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Suomen kasvatustieteellinen aikakauskirja

Metsäpelto, Riitta-Leena – Vasalampi, Kati – Poikkeus, Anna-Maija – Lerkkanen, Marja-Kristiina – Salminen, Jenni – Mäensivu, Marja. 2017. Teachers' experiences of promoting dialogic classroom practices in basic education. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 48 (1), 6–20.

This study examines teachers' experiences of participation in a professional development (PD) programme, which was titled *Promoting Interaction, Motivation and Engagement* and aimed at increasing dialogic classroom practices. The use of dialogic approaches in instruction, e.g., providing opportunities for sharing experiences and points of view in discussion, aimed at fostering students' learning motivation and active engagement and participation in the classroom. Individual interviews with six teachers (grades 4 to 8) participating in the programme were analysed using qualitative thematic analysis. The findings indicated changes in the teachers' attitudes towards dialogic teaching practices during the PD programme. Joint group reflection on the video-recordings of dialogic teaching experiments in the teachers' own and their colleagues' classrooms was experienced as especially meaningful for the facilitation of professional development. The adoption of dialogic teaching practices was supported by materials designed to stimulate student interest and debate and also by maintaining a safe and unhurried atmosphere in the classroom. According to the interviewed teachers, however, time limitations and teacher-directed routines imposed restrictions for wider use of interactive approaches in the classroom. Overall, the teachers reported an increased use of dialogic teaching practices in the lessons during the programme and saw beneficial effects on their students' engagement and participation in learning activities and also a positive effect on group performance.

Descriptors: dialogic teaching, professional development, interaction, engagement

Laukkanen, Saara – Holopainen, Leena. 2017. The relation between home literacy environment and children's reading skills at the first grade. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 48 (1), 21–34.

In this article we investigate the relation between home literacy environment and children's word reading skills in the first year of primary school. Home literacy environment refers to the number of children's books at home, parental homework assistance and children's interest in reading and writing. The article is based on a follow-up study with 324 primary school pupils and their parents. The results show that while girls read and wrote more often than boys, no gender effect was found in reading skills, unlike in many previous studies. However, children's interest in reading and writing was related to good reading skills. Also, the number of children's books at home was related to children's good reading skills. According to the results, the amount of parental homework assistance was related to children's word reading skills so that the poorer the children's reading skills were, the more the parents reported assisting their children with homework. This indicates that the parents are following their children's reading development and are able to adjust their homework assistance to the actual skill level of their children at the first grade.

Descriptors: children's books, children's interest in reading and writing, first school year, home literacy environment, reading skill

Kaarakainen, Meri-Tuulia – Saikkonen, Loretta. 2017. Primary, secondary and high-school teachers' information retrieval skills. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 48 (1), 35–49.

A set of data consisting of 573 primary, secondary and high-school teachers' test results concerning information retrieval is analysed in this paper. The data were collected during the years 2014–2015 by an ICT skills test. In the information retrieval tasks the teachers had to choose the right search channel, form an appropriate search phrase and evaluate the search results. The research objective was to find out differences in teachers' information retrieval skills. The results indicate that teachers' information retrieval skills are deficient especially in forming a search phrase. Men were found to be better in information retrieval than women, and young teachers succeeded better than the older teachers. Competent information-seekers were more active users of digital technologies and new media services, and used technology for making their own content or for searching information more regularly than the others.

Descriptors: information retrieval, teachers, Internet