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Suomen kasvatustieteellinen aikakauskirja

Holma, Katariina – Hyytinen, Heidi. 2015. A dialogue between philosophical and empirical approaches: the entanglement of normative and descriptive dimensions as a methodological challenge of educational research. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 46 (3), 220–232.

In our article, we analyse a central challenge of educational sciences: normative and descriptive research interests are fundamentally intertwined in educational research. We argue that the research field of education would benefit from extending the dialogue between philosophical and empirical approaches on education. We demonstrate some methodological problems following from confusions between normative and descriptive dimensions and illustrate how these confusions can influence both the interpretation of research data and the formulation of pedagogical guidelines. We derive examples from the research tradition of personal epistemology. Personal epistemology is a widely used research approach within the contemporary research field of educational psychology and higher education.

Descriptors: normativeness, descriptiveness, empirical, philosophical, personal epistemology, relativism, philosophical pragmatism

Äikäs, Aino. 2015. AAC-methods in research interviews – methodological challenges. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 46 (3), 233–246.

This article examines how one of the AAC-methods (Augmentative and Alternative Communication), namely PCS (Picture Communication Symbols) are used as a means of support in a research interview. The article describes the strengths and challenges of PCS for the interview situation and the research as a whole. A central theme discussed in this article deals with interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer in a setting of asymmetric communicative capacity. Also the ethical questions of interpretation and the problematics of giving voice in such settings are discussed. The data consists of interviews of four young adults (age range 23 to 28) who have broad-ranging communicative difficulties and also intellectual and developmental disabilities or autism. The use of PCS enriched the interaction but also brought various challenges. As a conclusion, it is proposed that the research methodology should be flexible and employ diverse methods in order to achieve participatory research with people with broad-ranging communicative difficulties.

Descriptors: augmentative and alternative communication, PCS, interviews, communication, participation

Wallin, Anna – Helenius, Jenni – Saaranen-Kauppinen, Anita – Eskola, Jari. 2015. **The first three decades of MEBS: from a methodological curiosity to an established research method.** *The Finnish Journal of Education* 46 (3), 247–259.

The method of empathy-based stories (MEBS) has been developed and expanded considerably since the first Finnish experiments conducted in the 1970s. Over the years, it has been used in various research areas and for different purposes. MEBS has been most commonly used in educational studies and social sciences both in Master's theses and doctoral dissertations. In this article, we review the history, present state and possible future prospects of MEBS: how the method has been used and how it could be developed in the future.

Descriptors: method of empathy-based stories, qualitative research, research method