

Health, Health Education and Health Promotion in Schools: key concepts and values

SHE Academy 2017

Venka Simovska, Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, Copenhagen

vs@edy.au.dk

Outline

The conceptualizations of health and underlying values

Health education and health promotion

School as a system

Participation

Learning

The concept of health

- What is a healthy: person, family, workplace, school, city, society?
- Where and how is health created?
- What influences health?
- How (if) health is connected with equity and human rights?

Health as a contested concept

- Contested: constructed, complex, political, loaded with values and emotions, open to diverse, open conflicting interpretations, depending on sociocultural, historical and political context...
- Often simplified in a quest for security and clarity (in practice, policy and research)

Ideally, to do research within the HPS paradigm implies an ambition to layer rather than reduce complexity

Medical concept

- Why people get ill?
- What are the risks?
- How can the risks be avoided, ameliorated and treated?
- Biomedical
- Reductionist
- Mechanistic
- Allopathic

Classical criticism

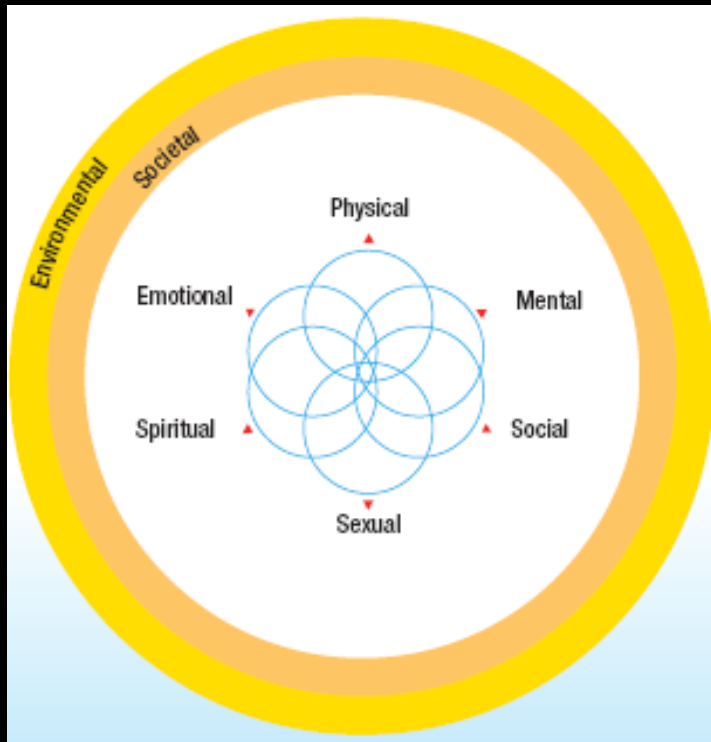
- The medical approach focuses on lifestyle while ignoring the health determinants on a social/societal level
- 'Healthism'
- 'Blaming the victim'
- Crawford 1977, 1980
- Ryan 1971

Holism: an antidote to reductionist epistemology

- Jan Christian Smuts (South Africa), 1926
- 'health'
- Whole, Hale, Healing

Health as assemblage

after Naidoo and Wills, 1994



- Health is embedded in people's everyday lives and in the ecologies of their lives
- The different dimensions are entangled and should be analysed in mutual interaction rather than in isolation

Salutogenic (health-enhancing) concept

- What keeps people healthy?
- What are the coping mechanisms and strategies?
- What is the dynamic between people and their environments?
- Sense of coherence (comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness)
 - Antonovsky, 1979; 1987; 1993; 1996
- Social capital (networks, trust and reciprocity; belonging to a community)
 - Bourdieu 1984, Coleman 1988, Putnam 1993

Socio-ecological concept

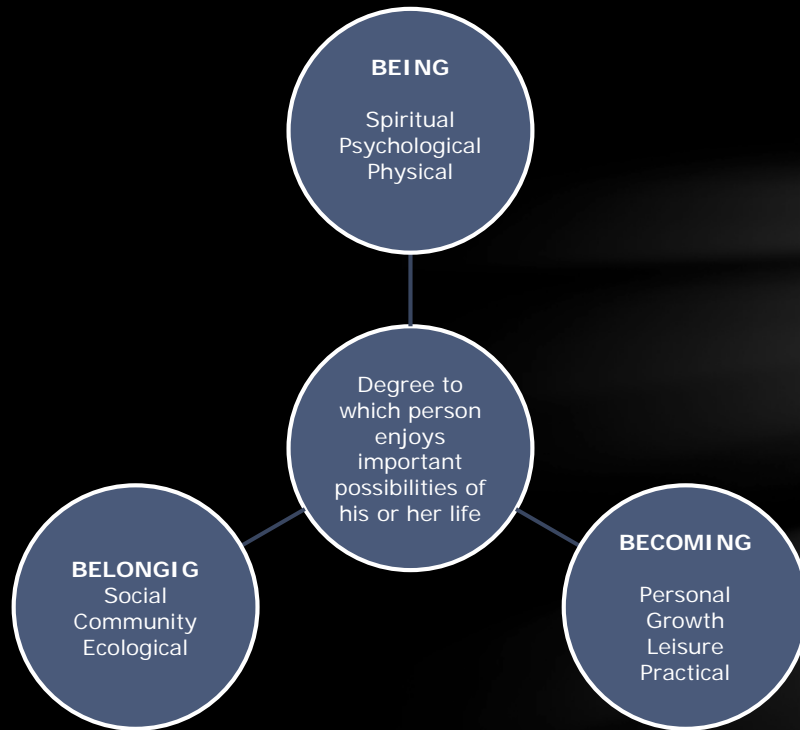
- Holistic view: health as a positive state of wellbeing, multidimensional and complex
 - Entangled with a number of social determinants besides biological e.g. political, economic, cultural, psychological and environmental
- Health is created in places where people live, love, learn, work and play
 - WHO, 1986; Kickbusch, 1997

The World Health Organization

- Health is a state of well-being, representing a fundamental human right and an investment in a better, more democratic and just society
- ...the extent to which an individual or group is able, on the one hand, to realize aspirations and satisfy needs and on the other hand, to change or cope with the environment (WHO, 1984:23)

Health as quality of life

after Raeburn and Rootman 1998



- Health as a degree to which an individual feels that she or he has a choice over the determinants of the three areas...

Social and societal health

Green and Tones 2010

Social (health of an individual)

- Interdependence, capacity to fulfil interpersonal relationships and an ability to accept the responsibility for others and act in a socially responsible ways

Societal

- The capacity and the commitment of a society to address inequalities, human rights and deal with the prevalence of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation etc.

Ideological Tensions

embedded in the philosophy of HP

Social, Holistic, Salutogenic approaches – focused on empowerment and health determinants

- Health as a means
- Social justice and equity
- Social transformation

Medical, Preventative, Curative approaches – focused on adopting pre-determined healthy lifestyles

- Health as an end
- Individual and collective health
- Behaviour change

Continuums

Radical  Conservative

Democratic  Authoritarian

Eco-holistic  Bio-medical

Health Education and Health Promotion



What is Health Education?

Def. 1

Health education is any **planned** activity which promotes health or illness related **learning**, that is, some relatively permanent **change in an individual's competence or disposition**

(Tones, 1990)

What is Health Education?

Def. 3

Consciously constructed opportunities for **learning** involving some form of **communication** designed to improve health literacy, including improving knowledge, and developing life skills which are conducive to **individual and community health**

(HP Glossary, 1998)

What is Health Promotion?

Def. 1

Health promotion represents a **mediating strategy** between people and their environments, synthesizing personal choice and social responsibility in health to create a healthier future

(WHO, 1984)

What is Health Promotion?

Def. 2

Health promotion is concerned
with making healthy choices easier
choices

(Milio, 1986)

What is Health Promotion?

Def. 3

Health Promotion = Health Education X Healthy Public Policy

(Tones and Tilford 1994)

Main Areas of Health Promotion

- Building a healthy public policy
- Creating supportive environments
- Developing personal skills
- Strengthening community action
- Reorienting health services

(Ottawa Charter, 1986)

Historical perspective

- HE has a long history before HP
 - Preventive and traditional 'educational' models dominate until late 70s
 - Critical and 'radical' models appear in the late 70s, preceding HP
- HP as a 'movement' (new public health) or a 'discipline' originates from the 1970

Health Promoting Schools

Holistic, positive notion of health

Health-promotion approach (rather than preventative or traditional-educational or behaviour regulating)

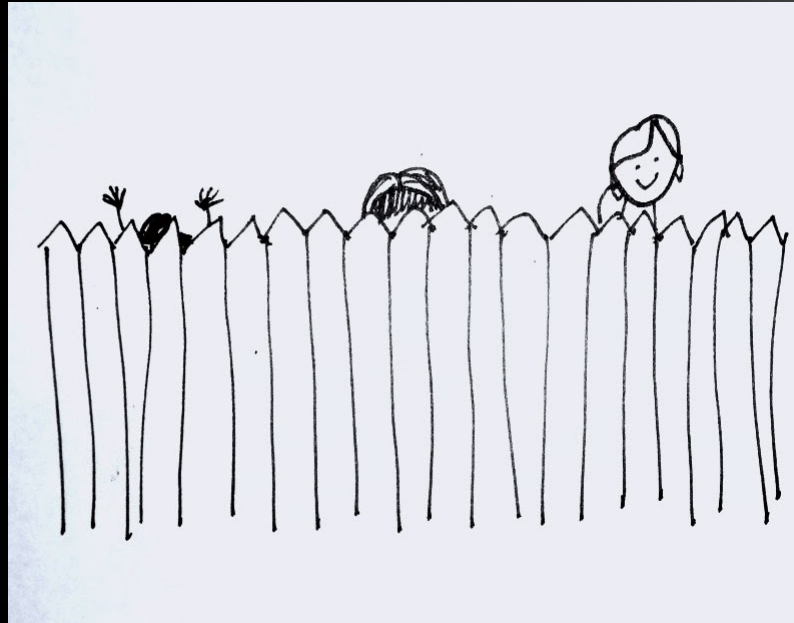
A whole-school approach (school as a system)

Students' empowerment and action competence concerning health matters

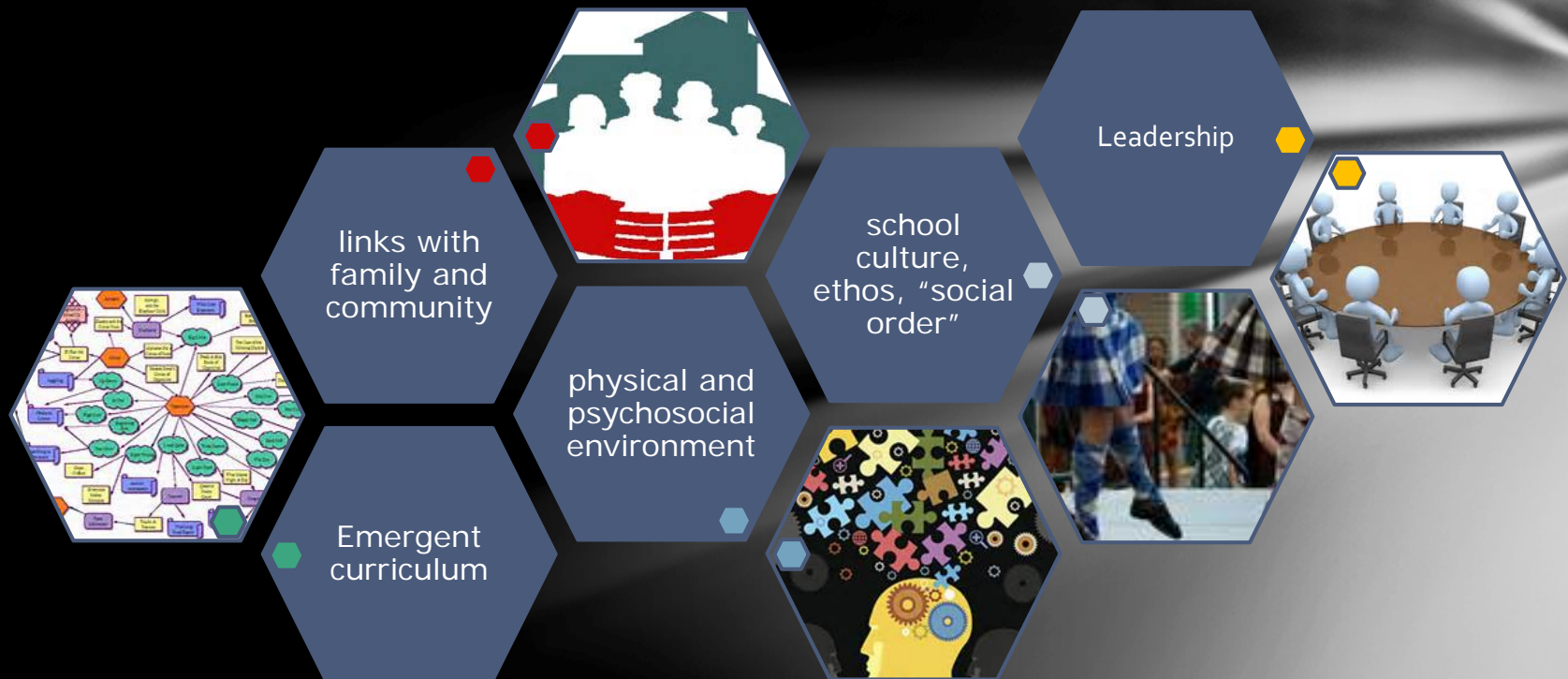
Teachers' and health professionals' competence as 'facilitators of learning about health'

Partnerships on different levels: school, local community, society, international community

Whose experiences matter?
Which (school) dynamics co-produce health and wellbeing?
Who is left out?



School as a system – the whole school; the settings approach



School dynamics and health: interactions and intra-actions

Trust, mutuality, reciprocity – Discrimination and violence

- Valuing diversity, plurality, difference
- Safety and security

Inclusion – Marginalization

- Social connectedness, networks, safe and supportive environments
- A valued social position
- A plurality of social, cultural and physical experiences

Access to resources of participation – Disengagement, indifference, resistance

- School decision making processes (beyond school councils), school norms and culture, home-school tensions, play, co-determination, solidarity...
- Opportunities for influence and Subjectification (Biesta)

Participation as ...

Taking part

- Learners are involved in educational programmes
- Interactivity of the teaching methods

Participation is a motivational tool

Participation as ...

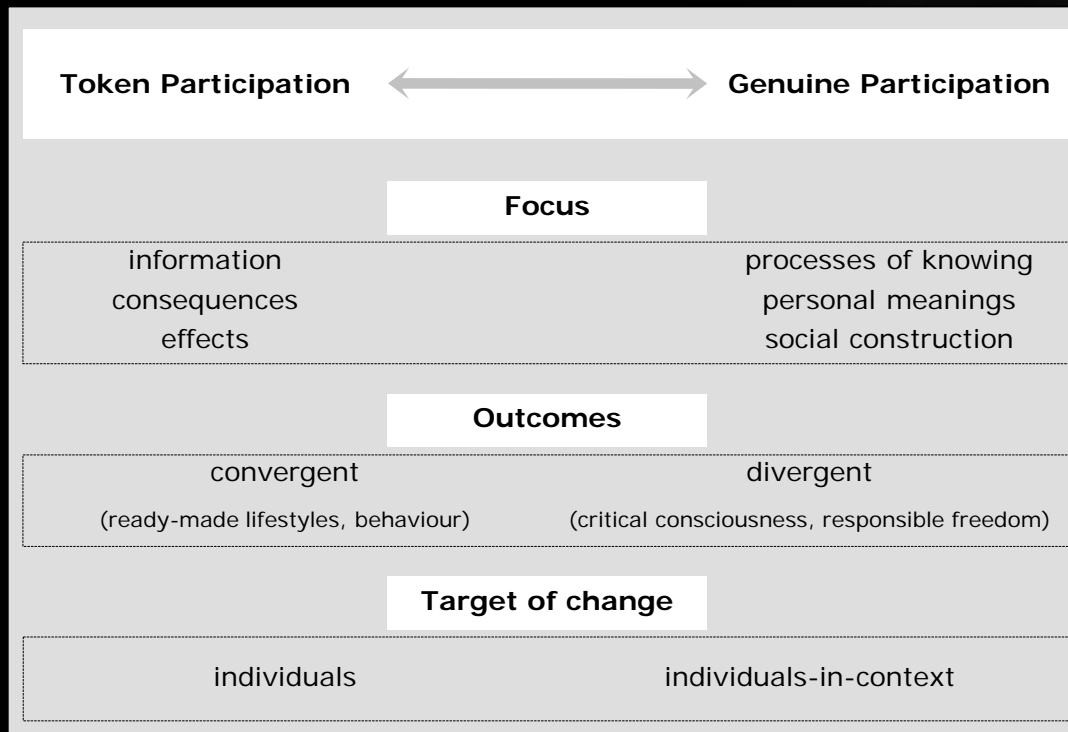
Influencing the matters of concern

- Participation is **active**
- Participation involves **choice**
- Participation has the possibility to be **effective**

Participation is a decision-making strategy

Different qualities of participation

Genuine vs. Token Participation (Simovska, 2005, 2007...)



Genuine participation

Process of sharing decisions and influencing the matters of concern

Participation – in what?

Dialogue

- Negotiating meanings, visions and plans for action
- Exploring alternative ideas, explanations and problem solutions
- Shared frames of reference

Action

- Intentional
- Focused on influencing the causes of a problem in question
- The participants have a say in identifying the causes and carrying out the action

Empowerment

Individual

Empowerment conveys the psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights

Rapaport

Community

Social action process in which individuals and groups act to gain control over their lives in the context of changing the social and political environment

Types of empowerment

Economic empowerment

- Skills and competences, access to secure incomes

Human and social empowerment

- Control over one's life, communities and societies

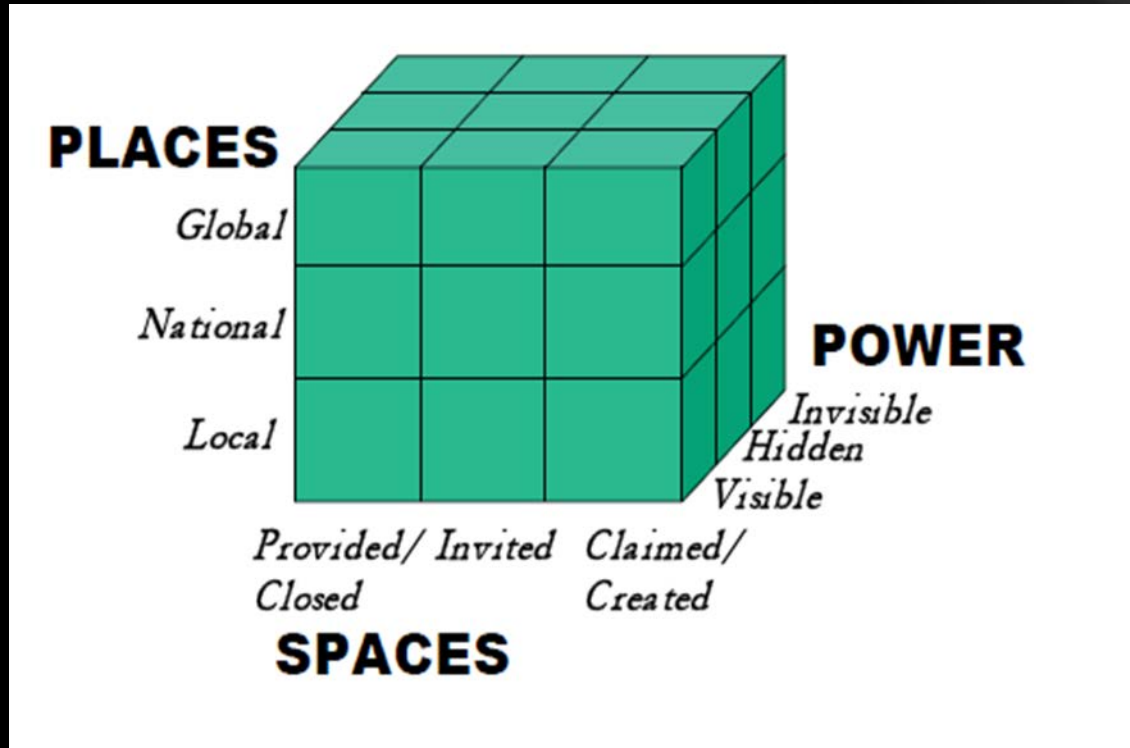
Political empowerment

- Capacity to claim one's rights

Cultural empowerment

- Capacity to redefine norms and recreate cultural and symbolic practices (e.g. minority rights)

Continuums of power



Action competence

Capability – based on critical thinking and incomplete knowledge – to involve oneself as a person with other persons in responsible actions and counter-actions for a more humane world.

Schnack, 1994: 190

Domain knowledge (health matters)

Intrasubjective and interrelational knowledge

Critical reflection

Commitment and Vision

Experience of taking action (skills)

Psychological resilience

Identity: qualified participant and change agent

Jensen, 1997; Simovska, 2005; 2011

Participation and Learning



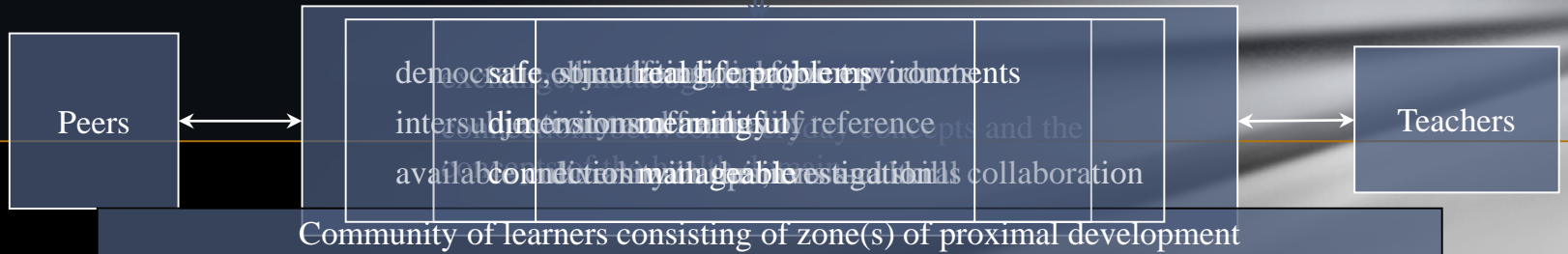
Different learning-theoretical perspectives

	Behaviourist	Cognitive	Situative
Participation In What?	Expert –led acceptable behaviour	Metacognition, reflective; self-determination knowing agents...	Collective knowing; ZPD; individual knowing; participation in practices of communities
Participation How?	Positive and negative reinforcements (from outcomes)	Challenge, fantasy, curiosity (intrinsic); meaningfulness	Learning is valued by the community; identity as active community members
Participation Why?	Knowledge acquisition (individual)	Knowledge construction (individual)	Participatory knowledge building

Conclusions

Genuine Student Participation and Teacher Guidance

Action Competence Development



Appropriation of the cultural resources of knowing related to health

Action competence development and development of identities as active participants in health promotion discourse communities