

2023 JNUE-JBE Cooperation International Conference
“The present and future of student-centered elementary education”

Lessons from Finnish Elementary Education

13th October 2023
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University of Melbourne



1: Facts and myths about Finnish education

2: The power of elementary education

3: Lessons for others

1: Facts and myths about Finnish education

FACT OR MYTH?

The most important single factor in improving quality of education is teachers.

MYTH!

”The conclusion that family background is far more important than people realized has remained a solid empirical finding for 50 years.”

- Stephen Morgan (2016)

Fake news

Only the best and the brightest can become teachers.



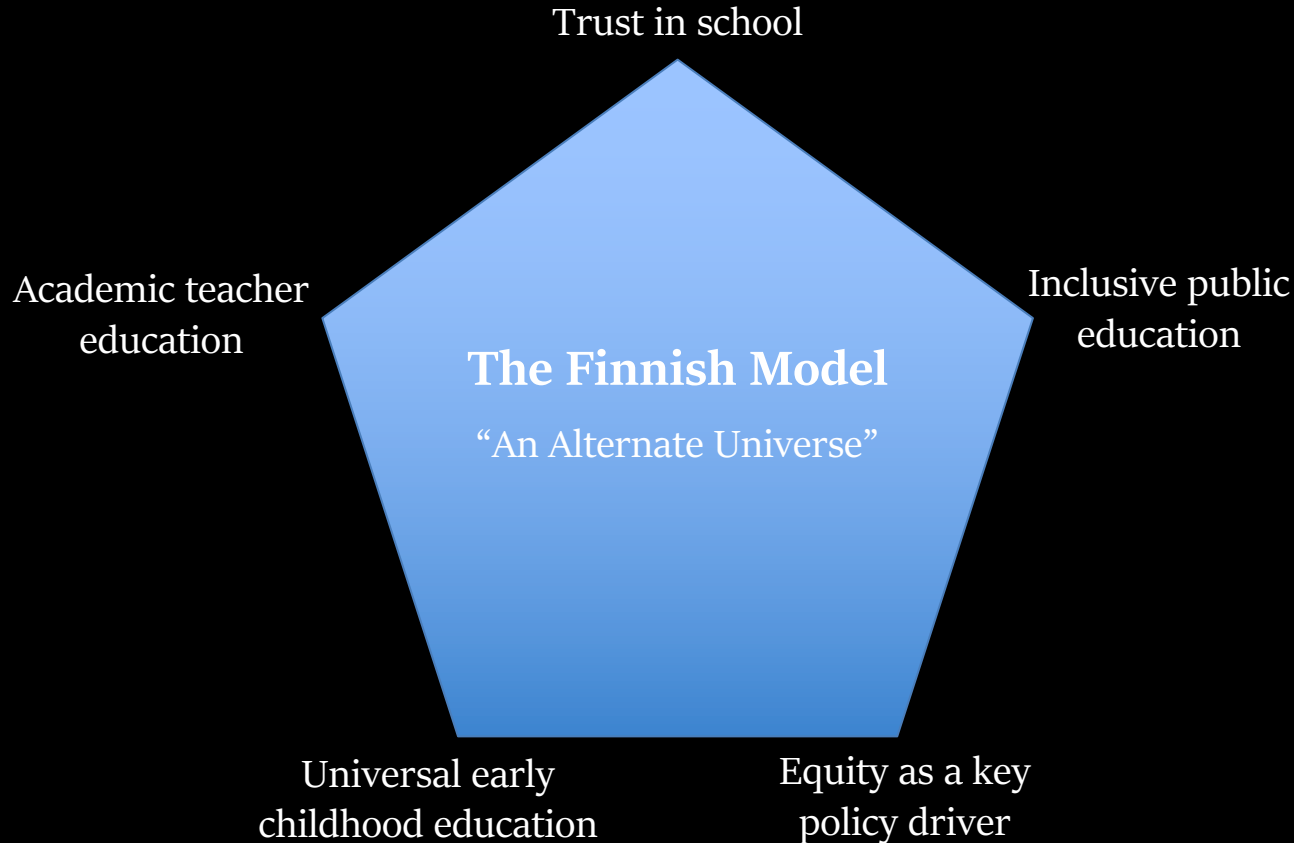
Facts and myths about Finnish schools
Pasi Sahlberg

SEMINAR SERIES 290

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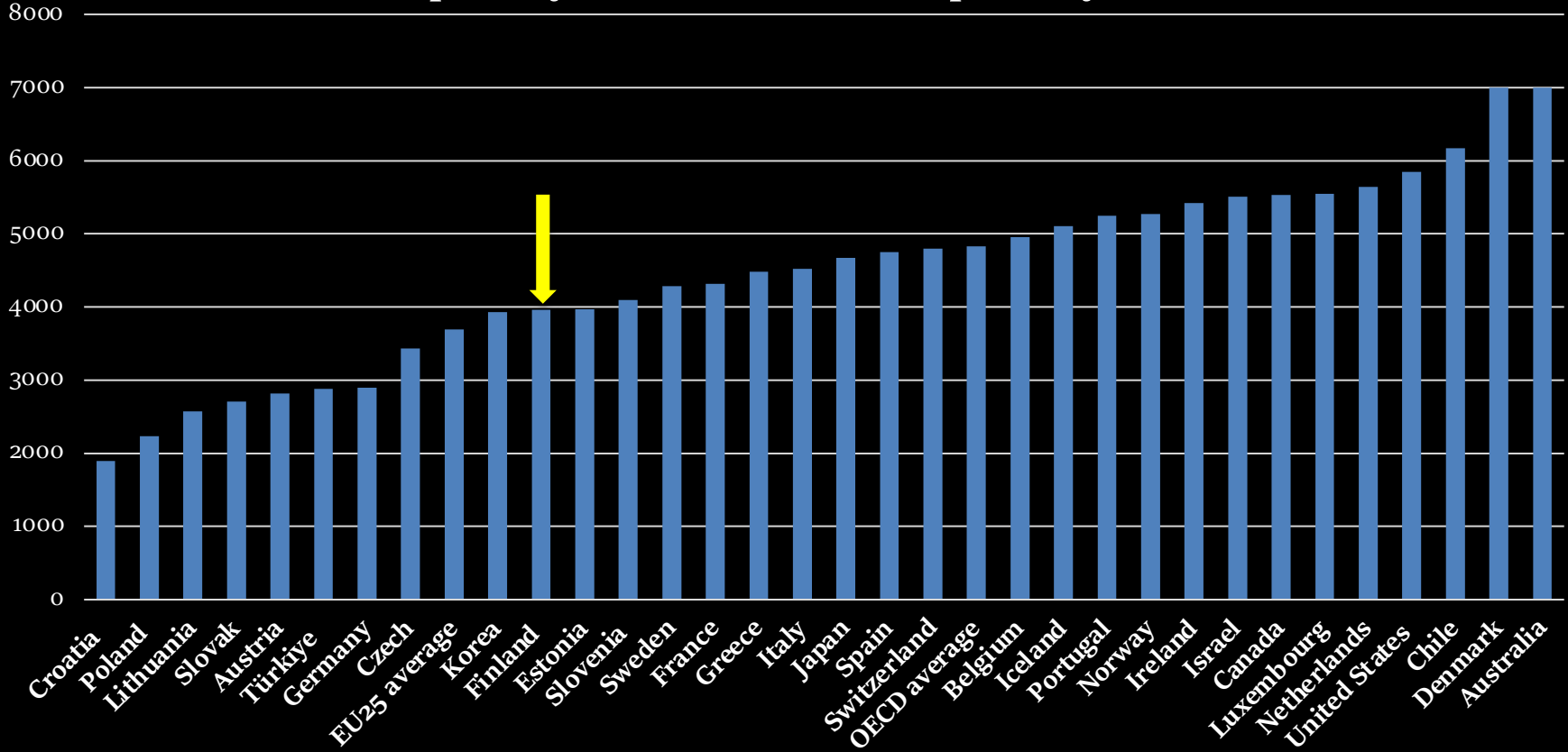
Facts about Finnish education



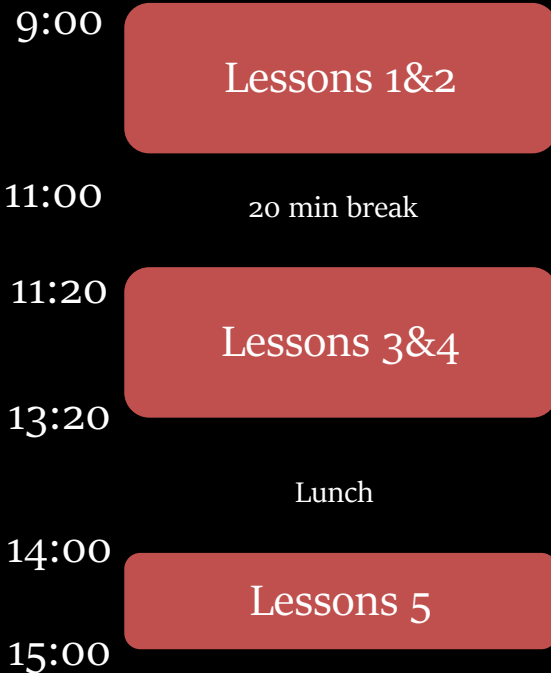
2: The power of elementary education

Compulsory instruction time in primary schools

Total instruction hours during primary education



Common Primary School Schedule



Finnish Primary School Schedule



Primary school teaching as
“Good Work”

Primary school teaching as “Good Work”

Excellence: “People know what they’re doing.”

Engagement: “People like what they do.”

Ethics: “People carry out work in ethical ways.”



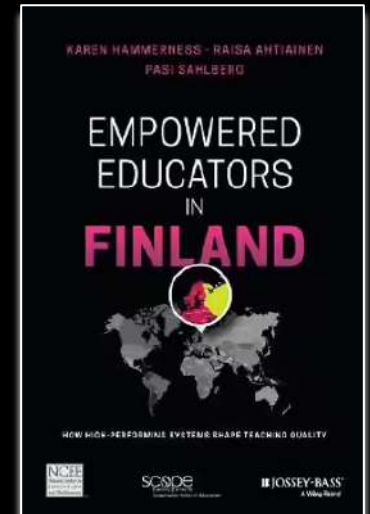
Educating primary school teachers

Selectivity into the profession

Teaching as research-engaged profession

Preparation grounded in clinical training

Lifelong professional development



1

Primary school teacher as a collaborative professional

Culture that permeates the whole school or system.

Regular quality feedback related to improvement.

Collective responsibility for all children's learning.

2

Primary school teaching as a leadership profession

Understanding student learning.

Teaching as leading children to achieve and grow.

Being responsible for collective professional growth.

3

Primary teacher education as clinical experience

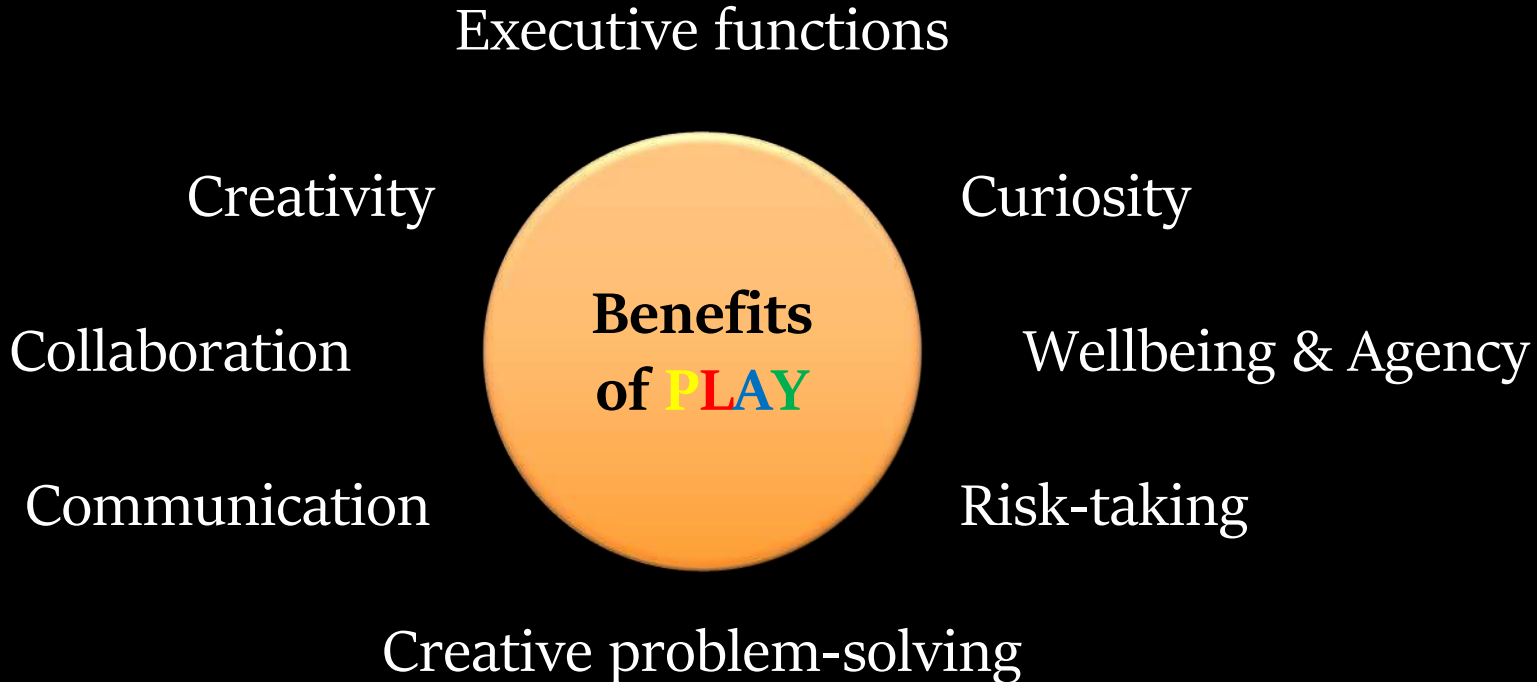
Research-based degree (MA) as a basic qualification.

University-teaching school partnerships.

Intensive supervision, expert modeling of practice,
and teaching diverse students.

3: Lessons for others

1. Coherence between instruction and unstructured play



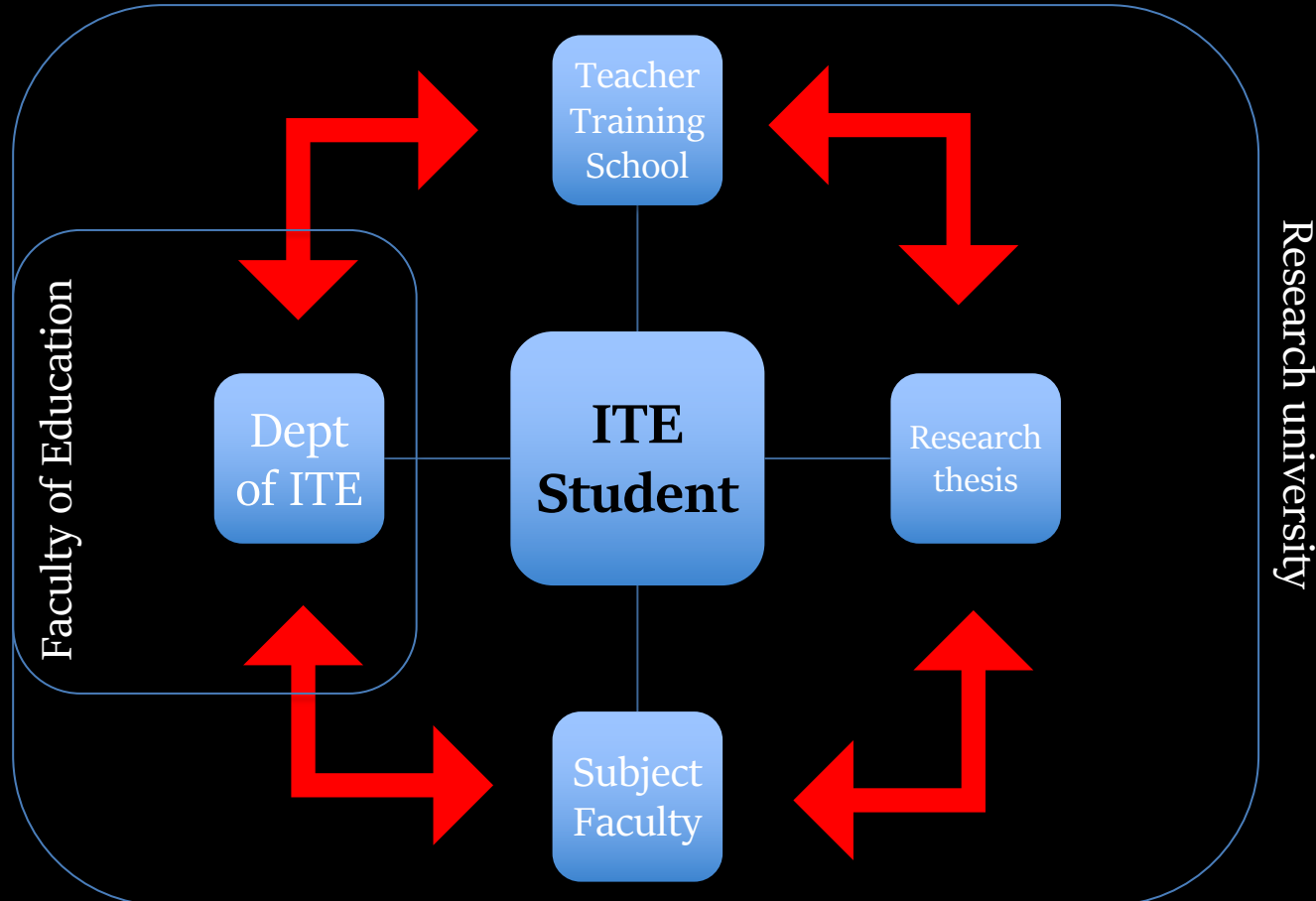
2. Prepare teachers to become professionals

UNDERSTAND teaching differently from your own school experience.

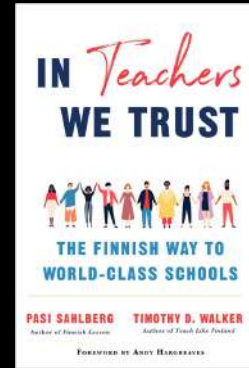
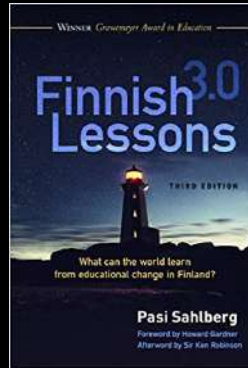
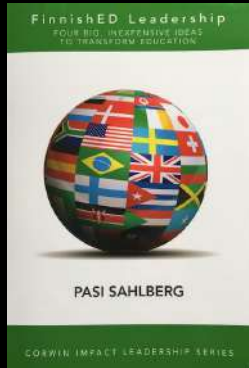
THINK & ACT as a teacher.

EXPLORE the complex nature of student learning.

3. Make primary teacher education research-based



THANK YOU!



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