

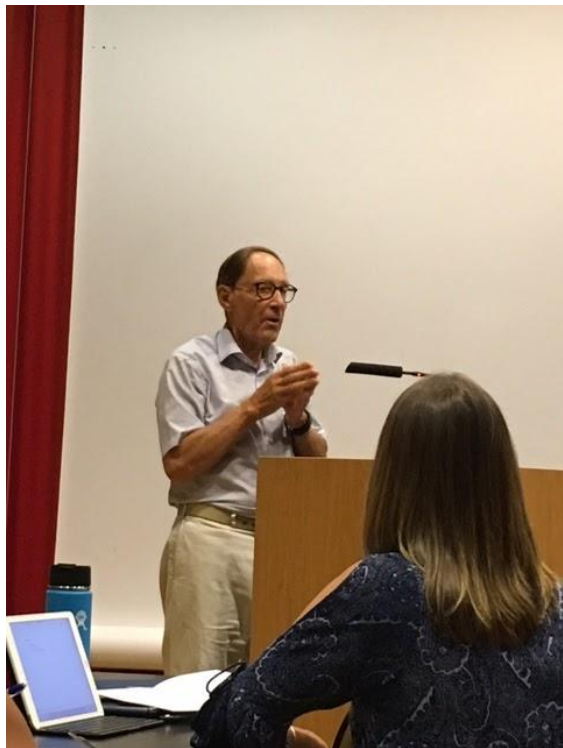
Educational Study Tour: Helsinki/Berlin

By Sara E. Ahern, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
July 24, 2018

What does Education Reform Look Like in Finland, the Top Country in the World for Education?

- PISA Testing
- History of Finland
- Culture and Values
 - Equity
 - Early childhood/care
 - School lunch
 - National Identity
 - Trust
- Focus
- Professionalism





Par Stenbäck
Former Minister of Education
Finland Ministry of Education



Petteri Elo
Grade 6 Teacher
Professional Development Consultant

Features of the Finnish System

1. Teacher recruitment and training
 - a. Recruitment
 - b. Masters Degree
 - c. Training Schools
2. Education is no longer political (contrasted to Sweden)
3. Little difference between schools
4. Autonomy of the teacher
5. No standardized tests
6. School leaders are former teachers
7. National library network/high literacy rates
8. Time for curriculum development and planning

According to Par Stenbäck

Other Thoughts

1. Teachers have average pay by Finnish standards
2. Strong teachers' unions
3. One of the shortest “time on learning” requirements in the world
 - a. Standardized across schools
4. Misconceptions
 - a. No special education → they have inclusion
 - b. Few second language learners → growing population of Finnish Language Learners (who continue with instruction in their native language)
5. Not a lot of instructional technology
6. The government does do some “sampling” to test student learning outcomes

Phenomenon-Based Learning

Phenomenon-Based Learning - a Finnish curriculum reform effort that went into effect in 2016

Expectation: each student will have one Phenomenon-Based Learning experience in each grade, focused on developing the T7 competencies:

T1: Thinking and Learning to Learn

T2: Cultural competence, interaction, and self-expression

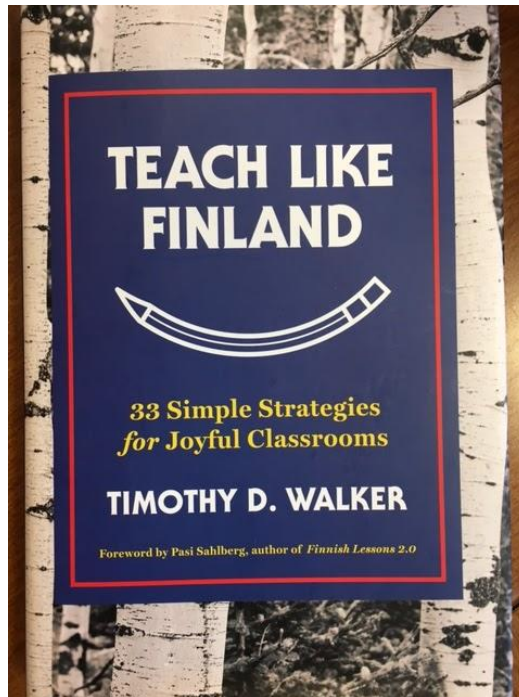
T3: Taking care of oneself and managing daily life

T4: Multiliteracy

T5: ICT Competence (Information and Communication Technology)

T6: Working life competence and entrepreneurship

T7: Participation, involvement, and building a sustainable future



Timothy D. Walker
Educator
Author

Moved to Finland in 2013
from Massachusetts

Taught in Arlington and
Chelsea

"To Sara:

Don't forget the Joy!"

Timothy D. Walker"

Mr. Walker's Perspective

S = Sensible

I = Independence

M = Modest

P = Playful (45:15)

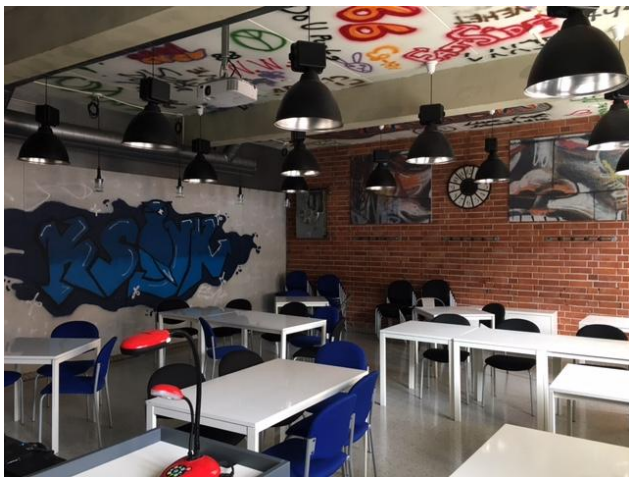
L = Low stress

E = Equity

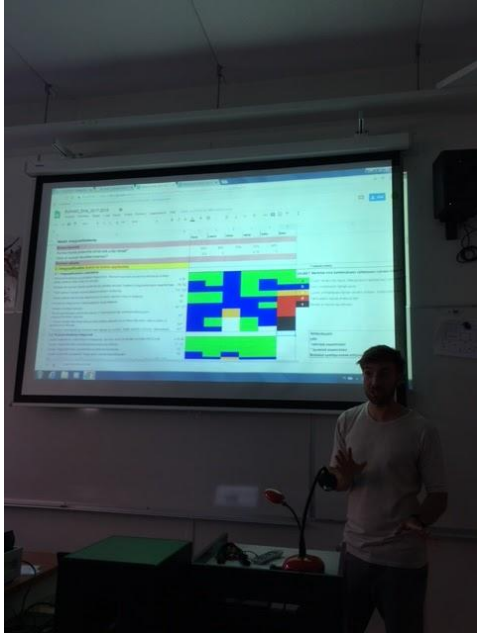
More on TRUST:

There is no word for “teacher accountability”.

They use “responsibility”.



School Visit: Personalized Learning, Core Values, & A Conversation with Students



Some Sights from Finland



Global Leadership Summit: Berlin, Germany

For Students:

- Design thinking competition
- Keynote speakers
- Breakout Sessions/Workshops
- Travel

For Educators:

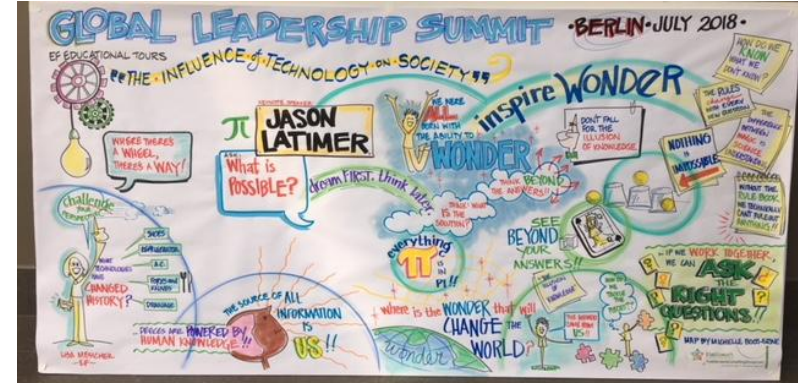
- Keynote speakers
- Breakout Sessions/Workshops
- Support/judge student designs
- Travel



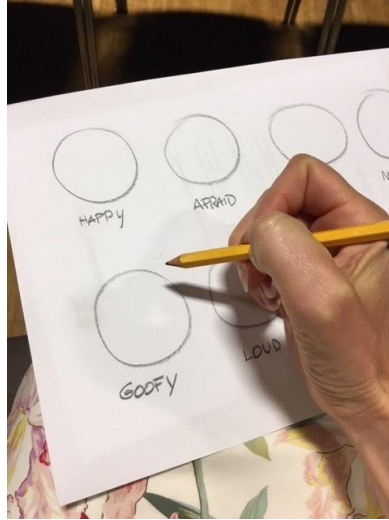
Speakers

Keynote Speakers:

- Jason Latimer (illusionist and entertainer)
- Randi Zuckerberg (entrepreneur, founder of Facebook Live)
- Andini Makosinski (inventor)
- Glen Keane (author, illustrator, animator)



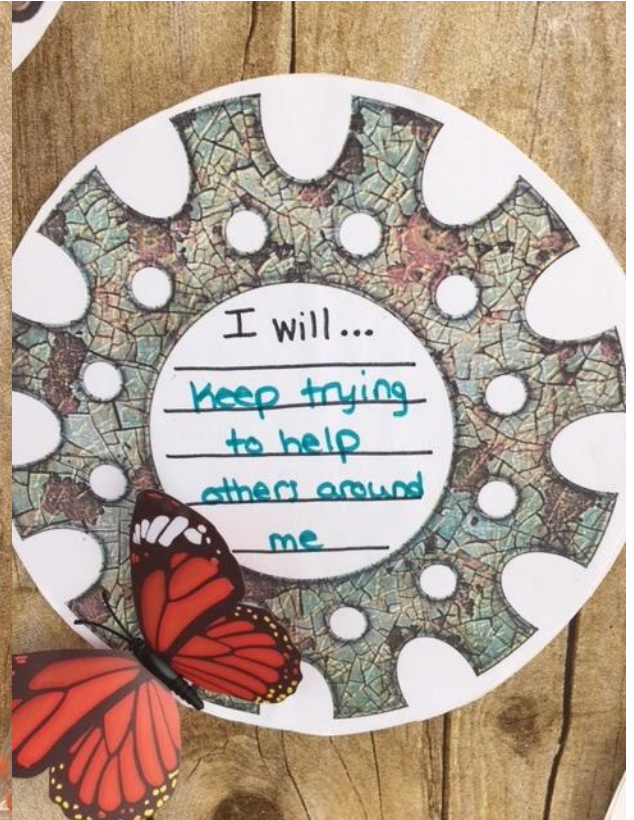
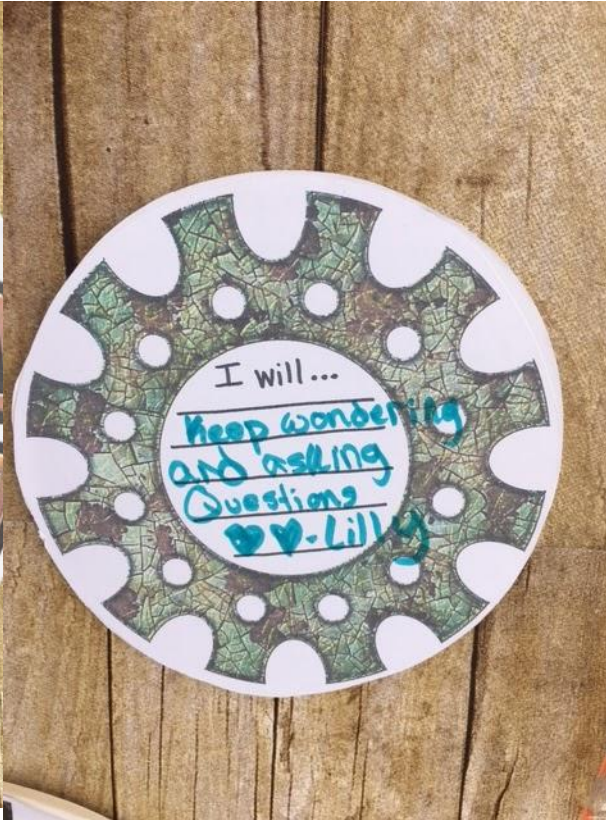
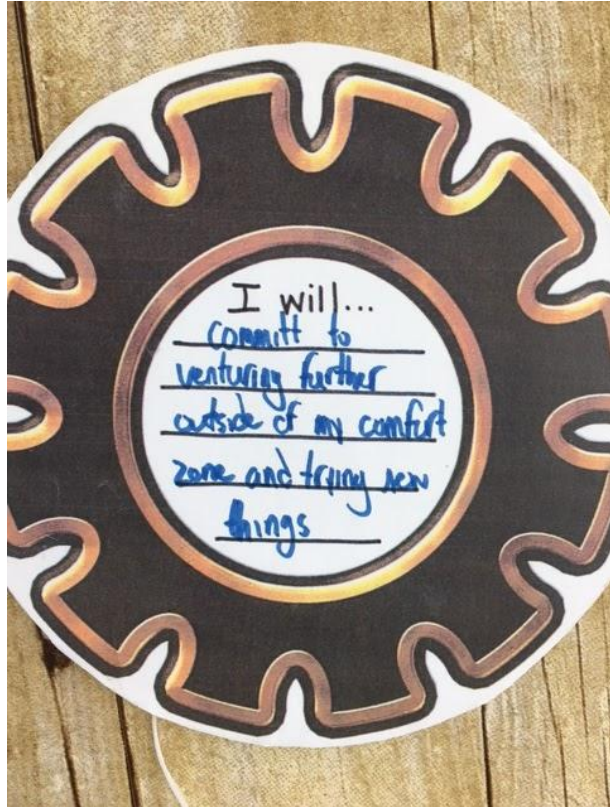
Breakout Sessions/Workshops



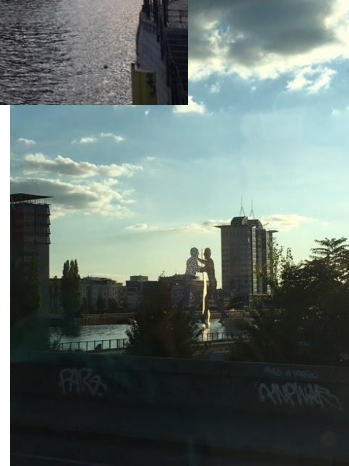
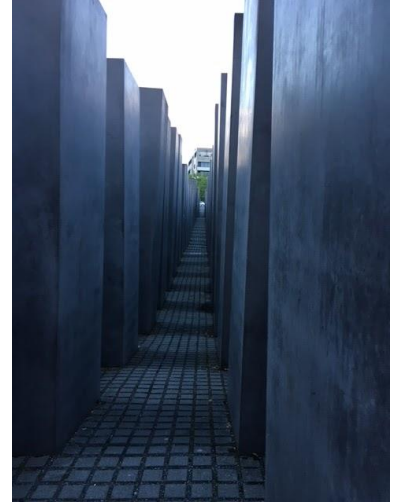
I attended:

- Comparative Education: Panelists compared education systems in South Africa and Germany
- “Conversations” with Keynote Speakers
- Building Empathy through Play

Student Reflections



Some Sights from Berlin





Reflections, Next Steps, and Implications