




FINNISH NATIONAL
AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

What's cooking? Recent developments in the Finnish education system and policy

Olli-Pekka Heinonen, Director General  @Heino1Olli
International Summit on the Teaching Profession
Helsinki, 13 March 2019



Finland in brief

- population 5.5 million (18 inhabitants /sq. km)
- two official languages: Finnish and Swedish
- persons with foreign background : 6.2 % of the population
- education level of the working age population:
 - 11 % basic education
 - 44 % upper secondary education
 - 45 % tertiary education

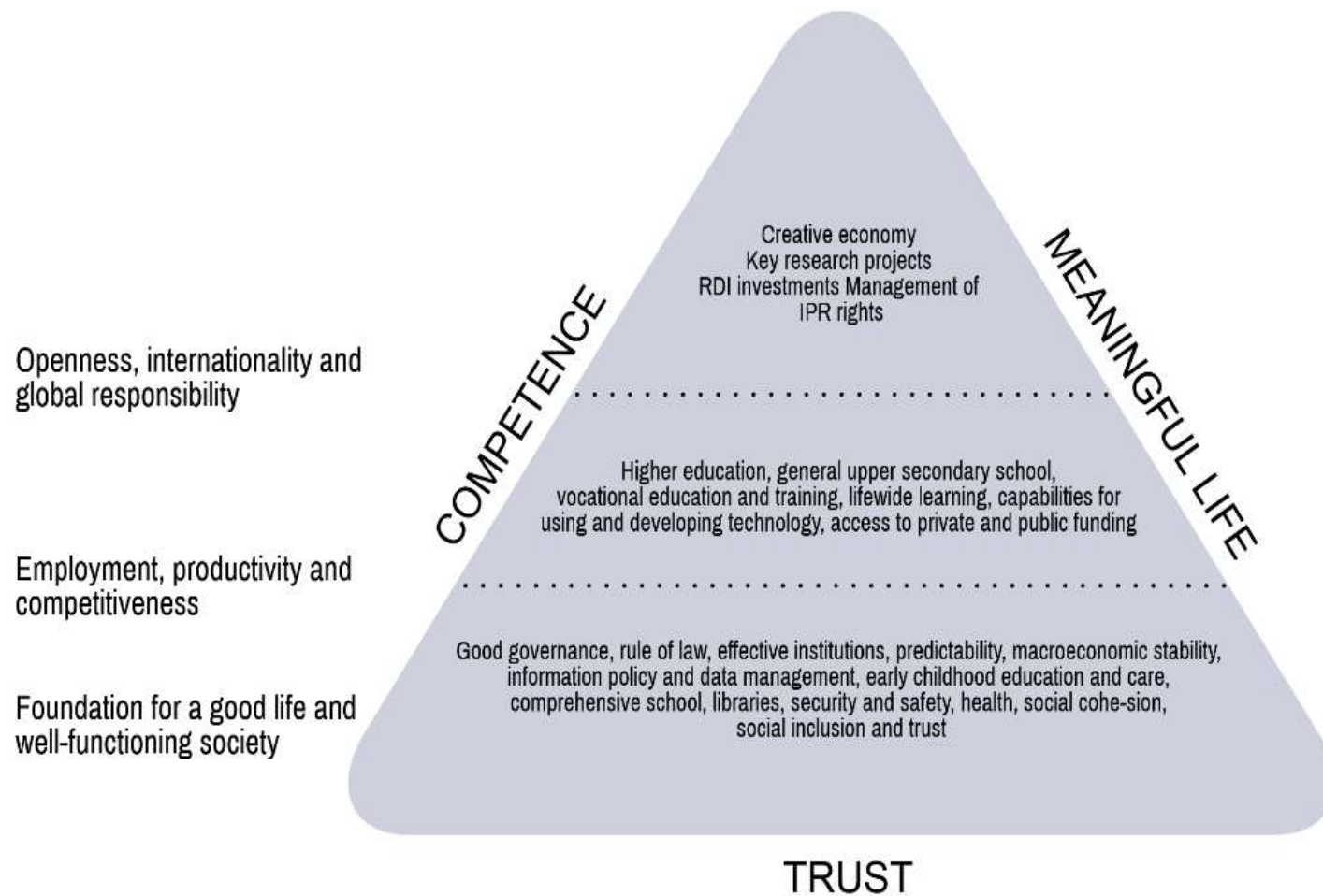


Statistics Finland 2018, Education at a Glance 2016, City of Helsinki media bank





Photo: Tuomas Uusheimo / Helsingin yliopisto



Source: The Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland

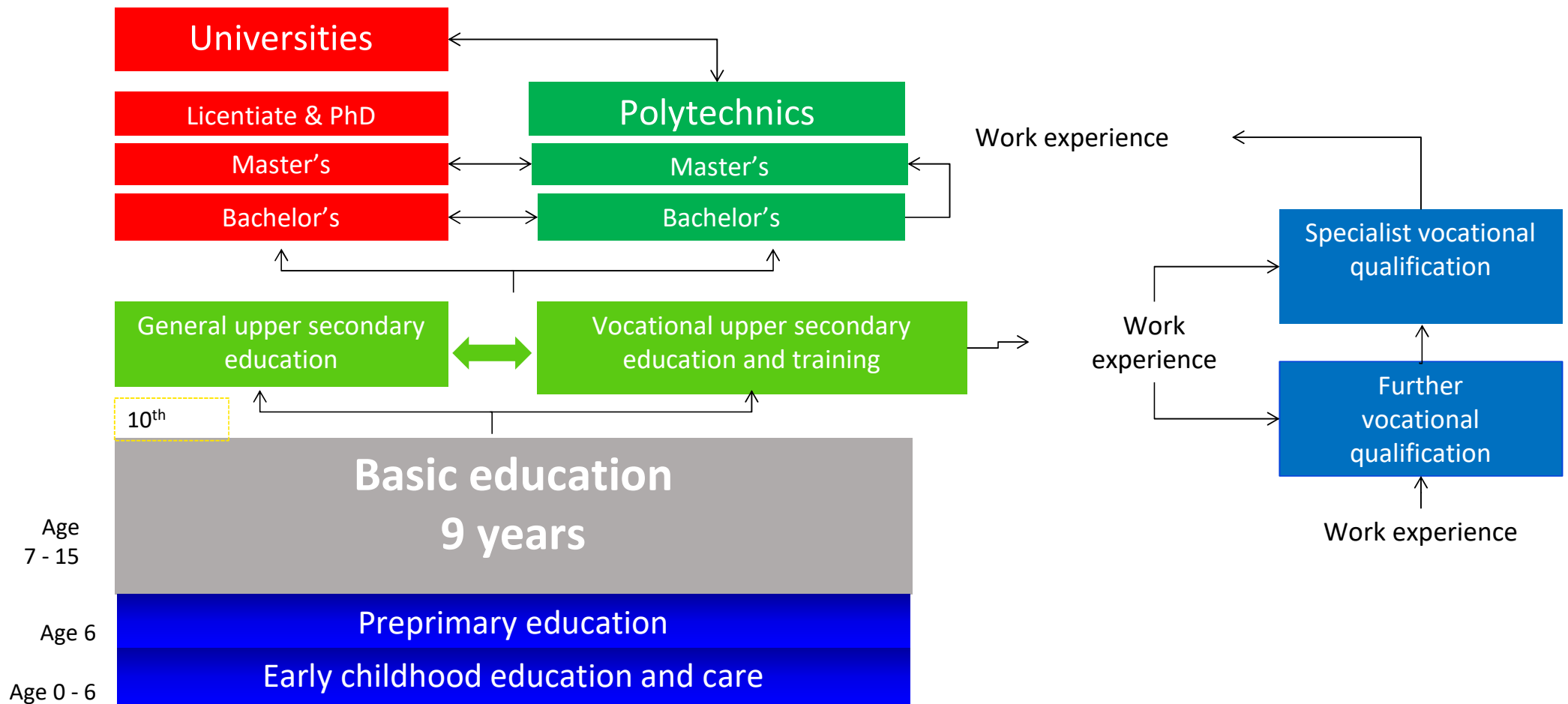
Underlying educational understanding is based on equity

Everyone has the right to basic education free of charge. The public authorities shall guarantee for everyone equal opportunity to receive other educational services in accordance with their ability and special needs, as well as the opportunity to develop themselves without being prevented by economic hardship.

(Constitution of Finland)



No dead-ends in the education system





Characteristics of the Finnish Education System

- **Finnish culture: trust for education**
- **Education policy**
 - Educational equality and equity
 - Delegating decision power and responsibility from central administration to the local levels
- **Comprehensive school (= basic education)**
 - Core curriculum
 - Headteachers as pedagogical directors
 - School practices: several subjects, small groups, high quality equipment
- **Teacher education**
 - Teaching seen as an academic profession
 - Highly-qualified teachers
 - Excellent students



School meals



15 minute break - after every 45 minutes



Emphasis on collaboration,



Equal opportunities and equality



All children go to publicly funded schools



No standardized tests in basic education



Early support

Finnish education in international comparison

**Instruction
time low**

**Differences
between schools
small**

**Girls outperform
boys**

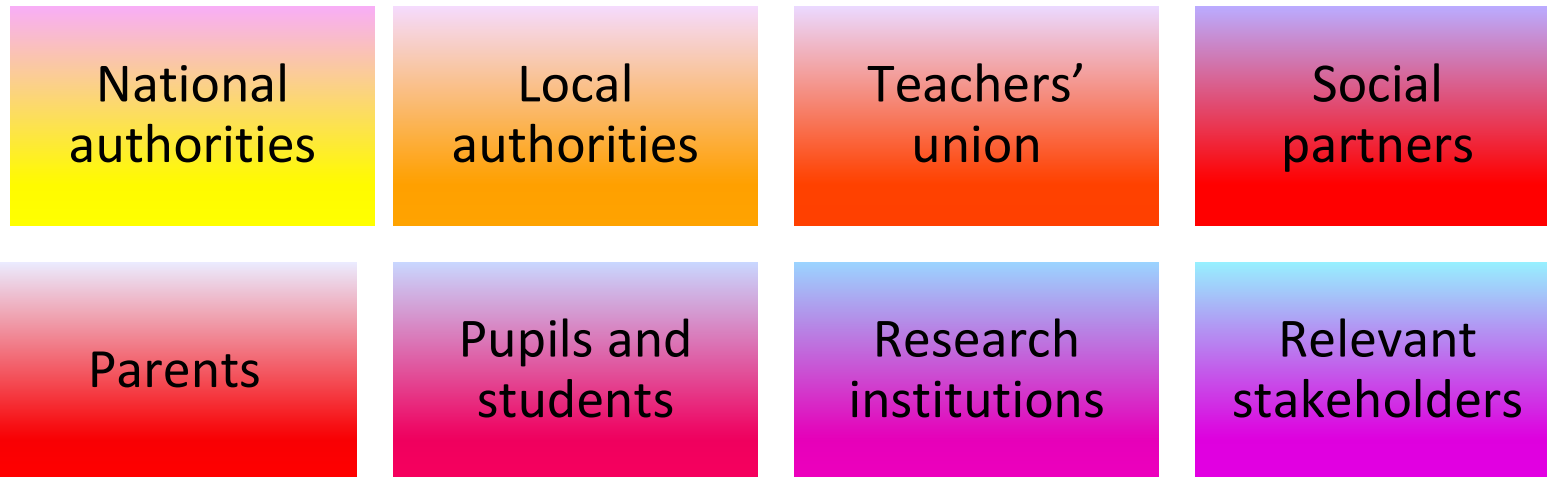
**Moderate
costs**

**Socio-economic
effect moderate**

**Teachers feel highly
valued**



Education developed in partnership





WHAT MAKES TEACHING PROFESSION SUCH A POPULAR?

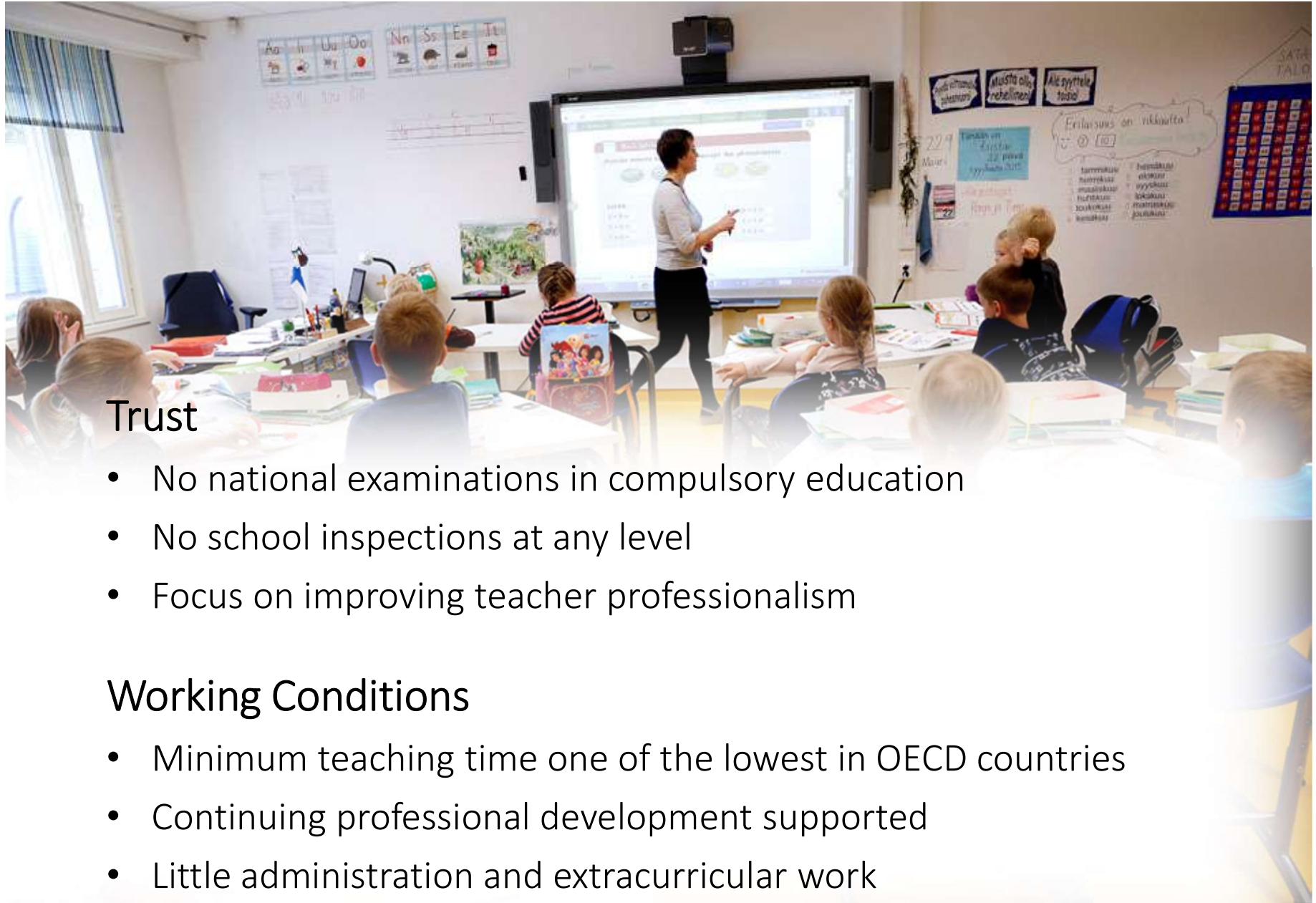
Autonomy

- Freedom to choose learning materials and pedagogy
- Freedom to decide on assesement
- Participating in defining local curriculum

Respect

- Teachers are well respected
- Changing of profession is very rare
- Teacher education programmes are popular

Source: Finnish teachers and principals in figures, National Agency for Education, 2018



Trust

- No national examinations in compulsory education
- No school inspections at any level
- Focus on improving teacher professionalism

Working Conditions

- Minimum teaching time one of the lowest in OECD countries
- Continuing professional development supported
- Little administration and extracurricular work



Tutor Teacher Model

- **The New Comprehensive action plan aimed to introduce tutor teachers to all ca. 2,200 comprehensive schools in Finland to embrace new pedagogical approaches, support implementation of new core curriculum, promote the digitalization of teaching and increase peer learning and collaboration**
- **Also training for tutor teachers themselves was made available in 2016, and regional networks of tutor teachers in 2017 (5 ECTS)**
- **Tutor teacher model has been supported with EUR 23,8 million in 2016–2018**

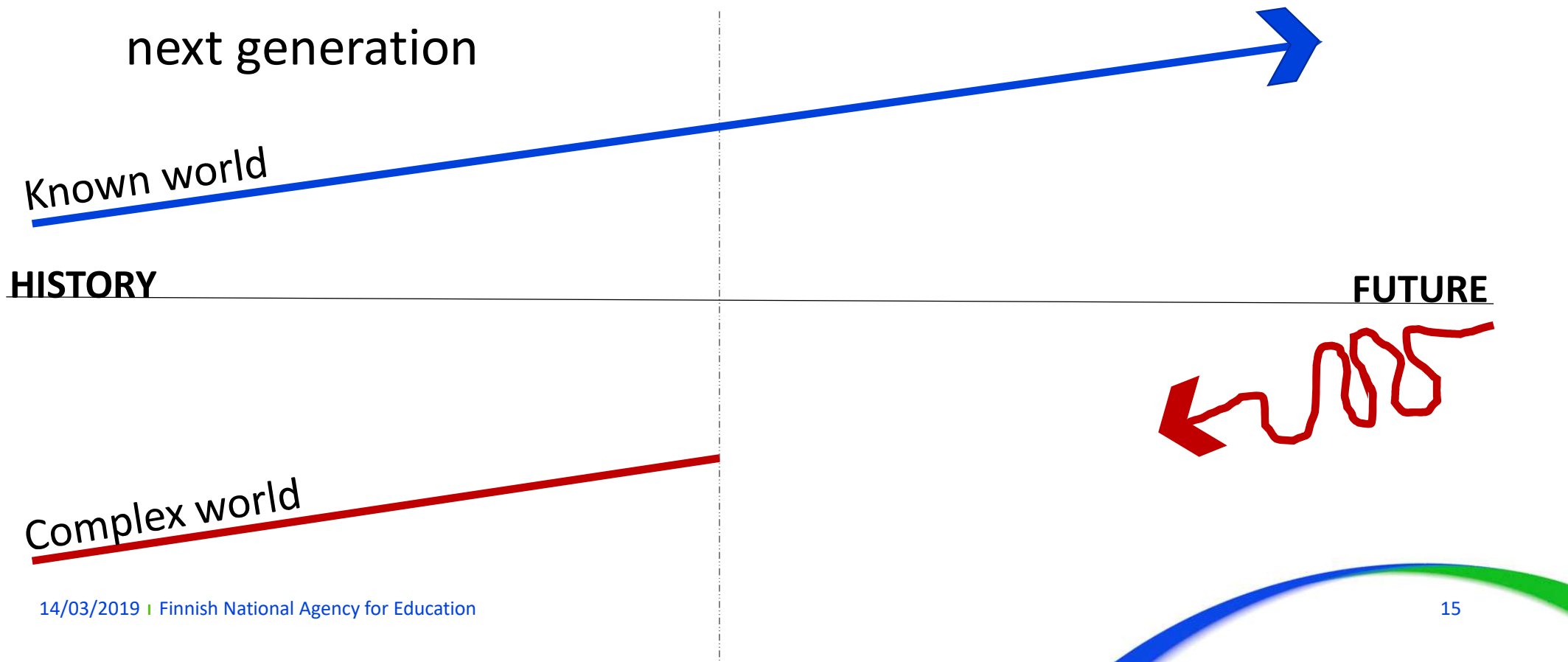
How to educate and train in an uncertain and complex world for a future we can't predict?



The Metatasks of Education

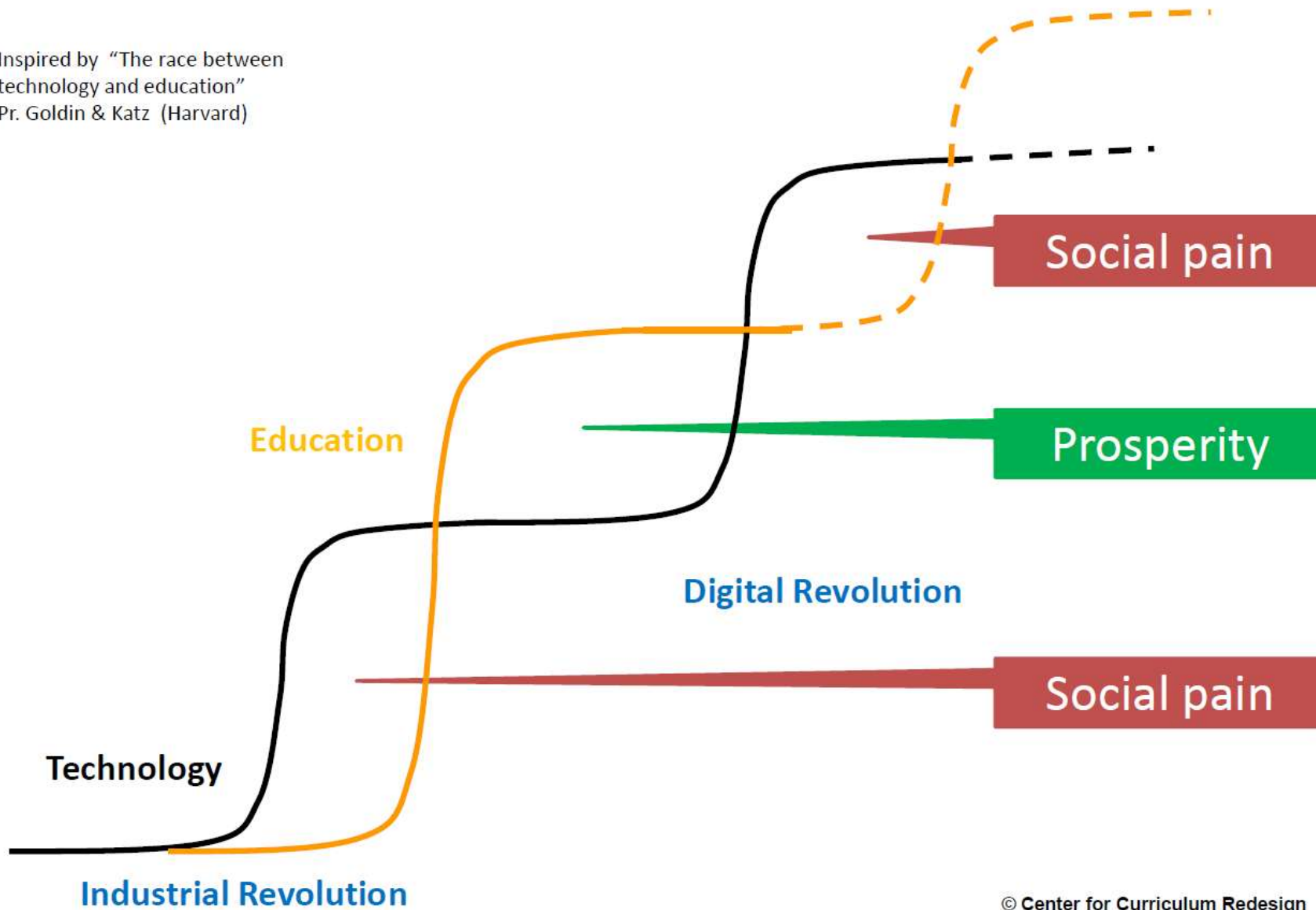
1. Transfer the human achievements for the next generation

2. Give capabilities to confront the future

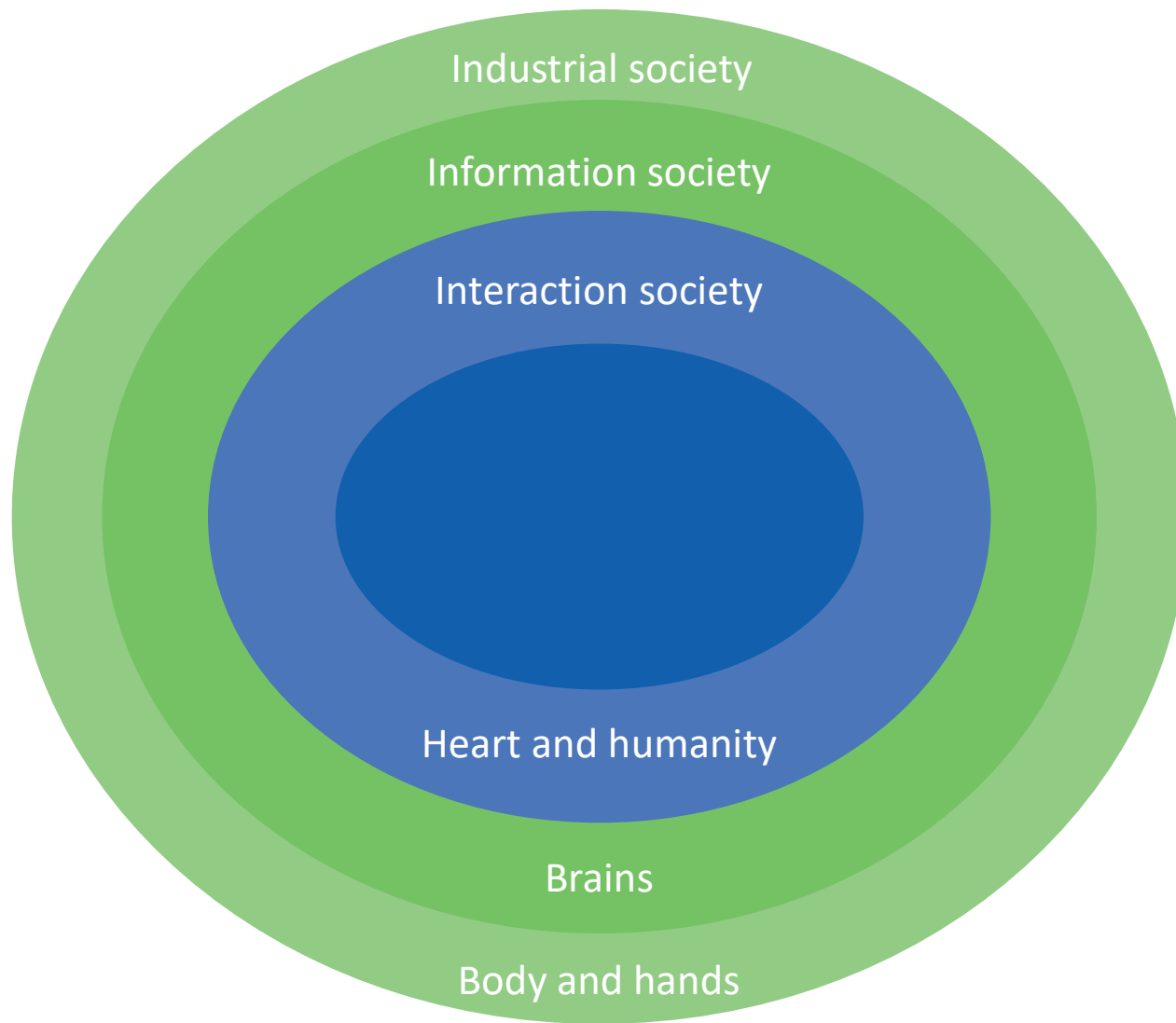


The Race between Technology and Education

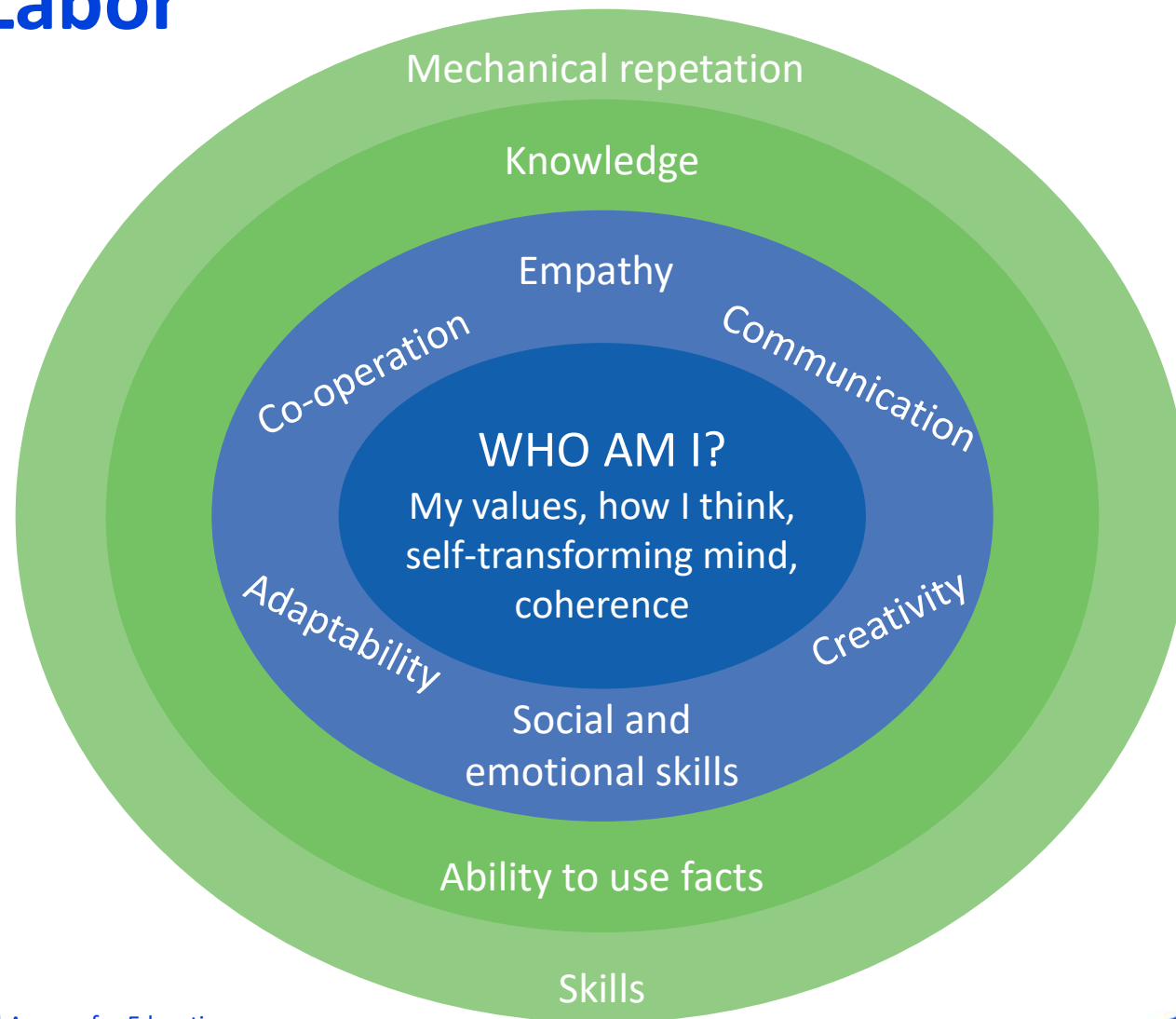
Inspired by "The race between technology and education"
Pr. Goldin & Katz (Harvard)

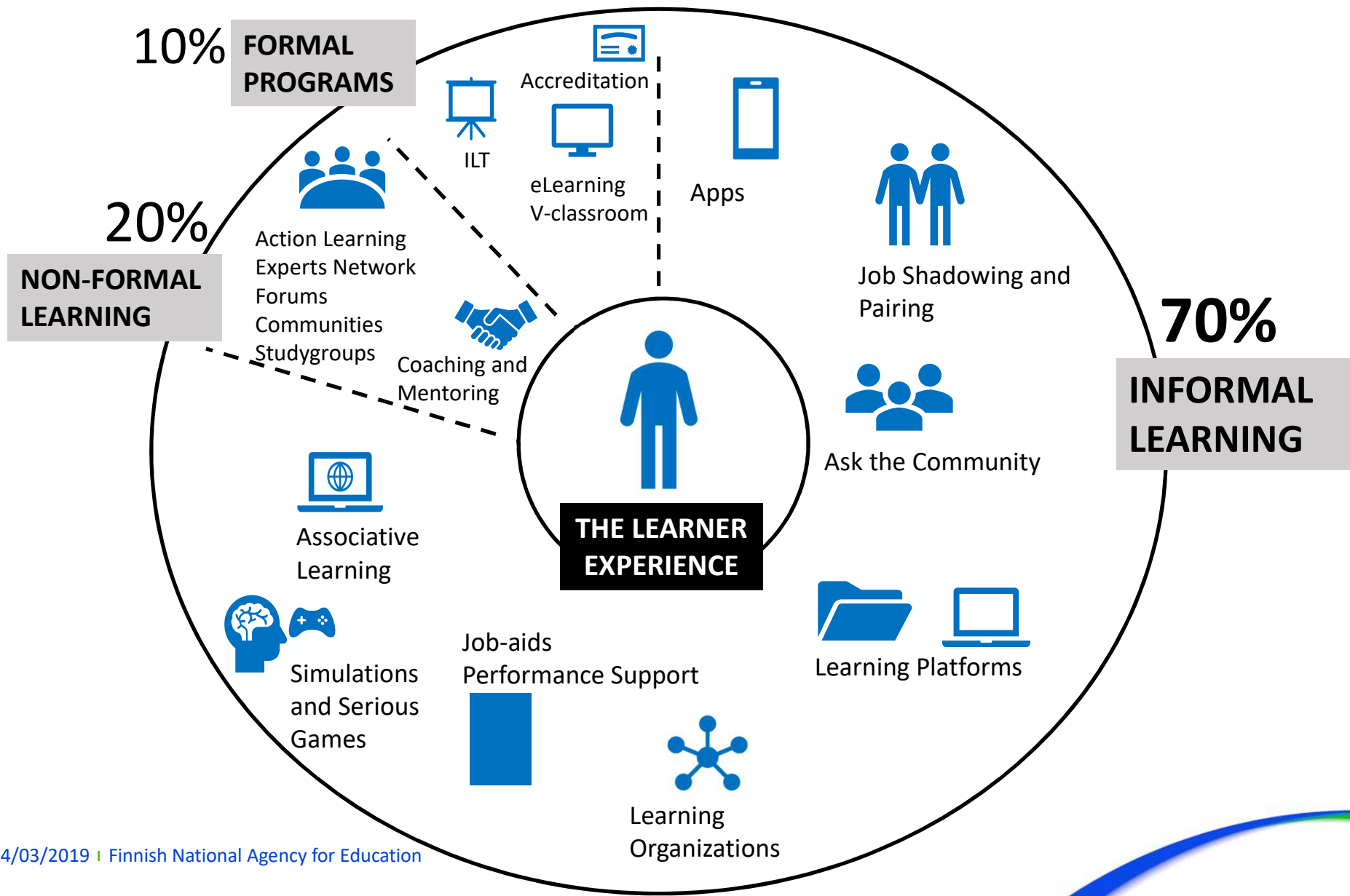


Source: Charles Fadel

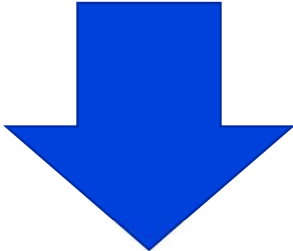


Human Labor





Equal teaching



Interface
of
Learning

Creativecommons.org

Immigration

Inclusion

Opportunities and threats of digitalisation

Scarcity in basic needs

Challenges in mental health

Understanding various learning difficulties

Individuation

Diversified needs, starting points and prerequisites

Diversity of demand requires diversity of support

Equality



The assumption is that everyone benefits from the same supports. This is equal treatment.

Equity



Everyone gets the supports they need (this is the concept of "affirmative action"), thus producing equity.

Justice



All 3 can see the game without supports of accommodations because the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed

Four Keys to Finnish curriculum reform 2016

Changing role of students

- Working together, participation
- Exploratory and creative learning

World of change

- Environment, globalization, economy, world of work, technology, diversity of society

Impact on children's environment

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



Rethinking transversal competences

• National goals for basic education and transversal competences

- knowledge
- skills
- values
- attitudes
- will

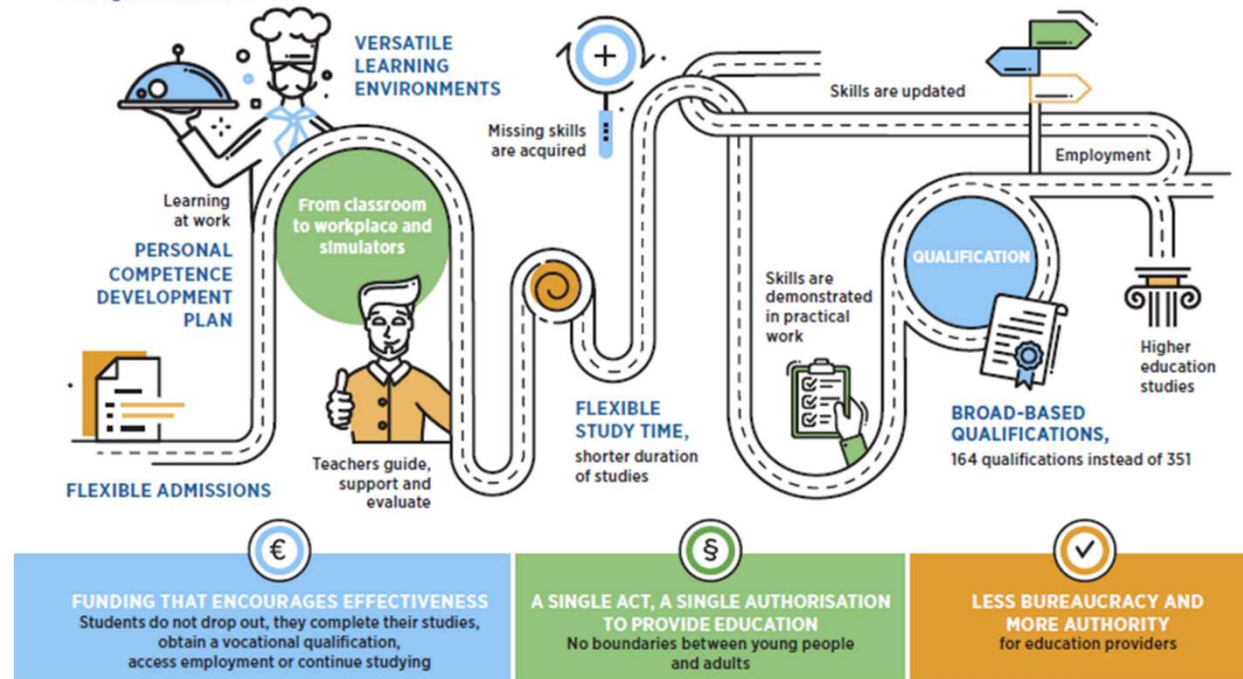


Implementation is the strategy

Government proposal 2017

NEW VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING as of 1 January 2018

Working life is undergoing changes. New occupations keep on emerging and old ones disappear. Technology advances. Revenue models are renewed. Students' needs are becoming more and more individualistic. Skills need to be updated throughout careers.



NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

WHAT?
ALL COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS MEET HIGH STANDARDS AND OFFER EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

WHY?
EVIDENCE OF LEARNING AND WELLBEING

HOW?
COHERENT AND FLEXIBLE SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT

SYSTEMATIC
DECISION-
MAKING,
GUIDANCE
AND
SUPPORT

EDUCATION PROVIDER

WHAT?
LEARNING COMMUNITIES DEVELOP PROFESSIONALLY

WHY?
EFFECTIVENESS OF EDUCATION

HOW?
SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND ADAPTABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

COMPETENT
TEACHERS,
PRINCIPALS
AND OTHER
SCHOOL
STAFF

SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS

WHAT?
STUDENTS FEEL GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES AND ARE MOTIVATED TO LEARN

WHY?
COMPETENCE- AND INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

HOW?
SENSE OF COMMUNITY, EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION AND PERSONALISED LEARNING PATHS WITH TIMELY SUPPORT

COMPETENT
AND SELF-
CONFIDENT
CHILDREN
AND YOUNG
PEOPLE

COMMUNITY OF GROWTH

WHAT?
WELLBEING OF FAMILIES AND RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD

WHY?
TIMELY SUPPORT BASED ON FORESIGHT

HOW?
CHILD-, YOUTH- AND FAMILY-CENTRED APPROACH

GOOD
EVERYDAY
LIFE TO
HELP
CHILDREN
LEARN

FUTURE EDUCATION SYSTEM

FINNISH BASIC EDUCATION

- Excellence through equity for all

prioritised goals

1

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Developing the school leadership system towards collaborating and constantly learning expert organisation.

2

LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT, FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

Development of basic education is founded on a long-term collaboration based on trust. There is a continuous dialogue between national and local development.

3

SUPPORT FOR LEARNING, PERSONALISED LEARNING PATHS AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING SOLUTIONS

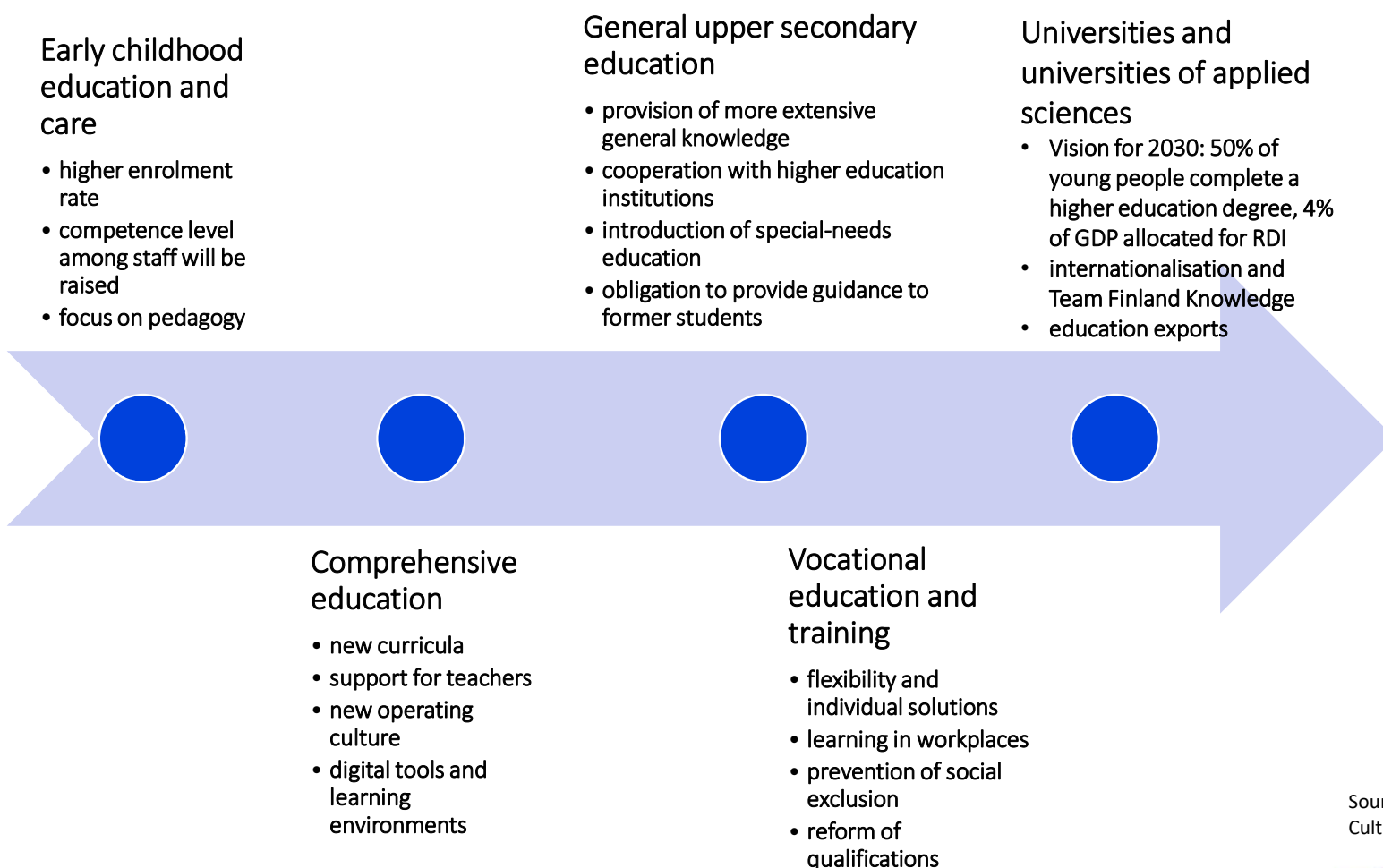
Basic education provides all students with equal opportunities for high-quality and pedagogically relevant teaching.

4

SCHOOLS PROMOTING WELLBEING

Schools are seen as an essential part of the communities.

The entire education system will be reformed



Source: The Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland

Strengthen the systemic, holistic approach

- School subjects → • Also competences, skills
- Teaching individuals → • Community capacity building, applied learning
- School-based learning → • Lifelong learning path and ubiquitous learning
- Physical, social, ethical, mental wellbeing separately → • Seeing human being as a whole, growth mindset
- Individualistic professional development of teachers → • School as a learning community
- Provider-based services → • Child- and youth- centered services
- National identity → • Global consciousness

Assess learning



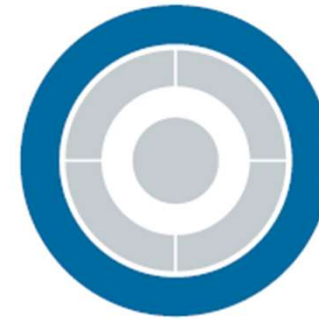
to make it a serious goal

Act on evidence



to make schools
work for all learners

Align actors



to make the whole
system work for learning

Thank you!

