



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Well-Being and Resilience in a Secondary School in Wales: Pupils and Staff Perspectives.

Ysgol Y Preseli

Dr Nichola Welton, Dr Stuart Jones
(UWTSD); Dr Gill Noam (Harvard
University)

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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Overview of Seminar

- Aims...
- To present an overview of a small scale qualitative research project with Ysgol Y Preseli *(Approval provided for naming school)*
- Focusing on well-being

Background

- **PEARS** : *Programme in Education, Afterschool and Resiliency*
 - Youth development
 - School reform and prevention
 - (Dr Gill Noam Harvard University)

Background

- The Holistic Student Assessment (HSA)
 - An assessment tool designed to measure the young peoples' resiliencies in relation internalising and externalising problem behaviours (Noam et al., 2012).
- This tool has been utilised by the proactive Ysgol Y Preseli
 - A visionary approach to adopting the HSA, the only school in Wales through
 - The encouragement and instigator of the approach of Tim Thomas (School Governor)

Background

- HSA
 - 86-question instrument describing the young person's development as a holistic interaction between four core developmental needs
 - Active Engagement
 - engaging the world physically
 - Assertiveness
 - expressing voice and choice
 - Belonging
 - social connection and relationships
 - Reflection
 - thought and meaning-making.
- (Pear, 2016).

Background

- Effectiveness of the HSA explored quantitatively
 - (e.g. Noam, Malti & Guhn, 2012; Malti, Zuffiano & Noam, 2017).
- No studies to date evaluating its effectiveness using qualitative measures.

Overall Aim

- School of Social Justice and Inclusion and the School of Psychology, in Partnership Ysgol y Preseli and Harvard University.
- Carried out initial qualitative research to address the following research aims and questions.

Overall Aim

- 1) Factors that can influence the well-being of children at Ysgol y Preseli.
- 2) The Barriers that affect well-being and resiliency (Pupils and Staff perspective)

Overall Aim: cont...

- 3) The effectiveness of the HSA in identifying the resiliency and well-being needs of the children.
- 4) The effectiveness of HSA based and other interventions targeted at increasing resiliency and well-being.

Issues

- Health and well-being experienced during childhood and adolescence can have a long-lasting impact on the individual
 - (e.g. Vostanis,2010; Banerjee et al (2016)
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) seen to have a significant impact on the life course of an individual
 - (Bellis, et al 2016).

Policy Context

- Welsh Government 10 year strategy : Mental Health and Well-Being.
- The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) supports this strategy with the overall aim
 - to “improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales” . (Welsh Government, 2015)

Practice

- *The effects of a supportive school initiative can be enduring and can provide a foundation of support and protection, particularly for the children and young people who are experiencing stressful or harmful conditions during their childhood or adolescence.*
 - (Public Policy Institute for Wales, 2016)

Research : Methodology

- A qualitative constructivist participatory design
 - » (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Mason, 2010).
 - Enabling an exploration of how the initiative (HSA & associated interventions) **works in context**
 - 3x Focus groups: Staff x 1/ Participatory FG pupils x 2 (Years 7/10)
 - Participatory principles and methods of data collection used to engage the pupils of Ysgol Y Preseli to provide them with an opportunity for their views to be taken into account.
 - » (Flores, 2008)

Research : Methodology

Participatory evaluation with young people is meant to empower young people, and can make a real contribution to the development process itself. It has the potential to transform situations in the process of learning more about them.

(Gawler, 2005)

Methods: Research with Young People

- Adoption of youth work approach to collect data through participatory activities
- Themes explored with the young people determined the types of activities engaged in:
 - Stress Balloons
 - Clothes Line
 - Rucksacks

Methods: Research with Young People

- The approach was successful in generating feedback from young people in a proactive way.

Themes :Factors that can influence the positive well-being of children at Ysgol y Preseli. PUPILS

Socialisation

Friendships

- Importance of Friendships and being with Friends
- Making friends through activities

Food

School

- Quality of food seen as important

School Environment

Safe and Supportive

- “Only been here since July and it feels like home”
- “sense of belonging to a community”
- “School is fun and I love coming to school”
- Safe

Opportunities

Curricula

- Interesting lessons
- Choices to do some subjects
- Fun lessons
- Teachers motivating
- Extra support available e.g reading

School Staff

Supportive Teachers

- “*Teachers are full of heart*” “
- Head of Year 7
- Youth worker
- Head of Welsh Department
- Counsellor
- Other teachers

Opportunities

Extra Curricula

- clubs
- additional activities
- trips
- fun day

Themes :Factors that can influence the positive well-being of children at Ysgol y Preseli. STAFF

Pupil Voice

Opportunities to be listened too

- YP feel happy to speak to teachers about any worries
- Questionnaires,
- Observations
- Parents evening

Interventions Curricula

Promoting well being:

- Working with External agencies: Havard –HSA
- Personal and Social Development sessions
- Early Intervention
- Mentoring for young children

School Environment

Safe and Supportive

- Safe environment
- Positive relationships with pupils
- Good Communication
- Staff

Interventions Extra Curricula

Promoting well-being activities

- Promoting Well-being activities:
- Step Forward Plan
- Mentoring
- Checking in system
- Buddy System
- Youth Worker
- Working with external agencies

Themes :The Barriers that may affect well-being and resiliency (Pupils and Staff perspective)

School Environment

Teachers attitudes

- Challenging work
- Too much homework
- Teacher pressure
- Teacher Stress
- Pupil Stress

Socialisation

Peer issues ,

- Bullying (Pupils)

Opportunities

Curricula

- To much Homework
- To much pressure on doing well in exams

Opportunities

extra curricula

- More clubs (Pupils)
- More Breaks (Pupils)

Money

- Lack of funds for resources (Pupils)

Equal opportunities

PUPILS

- Access to all sport (e.g. netball, hockey, rugby football)
- Welsh Background seen to be a advantage
- **Not just to focus on academic and certain sporting achievement but to celebrate all external activities**
- Labelling pf pupils accepting all abilities not just exam success.
- Age (excluded from certain clubs)

Themes :The Barriers that affect well-being and resiliency (Pupils and Staff perspective)

Image /
Identity

Pressure to be cool and wear labels (Pupils)

External

Issues at home (Pupils & Staff)

Themes :The effectiveness of the HSA in identifying the resiliency and well-being needs of pupils.

- HSA effective in identifying issues with pupils...and enabling effective support mechanisms to be put in place.

Staff

- Not discussed by pupils directly.
- However interventions with year 7 highlighted as key to promoting their positive feelings towards school and their experiences.

Pupils

Summary

Research identified opportunities for promoting young people's well-being

Research identified some issues that may **impact** on promoting young peoples well-being

From a Staff Perspective the value of HSA was identified

From a Pupil perspective interventions seem to have had a positive impact on them

Limitations /Strengths

A pilot
Requires further
in-depth
questioning
around HSA

Participatory
research
methods
generated a
significant
amount of data:

In an
appropriate,
engaging
“gentle”
manner....

Recommendations

Continue to draw upon a qualitative / participatory methodology to engage:

- ethically and appropriately with young people.

The school is clearly providing opportunities to promote well-being and utilising external bodies to support this...

To consider further young peoples views on what impacts their well-being

Further focused research with Young people regarding the HSA required To draw out the young peoples views on the HSA and associated interventions

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