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**Title/Título:** Focus groups in school-parents partnership. Some methodological issues  
Enfoque de grupos en la relación centrodocente-padres. Algunos aspectos metodológicos

**Topic:** Strategies and methodologies to promote family-school-community partnership  
Estrategias y metodologías para promover la cooperación entre las familias, los centros docentes y las entidades sociales comunitarias

**Presentation time/Día de presentación:** Session in English. Thursday 15, 4:00-5:30 p.m. Room 2, Third Floor

Sesión en Inglés. Jueves 15, 4:00-5:30 p.m. Sala 2, Tercer Piso

### **Abstract**

In recent years, we have witnessed a growing interest towards research methodologies which can lead to a better understanding of organizational practices, with the aim to help policy makers in developing strategies intended to foster active partnerships between parents and school. At the same time, research in educational contexts is adopting qualitative methodologies to investigate teachers' daily relational problems, with special regard to school-parents-community links. An overview of the existing literature (Rennie, Watson, Monteiro, 2002) underlines a new attention for qualitative research on the field, viewed as a privileged and useful way to gather and interpret data. In this paper we present the results of a research conducted with four Focus Groups (N=30), composed of teachers and parents of a primary and a secondary Italian schools. This work represented the first step of an action-research project aimed at building a new organization in the relationships between parents and schools. The texts produced during the Focus Groups were studied mainly through two software tools: Nud-Ist (the acronym stands for "Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching and Theory-building"; it is a well known package widely used in the field of Grounded Theory) and T-Lab Pro 4.0 (an interesting and rather new software consisting of various tools for text analysis, mapping and support to interpretation). It is an example of how a carefully conceived qualitative research can lead to results which are as strict, replicable and cogent as those of mainstream quantitative research.