



OPETUSHALLITUS
UTBILDNINGSTYRELSEN

Curriculum development and teachers' autonomy in the Finnish education system

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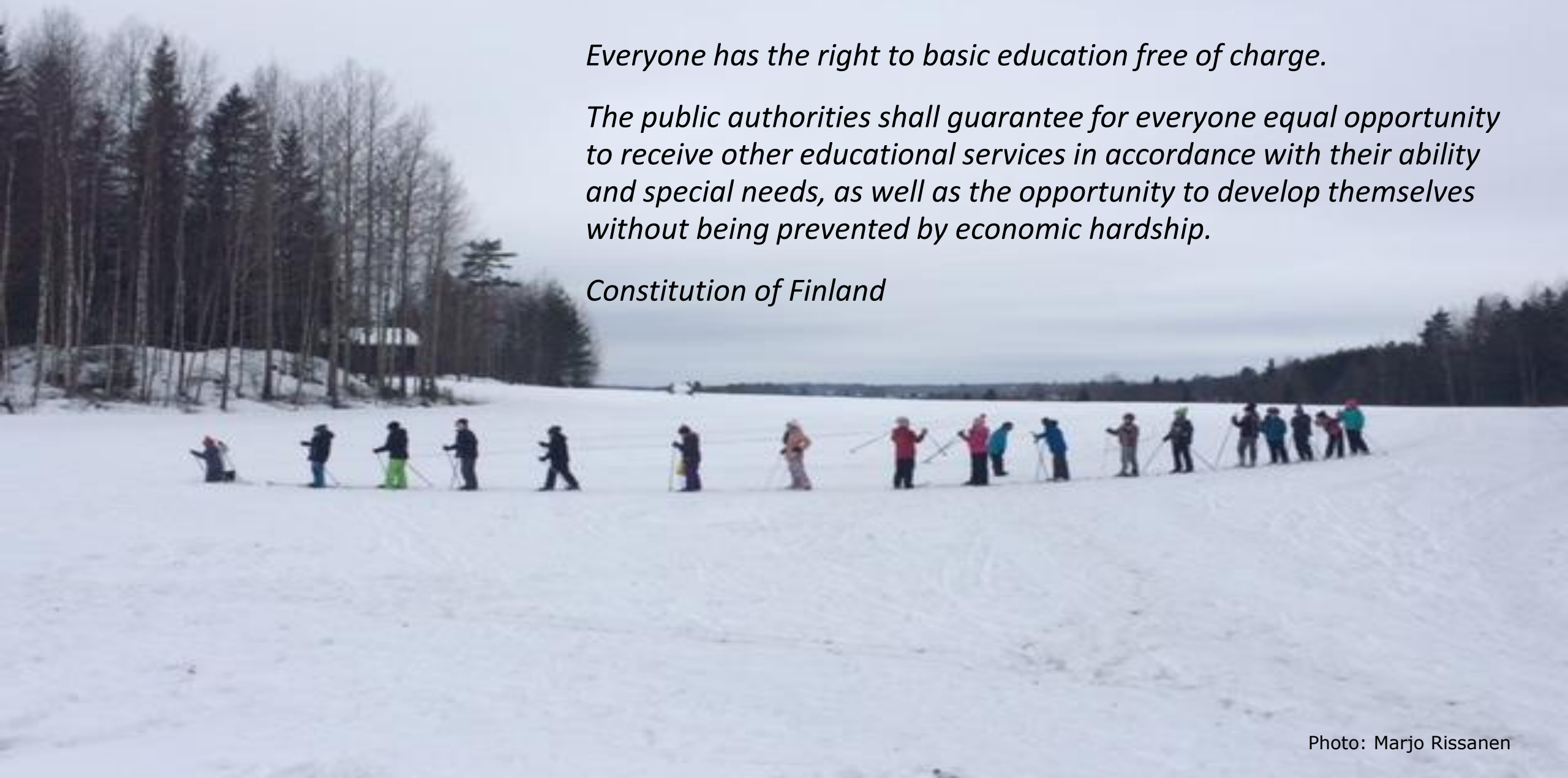


Educational understanding is based on equity

Everyone has the right to basic education free of charge.

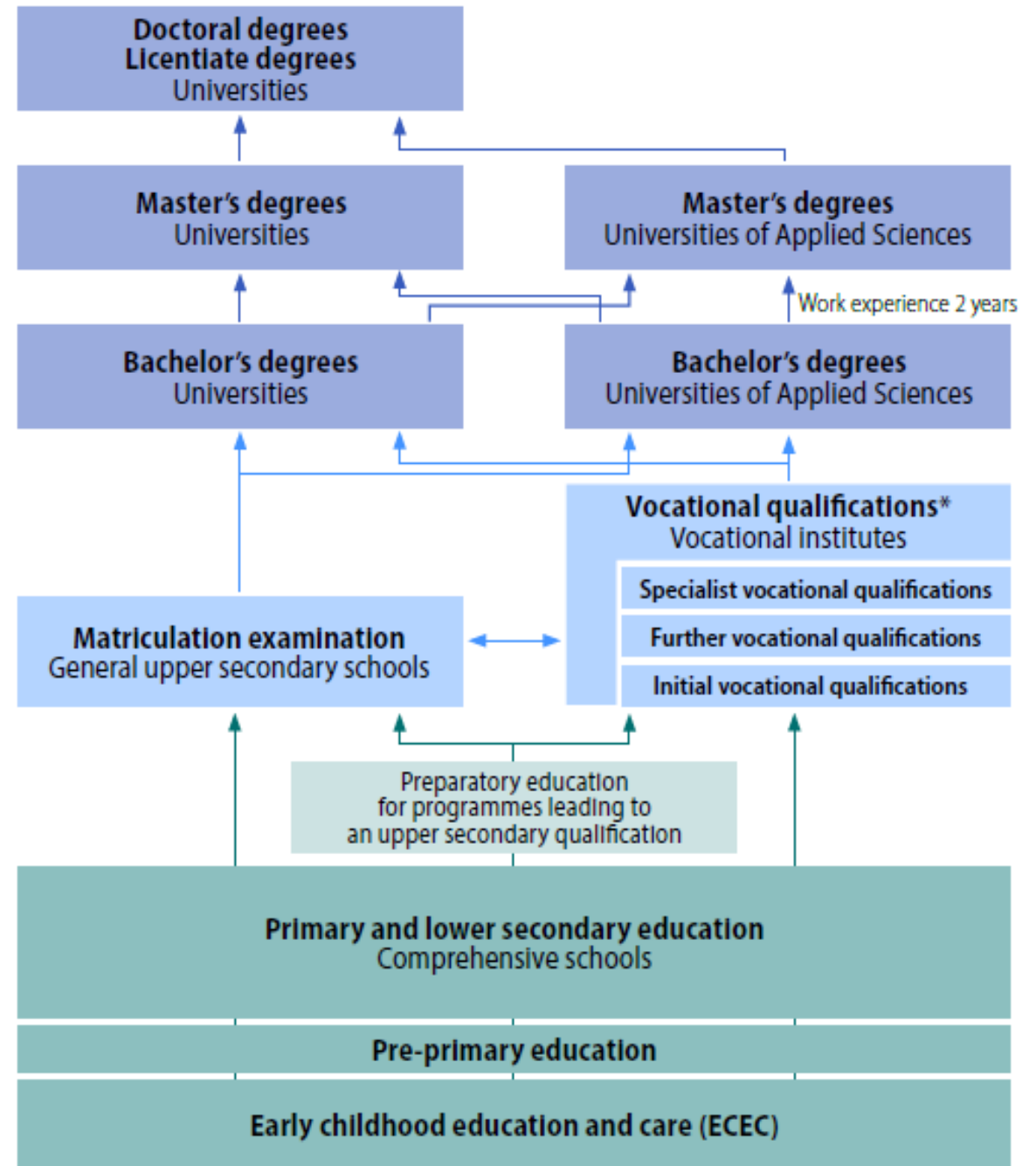
The public authorities shall guarantee for everyone equal opportunity to receive other educational services in accordance with their ability and special needs, as well as the opportunity to develop themselves without being prevented by economic hardship.

Constitution of Finland




Education system in Finland

- Flexible education model
- No dead ends – learning can always proceed to an upper level of education
- Expansion of compulsory education to the age 18 (1.8.2021)



**How is national
curricula/standard designed,
updated and set for different
levels of education?**

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Two-tier national administration

Ministry of Education and Culture

- Education policy
- Preparation of legislation
- State funding

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

Finnish National Agency for Education

- National development agency
- National Core Curriculum & qualification requirements
- Support for evidence-based policy-making
- Support for reform and development
- Services for educators and learners
- Supporting internationalisation

The 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 Curricula

Education providers and schools

- Local decisions basing 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

National core curriculum is based on the norms

- Constitution of Finland 731/1999
- Basic Education Act 628/1998
- Basic Education Degree 852/1998
- Government Degrees on the national goals of education and distribution of lesson hours in basic education 422/2012
- Government Degree amending the Basic Education Degree 423/2012
- Children Welfare Act 417/2007
- Pupil and Student Welfare Act 1287/2013
- Non-Discrimination Act 21/2004
- Act on Equality between Women and men 609/1986
- UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007
- Quality criteria for basic education, Ministry of Education and Culture 2012:29

Objectives of education

Section 2

- The purpose of education referred to in this Act is **to support pupils' growth into humanity and into ethically responsible membership of society** and to provide them with **knowledge and skills needed in life**. Furthermore, the aim of pre-primary education, as part of early childhood education, is to **improve children's capacity for learning**.
- Education shall **promote civilisation and equality in society** and pupils' prerequisites for participating in education and otherwise developing themselves during their lives.
- The aim of education shall further be to secure adequate **equity in education throughout the country**.

Source: Basic Education Act 628/1998

Local authority as education provider

Section 4 Statutory duty to arrange basic education and pre-primary education

- The local authority
 - shall have **an obligation to arrange basic education for children of compulsory school age** residing in its area and pre-primary education during the year preceding compulsory schooling.
 - shall have an obligation to arrange pre-primary education for children within prolonged compulsory schooling.

Source: Basic Education Act 628/1998

Underlying values in Finnish education

- **Uniqueness of each child/pupil and right to a good education**
 - Each pupil is unique and valuable just as he or she is and has **the right to grow into his or her full potential** as a human being and a member of society.
- **Humanity, general knowledge and ability, equality and democracy**
 - Education is built on **respect for life and human rights**. Education promotes well-being, democracy and active agency in civil society.
 - The development education is guided by the goals and extensive principles of equality and equity.
- **Cultural diversity as a richness**
 - Education supports the pupils in building their personal **cultural identity and their growth into active actors** in their own culture and community while promoting their interest in other cultures.
- **Necessity of a sustainable way of living**
 - Education broadens the pupils' horizons, allowing them to appreciate their cross-generational global responsibility.

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		2	3		7
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										225
(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

Total annual number of lessons = annual weekly lesson x 38

Education provider decide, how lesson hours in each grade are allocated to core subjects, optional lessons in artistic and practical subjects, and subjects that are optional for the pupils as required in the Government Decree (local distribution of lesson hours).

225 minimum number of lessons

Source:

<https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2018/20180793>

The minimum number of lessons in the basic education

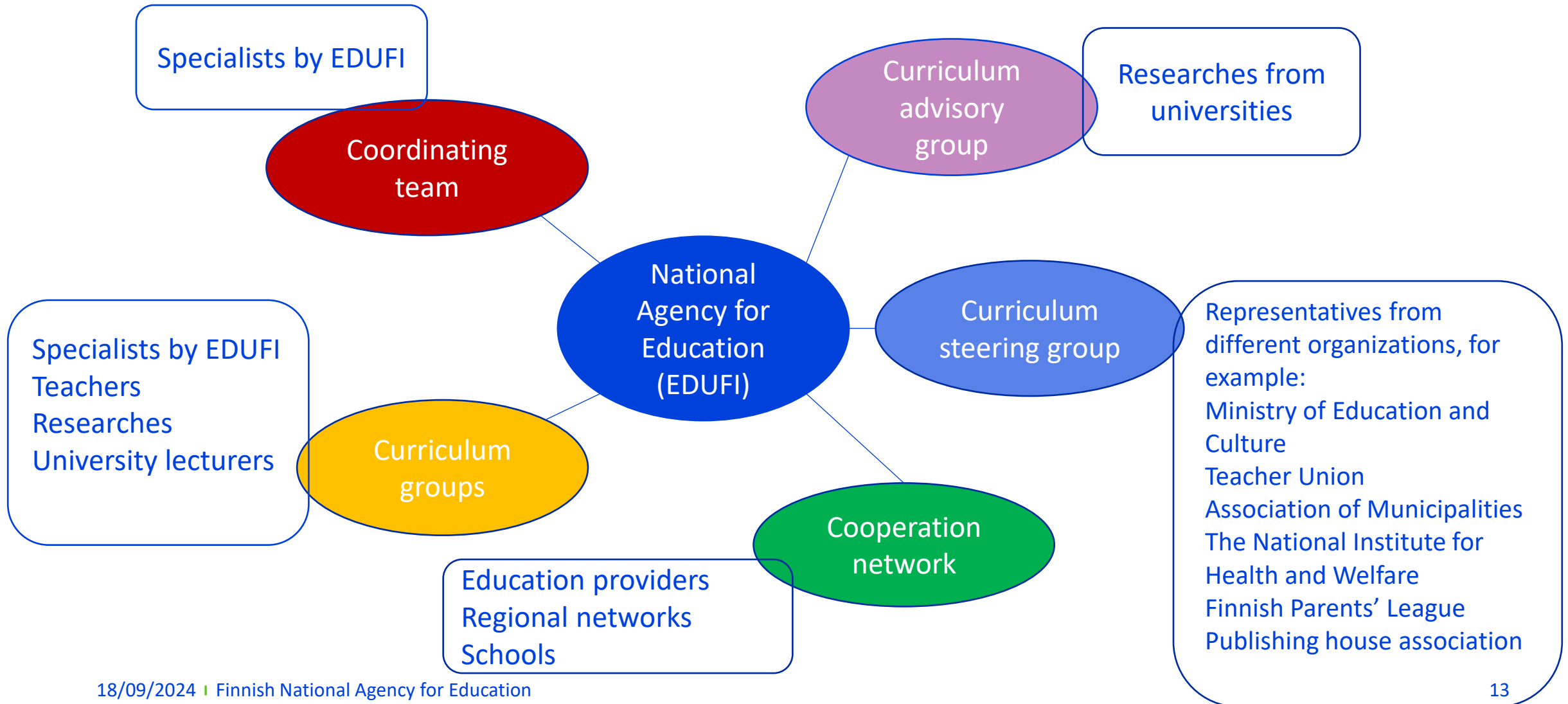
- Grades 1 and 2 20 lessons/week minimum
- Grade 3 22 lessons/week minimum
- Grade 4 24 lessons/week minimum
- Grades 5 and 6 25 lessons/week minimum
- Grade 7 30 lessons/week minimum
- Grade 8 29 lessons/week minimum
- Grade 9 30 lessons/week minimum

The pupil's work load in basic education must be such as to allow him or her enough time for rest, recreation and hobbies over and above the time spent in school, school travel and homework.

Basic Education Act 628/1998, Chapter 6, section 24:

https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/1998/en19980628_20101136.pdf

Cooperation in preparing National Core Curriculum



Curriculum process

Finnish education evaluation
centre/ EDUFI/Finnish Institute
for Educational Research

Preliminary preparation

Preparing the national
core curriculum

Support for
implementation of
curriculum

Monitoring and
evaluation

Law
reform/
degree
reform /

Curriculum
process
schedule

The decision
on starting
the
curriculum
process by
EDUFI

Detailed plan for the
curriculum process:

- specialists by EDUFI
- advisory group if needed
- specified schedule
- principles of participation
- communication plan
- ePerusteet -platform
- budget

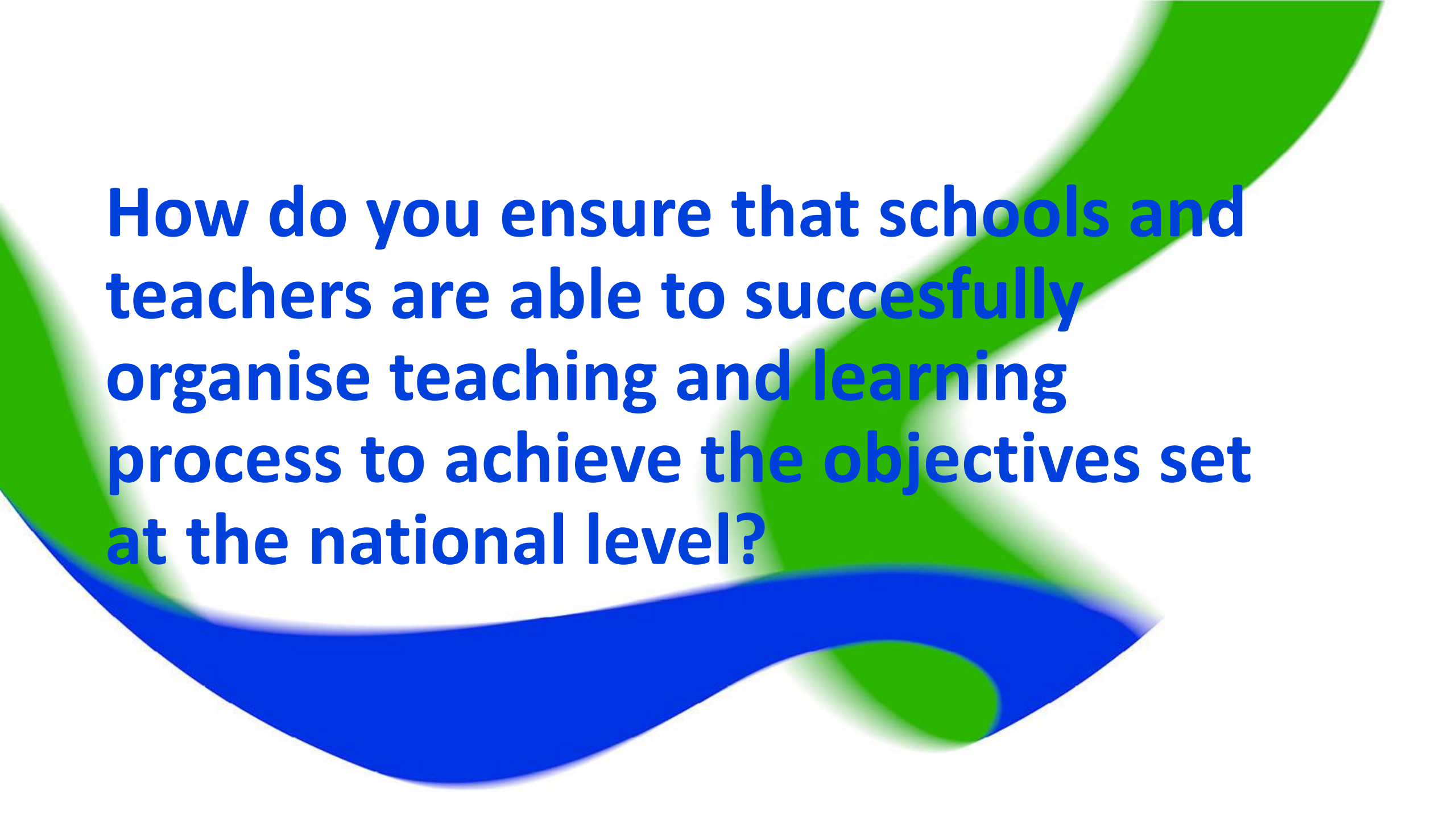
Preparing the national core curriculum

- ensuring the research basis
- intensive communication with teachers and participation of the pupils
- open inclusive process
- statement request
- hearing the management group and the board of the EDUFI before making decisions of the national core curriculum

Planning support for implementation

- communication
- support for local curriculum processes
- providing the material for the implementation
- utilization of development works

Local curriculum
processes



How do you ensure that schools and teachers are able to successfully organise teaching and learning process to achieve the objectives set at the national level?

Planing support for implementation

- communication
- support for local curriculum processes
- providing the material for the implementation
- utilization of development works

Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) has web-pages, where are a lot of materials for curriculum implementation for teachers, principals and education providers

<https://www.oph.fi/fi/koulutus-ja-tutkinnot/perusopetus>


<https://www.oph.fi/en/education-system/basic-education>

EDUFI organizes in-service training for the teachers, principals and education providers (webinars, in-person meetings/trainings)

EDUFI provides many networks for educators in the ECEC , primary and lower secondary and general upper secondary level.

EDUFI can give grants for certain purposes in curriculum implementation, for example Digital learning environments, Developing special needs education and other support for learning in the general secondary education, Developing international affairs in the ECEC, pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, general upper secondary, Developing school club activities.

What kind of requirements for teaching and learning process do national curricula include?

A decorative graphic on the right side of the slide, featuring a thick blue wavy line that curves upwards and then downwards, with a green wavy line following a similar path below it. The lines have a soft, blurred edge.

School as a learning organization

A decorative graphic consisting of two thick, wavy, overlapping lines. One line is a vibrant blue and the other is a bright green. They curve and swirl across the bottom and right sides of the slide, creating a dynamic, organic shape.

Significance of school culture and its development

The school culture plays a key role in implementing comprehensive basic education. It always affects the quality of school work as experienced by the pupils.

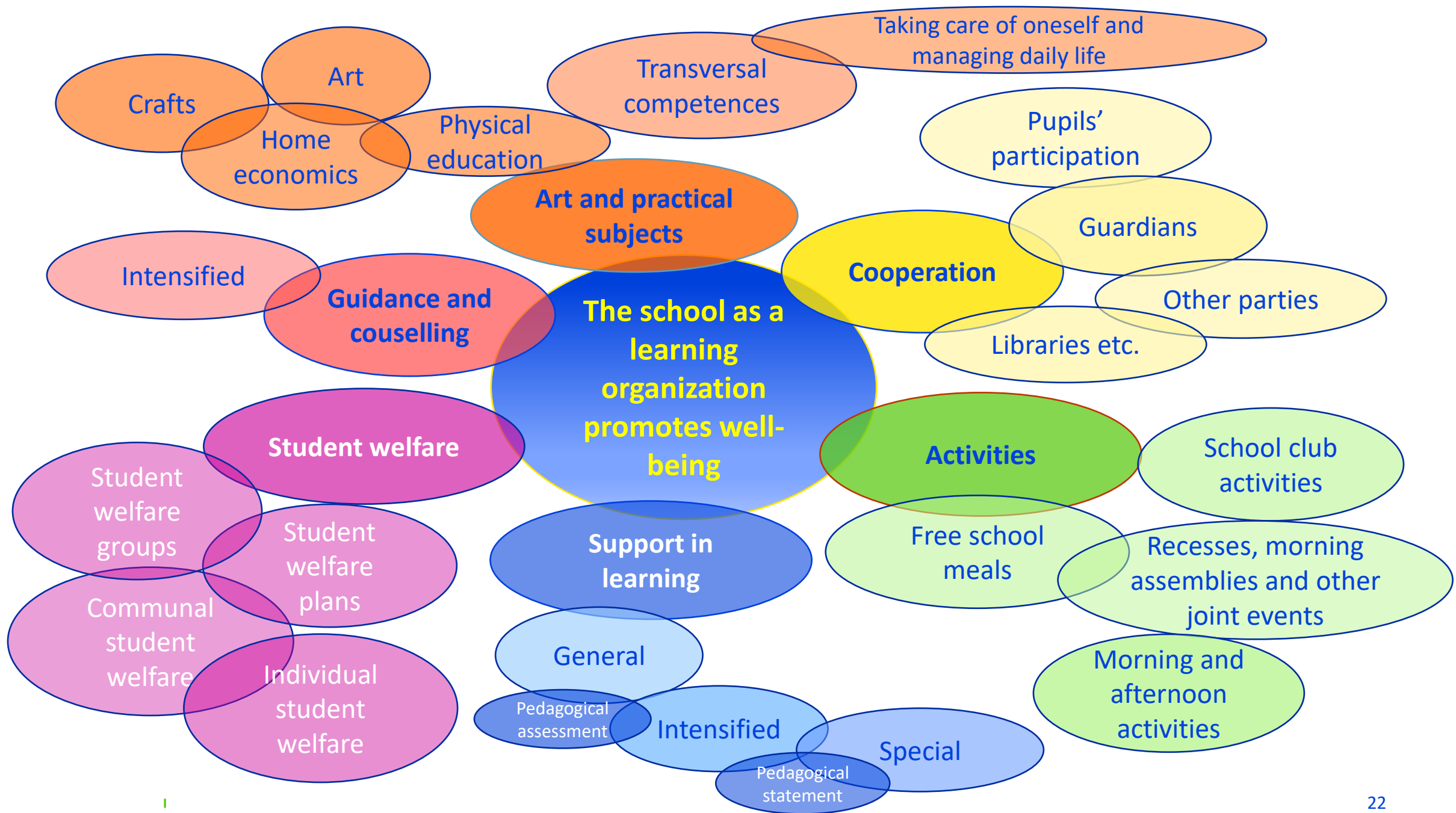
- The school culture may be developed and changed. It is an entity whose components are
 - interpretation of the norms that direct the work and the goals of the activities
 - leadership and the organisation, planning, implementation and evaluation of work
 - competence and development of the community
 - pedagogy and professionalism
 - interaction, atmosphere, everyday practices and learning environments.

Principles that guide the development of the school culture

- The goal is to create a school culture that promotes **learning, participation, well-being and a sustainable way of living.**
 - *A learning community at the heart of the school culture*
 - *Well-being and safety in daily life*
 - *Interaction and versatile working approach*
 - *Cultural diversity and language awareness*
 - *Participation and democratic action*
 - *Equity and equality*
 - *Environmental responsibility and sustainable future orientation*

Shared responsibility for the school day

- Shared responsibility for and attention to ensuring that **each pupil enjoys a good and safe school day**. The promotion of **well-being** is part of the duties of every adult in the school, regardless of their roles.
- In the organisation of school work, the needs, capabilities and strengths of all pupils are taken into account.
- **Cooperation with guardians and other parties** supports the successful achievement of this aim.
- Each pupil is entitled to instruction, guidance, pupil welfare and support according to the curriculum on all school days and a safe learning environment.



Conception of learning

Learner's active role

- Sets targets
- Reflects & analyses
- Solves problems

Interaction

- Learns with others and in different environments
- Understands consequences

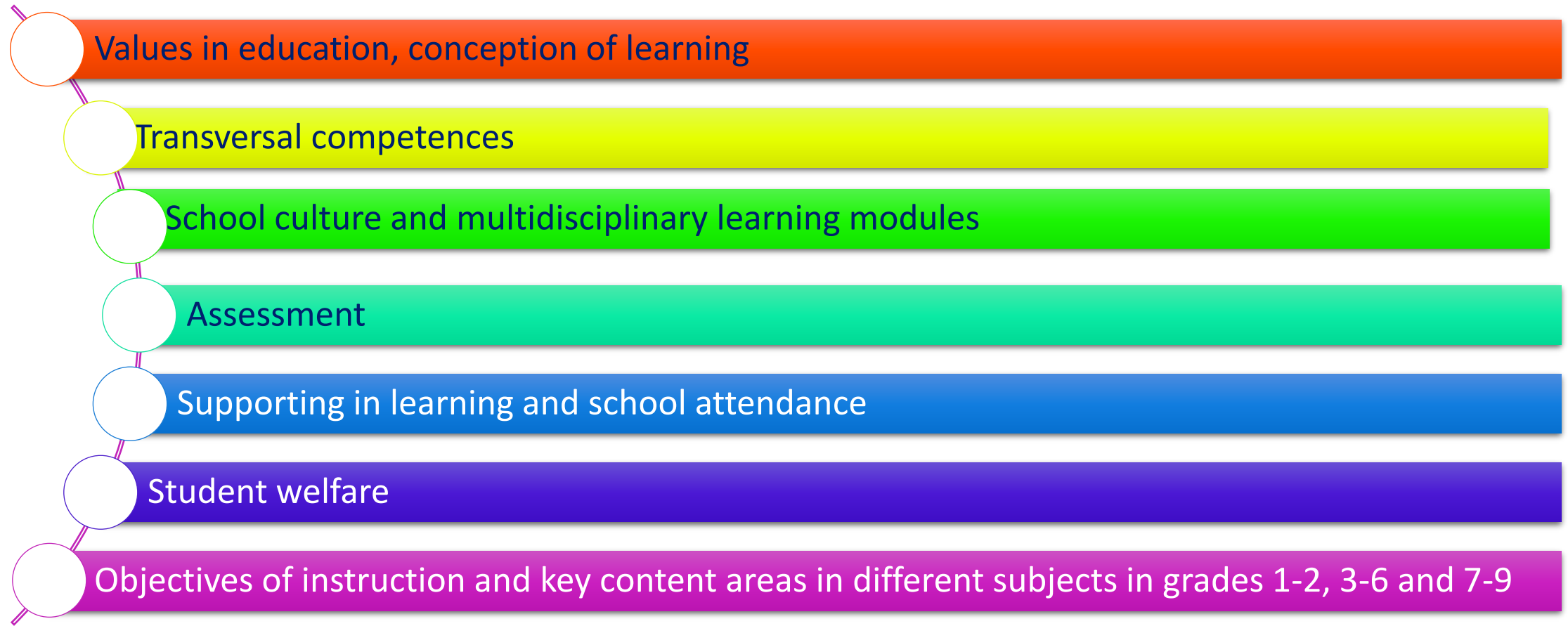
Learning to learn

- Recognises own way of learning
- Applies this to promote learning

Self-conception and confidence

- Helps setting targets
- Receives feedback

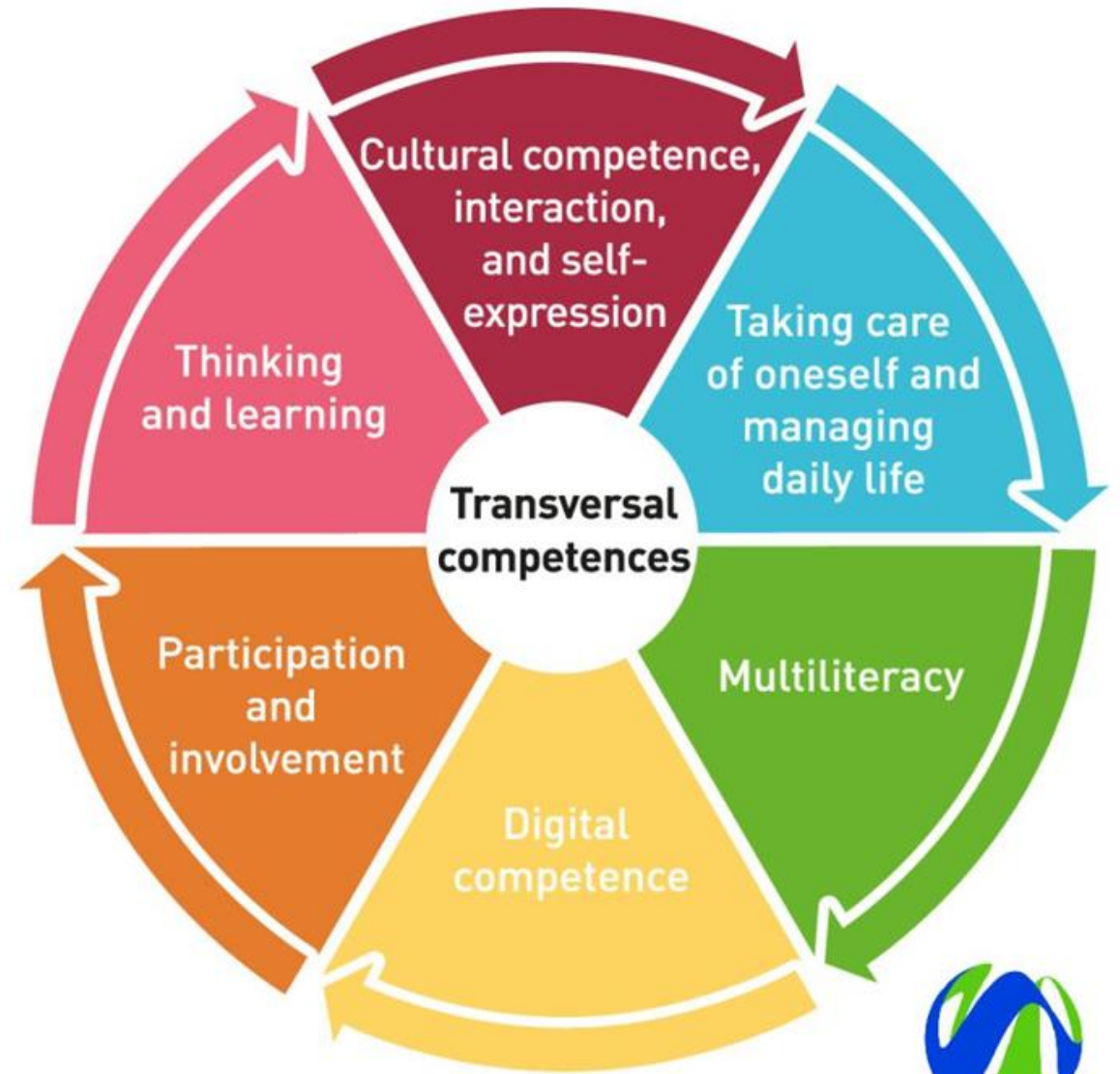
Key contents of the National core curriculum for basic education 2014



Education builds transversal competences

Transversal competences are included in the national core curricula:

- Early childhood education and care (ECEC)
- Pre-primary education
- Primary and lower secondary education (Basic education)
- General upper secondary education



Objectives of instruction	Content areas related to the objectives	Transversal competences
O1 to guide the pupil to plan his or her work as well as to produce with ideas, explore, and experiment persistently	C2-C5	T2, T3
O2 to guide the pupil to set goals for his or her learning and work in crafts as well as to implement an entire craft process on the basis of these goals and to assess his or her learning	C1-C5	T1
O3 to guide the pupil to familiarise himself or herself with different tools, materials, and suitable working practices and to use them diversely as well as to produce and develop new ideas	C1-C5	T4, T6
O4 to guide the pupil to use the concepts, signs, and symbols of crafts fluently as well as to strengthen his or her visual, material, and technological expression	C1-C5	T2, T4
O5 to guide the pupil to perceive and anticipate risk factors related to working situations and to react to them as well as to act safely in the craft process	C6	T3, T6
O6 to guide the pupil to use the possibilities of information and communication technology in designing, producing, and documenting the craft process as well as in producing and sharing communal information	C1-C5	T5
O7 to guide the pupil to understand the meaning of crafts, manual skills, and technological development in his or her own life, the society, entrepreneurship, and working life	C7	T6
O8 to guide the pupil to think economically and to make choices in the crafts process that promote a sustainable way of living	C8	T1, T4, T7

National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014

EXAMPLE: CRAFTS IN GRADES 7-9

OBJECTIVES OF INSTRUCTION (1-8)

CONTENT AREAS RELATED TO THE OBJECTIVES

C1 Producing ideas

C2 Design

C3 Experimentation

C4 Documentation and assessment

C5 Production

C6 Occupational safety

C7 Entrepreneurial learning

C8 Awareness and participation

TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCES (1-7)

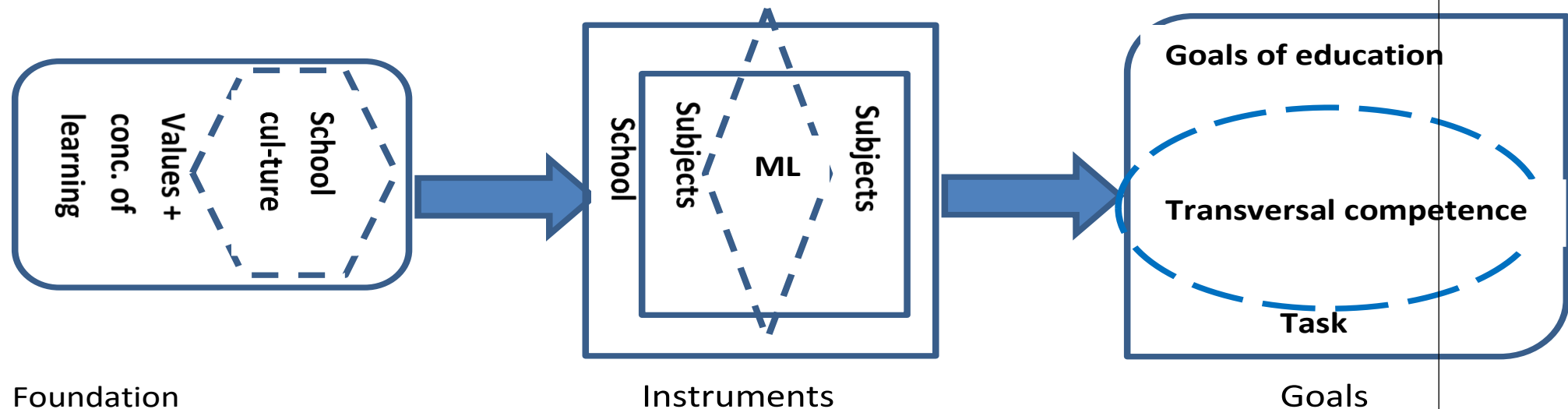
In the end of the 6th and 9th grades we have the assessment criterias in the grades of 5, 7, 8 and 9 (scale is from 4 to 10).

Multidisciplinary learning modules

- each school year at least **one clearly-defined theme, project or course that combines the content of different subjects and deals with the selected theme** from the perspective of several subjects
- are formed **based on the objectives of subjects** so that they promote the achievement of the goals set
- are planned and implemented as **decided by the municipality and the school**
- topics, duration and implementation may vary based on local needs and interests
- **pupils participate in planning** the multidisciplinary learning modules at their school
- **assessed as part of the subjects**


Multidisciplinary learning in the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2014)

Multidisciplinary learning modules (MLs) are study periods of integrative instruction based on cooperation between subjects. Their implementation should showcase the school's values and conception of learning. The learning modules express in concrete terms the principles that guide the development of the operating culture of basic education and support the development of transversal competence.



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
- Online tools for composing and publishing local curricula.



**What is the mandate
and role of schools and
teachers in delivering
national curricula?**

Local curriculum

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.
 - lays a common foundation for and points the direction to daily school work. 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.
 - links the **operation of the schools to other local activities** aiming to promote the well-being and learning of children and young people.

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.

Teachers' autonomy

- In Finland teacher has to have a master degree to get a permanent job in a school. We have a thrust based culture in schools and we don't have school inspectors.
- Teacher has autonomy in
 - planning the lessons and learning projects based on the local curriculum, which is prepared according to the national core curriculum.
 - selecting pedagogical working methods considering the goals set for teaching and learning as well as the pupils' ages, needs, capabilities and interests.
 - using different kinds of learning materials (text books, digital material etc.)
 - cooperating with guardians.

EDUFI around the web

- English-language website at www.edu.fi
 - The former edu.fi service for teachers has been integrated as a part of our new website
- Services in Finnish and Swedish at www.oph.fi

EDUFI on social media @opetushallitus



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Thank you! Kiitos!

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