



# **Trust and Responsibility: a fruitful strategy for Finnish education and schools**

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**Kirstilonka.fi**

**@kirstilonka**

**What do you know/think/wonder/want to know about:**

**Finnish schools?**

**Teacher education?**

**Please talk to the person(s) next to you and compare!  
I shall interrupt you by raising my hand after 3 minutes**

# Seven urban legends of Finnish Education (Lonka, 2018)

1. Giving up subject-matter teaching **False**
2. Minimal guidance and no structure **False**
3. Digitalisation leads to giving up doing things by hand **False**
4. Social and emotional interaction is diminishing **False**
5. Hard work is not needed and schools are too entertaining **False**
6. Collapsing PISA results and blaming the new curriculum **False**
7. Common and serious internet addiction among youth **False**

# The most important part of any successful educational system - the teacher *SCIENCE*, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2012, Vol 335

Editor

John E. Burris

**Recruit the best and the brightest to be teachers, and train them well.**

**Give them the independence from centralized authority, and time to prepare lessons and ...**

**.... Finland acknowledges the central role of teachers in society, as demonstrated by the respect**

# Different levels of Finnish school teachers

## **A secondary (subject matter) teacher**

- typically teaches at grades 7 to 12 (ages 13 to 19)
- teaches typically one major and one minor subjects (e.g. math and physics)

## **An elementary (class) teacher**

- grades 1 to 6 (ages 7 to 13)
- teaches typically all 13 subjects, specializes in one or two

## **An early education (kindergarden) teacher**

- teaches from age 3 to 6
- no subject-matter based curriculum, playful learning

# Finnish Teacher training at the university level

- The training of subject matter teachers has been conducted at the university level since the early 19th century (Master's degree plus pedagogical studies)
- The training of class teachers (primary) was transferred over to be carried out by universities in the early 1970s (Master's degree)
- The training of kindergarten teachers in universities began in 1995 (BA, also MA)



# SUMMARY OF SOME BASIC FEATURES OF FINNISH TEACHER EDUCATION

- The level (MA) of teacher education has been highest in the world
- It is still difficult to get in to a class teacher program (BA+MA), more than 1500 apply and 120 taken in
- Attractive job: autonomous teachers, short school days, long holidays, relatively good salary
- Teachers are usually well-liked and respected
- 96 % of our students from Faculty of Education get a job quite soon after graduation (Statistics of 2018), majority shall work as teachers
- The teaching philosophy is also based on supporting the autonomy of the students and trusting that they learn to self-regulate their learning
- Vocational universities train vocational teachers

# Finns are NOT applying the “output approach”

- **The output approach has a close link to accountability “ideology”, where nationwide testing is organised in order to recognise effective and non-effective schools and teachers**
- **According to this “ideology” standards and accreditations are needed also for teacher education**
- **We believe in our academically educated and autonomous teachers both in universities and in schools – no school inspections and no standardized testing to compare schools**



# FINNISH TEACHERS' ROLE IN ASSESSMENT

- Teachers are considered as autonomous academic professionals, who are able to **plan, implement, and assess** teaching and learning
- Assessment data (formative and summative) is used for different purposes, e.g.
  - student assessment (learning and development)
  - for improving teaching and learning
  - for selecting students to next level
- Teachers can regulate their own learning, which is prerequisite for supporting learning and autonomy in their students
- No high-stake exams before the end of high school

# The school reform in 2016

- The new curriculum is introduced every 10 years
- In vocational training 2015
- The 2016 reform in general education introduced seven new broad-based skills
- Also interdisciplinary or phenomenon-based projects in addition to subject-matter based studies (at least one per year)
- The implementation started gradually and proceeded to ninth graders in 2019
- A new High school curriculum was introduced in 2019

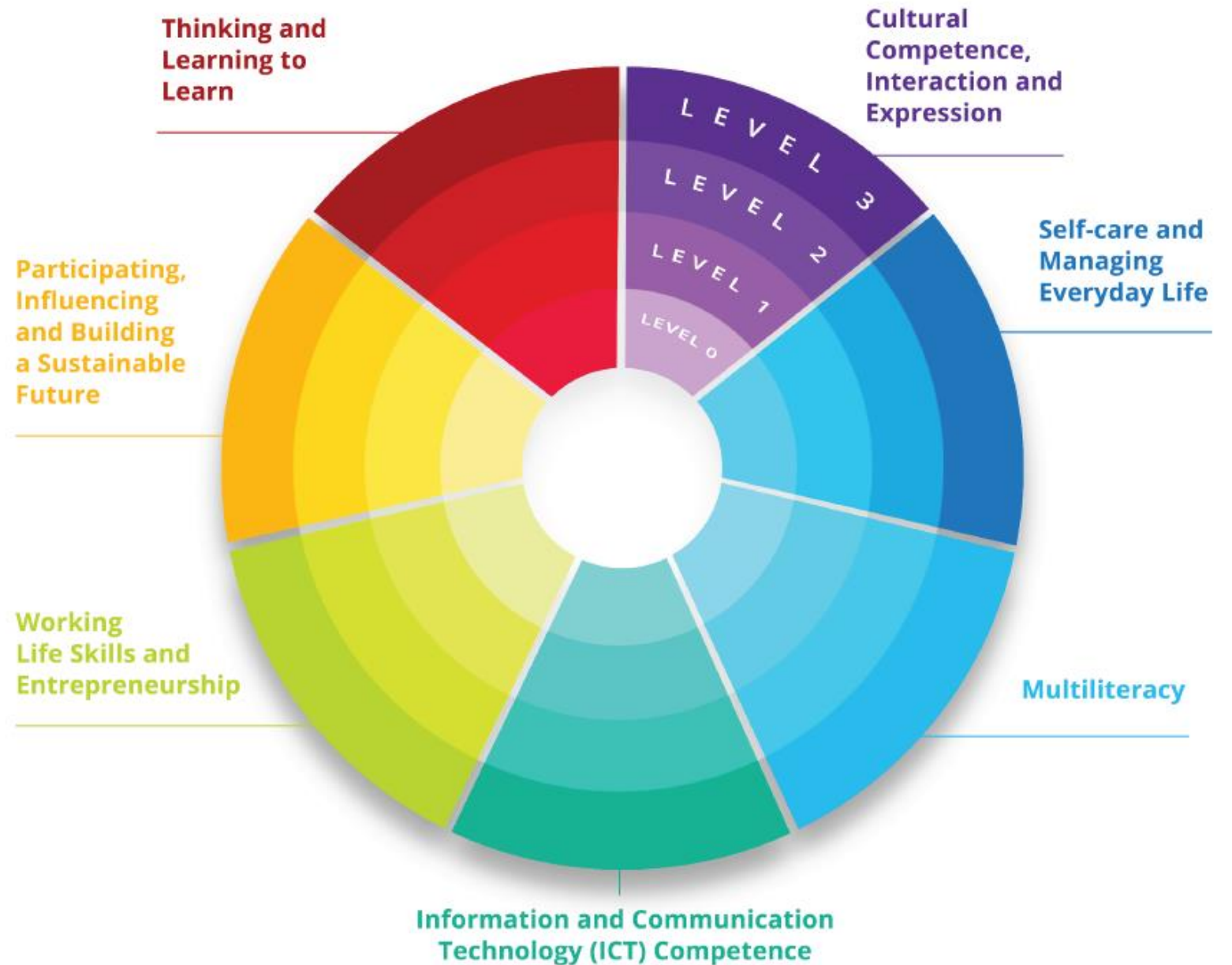
# Some features of Finnish educational system

- Same early childhood education for all from 3-6 years
- Same comprehensive school for all from 7-15 years
- After comprehensive school, proceeding to either high school or vocational education from 16-18
- No dead ends, at any stage you can move towards higher education
- Vocational universities and research universities (a dual system)
- University of Helsinki is among the 80 best in the world, educational sciences among 30 best (number 6 in Europe in 2019)

# CURRICULUM REFORM IN 2016

## THE FINNISH BROAD-BASED 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

A TOOL AVAILABLE ON [kirstilonka.fi](http://kirstilonka.fi)



# The seven broad-based skills

- 1) Thinking skills and learning to learn
- 2) Cultural competencies, communications skills and self-expression
- 3) Taking care of oneself and every day skills
- 4) Multiliteracy
- 5) ICT competencies
- 6) Work life skills and entrepreneurship
- 7) Participation in society and the readiness to build sustainable future

# Interdisciplinary or Phenomenon-based projects

In the new national curriculum, there are usually 1-2 interdisciplinary projects per year, crossing the boundaries of subject matter

Playful learning and gamification, i.e. Seppo.io

In Helsinki and many other communities these are organised around a larger phenomenon, such as "Life and Death" or "Energy"

Combining academic topics with other mandatory subjects, such as handicraft,





# Renewing our teacher education, physical spaces, technologies and practices

- ENGAGING  
LEARNING  
ENVIRONMENT  
FOR FUTURE  
TEACHERS

K. Lonka (2012)



<http://vimeo.com/60818003>

Video by Mikko.I.Halonen



Pictures by Veikko Somerpuro

<http://vimeo.com/hufbs>



Prof Kirsti Lonka



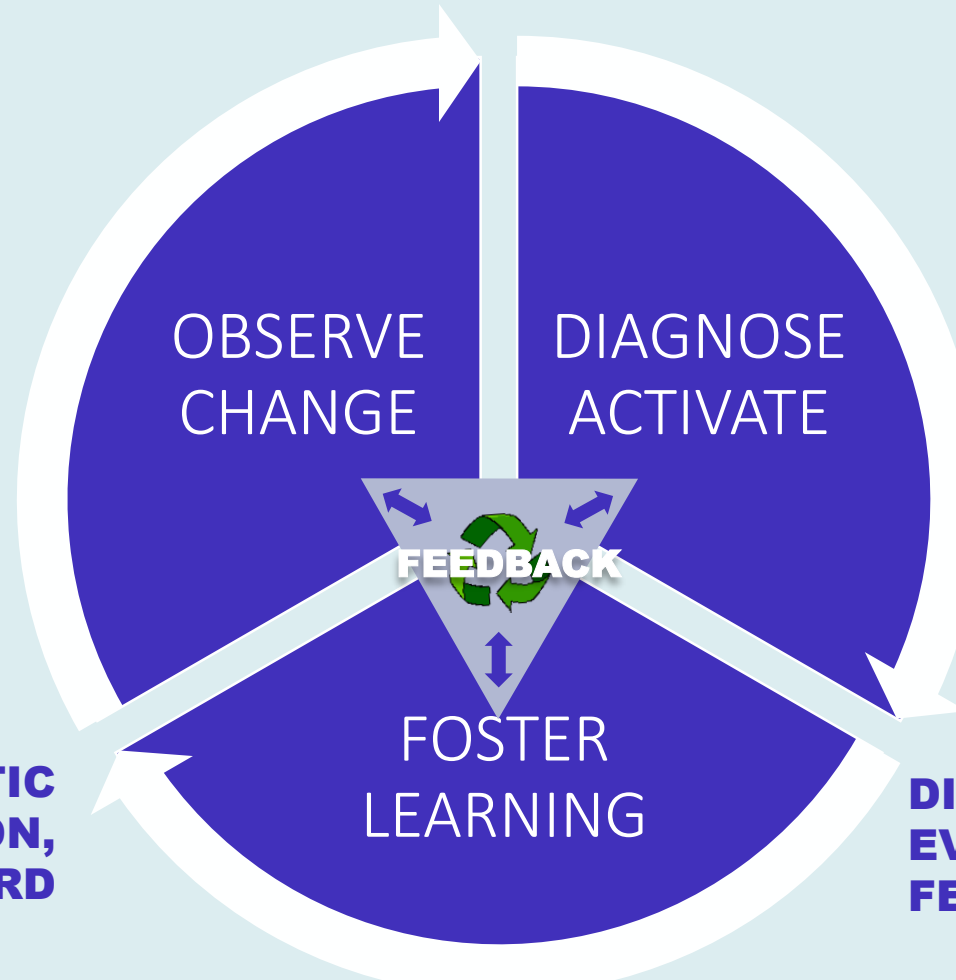
# Based on Engaging Learning model (Lonka, 2012; 2018)

## High-impact learning and sustainable results

Assessing change, deepening interest

- What new was created?
- What should be developed?

**DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATION, FEED FORWARD**



Activating and diagnosing, catching interest, setting context and goals, starting the process.

**DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATION, FEED FORWARD**

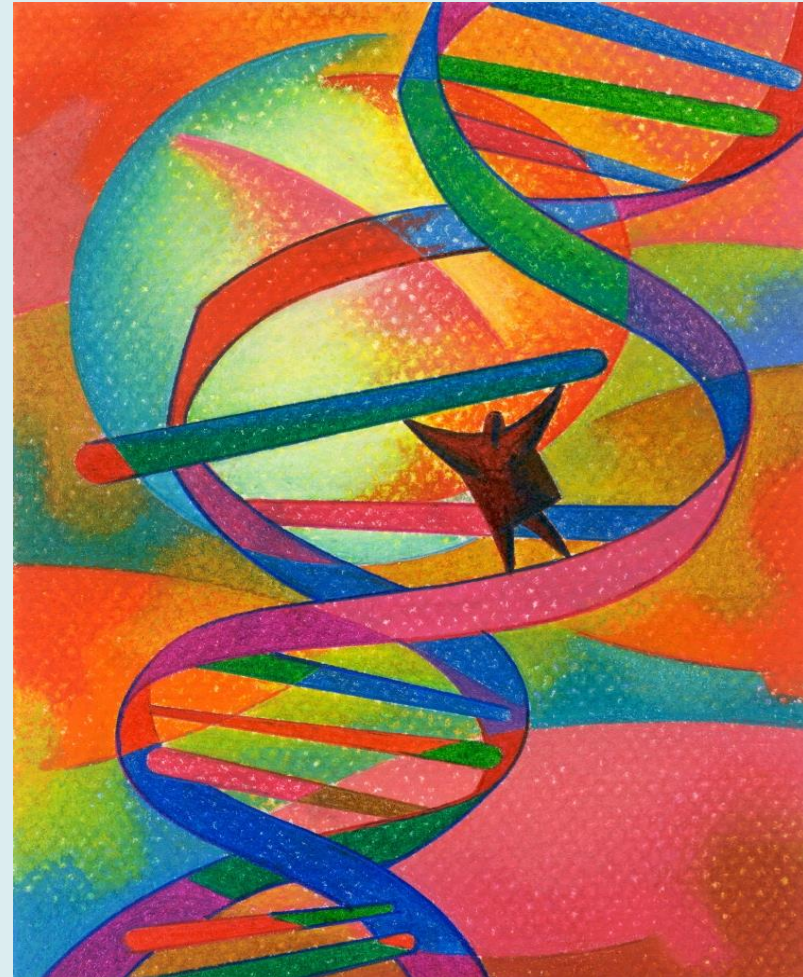
Fostering the learning process and reflective thinking, maintaining interest, (face to face, P2P, virtually etc.), creating new knowledge or new practices

# THE SEVEN MIRACLES OF FINNISH SCHOOLS

1. Better results with less money than other Nordic countries
2. Short school days and long holidays provide as good results as 12-hour days in East Asia
3. Playful learning until the age of 7 and still good results
4. Top 5 results in science, even though arts, music, handicraft, sports and home economy are mandatory school subjects
5. In the same class there are refugees, special needs students and children from all kinds of socio-economic status
6. Finland is the only country in the world where teenagers are among top five in both science and life satisfaction (OECD2018)
7. Simultaneously a digital leap, school funding cuts, refugee crisis and new national curriculum

# The double helix of our teachers

- Trying to keep up the old practices and simultaneously trying to transform our schools
- This is a world wide problem
- One needs to give up even some good things to constantly update our system
- This may be very stressful!



# New projects by Finnish Ministry of Culture and Education

- **Teacher education reform started in 2018  
(Chair prof Jari Lavonen)**
- **Top projects funded 2017-2019 for several million euros (University of Helsinki: two million euro)**
- **Our own project is called "Phenomenal Teacher Education" aiming at supporting the implementation of the new national curriculum and renewing teacher education**



# New ways of learning

- School goes out and the outdoor world comes in
- Bridging between different learning environments by using mobile technologies
- It develops the brain to spend time in outdoor activities and sports, as well as arts and music



Above: Taiwanese high school students in Finland 2017 studying the phenomenon "Energy"



All this promotes innovation and skills for the future!





Online/Blended Solution

# TAT **business courses**

**Based on Prof. Lonka's  
Engaging Learning  
Model**





Online/Blended Solution

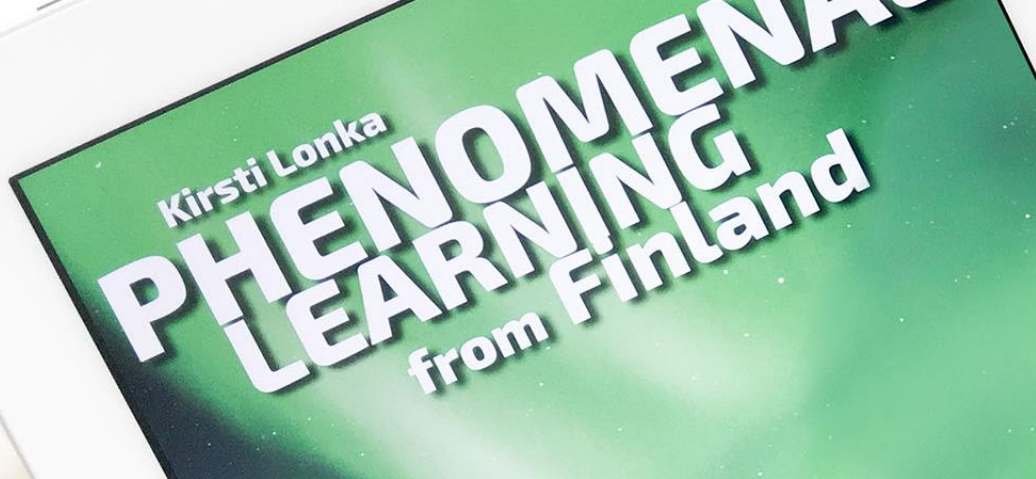
# Commercial and Economic skills for Youth

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<sup>TAT</sup> **business  
courses**





*Research-based solutions to engage the learners (Lonka, 2018).*

MODERN PEDAGOGICAL THEORIES

BROAD-BASED COMPETENCES

*Helping to implement the new curriculum*

*Phenomenal Teacher Education*

NEW LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

*Using the latest technologies to support blended learning*

# Some latest publications

Talvio, K. M., & Lonka, K. (2019). How to create a flourishing classroom? An intervention protocol for enhancing teachers' social and emotional learning. In L. E. van Zyl, & S. Rothmann (Eds.), *Positive psychological interventions: Theories, methodologies and applications within multicultural contexts* Springer.

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