



**Kasvatus 2011 Vol. 42 No 1**  
**The Finnish Journal of Education**  
**Suomen kasvatustieteellinen aikakauskirja**

**Alatupa, Saija – Hintsanen, Mirja – Hirstiö-Snellman, Paula. 2011. The relationship of class size and school size to student achievement: Any differences between boys and girls? The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus 42 (1), 31–45.**

In Finland, there is no commonly defined limit for the number of students per class, but growing class sizes have raised discussion about the impact of class size on student's school performance and well-being. The present study focuses on gender differences in the impact of class and school size on students' school performance measured as grade point averages (GPAs) among 9<sup>th</sup>-graders (average age = 15 years) in a nationally representative sample of Finnish boys and girls. Our results confirmed the well-known fact that girls outperform boys at school. Our main finding was that girls performed better than boys regardless of the class and school size. We also showed that the difference in GPAs to girls' advantage increased along with class and school size.

*Descriptors:* Grade point average (GPA), student achievement, school size, class size, gender, upper level of comprehensive school

**Annala, Johanna – Mäkinen, Marita. 2011. Curriculum in higher education – towards the goals of knowing and acting. The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus 42 (1), 6–18.**

The article reports on a study of the interpretations academics give to the curriculum development in higher education (HE). The data were collected by theme interviews in a university of applied sciences, UAS, (N = 18) and in a research university, RU, (N = 27). The analysis was conducted by qualitative content analysis. The interpretations are discussed in the light of the framework based on the schema by Barnett and Coate (2005) and on the concepts of projection and introjection by Bernstein (1996). Despite the disparate legally instituted profiles and HE offered by RU and UAS there were very few differences in the talk of the institutions. The interpretations of curriculum reflect two core tasks of HE: serving the information intensive education policy and serving the working life and society in general. The results suggest that a reactive approach to the development of curriculum was distinctive. It was difficult for the academics to conceive of what is relevant knowledge in HE and the nature of its connection to the needs of knowledge society. Instead, the proactive interpretation of curriculum appeared as integrating the internal and external objectives of knowing and acting in curriculum design.

*Descriptors:* curriculum, higher education

**Hamarus, Päivi – Kaikkonen, Pauli. 2011. Definitions and ways of defining bullying. The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus 42 (1), 58–68.**

This article discusses definitions of bullying and ways of defining it. Internationally widely accepted Olweus' definition has helped unify research on bullying. The goal is to define the concept precisely, thus allowing results that are of value in both international and longitudinal studies. Scholarly traditions have determined what is researched and how intervention is used. Educational legislation looks at bullying from the point of view of the community, but interventions are usually

directed at individuals. In contrast, workplace safety legislation defines bullying as something done to an individual, while interventions are intended to improve the whole organisation.

The definition of bullying has spread from more scholarly use to the schools themselves. Schools (and communities) should prefer a definition that promotes early intervention; otherwise certain common bullying identifiers (it is prolonged or continuous) might even hinder early detection and intervention. To avoid this, two traits are relevant: the imbalance of power between the bullied and the bully, and the individual's subjective experience. Community members might have differing views on bullying, and to be able to successfully anticipate and prevent bullying, it is imperative that the community's definition is clear and coherent. Multidisciplinary research on this topic with an emphasis on the educational sciences is still necessary.

*Descriptors:* bullying, school, prevention

**Havu-Nuutinen, Sari – Karppinen, Netta – Päivinen, Annika. 2011. Pedagogical handling of crises as part of teacher's work. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 42 (1), 19–30.**

The aim of the study is to describe and examine teachers' pedagogical decisions when approaching a traumatic crisis with young pupils. Firstly, we describe the methods used by teachers in such a classroom situation, and then we proceed to examine the controlling factors which influence their approaches when dealing with a crisis. The data for this study were collected using two separate methods: in the first method (n=6) the data comprised interviews with the teachers using frame stories of the crises, while in the second method (n = 8), the focus was on the teachers' experiences of considering a traumatic crisis with children. This data was also collected through in-depth interviews. According to the teachers' descriptions crises are processed in three phases: 1) listening and informing, 2) management and 3) the reflection phase. Each phase was based on pedagogical methods and child-centred approaches, but sensitivity to the pupils and emotional factors played a significant role when dealing with the crisis. The teachers felt crisis management to be very difficult and would have needed more knowledge about traumatic crisis in order to better approach such a crisis with their pupils. As such, the teachers' pedagogical solutions were based more on their own previous experiences and intuition than on the conceptual knowledge of the management of traumatic crises.

*Descriptors:* traumatic crisis, teachers' pedagogical thinking and action, early primary grades.

**Latomaa, Timo. 2011. What is counseling all about? Counseling as a pedagogical activity. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 42 (1), 46–57.**

This article considers counselling from a pedagogical and Bildungs theoretical perspective subject to a psychological interpretation. In terms of Bildungs theory, mental activity and construction of the mind is understood as an orientation to taking mental possession of world relations. This takes place in experience and action in relation to the self as growth, to the material world as learning and to culture as socialization. In pedagogical terms, the basic forms of pedagogical activity, education, teaching and socialization, are understood as an effort to interpret and understand world relations and convey understanding. Mental world relations are also discussed in terms of difficulties and disorders in growth, learning and socialization, and pedagogical activity in terms of psychotherapy, special education and social pedagogy to support and remedy these. Counselling is understood as demarcation, moving in the pedagogical field between the basic forms of pedagogical activity thus outlined depending on the current needs of the person being counselled. By interpreting and understanding the world relations, and by conveying this understanding, counselling aims to: 1) promote growth, learning and socialization, 2) provide support in difficulties and problems related to these, and 3) make it possible to repair interruptions, errors and distortions in them. Counselling as a pedagogical activity, conveying understanding, follows the four principles of understanding: those of the ability to understand, of conveying understanding, of the foundations of understanding and of better understanding.

*Descriptors:* counselling, theory of counselling, pedagogical activity

**Takala, Katri – Oikarinen, Arja – Kokkonen, Marja – Liukkonen, Jarmo. 2011. Factors promoting kindergartens' socioemotional skills during PE sessions as experienced by early educators. The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus 42 (1), 69–80.**

The purpose of this study was to analyse and describe early educators' experiences of an eight-month-long intervention to develop 3–4-year-old preschool children's socioemotional skills through physical exercise sessions. The aim of this study was to identify those pedagogical issues that PE instructors need to consider when developing children's socioemotional skills by means of PE sessions. The second aim was to unravel those day care centre activities that facilitate the development of children's socioemotional through PE sessions. Six early educators, who work in five day care centres and who had instructed in the intervention to develop children's socioemotional skills through PE sessions, were the target group of this study. The data was collected by interviewing the early educators twice: in the beginning and middle of the intervention.

The transcribed, 170-page-long thematic interview-based data was analysed using content analysis. The results indicated that the early educators considered taking children's views into account, children's sense of belonging to a group, encouraging support for children and goal-directed activities important for the development of children's socioemotional skills. Furthermore, preparation of PE sessions in advance, goal internalisation, preplanned programmes and cooperation between different actors were regarded as central issues in the activities of day care centres by the early educators.

*Descriptors:* early education, physical education, socioemotional skills, thematic interview, content analysis