



FINNISH NATIONAL
AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

Finnish National Agency for Education EDUFI, National and local curriculum

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Director
Education, Training and Competence

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Own background

- Director of education in 3 different cities and municipalities, 8 years
- Principal in k-12 school, 4 years
- Principal in Finnish International School in Georgia, 1 year
- Training officer and a trainer, 3 years
- International experience, 5 years, (Afg, Kos, Geo)
- Teacher from foster home (approved) school through comprehensive school and upper secondary school up to the university.

EDUFI's tasks in a nutshell

- **developing education** and training, early childhood education and care and lifelong learning, taking care of services and management duties related to them, and anticipating society's competence and education needs
- **creating the national core curricula** for basic and general upper secondary education, basic education in the arts, vocational education and training, and early childhood education and care
- **facilitating programmes and contracts** that promote internationalisation and providing consulting services for internationalisation
- **providing services** for student admissions
- **producing information** to support development and decision-making in our field, and **developing** the education field's central **information databases**
- **making decisions on the recognition of studies** completed abroad as well as duties dealing with language and translator's degrees

Finnish National Agency for Education 1.3.2022

Director General and Communications

- Support Services for Leadership
- Communications

Education, training and competence

- Vocational Education and Training
- Support for Development
- General Upper Secondary Education, Basic Education in the Arts and Liberal Adult Education
- Basic Education and Early Childhood Education and Care
- Education and Services in Swedish

Customer Experience & Data and Knowledge

- Customer Experience
- Digitalisation
- Foresight and Analysis
- Training and Publishing
- Services for Student Admissions
- Recognition of Qualifications and Language Proficiency
- National Data Resources



International Affairs and Impact

- Internationalisation Services for Vocational Education and Training
- Coordination of EU Programmes
- International Higher Education Cooperation
- Internationalisation Services
- Internationalisation Services for Higher Education Studies
- Internationalisation Services for Youth, Culture and Sports
- Finnish Centre of Expertise in Education and Development (FinCEED)
- Internationalisation Services for General Education and Adult Education
- Impact

Administrative Services

- Personnel and Work Environments Services
- Financial and Procurement Services
- Information Control Services and Government Funding

Basic Education Curriculum System in Finland

**Basic Education Act and Decree
General National Objectives and Distribution of
Lesson Hours**

Ministry of Education

- Time allocation between different subjects
- School subjects
- General goals for education

National Core Curriculum

Finnish National Agency for Education

- National regulation
- General framework for providing and organising education
- Enhances equality in education throughout the country
- Objectives and content areas of each subject

Local Curriculum

Education providers (usually municipalities) and schools

- Local decisions based on the national core curriculum
- Local needs, resources and emphasises

School's Annual Plan

Schools

- Realization of local curriculum
- More precise definitions of daily school work

The purpose of the steering of basic education is to ensure the equality and high quality of education and to create favourable conditions for the pupils' growth, development and learning.

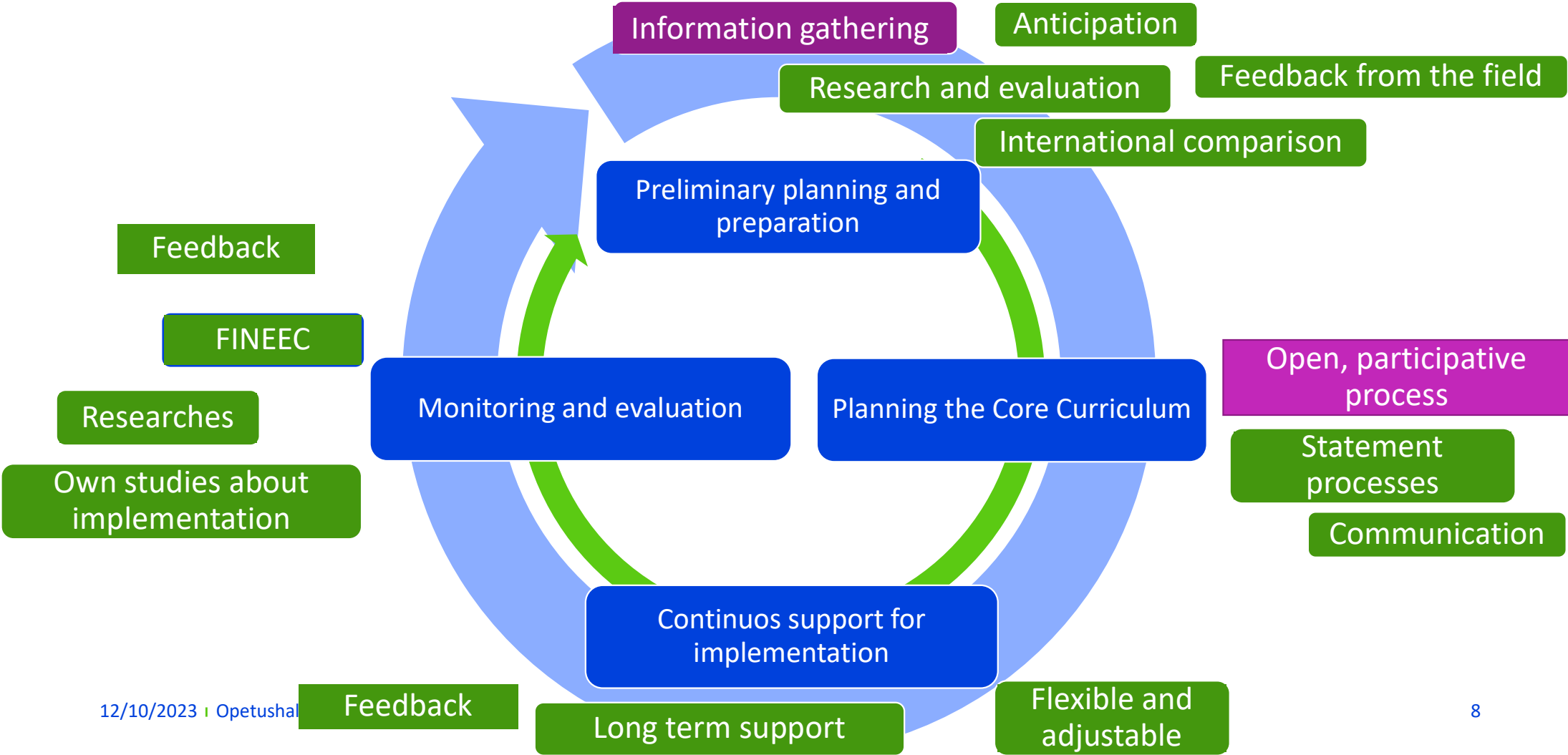
How can we make it work?

- **Everything is based to the TRUST!**
- The ministry of Education trust that National Agency for Education give proper National Core Curricula and fullfill our legal tasks.
- We trust that municipalities (appr. 300) will create their local curriculum and they will follow our norms (EDUFI does not have legal right for school inspections).
- Municipalities trust that local schools would follow local curriculum and national core curriculum
- Principal / Headmaster trust, that their teachers follow curriculums -> Wide pedagogical autonomy due to MA degrees.
- Regional state administrative agency monitors the legal protection of students, however they don't currently have legal authority taking the initiative for school inspections. Being reactive instead of proactive.

The background features a decorative graphic consisting of two thick, wavy lines. One line is green and the other is blue. They overlap and curve across the bottom and right sides of the page, creating a dynamic, abstract shape.

The Finnish National Core Curriculum

Process of creating National core curriculum



The main objective in Finnish education policy

Every pupil is unique and
has the right to high-quality education and lifelong learning



The main goals in the curriculum reform 2016



- To enhance **joy and meaningfulness** of learning and the **active role** of pupils.
- To create better opportunities for **deep, active and focused learning**, for the development of more **generic competences** and for **high quality learning achievement**
- To support **the identity development and well-being** of every pupil
- To promote **cooperation** in the school community and between schools and their surroundings
- To enhance **sustainable way of living** and **sustainable well-being** of both individuals and the society





- Students are active agents
- Interaction promotes learning
- Positive experiences and emotions promote learning
- Self-regulation and self-directedness are important
- Learning to learn is a central skill to be learned in school

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Life
skills

Transversal
competences

21st CENTURY
SKILLS

General
competences

Cross-
curricular
themes

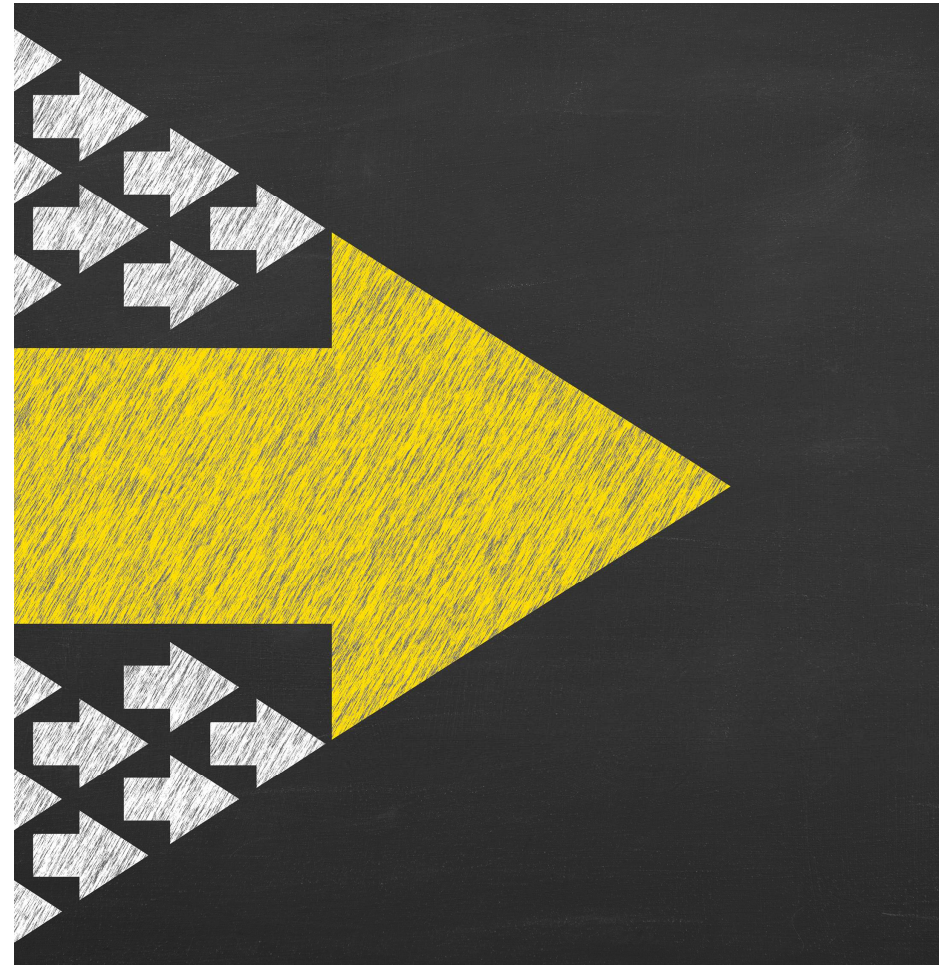
Key
competences

Life-long
learning
skills

Other concepts?

Holistic and visionary curriculum approach

- Curriculum covers all areas of school work.
- It describes the main principles and guidelines for providing education and organising teaching and learning.
- It includes also all subject syllabi.
- It is future-oriented and visionary.



School subjects in Finnish curriculum

Mother tongue and literature

A1-language (for example English/
German/French)

B1-language (Swedish/Finnish)

Mathematics

Environmental studies

Biology and geography

Physics and chemistry

Health education

Religion/Ethics

History and social studies

Music

Visual arts

Crafts

Physical education

Home economics

Guidance counselling

Optional subjects



Distribution of lesson hours in basic education 1.1.2020

Subjects	Grades									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Mother tongue and literature	14		18				10			42
A1-language ¹	2		9				7			18
B1-language					2		4			6
Mathematics	6		15				11			32
Environmental studies	4		10							
Biology and geography ²							7			
Physics and chemistry ²							7			
Health education ²							3			
<i>Environment and nature studies in total</i>			14				17			31
Religion/Ethics	2		5				3			10
History and social studies ³			5				7			12
Music	2		4				2			8
Visual arts	2		5				2			9
Crafts	4		5				2			11
Physical education	4		9				7			20
Home economics							3			3
Artistic and practical elective subjects			6				5			11
<i>Artistic and practical subjects in total</i>										62
Guidance counselling							2			2
Optional subjects					9					9
Minimum number of lessons										224
(Optional A2-language) ⁴						(12)				(12)
(Optional B2-language) ⁴							(4)			(4)
--- = Subject is taught in the grades if stated in the local curriculum.										
¹ A1 language teaching begins at 1 st grade spring term at the latest, for at least 0.5 hours per week.										
² The subject is taught as a part of integrated environmental studies in the grades 1-6.										
³ Social studies are taught in grades 4-6 for at least 2 hours per week and grades 7-9 at least 3 hours per week.										
⁴ The pupil can, depending on the language, study a free-choice A2 language either as an optional subject or instead of the B1 language. The pupil can study the B2 language as an optional subject. The free-choice A2 and B2 languages can, alternatively, be organised as instruction exceeding the minimum time allocation. In this case their instruction cannot be organised using the minimum time allocated in the distribution of lesson hours for optional or B1 language as defined in this paragraph. Depending on the language the pupil receives instruction in a B1 language or optional subjects instead of this B1 language. The distribution of lessons hours would be a minimum of 234 annual lessons for a pupil studying the A2 language as instruction exceeding the minimum time allocation. The corresponding number of annual lessons is a minimum of 226 for a pupil with the B2 language. The total number of annual lessons would be a minimum of 238 for pupils studying both the A2 and the B1 languages as instruction exceeding the minimum time allocation.										

Distribution of lesson hours in basic education

Government Decree on the National Objectives for Education Referred to in the Basic Education Act and in the Distribution of Lesson Hours

Grades 1 and 2	20 lessons/week minimum
Grade 3	22 lessons/week minimum
Grade 4	24 lessons/week minimum
Grades 5 and 6	25 lessons/week minimum
Grades 7 and 8	29 lessons/week minimum
Grade 9	30 lessons/week minimum

A large curricular reform is always preceded by a renewal of the distribution of lesson hours, which states the minimum statutory lessons to be taught in different subjects.

Content of the National Core Curriculum

1. The significance of local curricula and the local curriculum process
2. Basic education as the foundation of general knowledge and ability
3. Mission and general goals of basic education
4. Operating culture of comprehensive basic education
5. Organisation of school work aiming to promote learning and well-being
6. Assessment
7. Support in learning and school attendance
8. Pupil welfare

Content of the National Core Curriculum

9. Special questions of language and culture

10. Bilingual education

11. Basic education based on a particular philosophical or pedagogical system

12. Optional studies in basic education

13. Grades 1-2

14. Grades 3-6

15. Grades 7-9

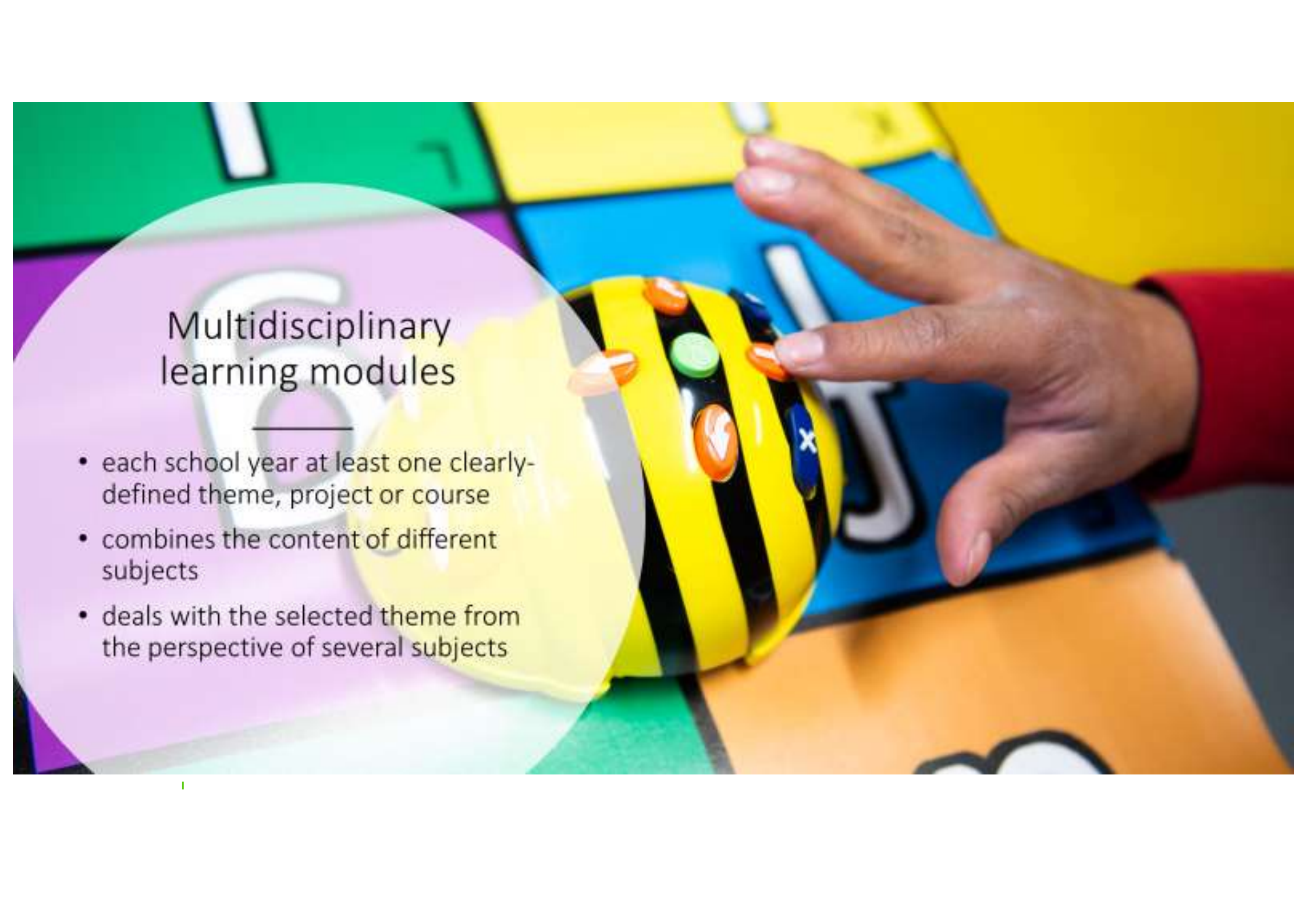
<https://verkkokauppa.oph.fi/EN/page/product/national-core-curriculum-for-basic-education-2014/2453039>

Rethinking transversal competences

• National goals for basic education and transversal competences

- knowledge
- skills
- values
- attitudes
- will



A hand is shown touching a small, yellow and black striped robot that resembles a bee. The robot has several orange and green circular sensors on its body. The background is a colorful, abstract pattern of yellow, blue, green, and purple shapes. A semi-transparent purple circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

Multidisciplinary learning modules

- each school year at least one clearly-defined theme, project or course
- combines the content of different subjects
- deals with the selected theme from the perspective of several subjects

Local curriculum

E-curricula

- All curricula in digital format <https://eperusteet.opintopolku.fi/#/fi>
- The curricula are published as open data -> possibility for service providers to use the data via open API (Application Programming Interface).
- Online tools for composing and publishing local curricula.



The National Core Curriculum and the local curriculum

- **The local curriculum** is an important part of the steering of education. It plays a key role in setting out and implementing both national targets and goals and tasks considered important locally.
- The local curriculum lays a common foundation for and points the direction to daily schoolwork. It is a **strategic** and **pedagogical tool** that defines the policies for the education provider's operation and the work carried out by the schools.
- The curriculum links the operation of the schools to other local activities aiming to promote the well-being and learning of children and young people.

Principles that inform the preparation of the local curriculum

- The education provider carries the responsibility for the preparation and development of the local curriculum.
- Decisions on the implementation and organisation of the educational task of basic education, instruction, assessing and supporting learning, guidance counselling and pupil welfare, cooperation between home and school and other activities are contained in the curriculum.
- The local curriculum complements and emphasises the goals, policies that direct the activities, key contents and other aspects related to the organisation of education specified in the core curriculum from a local perspective.
- The purpose of the curriculum is to promote the continuous improvement of education quality and to reinforce the continuum of education.

Principles that inform the preparation of the local curriculum

- The education provider shall ensure that **the education personnel has possibilities for taking part** in this cooperation and promote both cooperation between subjects and multiprofessional cooperation between various groups of actors.
- According to the Basic Education Act, **a possibility of taking part in the preparation** of the curriculum and the associated plans must also be provided for **the pupils and their guardians.**

Evaluation and development of the local curriculum

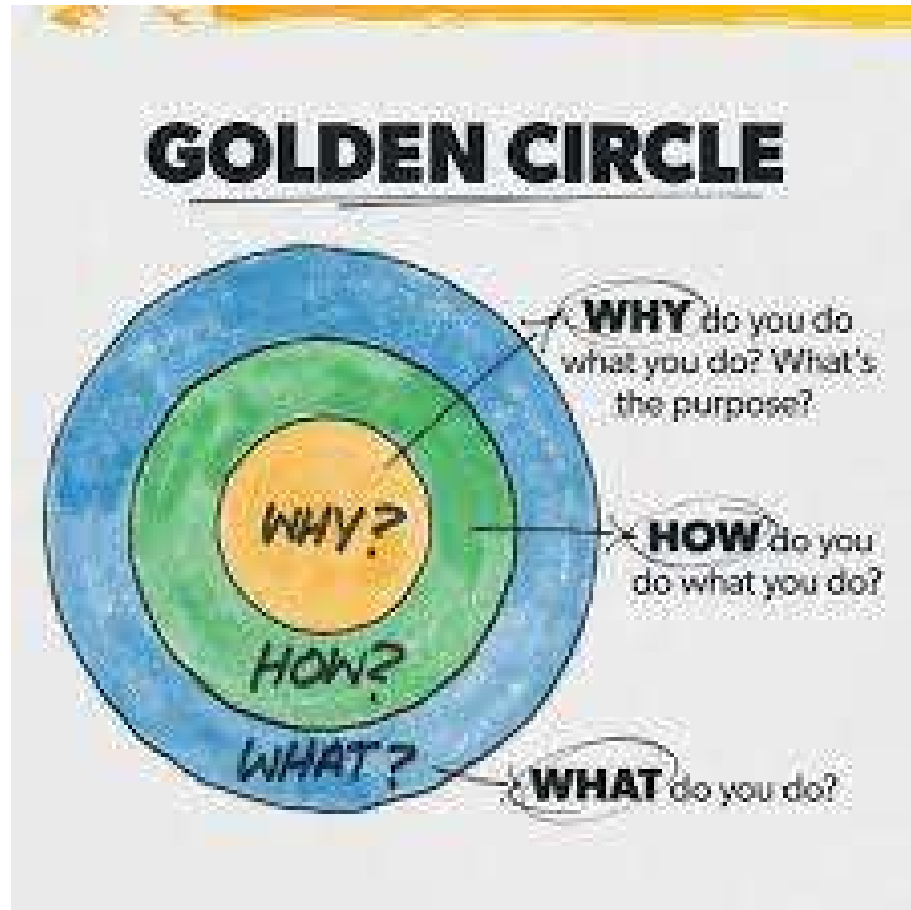
- An education provider shall **evaluate the education it provides** and its impact and take part in external evaluations of its operations.
- The purpose of both **the internal and external evaluation** is to support educational development and to improve conditions for learning.
- The monitoring, regular evaluation and development of the local curriculum and annual plans are part of this duty.
- In their **self-evaluations**, the education provider and schools can draw on the results of national evaluations and development projects and the national quality criteria for basic education.
- **When changes are made in the national core curriculum, the corresponding changes must be made in the local curriculum and implemented in practice.**

School Leadership in Finland

- Every school is lead by a principal (based to legislation)
- Principal qualification requires additional studies of educational administration
- The staff are highly trained professionals, e.g. every teacher has MA in Education. School assistants and other staff are trained as well
- Based to general collective agreement, every teacher has in-service training 3 days / year. N.B. In-service training must also be managed.
- Knowing the staff. Talent management. Supporting professional growth.
- Leading the experts might sometimes be challenging. Leadership.
- Creating the atmospere of trust and creating the organizational and operational culture.



Creating the operational culture



- It would require quite some time.
- Based to **Simon Sinek's** famous model, why Shouldn't we start with WHY?
- That "might disarm" some of the opposition in change management
- On the other hand justifying the change would participate the staff and make them feel more committed to the change.

Major challenges in society

- climate change
- strengthening inclusion and active citizenship
- changes brought about by digitalisation
- changing competence needs
- the impact of demographic development
- regional segregation
- migration
- non-discrimination and equality (accessibility)



Thank you! Kiitos!

