

Identity in School

A Practical approach

Two main areas:

- **Mutual observations in the school setting.**
- **Meaningfull expectation structures.**

Observations

- Creating meaning in complex environments
- Creating meaningful identities
- Participation through a sense of coherence

Expectation structures

- Reducing complexity
- Reducing risk
- Reliability
- Sustainability

Identity and health

Different identities mean different reasons for being healthy or unhealthy.

Two schools

The children in two schools in the close vicinity of each other have very different knowledge-profiles and contradictory opinions and attitude towards most health related topics.

Two schools

In one school the children have a very negative opinion about the school, the teachers and the way they are being taught. It is obvious, that they unite in an opposition to the school. They express powerlessness and helplessness and tell a story about being neglected.

Two schools

The factual knowledge they receive from school is characterized by doubt and a feeling that they really should learn about other things.

Two schools

The result is that they identify with people and things not related to factual knowledge about health

Instead they tend to focus on this negative bonding in groups against grown-up knowledge.

Two schools

The children in this school also seem to drink more alcohol and smoke more than the children in the other school and they are seemingly aware of this without wanting to change it.

Two schools

On the nearby school the scenery is totally different.

The factual knowledge plays an important identity-bearing role here and the children express a desire to learn more and to know more. They do not express any of the frustration that was evident on the other school.

They seem to understand and identify with the school and the teachers.

There is an overall feeling of coherence in the school and in the interactions between people in the school.

Two schools

It also seems that there is an identity-forming and role-bearing effect connected to actively participating in the classroom-activities.

They still think it is important to have a group identity with their peers – but it is not a group identity, that is based on frustrations and animosity towards the school.

Conclusions

There are extremely different motivations and conditions for being healthy and for thinking about health in the school.

Conclusions

Identity seems to be deeply rooted in the observations of the communication in the different contexts that the children participate in.

To be able to assess or observe your own identity in the communication seems to be connected to the ability to develop action-competencies and to use knowledge.

Conclusions

By self-defining themselves through health and health-related topics the young people construct a conscious health-identity. Such a more or less clearly defined health-identity is important for the strategies the young people use to navigate within the information and communication about health and health-related topics:

Conclusions

In the school-classes you often find several clearly defined types or roles, that are created through different approaches to health or exercise and has an identity-forming function in the group of young people. These roles and identities are very different from school to school.

- How do we work with these concepts in our daily interactions with school children?

How do we make the school (and the individuals within the school) more easily observable and thereby more meaningful?

How do we make the schoolchildren better observers?



Group discussion 1

GOAL:

“Empowerment” and “Identity” as objectives for health promotion in schools:

- are they appropriate?
- are they connected?
- what are the alternatives?

Group discussion 2

MEANS:

Using “New Story/Dialogue” & “Children’s observations” as methods for health promotion in schools:

- are they useful?
- - what are the alternatives?