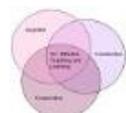


## Improve learning and teaching – Finnish it? Presentation walkthrough

1. Sharing ideas about education will help us build better learning experiences in the classrooms worldwide. Being aware about choices is the first step in choosing how to teach.
2. What is good in your educational setting? What could be improved? What has been your best learning experience? How about teaching experience? How are those different or alike? These are the questions I wish for you to think while starting this presentation.
3. UNICEF has good information about learning and teaching. I think these same principles apply to adult learning as well. With adults the role of expectations may be more emphasized. Finnish education also emphasizes the student-centered learning, and students' having a more active role in their own education (self-assessment, collaborative learning activities).
4. The one very important message in all learning and teaching is about personalization. **Student-centered** learning has proven to be very effective. We often talk about students, how they are not clones and should not be treated like ones, so asking questions about the factory model of education is important. The world today is different from the industrial world where school systems were created, so preparing students for their unknown future must be different as well.
5. These global competencies apply for both teacher training as formal education in general. Teachers have diverse needs for their professional development. Standards alone are not the solution – there must be room for customization, both for teachers and the students, to build up from standards and achieve **global competencies**. Educational systems have their distinctive characteristics, so global education must have a unique look in different countries, districts and schools.
6. Well-rounded education is a combination of many different things. Empowering teachers to teach and students to learn. Understanding how learning is a global phenomenon, regardless of the curricula used or the age or level of learners. Remembering the benefits of student-centered practice, and aiming for providing both teachers and students with opportunities to achieve the global competencies of investigating, recognizing, communicating and taking action.
7. The next slides have some of the tools I learned during my Finnish teacher education. In the workshop we are using tools for incorporating these fundamental parts of lesson planning and instructional design into the everyday practice.
8. All training and professional development should include the three basic components of teacher professionalism and competency: **teaching and instruction, pedagogical knowledge and global reflection**. The colour in the thirds deepens with layers of competence. You probably notice how the third part, global reflection, seems to be drifting apart from the two others? That is unfortunately happening too often in training and PD. But if we don't include all levels in training, then reaching the global competencies becomes significantly harder.



9. Too often we stay on this level in training and PD sessions, and talk about the curricula or ready assessments. How would you incorporate investigating, recognizing, communicating and taking action into teaching practice, if everything is designed and scripted by someone else? And how do you think students will learn to investigate, recognize, communicate and act if they are not active participants in their own learning?
10. This is the middle level of investigating, recognizing, communicating and taking action. With solid knowledge of how learning happens and how learning can best be supported we are taking a huge leap towards enabling students to gain the global competencies during their education. This level helps us as teachers be aware about our own choices in classroom practice. No classroom or group of students is identical to another, so no practices should be adopted without thinking how well they fit into this particular class. It is great to share ideas about teaching and education, but the pedagogical knowledge teacher has should be used to make the final decision for using any given strategies in the classroom.
11. We only see what we are ready to perceive. Awareness is the first step in everything. If investigating, recognizing, communicating and taking action are high in our priority order, they most likely appear more often in our vocabulary too. For educators it is really important to think about the question “why”. ? Changing between the big picture and details is important when we try to understand, it is the ability to take different viewpoints to the same issue and trying to see what others see.
12. The important thing while thinking and discussing teaching and learning, is to remember that we are preparing students for their future lives. Each student has a unique life ahead – how could we equip them all with skills to make the most of it? These three tools (personalization, cooperation and emphasizing process over product) appear in many of my writings as the 3Cs (Cognitive, Cooperative and Constructive practices).
13. Reflecting upon choices not only increases the awareness about reasons behind certain decisions, but often also reveals other possible options. It can really help you find the positive elements in your school or educational system! This is why we have conferences and professional learning networks. But taking the next step after attending a workshop or conference is important: the implementation plan. How are you going to use this information you just gained? What will you change in your classroom/workplace tomorrow? Making reflection an everyday practice by using these three steps improves the learning experiences your students have!
14. How could your class/school/district be global and unique at the same time? What are your positive elements?
15. More information about choices, reflection, student-centered learning/teaching and Finnish pedagogy can be found by visiting Nina’s Notes at <http://ninacsmith.com/> or by reading Nina’s blog at <http://notesfromnina.wordpress.com/> Nina’s book Choosing How to Teach can be found at Amazon and other bookstores worldwide.

