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Rinne, Risto – Järvinen, Tero – Tikkanen, Jenni – Aro, Mikko. 2012. Changes in educational policy and the status of school in Europe – Opinions of principals from eight European countries. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 43 (5), 460–475.

Neoliberal education policies have altered the operational environments of schools and affected school principals' job descriptions and requirements. As a result of managerialism, decentralisation and the marketisation of education, principals are increasingly responsible for profitability, marketing and striving in competition in addition to their role as pedagogical leaders. In this article, we will analyse the opinions and views European principals hold on the changes in the governance of education, on the relevance of education, educational transitions and the factors affecting coping with the demands of education in Europe. This study is a part of a European Union funded GOETE research project, which aims to analyse and compare how European education systems and national education policies address the changing relation between education and social integration. In addition to Finland, the countries involved in the project are France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. The views of the principals do not reflect the structures of the national education systems consistently. Questions related to educational equality highlighted the clearest differences. The more inequalities there are in the education system, the more widely the principals consider it important to allocate resources to support the pupils in the weakest positions.

Descriptors: educational policy, comparative research, neoliberalism, managerialism, principals

Haltia, Nina. 2012. Scarce crediting and serial degrees: Adult university student in the education policy discourse in the 2000s. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 43 (5), 476–487.

This article studies education policy discourse in Finland concerning adult students in universities. The empirical data consists of documents published in the 2000's, produced mainly by the Ministry of Education. Discourse analysis is utilised to seek answers to questions about what kind of adult these documents are talking about and what kind of place is given for the adult student. In the light of the data, universities seem to be places primarily for young students, but also the aim to educate adults is brought up. Certain forms of education, like Master programmes, further education and Open University education, are considered suitable for adults. There is also a temporal transition in the documents as further education was gaining emphasis during the last few years. Degree studies by adults seem to be found even as an undesirable phenomenon. Also issues concerning recognition of prior learning and the dialogue between working life and education have become central. The adult student that the documents are talking about, is a skilled person who already has prior education but who needs to further enhance his or her know-how. He or she does not seek degree education but pursues further education, in particular. The ideal adult student that the documents construct is a skilled individual who already has a degree from higher education, who proceeds linearly on his or her career and whose needs for education follow the needs of the employer and working life.

Descriptors: adults, university studies, further education, open university education, education policy

Kauko, Jaakko – Varjo, Janne – Kalalahti, Mira – Sahlström, Fritjof – Simola, Hannu. 2012. Dynamics of comparative educational research – theoretical programme. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 43 (5), 488–501.

With its focus on relational dynamics the Comparative Analytics of Dynamics in Education Politics (CADEP) will seriously take up the challenge of unravelling the complexity, contingency and trans-nationality that characterise educational systems of late-modern societies. Applying the theoretical concept of dynamics we aim to resuscitate a specific social field of education to scrutiny through the analysis of relations between the main actors and institutions, and the essential discursive formations and practices along the dimensions of time (historical continuation), space (local, national, regional and global) and level (micro/actors, meso/institutions and macro/structures). The main idea is that the fluidity and movement of a specific policy field of basic education are relative, but reflect the intertwinement of the dynamics from at least four focal perspectives: education policy-making, education governance, family educational strategies and classroom cultures. We present some results on each perspective drawing on the Finnish case.

Descriptors: dynamics, education policy, comparative research, theory

Silvennoinen, Heikki – Seppänen, Piia – Rinne, Risto – Simola, Hannu. 2012. Social Classes and School Choice Policy: An Examination from Supranational to Local Level. *The Finnish Journal of Education Kasvatus* 43 (5), 502–518.

Educational policy promoting free school choice has, since the 1980s, been a central part of the global restructuring of education. In this article, the supranational school choice policy and its national and local implementation are analysed in relation to social classes and the resources (capitals) of families. What kind of a relationship do people of different social classes have to the school choice policy? What kind of effects does the implemented school choice policy have on the differentiation of the school choices among families? How does the new freedom relate to the educational behaviour of individuals and families in different social classes? What are the possible effects the differentiation of educational behaviour of the families has on the differentiation of schools? Empirical findings on school choice in Finland seem to support the theoretical arguments that in developed societies around the world, education policies are currently primarily aimed at satisfying the concerns and interests of the middle class: policy thinking is classed in particular ways, and large-scale educational restructurations, like free school choice, are working in favour of middle-class families. The middle class is not just passively adopting the new opportunities, but actively influencing education policies in their own interest at various levels from national to local, and institutional.

Descriptors: social class, school choice, education policy, educational equality, family strategies, segregation