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Schools that Promote Health, Well-being and Educational Success in the Next Decade

Health Literacy as a Learning Outcome

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Health Literacy? – Our presentation

- What is health literacy and how does it/ can it relate to the school child?
- Leena Paakkari - “Health literacy as a learning outcome in school” – five core components of health literacy.
- Michael Ormshaw - Health literacy applied to the health education domains of Physical Activity and Nutrition – defining an index of HL & measuring health literacy.
- Questions and comments
Brief thoughts on H.L.

- Historically and geographically diverse interpretations of health literacy, its meaning and measure...
- There are COMMON THEMES when defining health literacy...
- A call for action...and a call for diverse application of health literacy...to be context, content and setting specific...
- Some argument over the content and construction of health literacy...
- Expanding area of interest, discourse and research...

A definition of health literacy

Health literacy comprises:

*a broad range of knowledge and competencies that people seek to encompass, evaluate, construct and use.*

Through health literacy competencies people become able:

*to understand themselves, others and the world in a way that will enable them to make sound health decisions, and to work on and change the factors that constitute their own and others’ health chances* (cf. Abel, 2007; Zarcadoolas et al., 2005).

A typical definition: “The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions” (Ratzan and Parker 2000)
Five core components of health literacy

(1) theoretical knowledge
(2) practical knowledge
(3) critical thinking
(4) self-awareness
(5) citizenship

- A component:
  not necessarily single skills, but rather broader competence fields

In more detail

- **Theoretical knowledge**
  - Factual knowledge of health issues, ability to recall
  - A necessary basis for other components

- **Practical knowledge**
  - Health related skills
  - To put theory into practice (ability to apply)

- **Critical thinking**
  - To raise doubts, to make arguments etc.
  - To deal with large amount of knowledge, to have power over the knowledge

- **Self-awareness**
  - Ability to self-reflect: to inquire and evaluate one’s thoughts, feelings and behaviour, to relate the topics to one’s own life, and to understand one’s self as a learner
  - To make personal meanings, to understand one’s self

- **Citizenship**
  - The ability to act in an ethically-responsible way and take social responsibility
  - To participate in health promoting actions at different levels
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Creation on learning situations

Theoretical knowledge

- To memorize
  - Teacher: expert
  - Pupil: passive recipient
  - Knowledge: non-complex

Practical knowledge

- To apply
  - Teacher: activator
  - Pupil: active participant
  - Knowledge: non-complex

Critical thinking

- To link/raise doubts
  - Teacher: guide
  - Pupil: critical thinker
  - Knowledge: complex

Self-awareness

- To self-reflect
  - Teacher: creator of a safe atmosphere
  - Pupil: a reflective inquirer
  - Knowledge: complex

Citizenship

- To show ethical and collective reflection
  - Teacher and Pupil: participants of a learning community
  - Knowledge: complex

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A Study: School Children’s Health Literacy and Health Behaviour:
Physical Activity and Nutrition in Focus
Michael Ormshaw (Lasse Kannas)

1. Measuring school children’s health literacy as a learning outcome

Theme: essential competences = HL learning outcomes

Health literacy

1. What?
- Measure school children’s PA and nutrition related knowledge, skills and understanding
- Compare to behaviours

2. Why?
- Interest in effectiveness of education system to equip the youth for later life
- Try to improve curriculum content and delivery by employing evidence based practice

3. How?
- Formulation of health literacy index of physical activity and nutrition – setting and context specific
- Components of physical activity and nutrition related health education
- Development of effective and valid measurement instrument

Literature review and intuitive categorisation of health education components
Building of HE components as learning outcomes – DELPHI SURVEY
Systematic review to discover current situation and methods of childhood HL measurement
Health literacy and the school child: a route through the development

- 1995 – The National Health Education Standards – ACHEIVING HEALTH LITERACY: 7 STANDARDS.
- Obstacles = Unconnected/irrelevant health instruction and Failure to document student performance
- Nutbeam 2000 – Outcome model
- St Leger 2001 – HL in a school setting
- Institute of Medicine 2004 – Education as an “intervention point” in the HL framework
- WHO 2004 – skills for health – measurement and evaluation of HL in terms of skills based education

Study: The processes in context

Task 1
Review and analysis of literature
1. Teaching materials, text books, national and international guidelines and recommendations etc.
2. Health literacy (HL) definitions and descriptions
3. Initial HL measurement tool

Outcome 1
Initial list of common learning themes and topics
BRANDED AS COMPONENTS OF HEALTH EDUCATION (HE)
1. Teaching materials, text books, national and international guidelines and recommendations etc.
2. Health literacy (HL) definitions and descriptions
3. Current HL measurement tool
Measuring all “dimensions” of HL to be piloted and shortened

Outcome 2
Combination of HE components with common HL abilities and skills e.g. seek, understand, communicate, access etc.

Outcome 3
Initial measurement instrument
Consisting of 141 items in 17 sections

Task 2
SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Outcome - questions answered
How have childhood health literacy been measured (tools, questions, methods)?
What child and adolescent specific components of HL have been identified?
What health domains/topics have been deemed important for children?

Task 3
DELFII SURVEY
To obtain collective expert opinion on “importance” of each learning outcome
Most important learning outcomes to measure

Outcome - questions answered
What is the collective expert opinion on the importance of learning outcomes?
Which HE themes and topics should form the subject matter of the HL measurement instrument?
A Systematic Review of Literature: Measuring Childhood Health Literacy

- Components of health literacy – Key competences (Paakkari)
The health education learning outcomes (n=8) cover the whole spectrum of health literacy components

- Systematic review resulted in 9 health literacy categories (with sub categories).

- As demonstrated by the PA and nutrition learning outcome components. The HL components should be the foundation for learning outcomes in any health domain.

To Conclude: health literacy is THE learning outcome
Thank You

Questions?

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