

Education in Estonia

Learner- centered schoolmodel in Pelgulinna Gymnasium



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Vice-principle of Pelgulinna Gymnasium

mentor of general schools

Education Strategy of Estonia 2021-2035

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To equip the population of Estonia with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare people to fulfil their potential in personal, occupational and social life and contribute to promoting the quality of life in Estonia as well as global sustainable development.

The achievement of the general goal is supported by three strategic goals



Learning opportunities and the organisation of education

Learning opportunities are diverse and accessible and the education system enables smooth transitions between levels and types of education



Teachers, learning environments and approaches to learning

Estonia has competent and motivated teachers and heads of schools, a diverse learning environment and a learner-centred approach to learning and teaching



Education, society and the labour market

Learning options are responsive to the development needs of society and the labour market



Preservation and development of the Estonian language and culture



The population's welfare and security



Cooperation within Estonia and internationally



Social cohesion

Principles and values guiding the preparation and implementation of the strategy



Entrepreneurship and focus on solutions



Sustainable development of society and the natural environment



An evidence-based approach and professionalism



A sense of accountability and consideration



Empowering learners

The Estonian education system

consists of four levels:

primary education, basic education, secondary education, higher education

educational forms are:

daytime study, evening study (e.g. in adult schools), part-time and full-time study, distance learning, externship, home study

School is **compulsory for a child who turns seven years old by October 1st** of the current year. Studying is compulsory until the completion of basic education or **until the age of 17**. In Estonia, it is allowed to fulfill the school obligation also in the form of home education.

The Estonian education system

In Estonian schools, teaching is conducted in Estonian in most elementary schools and high schools, but there are also Russian-language elementary schools and high schools.

There is a step-by-step transition to learning in Estonian.

Estonian is generally the language of instruction in universities, universities of applied sciences and vocational education institutions.

But there are also universities where English is the language of instruction in some subjects or even of the whole curriculum

The Estonian education system

Studying in Estonian general education schools is generally free of tuition fees, study costs are covered from the state and local government budgets.

There are also private schools where tuition is paid.

Studying at universities and colleges is also partly paid.

Regulations

[Republic of Estonia Education Act](#)

[Basic School and Upper Secondary School Act](#)

[Preschool Child Care Institution Act](#)

[Private Schools Act](#)

There are also legal acts in the field of vocational education, adult education and higher education

The basis for school activities are

school's development plan and school's curriculum, which show the differences between the school's curriculum and the national curriculum.

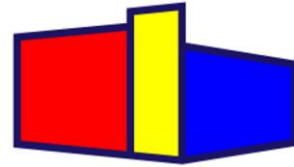
general work plan

Two curriculums - the national curriculum of primary school and the national curriculum of upper secondary school

Education system moves to

- **learner-centered** school models (*student-subject, learning skills*)
- the development of the education system is **evidence-based** (**critical thinking and *ability to work with data***)
- The contemporary approach to learning and teaching
- digital pedagogy

Local school



**PELGULINNA
GÜMNAASIUM**

Full-cycle school, based on Art and ICT

850+72 learners

main goal: knowledgeable, skilled and self-directed learner

our moto: CHOOSE CREATE AND DO

School belongs to OCDE education 2030 innovation
school group Hub 4

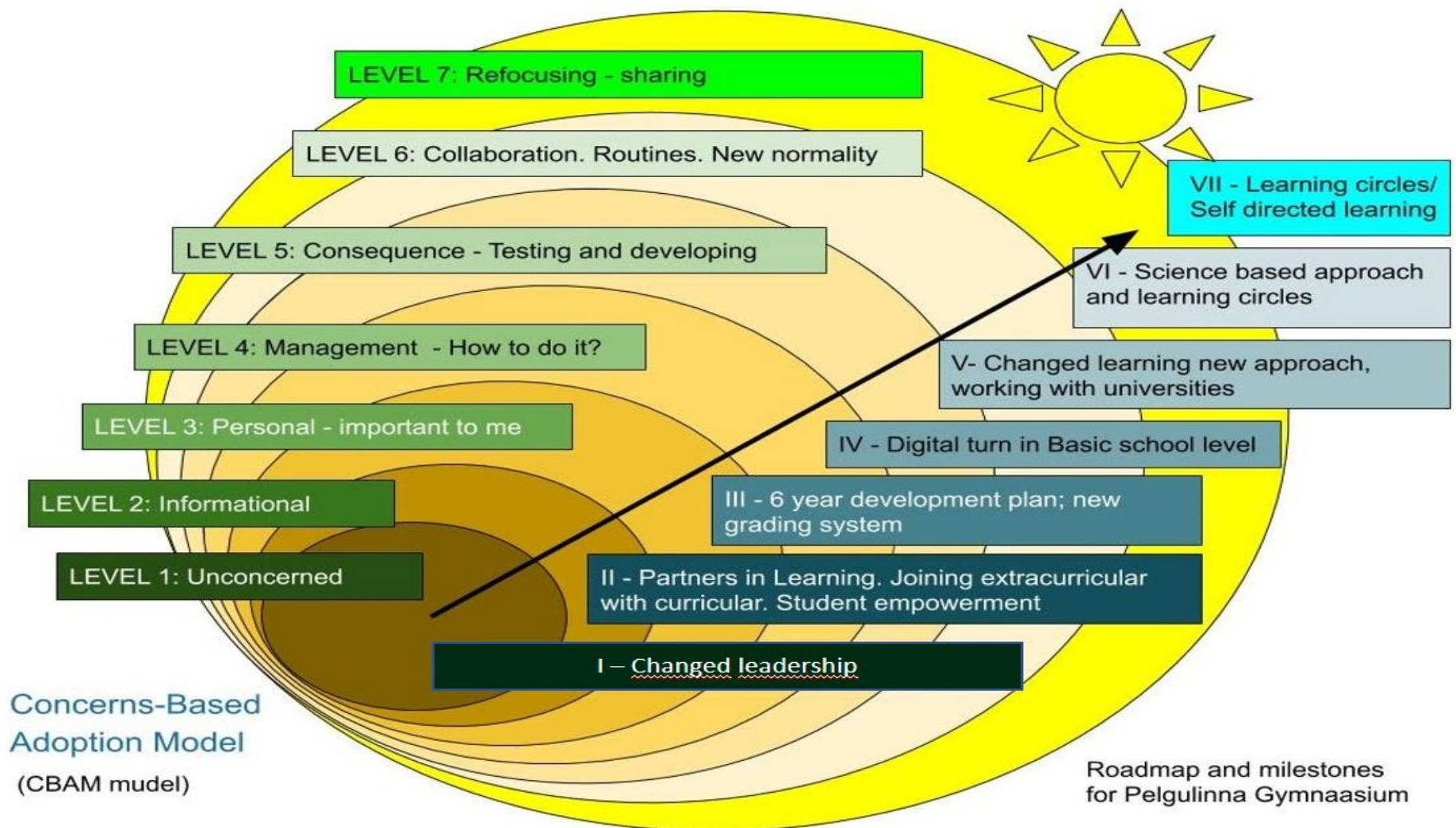
INTENDED LONG-TERM IMPACT WE ARE PLANNING

- Pelgulinna's graduates and teachers are knowledgeable, skilled and self-directed cooperative learners.
- Pelgulinna's students feel assessment is above all helping them to learn and ***think critically***.
- Empathy, connectedness, honesty, and well-being characterise student-student, teacher-teacher and student-teacher ***relationships***.
- Teacher cooperation and co-agency drive school renewal.

INTENDED OUTCOMES FOR ACHIEVING IMPACT

- Pelgulinna has in place a process for ongoing improvement to systematically enhance collective teacher efficacy.
- Pelgulinna is a leader in supporting its own students in building assessment literacy.
- A programme for enhancing student voice and learner autonomy is systematically applied and enhanced.
- A programme for teaching cognitive and non-cognitive skills is systematically applied and enhanced.

What we have done for that?



Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM model)

Roadmap and milestones for Pelgulinna Gymnaasium

Main goal:

to improve
students'
competences

sub goal I

Teachers implement
learning strategies,
share best practises

sub goal II

Students develop the
ability to analyse their
learning skills.

sub goal III

Leadership and learning circles
help to maintain and develop
a supportive ecosystem

UNIVERSITY

- * Leadership trainings
- * Ad hoc Meetups
- * Specialized trainings
- * Testing

LEADERSHIP

- * Strategic planning
- * Motivation building
- * Working with student-body
- * Working with parents

- Developing:
 - * self-analysis framework for students
 - * learning cycle methods for teachers and students
- Co-teaching, peer feedback, lesson visits and role-modelling

TEACHERS

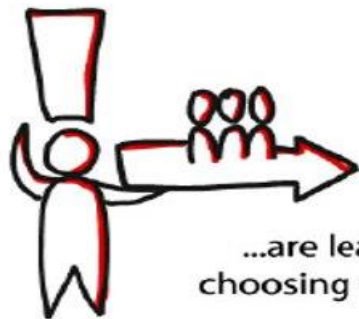
- * Understanding their level of learning competences and improvement possibilities (through learning analysis testing, training)

STUDENTS

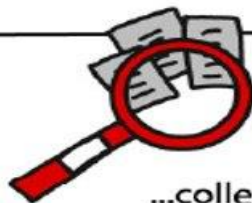
The Future School

EVIDENCE-BASED AND COLLABORATIVE

Change
successfully im-
plemented!



...are learner-centered in
choosing the focus of change

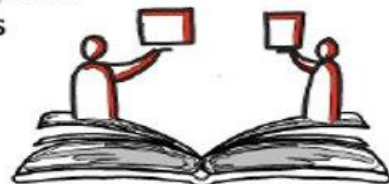


...collect data and analyze
the change process

...learn from the experience
of others



...create new solutions
and practices



WE...

...lead the change with teachers
and school leaders



School and university hand in hand



National Center
for Educational
Research

innove



Funded by the European Social Fund

Self-directed learner?

- Acquired learning skills that create an opportunity to constantly improve oneself, acquire new knowledge and skills
- Achieved / acquiring collaboration skills between learner and teacher, collaboration between learners and teachers, collaboration between school and community.
- Collaborative skills are based on emotional and social intelligence, which means the ability to understand and direct one's own and others' behavior, ways of thinking and feeling in different situations.
- Is creative
- Be able to think critically(evidence-based)



School management and evaluation and changes in teachers working

Fixed time for cooperation;

Implementation of the study circle,
process monitoring and evaluation of
results;

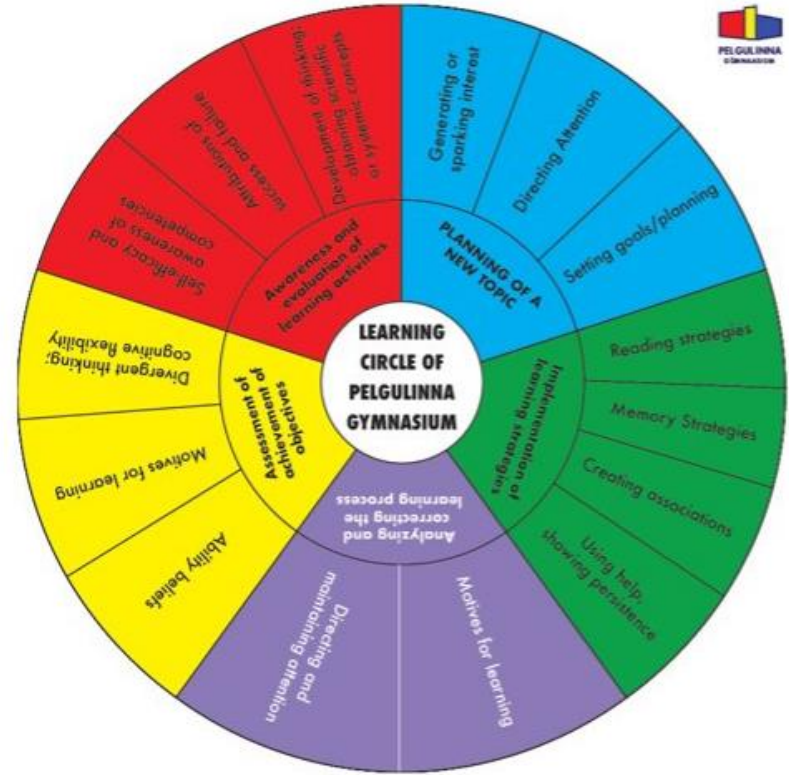
Collaborative conversations to set
teachers' development goals;

Feedback for teachers, observations;

Collaborative planning, integrated work
plans, integration-based activities,
conscious teaching of learning skills,
learning competency tests, formative
assessment, system of learning partners.

Integrating the learning circle of learners into everyday work

Development of learning skills



Learning organization - everyone is learning

Extending the lesson to support learner self-regulation (75-minute lesson)

School week with ***four contact days*** (*self-regulation and planning of your learning*)

Digital solutions to support teachers and support learners' independent learning habits

Long lessons - what the researchers say



Helps develop critical thinking and problem solving skills

More deep learning (there can be no lectures, but collaborative learning where the learner is active)

Stronger relationship between student and teacher

Fewer changes and transitions per day for both teachers and students

Allows more consideration to be given to individual characteristics

Allikad: O'Neil, 1995; Salvaterra & Adams 1995; Queen 2000; Veal & Flinders, 2001, Kim Mattox, Dawson R. Hancock, and J. Allen Queen, 2005.

- Students have less homework
- Teacher less preparation for lessons in different classes
- It is important to keep an eye on what students are learning, not what material the teacher is going to go through
- School climate-teaching methodology-learning organization are all interconnected and affect each other.
- Improving learning outcomes
- Less breaks (noise, conflicts)

Learning is a holistic process

In the past: two weeks in one school year; 1-9 graders

- Monday to Friday
- 3-4 integrated subjects
- activities outside of school
 - > museumus
 - > nature observation
 - > physical activities

Purpose: *showing links between different subjects and everyday life*

This year:

- 5-8 graders
- One day in a week within seven weeks, a total of seven days
- Two periods a year (we have a total of five periods)
- 3-4 integrated subjects
- **Purpose:** *improving time management; improving teamwork skills (students and teachers); autonomy; meaningful learning, from ordinary thinking to scientific thinking, support the learning of study skills*

Integrated learning



- Better time management skills
- Increased autonomy
- Noticing connections between subjects- more thorough homework/tasks
- Seeing the whole
- Different teacher student interactions



- Lack of teamwork between teachers
- Difficult to let go of the curriculum
- Integrated learning vs simultaneously assigned tasks

The key to effective and conscious learning

knowledgeable teacher

The structure of professional learning community (PLC)



A definite goal



Theoretical basic material



Homeworks



Analysis

Teacher Learning Circles

(last year)

child
development

learning
skills

lesson
study

well-being
& mental
health

integrated
learning

teacher
professional
development

Teacher Learning Circles

(this year)

learning
skills
& lesson
study

learning
skills &
lesson
study

learning
skills &
lesson
study

learning
skills &
lesson
study

learning
skills &
lesson
study

learning
skills &
lesson
study

Awareness

knowledgeable teaching of learning skills cooperation

Student

Lesson for learning learning-skills

Active lessons

Guides to support self-studying

Development of learning system to support learner self-regulation

Teacher

Professional learning communities

Learning-partners system

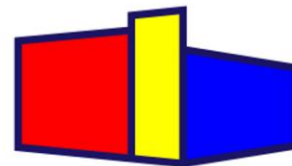
Feedback for teachers by students

Cooperation time for teachers

Thank you!

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