



Indicators of health promoting schools in Ireland: towards the participative inclusion of students.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a political and practical need to develop appropriate indicators for health promoting schools. As key stakeholders in education, students have the right to be fully engaged in this process. This research proposed a process for engaging with students to develop school level indicators of health; a total of 164 students generated and categorised indicators and developed schematic representations of their analyses.

METHODOLOGY

In the first classroom, students answered the question “*If you moved to a new school, what would it need to have to be a healthy place?*” on individual flashcards, which were classified into groups using a variation of the card game ‘snap’ in the second classroom. In the third classroom, students discussed the relationships between the developed categories and determined how the categories should be presented. These procedures were repeated twice in three schools, resulting in six developed schemas.

RESULTS

The six sets of categories showed remarkable similarity, physical aspects of the school predominated but emotional and social health issues also emerged as potential indicators. The schema demonstrated the holistic perspectives of students. They illustrate the importance of relationships and the physical and psycho-social environment within schools.

CONCLUSIONS

These data illustrate that students can productively engage in the process of indicator development and have the potential to act as full stakeholders in health promoting schools. The methods enabled student control over the data generation, analysis and presentation phases of the research, and provided a positive, fun experience for both students and researchers.

PRESENTED

As a Paper Presentation, to the Researching Children's Worlds Conference in Galway in February, 2008 by S. O'Higgins, Dr. Saoirse Nic Gabhainn, Dr. Jane Sixsmith, Dr. Enda Delaney, M. Moore & Ms. Joanna Inchley in 2008.

As a Paper to WHO 5th Workshop on the Evaluation of the European Network of Health Promoting Schools in Sigriswil, Switzerland in June 2006, by S. O'Higgins, Dr. Saoirse Nic Gabhainn, Dr. Jane Sixsmith, Dr. Enda Delaney, M. Moore & Ms. Joanna Inchley .

As a Paper to the National Institute of Medical Research (Epidemiology and Public Health) in May 2007 in Toulouse, France by Dr. Saoirse Nic Gabhainn, Dr. Jane Sixsmith, S. O'Higgins, Dr. Enda Delaney, M. Moore. Indicators of success for health in schools: the development of schematic models by children.

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