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Suomen kasvatustieteellinen aikakauskirja

Ahava, Anna-Maija – Palojoki, Päivi. 2005. Pedagogical challenges of consumer education. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 36 (1), 20–32. — This study explores the pedagogical challenges facing consumer education in Finnish comprehensive schools. Empirical data collected in Vantaa, Finland from 59 teenagers aged 14-15 were analysed using qualitative methods. The data were gathered through mind maps, written questionnaires and semi-structured group interviews. According to the empirical results, young consumers live simultaneously in three parallel worlds, with their consumption patterns shifting as they move from one world to another. However, their boundary-crossings are smooth and based on natural strategies. In conclusion, the young consumers' view is that "real" consumer activities begin only in adulthood. They lack motivation to study consumer issues at school because they feel that the core content of consumer education does not correspond to their lives. Given this, consumer education needs pedagogical innovation grounded on the needs of the young consumers and the special features of their patterns of consumption.

Descriptors: youth, consumer behaviour, consumer education, boundary-crossing

Kultalahti, Leena – Jokelainen, Terhi – Tensing, Marianne – Soini, Hannu. 2005. The dynamics of participation and withdrawal – The researcher's varied roles in qualitative action research. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 36 (1), 44–51. — The aim of the article is to illustrate and reflect on methodological problems related to the researcher's role in qualitative action-oriented studies. The main challenge faced by the action researcher is their double role: they are both a promoter of change and a researcher. The article describes how the researcher moves from one role to another during a single study: promoting change, collecting and analysing data, and interpreting the results. In conclusion, the researcher is like a spirit level, balancing between different roles, but also rocking the balance if needed. Action research is about the dynamics of participation and withdrawal.

Descriptors: action research, methodology, researcher role

Lehto, Juhani E. 2004. Constructivism as a cornerstone of teaching in Finnish comprehensive school? A critical review of some Finnish applications. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 36 (1), 7–19. — The article describes briefly the present position of constructivism in Finnish comprehensive school and its curriculum. Constructivism is defined mainly as an ideological normative paradigm. Students' active role and reflective thinking are seen as general educational objectives rather than as factors associated exclusively with constructivism. Some Finnish applications of constructivism have abandoned several student-related issues, which may have an adverse effect on the organisation of instruction. Of these issues the article considers socioeconomic backgrounds, motivational orientations, cognitive abilities, and personality variables. Because these factors are not properly addressed when applying constructivist principles in teaching, learning outcomes may prove inadequate. The article discusses also problem-based teaching techniques and argues that their applicability in comprehensive school may be limited. In Finnish educational debate, the constructivist approach is often regarded as a leading paradigm for educational improvement. The article concludes that this is an overestimation because of the failure of Finnish applications to deal with student diversity.

Descriptors: constructivism, teaching, comprehensive school, student differences, problem-based learning

Leinonen, Jorma – Korhonen, Anne. 2005. How to assess mathematics studying and understanding. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 36 (1), 33–42. — In this article we develop and describe a method based on discourse analysis for evaluating mathematics studying. The empirical data were gathered from diaries that the subjects, training to be class teachers, kept about their mathematics studying. We evaluated how students understand the meanings of mathematical concepts and how they solve mathematical problems involving number systems. An analysis based on the principles of the British tradition of discourse analytical theory (Potter & Wetherell 1987; Edwards 1993) identified, in the diaries, two different mathematical discourses. In the first discourse the students considered mathematical problems from an empirical point of view, trying to solve them by using their practical experience and mnemonics. In the second discourse, mathematics was studied on the basis of creative thinking, that is, the students tried to find a properly mathematical way of thinking, as one of them put it. Students using this discourse were able to draw on, for instance, the inconsistency between the two discourses in their mathematical reasoning.

Descriptors: discourse, discourse analysis, mathematics studying, meaning, understanding