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Reading Diploma as a Pedagogical Tool for Reading Engagement

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According to the national as well as international tests, the amount of weak readers and the variety of reading skills is growing among Finnish students (Kauppinen & Marjanen, 2020; Leino et al., 2019). This presentation is based on a project Lukeva Salo (Reading Salo). Lukeva Salo is a two-year project started August 2020 in the city of Salo in Finland. The aim of the project was to support educators and families in their attempts to promote students' reading. One of the aims of the project was to enable all students to read 30 minutes daily as many international studies recommend (PIRLS 2016; PISA 2018). To help as many students as possible to reach that goal, a reading challenge called the Salonen Reading Diploma was introduced. In the challenge, the students are encouraged to read a certain number of books in order to reach the diploma. In general, reading diplomas are popular pedagogical tools at Finnish schools (Ihalainen & Vainio-Mattila, 2004; Miettinen, 2018.)

This presentation focuses on investigating how the teachers use the reading diploma as a part of their pedagogy and what kind of pedagogical support they give to their students. The data presented in this study has been collected via online questionnaires from six 3rd grade and 7th grade teachers in the school year 2021–2022.

The results show that teachers use diverse methods in relation to the reading diploma activity and there are a lot of creative methods for getting engaged with the texts. Teachers choose the reading diploma as a pedagogical tool to increase students' reading during their free time, to improve students' reading skills and to expand their knowledge in literature. About half of the teachers use the reading diploma as a compulsory task and half of the teachers as a voluntary activity. It seems that reading challenges like reading diplomas give the teachers possibility to make pedagogical choices in their implementation.

The presentation will be given in Finnish.

Keywords: Literature lessons, Reading diploma, Reading instructions

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