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**Suomen kasvatustieteellinen aikakauskirja**

Ahtee, Maija – Pehkonen, Erkki. 2005. Listening – An important aspect of communication in the mathematics classroom. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 36 (4), 299–306. — The teacher's questions and the pupils' responses form an essential part of a school lesson. The constructivist idea, however, emphasises that the teacher's task is to help the pupils as they construct their knowledge and understanding of concepts and their mathematical thinking. Learning mathematics means, among other things, learning to use a specialised conceptual language both in speaking and writing and in reasoning and problem-solving. While the role of communication in the classroom cannot be emphasised too much, it must be realised that communication requires both a speaker and a listener. The article develops a hierarchical model of levels of listening and uses it to evaluate teachers' levels of listening.

*Descriptors:* listening, mathematics teaching, communication

Karila, Kirsti. 2005. Discussions between parents and day-care staff as arenas of educational partnership. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 36 (4), 285–298. — Educational cooperation between parents and day-care staff is seen as an important factor supporting a child's growth and development. In Finland, efforts to develop educational cooperation of this kind have in the last few years been based on the starting points of educational partnership. Educational partnership foregrounds the reciprocal relationship between parents and day-care professionals. It is assumed that educational partnership will make it possible to reinforce parents' participation in the early childhood education of their own child. The purpose of the study described in the article was to look at the ways in which educational partnership is constructed in educational discussions between parents and staff. More specifically, the study sought to find out what are the issues considered in these situations, what are the meanings attributed to the issues brought up, and how different interpretations emerge and are constructed during a discussion. The research data comprised educational discussions between the parents of 10 children (five 1–2-year-olds and five 5–6

-year-olds) and day-care centre staff (18 discussions in total). The discussions arose in authentic cooperation situations.

An analysis of the discussions that served as research data shows that discussion practices are constructed largely from the starting points of the day-care professionals. If we wish to enhance parental participation in the functioning of public institutions of early childhood education, we must listen to the voice of the parents and develop action practices in a direction where authentic participation becomes possible.

*Descriptors:* early childhood education, parent, day-care staff, home-kindergarten cooperation, educational partnership, educational discussion

**Koro-Ljungberg, Mirka. 2005. Epistemological validity analysis in qualitative research. The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus 36 (4), 274–284.** — The purpose of this article is to discuss the complex issues associated with the concept of validity and the consequent conceptual and methodological problems that arise in qualitative research. The article approaches validity from an (e)pistemological perspective that emphasises the social structure, situatedness, and fallibility of knowledge. A central argument is that instead of foregrounding generalisable validity constructs or external evaluation conducted after the completion of a study, in qualitative research analyses of validity should focus on the research process as a whole and on the active role of researchers. From the perspective of (e)pistemological validation, it is important that researchers give a reflective and detailed description of the epistemological, moral, and ethical choices and values linked with their research. In addition, it is essential to discuss the ways in which one's research is open to new research questions and new approaches and the ways in which a given piece of research will change theory and practice. Lastly, it can be argued that it is essential to document the role of creativity and the ways in which major decisions and methodological turning points influence a study and its validation process.

*Descriptors:* qualitative research, epistemology, validity

**Saikkonen, Tuija-Leena – Miettinen, Sari. 2005. School ethnographer – Where are you? On positioning the researcher in the school context. The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus 36 (4), 307–319.** — Social studies of childhood, a research field that emerged in the last decade, challenged researchers to reassess the methods they had been using. An ethnographical approach came to be accepted as a useful strategy among others in childhood studies. In studies of school in particular, ethnography was seen as a suitable line of attack because of its open starting point that had room also for contradictions. The article discusses the position at school of an ethnographically oriented researcher, whose aim is to acknowledge children as competent interpreters of their own life on the one hand and respect the functions and objectives of school on the other. We look at the subject in terms of the researcher's relationship with school as an institution, with ethnography as a research method, and with the child informants. We illustrate these phenomena using extracts from our own research materials. In school, a researcher with an ethnographic outlook occupies a middle ground that is normally empty. Given that school is a setting oriented towards objectives, this leads to a certain degree of contradiction and conflict. The researcher's relationship with their child informants is necessarily distorted; school and its power structures is a distorting factor in itself. Ethnographic research is a dynamic process where the researcher must accept features that point in many directions, some of them contradictory.

*Descriptors:* school ethnography, childhood studies, researcher positioning