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International experience of Hungarian school headmasters in Finnish continuing professional teacher training environment

I. Comparative evaluation of Finnish and Hungarian approaches and practices

The European Commission works with EU countries to raise standards of teaching and teacher education by facilitating the exchange of information and experience between policy-makers.¹ We mean this exchange is just as important between teachers. Therefore, we, BME APPI teachers, build relationships with other educational institutions.

In April **11-17**. 2016, a study visit was organised in frames of **visiting the Finnish education system**, in the School of Vocational Teacher² Education at Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAOKK).

Finnish education is facing challenges like most such systems worldwide. Vocational institutes and universities have to prepare their students for the emerging new situations, developing new ways of working, meeting challenging practices as well as working on the limits of their own abilities. Changes taking place in society and working life have been driving the educational system into a new situation.

Routine application of existing methods and experience is not sufficient in the teachers' work anymore. The required new skills are collaboration in various working environments, developing solutions and creating new ideas by which they can respond to challenges.

In discussions with vocational teachers at TAOKK, their relevant experience has been weighted against the Hungarian one, to examine how they can be used in our public educational practice. Having studied the description of the Finnish education system with the peer colleagues, some of the featured items have been compared with the Hungarian practice taking into account the core elements of the Hungarian **teacher** career model to find out the significant similarities and differences.

The use of information and communication technologies as well as the social media are important elements in Finland in collaboration and knowledge building.

ICT use has been part in the Hungarian everyday practice as well. Collaborative methods are also increasingly used in blended learning form in teacher training courses, introduced and promoted by innovative teaching staff.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/teaching-professions_en

² [Vocational teachers, also called career and technical education teachers, teach workplace skills to children and adults. They work for public middle and high schools](#)

Participatory pedagogy and authentic learning are substantial elements for evaluation of teacher students. The ideology behind participatory pedagogy requires different approach to learning than before. Instead of relying on individual, disconnected tasks and learning contents, the comprehensive issues, phenomena and problems which arise from the teacher's work are emphasised. This approach enables the use of different ways of activating learners, application of exploratory, problem and phenomena based pedagogical models and methods.

Participatory pedagogy focuses on supporting the students' participation, understanding the importance and use of peer groups, taking into account the students' own starting points and goals, accepting that learning happens everywhere, with continuous use of reflection and evaluation. Participatory pedagogy uses the principles of authentic learning. Authenticity is realised in the learning environments. The functional approach is research-based work, which supports the development of thinking competences.

Most paradigms sounded familiar for the Hungarian peer group. We focus principally on the same aspects but using different emphasis. The term 'participatory pedagogy' is rarely used in our professional communities but often highlighted during the teacher evaluations. The 'continuous use of reflection and evaluation' is more important, due to the Hungarian teacher career model.

Research based teaching is less frequently used in our pedagogical practice – neither among students nor among teachers.

The Finnish focus on better learning environment. Their classrooms are typically described as learner-centred. We should welcome this idea, to the extent we can afford it. In Hungary fewer teachers take students preferences into account and not too many of them believe that 'learning can happen everywhere'.

The aim of TAOKK is to involve the students in finding and getting inspiring learning experiences.

We also believe that it is more effective to apply experiential methods this way and less thorough frontal knowledge transfer. Phenomenon based learning is in our country less used than it would be expected.

The evaluation which emphasises the students' own activeness and reciprocity consists of self, peer and working life evaluation.

There are good practices in Hungary as well which are based on the same elements. Workshops in schools, self evaluation groups, and the role of consultants also follow this methodology.

The Finnish teacher education modules and courses use the same evaluation table which is based on an integrated epistemology. It is divided into descriptive knowledge, applied knowledge and integrated knowledge. Teacher students present theoretical and experience

based knowledge as separate entities. They reflect on their observations, actions and experiences.

Applied knowledge is most item prominent in the Hungarian apprenticeship exam. Our apprenticeship exam and proceedings are similar, but integrated knowledge is required during our master teacher certification process. Observation however should be a more pronounced element in our country.

To choose methods which work properly in different situations is showing up in the Finnish system as advanced skill. New working methods and strategies are being permanently developed. The important questions are “Why is this done in such a manner?” “Who can benefit from this and how?” and “Are there other ways to do this?”

These aspects appear in our qualification practice as well. At our qualification process teachers have to be reflective, in their documentation as well. Our related questions are the same.

Documentation of one’s own learning is an important part of participatory pedagogy. It shows how the teacher students’ own professional thinking and work have developed. The aim is to enhance reflective thinking and deepen the learning process

For the same reason should Hungarian teachers and candidates write their portfolio.

The competences in the Finnish curriculum are: evaluation competences, facilitation competences, cultural knowledge, partnership knowledge and well-being knowledge. In national educational policies, there is a wide variety of approaches to define the competences that teachers are required to be able to deploy, ranging from a ‘light touch’ to complex description. In Finland, the government declarations on university qualifications give general guidelines. The novel pedagogical approach of „well-being” is especially interesting.

These competences are partly different from the Hungarian requirements and more similar to „Basic competences in life and in work” (Kálmán, 2006).

In Hungary the teacher standards are defined by ministry regulations. We don’t use the „well-being” term.

Finnish teacher students can have an active part in designing and evaluating their own learning. Each teacher student can create his/her own individual study plan. The plan lists the students’ learning goals compared to the goals of teacher education, sets personal goals and finds new opportunities for learning. In Applied Methodology, it is called: „Teaching Learners to be Self-Directed.”

These self regulated methods support building key competences for Lifelong learning. We consider them as credible! The teacher will be able to understand and support the students’ learning process more effectively this way. The Hungarian practice is similar.

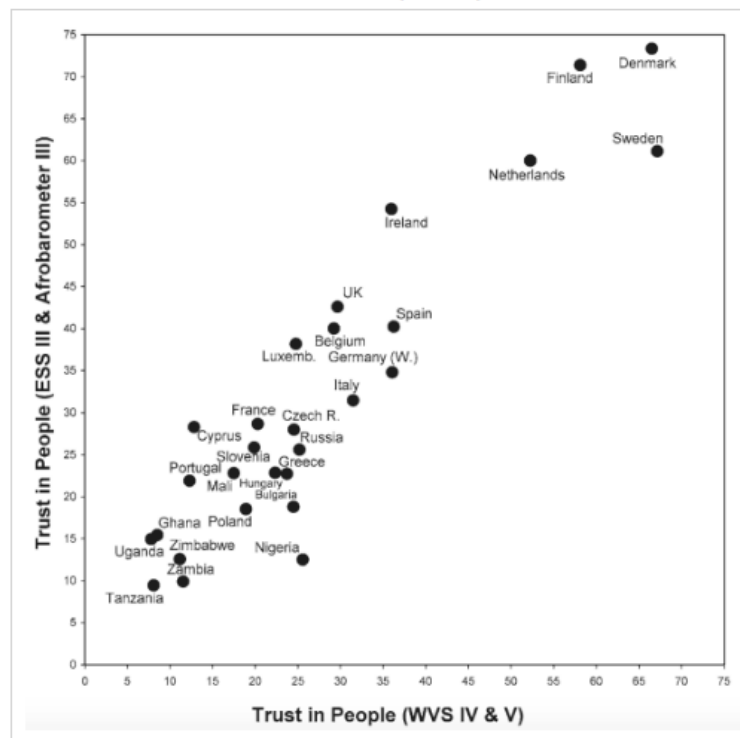
As summary of the comparative consultations, we have collected keywords of the Finnish highlighted terms: **High quality, Autonomy, Student centered, Support, Constructive learning, No national tests of learning outcomes, No school ranking lists, Innovation, Trust.** The issue of **trust** should be highlighted in the national comparative context. In the Hungarian practice this term is not too frequently used.

II. Trust based approach

In the consultations with the Finnish peers this theme has been often discussed.

Levels of interpersonal trust

Interpersonal trust levels as measured by the World Values Survey and European Values Study, and the European Social Survey and Afrobarometer Survey – Inglehart & Welzel (2010)²⁶

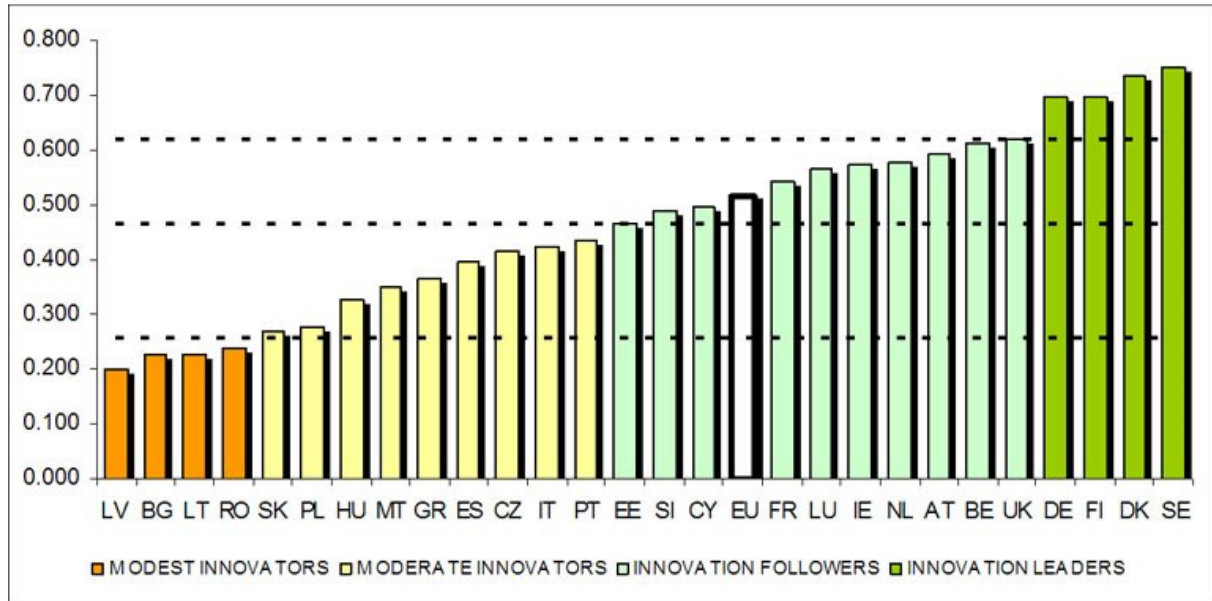


1. figure³

The Finnish society is characterized by high levels of trust. Teachers are also entrusted with considerable independence in the classroom. They have responsibility for the choice of textbooks and teaching methods. There is a climate of trust between educators and the community. The curriculum at TAOKK was revised by 300 teachers in collaboration. There is no external evaluation and school inspection has no control over the work of teachers since they received a high level of autonomy. „Trust and support”- was said by the Finnish partners.

³ <https://ourworldindata.org/trust>

European innovation scoreboard shows:

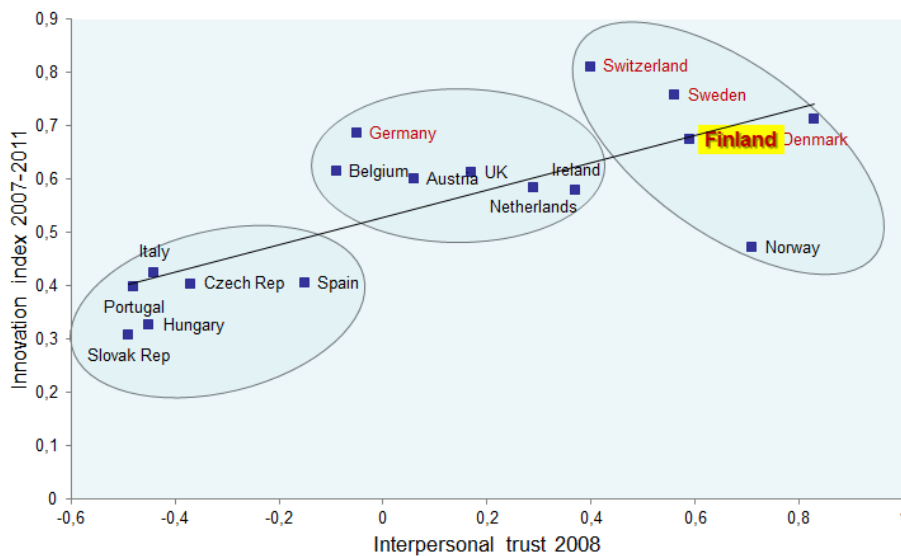


2. figure⁴

Hungary is a Moderate Innovator (2016)⁵ Finland belongs to Innovation leaders.

Interpersonal trust and innovation

Whilst trying to find connection between trust and innovation, we have found that there was a clear positive correlation.



3. figure

The Year 2008 Social outcomes of education indicator included measures of self-reported health, volunteering, interpersonal trust and political efficacy, assessed in the Survey of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. These four social outcome measures are considered among the key indicators of individual and national well-

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/news/new-innovation-union-scoreboard-main-competitors-outpace-eu-despite-progress-many-member-states>

⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/17840>

being (OECD, 2013). Both educational attainment and literacy proficiency are positively associated with these measures⁶

The issue of trust in the educational process should be therefore considered as important. Nowadays one may feel lack of trust between education stakeholders and teachers in Hungary which creates unreceptive environment for the professional development process. In turn: "In a continuously unfavorable environment the majority of the energy is devoted to the continuous adaptation performance, little of it remains for "useful" work. In this environment, it remains just who is unable to concentrate resources needed for the outburst." (Kálmán, 2005)

III. Relationships between Teachers' competences and paradigms in education

In consultations with the Finnish partners about the 21st Century Skills, the following items have been emphasized:⁷

Ways of thinking: Creativity and innovation; Critical thinking, Problem solving; Learning to learn, Meta-cognition

Ways of working: Communication; Collaboration (teamwork)

Tools of working: Information literacy; ICT literacy

Living in the world: Citizenship – local and global; Life and career; Personal, social responsibility

This listing was completed with these paradigms: system thinking, from disciplinarity to multi disciplinarity, from local to global, from simplicity to complexity. (Kálmán, 2016)

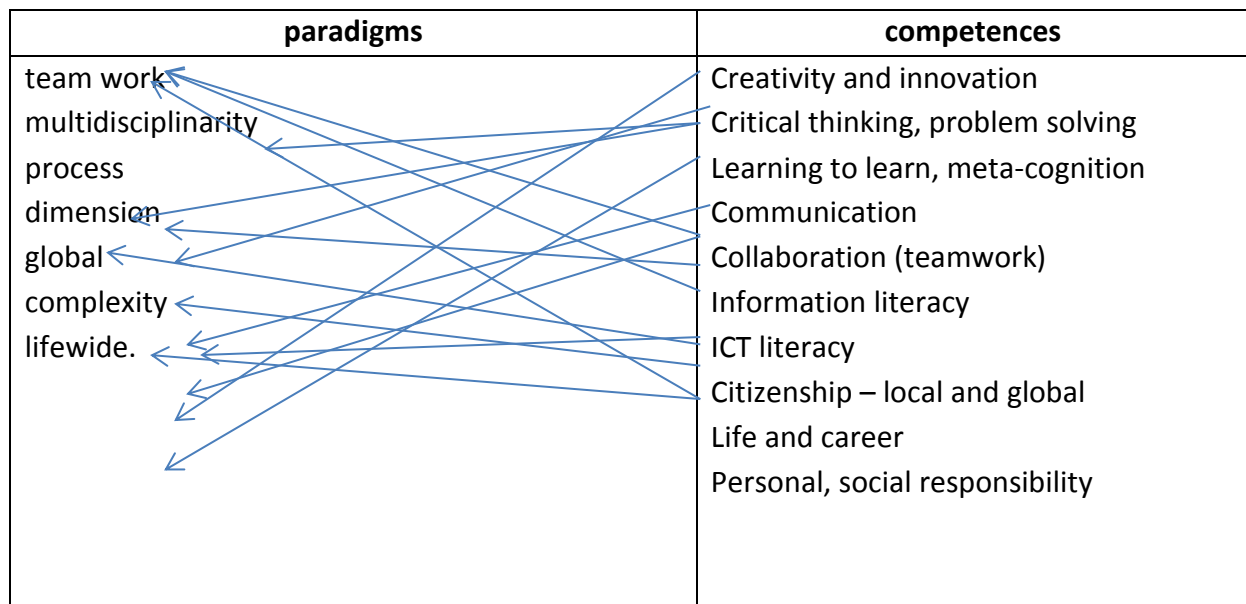
It's easy to identify these terms among the expectations toward teachers both in Finland and in Hungary. 'Life and career' is more typical in Finland where government supports changing career paths. We noticed the similarity and correlation between this and the 'well-being' competences.

⁶ <https://www.oecd.org/edu/Education-at-a-Glance-2014.pdf>

⁷ Source: Microsoft-Intel-Cisco ATC215 project

We compared Paradigm Shift in Education with the expectations mentioned above.

- from individual to team work
- from disciplinarity to multidisciplinary
- from standard to process
- from stability to dimension
- from local to global
- from simplicity to complexity
- from lifelong to lifewide

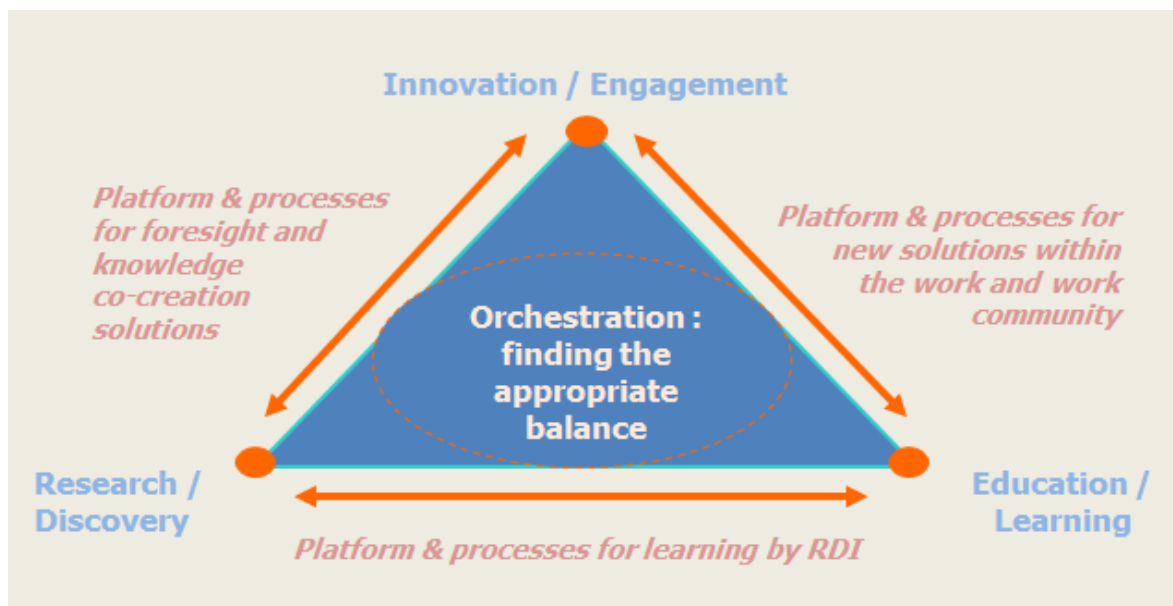


4. figure

It was agreed that at the same time these changes support and develop the teachers' competences needed for Lifelong learning. Each of these items can be found in the Hungarian practice as well, whilst not in all aspects with the same emphasis as in the Finnish context.

This paradigm shift can support teachers in becoming more innovative. The innovative approach should be part of contemporary education. Relying on education research achievements, it can help to find balance between learning, the foresight and the work community. This thesis is illustrated with the Knowledge Triangle.

What is the Knowledge Triangle?



5. figure

„The Knowledge Triangle should primarily be seen as a large-scale societal innovation through which Europe can strengthen its research potential, increase its capacity to educate talents and to promote and create demand-driven open innovation platforms for wide societal use”⁸

„New ways to learn call for new approaches to pedagogical development and assesment that truly encourage learning by doing and motivate the learners. Bringing together theory and practice is essential in implementing the Knowledge Triangle.”

Implementing the Knowledge Triangle means among others the following concepts:

- targeting more development activities on curriculum and learning environment initiatives, which are essential to learning to learn;
- equipping university teachers with skills and competencies to facilitate learning;
- taking advantage of situations in which studies are focused on solving real life problems;
- supporting the growth of the teacher students’ identities as teachers through content, methods and the whole operating culture.

Summary

In frames of the above series of consultations with our peers, we have studied the Finnish educational system and their teacher training methods from several aspects. It was found that the expectations in the Hungarian career model show certain similarities. The characteristics of the related paradigm shift in Finland has also been studied and considerations made for their application and adaption in Hungary. The important aspects

⁸ The Knowledge Triangle. European Society for Engineering Education SEFI, CESAER (Conference of European Schools for Advanced Engineering Education and Research)

found as worth considering were: research based planning, trust based approach, career path, open learning environment - which can blaze a trail to the competences needed for LLL paradigm change.

“The philosophy or theory of practice is not a plan to be implemented, not content ideas or worldview, it is not even a paradigm (according to the most abstract model), but something that speaks to the practical alternatives and criteria for decision-makers. If you like nothing more than a combination of human decision-making rules, methodology. Therefore, who is calving from the West what to do, instead, learn from it, as it’s used to do, preserves backlog.”

(Kálmán, 2006)

Thanks for dr. Kálmán Anikó, who helped me with her experiences to place my thoughts into a wider context.

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