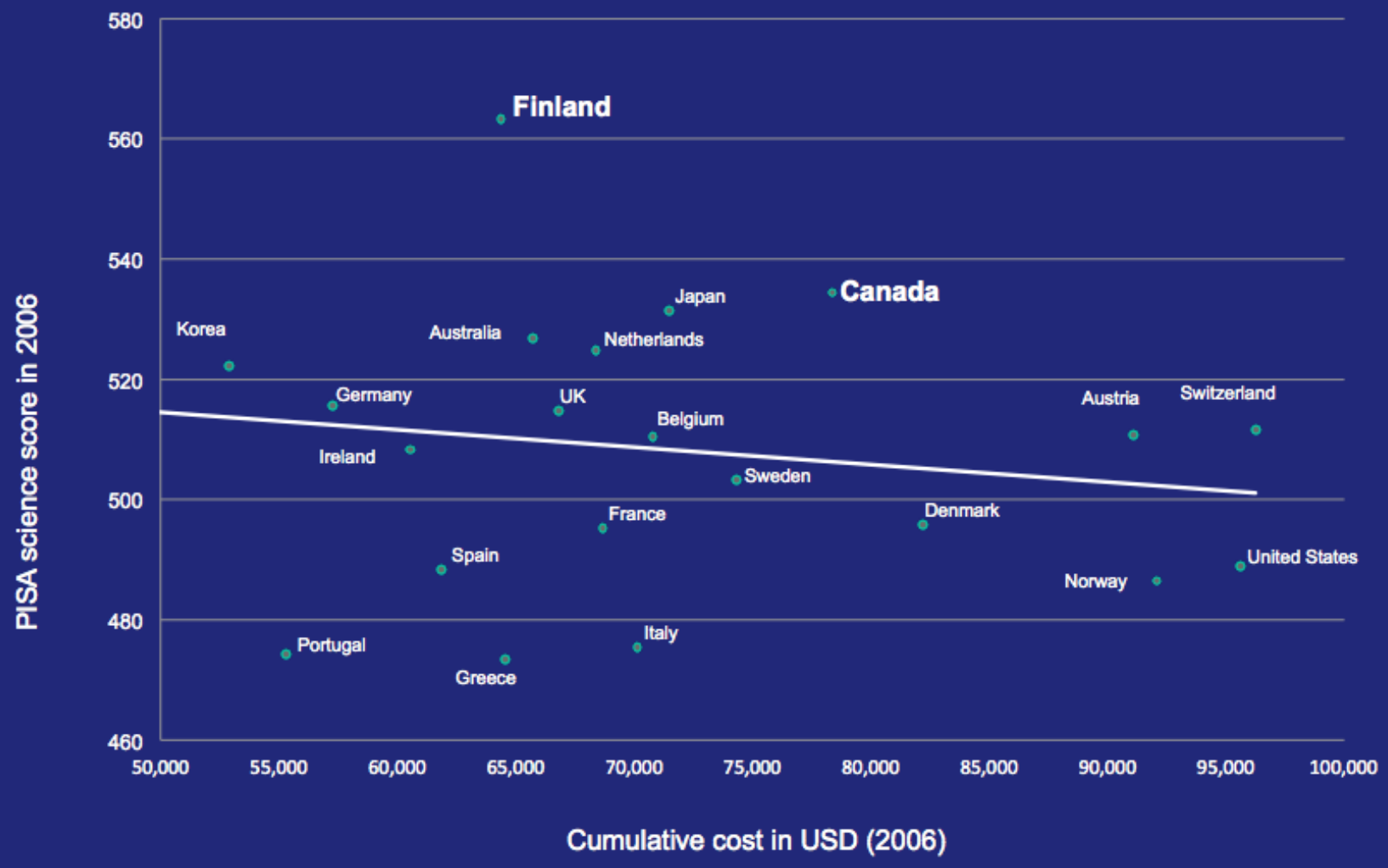
Quality indicators:

- Excellent results in PISA 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012
- 73 % of the 25-64-year olds have a certificate from upper secondary level and 33 % (the highest in the EU) have a university or corresponding education.
- Low drop-out rate (0,3 % in basic education, 2-3% in general education and 10% in vocational upper secondary education)
- According to research more than half of these drop-outs will later in one way or another receive it and possibly also a further certificate.
- Only slightly more than 1 % of the age group does not receive a comprehensive school leaving certificate.

Effective use of resources

- less than 6 % of GDP goes to education
- 190 School days per year, 4-7 hours per day in compulsory education
- The repeat rate in basic education is less than 2 %

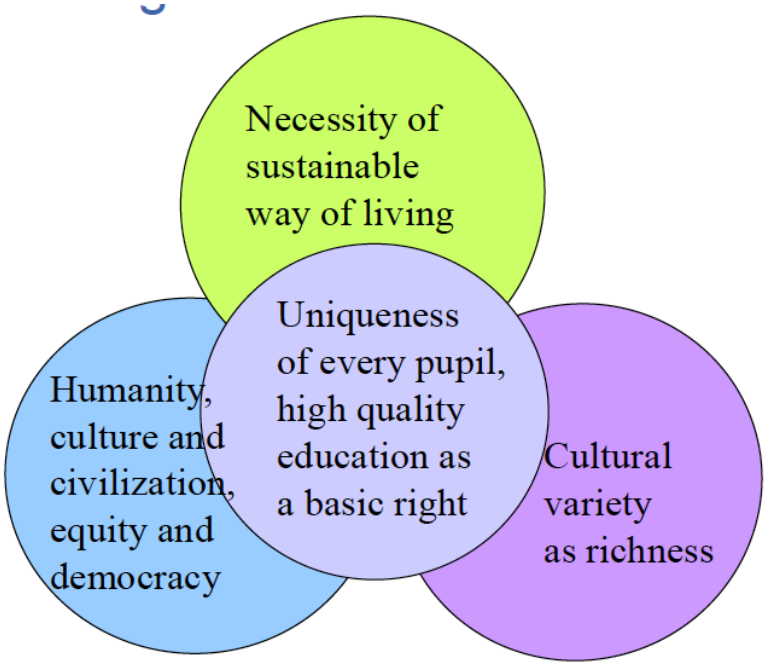
# Student achievement and the cost of schooling




OECD 2010

# Smart and sustainable educational policies and values

- Finland has never aimed to be the best in education – focus has been on other values such as equity and sustainability!



# Finnish School system before the reform

Puistonmäki, 1st primary, 1968

New comprehensive school system was introduced

- 9-year municipal school in which all pupils, regardless of their background, had the same rights and they shared the same schooling opportunities.

Decentralisation

- Decision making powers given to local municipalities

The system relies on the proficiency of the teachers in their efforts to meet the objectives laid down in the curricula.

- Evaluation Council for Education 2003

**New National Core Curriculum for Basic Education**

1970 | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2016

**Local Curriculum work in progress**

Evaluation instead of inspection

- school inspection was discontinued.
- Focus on self-evaluation and external evaluation
- Trust to school providers and teachers

Decision about teacher training

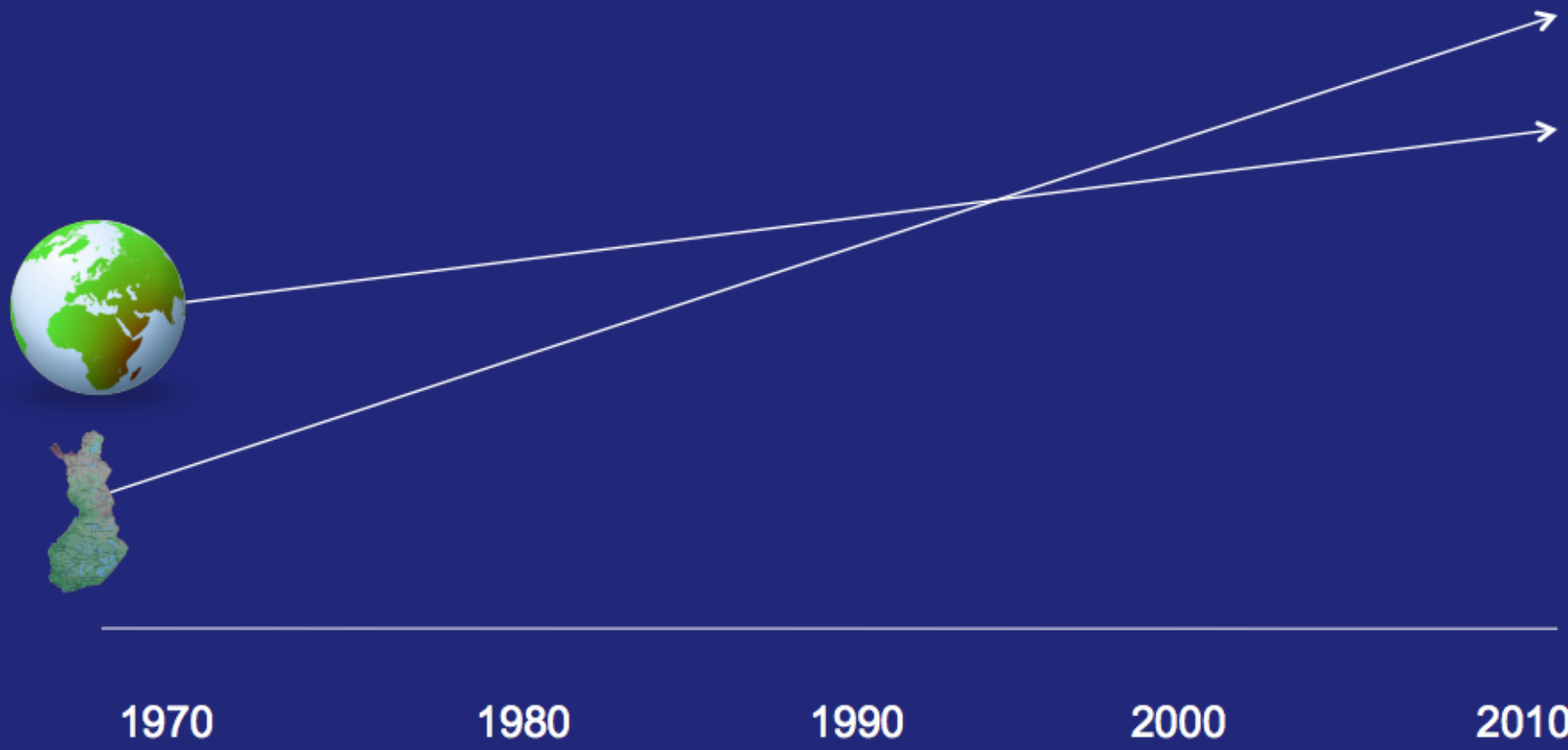
- All the teachers should have academical diploma (masters degree)

Role of central administration diminished

- National Board of Education: Broad aims and contents
- Education providers design their own local curricula

# Education system performance over time in Finland and developed nations

learning, participation, equity and efficiency



# FINNISH EDUCATION SYSTEM AT GLANCE

- 3.100 (88 private) basic schools / 555 000 pupil 39.610 Heads and teachers / average cost per pupil 6.909 euro
- 440 (37 private) general upper secondary schools / 112 000 students / 7.900 Heads and teachers / average cost per pupil 6.258 euro
- 223 vocational upper secondary schools / 157 providers / 155 000 students / average cost per pupil 10.604 euro

# Finnish education system

Finland has built up an education system whose characteristics consist of

- uniform, comprehensive school system
- free education from pre-primary to university level
- equal opportunities for education as a primary goal
- free school material (in basic school), meals and transport (if distance is more than 3 km) and
- special education by using the principle of inclusion.

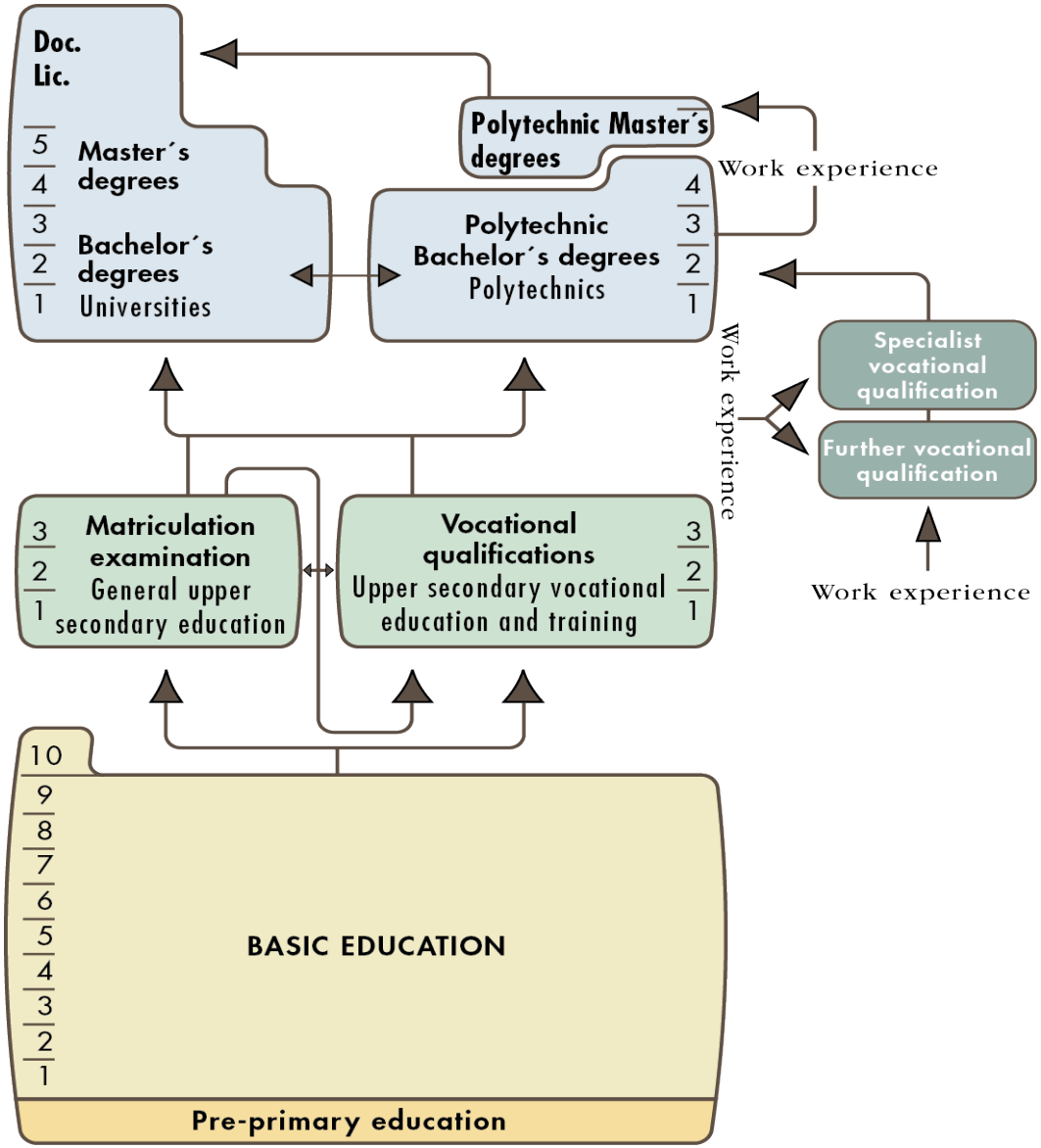
Typical of Finland are

- very small differences in achievement between schools,
- well defined and accepted admission areas
- lack of public ranking lists
- highly competent and autonomous teachers

# Basic operational culture inside the Finnish Education System

- Trust on schools, principals, teachers and students
- School Autonomy – School operational culture
- Influence of the local community
- Comprehensive basic school with extensive special and remedial teaching
- Limited competition between basic schools
- Heavy competition between schools after that, covering the whole country
  - Schools compete for best youngsters
  - Youngsters compete for best study places

# FINNISH EDUCATION SYSTEM 2015



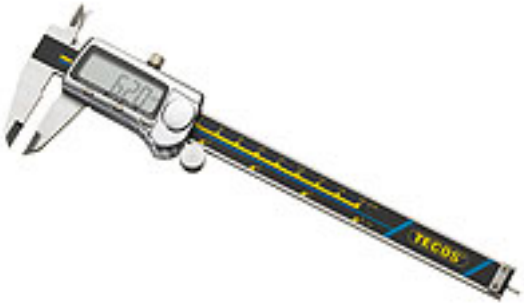
# What has been decentralised to local level of 336 municipalities?

- The ownership of schools
- Designing and decision on school network and school buildings
- Decision on class sizes
- Decision on recruitment of teachers and principals publicly declared vacant
- In the frames of National Core Curriculum:
  - Local (municipal) curriculum
  - Free space for time allocation
- Running and rhythms of school work
- The allocation of state funding
  - budget for the system and the schools

- Education committee is mandatory for municipalities – otherwise free organisation of decision-making.

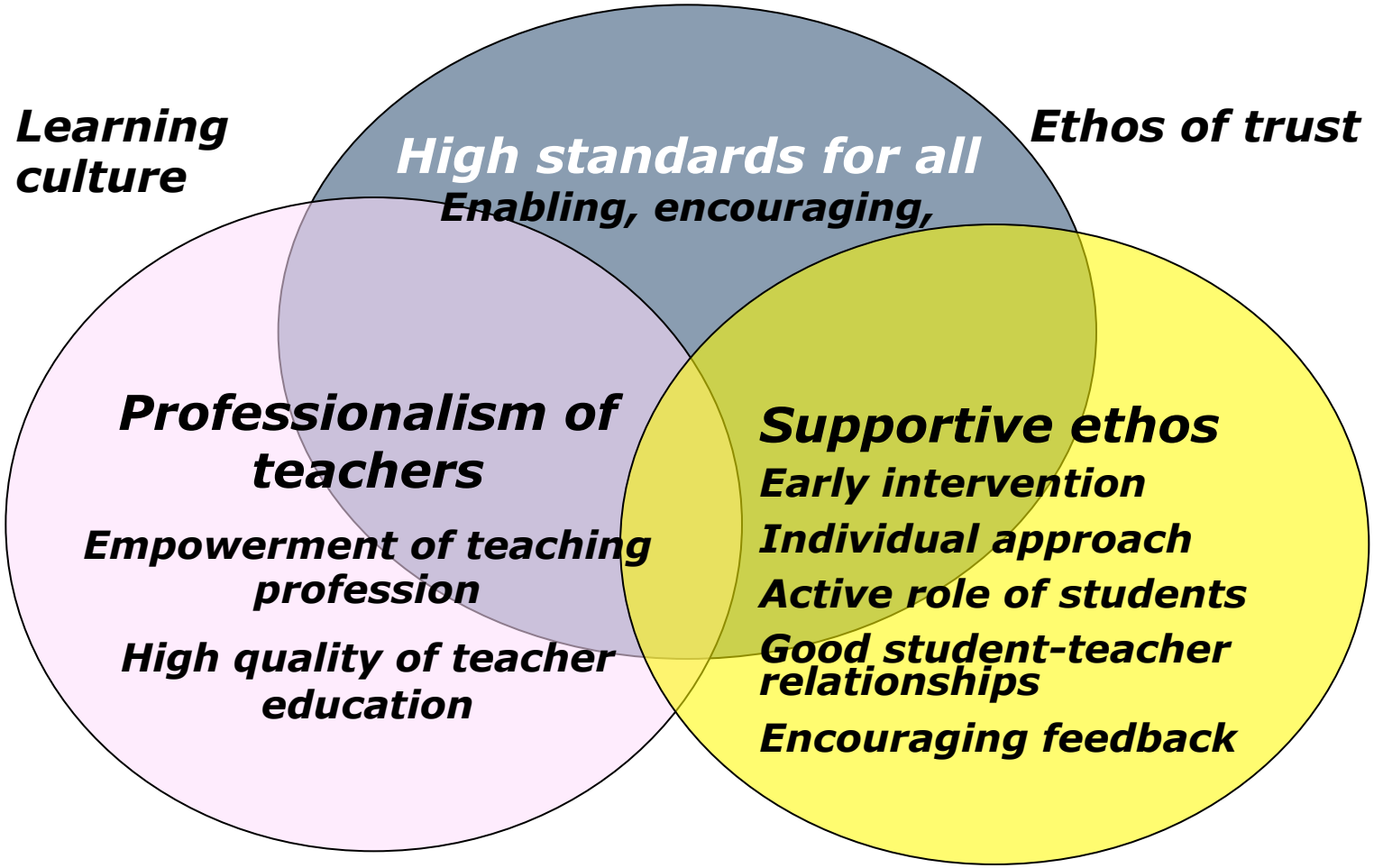
# Finnish education system is inclusive and flexible

- Systematic studying starts only at the age of seven
- Nine-year compulsory basic education is the same for all children; it is inclusive, flexible and takes into account pupils' individual needs - there is no streaming or tracking in basic education
- No inspections, no high-stakes testing or national examinations in basic education - very strong support systems instead, drop out is only 0.3%
- After completing basic education, pupils can choose the tenth voluntary year or apply for a study place either in general (more academic) or vocational upper secondary education, 97 % continues studies immediately




# Every Finnish child learns to saw , knit, measure, cook - and is allowed to use real tools!

# The Ethos of the Finnish Education system




Education system:
comprehensive, non-selective, central guidelines and goals,
local implementation and innovation

# Teaching is an attractive and desired profession in Finland

# WHY TO REFORM A WELL-FUNCTIONING SYSTEM?

In order to meet the challenges of the future, they focus on developing schools as learning communities, emphasising the joy of learning, and promoting student autonomy in studying!

# *"Only dead fish follow the stream"*

an old Finnish expression

- Finland has decided to go against the tide of the "global education reform movement," which is based on core subjects, competition, standardization, test-based accountability, and control.

Dr Pasi Sahlberg, 2012

# Why-What-How-When?

- **Why?**
  - The world in which schools operate has undergone major changes since the beginning of the 2000s; increasing the impact of globalisation and the challenges for a sustainable future
- **What?**
  - Competences needed in society and working life are changing; requiring skills for building a sustainable future
- **How?**
  - Content of education, pedagogy and school practices must be reviewed and renewed in relation to these changes
- **When?**
  - Local curricula to be approved by 1 August 2016 for introducing the new curricula at the beginning of the autumn term in 2016 for all grades

# How?

School should be a better learning environment and supporting and encouraging community which

- enhances the **meaningfulness** of studying in school
- strengthens the **identity** of every student and their **ability to work with others**
- enhances the capacity for **learning to learn** and the development of other **transversal competences**, and similarly ensures the **high quality of learning** results
- supports the development of **sustainable way of living**

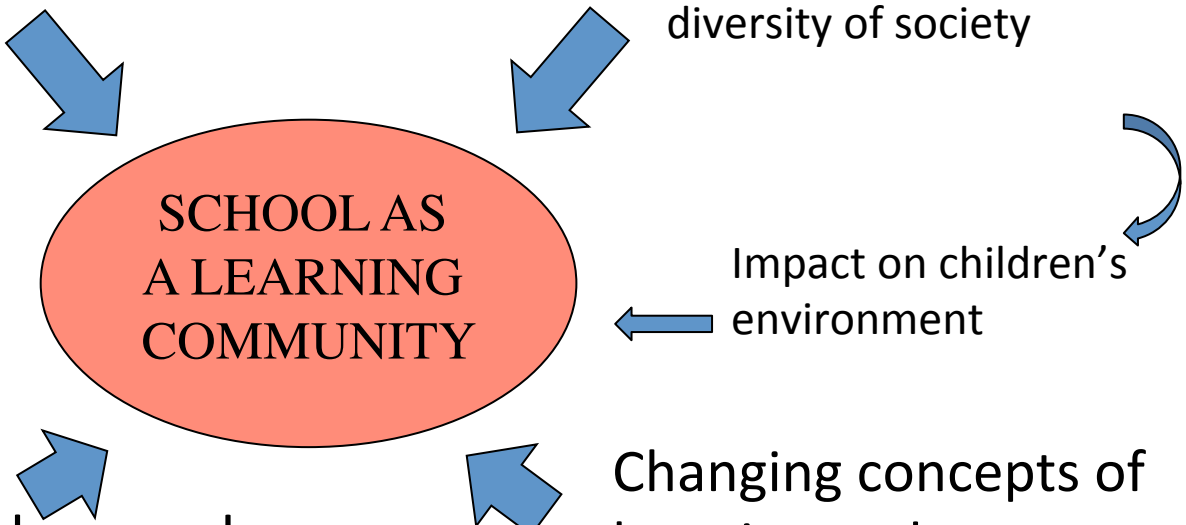
# WHY TO REFORM?

## Changing role of students

- Working together, participation
- Inquiry-based and creative learning

## World of change

- Environmental issues, globalization, economy
- World of work, technology, diversity of society




## Changing role of teachers and teaching

- Learning conception
- Working together and building learning entities

## Changing concepts of learning and competence

- Wide and transversal, ethical, sustainable
- Interaction, learning to learn, working with knowledge

# The core of change

In this world, our doing, knowing and being have changed (Pirjo Ståhle, 2009)

- **Doing** – all important and most influential outcomes are produced by cooperation and networks
- **Knowing** – more and more decentralised both technically and socially
- **Being** – our identity is hard-pressed in a world of constant change and global information flows

# Key questions of the reform

- **VISION**
  - What will education mean in the future? What kind of competencies will be needed? What kind of practices would best produce the desired teaching and learning?
- **ACTION**
  - How will change be realised in municipal and school cultures and in every lesson? Significance of personal vision and will.
- **TEACHER EDUCATION**
  - What kind of skills will teachers and other school staff require to be able to work so as to promote education and learning for the future?
- **COMMON GUIDELINES**
  - How do the national core curricula and local curricula guide and support the work of teachers and the school community?

# Focus of the curriculum reform

Rethinking the learning conception

- Importance of students own experiences and activities, feelings and joy
- Importance of working together, learning to learn in dialogue with others
- Renewing the idea of learning environment

Rethinking the school culture and the relationship between the school and the community

- School as a learning community
- Diverse and open cooperation

Rethinking the roles, goals and content of school subjects

- Transversal competences to support the identity development and the ability to live in a sustainable way

# What is changing ?
## (Government Degree 2012)

**More participatory, physically active, creative and linguistically enriched schools and integrated teaching and learning**

More lesson hours to

- Social studies (+2), Physical education (+2) and Music and visual arts (+1+1)

Integrated environmental studies in grades 1-6, including

- Biology, Geography, Physics, Chemistry and Health studies

More varied language program

- State supports financially municipalities in providing extra language studies

| Min. periods | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Now** | 19 | 19 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 222 |
| **New** | **19** | **19** | **22** | **24** | **25** | **25** | **29** | **29** | **30** | **222** |

# Basic education curriculum reform(1) - Core ideas

Sustainable way of living

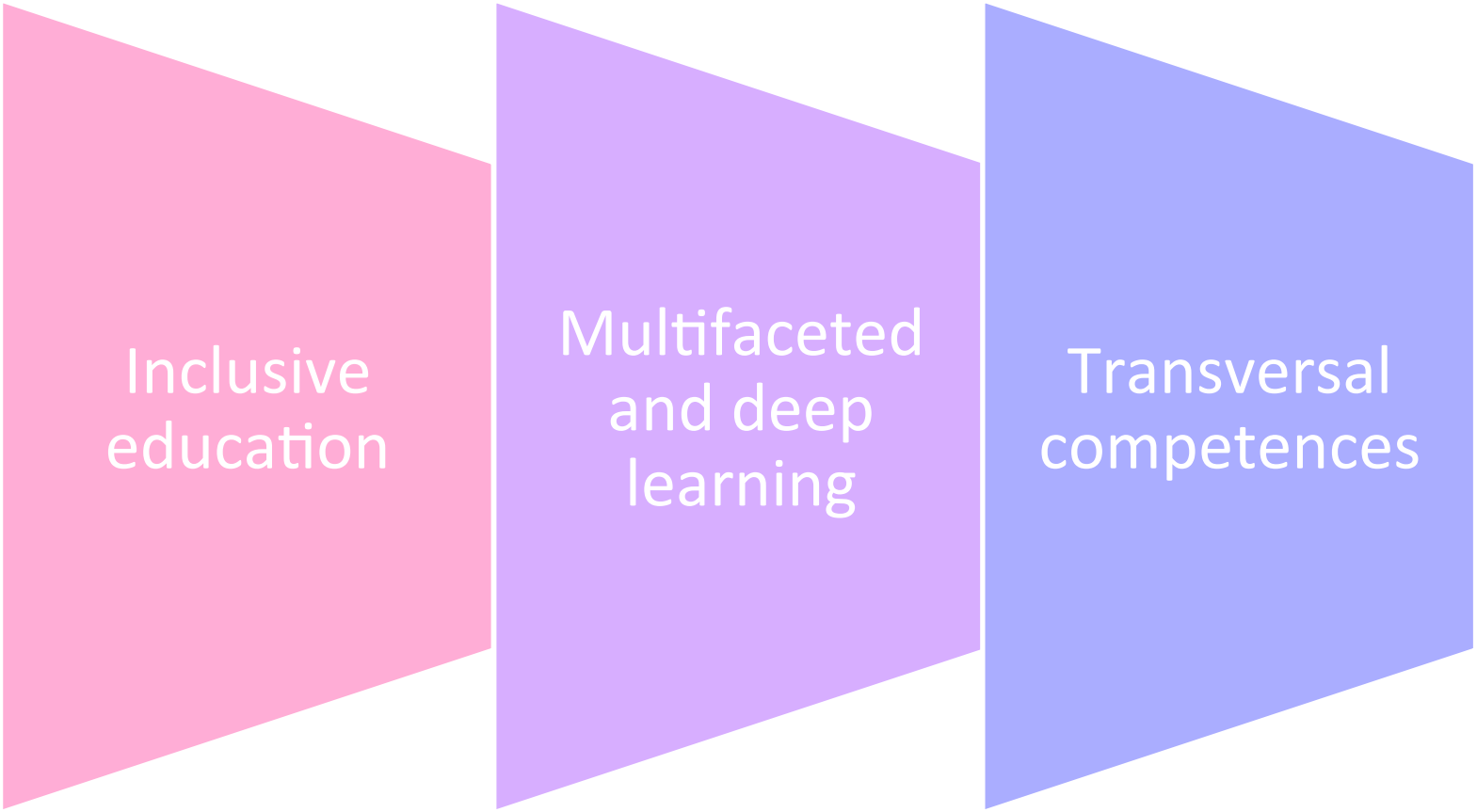
Active learner

Integrative teaching

School as a learning community

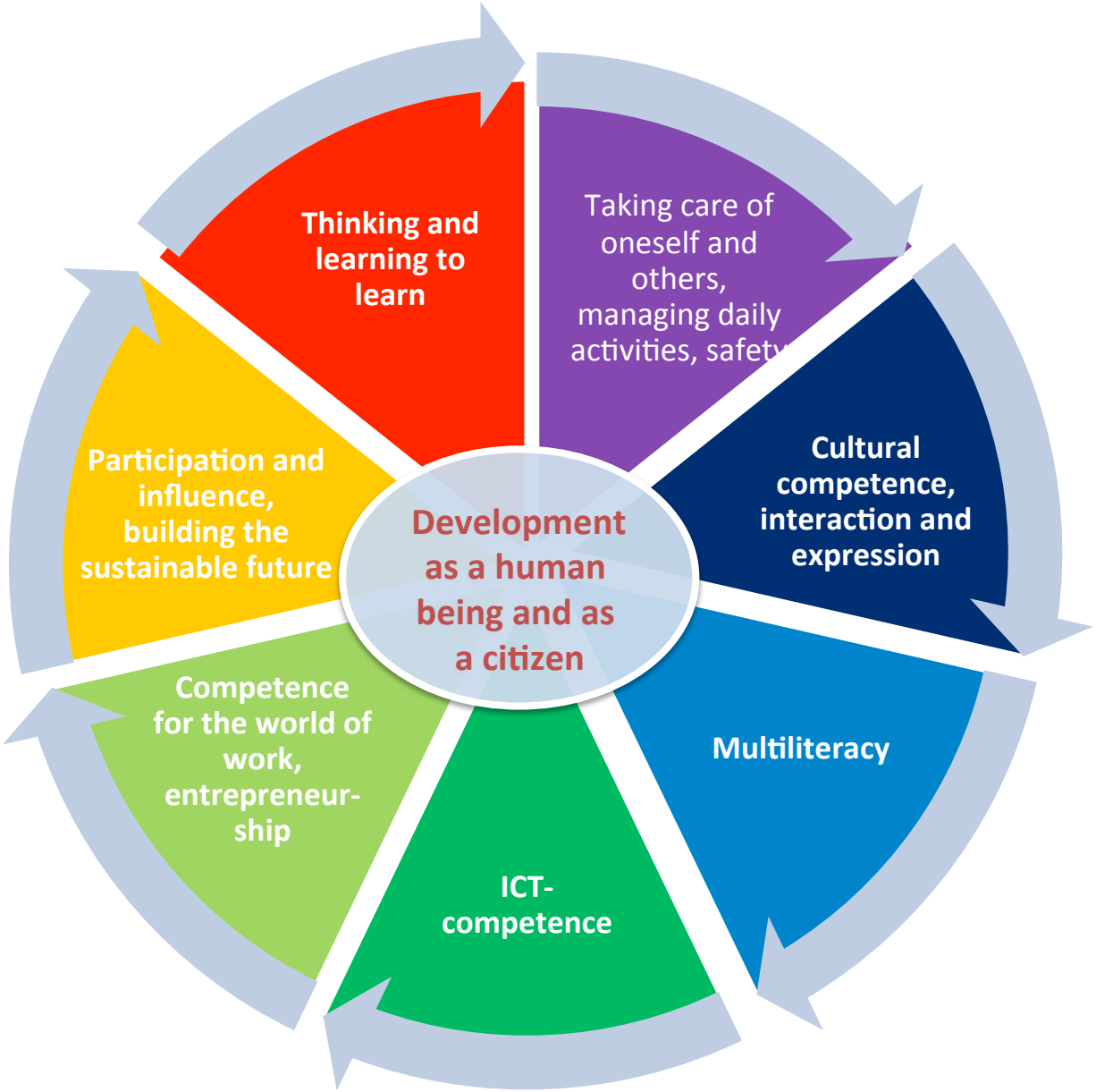
Comprehensive education

# Basic education curriculum
# Main concepts 2

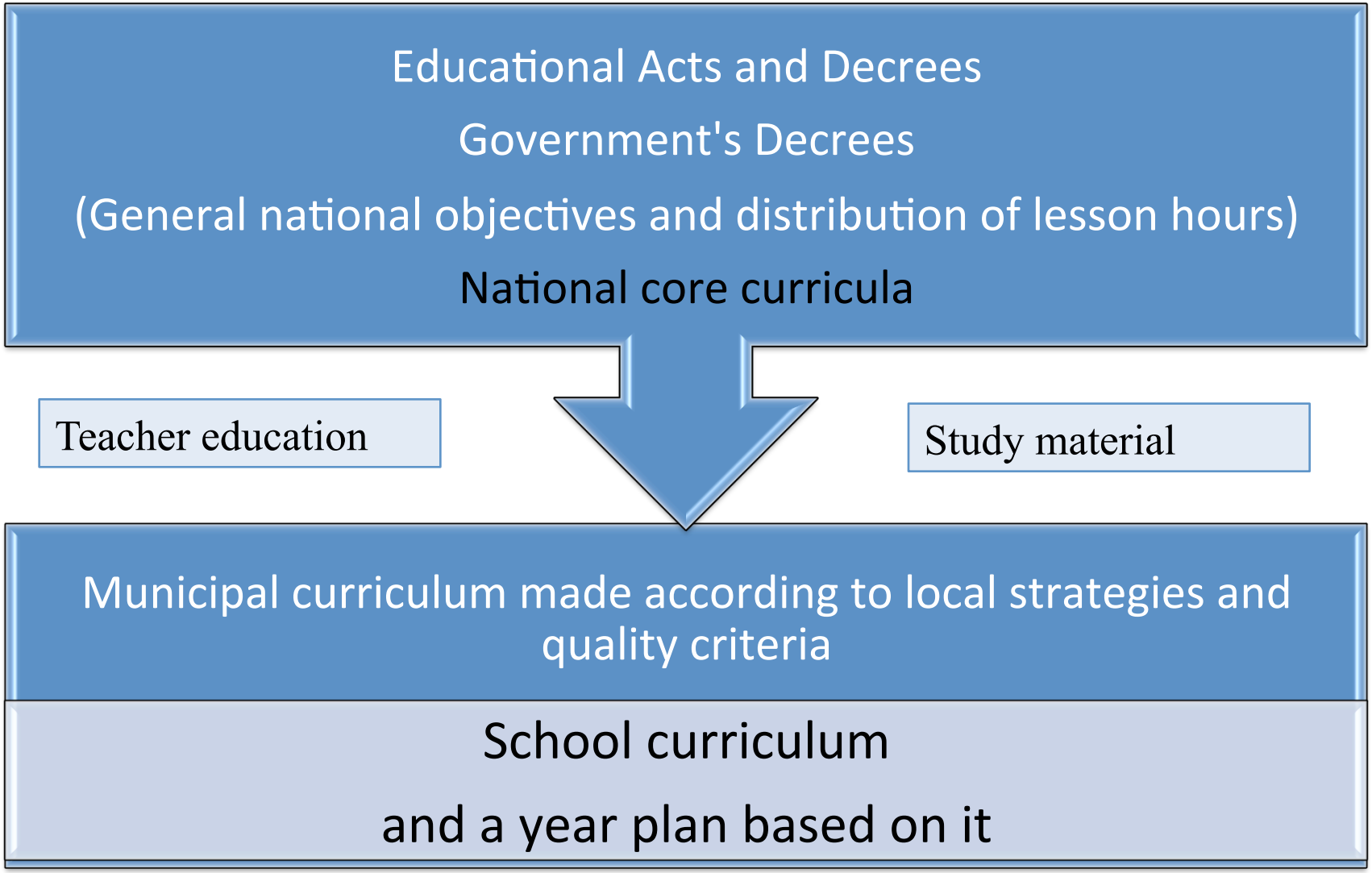


# Applying the 7 key competences

National Goals for Basic Education and Transversal Competences
- knowledge
- skills
- values
- attitudes
- will



# Governance structure and curriculum system in Finland



# Curriculum is more a process than a product!

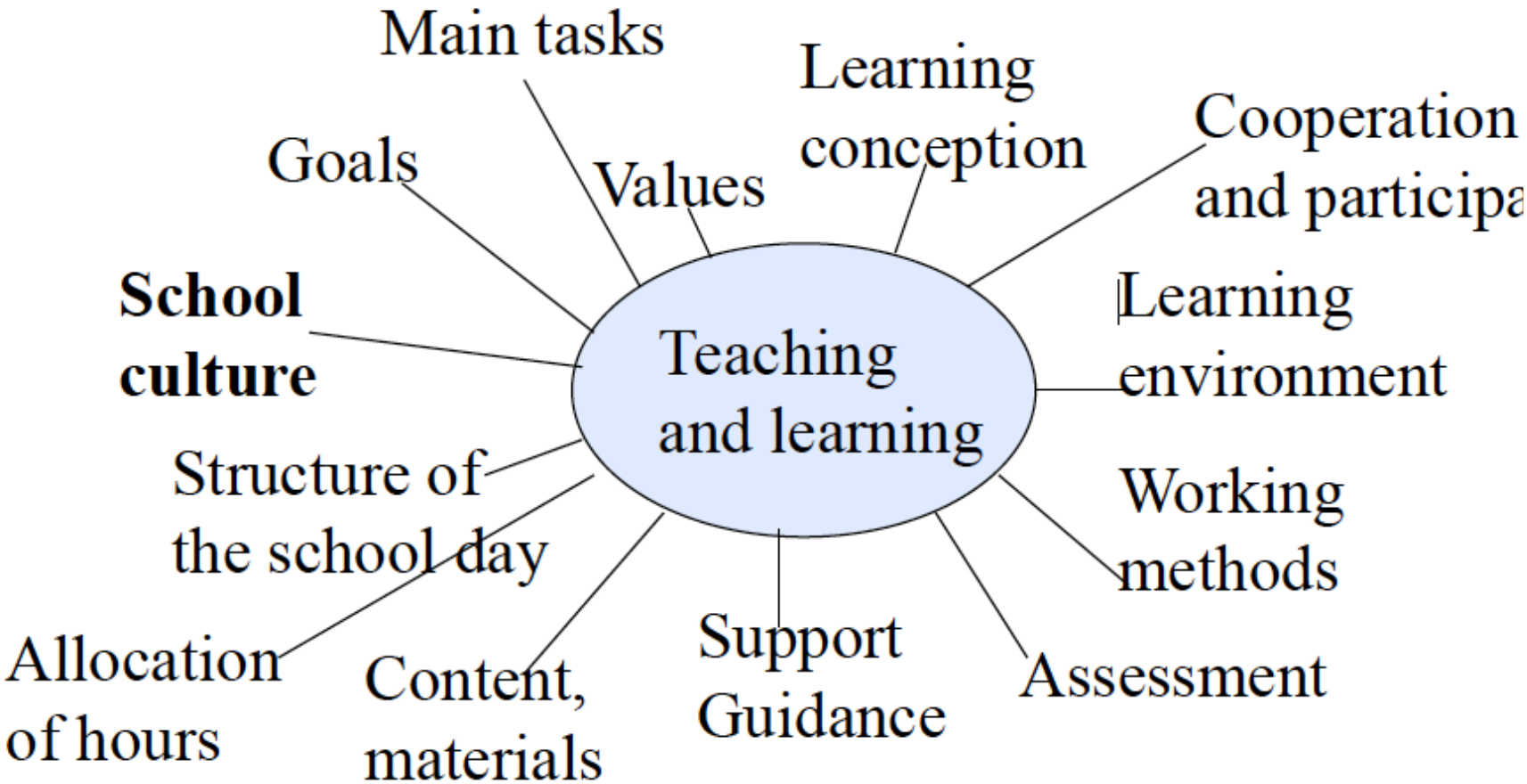
National core curricula and local curricula are drawn-up in open, interactive and cooperative processes

- Cooperation is based on mutual trust and respect
- This ongoing dialogue targets
  - to identify the issues to be improved
  - to find solutions that best serve teaching and learning
  - to promote the commitment of all stakeholders in the curriculum process and the goals set for education

# Flexibility to do things differently

- Finland's National Curriculum Framework is a loose common standard that steers curriculum planning at the level of the municipalities and their schools. **It leaves educators freedom to find the best ways to offer good teaching and learning to all children.**
- Each School provider will have a degree of flexibility to create their own, local curriculum for local circumstances.
- Finnish schools will continue to teach mathematics, history, arts, music and other subjects in the future.
- But also broader and flexible topics- chosen locally - must be introduced, which would bring in multi-disciplinary modules on languages, geography, sciences and economics.
  - Some examples are e.g. European Union, Climate change,

# Local curriculum work covers all the important areas of teaching and learning



# Phenomenon-based learning

- All basic schools must have at least one extended period of multi-disciplinary, phenomenon-based teaching and learning in their curricula.
- The length of this period is to be decided by schools themselves.
- The concept of “phenomenon-based” teaching is a move away from subjects towards inter-disciplinary approach
- students must be involved in the planning of phenomenon-based study periods and that they must have voice in assessing what they have learned from it.

# Phenomenal Helsinki

City of Helsinki
Education Department

## - the joy of learning and doing together

- The new curricula will bring phenomenon-based learning to the forefront alongside subject-based learning.
- This means that students and pupils will be studying in a community-oriented and long-term manner, dealing with real problems and real-world phenomena: the skills, objectives and contents of multiple subjects will we integrated.
- Such skills include thinking skills, working skills, interaction skills, professional skills, everyday skills, participation and influencing skills and the building of a sustainable future.

# Phenomenal Helsinki

## - the joy of learning and doing together II

- The school will build **networks and partnerships** to **support the growth and learning of children**
- The school will consist of **flexible learning spaces** that are suitable for different kinds of groups and working methods, and accessible to operators outside of the school as well.
- The school will also encompass nature and urban Helsinki, where **problems and phenomena will be studied in real environments** and **with the collaboration of real operators and experts**.
- Pupils and students will learn by **operating in a community, in society and in working life**.
- Helsinki aims to comprehensively utilise the potential of **digitalisation** in the development of pedagogy, to which end the city will draw up a predictive digitalisation strategy for education and learning.

"We really need a rethinking of education and a redesigning of our system, so it prepares our children for the future with the skills that are needed for today and tomorrow.

There are schools that are teaching in the old fashioned way which was of benefit in the beginnings of the 1900s – but the needs are not the same and we need something fit for the 21st century."

*Marjo Kyllönen, (Independent, Sunday, 20.3.2015)*

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