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## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN THE CONTEMPORARY BASIC EDUCATION IN FINLAND

“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.  
Education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living”<sup>1</sup>

John Dewey

### INTRODUCTION

In the article, I am going to find out the relationship between Professional Learning Communities, shared values and vision of contemporary basic education in Finland. I also analyze trust and respect, closely related to PLC. I would take into account collaboration in Finnish schools, the highest level of teachers' responsibility, which is related to the high level of teachers autonomy. I would pay attention to reflective professional inquiry and need to discuss the importance of reflection, in which professional development of teachers is linked to their confidence and skills to promote and support principals and teachers to become a community of learners. My one week Erasmus visit in 2017 helped me not only use the library sources of the University of Eastern Finland but also discuss with academics at this university the importance of using such sources.

### FINLAND

Finland, with a population of 5.5 million, lies north of the Arctic Circle in a quarter of the country. It is characterized by well-preserved nature and a cool

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<sup>1</sup> [Online], <<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/1062006-education-is-not-preparation-for-life-education-is-life-itself>> [dostęp: 28.11.2020].

climate. Finland, which for centuries belonged to the territory of Sweden, and then from 1809 to the Russian Empire, regained its sovereignty only in 1917. Since then gradually after the Second World War, Finland developed a dynamic economy with small wage differences<sup>2</sup> in order to overcome capital tensions among employees.

The Nordic model was ethnically, linguistically and culturally homogeneous. According to Slagstad a Finnish cultural consensus stands on the preservation of national identities “at a time when there was a rapid growth in industrial capitalism”<sup>3</sup>. The Finns combined the free market and centralized planning to minimize the daily tensions between the various classes in society and become 11<sup>th</sup> the highest economy in the world in 2019 according to Global Competitiveness Index 4.0<sup>4</sup> (1<sup>st</sup> place Singapore, 29<sup>th</sup> Poland). Finland placed emphasis on sobriety, puritanism, and awareness of good and evil, which characterize the welfare state<sup>5</sup>.

The Nordic model of social democracy helps to understand the pragmatic aspects of teachers’ professional development in Finland. The youth of 1960s wanted democratization of education and introduce a successful change in education. Finnish society has been engaged in the development of social security of all citizens. The biggest reform of Finnish education started in November 1963 during the period of a rapid migration of villagers to the city centers. The Agrarian Party and the left wing parties prepared the new rules in education. These new rules were positively perceived by The Finnish society which wanted effective education for all students. Consequently, Finland eliminated the system of external inspection and introduced procedures to improve the quality of teachers’ work. From 1963 the previous teacher-centered methods of teaching were criticized and the new conception of knowledge was introduced and accepted by society and teachers. Consequently, Finnish basic schools become an element of the welfare state in Finland and there was observed the link between the education level and economic growth.

PISA studies (OECD 2007; 2013; 2018) have presented that during last ten years Finnish results have been declining in pupils’ outcomes in completing their basic education. This is the result of the grown of students with poor basic skills.

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<sup>2</sup> N. Brandal, Ø. Bratberg, D.E. Thorsen, *The Nordic Model of Social Democracy*, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2013, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> R. Slagstad, *De nasjonale strateger [National Strategy Makers; in Norwegian]*, Norway: Pax Forlag A/S, Oslo 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Global Competitiveness Index 2019, [online], <<http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2019/competitiveness-rankings/>> [dostęp: 01.09.2020].

<sup>5</sup> F. Sejersted, *Sosialdemokratiets tidsalder. Norge og Sverige i det 20. århundre [The Age of Social Democracy. Norway and Sweden in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century; in Norwegian]*, Norway: Pax Forlag A/S, Oslo 2005.

Despite these challenges country has been resistant to the global education reform movement and has not adopted outcome-based education<sup>6</sup>. An answer to global and local challenges in Finland is based on the continuous development of The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014<sup>7</sup>, which was regularly reformed each ten years<sup>8</sup>. In this light, it makes sense to mention as Pasi Silander from the Helsinki Education Department answered for the question about the school of the future. The Silander's answer was "we do not train students for PISA. We train them for life"<sup>9</sup>.

In my article I will pay attention to basic schools as Professional Learning Communities which include: shared values and vision, collective responsibility, reflective professional inquiry, collaboration and group, as well as individual learning.

#### SCHOOLS AS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

The Professional Learning Community, which is used in the basic Finnish education has been reorganized from the concept of learning organization. Its beginnings comes from the business sector<sup>10</sup>, organizational theory<sup>11</sup> and concepts of collegiality and collaboration. Hord presents "professional community of learners" in which the teachers in a school and its administrators continuously seek and share learning, and act on their learning. The goal of their actions is to enhance their effectiveness as professionals for the students' benefit; thus, this arrangement may also be termed "communities of continuous inquiry and improvement"<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> P. Sahlberg, *Finnish Lessons. What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland*, Columbia University, New York 2015.

<sup>7</sup> *The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014*, Finnish National Agency for Education, Juvenes Print-Suomen Yliopistopaino Oy, Helsinki 2016.

<sup>8</sup> J. Pietarinen, K. Pyhältö, & T. Soini, *Large-Scale Curriculum Reform in Finland – Exploring the Interrelation Between Implementation Strategy, the Function of the Reform, and Curriculum Coherence*, "The Curriculum Journal" 2017, 28 (1).

<sup>9</sup> P. Silander, *How to Create the School of the Future. Personal Collection of Pasi Silander*, Helsinki Department of Education, Helsinki 2017.

<sup>10</sup> V. Vescio, D. Ross, & A. Adams, *A Review of Research on the Impact of Professional Learning Communities on Teaching Practice and Student Learning*, "Teaching and Teacher Education" 2008, 24 (1), p. 80–91.

<sup>11</sup> M. Leclerc, A.C. Moreau, C. Dumouchel, & F. Sallafranque-st. Louis, *Factors that Promote Progression in Schools Functioning as Professional Learning Community*, "International Journal of Education Policy & Leadership" 2012, 7 (7), p. 1–14.

<sup>12</sup> S. Hord, *Professional Learning Communities: Communities of Continuous Inquiry and Improvement*, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Austin, TX 1997 [online], <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED410659.pdf>> [dostęp: 26.11.2020], p. 1.

Despite the fact that there is no universal definition of PLC (Stoll)<sup>13</sup>, (Vescio)<sup>14</sup>. This concept has been presented from varied scientific perspectives, taking into account many complementary characteristics to operationalize PLCs<sup>15</sup>. There is still a challenge to characterize PLC and its multidimensional and multilevel nature. According to Hord<sup>16</sup> PLCs shares five key characteristics, which also associate working together. These characteristics include: shared values and vision, collective responsibility, reflective professional inquiry, collaboration and group, as well as individual learning.

According to DuFour “To create a professional learning community, focus on learning rather than teaching, work collaboratively and hold yourself accountable for results”<sup>17</sup>. Professional Learning Community seems to be explained as “to emphasize our belief that unless teachers are provided with more supporting and engaging work environments, they cannot be expected to concentrate on increasing their abilities to reach and teach today’s students more effectively”<sup>18</sup>. The operational characteristics of PLC consist of three significant factors connected to the ways how PLC is implemented. There is professional development (PD), use of data, and system-wide trust<sup>19</sup>. Continuous professional development CPD<sup>20</sup> can be formed in varied ways, but learning in PLCs is a part of the daily collaborative work as “teachers accumulate and circulate knowledge, implement it, and, from the experience, gain yet more knowledge”<sup>21</sup>. For PLCs characteristics there is also significant to present trust and respect in basic schools.

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<sup>13</sup> L. Stoll, R. Bolam, A. McMahon, M. Wallace, & S. Thomas, *Professional Learning Communities: A Review of the Literature*, “Journal of Educational Change” 2006, 7 (4), p. 1–38.

<sup>14</sup> V. Vescio, D. Ross, & A. Adams, *A Review of Research...*, op. cit., p. 80–91.

<sup>15</sup> C. Lomos, *To What Extent do Teachers in European Countries Differ in Their Professional Community Practices?*, “School Effectiveness and School Improvement” 2017, 28 (2), p. 276–291.

<sup>16</sup> S. Hord, *Professional Learning Communities: Communities of Continuous Inquiry and Improvement*, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Austin, TX 1997 [online], <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED410659.pdf>> [dostęp: 26.11.2020], p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> R. DuFour, *Schools as Learning Communities*, “Educational Leadership” 2004, 67 (8), p. 6–11.

<sup>18</sup> *Professionalism and Community: Perspectives on Reforming Urban Schools*, eds. K.S. Louis, S. Kruse & Associates, Long Oaks, CA 1995, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> R. Williams, K. Brien, C. Sprague, & G. Sullivan, *Professional Learning Communities: Developing a School-Level Readiness Instrument*, “Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy” 2008, 74 [online], <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ807003.pdf>> [dostęp: 26.11.2020].

<sup>20</sup> A. Kennedy, *Models of Continuing Professional Development: A Framework for Analysis*, “Professional Development in Education” 2014, 40 (3), p. 336–351.

<sup>21</sup> A. Hargreaves, & M. Fullan, *Professional Capital. Transforming Teaching in Every School*, Teachers College Press, New York 2012.

## TRUST AND RESPECT AS THE BASIS OF PLC IN FINNISH SCHOOLS

High-trust to teachers' job as part of the PLC model has been present in Finnish education since the beginning of the 1980s, along with criticism of previous teacher-centered methods of teaching. During this period, a new curriculum was created and the theoretical and methodological foundations of the new concept of knowledge and teaching were improved.

Trust, according to the the third operational characteristic of PLC, takes into account the support of the collaboration, reflective dialogue, and professional community<sup>22</sup>. According to Hargreaves trust is the backbone of a strong and sustaining PLC in which "professional learning communities demand that teachers develop grown-up norms in a grown-up profession – where difference, debate and disagreement are viewed as the foundation stones of improvement"<sup>23</sup>. Tschannen-Moran<sup>24</sup> disputes that constructing trust among teachers is be more important in inspiring changes in practice than does creating a trusting relationship with the head of school. Correspondingly, Wahlstrom and Louis<sup>25</sup> claim that the development of teachers' trust in school becomes less significant when exist shared leadership and professional community. Teachers in Finland build "professional and strong relationships in classrooms with clear sense of collective responsibility which exist between colleagues"<sup>26</sup>. Schools reculture towards being PLCs in a continuous process that begins from the maturity level of a school with some difficulties to have an effect on students' outcomes. According to Fullan some schools move at a steady pace to finish with efforts, while others stop and continue the process without reculturing<sup>27</sup>.

In Finland, the whole society trusts teachers and school principals. In this light, it does not seem extraordinary that there is no external educational supervision in Finland. The Finnish education system is a self-correcting system combined

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<sup>22</sup> A. Bryk, E. Camburn, K.S. Louis, *Professional Community in Chicago Elementary Schools: Facilitating Factors and Organizational Consequences*, "Educational Administration Quarterly" 1999, 35 (Supplement), p. 751–781.

<sup>23</sup> A. Hargreaves, *Teaching in the Knowledge Society*, Open University Press, Buckingham 2003, p. 163.

<sup>24</sup> M. Tschannen-Moran, *What's Trust Got to do With it? The Role of Faculty and Principal Trust in Fostering Student Achievement*, in annual meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration, Kansas City 2004.

<sup>25</sup> K.L. Wahlstrom, & K.S. Louis, *How Teachers Experience Principal Leadership: The Roles of Professional Community, Trust, Efficacy, and Shared Responsibility*, "Educational Administration Quarterly" 2008, 44 (4), p. 458–495.

<sup>26</sup> A. Suwalska, *High-Trust to Teachers' Job in Finland in 1970s*, "Studia z Teorii Wychowania" 2018, t. IX, nr 3 (24), p. 282.

<sup>27</sup> M. Fullan, *The Three Stories of Education Reform*, Phi Delta Kappan 2000, 81 (8), p. 581–584.

with collective professional responsibility – another element of the PLC. In the PLC model and the self-correcting Finnish education system, there is omnipresent self-evaluation. Moreover, teachers do not need assistance and external support to be more effective in their professional work, and consequently there is no need to identify good and bad teachers in Finnish society. The high-trust is closely related to collaboration between schools in Finland, which use “networks to share ideas how to teach and solve school problems between schools”<sup>28</sup>.

#### SHARED VALUES AND VISION

Louis and colleagues<sup>29</sup> advised that shared values improve a structure for “shared, collective, ethical decision making” to improve shared values and vision. If teachers have a shared vision, the goals have been seen as centrally important. As a result, there is perceived “an undeviating focus” on students’ learning<sup>30</sup> because individual autonomy is regarded as probably diminishing teacher efficacy when teachers “cannot count on colleagues to reinforce objectives”<sup>31</sup>. Shared values and vision of education in the light of PLC in Finnish basic schools have been present since the seventies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and they are seen in the Finnish contemporary education.

On the other hand, The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014 involves some goals closely related to PLC: promoting schools as learning communities, distribution of leadership, the joy of learning, collaborative atmosphere and students’ autonomy in schools. In Finland according to The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education<sup>32</sup>, in the point 2.2 ‘Underlying values of basic education’, each child is unique and valuable. The document underlines his or her uniqueness and right to improve his or her skills as a human being and as a part of democratic society. To achieve this, students require not only individual support, but also need to experience that they are valuable and being heard in their society. The document stresses the need for Finnish students to cooperate ‘to advance the functioning and welfare of the community’<sup>33</sup>. The document stresses the right of each child to a good education. Furthermore, learning is recognized as a process which helps students to build their “identity, understanding of humanity, world-

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<sup>28</sup> A. Suwalska, *High-Trust...*, op. cit., p. 276.

<sup>29</sup> K.S Louis, S.D Kruse, & Associates, *Professionalism...*, op. cit.

<sup>30</sup> S.M Hord, *Learning together, leading together: Changing schools through professional learning Communities*, Teachers College Press, New York 2004.

<sup>31</sup> K.S Louis, S.D Kruse, & Associates, *Professionalism...*, op. cit.

<sup>32</sup> *National Core Curriculum...*, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

view, and philosophy of life and to find their place in the world. As in meantime, they come to understand themselves, other people, the society, the environment and different cultures”<sup>34</sup>.

On the other hand, apart from the right of each child to a good education, the document emphasises support for each child in his or her growth as a human being. The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014 underlines the need to aspire to “truth, goodness, beauty, justice and peace”<sup>35</sup>. The humanistic perspective characterises ethical and sympathetic conflicts in the growth of each child to stand up for good reason. In this light, each student is capable of making decisions following ethical reflections. The document puts into consideration the importance of the ethical perspective in guiding students towards a realisation of what is valuable in their lives.

The national core curriculum 2014 takes into account “humanity, general knowledge and ability, equality and democracy”<sup>36</sup>. The document underlines the need to contribute to the child’s ‘truth, goodness, beauty, justice and peace’, and emphasises the conflicts between students’ aspirations and the realities of their lives. There is information about students’ ability to solve conflicts ethically and their courage in defending what is good, which constitutes parts of their general knowledge and ability. It allows them to make decisions dependent on ethical thinking and their capacity for putting themselves in another pupil’s situations.

#### COLLABORATION IN FINNISH SCHOOLS

Collaboration in a PLC can flourish in an open atmosphere where there is no external pressure. Collaboration is related to the quality and effectiveness of Finnish basic teachers who contributed to the success of Finland’s education system<sup>37</sup>. Darling-Hammond claimed that Finnish teachers “work together collegially, to design instruction that meets the demands of the subject matter as well as the needs of their students”<sup>38</sup>. Finnish teachers share information and knowledge, plan, and solve-problems related to their teaching. According to Sahlberg<sup>39</sup> they obtain extra

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<sup>34</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>35</sup> Ibidem, p. 16.

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>37</sup> L. Darling-Hammond, *The Flat World and Education: How America’s Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future*, Teachers College Press, New York 2010.

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem, p. 172.

<sup>39</sup> P. Sahlberg, *Developing Effective Teachers and School Leaders: The Case of Finland*, [in:] *Teaching in the Flat World: Learning from High-Performing Systems*, eds. L. Darling-Hammond & R. Rothman, Teachers College Press, New York 2015, p. 30–44.

money added to their monthly salaries for collaboration with colleagues. Finnish education system is based on collaboration in PLC between administrators, teachers, students, and the community. Finnish basic schools value the collaboration among pupils which support students with occasions to construct their knowledge through social cooperation. According to The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014 Finnish schools are obliged to work together with the parents and community outside of school. The document stresses the need for cooperation within the schools and to design a positive learning community for the students within the school environment.

In relation to the structure of collaboration in PLC, Vangrieken et al. claimed that, “Groups of teachers may be fixed or they may be more loosely organized in the sense that the collaborations are of a more ad hoc nature (no fixed groups of teachers who always work together but changing constellations)”<sup>40</sup>. According to Hargreaves “feelings of interdependence are central to such collaboration: a goal of better teaching practices would be considered unachievable without collaboration, linking collaborative activity and achievement of shared purpose. This does not deny the existence of micropolitics, but conflicts are managed more effectively in some PLCS”<sup>41</sup>. Collaboration includes the language, tools, documents, images, symbols, well-defined roles, specified criteria, codified procedures, regulations, and contracts that various practices make explicit for a variety of purposes<sup>42</sup>. According to Hargreaves and Shirley<sup>43</sup> students listen to teachers during lesson. Students work individually or are involved in the whole class activities based on questions and answers. Teachers quite often divide students taking into account their multiply intelligences or learning styles. As a result, teachers claim that they teach students in a holistic way. “It is conducted with sufficient time and in unharried way”<sup>44</sup>.

Collaboration in Finnish schools is based on official meeting, attended by everyone in an open atmosphere. During weekly meetings, school stakeholders discuss new practices, educational issues; explain their educational practices; reflect on their experiences, freely share their ideas and plan the future. Finnish Teachers collaborate to create a “positive learning community for the students within the school environment”<sup>45</sup>. Focusing on “cooperation rather than competi-

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<sup>40</sup> Vangrieken K., Raes, E., Kyndt E., Dochy F., *Teacher Collaboration: A Systematic Review*, “Educational Research Review” 2015, 15, p. 25.

<sup>41</sup> A. Hargreaves, *Teaching in the Knowledge...*, op. cit.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, p. 47.

<sup>43</sup> A. Hargreaves, & D. Shirley, *The Global Fourth Way, The Quest for Educational Excellence*, Sage Publications, London 2012, p. 54–55.

<sup>44</sup> A. Suwalska, *High-Trust...*, op. cit., p. 283.

<sup>45</sup> *National Core Curriculum...*, op. cit., p. 38.



tion, educators and students worked with local architects to build a bridge in the community”<sup>46</sup>. Research of Bryk et al., presents that teachers ask questions about their practice, others strengths and can more easily find “expert advice” from colleagues<sup>47</sup> and they did not really understand the difference between formal and informal meetings. The school atmosphere in Finnish schools is very open and school units are free to discuss, advise and share their ideas or thoughts with colleagues on a daily basis.

### COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Collective responsibility, according to King & Newmann<sup>48</sup> and Kruse, Louis & Bryk<sup>49</sup> is seen from a wide literature agreement, presents that participants of a PLC are responsible for student learning. It is believed that such collective responsibility helps to sustain commitment, “puts peer pressure and accountability on those who do not do their fair share, and eases isolation”<sup>50</sup>. In Finnish basic schools we observe the highest level of teachers’ responsibility, which is related to the high level of teachers autonomy.

According to Sahlberg, there is observed trust-based responsibility and „trust within the education system”<sup>51</sup>. It is acknowledged that society trusts teachers and principals in Finland. The Finnish society respects and wants to understand “what is happening in the everyday life. [...] The knowledge of how to solve the problem is in the school. [...] You have to trust. Trust is the first thing”<sup>52</sup>. According to Hargreaves and Shirley<sup>53</sup> all problems are explained and solved by a constant interaction rather than through public exposure of the problem or government top-

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<sup>46</sup> K. Davis, A. *Teacher Educators’ Initial Impressions of the edTPA: A “Love-Hate” Relationship* [online], <<http://www.srate.org/JournalEditions/Volume27-2/Manuscript%2003.Davis.pdf>> [dostęp: 28.11.2020].

<sup>47</sup> A. Bryk, E. Camburn, K.S. Louis, *Professional Community in Chicago Elementary Schools: Facilitating Factors and Organizational Consequences*, “Educational Administration Quarterly” 1999, 35 (5) (Supplement), p. 751–781.

<sup>48</sup> M.B. King, & F.M. Newmann, *Building School Capacity through Professional Development: Conceptual and Empirical Considerations*, “International Journal of Educational Management” 2001, 15 (2), p. 86–93.

<sup>49</sup> K.S. Louis, S.D. Kruse, & Associates, *Professionalism...*, op. cit.

<sup>50</sup> F.M. Newmann, & G.G. Wehlage, *Successful School Restructuring: A Report to the Public and Educators by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools*, CORS, Madison, Wisconsin 1995.

<sup>51</sup> P. Sahlberg, *Finnish Lessons. What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland*, Columbia University, New York 2015, p. 149.

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>53</sup> A. Hargreaves, & D. Shirley, *The Global Fourth Way...*, op. cit., p. 65.

down intervention. Tirri also observed that holistic approach predisposes “creative ideas to blossom in the classroom”<sup>54</sup> in Finnish basic schools. Teachers plan collectively their curriculum taking into account the flexible national goals and the local societal problems. Feelings of interdependence are central to such collaboration: a goal of better teaching practices would be considered unachievable without collaboration, linking collaborative activity and achievement of shared purpose. This does not deny the existence of micropolitics, but conflicts are managed more effectively in some PLCS<sup>55</sup>.

#### REFLECTIVE PROFESSIONAL INQUIRY, GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL LEARNING

Professional learning communities PLC in schools can be perceived according to Wenger<sup>56</sup> as communities of constant practice or as groups of teachers sharing a concern, passions and deepening their knowledge. There is observed a shift from teachers, who are passive participants to teachers who become active learners. This process is seen and distinguished from a technical-rational-top-down approach to Continuous Professional Development, “towards a more cultural-individual interactive and newer approach to the professional development of teachers”<sup>57</sup>. In this light there is need to discuss the importance of reflection, in which professional development of teachers is linked to their confidence and skills in reflective action<sup>58</sup>.

Finnish teachers need time for reflection on teaching practice and it is a key factor for Teacher Professional Development, which has been underlined by researchers (Schneider & Plasman)<sup>59</sup>, (Svendsen)<sup>60</sup>, due to critical reflection can

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<sup>54</sup> K. Tirri, *Teacher Education Is the Key to Changing the Identification and Teaching of the Gifted*, “Roeper Review”, Jul–Sep 2017, vol. 39, issue 3, p. 210–212.

<sup>55</sup> A. Hargreaves, *Teaching in the Knowledge...*, op. cit., p. 163.

<sup>56</sup> E. Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, And Identity (Learning in Doing: Social, Cognitive and Computational Perspectives)*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998.

<sup>57</sup> B. Svendsen, *Inquiries into Teacher Professional Development – What Matters?*, “Education” 2020, vol. 140 (3), p. 115.

<sup>58</sup> S.J. Prestridge, *Reflective Blogging as Part of ICT Professional Development to Support Pedagogical Change*, “Australian Journal of Teacher Education” 2014, 39 (2), p. 70–86.

<sup>59</sup> R.M. Schneider, & K. Plasman, *Science Teacher Learning Progressions: A Review of Science Teachers’ Pedagogical Content Knowledge Development*, “Review of Educational Research” 2011, 81 (4), p. 530–565.

<sup>60</sup> B. Svendsen, *Teachers’ Experience from a School-Based Collaborative Teacher Professional Development (TPD) Programme: Reported Impact on Professional Development*, “Teacher Development” 2016, 20 (3), p. 313–328.

have an impact on the learning process. Griffin (cited by Sergiovanni)<sup>61</sup> referred to these activities as “inquiry and believes that as principals and teachers inquire together they create community. Inquiry helps them to overcome chasms caused by various specializations of grade level and subject matter. Inquiry forces debate among teachers about what is important. Inquiry promotes understanding and appreciation for the work of others”. Inquiry supports principals and teachers to become a community of learners.

All teachers are perceived as learners with their colleagues in Finnish schools<sup>62</sup>. Rosenholtz added that ‘learning enriched schools’, is like “professional self renewal” or is “a communal rather than solitary happening”<sup>63</sup>. Collective learning is omnipresent through collective knowledge creation<sup>64</sup> whereas the school learning community participates in the serious dialogue, interprets it and distributes it within its group.

## CONCLUSIONS

Finnish education system is based on collaboration in Professional Learning Community between administrators, teachers, students, and the community. Finland has been resistant to the global education reform movement and has not adopted outcome-based education. Shared values and vision of education in the light of PLC in Finnish basic schools has been present since the seventies of the 20th and they are seen in the Finnish contemporary education

According to Hargreaves and Fullan Finnish teachers have enough time for planning, teaching, diagnosing and evaluating. It is especially significant due to teaching is perceived as ‘permanent-commitment-a job for life’ and each ten years the country regularly reforms The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education.

In the presented above light, it is not astonishing that Finnish teachers are perceived as professionals, who use the highest standards of teaching, having habits of cooperation, trust and responsibility. In Finland, the whole society trusts teachers and school principals. In this light, it does not seem extraordinary that there is no external educational supervision in Finland. Teachers are able to cooperate to each other and have time for reflection on teaching practice. Consequently, teachers professional development is linked to their confidence and skills in reflective actions.

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<sup>61</sup> T.J. Sergiovanni, *Building Community in Schools*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco 1994, p. 154.

<sup>62</sup> K.S Louis, S.D Kruse, & Associates, *Professionalism...*, op. cit.

<sup>63</sup> S.J Rosenholtz, *Teachers' Workplace: The Social Organization of Schools*, Longman, New York 1989.

<sup>64</sup> K.S Louis, *Beyond "Managed Change": Rethinking How Schools Improve*, “School Effectiveness and School Improvement” 1994, 9 (1), p. 1–27.

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### Summary

In the article I will pay attention to schools as Professional Learning Communities which include: shared values and vision of education, collective responsibility, reflective professional inquiry, collaboration and group, as well as individual, learning. I also analyze trust and respect, closely related to PLC in contemporary Finnish education.