



OPS 2016

Curriculum reform in Finland

FINNISH NATIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Reforming general education

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Reform of general education

- The entire general education system is due for reform in terms of objectives, lesson-hour distribution, the National Core Curricula and local curricula.
- The transfer of early childhood education and care into the administrative sector of the Ministry of Education and Culture needs to be taken into account.
- The work will be carried out as a whole between 2012 and 2016/2017.
- Several core curriculum documents will be drawn up concurrently.
- Each process of drawing up a core curriculum document involves broad-based co-operation with education experts and various stakeholders, as well as support for local curriculum development efforts



General education reform: Curriculum development work 2012–2017

2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017

NCC for pre-primary, basic and voluntary additional basic education

Local curricula

NCC for general upper secondary education

Local curricula

NCC Preparatory education for general upper secondary school

Local curricula

NCC for basic education for adults and NCC for general upper secondary education for adults

Local curricula

NCC for basic education in the arts

Local curricula

NCC = National Core Curriculum



TEACHING AND LEARNING

POSSIBLE SCHOOL-SPECIFIC CURRICULUM and annual plan based on it

LOCAL CURRICULUM 2016

Local needs

Quality criteria

and policies

Teacher education

Learning materials

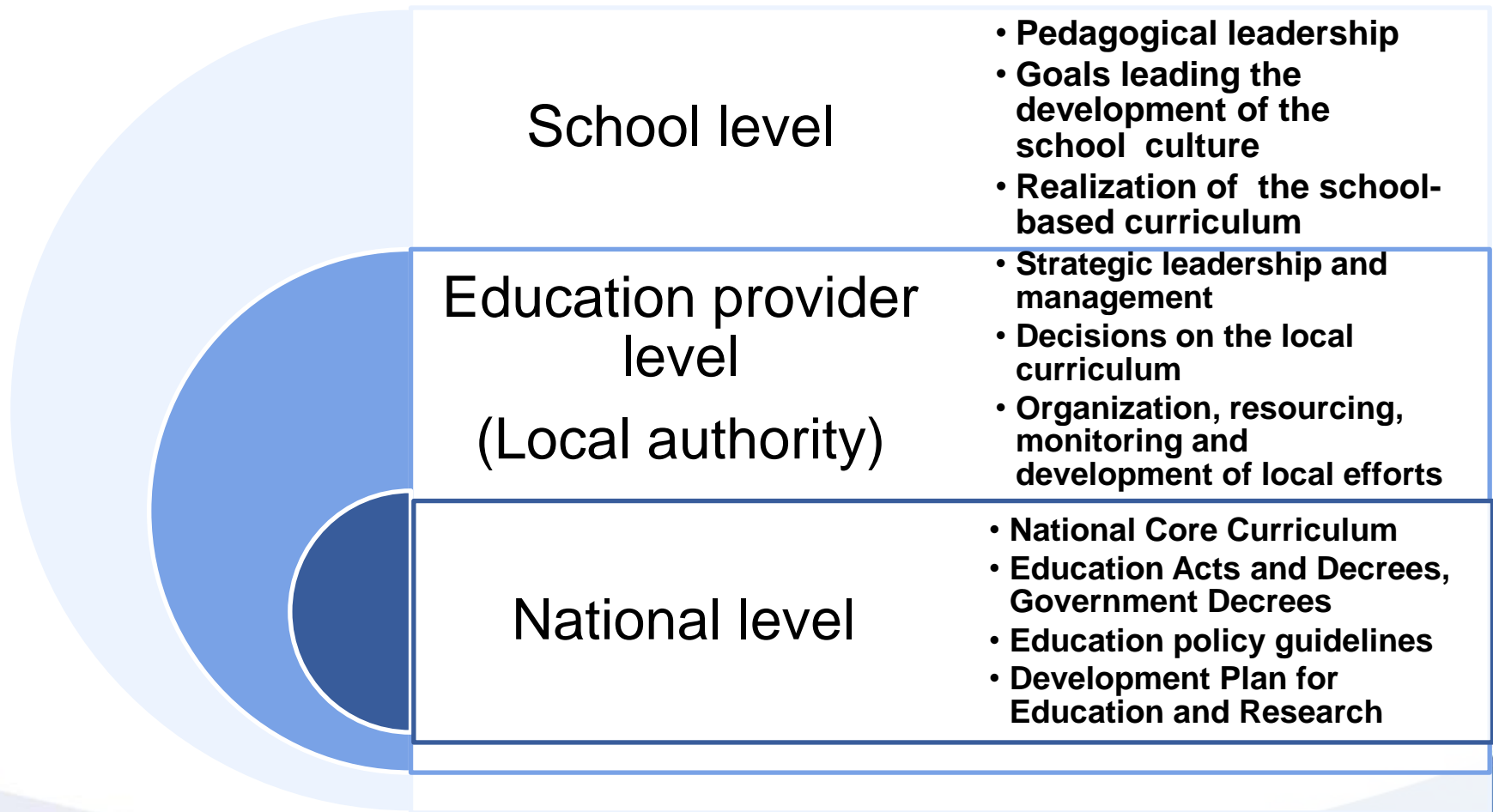
National Core Curriculum 2014

Government Decree 28.6.2012 governing the general national objectives and distribution of lesson hours in basic education

Basic Education Act and Decree



Accountabilities within the curriculum process





Curriculum process is important

- Reform of the National Core Curricula and local curricula provides an opportunity - a common framework, time and structures - to discuss the changes taking place in today's world and to develop schools and teaching
- Education both builds our future and addresses future challenges
- Change requires strong leadership and a great deal of shared thinking



Key questions of the reform

- What will education mean in the future? What types of competencies will be needed? What kind of practices would best produce the desired education and learning? **VISION**
- How will change be realised in municipal and school cultures and in every lesson? Significance of personal vision and will. **ACTION**
- 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? **TEACHER EDUCATION**
- How do the national core curricula and local curricula guide and support the work of teachers and the school community? **STANDARDS**



Premise for the curriculum planning

- Knowledge-based
 - Standards-based
 - Future-oriented
 - Cooperative, interactive
- Shared vision**
- Commitment**

Premise for planning the core curricula involves:

- Estimating the changes in the operating environment
- Analysing the current state
- Findings of research, evaluations and development projects
- International material – what could we learn from others?
- National policy guidelines

National policy guidelines include:

- Education Act and Decree
- Government decree
- Government Programme and the Development Plan for Education and Research

Applying the findings of development projects

Findings of recent national development projects to be utilised in outlining the national core curriculum:

- ◆ Intensified and special support (KELPO)
- ◆ Pupil and student welfare service structures
- ◆ Guidance counselling
- ◆ Education provision in hospitals (SAIREKE)
- ◆ Supporting the basic education provision for Romani children (ROKU)
- ◆ Multiculturalism skills within school communities (MOKU)
- ◆ Language teaching (KIELITIVOLI)
- ◆ ICT in teaching



Legislative changes and new development tasks to be considered

- ◆ Early Childhood Education Act and the possibility of pre-primary education becoming compulsory
- ◆ Pupil and Student Welfare Act and amending the sections on school discipline
- ◆ Promoting equality, particularly between men and women
- ◆ Entrepreneurship and skills for working life
- ◆ Facilitating democracy, empowerment and influence
- ◆ Enhancing social skills and good manners



Outlining the national core curriculum for basic education

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Timetable for curriculum reform (in line with the government decree)

- The national core curriculum of pre-primary education, basic education and voluntary additional basic education to be outlined by the end of 2014
- 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



Partnership-based and transparent planning process

- The core curriculum is outlined by multidisciplinary working groups supported by online consultation groups
- Education providers are asked to provide feedback; the National Board of Education website to have open consultations three times during the process
 - **November 2012 - general guidelines**
 - **Early September 2013 - pre-primary education**
 - **April 2014 - basic education and voluntary additional basic education**
- Key stakeholders to provide their **official opinions** on the new national core curriculum **during the autumn of 2014**



Implementing the core curriculum – support for local contributions

- The core curriculum documents to be provided in electronic and structured form in order to allow them better serve the users and to increase adaptability
- The text is divided into two sections:
 - a concise section about the standards with links to relevant legislation, and
 - a support section for explaining the standards and providing examples of implementation and links for relevant material to support teachers' work

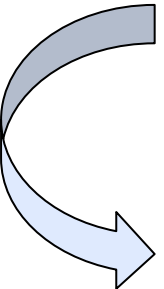


Why do we need
curriculum reform?

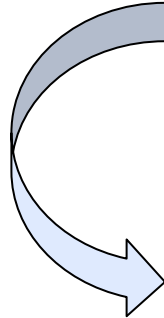
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Why to reform a well-functioning system?



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 **WHY?**



Competencies needed in society and working life have changed, requiring skills for building a sustainable future **WHAT?**

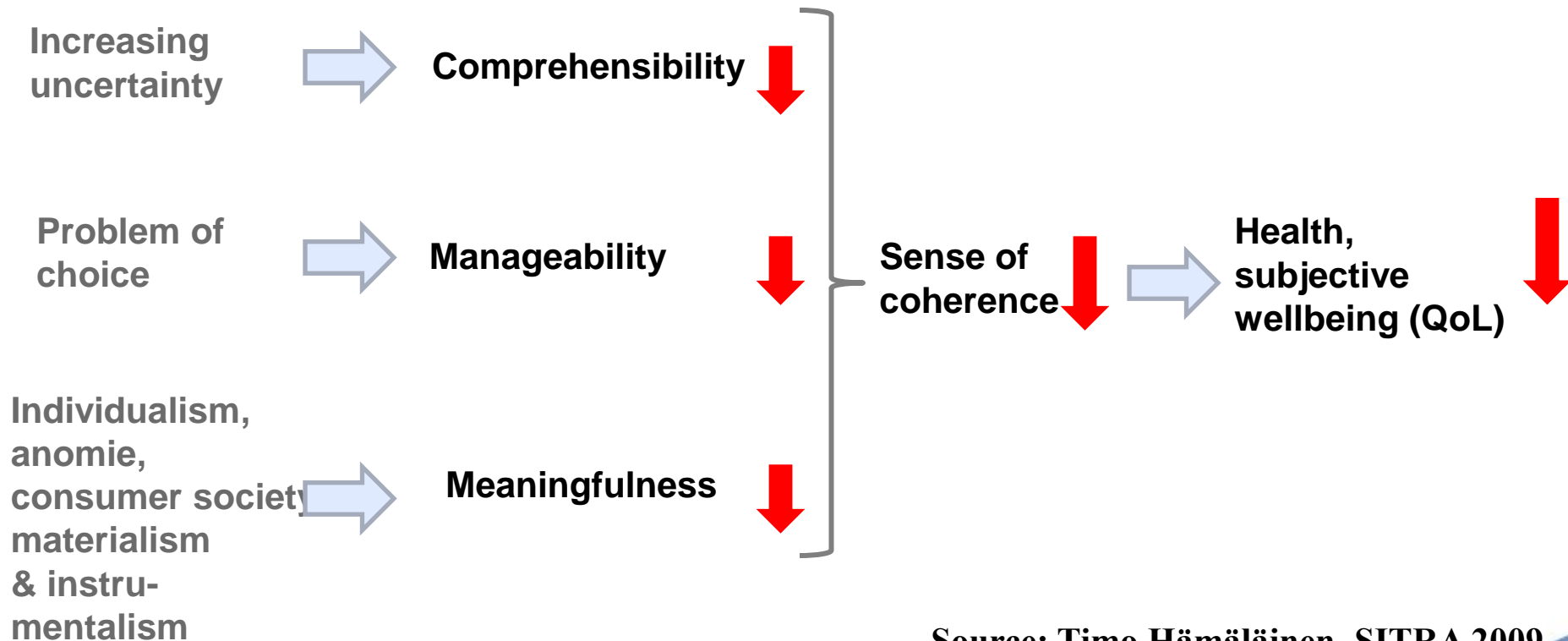
Content of teaching, pedagogy and school practices should be reviewed and renewed in relation to the changes in the operating environment and skills **HOW?**



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

Transformation of society and mental wellbeing



Source: Timo Hämäläinen, SITRA 2009
(Aaron Antonovsky, Monica Ericsson & Bengt Lindström)



Importance of renewal and prerequisites for success

- Central role of schools – supporting the sense of coherence of their students and taking responsibility for choices and action that shape our future
- Our strengths
 - Clear standards, a well functioning curriculum system
 - Culture of cooperation and trust
 - Competent teachers, high ethical orientation and commitment
- Our challenges
 - School culture
 - Role of students
 - Pedagogics
 - Use of digital learning environments
 - Quality of learning process and results



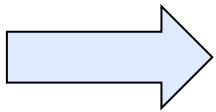
What will the new
basic education
look like?

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Government Decree 422/2012 as a starting point

- Applies to pre-primary education, basic education, voluntary additional basic education, and adult basic education
- Sections defining main objectives for education:
 - Section 2: Growth towards humanity and responsible citizenship
 - Section 3: Necessary knowledge and skills
 - Section 4: Promoting education, equality and lifelong learning



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



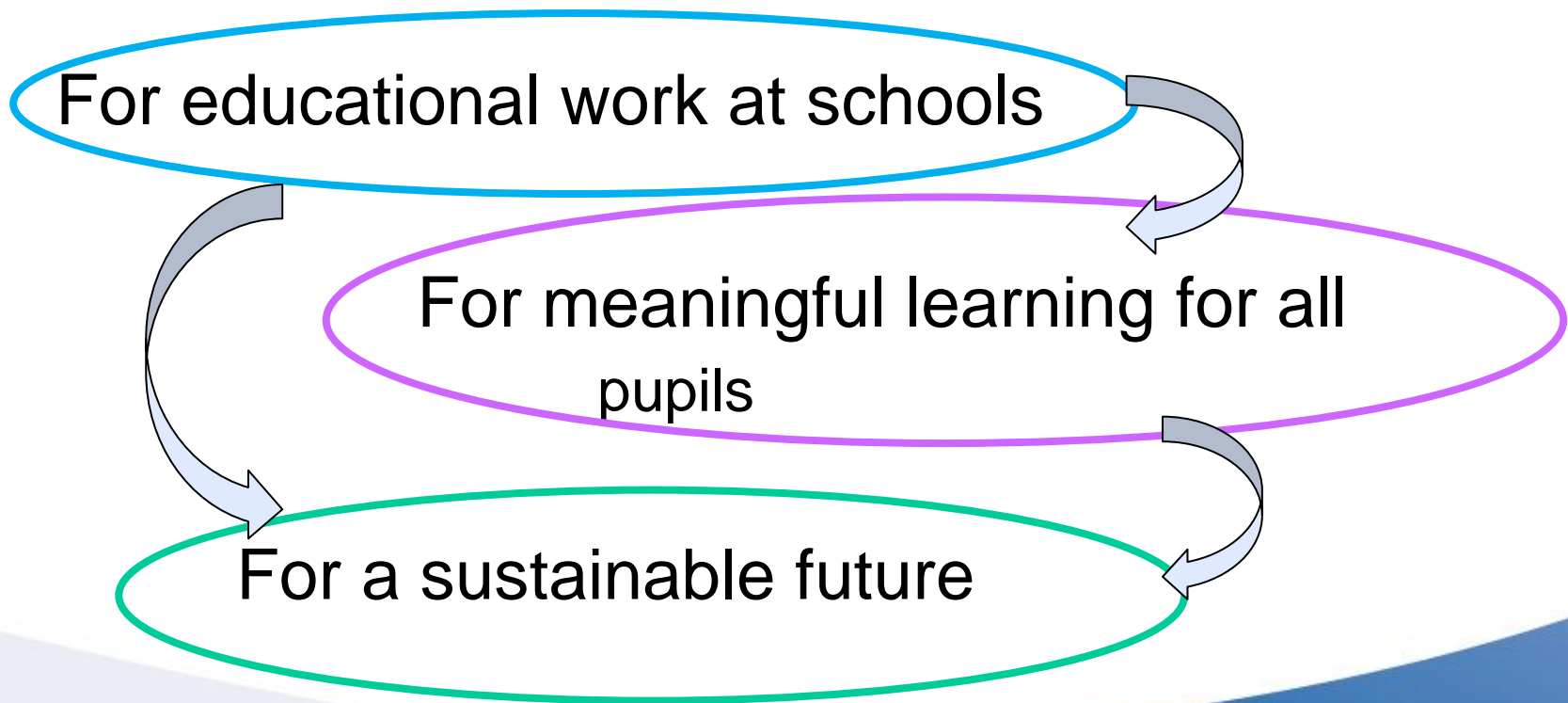
Government Decree 422/2012 as a starting point

- ◆ Pupil's minimum amount of lessons is 222 in grades 1-9
- ◆ More lesson hours to
 - Social studies (+2)
 - Physical education (+2)
 - Music and visual arts (+1+1)
- ◆ Integrated environmental studies in grades 1-6, including
 - Biology
 - Geography
 - Physics
 - Chemistry
 - Health studies
- ◆ More varied language program
 - State supports financially municipalities in providing extra language studies



Key objective of the basic education curriculum reform

We will work together to create better opportunities





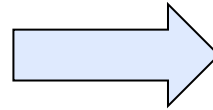
Core of the reform

Why? What?  How?

The school will be developed both as a growth community and as a learning environment



Why? What?



How?

- If you want to increase curiosity, allow questioning
- If you want to develop problem-solving skills, link school knowledge to real-life problems and encourage pupils to work together to seek solutions
- If you want to increase understanding, combine knowledge and skills from different subjects
- If you want to raise citizens who will develop society, promote inclusiveness and participation, give opportunities to make a difference, and facilitate positive - not negative - critical thinking
- If you want to strengthen learners' self-confidence and learning motivation, give constructive and honest feedback. Never humiliate or put down a learner.

IT IS ABOUT DEVELOPING THE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND PEDAGOGICS



Principles of planning the core curriculum

In outlining the national core curriculum, these perspectives are considered for all dimensions (objectives, content and practices):

- **Building on strengths**
- **Sustainable future as an objective**
- **Equality in all areas of education**
- **Meeting pupils' needs and supporting wellbeing and other prerequisites for learning**
- **Coherence and consistency of basic education, learning continuums**
- **International aspects and global responsibility**
- **Awareness of languages and cultures, regarding them as richness**
- **Technological change, working with knowledge**
- **Challenges for broad-based, multimodal literacy**



What are the most important aspects of change in the core curriculum?

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Relationship of education and schools to a changing society

- ◆ Strengthening the **value basis**
 - Uniqueness of every child, and high quality education as the basic right
 - Relationship with a changing society
- ◆ More detailed description of the **tasks**
 - Tasks include both teaching and educating (raising up)
 - Taking care of the completion of compulsory education of all students
 - Basic education as a basis of a solid all-round education
 - Solid foundation for all for entering upper secondary education
- ◆ To be considered **in organising school work:**
 - Increasing need for cooperation, role and participation of pupils
 - The educating and guiding influence of all school activities
 - Importance of varied learning environments and, for example, opportunities for remote teaching



Learning and competencies in a changing society

- ◆ **Description of the conception of learning** to take into account the latest research, specifically:
 - In integrating the learning environment, working practices, and teaching, and defining the support for learning and for pupil assessment
 - In defining subject goals and content, where the 'how?' aspect is emphasised
- ◆ In strengthening **objectives** and in defining **broad-based competence** across subject groups
 - Objectives of broad-based competence in supporting the efforts to integrate teaching
 - Competence is described as challenges set out for school work and teaching, not directly as learning objectives for pupils



Broad-based competence in the draft core curriculum (1)

- Broad-based competence refers to the total of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, capacity and will
- Competence supports the identity formation of pupils and creates an ability to lead a more sustainable life
- Competence development requires cooperation across school subjects and dealing with the questions pupils find meaningful
- Descriptions of competence have been derived from the government decree and defined in relation to the changes in the operating environment



Broad-based competence in the draft core curriculum (2)

Dimensions of broad-based competence (7)

- Thinking and learning
- Cultural competence, interaction and expression
- Looking after oneself, managing daily activities, safety
- Multiliteracy
- ICT competence
- Competence required for working life and entrepreneurship
- Participation, empowerment and responsibility



Working approaches in basic education and schools

- ◆ Importance of **pupil assessment** in the learning process is better described
 - From assessment of learning towards assessment for learning, and assessment as learning
 - Importance of positive feedback
- ◆ Defining goals for developing **organisational culture**
 - Goals emphasise the developing nature of organisational culture and its significance for pupils' growth and learning
 - Goals support the implementation of the value basis and tasks, and the development of broad-based competence
 - Goals emphasise coherent basic education and integrated teaching



Schools as learning organisations

- ◆ Schools are communities that learn themselves while supporting their pupils' growth and encouraging all of their members to learn
 - Strengthening pupils' positive and realistic self image as learners
 - Emphasis of unhurried pace and peace
 - Importance of self-reflection of individuals and the whole school community
 - Learning as the focus of the school's pedagogic leadership
- ◆ Features of learning organisations
 - Varied working approaches
 - Interaction and empowerment
 - Wellbeing and safety in daily life
 - Diverse cultures and awareness of languages
 - Responsibility for the environment and future orientation

WHAT DO PUPILS SAY IN THEIR FEEDBACK?

- Notice that all children are different and that everybody has the right to learn the things they need in life.
- The key skills in the future will be the ability to look after oneself, skills for working life, and empowerment, responsibility and contribution - personal relationships and looking after others could be emphasised more.
- It's good if pupils of different ages will learn how to work together; learning from other pupils could be highlighted more.
- Schools could make use of the skills pupils have learned in leisure time and outside school; for example, pupils could teach each other.
- You must take different perspectives; it's good that pupils are able to learn with all kinds of people.
- Good atmosphere, encouragement and a variety of tasks in different environments are important at school.
- Truly listen to us. We want to make a difference in our own lives. It's very good if pupils can influence tasks they will be doing themselves.



It could be about this...

“Help kids know how to make meaning and sense of what they are learning so they can see who they are.”

Mary Helen Immordino-Yang Ed. D.





OPETUSHALLITUS

Thank you!

