



Kasvatus 2023 Vol. 54 No 5 The Finnish Journal of Education

Ruutiainen, Ville – Paananen, Maiju – Fjällström, Salla. 2023. Segregating early childhood education? Differences of the neighborhoods of public and private ECEC centers in Finland. The Finnish Journal of Education 54 (5), 434–449.

The number of private early childhood education and care (ECEC) centers has increased during the recent decade in Finland. The clientele of private ECEC consists typically of families whose socioeconomic status (SES) is higher than on average. In this article, we examine how private and public ECEC centers in Finland are located in different types of neighborhoods. The data consisted of ownership and funding data of ECEC centers and municipality as well as zip code based data of the socioeconomic and urban structure of the areas. The data was analyzed using crosstabulation and multinomial logistic regression. The results indicate that private ECEC centers are overrepresented in urban municipalities and inner urban and high SES neighborhoods. Segregation entails also more subtle differences related to the form of ownership and funding. Based on our research, examining the parents' early childhood education decisions alone is not sufficient to explain the socioeconomic differentiation of the clientele of private and public ECEC centers. The differentiation seems to be explained at least partly by the different locations of the ECEC centers.

Descriptors: early childhood education, segregation, spatiality, privatization, universalism

Paakkari, Antti – Siippainen, Anna. 2023. Accidents, networks, enthusiasm and sorrow. Public-private partnerships as assemblages of desire. The Finnish Journal of Education 54 (5), 450–463.

This article investigates a public-private partnership between an activity-tracker manufacturer and the early childhood education and care (ECEC) services in a Finnish municipality. Our starting point is the idea of co-operation as an assemblage that is organized around desires. The research provides new knowledge on how privatization processes and public-private partnerships around edtech are constructed. The data was based on interviews with staff members from the municipal administration, ECEC centers and the tracker manufacturer. The analysis focused on the beginning and the end of the project and showed how the enterprise was initially able to connect to the desires of the actors. The assemblage connecting the actors was held together by a common enthusiasm. In the central position were the enthusiastic parents and third sector organizations that helped the enterprise to create contacts with the municipality. The analysis also indicated how the desires of the actors lead to different directions and how the co-operation that is considered a success from the enterprise's point of view was seen with puzzlement, disappointment and sorrow in the municipal administration and the ECEC groups. The article provides an opportunity to understand the ground-level consequences of privatization, the different roles that the public and private sectors have in their partnerships, and the conflicts that arise in these kinds of partnership.

Descriptors: assemblage, desire, early childhood education, privatization, public-private partnership, public sector

Kiesi, Iida – Luoto, Lauri – Palonen, Tuire – Seppänen, Piia. 2023. Edu-business network in Finland: A network analysis of edu-businesses' coalition memberships and board interlocks. The Finnish Journal of Education 54 (5), 464–480.

In this article we study an education business network in Finland. We analyze the network and the companies in it by researching the companies' and their board members' membership connections in edu-business coalitions and company boards. The results were interpreted with the concept of social capital gained from the connections between companies. The research data consisted of three types of actors: four coalitions promoting education business, edu-businesses that are members in these coalitions (N=174), and the board members of these companies (N=739). Based on the analysis, the network was divided into three groups: 1. the largest companies, which are only members of Education Finland, 2. the mainly small, education technology companies that have joined three or four coalitions, and 3. the companies of varying sizes that have joined only one or two coalitions and are not connected via board interlocks. Education Finland, which is coordinated by the Finnish National Agency for Education, is a central edu-business actor in terms of its size and the board interlocks of its members: the state has created favorable structures for education business, especially for education export, where the collaboration of public and private sectors is essential. The operations of the edu-business network that we analyzed can be interpreted as soft privatization, because the public sector enables private actors to participate in the public education system.

Descriptors: board interlocks, edu-business, education export, interlocking directorates, social capital, social networks analysis

Laaksonen, Linda Maria – Jokila, Suvi. 2023. Epistemic entanglements between guidance counselling and private preparatory course providers in seeking admission to higher education. The Finnish Journal of Education 54 (5), 481–492.

We examine entanglements of public and private education providers in the context of Finnish higher education admissions. Drawing from a socio-material perspective we ask how entanglements of guidance counseling, private preparatory course providers, and information related to higher education admissions are constructed in the everyday life of public general upper secondary schools. The socio-material approach enables a diverse examination of the relationships between public education and private preparatory course providers, focusing on the question of how private entities become part of the everyday life of public education. We analyzed ethnographic research data from three Finnish general upper secondary schools during 2019–2021 using abductive analysis. The relationships between guidance counselling and private preparatory course providers were formed through various collaborations, and information on higher education admissions was constructed beyond the boundaries of public education. We identified four entanglements emerging in different situations: 1) the private preparatory course providers' visits to the schools, 2) the guidance counsellors' visits to the events that were organised by private preparatory course providers targeting guidance counsellors and educators, 3) the materials (leaflets, websites etc.) offered by private preparatory course providers and 4) the private preparatory course providers taking part in counseling situations (in discussions). We suggest that an analysis of the relation of public and private educational actors requires moving beyond the public-private dichotomy and examining encounters and negotiations among different actors, such as guidance counsellors and private preparatory course providers.

Descriptors: entanglement, ethnography, guidance counselling, preparatory courses, privatisation, upper secondary education

Plamper, Raakel. 2023. Changing meanings of higher education in Finnish higher education with selective fee policy. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 54 (5), 493–506.

In Finnish higher education (HE), only students coming from outside the EU and EEA areas are charged tuition fees. In this study, I investigate how the tuition fees as a form of privatisation change the construction of private and social benefits and student positions in both international fee-labile and Finnish non-fee-paying master's degree students' speech. Through an interdiscursive analysis of interviews (N=34) I analysed the conflicts inside and between the discourses: the discourse of profits, the discourse of obligation, the discourse of equality and the discourse of growth. In hegemonic struggles between the discourses, the instrumental value of education became focal at the expense of the intrinsic value and societal objectives of HE. This emphasises the position of students as investors or consumers, and the position as societal investment is overshadowed. Changes in meanings and positions challenge the conventional speech associated with Finnish HE about equal HE opportunities and understanding HE as student's obligation to serve the society.

Descriptors: higher education, positions, privatisation, students, tuition fees

Haltia, Nina – Kosunen, Sonja. 2023. Open university education or private preparatory course? Fees in the transition phase from secondary to higher education. *The Finnish Journal of Education* 54 (5), 507–521.

Open university education and private preparatory courses have lately become more topical in public discussion in Finland. During the 2010's they both have increased their volume of activity. Both open university education and private preparatory courses collect fees of which they have been criticised and which is one of the reasons they have also been compared to each other. In this article we study these educational activities and analyse how they have become constructed on the boundary between public and private forms of education. We explore the nature of these activities from two perspectives: 1) how the funding of open university education and private preparatory courses are being organised and 2) how these activities are being constructed from the perspective of transition to higher education? In our analysis we use previous studies and publications, documents and statistical information. We suggest that open university education and private preparatory courses bring characteristics of privatisation to the transition phase between secondary and higher education. In planning and steering their practices, both of these activities utilise the competitiveness of student admissions and the uncertainty that arises from that. In seeking admission, applicants are striving to manage the uncertainty by utilising these educational activities. The roles of these activities in relation to the higher education system, however, differ in for instance that only open university education offers formal credits and that teachers in these activities are recruited on different grounds. It can be asked, whether education policy and practices of education should be more explicit in making the difference between public and private forms of education.

Descriptors: higher education, open university education, private preparatory courses, privatization, student admission