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Suomen kasvatustieteellinen aikakauskirja

Kuusisto, Arniika – Kallioniemi, Arto – Matilainen, Mia. 2014. Multicultural work communities in Finnish early childhood education. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 45 (2), 113–126.

This article examines multicultural work communities in early childhood Education and day Care settings in Finland. More precisely, the paper looks at, firstly, what kind of linguistic, cultural, and worldview aspects the staff members attach to the diversity of their kindergarten; and secondly, how the staff members' various backgrounds in terms of languages, cultures, and worldviews are expressed in the work community. The data were collected by focus group interviews of the staff in four Kindertgartens located in the metropolitan area of Helsinki. The data were analysed by means of qualitative content analysis. The identified special challenges of a multicultural work community had to do with the lack of a common language as well as with issues related to different worldviews. While the diversity of languages and cultures were regarded as an asset in the work community, the variety of worldviews were often addressed through negations. In the same vein, different worldviews within a group of children were also often discussed as limitations to the operation culture. In this talk Finnish identity appeared as a homogeneous entity, disregarding its inner diversity and pluralism. The need for further in-service training for kindergarten staff on worldview issues was highlighted in this data.

Descriptors: multicultural, pluralism, work community, kindergarten, early childhood Education

Niikko, Anneli – Korhonen, Merja. 2014. Early childhood educators as developers of child-centred pedagogy in kindergarten. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 45 (2), 127–139.

This article deals with a four-year developmental action-research project in a preschool context. The retrospective study investigated what kind of changes occurred in the project when three early childhood educators were striving to develop their child group activities towards a child-centred direction during the four-year period. The specified research questions concerned activity structures and physical spaces, interaction both among children and between them and their educators, and educators' cooperation. Methodologically, the study was conducted as a case study with data collected by an ethnographic method and analysed by means of qualitative content analysis and applying Hammersley and Atkinson's three-phased method. The results revealed that the changes made in the child group's physical spaces and use of equipment and materials did encourage children's self-directedness, independence and playing both alone and together with peers. Moreover, changes and restructuring of the core activities, such as the morning circle, prearranged teaching activities and children's rest situations, provided better opportunities for interaction with children, implementation of child-centred activities, and educators' cooperation.

Descriptors: child-centred education, early childhood educators, kindergarten, case study

Rantala, Anja – Uotinen, Sanna. 2014. Parental participation in needs assessment and provision of special support for children– local ECEC curricula under examination. The Finnish Journal of Education 45 (2), 140–151.

This article discusses how parents' participation in assessing the needs and providing special support for their children is presented in local early childhood education and care (ECEC) curricula. The data of this study consists of 49 local ECEC curricula, which were available on municipal web sites. The curricular sections concerning special support in early childhood education were analysed by means of content analysis regarding issues of parental participation. The local ECEC curricula followed closely the national curriculum guidelines (2005). Municipal differences appeared mainly in the accuracy of the plans and in the ways special support was organised. According to the data, parents have an important role in assessing their child's need for special support, and their expertise was well acknowledged. However, parents' role in providing the support was unclear. Parents were well involved when drawing up the individual ECEC plan, but when it comes to implementation of the support, there are no mentions about their role beside the professionals. The municipal curricula emphasise the significance of specialists both for needs assessment and provision of special support.

Descriptors: parental participation, early childhood special education, special support, local ECEC, partnership

Kirjavainen, Tanja – Pulkkinen, Jonna – Jahnukainen, Markku. 2014. Special education arrangements in basic education for different age cohorts in years 2001–2010. The Finnish Journal of Education 45 (2), 152–166.

The number of special education students in the Finnish basic education has increased during the 2000's. In this paper, we study the changes in special education by cohorts and grade levels. We used a unique time series data compiled by Statistics Finland, covering the years 2001–2010 and all comprehensive schools from grades 1 to 9. According to our results, there were differences in the provision of special education between different cohorts and grade levels. Part-time special education was more common in grades 1–3 whereas the number of special education students was largest at the lower secondary level. Integration of special education students to mainstream classes increased steadily during the primary school but decreased sharply in the beginning of the lower secondary stage. The share of special education students with an individualised curriculum in some subjects increased during the period and the differences between the cohorts were particularly large at the end of the comprehensive school. The increase of special education students in the 2000's was mainly due to transfers based on less severe difficulties classified as "other reasons".

Descriptors: Special education, basic education, statistics

Kivinen, Osmo – Kaarakainen, Meri-Tuulia – Anttila, Aino. 2014. Differences in learning and reading comprehension with hypertexts and linear online texts. The Finnish Journal of Education 45 (2), 167–181.

Non-linear hypertexts are considered more challenging to read than linear texts. Mastery of information seeking strategies and reflection on one's own actions are emphasised when learning with hypertexts. In this article differences in reading comprehension with hypertexts and linear online texts are analysed by means of the web-based ReadIT-software. Also online reading habits and related gender differences are examined. The research data consists of reading comprehension test results of ninth-graders' (N=308) in both linear and hypertext settings, and of related log files stored to the research database during the students' reading process. The results show that there were no significant differences in the reading comprehension test scores between those students

who read hypertext and those who read linear online text. Among the students who read the hypertext four different proceeding habits stand out. Although there were no gender differences in the reading comprehension test scores, a difference was found in the online reading habits in that boys proceeded with both text types straightforwardly and fast, but ended up guessing more often than girls. Girls, in turn, were more diligent and interactive during online reading, and proceeded slower than boys.

Descriptors: hypertext, linear online text, online reading, reading comprehension