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Suomen kasvatustieteellinen aikakauskirja

Mård-Miettinen, Karita – Miettinen, Elisa – Kangasvieri, Teija. 2014. Pre-school children's beliefs about language learning. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 45 (4), 320–332.

This article examines pre-school children's beliefs about language learning in regard to both mother tongue and second or foreign languages. The data have been gathered using structured interviews and visual narratives, i.e. children's drawings and their accounts of what they have depicted. The data are analysed applying phenomenographic analysis that focuses on describing a phenomenon as the respondents experience it. This study shows, inter alia, that today's kindergarten children perceive that they are living in quite a multilingual world. Furthermore, five- and six-year-olds have a positive and broad-minded attitude towards different languages, their own language skills, and language learning. Compared to primary pupils, whose language learning beliefs are often linked to the school environment, pre-schoolers feel that they learn languages in many places, with several people, and in various ways.

Descriptors: beliefs, language learning, multilingualism, child perspective

Salminen, Jaanet – Annevirta, Tiina. 2014. Guidance provided by the national core curriculum – what, to whom, and why? *The Finnish Journal of Education* 45 (4), 333–348.

The new National Core Curriculum for Basic Education in Finland will be completed by the end of 2014. The reform of the core curriculum aims to respond to the challenges of the vastly changing society (Halinen, Holappa & Jääskeläinen, 2013). The instructive function of the core curriculum will stay unchanged, however, as the purpose of the core curriculum is to postulate explicitly what teaching in basic education should include in Finland (Sarjala & Suopohja, 2000). The core curriculum should also form a coherent whole for guiding the work of schools as well as individual teachers. The aim of this article is to explore what kind of textual instruction can be found in the national core curriculum and how much of the instruction focuses clearly on the teacher and teaching. The emphasis is on how Finnish basic education teachers are guided by the core curriculum. The data consists of the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2004) and the Amendments and Additions to the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2010). The units of analysis are the sentences in the core curriculum and they are examined by means of content analysis. The results of the study show that there is very little text focusing on explicit instruction for the teacher and teaching, but instead there is plenty of informative text providing Implicit or indirect guidance. Based on the results, the theoretical background of the national core curriculum is considered in this article especially from the viewpoints of the traditional *Curriculum* and *Lehrplan* theories. Also the instructive function of the current core curriculum and its connection to the teacher's autonomy are discussed.

Descriptors: core curriculum, Lehrplan, Curriculum, curriculum instruction, teacher autonomy

Niemi, Anna-Maija. 2014. Support, need, stigma or privilege? Discourses on special educational needs in the context of vocational upper secondary education. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 45 (4), 349–363.

The article focuses on vocational education discourses where the terminological meanings and ways of talking about students' 'specialness and special needs are formed. The research context is Finnish upper secondary pre-vocational and vocational education and training. The talk of the interviewed education professionals is analysed with respect to the medical discourse and the discourse of inclusive education. It seems that the special needs discourse and categorisations are deep-rooted in policy documents but also in everyday practices of the school. However, some professionals also aim at deconstructing the special needs classifications which are experienced as stigmatising. The data consists of three focus group interviews with education professionals and ethnographically produced fieldwork data in two vocational institutes in Southern Finland.

Descriptors: special needs, specialness, vocational education, medical discourse, inclusion