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Perspectives on Finnish Education Context & Teacher Education

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Introduction of the speaker

Anni Loukomies

- MA (Education), PhD
- Present position: University lecturer in didactics, researcher
- 22 years of experience in teaching grades 1-6, 10 years of experience in mentoring students in a teacher training school
- Research interests: motivation and emotions in learning situations, student teachers' learning in a teacher training school, inclusive education

The aim of the lecture:

- To get familiar with the Finnish school system and Finnish teacher education
- To get familiar with the concept of practical theory
- To learn about the role of engagement in teacher education
- To get familiar with different interactive teaching methods
- To develop professionally as a teacher and a trainer

Structure of the session:

1. Basics of the Finnish education system
2. Basics of the Finnish education culture
3. Teacher education in Finland
4. Teaching practice
5. Teacher's practical theory
6. Engagement in teaching practice and learning

Warm-up task

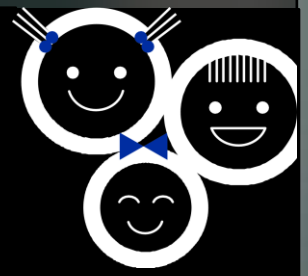
Write your pre-existing views about Finnish Teacher Education on a Flinga wall

https://edu.flinga.fi/s/ERRX3ZZ

Finland was ranked as the happiest country in the world 2nd time in the UN World Happiness Report.

HAPPIEST COUNTRY

For the second year in a row, Finland is the happiest nation in the World Happiness Report, which ranks 156 countries by how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be.



Really??

Basics of the Finnish Education System

Pre-conditions for having success in education

- Professional teachers who are able
  - to collaborate,
  - to broad planning and assessment of students' learning,
  - and willing for continuous professional learning and
  - develop the school environment.
- National level, long term strategic aims and preparation of local level implementation, like curriculum, and common understanding of the aims.
- Quality work, continuous improvement of learning environments and practices at the local level collaboratively.

Characteristics of Finnish Education

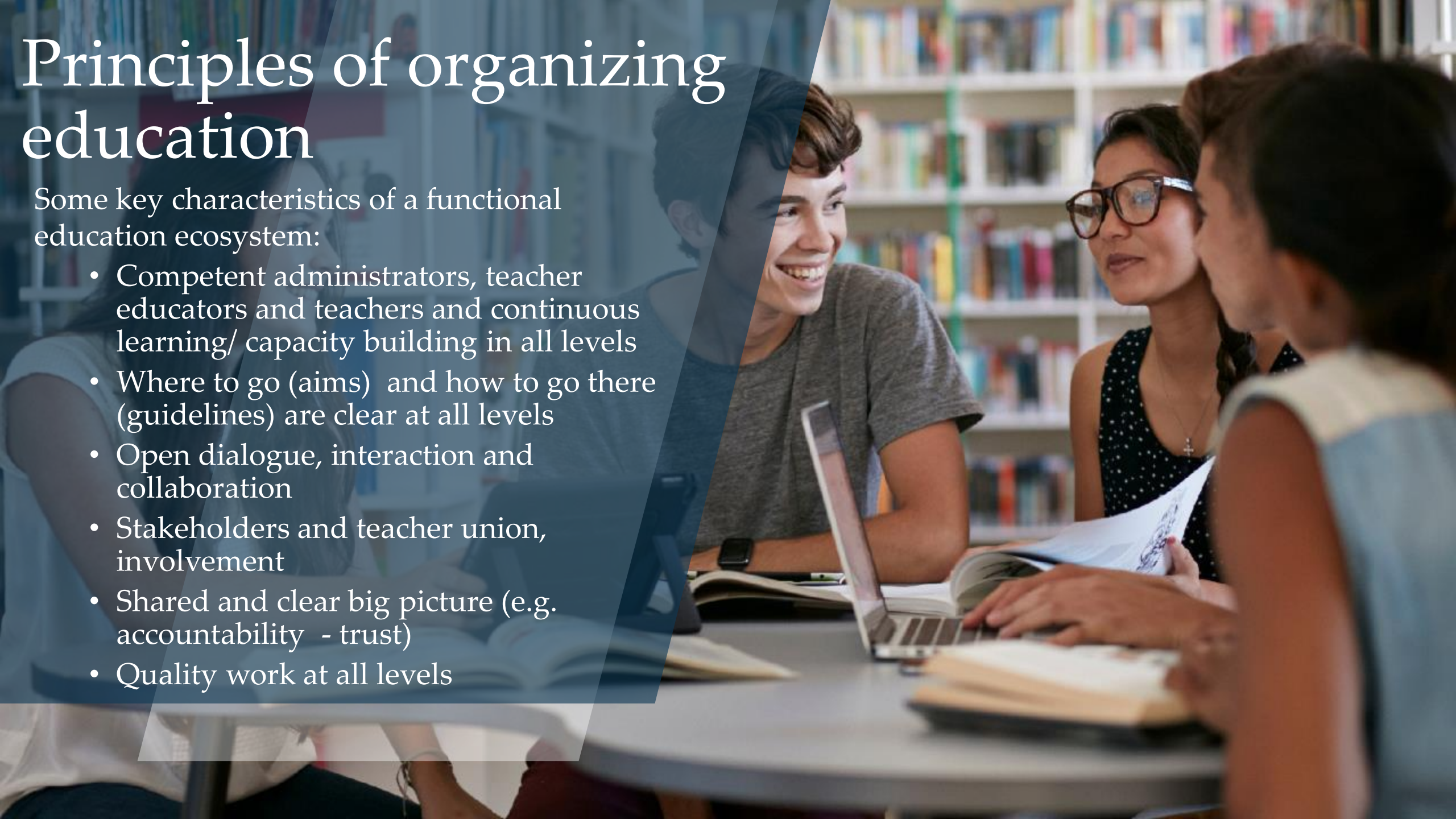
- **Shared vision**
  - preparation of local curriculum based on national frame
  - collaboration culture
- **Equity in education**
  - education is free to the end of upper secondary school (books, meals, health care, …)
  - role of special education and counselling (~ 20% of the students have special needs)
- **Quality through decentralization**
  - leadership, quality work at city and school level
  - providers of education are responsible for in-service training

Laukkanen (2008), Niemi et al. (2012), Sahlberg (2011)

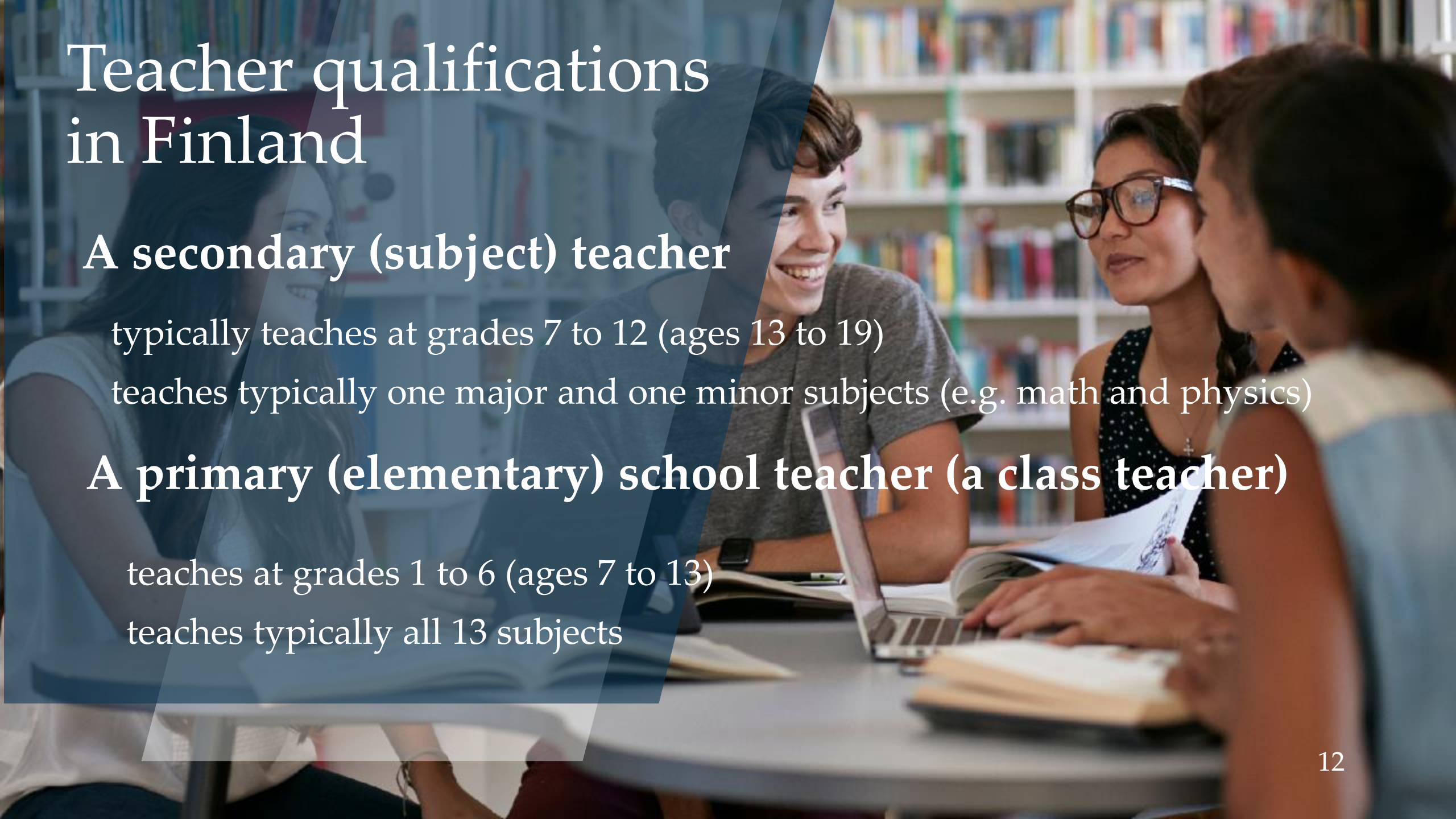
Principles of organizing education

Some key characteristics of a functional education ecosystem:

- Competent administrators, teacher educators and teachers and continuous learning/ capacity building in all levels
- Where to go (aims) and how to go there (guidelines) are clear at all levels
- Open dialogue, interaction and collaboration
- Stakeholders and teacher union, involvement
- Shared and clear big picture (e.g. accountability - trust)
- Quality work at all levels



Teacher qualifications in Finland



A secondary (subject) 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)

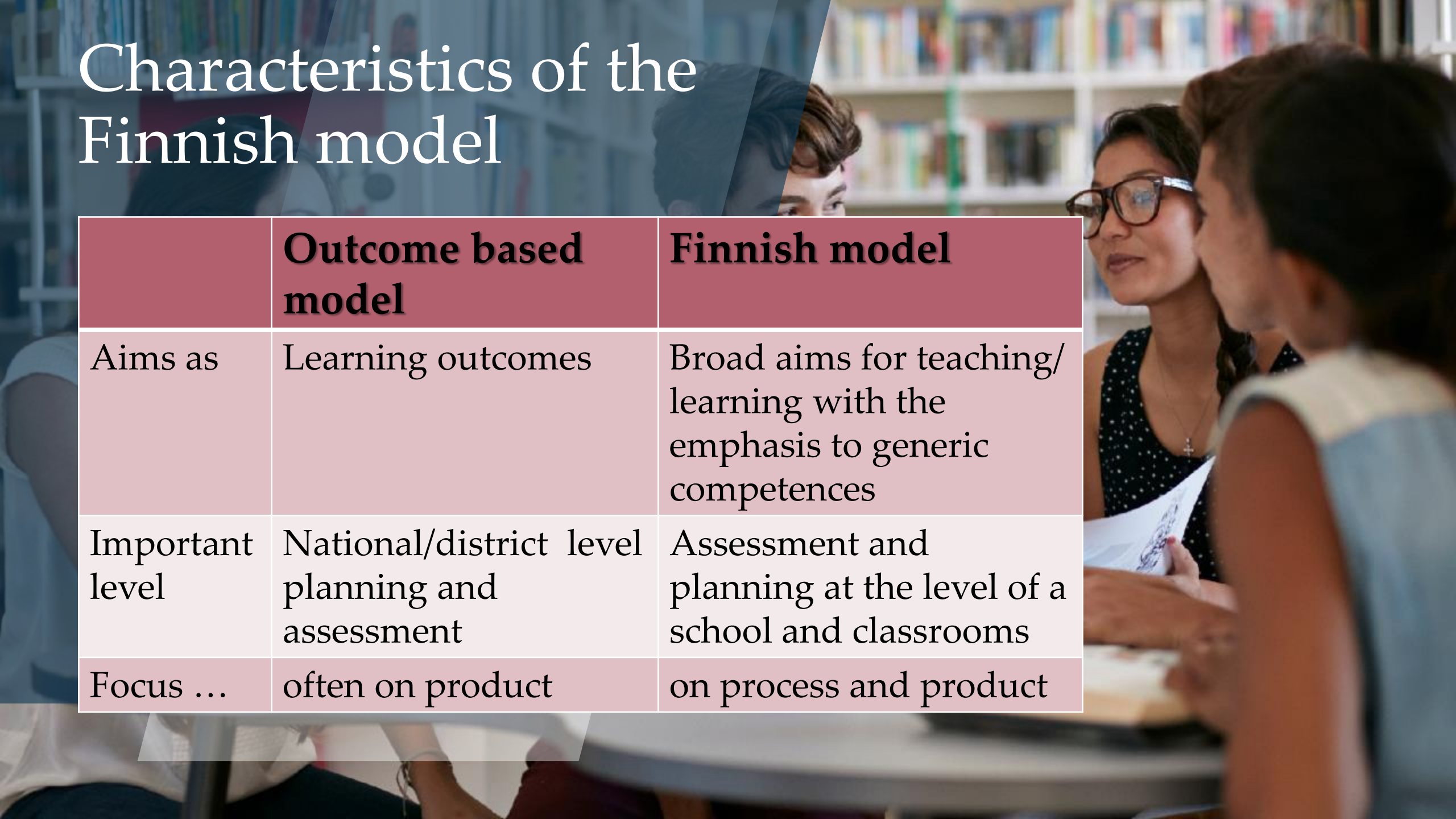
A primary (elementary) school teacher (a class teacher)

teaches at grades 1 to 6 (ages 7 to 13)

teaches typically all 13 subjects

Characteristics of the Finnish model

	Outcome based model	**Finnish model**
Aims as	Learning outcomes	Broad aims for teaching/ learning with the emphasis to generic competences
Important level	National/district level planning and assessment	Assessment and planning at the level of a school and classrooms
Focus …	often on product	on process and product



The autonomous Finnish teacher

- The decision power concerning teaching is at the school and teacher level.
- Teachers are considered as experts in education, teaching curriculum and learning.
- Teachers are responsible for their in-service professional development.
- Teachers at all levels of education (1-12) have a Master's degree, MA in Education.
- Teachers can choose the teaching methods they use and how they implement the curriculum.
- Rather high status of the teacher's profession in the society and among students.
- Teacher students are selected among the best high-school graduates

Basics of the Finnish Education Culture

Concept of Learning in the Finnish Curriculum

- Pupils are seen as active actors.
- Pupils learn to set goals and to solve problems both independently and together with others.
- Learning is seen as an inseparable part of an individual's growth as a human being.
- Aims of learning to reflect learning, experience and emotions (meta-cognitive skills), development of learning-to-learn and self-regulation skills.
- Positive emotional experiences related to learning situations promote high quality learning, well-being and development of the concept of self.
- Learning takes place in interaction with peers, teachers and other adults.
- Learning takes place in various learning environments, both inside and outside the school building.
- Learning involves doing, thinking, planning, exploring, reflecting and assessing.
- Emphasis on critical thinking, creativity and changing one's perspective.
- Supporting the pupils to expand their interests.
- **Pre-existing knowledge** as a starting point of the learning process.
- Transversal competencies are prioritized over content knowledge, thinking and learning-to-learn skills being the most important.
- Supporting self-efficacy beliefs and self-esteem through the use of appropriate evaluation methods (very few standardised tests in Finland)

Inclusive School Culture

•Very few self-contained groups for students with special needs
•Children study in inclusive groups in the neighbourhood schools
•Individual support is offered based on individual needs
•Finland has one of the smallest gaps between high and low achieving students (PISA, 2018)

The learning community:
•takes care of the safety and wellbeing of every member of the community
•systematically promotes versatile working approaches as well as cooperation and interaction
•is aware of different languages and sees culture as a richness
•promotes participation and democracy
•promotes equity and equality
•takes responsibility for the environment and focuses on a sustainable future

Support for collaboration

- Collaboration supports learning (Kagan & Kagan, 2002)
  - Positive dependence on group members
  - Individual responsibility that supports the development of self-regulation
  - Group is more than the sum of its members
  - Structure brings safety and predictability (Guay, Ratelle & Chanal, 2008)
- Learning social interaction skills is important (Buchs & Butera, 2015)
  - Learning group work skills takes time and is an aim as such.
  - Roles in the group, modeling the activities, choice of the instructional method & reflection support collaboration (Mercer & Dawes, 2008; Kagan & Kagan, 2002)

Structure of the National Core Curriculum

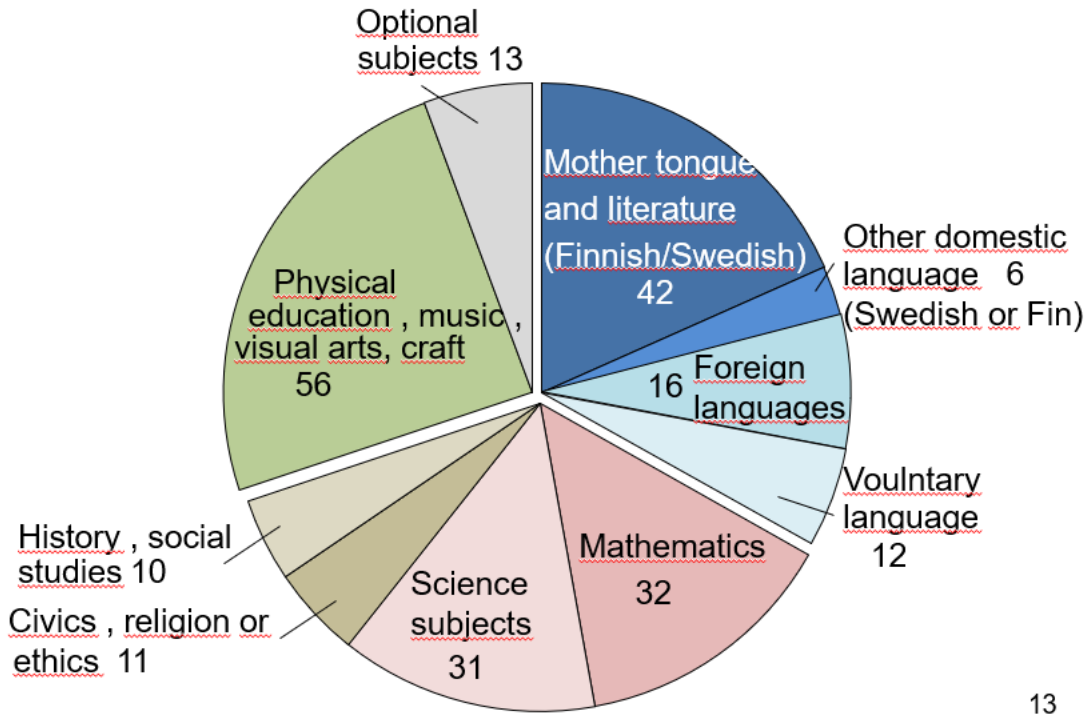
General section

- Value base
- Conception of learning, working methods, learning environments…
- Allocation of lesson hours to school subjects
- Overall goals
- Description of transversal competences

Subject specific section

- The task of the subject
- Teaching goals and integration of transversal competences to subject specific aims
- Disciplinary core ideas/concepts
- Learning environments and teaching methods
- Guidance and support
- Characteristics of assessment and methods
- Criteria for the final evaluation

Yearly lessons in a Finnish comprehensive school, approximately



What competences should be emphasised in education according to OECD learning compass 2030?

Basic competences
know-what (concepts, principles, processes) and know-how (inquiry, problem-solving, design solutions)

Cognitive and meta-cognitive skills
critical and creative thinking,
learning-to-learn
and self-regulation

Social and emotional skills empathy, self-efficacy, responsibility and collaboration

Transversal Competencies in the Finnish Curriculum

T1 Thinking and learning to learn
T2 Cultural competence, interaction and expression
T3 Self-care and everyday management
T4 Multiliteracy
T5 Information and communication technology skills
T6 Working life skills and entrepreneurship
T7 Participation, influence and building a sustainable future

Support for Metacognition

- Learning strategies
- Planning
- Being aware of pre-existing knowledge
- Monitoring and re-directing
- Emotional & behavioural regulation
- Reflection & self-assessment

Multidisciplinary Learning Modules

- The content of the phenomenon is based on curriculum and on pupils' own interests.
- Different subjects merge.
- A teacher helps seeing the perspectives of different subjects and concepts related to them.
- Approach gives a possibility to connect art, handicraft, music, drama or other art subjects as part of the content
- Group work.

Multidisciplinary Learning Modules

- The project may start from a topic set in curriculum, but during the project pupils' perspectives give new directions to study contents and learning outcomes.
- In the project there are often learning activities that promote both individual work and group work.

Digital Tools in the Finnish Education

Students should

- be able to
  - use digital tools in creative ways;
  - collaborate and network through digital tools;
  - work with data, information, and knowledge.
- be guided in
  - critical and creative knowledge practices, like search of information and generate ideas;
  - collaborative knowledge building and use of knowledge;
  - constructing and working with artifacts with digital tools in in- and out of school-learning environments.

Supporting higher order cognitive skills with appropriate instruction

- Taxonomy of cognitive skills (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2005)
- Categories of knowledge
- Tasks at all levels of the taxonomy for all pupils
- Emphasis on procedural and metacognitive skills

	1.Remember	2.Understand	3.Apply	4.Analyze	5.Evaluate	6.Create
A)Factual						
B)Conceptual						
C)Procedural						
D)Metacognitive						

Teacher education in Finland

Teacher Education in the University of Helsinki

- **50 years experience** in research-based teacher education
- **300 staff** members and **3500 degree students** (include secondary teachers)
- **8 Master level degree programs** in various fields from kindergarten to secondary school
- International Secondary Teacher Education Program
- **360 Masters and 25 PhDs yearly (secondary teachers at other faculties)**
- **21 research groups**, focusing on, for example, Research in teaching and learning, Science and Mathematics education, …

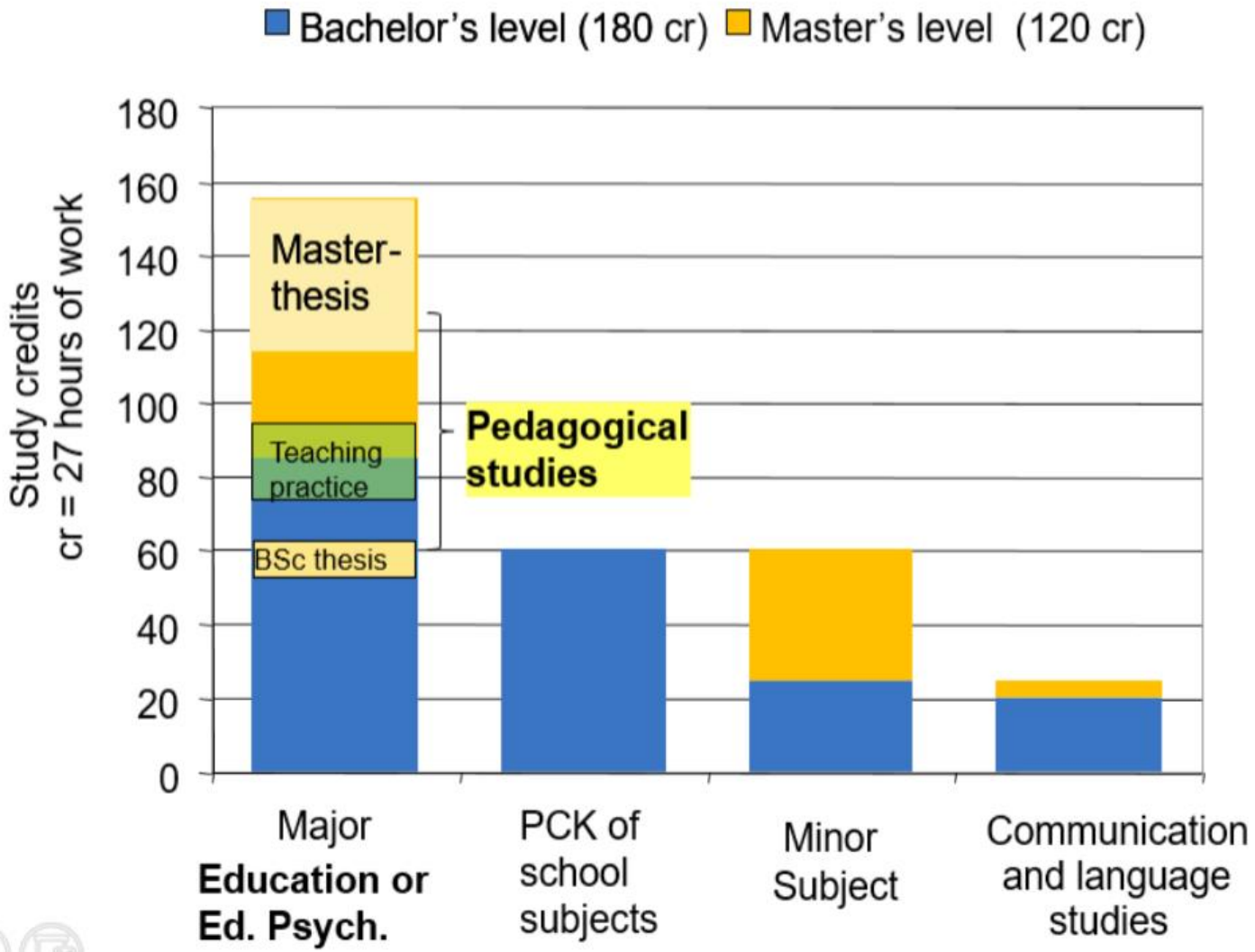
Research-based teacher education

- National teacher education strategies are based on research
  - Teacher education is developed by researching the quality of teacher education.
- Teacher education programs are based on research
  - Content of teacher education is based on research. Practice is based on theory => theory creates frames for practice.

Research-based teacher education

- Teacher educators' research community
  - Teacher educators develop their own teaching through research-based means.
- Student teachers learn to produce and consume research-based knowledge
  - Student teachers are educated to develop their own work by using research-based means: producing various kinds of data from their own work and by reflecting it and oneself as a teacher systematically.

Structure of the master degree of a primary teacher: 3 + 2 years



Pedagogical studies

The aim is to

- to integrate subject matter knowledge, knowledge about teaching and learning and school practice into their own personal pedagogical view;
- to become aware of the different dimensions of the teacher profession: social, philosophical, psychological, sociological, ethical, and historical basis of education;
- to be able to collaborate in different networks and partnerships, incl. own school learning community;
- to be able to reflect on their own personal pedagogical "theory/view" (reflection for, in and on action);
- to act as autonomous professional in planning, implementing and assessing teaching and learning;
- to develop potentials for lifelong professional learning through research orientation.

Teaching practice

University affiliated teacher training schools

- All teacher students conduct teaching placement periods in university affiliated teacher training school (comparable to university teaching hospitals)
- Mentor teachers supervising the teaching placement periods
- Educated mentor teachers, master or doctoral degree
- Scaffolded planning
- Post-lesson reflection discussions
- Online mentoring

Multidisciplinary teaching practice

The student teacher learns to:

- understand the perspective of the pupils
- understands how to promote the general atmosphere, interaction and communication in a classroom
- set goals for her/ his lessons
- use various teaching methods including drama and to evaluate which methods to use in reaching the goal
- understand what are the main concepts or skills to teach for the lerners
- understand how to promote the didactic relation with practices that are suitable to the particular subject (i.e. physical education and science are to be taught with different methods)
- impement mutidisciplinary learning modules
- recognize special need students and learns how to promote their learning
- teach in pairs

Implementation of the multidisciplinary teaching practice

Teaching is planned based on didactic knowledge in each subject.

Teaching is planned in terms of promoting pupils' role as active members and learners of a community.

On lessons the student teachers practice both teaching individually and in pairs.

In reflections and in feedback the focus is in didactic mannors, in curriculum and in personal goals the student teachers have set themselves.

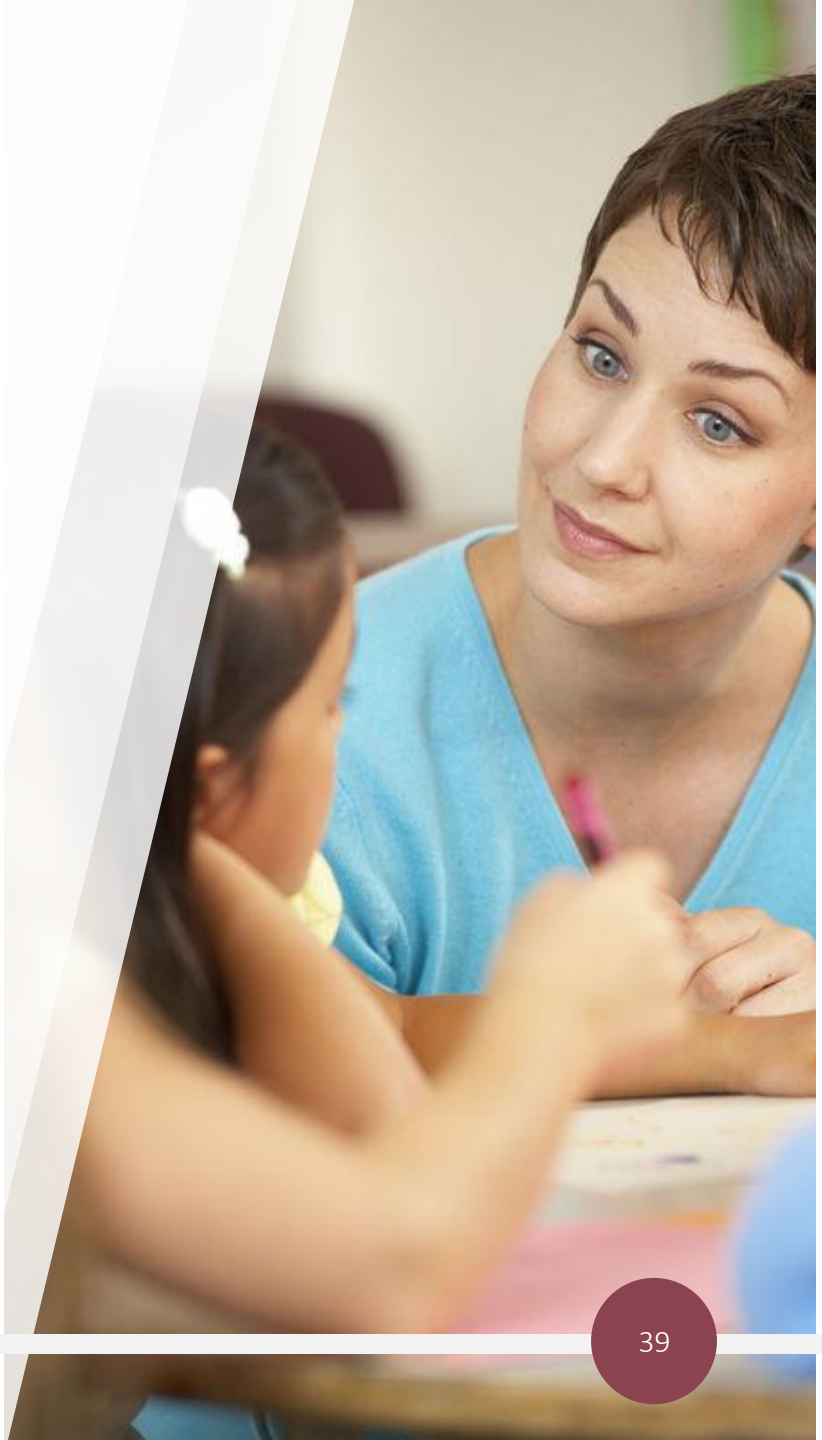
Mentoring in the multidisciplinary practicum

- Feedback discussions for all the lessons.
- Feedback discussions can take place after the lesson or at the end of the day
- Continual help with lesson planning if the help is needed
- Mentors autonomy to implement mentoring

Master level practicum

After the teaching practice the student teacher is able to

- Plan, implement and evaluate a whole school day.
- Evaluate the society perspectivive in teachers profession and to see school as part of local community.
- Undersand the multiple ethical perspectives related to teacher's profession.
- Understand how school organization works and how it is being lead.
- Reflect his / her practical theories.
- Recognize and teach pupils with secial needs.



Implementation of the master level practicum

- Studen teachers plan and implement the whole school day in pairs.
- The student teachers get to know other professions and sectors in a society that the teacher has to co-operate with.
- The student teachers learn to set goals for their own professional development.
- The student teachers learn to co-operate with the parents of the pupils.
- In report the focus is in one's own teacher identity and curriculum.

Mentoring in the master level practicum

- Feedback discussions after each day.
- The topics often come out of the student teachers own reflection and needs.

Mentor’s role

- Starting point in mentoring are student teachers own goals and needs.
- There is no one role for a mentor, but the role changes.
- A mentor can be a mirror for reflection, an 'assisstant teacher' on a lesson or a co-teacher.

Practical theory

Practical theory

- Teachers use practical theory as a framework for their everyday work, but it also creates a mirror for teachers' reflections on their teaching.
- Teacher's practical theory is a concept that expands practical knowledge also to a teacher's personal beliefs, values and understandings that guide the teacher's pedagogical actions in a classroom.
- Beliefs that teachers hold can influence their professional decisions and actions with regard to classroom instruction
- Many other sets of beliefs that teachers hold (such as moral, political, social, or efficacy-related beliefs) also strongly affect their teaching.
- Thus, beyond professional knowledge − which is also essential – beliefs play an essential role in organising elements relevant to teachers' everyday work.
- Teacher's personal experiences and experiences with schooling affect concep tions of and beliefs about teaching and the teacher's role.

Stenberg, K., L. Karlsson, H. Pitkäniemi, and K. Maaranen. 2014. Beginning student teachers' teacher identities based on their practical theories. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 37*(2), 204-219.

The development of practical theory

There are three forms of experiences that influence the formation of teachers' practical theory:

1. teacher's personal experiences and cultural understanding;

2. teacher's experiences with schooling; and

3. teacher's knowledge, which has been approved within a community of scholars.

Experiences in subject matter and pedagogical knowledge are particularly significant in shaping the teacher's understanding of teaching and affect conceptions of and beliefs about teaching and the teacher's role.

Richardson, V. 1996. "The Role of Attitudes and Beliefs in Learning to Teach." In Handbook of Research on Teacher Education, 2nd ed., edited by J. Sikula, T. J. Buttery, and E. Guyton, 102–119. New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan.

Activating methods to elaborate teacher beliefs

- Choosing a picture
- Mind map
- Sifting
- Aquarium

Reflecting beliefs through choosing a picture

1.Think of your own schooling experiences. Choose a picture that somehow reminds you of a teacher who was particularly good.

2.Tell others why the picture reminds you from that teacher. What made her / him such a good teacher?

3.Choose a picture that describes you as a teacher.

4.Tell others why you chose that picture.

5.Compare the two pictures you chose. Are there common features?

Reflecting beliefs through mind mapping

1.Make a mind map of the ways how a teacher can enhance pupils' motivation.

2.Colour the marks with blue if you have learnt that through your experience as a teacher.

3.Colour the marks with green if you know that through educational theory.

Reflecting beliefs through shifting

1. Write down five the most important characteristics for a good teacher.

2. Pair up and make a shared list of the most important characteristics for a good teacher.

3. Make two groups share your ideas and make a shared list of the most important characteristics for a good teacher.

4. The groups present their ideas. Make one list of the most important characteristics for a good teacher.

5. Reflect together, how this list supports child centred pedagogy? Are there some contradictions?

Reflecting teacher's knowledge, which has been approved within a community of scholars through aquarium method

1.Make n groups.

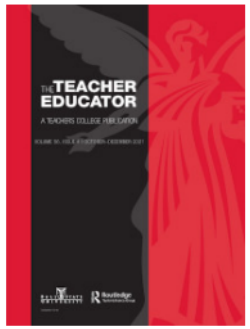
2.Discuss in groups what are the best ways for classroom management according your experiences. What makes these methods to work?

3.Choose two representatives for an aquarium discussion.

4.In aquarium discussion the discussants bring out ideas brought up in groups. The other members follow the discussion.

Support for student teachers' engagement

Student teachers' engagement in teaching practice situations



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Student teachers' situational engagement during teaching practice in Finland and South Africa

Anni Loukomies, Nadine Petersen, Sarita Ramsaroop, Elizabeth Henning & Jari Lavonen

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Operationalization of the engagement concept

To operationalize the concept of engagement, we decided to follow Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) flow theory, because it proposes three pre-conditions for engagement that are measurable with a questionnaire: interest, skill, and challenge. To be engaged in a teaching practice situation, a student should experience situational interest and challenge in the task, and skill or competence to undertake the task (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Schneider et al., 2016). All three pre-conditions for engagement stated in flow theory—interest, skill and challenge—relate to cognitive, emotional and behavioral components of engagement.

Student teachers' engagement in different interaction situations in teaching practice

	f	%[a]	% eng.[b]
Alone	355	15%	16%
In a pair	1731	73%	30%
In a group	278	12%	27%
With a mentor teacher	561	24%	36%
With an university teacher	134	6%	32%
Other person	230	10%	30%
All interaction situations	3289		

Level of engagement in different learning situations in teaching practice

	f	%[a]	% eng.[b]
Teaching a lesson	682	29%	40%
Planning a lesson	587	25%	27%
Reflecting on lesson	324	14%	27%
Informal discussion	239	10%	20%
Following a lesson	102	4%	8%
Participating a lecture in teaching school	40	2%	18%
Participating a workshop in teaching school	29	1%	38%
Other activity	510	22%	15%

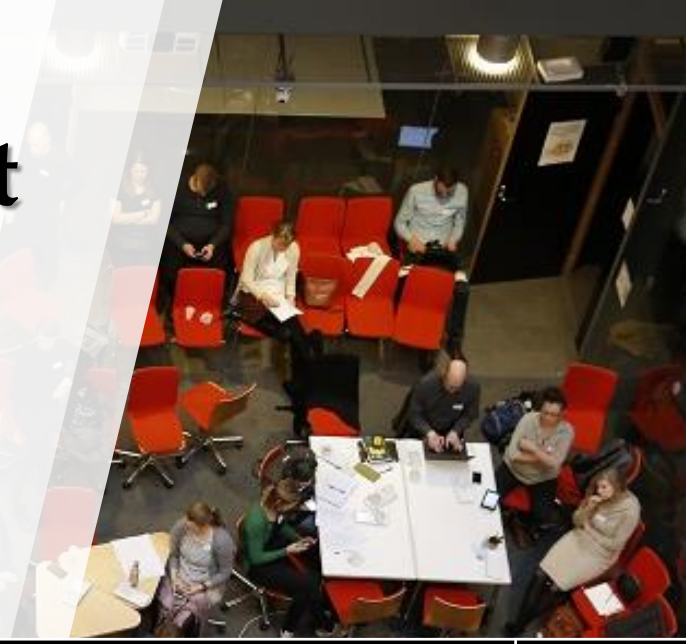
Highlights of the results

This study examined situations in which our participating student teachers experienced engagement. The results emphasize the significance of personal interaction with mentors and university lecturers in supporting the emotional and cognitive aspects of engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004). The student teachers found teaching, planning and reflecting on their lessons more engaging than other activities or informal discussions.

Implications for practice

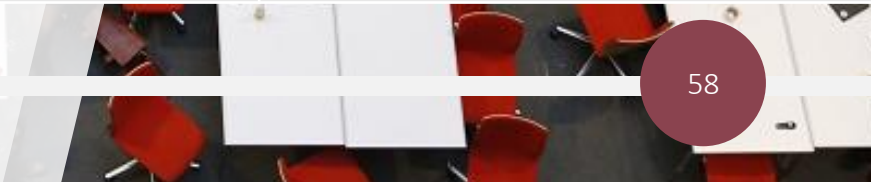
authentic setting. This research shows that teaching and mentoring sessions are especially engaging for student teachers. It is important to organize teaching practice in teacher training schools, where educated mentors can scaffold the students' reflection process, support the students in combining theoretical and practical perspectives of the teaching profession and guide students to seek information from various knowledge sources, which is the case in both Helsinki and Johannesburg university teacher training schools. Stokking et al. (2003)

Support for motivation and engagement



- This model is based on the Self-Determination Theory of Motivation (Deci & Ryan).
- Motivation takes place in a continuum from amotivation to intrinsic motivation.
- The quality of motivation develops as the regulation becomes more intrinsic
- Support for the basic needs
  - Autonomy
  - Relatedness
  - Feeling of competence
- Intrinsic and autonomous motivation styles are related with higher quality learning outcomes

Amotivation	Extrinsic motivation				Intrinsic motivatio
	external	introjected	identified	Integrated	
Amotivation	Controlled motivation		Autonomous motivation		



Support for motivation and engagement

- Taking into account the students' perspective
- Having students' thoughts, emotions and suggestions as a starting point of the activities
- Recognising and supporting the students' ability to take responsibility and regulate their learning
- Nourishing the existing motivational resources
- Offering rationale for the activities
- Non-controlling interaction style
- Enough time for learning and identification
- Giving attention and accepting the negative emotional experiences
- Applies to both school and teacher education

(Reeve & Halusic, 2009)

Structure supports engagement

- Clear aims and sub-aims
- Scaffolding
- Continuous, feasible and constructive feedback
- Suggestions for changing the activities
- Structured schedule
- Appropriate lenght of the working periods & breaks
- Roles in the group tasks

Breakout rooms:

In your group, ccompare the Finnish and Thai education and higher education contexts. What similarities and differences can you track?

References

Thank you for your attention!

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Learning time and science performance