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Suomen kasvatustieteellinen aikakauskirja

Laitinen, Satu – Mattinen, Aino – Kajamies, Anu – Vauras, Marja – Lepola, Janne. 2013. Small children's task orientation and related development in kindergarten's reading sessions. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 44 (5), 482–493.

This study addresses the development of children's on-task and off-task orientation during kindergarten book reading sessions involving 20 stories from the Rabbit Stories intervention. It examines kindergarteners' (n = 22) development of motivation during the study of listening comprehension. A kindergarten teacher discussed the 20 stories in a small group of two children in line with the principles of the intervention programme (1 story/week). The development of motivation was measured by teacher ratings and four video-observed interventions with children selected based on teacher ratings. The observations focused on on-task and off-task motivational orientations (Salonen, Lehtinen, & Olkinuora, 1998) and partly distracted on-task motivation (Berhenke et al., 2011). The results show that the children displayed progressive task orientation, while partly distracted task and off-task orientation decreased during the intervention. The paper concludes with a discussion of motivation in early childhood education.

Descriptors: Task-orientation, listening comprehension, early childhood education

Nikkinen, Eeva-Maria – Aunola, Kaisa. 2013. Academic self-concept of first-graders in special education classrooms. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 44 (5), 494–507.

The study examined whether first-grade students in special education groups differ from their peers in mainstream education in terms of their academic self-concept, and further, whether students' academic self-concept changes during the first school year, and whether there are differences in this change between these student groups. The participants were 153 first-grade students in mainstream education and 13 students with special educational needs. Students' academic self-concepts were assessed applying both self-reporting and the teacher's and the researcher's ratings. The results showed that at the beginning of the school year the SEN students had a higher academic self-concept than their peers in mainstream education. Similarly, according to teachers' and the researcher's observations, the SEN students showed more positive self-evaluations in relation to their actual skill level at the beginning of the first grade than students in mainstream education. However, during the first school year the academic self-concept of the SEN students declined whereas the trend among the mainstream students was the opposite, becoming more positive.

Descriptors: self-concept of ability, academic self-concept, special education, students with special educational needs, First grade

Ullakonoja, Riikka – Nieminen, Lea – Huhta, Ari. 2013. Finnish language learning motivation, reading comprehension and writing skills among Russian-speaking comprehensive school students. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 44 (5), 508–521.

This study focuses on Russian-speaking students' motivation towards learning the Finnish language in the Finnish comprehensive school. More precisely, it investigates the relationship

between the students' motivation towards learning Finnish and their performance in Finnish reading comprehension and writing tasks. The data were collected as a part of a larger multidisciplinary research project, which explores the possibilities for diagnosis of second or foreign language reading and writing. The participants ($n=247$) were third- to ninth-graders who spoke Russian at home, and came from 86 schools around Finland. They completed a motivational questionnaire and performed Finnish reading comprehension and writing tasks. The study focused on six motivational dimensions (instrumentality, intrinsic interest, motivational intensity, self-concept as a learner of Finnish, linguistic anxiety, and parental encouragement) and their relationship with Finnish reading and writing performance. The students were grouped by gender, school level, length of residence in Finland and the language mostly used at home. The results show that motivational dimensions explain the variance in writing performance better than in reading and that gender, school level, length of residence and language mostly used at home influence the motivational dimensions.

Descriptors: motivation, Finnish language, reading comprehension, writing, immigrant background

Kokkonen, Juha – Kokkonen, Marja – Yli-Piipari, Sami. 2013. Expectancy beliefs and values explaining physical education grade. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 44 (5), 522–532.

Grounded in the expectancy-value theory, this study examined possible gender differences and predictive strength of expectancy beliefs and values (attainment, utility, intrinsic values) on physical education (PE) grades among 763 pupils (365 girls, 398 boys) in the 6th and 9th grades. Regression analyses showed that expectancy beliefs and values explained 20% – 25% of the PE grade. Standardised regression coefficients between expectancy beliefs and PE grade varied between .20 and .32. As for the values, only intrinsic value emerged as a determinant of PE grade. The study showed gender similarity in the regressive models in Grade 6. In Grade 9, however, girls' individual differences were larger than among boys. In both the 6th and 9th grades, girls had higher PE grades, whereas boys scored higher in expectancy beliefs. Boys also attributed greater utility and intrinsic values in the 9th grade.

Descriptors: motivation, school physical education, values, beliefs, structural equation modelling

Niemivirta, Markku – Pulkka, Antti-Tuomas – Tapola, Anna – Tuominen-Soini, Heta. 2013. Achievement goal orientation profiles and their relation to task-specific motivation and performance. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 44 (5), 533–547.

This study investigated what kinds of achievement goal orientation profiles can be identified among folk high school students' ($N = 2793$) and how students with different profiles differ with respect to task-specific motivation (situational interest, self-efficacy, and claimed self-handicapping) and performance in a problem-solving task. Five groups of students with distinctive goal orientation profiles were identified: uncommitted, success-oriented, mastery-oriented, performance-oriented, and avoidance-oriented, respectively. The groups differed in terms of their task-specific motivational appraisals. Compared to the others, mastery- and success-oriented students anticipated the task to be more interesting and reported higher self-efficacy, whereas students emphasising performance-related orientations claimed more self-handicaps. Group differences on task performance were rather small, but showed inferior performance in avoidance-oriented students. Students' task-specific motivation partly mediated the effects of goal orientations on performance: mastery- and success-oriented students' confidence in their own abilities seemed to support their task engagement. In effect, our results illustrate how students' with different motivational mind-sets interpret, experience, and approach learning and performance situations differently.

Descriptors: motivation, achievement goal orientation, situational interest, self-efficacy, self-handicapping strategies, task performance