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“Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle” - Guide

Enhancing the Integration of Young Immigrants at Myllypuro Upper Secondary School

Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences

Bachelor of Social Services

Degree Program in Social Services

Thesis

Autumn 2012

Authors Title Number of Pages Date	Laura Balash, Kaisa Huovinen “Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle”- guide: Enhancing the Integration of Young Immigrants at Myllypuro Upper Secondary School 30 pages + 1 appendix Autumn 2012
Degree	Bachelor of Social Services
Degree Programme	Degree Program in Social Services
Specialisation option	Social Services
Instructors	Mervi Nyman, Senior Lecturer Riikka Tiitta, Senior Lecturer
<p>The objective of this Bachelor’s Thesis was to develop a guide for the immigrant background students of Myllypuro Upper Secondary School. This guide, “Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle”, presents the school areas and rules in a visual form, as well as displays the areas and rules in the Finnish language. The purpose of this guide is to enhance the integration process of immigrant background youth who are new to the Finnish schooling system.</p> <p>This thesis presents the process of making the guide, as well as the theoretical background used in the “Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle”- guide. The main theoretical framework used in this guide is integration and empowerment.</p> <p>This guide was compiled in assistance with the students and teachers of the Myllypuro Upper Secondary School. The student guidance counselor as well as the teachers of the preparatory class has assisted in the process. In addition, the students have also voiced their opinions about what aspects should be taken into consideration in the guide.</p> <p>The outcome, the “Myllypurosta ponnistaa Maailmalle”- guide, was made for distribution in the Myllypuro Upper Secondary School. Due to the fact that integration and empowerment are long processes, it has not been possible to accurately measure the results in such a short time, and therefore we have not been able to test how the objective has been met. The initial reactions from the Myllypuro Upper Secondary School have been positive, and the possibility of using this guide in other Finnish Schools has been discussed.</p>	
Keywords	integration, immigrants, environment, empowerment, language, multiculturalism, school, social participation, youth

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1 Introduction

The product of this thesis is a guide compiled for use in Myllypuro Upper Secondary School for immigrant background students to help them integrate and function in the Finnish schooling system. This thesis consists of this guide, "Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle", as well as this report, which will present the theoretical basis and background used to develop the guide.

The guide itself is an introduction guide for new, immigrant background students. It features pictures of relevant areas, school subjects and the school's rules in a visual form to help the new students understand the rules even without understanding of the Finnish language. Schools, as secondary socialization environments, play an essential part in the integration process (Tampereen Yliopiston Täydennyskoulutuskeskus). This is why we chose to work in cooperation with Myllypuro Upper Secondary School to produce a guide for immigrant background students to help them integrate and function in the Finnish schooling system.

The pictures present different areas and classrooms, which are relevant for the new student to be able to cope and navigate in the new environment. The rules are also visualised, using a bear figure to represent what one should refrain from doing according to the school rules. In the end of the guide there is a list of the lesson times, room for notes, and a map of the area around the school, to help the students navigate around the Myllypuro area. The function of the guide is not solely to introduce the school and its rules but also support the students' language learning process.

The name of the guide "Myllypurosta ponnistaa maailmalle" refers to the school motto and the frog on the front page is the school's mascot animal. Myllypuro is a multicultural school with approximately 230 students, with various different nationalities (Valtonen 2012). Myllypuro Upper Secondary School is one of the most international schools in Finland and with a successful integration program it could become a pioneer in competent intercultural schooling, educating students that are well-prepared to face the global world.

As the amount of immigrants in Finland has rapidly increased during the past 10 years, society has been forced to adapt to the new situation. Society, and the institutions that belong to it, have had to come up with new solutions on how to integrate immigrant background citizens in a way that has positive affects for all parties. In Finland the so called "integration model" is executed, in which the goal is to preserve one's own cultural heritage and maintain connection with the majority culture (Liebkind 1994: 37). One purpose of this final thesis is to introduce a new tool to be utilized in the integration process.

The theoretical background of this thesis introduces the reader to the concepts of integration, social participation and empowerment and the role they play in the life of a young immigrant who has recently located in Finland. First a brief overview of immigration statistics is included to illustrate the relevance of the guide, followed by the objectives of the guide. Then the importance of integration and language and the connection of the guide to many layers of empowerment are discussed further, as well as the process of making the guide. Last is presented the questions and the developmental ideas which were raised during the process

2 Myllypuro Upper Secondary School

Myllypuro Upper Secondary school is one of the most multicultural schools in Finland with students from several different cultures. One of the objectives of the school is to work towards equality by positive co-operation of all parties involved in the day-to-day school life, taking into consideration all different cultures. (Myllypuron koulu).

Myllypuro Upper Secondary School has 230 students with the grades 7 to 9 and the tenth grade. In addition, Myllypuro has immigrant preparatory classes for basic education (MAVA - maahanmuuttajien perusopetukseen valmistava luokka) and preparatory classes for immigrant youth (MANUVA - maahanmuuttajataustaisten nuorten valmistava ryhmä). (Myllypuron koulu.)

Myllypuro upper secondary school is part of the MANUVA - project, which is part of Helsinki city's "Children and Youth Wellbeing Plan" (Helsingin lasten ja nuorten hyvinvointisuunnitelmaan) (Opetusvirasto 2012). The MANUVA - project is targeted towards youth whom have moved to Finland towards the end of their compulsory basic educa-

tion, and therefore mainly consists of youth aged 15 - 16. The goal of the MANUVA-project is to enhance the integration of immigrant youth, enable further education and prevent social exclusion. (MANUVA 2011.) The “Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle” - guide is aimed to support the goals of the MANUVA- project as well as support the integration of young immigrants at Myllypuro Upper Secondary School.

3 Relevance of the guide

The amount of immigrants coming to Finland has increased during the last 20 years, with the most rapid increase taking place during the past 10 years (Maahanmuuton vuosikatsaus 2011). This change in the demographic of Finland has led to integration and immigration policies being one of the top subjects in the news and in political debates. The public discussion has mainly focused on how to ensure successful integration, and whether or not to continue accepting immigrants into Finland.

A lot of emphasis has been put on ensuring the successful integration of people of immigrant background, and new innovative ways to achieve this goal are constantly being developed. The integration process of immigrant background individuals to the Finnish society is a long process, during which several aspects must be taken into consideration. The notion of cultural identity, how one perceives oneself as well as what role one sees oneself as having as part of the community, is of key relevance during the integration process. If the individual is able to acknowledge citizenship to both cultures, show respect towards both cultures, and is able to cherish the fact that one is be part of several cultures, the integration process can be seen have being successful. This is why attention has been paid to this aspect while compiling the “Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle”- guide. A lot of time has been put into ensuring the guide gives an honest picture of the Finnish schooling system, to reduce the risk of anxiety caused by any possible misunderstandings and culture conflicts.

3.1 Immigration statistics

The amount of immigrants in Finland has increased dramatically during the past 10 years. As seen in chart 1, the amount of immigrants in Finland has risen from 98 577 immigrants in 2001 to 183 133 immigrants in 2011. Furthermore, the most remarkable

increase has been in the number of children and young immigrants, especially in the age group of 6- to 12-year-olds (see chart 2). We would like to bring to attention that these charts do not include asylum seekers, who also attend school and therefore the actual number of children and young immigrants in Finland is higher than shown in chart 2 (Pakolaisneuvonta).

The increase in immigrant amounts has forced the Finnish society to develop and promote actions to enhance the integration of immigrants. Special attention should be brought to the immigrant children and youth, for integration that has started at a young age is often easier, as well as more successful (Alitorppa-Niitamo 1993: 22). Due to the above mentioned fact the “Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle” –guide can be a relevant tool in the process of enhancing the integration process of immigrant youth.

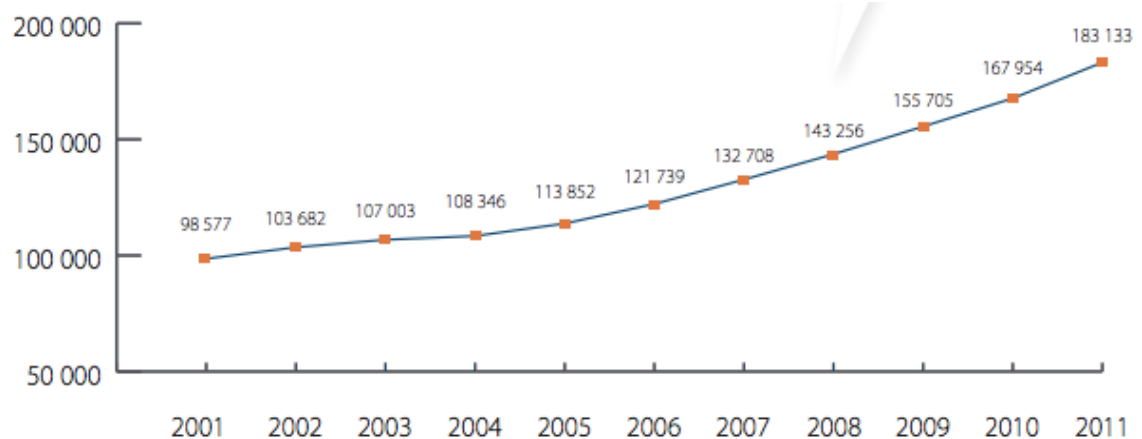


Chart 1. The amount foreign citizens in 2000 – 2011 (Maahanmuuton vuosikatsaus 2011)

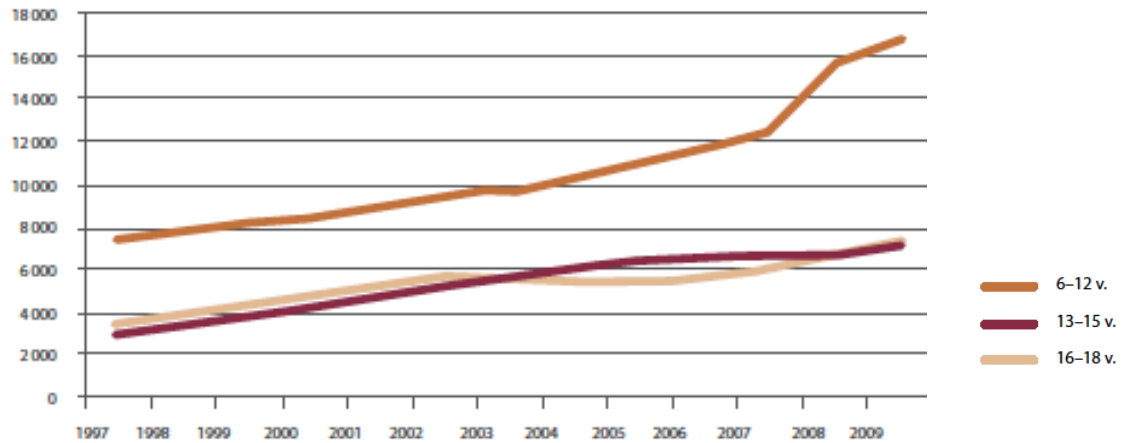


Chart 2. The amount of children and youth with foreign – language 1997 – 2009 (Maa-
hanmuuton vuosikatasaus 2010)

3.2 The importance of cultural identity and multiculturalism

Culture is a complex whole that includes the assimilation of knowledge, beliefs, art, moral, law and habits as well as other traditions and qualities that one has acquired as part of a community (Taylor cited in Honkala 1999:24). Members of a minority always ponder upon their identity. What or who are they? Identity is the answer to the question “Who or what am I?” It is about the perception of one self or the communities one relates to. Integration refers to merging into a whole, where the pieces stay consistent. Studies about the effects of losing one’s own culture among children have shown that children need consistency in regard to their cultural traditions in their new environment, to avoid possible discrimination or anxiety caused by the gap between generations. (Honkala 1999:26.)

Multiculturalism has always been born by the encounter of different cultures. Multiculturalism as a feature that defines identity is a newer term that especially in the school world refers to the possibility of the student having several languages and cultures they have adopted. At a given point in one’s life, one can decide to build ones identity into a more multicultural direction. This requires appreciation from the surrounding community towards diverse lifestyles, as well as support from the surrounding community for the individual who is trying to develop and adapt. (Talib 2002:48.)

Members of minority groups can have two different reactions on how they act in the new society. An insecure minority strives to compare themselves to the majority in all ways possible. To the minority, the majority represents the advantageous norm, and the members of the minority are ashamed of their own group; they avoid it, and strongly relate to the majority, which represents everything good to them. A secure minority emphasizes their uniqueness and their special qualities, and demands their common acknowledgement. Members of a secure minority relate strongly to their own group. (Honkala 1999:26.) The Finnish integration policy strives towards the latter of these options.

During the encounter of different cultures, the role of cultural identity becomes integral. In these situations where cultures clash, personal values and identity are compared to the unfamiliar i.e. new society, during which own insecurities and protection of one self may lead to the accentuation of the differences. Humans have a need to define their sense of belonging to a group, as well as clarify the boundaries that those who do not belong to the group may not cross. (Talib 2002:46-47.)

While defining group identity the following categories can be used: national, ethnic and social identity. National and ethnic identity refers to the identity one is born into; being Finnish or Somalian, or having the ethnic identity of belonging to the Jewish or Sami community. These two categories are objective social identities. Subjective social identity constructs of all other groups the individual feels one belongs to due to, for example, their gender, age, profession, religion, nationality or spoken language. It is important to separate the so-called objective and subjective social identity, and notice that they are not always the same. (Talib 2002:46-47.)

Based on the above mentioned separation of group identities, a community may define an individual as an immigrant, although the individual sees oneself as part of the community. This is relevant while examining the cultural identity one adapts in the new culture. The adherence to the norms of the group has a positive correlation with identifying with the group. When the individual is striving to contain the identity that one has so far lived with, the individual commonly aims to evaluate the sense of belonging to the group positively. While comparing one's own group to other groups, one may accentuate the positive aspects of the own group, and belittle the qualities of the other group. (Talib 2002:46-47.) This means that the immigrant may be hesitant towards the new society in order to protect one's own identity.

According to researches, an individual is able to live in two or several cultures or use several languages simultaneously. In this type of multicultural, changing culture pattern the individual utilizes different types of motivation and problem-solving techniques as well as communication and behavioural models, depending on what the situation requires. In this type of culturally fluctuating model an individual can belong to two cultures without having to give up the individual's cultural identity. (Talib 2002:49.) This is the goal the Finnish integration policy strives for: having the immigrants perceive themselves as members of two cultures, that do not contradict each other.

The students' sense of group identity has a significant effect on one's school success. An immigrant background student is no exception to this. Positive group identity, belonging to a specific group, for example family, helps to adapt to the school and have better school success (Talib 2002:53). Successful integration includes having the sense of belonging to the surrounding community, and thus successful integration of immigrant background students can help them achieve better grades.

When multiculturalism is encountered, and a part, of a school in the form of an immigrant background student, it often may expose prejudice and in-rooted habits of the school. The values listed in the curriculum (opetussuunnitelma) which are equality, tolerance and internationality, are not actualized merely by having them as a declaration in the curriculum, but should be reinforced in the curriculum's content and most importantly school practices (Honkala 1999:42). Even if the immigrant background student is enthusiastic to learn the values and language of the new culture, the reactions of the society affect how welcome and appreciated the immigrant background student feels. This is one of the reasons why a guide specifically aimed for immigrant background students can help them feel appreciated, valued and welcome to the new environment, and thus enhance the integration process.

A multicultural individual is a valuable asset to the community. A multicultural individual can transfer personal as well as common knowledge about culture, self, identity and language to others. Thus, a multicultural individual can increase the possibility for others to achieve the status of an informed activist in society. (Talib 2002: 49.) By sharing knowledge, the immigrant background individual can help enlighten the others about multicultural issues, as well as encourage others to seek further knowledge. When an individual of immigrant background feels appreciated and accepted, this individual will

be motivated to help build the community towards a more multicultural and tolerant atmosphere.

Successful integration of the immigrant background students has several effects on not only the student himself but also the society at large. A multicultural school provides the staff and fellow students' possibilities to learn how to interact with different cultures. Multicultural schools also have an important role in the lives of the immigrant background students, for the actions of the school may have effect on the unemployment and exclusion that the immigrant background student may face in the future. A multicultural school with a successful integration program also plays an essential part in diminishing racism and violence in the community. (Honkala 1999:42.)

4 Objectives of the guide

The main purpose of the guide is to serve the needs of the immigrant background students of Myllypuro upper secondary school. The function of the guide is to help the students navigate around the school areas, familiarize the subjects as well as comprehend the schools rules. It also supports the student's Finnish language learning, begins the process of personal empowerment of the student, and generally helps in the integration process.

Myllypuro Upper Secondary School has two classes for youth who have come to Finland and do not have any knowledge of the Finnish languages. The aim of this preparatory class (MANUVA, maahanmuuttajanuorten valmistavaluokka) is to build the students language skill to a sufficient level so that the student can be integrated into the same classes as the native Finnish students as soon as possible. This integration process usually takes from a few months to a year. Myllypuro Upper secondary school itself is one of the most multicultural schools in Finland, with approximately 40% of the students in the Finnish speaking classes being of immigrant background. (Valtonen 2012.)

The objectives of the preparatory class for immigrant youth is to increase the students balanced development and acculturation to the Finnish society, as well as equip the student with the needed skills to take part in the basic schooling. Those immigrants who have little or no experience in taking part in schooling need more support to

achieve the needed skill level to join the other, Finnish speaking, classes. The emphasis in the preparatory classes is on learning Finnish or Swedish; in addition it strives to teach basic skills that support coping in everyday situations, integration and the development of the students identity as a learner (ed Sarlin et al. 2009: 27). Our objective with this guide is to help alleviate the anxiety of learning a new language through visual aids, as well as hopefully arouse enthusiasm towards learning the Finnish language.

The initial plan for the “Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle”- guide is that it could be used in all multicultural schools in Finland. The aim is to design the guide in such a way that it later can be further developed by minor alterations to accommodate other schools in Finland, not merely Myllypuro Upper Secondary School.

5 Integration of young immigrants

Successful integration of immigrants is essential in order to achieve a well-functioning society. There are different models of how to integrate immigrants into society, for example utilizing multiculturalism and assimilation. In Finland the objective is to work according to the integration model. According to this model, immigrants are, as Finnish citizens, seen to have the same rights and obligations as other Finnish citizens. In the integration model the culture of the immigrant is not seen as a negative aspect, and that it does not hinder the possibility of equal citizenship, but reinforces it. (Paavola&Talib 2010: 41.) However, it should be noted that successful integration is only possible when the surrounding culture is open and tolerant towards different cultural groups (Alitolppa-Niitamo 1993; 32).

Immigration in Finland has been in a steady rise throughout the last decade, with the amount of immigrants increasing by 87% from 2001 to 2011 (Maahanmuuton vuosikatsaus 2011). Thus, it is not with no foundation to state that integration is essential, especially the integration of the young immigrants. It has been proven that the socialization to a new culture becomes easier the earlier it has been started (Alitolppa-Niitamo 1993: 22).

Language plays a significant role in the integration process. Language and communication are key factors in the socialization process. Without common and mutual under-

standing the society faces many difficulties (Paavola&Talib 2010:232). Schools provide a good environment for young immigrants to learn Finnish language and culture and by doing so take the first steps towards diminishing possible problems that may otherwise arise.

Empowerment and social participation go hand in hand with integration, working as forces that support each other. According to Räsänen (2006:75) one must have autonomy and power, meaning that the person has to have power over their own life. Without personal power, social participation and integration are almost impossible. This is due to the fact that when these are lacking, the individual is not strong enough to receive and absorb all the new information of the new society.

5.1 Integration

According to social psychologist John Berry integration refers to the state during which the individual feels one belongs and appreciates belonging to an ethnic minority, but can function with other ethnic groups, as well as the society at large¹ (Forsander, Ekholm, Hautaniemi et al. 2001). Successful integration is essential to ensure the well-being of immigrants, as well as reinforce positive societal action of the immigrants who have come to Finland.

The readiness to integrate and take part in the new environment is a combination of several aspects. One of the most important thing is that the individual is open and ready to the new situation i.e. has a want to integrate and learn new ways of action and the new language. The readiness to integrate is equivalent with the reasons for which the immigrant has left his homeland. Those immigrant families, who have voluntarily chosen to leave their homeland, usually have better economic and psychological possibilities to integrate to the new societies, than those who have left by force. (Talib, Löfström, Meri 2004: 111.) When the individual has left home by force and is swept into a new society where one does not necessarily want to be but has no other options, the attitude towards the new society may be hesitant. The individual may feel that there is no need to try to integrate for he/she has no intention of staying in the new society for a longer time period.

¹ ” Integraatio tarkoittaa Berryn käsittein sitä, että henkilö kokee kuuluvansa etniseen vähemmistöryhmään ja myös arvostaa kuulumistaan siihen, mutta toimii myös muihin etnisiin tyhmiin, kuten valtaväestöön kuuluvien kanssa”

Immigration to a new country can be a transition in the individual's life that it is perceived as a crisis, and may increase the chance of psychological difficulties as well as other problems (Alitolppa-Niitamo 1993: 15). It is important to help the integration process in all ways possible in order to minimize the potential problems that may arise in an individual that has been torn from ones culture and original environment.

Socialization is the process during which the individual begins the process of becoming a member of their community. Normally, the socialization process is divided into two: primary and secondary socialization. During primary socialization a young child begins to absorb the culture in which one is raised at an early age; norms and patterns of behaviour are usually learnt from parents or the community. Primary socialization forms a base for later learning; learning the language and world view of the community is part of the primary socialization phase. The worldview learnt during the primary socialization phase is difficult to be erased or changed later on. (Alitolppa-Niitamo 1993: 22; Tampereen Yliopiston täydennyskoulutuskeskus.)

Secondary socialization takes place at school age. It is connected with society's division of work and social groups. This is when child or young person learns skills such as world views and meanings based on societal and civic roles. (Tampereen Yliopiston täydennyskoulutuskeskus.) As previously mentioned, the worldview learnt during the primary socialization phase cannot fully be changed and due to this fact, especially young immigrants can be confused when entering upper secondary school where new norms, patterns and meanings are being introduced. This is why special attention should be put in the integration at school, for as has been previously mentioned, the earlier the transition from one culture to another, the easier it is for an individual to adapt and the more complete the socialization process becomes. (Alitolppa-Niitamo 1993: 22.)

Acculturation, according to the Merriam Webster Dictionary is "cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture; *a/so* : a merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact or the process by which a human being acquires the culture of a particular society from infancy". Acculturation takes into consideration the psychological aspects that help enhance integration, as well as those that hinder the process. There are two main phenomena that have been proven to have negative impacts on immigrant youth and that prolong the acculturation

process: discrimination and the lack of sufficient language skills (Liebkind 2000: 122). Immigrant youth that struggle with language have less possibilities to interact in their new environment, are more stressed, and less content with their life (Liebkind 2000: 122.).

A study about the acculturation process of youth in Finland showed, that the better the language skill of the immigrant youth, the less discrimination one experienced. Although better language skills increased the individuals' sense of control and self-esteem, it did not increase their quality of life or diminish stress-symptoms. The amount of stress and perceived quality of life was shown to be in connection with the amount of support the individual received from the parents. By being able to avoid discrimination the immigrant youth may upkeep better mental health. (Liebkind 2000:122.)

As the correlation between increased language skills and less discrimination have been shown, it is important to begin the learning process of the new language as soon as possible. Article 16 of the government immigration policy guideline states as an aim to: "Enhance the availability of services providing societal guidance and language courses and to develop new support measures to help the functioning in working life and society" ² (Hallituksen maahanmuuttopoliittinen ohjelma). The "Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle"-guide serves both of these purposes: it provides guidance as well as offering the possibility to learn Finnish in a simple format.

It is challenging for immigrant adolescents to take part in school in the new society. Their language skills are not sufficient to express their emotions to their comrades or homeroom teacher. They are caught between two cultures; the culture of their parents and the culture of the new society (Pollari&Koppinen 2011: 83-85).

Juha Sihvola, (2007) as cited in Paavola&Talib (2010: 41), emphasizes that the language, religion and cultural traditions should not only be tolerated and protected against discrimination, but it should also be actively reinforced by for example offering language and religion lessons at school. The Finnish schooling system actively promotes the teaching of the immigrant's native culture by offering courses in the immigrant's own mother tongue, religion and Finnish as a second language courses (Maa-

² "Parannetaan yhteiskuntaan opastavien sekä kielikoulutuspalvelujen saatavuutta ja käytettävyyttä ja kehitetään opetusjärjestelmään liittyviä uusia työelämässä ja yhteiskunnassa selviytymistä edistäviä tukitoimia"

hanmuuttajien opetus). In addition to these policies that reinforce the cultural identity and language capabilities of the immigrant, much emphasis is put on the integration of the immigrant while beginning the schooling system in Finland. Especially the preparatory (maahanmuuttajien valmentava) class is designed to serve to the specific needs of the immigrant youth to which “Myllypurosta ponnistaa maailmalle” – guide is designed for.

When entering a new environment, where one may not be familiar with the unspoken rules and ways of action of the school, it is important to introduce these rules and basic vocabulary immediately to help function in the new environment and avoid possible misunderstandings. As adolescents are in a stage of their development during which emotions are intense, it is of key importance to help diminish the possibility of negative reactions that may lead to long-term negative attitudes. If the adolescent does not feel safe and appreciated in the new environment, he/she may develop a negative disposition toward taking part in the schooling system. (Pollari & Koppinen, 2011: 83-84.)

5.1.1 Meaning of language

The sense of community and belonging is based on communication. E.T. Hall describes communication as the basis and essence of a culture “In essence, any culture is primarily a system for creating, sending, storing and processing information. Communication underlies everything.” (Mikkola 2001: 23.) Language reflects cultural reality as part of the cultural field, as well as an important part of the communication system (Kaikkonen as cited in Mikkola 2001:94). Using a common language to refer to mutual information about the world helps upkeep the mutual reality of the speakers (Luckmaan as cited in Mikkola 2001:94). Words convey the speaker’s attitudes, beliefs and views. How and why language is being used is significant and connects to the social situation. To ensure the immigrant youth get a realistic view of society, as well to ensure they are correctly interpreted, it is important to emphasize the meaning of learning the new language as soon as possible.

Language and communication are essential for interacting in social situations. When learning a new language, it is important to take into consideration the language socialization of the child, meaning that if the child/youth has not been socialized into the schools language, culture and communication, the individual may face difficulties. (Paavola&Talib 2010: 232.) This implies that the immediate socialization of the new

student is crucial. Without knowledge about the language, culture and communication of the school environment, the risk of potential problems is increased, due to the lack of understanding and insufficient knowledge.

When studying and using a foreign language the individual is always in some sort of anxious state. One must, for example, try to understand what one has read, heard or heard (sic) and seen, even though it may be difficult. In this situation the individual must activate all lingual and non-lingual knowledge. At the same time one tries to broaden understanding and follow some sort of understanding strategy to get to a result that one is satisfied with.³ (Kaikkonen 1994: 51-53.) Our objective with this guide is to help alleviate the anxiety of learning a new language through visual aids, as well as hopefully arouse enthusiasm towards learning the Finnish language.

Learning a foreign language is always a learning process, which requires several different steps to achieve full understanding. One pattern of understanding the learning process is Kolb's (1984:30) learning styles. As the picture below shows, learning is always a complex process, involving many different ways of gaining and understanding new knowledge. This learning cycle also pictures how one learns languages; first one has a concrete experience (CE) (reading or hearing etc). Then one reflects and observes this experience, also known as reflective observation (RO). After this one forms an abstract conceptualisation (AC) of the new knowledge- reflects the knowledge to what they already know and fits it in with other similar knowledge. The final stage of processing the new data is active experimentation (AE): using the new knowledge or skill in practice. (Kolb 1984:30)

Kolb's (1984:30) learning cycle is applicable to all learning, and especially with the immigrant background youth using visual aids, such as pictures, can help them form the abstract conceptualization of the new knowledge. Seeing the pictures can help them connect the new knowledge with knowledge they already have inbuilt. The universal known cross over something forbidden is easy to understand. Seeing the pictures and having the abstract conceptualization can encourage them to move on to the active

³³ Vierasta kieltä opiskellessaan ja käyttäessään ihminen on aina tietynlaisessa jännitystilassa. Hänen pitää esimerkiksi yrittää ymmärtää lukemaansa, kuulemaansa tai kuulemaansa ja näkemäänsä, vaikka se tuottaisi vaikeuksia. Tässä tilanteessa hän joutuu aktivoimaan kaiken kielellisen ja jopa kielenulkoisen tietämyksensä. Samalla hän yrittää laajentaa ymmärrystään ja seurata jotain ymmärtämisstrategiaa päästäkseen itseään tyydyttävään tulokseen.

experimentation of the language; perhaps communicating with peers and teachers due to having a more clear picture of the content of the language and words they are using.

When working with immigrant background students learning Finnish, it is important that the immigrant background student is given much support. A valid option for teaching the basis of the language is using different types of materials, for example books with pictures, books and videos meant for the disabled or books from lower grades. (Honkala 1999:108.)

Merely having the rules in a written format may cause confusion to the immigrant background students. Even if the language is simplified, misunderstandings may still occur. Since the directness of speech varies in different cultures, the learner (of a new language) must be sensitized to what is the directness of the culture when for example receiving criticism or rejecting an offer. One must know what type of behaviour is seen as normal and acceptable, as well as what crosses the boundaries of the communications culture. (Kaikkonen 1994:103.) Due to the fact that the directness of language and the rules are different in different cultures, it is important to present the rules in a format that is easily understood, and that there is little chance for misunderstandings.

As the school rules are currently only available in written form in Finnish, it is difficult for one whose native language is not Finnish to get a whole picture of what the rules require of the individual. This is the reason why the emphasis is put on the school rules in our guide for Myllypuro Upper Secondary School. Different cultures have different set ways of acting and behaving, and some rules may be completely different to those what the individual may perceive as normal. By visualising the rules, it is clearly presented what kind of behaviour is endorsed, as well as minimizing the risk of misunderstanding due to insufficient language skills.

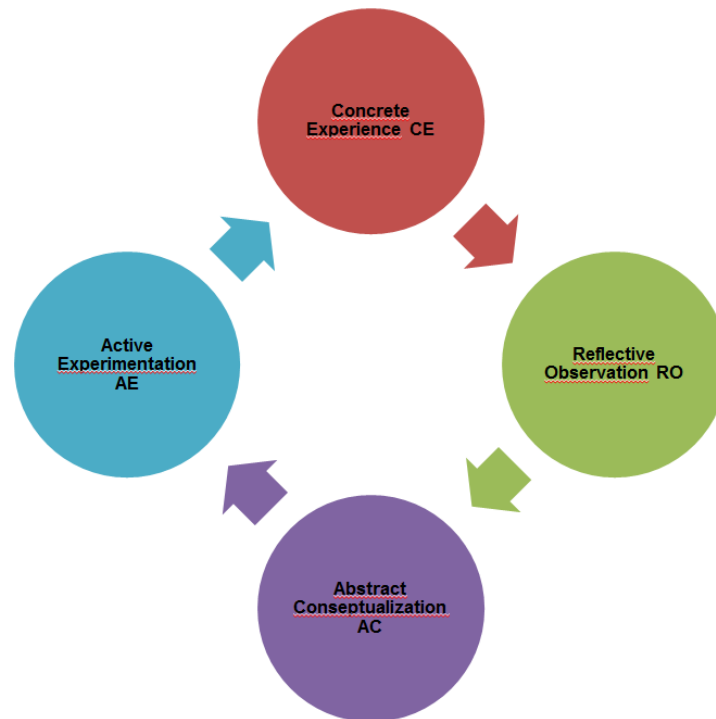


Figure 1. Kolb's experimental learning cycle according to Kolb's experimental learning theory (Kolb, David A. 1984 *Experimental Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development.*)

5.1.2 Empowerment supporting the integration process

The idea behind the theory of empowerment is the notion of individuals living in an injustice society and that because of this there are negative consequences in the individual's life one must find the power to overcome. A person who does not have power has different reactions and ways of achieving self-fulfilment than those of an empowered person. To be empowered one needs to achieve enlightenment. One must above all have power over oneself and the power to define the conditions of one's life. Essentially, empowerment is about the autonomy of the individual. (Räsänen 2006:75.)

Empowerment refers to the process, during which the possibilities for the individual as well as the group to influence prominent personal, social, financial and political powers are reinforced. Empowerment is specifically seen as achieving a personal sense of control in relation to reality and one's personal kismet. The individuals experience of one's power i.e. the opportunities to affect situations, accomplish set goals and achieve

more power in one's life are the essential components of empowerment. (Räsänen 2006: 79.)

Zimmerman (Zimmerman as cited in Siitonen 1999:89) in his theory "Psychological Empowerment" divides empowerment into three parts. The first part of empowerment is the intrapersonal component. The intrapersonal component refers to it being important that one feels one is capable of having an effect on one's environment. The second part is the interactional component. The individual should be able to understand how the system (society) works. The third part is the behavioural component. According to this part the individual should be able to use one's control in context and participate from one's own starting point in one's community. (Siitonen 1999:89.)

Based on Zimmerman's model empowerment consists of going through and achieving understanding of these three different stages; the sense of being able to effect one's surroundings, the understanding of how the system one wants to effect works and finally combining these two to be able to take part and interact in the system in a way that benefits the individual. Empowerment is not only the understanding of one's own personal feelings and strengths; empowerment is knowledge. By introducing the rules in the "Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle"-guide, the immigrant youth is provided with knowledge about how the society works and the expectations it puts upon the individuals behaviour.

The need for empowerment and the inner sense of power becomes relevant when an individual is prevented or restricted from empowering one self. Especially in the studies of the wellbeing of different minority groups it has become apparent that the social structures and/or other individuals may hinder some individuals or groups from feeling they or their work is appreciated. Because people have an in-built need to feel they are appreciated, even the smallest increase in the amount of appreciation one feels one receives can have a rejuvenating effect on individuals as well as groups, and it can produce a vast increase in the amount of energy utilized for learning and development. (Siitonen 1999:117.)

Positive reinforcement from the group is an important part of empowerment. Empowerment starts from the individual himself. According to Adams (2008:82) empowerment is a complex whole:

People do not become empowered merely by being invited to participate. They must feel empowered. A holistic approach to empowerment requires that a person's inner experiences- feelings and thoughts- are in harmony with what they do. Self- empowerment is the central domain of empowerment and is the area where we begin to work on ourselves and take control of our lives.

A young immigrant, new to a country does not necessarily feel empowered, when entering a new school. The lack of language skills, the new culture, habits and people can result in confusion or even in a cultural shock, causing a sense of lacking or insufficient power over oneself. Integration and empowerment go hand in hand; successful integration requires that the individual has the power and capability to learn about the new culture, language and habits. The guide "Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle" is aimed to be a useful tool to help the empowerment process, and by doing so, enhance the integration process. The guide itself is not empowering, since empowerment always start from the individuals self and power cannot be given, but may serve as a tool to help begin this process in the individual (Adams 2008:16-18).

Empowerment is a complex process, but can start with small actions: being able to cope in an everyday situation in Finnish successfully can be very empowering for someone of immigrant background. Especially success and appreciation from a group or school community can boost the self-esteem of the immigrant background student.

5.1.3 Social participation

Social exclusion is a concept that includes different forms of poverty, people's loneliness, the weakening of the immediate community and the inability to influence matters (Virtanen cited in Helve ed.1998). Social participation refers to the opposite of this; social citizenship, the sense of belonging and having meaning to give to the community. Social participation is forms of involvement, where people play an active part, have a greater choice and possibility to affect decision making and management (Adams 2008:31). The "Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle"- guide for immigrant background students is aimed to enhance the social citizenship and participation of the students: by

understanding their surroundings the immigrant background student has the opportunity to interact in a greater extent than without the knowledge of the school culture.

It is not merely the individuals or families responsibility to seek knowledge and help during the process of social participation. The responsibility for young people's well-being rests with the government and local authorities, as well as their families. Authorities determine the overall lines for action and deal with questions relating to young people's income, social welfare and health. The line of action adopted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is to promote healthy lifestyles, eliminate preventable risks, develop social welfare and public health services, and design welfare and social policies which take young people's needs into account. (Virtanen cited in Helve ed.1998.)

Especially when working with immigrant youth there is an emphasis on eliminating preventable risks. As sufficient language skills have been proven to promote the integration of the immigrant background youth, this guide aimed for youth with immigrant background can be seen as a preventative measure during their first weeks in Finland. Supporting sufficient language skills from the first moment promotes social participation as well as the integration process.

Each immigrant comes to the new society with his or her own cultural background. When different cultures meet, the immigrant individuals must adapt to the changes in culture. This is called the acculturation process. This refers to a change in the immigrants identities, values, behaviour and attitudes, and this is a process that each immigrant goes through in their own way. The immigrant is in an unfamiliar environment, where things work in a different way. One cannot rely on old experience and habits; one must re-asses their own cultural values as well as comprehend the values of the unfamiliar culture. (Honkala 1999:24.)

6 Development of the guide

The process of making the guide has been a long process and the original plan changed during the way. Laura Balash did her second work placement at Myllypuro Upper Secondary School and there she had the opportunity to get to know the features of working in a school environment as well as examine the needs of this specific school.

As the amount of immigrant background students in the Finnish schooling system has increased, the need for an introduction guide for these students has arisen among teachers and other staff members of the Myllypuro Upper Secondary School. Ms. Balash also marked the need for a guide that pictures the different school areas and rules to the immigrant students who have just arrived to Finland. The school's student guidance counsellor of Myllypuro Upper Secondary School, Mrs. Tiina Valtonen, and the teachers of MANUVA (maahanmuuttajanuorten valmistava luokka) agreed with this type of guide being relevant and important to the students, and thus the guide became the product of this final thesis.

It was agreed that a guide, that depicts the areas and pictures the rules in an easily understandable format, would be most useful for the school and help with the integration of the immigrant background students, especially during the first weeks they take part in the new school environment. We believe that this guide could be applicable in all schools in Finland that have young immigrants as students, although we will be making this first initial guide specifically for Myllypuro Upper Secondary School. We hope that in the future other schools in Finland would be interested in using our idea of a guide for immigrant background students to help the integration process in their schools.

6.1 Planning of the guide

For the planning of the guide we arranged a meeting with the student guidance counsellor of Myllypuro upper Secondary School Mrs. Valtonen. She had discussed with the principle of the school about the different aspects that should be taken into consideration while compiling the guide, as well as the specific needs of Myllypuro Upper Secondary School. We also interviewed a teacher of the MANUVA class, Mrs. Päivi Nuutinen, who shared her insight about the linguistic and other aspects that should be taken into consideration during the compilation of the guide.

Mrs. Nuutinen emphasized the importance of using the basic forms of the words and to avoid conjugations. She also felt it was extremely important to add the rules of the school to the guide. Her students would often have difficulties with understanding the rules of conduct in their new school environment. (Nuutinen 2012.)

The basic vocabulary, such as directions, names of different classes and areas were chosen together as a group, as well as taken into consideration the thoughts of the students themselves. We interviewed a few students on their thoughts of what would be important to them. Especially the schools attitudes toward electronic devices required more specification according to the students. The students also felt it was important to picture the route to the word works class, which is situated at Itäkeskus Upper Secondary School. Mrs. Valtonen also felt the route to the wood works class would be of most importance.

A list of different subjects and their abbreviations used in the school schedules was a wish that was presented by both the teachers and the students. The abbreviations of the different subjects have caused many misunderstanding among the immigrant background students, and navigating to the correct classroom has proven to be difficult without the understanding of these abbreviations. Thus, a list of the subjects with the abbreviations was decided to be added.

Mrs. Valtonen among with the other teachers also felt that a map of the area surrounding the school must be included. Many of the students who are not familiar with the area would get lost on their way from the metro station to the school. The location of the youth house nearby had also caused confusion; since many of the students like to pass time during the afternoons there, knowing the location of the youth house could encourage the immigrant background youth to go pass their time there and perhaps socialize with the Finnish speaking students.

The planning of the layout of the guide took extensive amounts of time, effort and technical knowhow. The most essential aspect was to make the guide as clear as possible, to ensure that it is easily understandable. Focus was also put in making the guide in a simple format, so that it could be easily printed and distributed to different schools, if interest in the guide arises in the future.

6.2 Making of the guide

For the guide we needed pictures of the school, for which we agreed for a time during which we could take the pictures. No students could be in the pictures due to laws protecting underage children. We also came to the conclusion that the guide would more “up – to – date” if we did not have any pictures of students or teachers. We went to

Myllypuro Upper Secondary School during a time there were little or no classes, and together with the student guidance counsellor Mrs. Valtonen took pictures of areas we all felt were important to have in the guide. Mrs. Valtonen also pointed out areas that she, as a teacher, felt would be significant.

Presenting the school rules in a visual form required brainstorming. For depicting the rules we decided it was best to have an artist draw up the rules in a format that could be easily understood. We met with our artist, Mr. Martin Balash, to think of ways to put the rules in a visual form. Mr. Balash decided on using a bear figure in different situations, which are forbidden to portray the rules. By drawing a cross over each forbidden situation, it shows in a simple way what one should not be doing. This was the best of the options, for we agreed picturing the situation/rule, which should be followed, would only show the figure sitting still and being obedient.

Mr. Balash felt that the cute bear figure is a universal symbol that cannot be misinterpreted or misunderstood as offensive or hostile. Some of the rules prove to be especially difficult to depict; for example the rule about not leaving the school premises during school hours. After several brainstorming we came up with solutions on how to depict the difficult rules, and Mrs. Valtonen agreed with our final products.

We ended up using as simple language as possibly, as it was the wish of the school, also keeping in mind that one of the aims was to support the language learning. That is why we only chose to use Finnish and not translate the guide to for example English or any other language.

Ms. Huovinen was responsible for compiling the guide into its final format and thoroughly acquainted herself with the different programs that can be used to make such a guide. She used GIMP and Adobe InDesign to create the layout of the guide. Ms. Huovinen and Ms. Balash tried to keep in mind that the guide was aimed for teenagers and chose the layout accordingly, keeping in mind to avoid making the guide too formal. Due to these reasons, Ms. Huovinen and Ms. Balash decided on making the guide in a cartoon-type layout. Ms. Huovinen and Ms. Balash also wished to make the guide applicable in years to come, and to use pictures that would not seem outdated in the near future. One of the biggest challenges was trying to make the guide as straightforward and easy to understand as possible. Due to these reasons, the material Ms. Huovinen and Ms. Balash chose for the guide was thoroughly thought through; it

was not possible to put excessive amounts of information in it without sacrificing the visual layout and coherence of the guide.

The initial plan was to make the guide in a format that could be distributed and altered if needed. However, it became evident during the process that this was not possible and the plan had to be changed. This happened due to the fact that Ms. Huovinen and Ms. Balash were not fully aware of the functions of the PDF – format. The PDF –format is probably the best way of making a guide in a digital form and for printing a guide-book, however the PDF – format does not allow to make any changes to it, which makes it impossible to alter the guide to the specific needs of different schools. Ms. Huovinen tried to find out different ways how to make the guide editable but with little success. In order to alter the guide one would need to have the Adobe InDesign program, which is relatively expensive, resulting to the guide being functional only at Myllypuro Upper Secondary School. Due to these setbacks the guide cannot be translated into any other language at the moment.

The final product of this thesis is the “Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle”- guide, aimed for enhancing the integration of young immigrants at Myllypuro Upper Secondary School. The guide is currently available in PDF-format for use in the Myllypuro Upper Secondary School. The guide consists of the school areas, rules and subjects in Finnish accompanied by a picture of the area, situation or subject.

7 Evaluation and critical discussion

The objectives of the “Myllypurosta ponnistaa Maailmalle”- guide were to help students navigate in the unfamiliar area and familiarize the students to the school rules and subjects. Through these actions the objective was to help the process of personal empowerment and integration into the Finnish schooling system. Due to the fact that the process and success of empowerment and integration are very difficult to measure, especially in a short time span, we cannot say with any certainty if the objectives of integration and the empowerment process have been successful. The authors would like to emphasize that the guide itself does not empower or integrate the individual, but can merely be used as a tool in the integration process.

The guide assists the student during the first encounters with the Finnish language, presenting the area or rule in a visual form and therefore supporting the students' language learning process. It was also brought to attention that another purpose this guide may serve is educating the student's parents, clarifying also to them the school rules and depicting the areas. According to Bates (as cited by Allat in Helve ed 1998) inadequate parental knowledge of the education system and unrealistic assessments of the job market limit daughters of immigrant parents careers. The "Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle"- guide can serve the purpose of providing knowledge to the parents in a simple format; even with inadequate language skills the parents can see what the areas are like and what the rules consist of. According to studies, immigrant parents may often "fall behind" with the integration and language learning processes, causing situations where the children serve as translators between the school and home (Talib 2002:23). The "Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle" – guide can help alleviate this problem in the very beginning by providing information and knowledge that can be easily comprehended by both the youth and their parents.

The initial response to the guide has been positive. Mrs. Valtonen has stated that she finds the guide to be "innovative, brilliant and unique". Although it cannot be said how the guide has helped the students so far, Mrs. Valtonen believes that this guide is an essential and useful tool for the welcoming and orientation of the new, immigrant background student. Mrs. Valtonen believes that the guide will diminish the initial problems of misunderstandings and confusion among the immigrant background students, and help them navigate and communicate in their new environment.

As some of the immigrant background students may have little or no experience of taking part in schooling, some even being illiterate, the guide's pictures and other visual aspects are essential for helping the immigrant background student function in the unfamiliar environment (Nuutinen 2012). The MANUVA- teachers as well as student guidance counsellor Mrs. Valtonen have expressed their great gratitude and positive feedback towards the Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle- guide. Although it is impossible to determine whether or not the guide has fulfilled the set objectives of helping the integration process through empowerment, the feedback so far has been extremely positive and the possibility of the guide working as a part of the integration process is expectant.

Ideally, the guide should have been completely designed in co-operation with the immigrant students. However, this process would have taken an extensive amount of time, for most of the MANUVA – class students have only elementary understanding of Finnish language and communication would have required extensive resources; also the time that can be used with the students is always limited due to their curriculum.

This guide was tailored for the needs of Myllypuro Upper Secondary school, and is now in distribution for the new students. If the guide is found to be a successful tool in the integration and empowerment process of the immigrant background students, Mrs. Valtonen can spread the word of the guide among her colleague's whom also have immigrant background students in their schools. Initially the guide was to be planned so that it could serve all schools in Finland that have immigrant background students that may require assistance during their first encounters with the Finnish schooling system. Unfortunately, this set goal was not able to be accomplished due to technical difficulties, and currently the guide is only applicable to be used at Myllypuro Upper Secondary School. Nevertheless, the authors would like to point out that this idea and a pilot version for a guide aimed for immigrant background students in the Finnish schooling system has now been launched if interest arises among other schools. In time, if the "Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle" – guide is shown to be a useful and successful tool in the integration process, it could be further developed by organizations with better resources for developing the visual and editorial aspects.

8 Conclusions

During the process of making the guide it has become apparent that there is a need for innovations and unique new ways to enhance the integration process of immigrant youth. Through participation and increasing language skills, the young immigrant can better function in the new society and culture. By learning immediately at arrival about the new society and culture, and the expectations that are put upon the immigrant youth, the individual can begin the process of sculpting ones cultural identity towards a multicultural mind-set.

As has been pointed out, integration is best achieved when started at a young age. The "Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle"- guide can be seen as an innovative tool in the integration process, as well as a creative aid that helps enhance participation. The

“Myllypurosta Ponnistaa Maailmalle”-guide can assist in several different elements of integration, empowerment and social participation. By having an aid, this guide to assist them, the immigrant youth can feel more welcome, appreciated, and in general more of a part of the new school environment.

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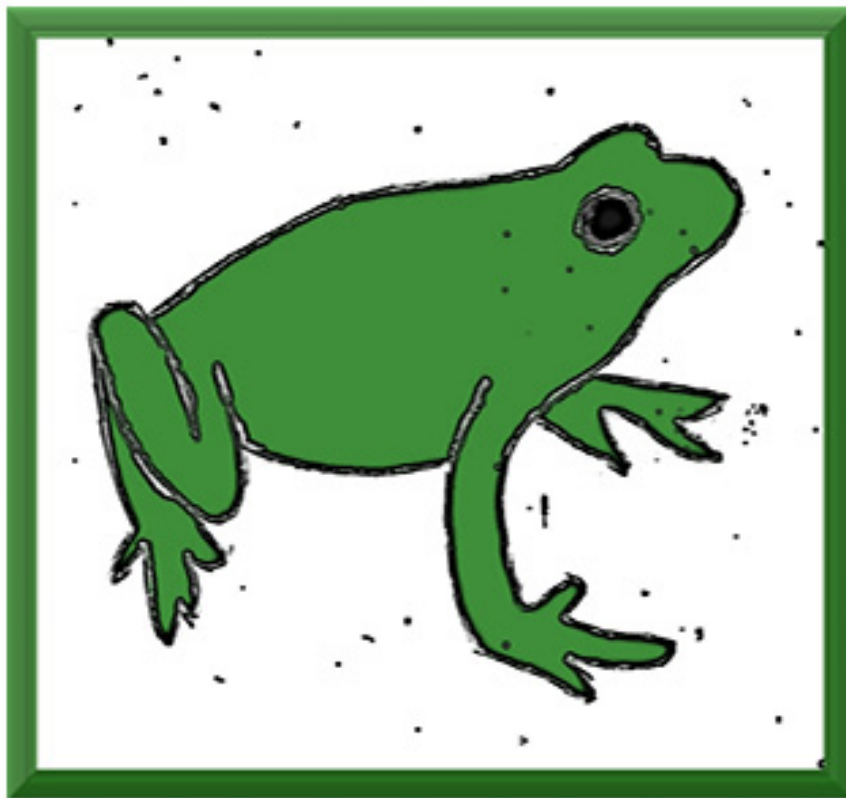
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MYLLYPUROSTA PONNISTAA MAAILMALLE

UUDEN OPPILAAN OPAS KOULUUN



Myllypuron Yläkoulu



Myllypuron koulu



luokkahuone



koripallokenttä



urheilukenttä



yläaula



tietokonehuone



liikuntasali



kirjasto



kotitalous-
luokka



Opon huone



ilmoitustaulu



kello



valkotalu
koulutussi



pulpetti



tuoli



roskakorit



viikko



kaapit

lyijykynä

viivotin



terotin



ruokala

lautanen lasi
↓ ↓



haarukka →

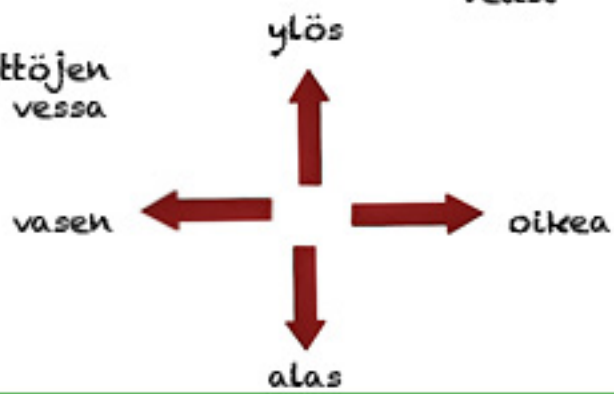


poikien
vessa



tyttöjen
vessa

↑
veitsi



Järjestyssäännöt

1.



Tulen ajoissa koulun ja tuon opiskeluvälineet.

5.



Teen läksyt.

2.



EI päällysvaatteita ja kattuja luokkaan tai ruokalaan.

6.



Elektroniset laitteet ja kännykät EI kuulu luokkaan.

3.



Annahan työrauhan. En puhallata.

7.



Muista hyvät tavat ruokalassa.

4.



Tunnilla ei saa syödä eikä juoda.

8.



Vaaralliset esineet, tupakka ja päihdyttävät aineet EIVÄT kuulu koulun.

9.



En tupakoi,

13.



Noudatan koulun ohjeita välitunnilla, Enkä poistu koulun alueelta.

10.



En roskaa tai turmele koulun omaisuutta,

14.



Kiusaaminen on kielletty

11.



Korvaan aiheuttamani vahingot tai hävittämäni oppikirjat,

15.



Vien viestit ja tiedotteet kotiin ja seuraan Wilmaa.

12.



En varasta,

16.



En tuo ulkopuolisia kouluun,

Oppiaineet ja Lyhenteet



Äidinkieli AI



Biologia BI

How do you do?

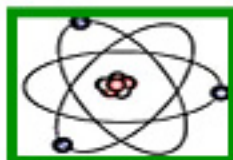
A1 - kieli Englanti ENA/Venäjä VE

Hur mår du?

B1 - kieli RUB

$2 + 3 = 5$

Matematiikka MA



Fysiikka FY



Maantieto GE



Uskonto/elämäkatsomustieto UE/ET



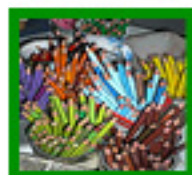
Kotitalous KO



Kemia KE



Oppilaan -
ohjaus OPO



Kuvataide KU



Käsityö:TN - Tekninen/
TS - Tekstiili



Musiikki MU



Liikunta LT/LP



Yhteiskuntaoppi YH



Historia HI



Terveystieto TT

Oppitunnit:



- 1. tunti: 8:15 - 9:00
- 2. tunti 09:00 - 09:45

Välitunti 15min: 09:45 - 10:00

- 3. tunti: 10:00 - 10:45
- 4. tunti: 10:45 - 11:30

Ruokailu: 11:30 - 11:50 TAI
11:50 - 12:10

- 5. tunti: 12:10 - 12:55
- 6. tunti: 12:55 - 13:40

Välitunti 15min: 13:40 - 13:55

- 7. tunti: 13:55 - 14:40
- 8. tunti: 14:40 - 15:25

Tärkeitä tietoja:

Rehtori: _____

Luokanvalvoja: _____

Opinto - ohjaaja: _____

Koulukuraattori: _____

Koulupsykologi: _____

Terveystenhoitaja: _____

Nettisivut: www.mylpy.edu.hel.fi

Wilma: <https://wilma.edu.hel.fi>

Muistiinpanoja

Kartta

1. Myllypuron yläkoulu
2. Myllypuron metroasema
3. Nuorisotalo
4. Puutyöluokka (Itäkeskuksen koulu)
5. Urheilukenttä

