



Tēnā koutou

Ko Paparoa te maunga

Ko Māwhera te awa

Nō Rūnanga, Tai Poutini ahau

Ko John Armstrong tōku ingoa

Ko tēnei tōku whānau

Ko Rebecca tōku hoa rangatira

Ko Rosie tāku tamahine

Ko Tom tāku tama

Tēnā koutou kātoa





Observations from high performing education systems

<http://www.compareyourcountry.org/pisa/>

Background:

- In **2013** I visited state schools in South Korea, Singapore, Japan, China, India and Sri Lanka
- In **2018** I visited state schools in Singapore, Shanghai, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands and Finland. I also attended a principals study tour at the University of Tampere, Finland.
- Henley School has a regular teacher exchange with a Singapore School over the past 7 years. Eight teachers have been involved in this experience.



Singapore

- Top of the PISA rankings in Reading, Maths and Science in 2015
- City State, 5.3m people, no natural resources, multicultural
- British based education system – centralised control
- Rigorous and highly streamed
- Part of the Confucian cultural circle along with Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and China
- PSLE – Primary School Leaving Exam
- English + second language (Malay, Mandarin and Tamil)



Singapore





Singapore





Shanghai - China

- Top of the PISA rankings in Reading, Maths and Science in 2012
- The Chinese education system is excellent in preparing outstanding test takers
- Top performing schools are assigned a weak school to administer
- Hard work is seen as the cornerstone for success – repetition is seen as a positive
- Teaching is a high status profession
- Keen competition for American Universities
- Teacher's focus on the group as opposed to on the individual



Shanghai - China





Finland

- Top performing country overall in PISA rankings in 2003, 2006 and 2009 (has dropped since)
- Has large land area with few people (5.4m) - remote location
- Strange language – unlike any other
- Happiest country in the world 2018
- Close connection with nature – sauna, lakes, forests, rally driving
- Lapland, Lakeland, Helsinki urban area
- High tax country – ‘cradle to the grave’ welfare with little or no poverty (alcohol and cigarettes heavily taxed)
- Equal opportunities for all – focus on equity
- Independent from 1917 (previously part of Russia and Sweden)
- Heavy wars against Soviet Union and Germany during WW2

FINLAND IN FACTS

5.4 million



1.4 million
inhabitants in
metropolitan
area

Life expectancy:
year



78



84

Official languages
are **FINNISH**...
(spoken by 88.9%)

...and **SWEDISH**
(spoken by 5.3%)

SÁMI is the mother
tongue of about 1,900 people.



Christianity:
73.8% **LUTHERAN**
and about
1.1% **ORTHODOX**



GDP per capita (2014)

37,559 €



REPUBLIC, parliamentary democracy,
200 members in one chamber

Independence Day
DECEMBER 6

1917



1995



1955



Observations from Finland

- Consistently ranked as having the best governance in the world - stable and safe country
- Ranked the third least corrupt country in the world
- Mothers' and children's well-being in Finland is the second best in the world.
- Finns borrow more books from the library than anywhere else
- Have the most saunas, drink more coffee and milk than any other nation
- Finland has the best overall education system in the world in terms of equity and value for GDP spent
- Highly competitive with Sweden

Typical Finnish schools





Typical Finnish schools





Typical Finnish schools





Connection with nature





Connection with nature





Cooked meal for lunch





Hands-on activities



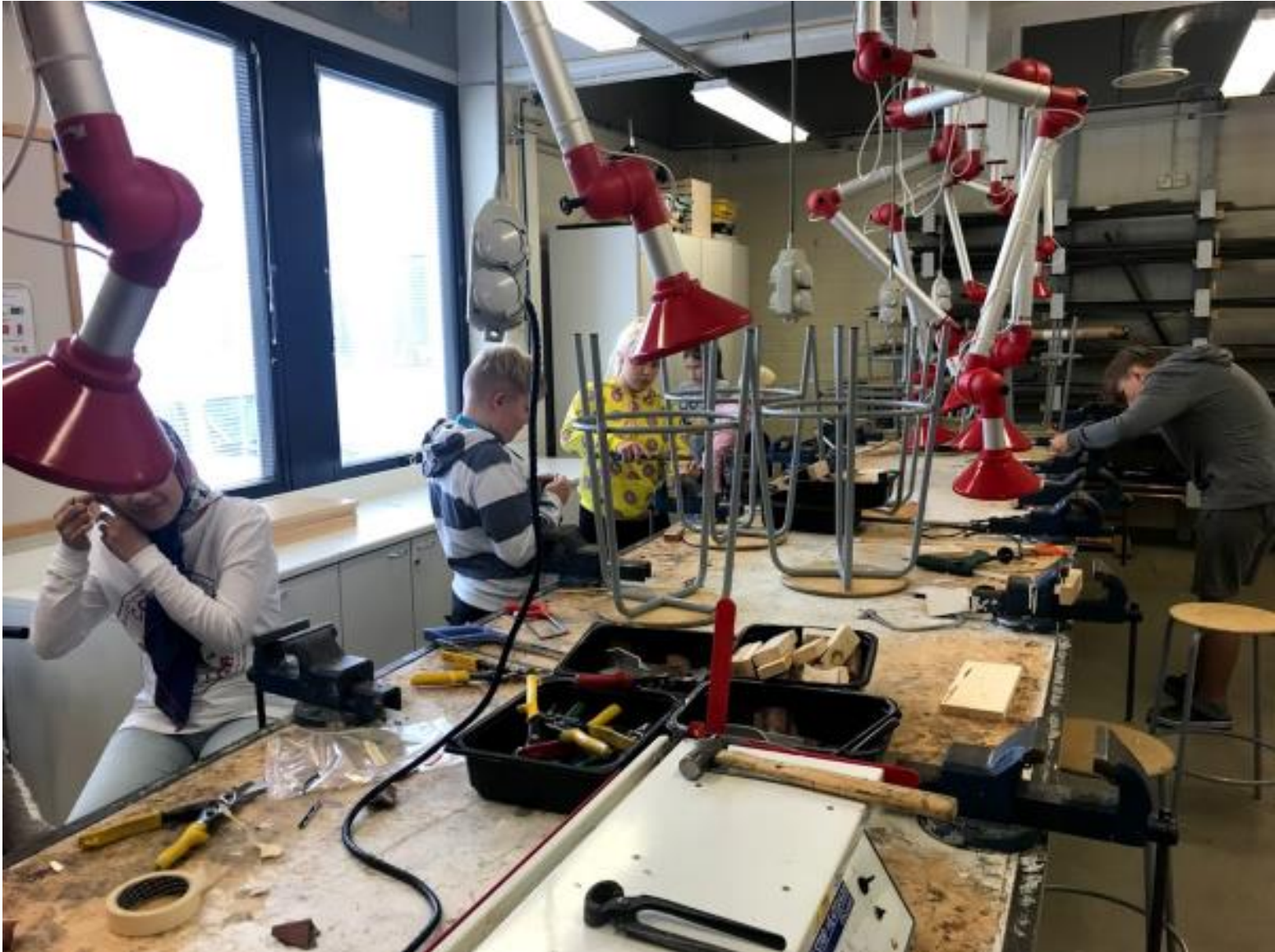


Hands-on activities





Designing furniture





Staffroom





Typical Finnish schools





Finnish student car





Teaching Observations - Teaching

- Student comes first in decision making – wellbeing focus through school welfare teams
- Focus on relationships between teacher – student
- No lesson went for longer than 45 minutes and all lessons were followed by a 15min outdoor break
- Lots of ‘hands on’ teaching activities – technology and hard materials (eg woodwork) from age 7 (hands on)
- Focus on 2nd Language Learning
- Lots of cooperative and group work within classes
- Teachers were paid on the number of lessons they delivered per week; 24 x 45min lessons per week, plus up to 3 hours for other activities as directed by the principal (18 hours teaching+3 directed = 21)



Teaching Observations - Teachers

- High quality teachers only 5-10% of all applicants get to teach – must have a Masters degree
- Teaching is a high status profession – teaching rated in the top 10 happiest professions
- No teacher registration – once qualified retained for life unless dismissed
- No school inspection systems or teacher appraisal/performance management systems – high trust
- Special needs coordinator for schools with over 300 students (full time)
- No stressed looking teachers
- Teachers have high autonomy in how they plan, what they plan and how they deliver and if they collaborate
- State issues textbooks to support core subjects
- Not unionised - Lean management – Principal, DP



Teaching Observations - System

- Start school at 7 years old
- Education is completely free – from primary to tertiary – no fees no student loans
- Schools do not compete with each other - Students attend local school
- Sample based testing as opposed to whole school/country testing
- No 'dead ends' in the education system
- School lunches provided by the state
- Special Needs - At least 12 per cent receive general support, while another 10 per cent get intensified support, such as pull-out sessions, and another 8 per cent of pupils receive special, or more targeted help, like personal education plans.



Considerations for NZ

National Level

- Compulsory second language learning for Year 0-6
- Eliminate 'dead ends' in our student learning pathways – track students intensively from Year 1-13
- State provided daily hot meal for all students
- Need to focus on equity
- Overhaul teacher education so that we are attracting the best we can to the profession – no compromises
- Ensure children attend their local school and trust in the system – could zoning achieve this?
- Random sample testing of students' understanding
- Adequate resourcing for special needs



Considerations for NZ

Regional Level and Kāhui Ako Level (Nelson & Tasman)

- Local MOE streamlined
- Cluster 'Supervisor' as opposed to Community of Learners leaders
- Move away from competitive model - Collaboration rather than competition
- Local Board of Trustees for a Kāhui Ako– less duplication
- Develop a local curriculum
- Share teachers across the Kāhui Ako
- Sample based testing instead of whole class/syndicate/school testing
- Teacher exchanges across the Kāhui Ako to best meet needs
- Welfare team for the Kāhui Ako



Considerations for NZ

School Level - Leadership

- Length of lessons and break times – under review at Henley
- Appraisal system - Greater trust in the teaching profession - doing this at Henley <https://teachingcouncil.nz/content/appraisal>
- Technology teaching from early age – more hands on
- School resourced special needs teacher - doing this at Henley
- 2nd Language Learning – doing this at Henley
- Shift from evidence based to value-based decision making
- Set up and formalise a school welfare team - doing this at Henley
- Sample based testing instead of whole class/syndicate/school testing
- Greater emphasis on the local curriculum – new resource from MOE
- Teacher 'follows' the class for 6 years



Considerations for NZ

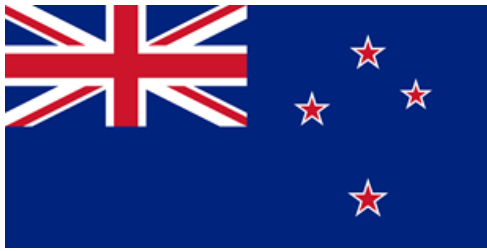
School Level - Classroom

- Restructuring lesson delivery to no more than 45 minutes followed by a 15-minute break – supporting this at Henley
- More ‘hands on’ learning where possible (technology opportunities from age 7 upwards)
- Teacher follows the class for the first 6 years where possible
- Greater focus on building relationships with students – a major focus at Henley
- Greater connection to the local environment – work in progress
- Teacher exchange opportunity – exchange with Singapore School set up at Henley (2 teachers each year)

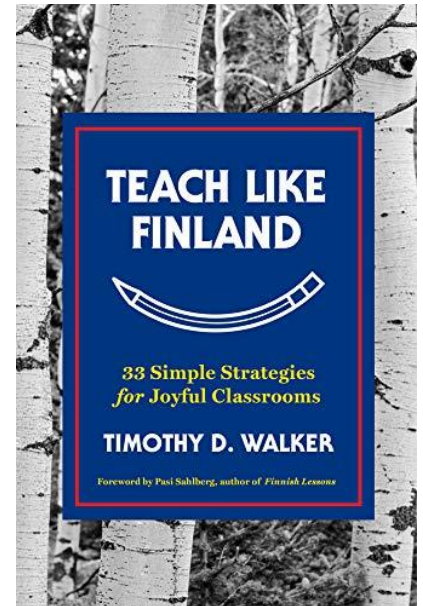
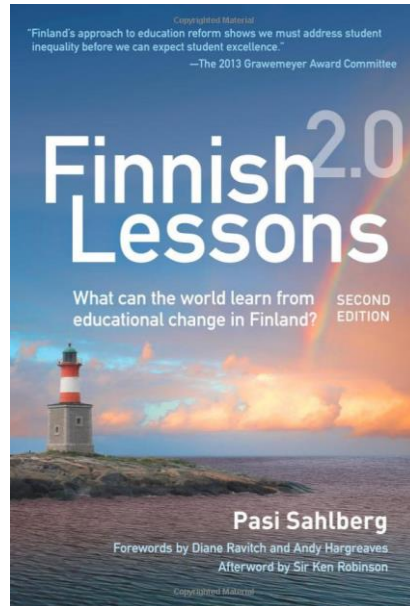
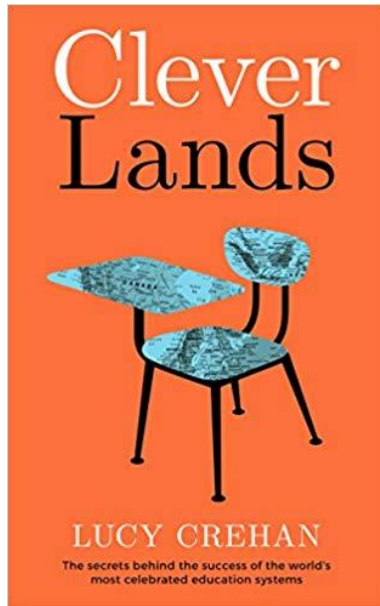


Conclusion

- Important to realise we can't simply copy high performing systems due to their unique contexts
- I admire aspects of the education system in Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Canada and Finland
- Asian students work ethic is much stronger – linked to parental expectations – however = high pressure
- Quality of teaching and teachers in Finland much higher than here (in my opinion) – hence 'high trust' model works.
- Need to focus on equity across our system



Recommended Reading



My full sabbatical report (PDF download) available from:
<http://www.educationaleaders.govt.nz/Leadership-development/Principals-sabbatical-reports/Primary-award-recipients-2018>

