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Haapala-Samuel, Aino. 2010. "This topic won't hurt me." Token female vocational students talk about sexism. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 41 (3), 252–262.

Finnish secondary vocational education is strongly segregated according to gender. Within the most strongly segregated vocational study fields it is mostly women who study as tokens. In this article, which is based on a small-scale interview study, token women's speech and meaning-giving is analysed to outline cultural conditions of success within two strongly male-dominated study programs. Special focus is on equality discourses in relation to what in the women's speech becomes defined as sexual harassment and what does not. The methodological basis of the research lies in post-structuralist feminism. Gender is defined as performative, power as productive and discursive and experience as linguistically constructed. Thematic interviews of four female students and one teacher of a vocational study program are used in the article. Analysis is data-based and conducted through thematic and deconstructive reading. Whereas physical attacks become defined as sexual harassment, sexist talk and joking do not, and the humouring of these can be suggested as a requirement of coping for women in the field. As a conclusion it is suggested that the classical liberal-feminist discourse of equality as achieved may do a disservice to the women who are studying in or interested in male-dominated vocational study fields, as it leaves hidden the more subtle mechanisms of gender and power, such as the power dimension inherent to sexist talk and joking. *Descriptors:* vocational education, gender segregation, tokenism, equality discourses, sexual harassment

Hakkarainen, Pentti. 2010. The zone of proximal development– a cornerstone of pedagogy? *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 41 (3), 240–251.

The concept of the zone of proximal development has been generally recognized as a basic concept of educational sciences, but the original idea about the interrelations between teaching, learning and development has disappeared. Vygotsky's goal of developing it as a general methodological tool was not attained. This is why it is necessary to relate the zpd concept to the other Vygotskian concepts characterizing human development. In this article an attempt is made to elaborate the zpd concept using theoretical ideas and results of empirical research. Emphasis is put on the unit of analysis of development and for this reason further elaboration of the concept should be based on play context. The zone of proximal development as the object of education offers an basis for an alternative pedagogical approach.

Descriptors: development, learning, teaching, problem solving, play

Kuusisaari, Hanna. 2010. Connecting theoretical concepts and everyday practices in teachers' process of collaborative knowledge creation. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 41 (3), 226–239.

This article analyses the process of collective knowledge creation in in-service training for home economics teachers and the connection of theoretical concepts and everyday practices in that process. The aim of the in-service training was to help the teachers learn and create knowledge and develop teaching methods for their work. The changes of the curriculum and theories of learning served as starting points for this case study. The research data consisted of videotaped and transcribed discussions of two teams creating knowledge and practices. The qualitative analysis of the team discussions focused on how learning theories emerge in development talk concerning developing teaching methods. Further analysis concerning the connections of theoretical concepts and everyday practices in the process showed differences between the two teams' collaborative knowledge creation. The new knowledge and everyday practice creation process is interconnected with theories of learning, teachers' everyday teaching methods, and collaboration. Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development is used as a tool for describing and understanding the collaborative knowledge creation process. The results indicate that creating new teaching practices is challenging but possible when theory and practice are interconnected through collaboration. The findings also show a new kind of way to arrange in-service training.

Descriptors: zone of proximal development, collaboration, collaborative knowledge creation, in-service training

Kyttälä, Minna. 2010. Learning diary as an instrument and assessment tool for a course in quantitative research methodology. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 41 (3), 263–273.

Even though university students consider learning of quantitative research methods important, they experience a lot of difficulties during the courses, and the learning outcomes are not as good as they should be. Students find it hard to adopt methodological issues and to create a general view of the course contents. This article explores the outcomes of one learning instrument experiment where the students (N=19) were guided to keep a learning diary during a quantitative research methods course to facilitate active learning. The results show that learning diary suits for the purpose of quantitative methods courses. However, the assignment of learning diaries as such does not ensure that all of the students adopt an active learning approach. Some of the students need more effective supervision to support their working with the diary.

Descriptors: research methods, learning, learning diary

Räihä, Pekka. 2010. The VAKAVA project did not turn out to be the saviour of a newly graduated secondary school-leaver. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 41 (3), 213–225.

Primary teacher education has been one of the most sought after study programmes in Finland, and one of the most difficult to enter. It has been especially difficult for newly graduated secondary school-leavers. In 2005, for example, 22.2 % of all applicants were newly graduated, whereas among the applicants invited to the second phase of entrance examination the percentage was only 15.8 %. This percentage further decreased to 9.0 % of the students admitted to the primary teacher education programme.

Attempts to improve the situation of the newly graduated applicants began in 2007, when pre-selection based on matriculation examination grades and additional points gained by work experience as a teacher or classroom assistant and Open University studies was replaced by a book examination open to all eligible applicants, i.e. the VAKAVA project.

Even though the percentage of newly graduated applicants increased a little with the changes in the pre-selection system, the loss of such applicants at the various stages of the selection process continued. The proportion of such applicants lost at the transition from pre-selection to the second phase even increased, but from the second phase to the training programme it decreased. The

decrease, however, does not result directly from the VAKAVA project, but rather from coincidence. People did not really know what to do with the matriculation examination certificate once it was removed from the pre-selection, and most departments of teacher education just transferred it to the second phase of the student selection. Because the points gained from the matriculation examination certificate were age-neutral, they availed the newly graduated applicants to reduce the advantage of older applicants gained for instance in the interviews of the second phase.

The VAKAVA project revealed the incompetence of our former student selection systems. When technical changes to entrance examinations are made, the effects can be non-existent or unexpected. This happened with the VAKAVA as well.

The age of the primary teacher students did not change as much as the culture in primary schools and the Open University. Temporary assistants and trainees aiming at becoming teachers have disappeared from schools almost entirely, because work experience does not give additional points any longer. Similarly the number of education students at the Open University has collapsed.

Descriptors: VAKAVA project, teacher education, teacher training, student selection, student admission