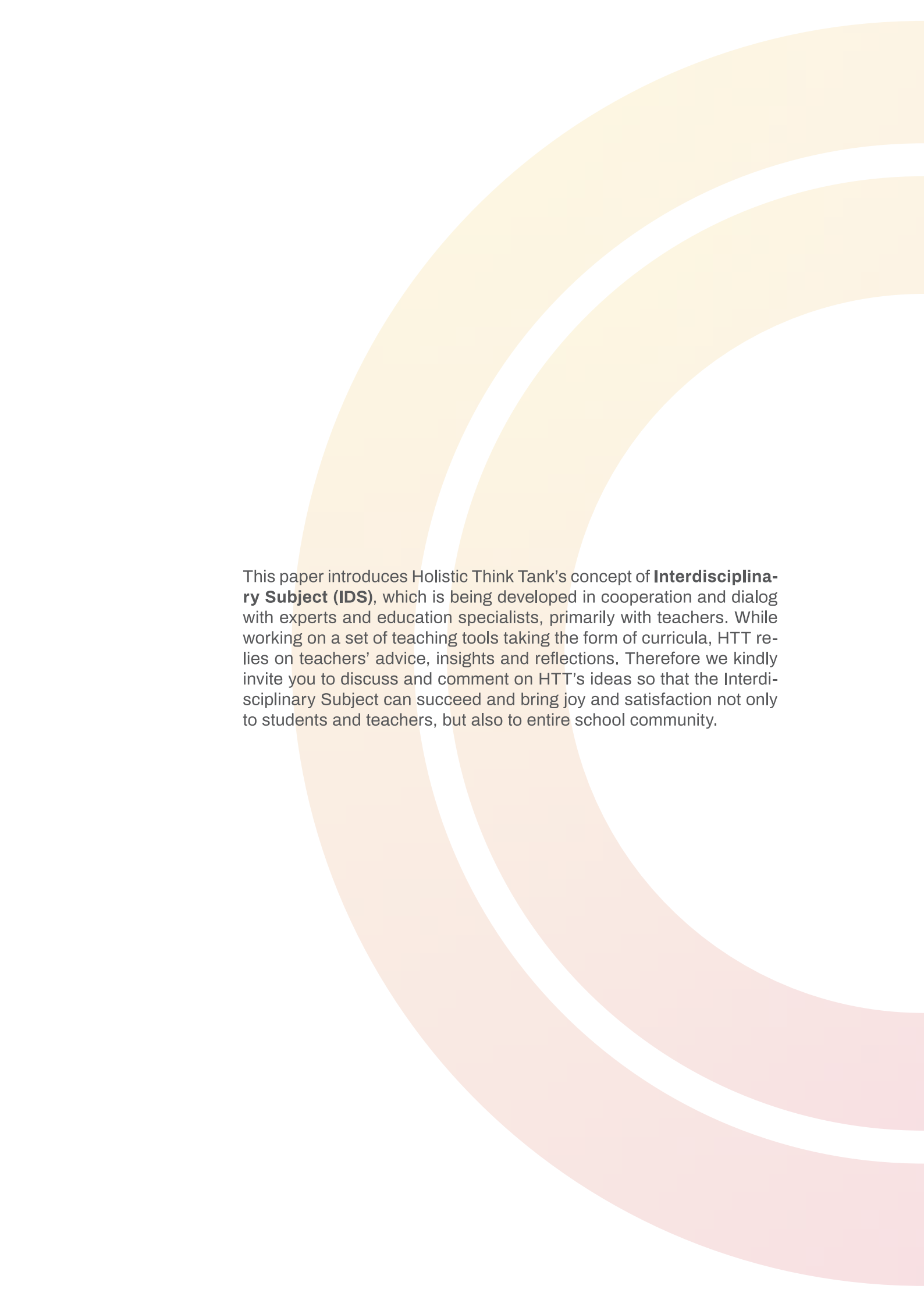




H**OLISTIC**
THINK TANK

**INTERDISCIPLINARY
SUBJECT (IDS)**

**SHAPING THE FUTURE
OF EDUCATION**



This paper introduces Holistic Think Tank's concept of **Interdisciplinary Subject (IDS)**, which is being developed in cooperation and dialog with experts and education specialists, primarily with teachers. While working on a set of teaching tools taking the form of curricula, HTT relies on teachers' advice, insights and reflections. Therefore we kindly invite you to discuss and comment on HTT's ideas so that the Interdisciplinary Subject can succeed and bring joy and satisfaction not only to students and teachers, but also to entire school community.



WHY?

Education affects the future. Modern world faces many challenges, which can't be met by administrative decisions alone. Social inequalities, political instability, economic and environmental crisis, coupled with growing demands of the labor market and these resulting from technological progress can be managed only in con-

centrated effort. In this context, we postulate social transformation that fosters holistic and interdisciplinary values, such as understanding natural, social, and economic environment as distinct entities, for which each individual is responsible.

The most straightforward path leading to informed, responsible,

and sensible society capable of meeting the challenges of ever-changing world is education. And **teachers** are the heralds of change in education. This is why Holistic Think Tank offers teachers support, including methodology tools, in shaping quality education of the future.

WHAT?

Considering ourselves a part of a global community of change-makers, we contribute to transforming education worldwide by promoting holistic and human-centred instruction assisted by **Interdisciplinary Subject curriculum**. The IDS, being a system of guidelines for teaching any subject that adapts to a given reality, is a tool that will make the transformation possible.

Education is not an abstract system of stand-alone disciplines taken out of the context. On the contrary, its principles should result from the current conditions of social life. HTT's understanding of what a modern education system should look like is based on this approach. As we envision a better education for this and next generations, we are deeply concerned about social context, in which teaching and learning take place.

To diagnose the education around the world - both in terms of the needs, deficien-

cies, and opportunities, HTT conducted a large-scale survey in schools in 10 countries on five continents, as part of which we asked the stakeholders of education process in those places a simple question: what should the school be like? We have also started cooperation with forward-thinking education experts, teachers, and pedagogues worldwide, listening carefully to their advice, experiences and conclusions. We have entered into collaboration with Human Restoration Project, Fab Foundation, and School of Education at the University of Sheffield. HTT has also established a scientific board, composed of finest experts representing various academic disciplines.

Moreover, HTT follows the results of research conducted by other education institutions and official bodies promoting the shift in education. Literature offers a number of new ideas, philosophical and pedagogical approach-

es that seem to form appropriate response to the challenges of the modern world. Valuable inspirations include: 21st Century Pedagogy, Education 2.0, Pedagogy 2.0, and Transforming education. For example, 21st Century Pedagogy aims to develop skills and knowledge students need to succeed in professional, private and social life. It can be applied in all subject areas and in educational, career, and civic settings throughout learners' life. Pedagogy 2.0 framework addresses the themes of participation in networked communities of learning, personalization of learning experience, and learner productivity in the form of active knowledge creation and innovation, as well as discussions of how emerging social practices, ethos, and modes of communication influence the roles of teachers and learners (McLoughlin C. and Lee 2011). The vision of Education 2.0 proposed by Yaacov Hecht prescribes a shift from a classroom to a learning community, a shift



WHAT?

from education professionals who work as individuals to education teams that lead a learning community (Hecht 2015).

Furthermore, a wide movement of transforming education or transformative learning illuminates two possible processes. The first aspect - “transformative learning”- connected to the research of Jack Mezirow (1978) - concerns individual growth and development, while the second aspect - transforming education - is often seen from the global perspective. As for the latter, Kozak and Elliott explore strategies that engage students as active citizens and transform learning to support environmental, social, and economic sustainability (Kozak and Elliott 2015).

We can investigate good practices and be inspired by the best education system in the world, like the one in Finland, where an original vision of educational and social change related to inclusiveness and creativity has been developed and owned (Sahlberg 2015). The description of educational approach in Finland is beyond the scope of this paper, but one aspect requires a spotlight, and it is a phenomenon-based approach in Finnish schools using varied pedagogical methods. Phenomenon-based learning stems from the reform of pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning that are characterized by emotive words such as holistic approach, child-centeredness, and lifeworld, and appear to neglect the complexity of educational situations (Symeonidis and Schwarz 2016).

Phenomenological concepts of learning emphasize gaining experience, which is different from constructing knowledge. Teachers become enablers, helping each child find their own way to learn. “Neither teachers nor students alone contribute to successful learning outcomes, but within their responsive relation occurs a transformation that is the work of both” (Symeonidis and Schwarz 2016).

Theorists and practitioners point out to the need for greater focus on students’ experiences in school, identify links between these experiences and a range of social, emotional, and academic outcomes, and highlight aspects of school and classroom practices that contribute to healthy human development, motivation to achieve, sense of confidence, and pride in success at school. Crucial elements of learning processes and new ways of thinking about student engagement are discussed. This challenge is analyzed by identifying multidimensional attempts: social, academic, and intellectual engagement (Dunleavy and Milton 2009).

HTT recognizes the value of this research, considering it essential for contextualizing our efforts. Unfortunately, educa-

tion still can serve as a means of dividing people and deepening inequalities in the world. Promoting students’ talents and capabilities is not everywhere considered a top priority. One of key problems is the widespread use of outdated curricula that are not adapted to the realities of the 21st century. We are aware of the fact that structural inequalities are rooted in individual education systems around the world. However, HTT strongly believes this situation should not prevent us from setting the right direction and proposing teaching and learning methods for education adapted to the 21st c. living.

These methods are universal, but not in the sense that they are identical in all learning contexts. Teaching methods used in Korean classrooms may differ from those used in schools in Zimbabwe. As Pasi Sahlberg said, educational systems resemble complex organic entities, such as plants or trees, that only grow luxuriantly on their native soil (Walker 2017). That is why we strive to ensure that every school in the world respects humanistic values and adopts a holistic approach to students, and that local conditions determine specific structure of a given educational system.

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HOW?

HTT's concept of changing educational approach builds on research into the realities of education systems in different countries. It is also founded on the work of HTT's three grantees: Human Restoration Project, Fab Foundation, and School of Education, the University of Sheffield who have developed curricula reflecting their visions of the Interdisciplinary Subject. Knowledge gained allows us outline the directions we are going to take in education advocacy. Our focus can be summed up in two words:

- humanism (understood as a concern for the happiness and development of human beings, also in their social environment, based on the values of tolerance, cooperation and human dignity),
- holism (understood as the comprehensive approach focusing on all aspects of learner/human being growth, including emotional, cognitive, physical and social development).

These philosophical lines echo strongly in the ten competencies HTT would like to equip learners with, which are described in the What School Ought to Teach list.

HTT Educational Curriculum proposes a blueprint for rethinking education. It aims to find an equilibrium between subject-based and competency-based knowledge. Involvement in research on global education, organization and participation in conferences

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and meetings with school practitioners are intended to bring us closer to answering the questions of how to implement the IDS. On this journey, we rely on the guidance of teachers who have expert knowledge and many years of practical experience.

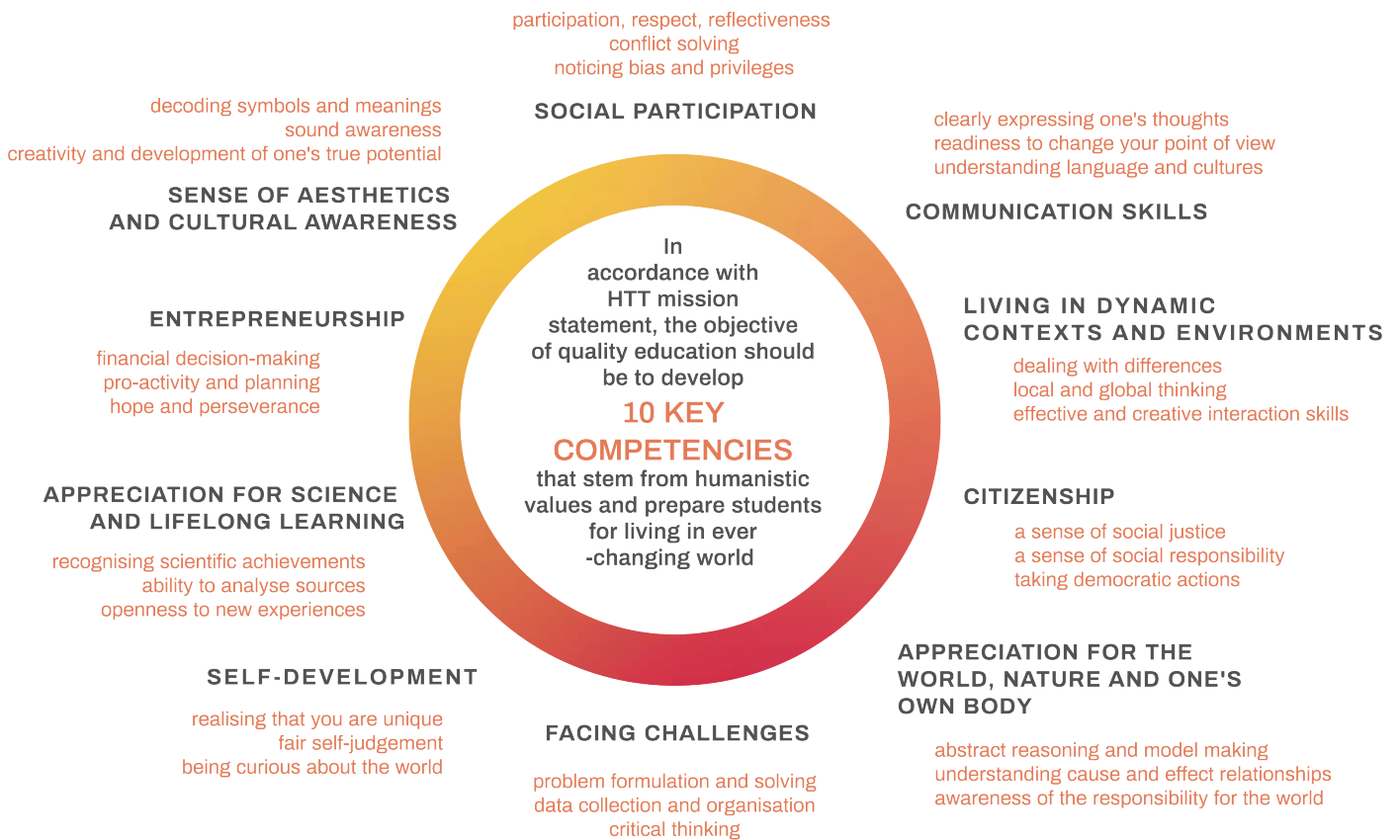
The processes of transformation in education, considered globally, should take into account cultural, social, and economic context that affects the operation of local education systems. In implementing IDS, we would like to be guided by the slogan: design globally, implement locally. We will follow the established route of introducing changes in education being aware that conditions prevailing in various education systems, as well as specific situation of individual schools may significantly affect the manner and scope of the IDS system implementation.

The quality of education is unevenly distributed among school participants. Disparities result from many factors, some of which are beyond the direct influence of curriculum, such as the quality of school facilities and equipment in different regions of a country and the world. IDS must take these disparities into account, for example, by proposing slightly different tools for

implementing the program in schools that do not have access to modern technologies.

Regrettably, the quality of education provided by schools does not correlate with the facilities and equipment it offers alone. It can be assumed that financial inequalities are easier to eliminate than social disparities. One of such challenges is the marginalization of entire community groups, which is reflected in education systems at their most basic unit: a classroom. Marginalization mainly affects students from underprivileged households, these representing ethnic, racial, religious, and linguistic minorities, indigenous groups, sexual minorities, and those with special educational needs and disabilities. Sometimes disadvantage can be related to gender. However, marginalization can also occur at other levels, such as exclusion taking place within a group of students.

It is very clear that educators and teachers face many questions and challenges. HTT is aware that changes we propose will bring visible results in education and societies not sooner than in 20 years. Nevertheless, it is high time to engage in a constructive dialog on school transformation. HTT invites teachers to enter into the discussion.



HTT list "What school ought to teach?"

WHO?

The change in education starts with teachers. Perceiving you as the main actors in the transformation process, HTT is well aware of the very difficult role you play. You start your career with energy and conviction about the significance of your profession. Unfortunately, in many cases, such an enthusiastic attitude gradually disappears when confronted with the reality of school life. This re-

sults from many factors, including systemic ones, which hinder the performance of your duties.

Nobody wants to perform a meaningless job. Doing something that is in conflict with your value system usually results in burnout. However, the Interdisciplinary Subject approach equips teachers with a valuable methodology tool and supports them in pursuing their vocation.

HTT is looking for professionals who share our outlook on education. We offer an opportunity to reevaluate your role and the way you look at your responsibilities. As lofty as it may sound, we would like to give you the strength and confidence that you have limitless potential to change the world. Join us, and let us develop the Interdisciplinary Subject together.

More information and the application form can be found here:
<https://idsproject.holisticthinktank.com/en/invitation/>



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