# English Summaries

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## Suomen kasvatustieteellinen aikakauskirja

**Lepola, Janne – Kivineva, Tanja – Orvasto, Ritva-Liisa. 2012. The role of enhanced storybook reading in kindergarten on the development of children's comprehension and literacy skills. The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus 43 (4), 336–349.**

The aim of the present study was to examine the role of enhanced storybook reading on the development of children's narrative text comprehension and production skills as well as motivation during the preschool year and in Grade 1. The enhanced storybook intervention was carried out by one kindergarten teacher and the aid, as well as the parents of the participating children from September to April. Altogether 32 stories were discussed in terms of the principles of the intervention programme. The intervention group included 12 children, while another 12 children were in the control group. The Control group children were matched pairwise with the intervention children on the basis of their initial scores on comprehension skills and letter knowledge. We assessed the development of children's comprehension skills comprehensively (listening and picture book comprehension, comprehension of instructions). In addition, we examined the development of motivation among the intervention children. Results showed clear gains in the ability to recall the main story elements and in inference-making skills among the intervention children as a function of enhanced focus on fairy tales. Also the control group demonstrated significant progress in narrative comprehension skills, suggesting that the enhanced storybook reading programme was not effective in promoting listening comprehension among children with heterogeneous starting points. However, the motivation of intervention children improved: their task orientation increased and task-avoidance decreased during the intervention. The discussion section takes a look at practical implications for early childhood education and parental guidance.

*Descriptors*: Story book reading, listening comprehension, preschool education, intervention, motivation.

**Keskinen, Hanna – Aunola, Kaisa – Lerkkanen, Marja-Kristiina – Poikkeus, Anna-Maija – Niemi, Pekka – Nurmi, Jari-Erik – Kiuru, Noona. 2012. Reading disability risk as a moderating factor between parenting styles and children's problem behaviour. The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus 43 (4), 350–360.**

The aim of this article is to investigate associations between parenting styles and children's problem behaviour and the moderating role of reading disability (RD) risk in these associations. The article is based on a data with 608 children of whom half ($n = 287$) had a RD risk as diagnosed in kindergarten. The other half did not have any RD risk. The data were collected during Grades 1, 2 and 3 of elementary school. Parenting styles (i.e., affection, behavioural control, psychological control) were measured using parents' self-reports and teachers rated children's internalising and externalising problem behaviour. The results showed, first, that high parental affection was associated with children's lower externalising problem behaviour. In turn, ambivalent parenting characterised by both high affection and psychological control predicted an increase in children's internalising problem behaviour. Children with RD risk showed more problem behaviour than other children. RD risk also moderated the associations between parenting styles and children's

problem behaviour. Mothers' high psychological control in the form of making the child feel guilty was more strongly linked to risk children's problem behaviour than that of children with no risk. Finally, mothers' behavioural control predicted a decrease in internalising problem behaviour particularly among children with an RD risk. The results suggest that children who have a risk for reading disability may on the one hand be particularly sensitive for negative impacts of mothers' making them feel guilty and on the other hand particularly benefit of mothers' behavioural control that is, setting boundaries for child's behaviour. The study was carried out as a part of the extensive First Steps follow-up study.

*Descriptors*: parenting styles, internalising problem behaviour, externalising problem behaviour, reading difficulty, risk for reading disability

**Kivinen, Osmo – Kaarakainen, Meri-Tuulia. 2012. Pedagogically differential digital ReadIT-learning program for training reading comprehension strategies. The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus 43 (4), 361–374.**

The idea of the digital ReadIT software for education is to train students to master reading strategies for reading various non-fictional texts. The goal is to guide students to independently utilise reading strategies and to enable learning enhancing habits by supported training. The research and development activities of ReadIT aim to provide a personalised learning enhancing tool that can be used both at schools and in distance learning. In this case study ReadIT has been applied in examining the utilisation of reading strategies and performing in reading comprehension test of Finnish ninth graders (n = 424). The empirical data consists of ReadIT's log file data, which contains information on students' transitions, time use, results in the reading comprehension test and the query data. Also teachers were asked to give assessments on their students' reading comprehension skills. Students' transitions in the ReadIT learning program, performance in reading comprehension test and their habits to use different reading strategies were analysed.

According to the results, boys perform equally well compared to girls in the computer-based reading comprehension test. In online reading, boys are catching up with the girls who have traditionally outperformed boys in reading. High-performing students in reading comprehension test spent more time in ReadIT and utilised its interactive functions more actively than the others. Boys typically proceeded quickly in a straightforward manner, while girls moved more slowly, utilising more intensively the reading strategies provided by the learning program. In reading comprehension, teachers evaluated girls to outperform boys. Regardless of the performance level, in self evaluations both girls and boys assessed their skills to be fairly good. Boys and girls tended to utilise the digital learning environment differently, but the differences were not related to the performance level of the student.

*Descriptors*: Reading comprehension strategies, personalisation, digital learning technologies

**Kalalahti, Mira. 2012. Family background, educational attitudes and educational attainment. The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus 43 (4), 375–390.**

The connection between educational attainment, attitudes and socio-economic background has been well studied. Even in Finland, where educational equality has been achieved in many ways, family background is still one strong determinant of educational achievements. One difficulty in studying the role of family background is that it consists of many different factors that should be considered in one study. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between family background, interaction between the pupils and teachers at school, school attitudes and school attainment. The study is based on a survey aimed at Grade 9 students in Helsinki in 2010 (N=2486). The data is analysed with statistical methods. The results show that the underlying factors and connections are different for school attitudes and school attainment. In relation to school attitudes, the results emphasise the importance of interaction between parents and children and between teachers and students.

*Descriptors:* educational attitudes, educational attainment, family background

**Niemi, Päivi – Asanti, Riitta – Seppinen, Hanna-Leena. 2012. Permanent small groups in lower secondary school – evaluation of a school development programme. The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus 43 (4), 391–405.**

This study describes students´ and teachers´ evaluations of a school development programme (the Permanent Small Groups - PSG). It aims at preventing loneliness and enhancing the learning of social skills and collaboration in lower secondary school. The classrooms are divided into heterogeneous groups of 4-7 students. They are permanent during the 7th and 8th grades. In the event of conflicts, the groups are not altered but instead teachers help the group to solve its problems. The students in Grade 8 (n=143) and in Grade 9 (n=137) and the teachers (n=31) answered the same open-ended questions. Both the students and the teachers held more often positive than negative views of the programme. They thought it to create a good atmosphere and collaboration at school. According to the students, everyone had a group of their own, nobody was alone and they made new friends. About a quarter of the students held negative views. Students would have liked to change groups at times and participate in decisions on how the groups are composed. Teachers perceived supervision as essential. The PSG model seems to promote positive interaction and the learning of social skills at lower secondary school.

*Descriptors*: social skills, lower secondary school, adolescent, collaboration, group interaction, collaborative learning, small group

**Vuopala, Essi – Järvelä, Sanna. 2012. Promoting and hindering factors in collaborative learning – students' experiences from a web course. The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus 43 (4), 406–421.**

The aim of this study is to investigate university students' experiences about factors promoting and hindering collaborative learning during a web course. The data were collected from an international course on 'Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning'. Students (N=83) worked in small groups and their studying was supported with different kinds of scripts. The data consists of on-line questionnaires in which students considered factors that affected their small group's collaboration. In the analysis of on-line questionnaires (311 copies) students' descriptions about factors promoting and hindering collaborative learning during each phase of studying were subjected to data-driven content analysis and coded into three main categories: factors related to group, factors related to learning environment and factors related to individual learner. Main findings indicate that the most significant factors, whether promoting or hindering collaborative learning, are related to group, especially to the quality of interaction and equality of participation. Second significant factor in this respect is related to the learning environment, especially to the formulation of the learning tasks. While factors pertaining to individuals were found less significant here, they were considered rather to hinder than to promote collaborative learning.

*Descriptors*: collaborative learning, computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL), higher education