

Social Sciences and Humanities

A Research Resource Base for Health Promoting Schools

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Background of Research

Health promoting schools (HPS), also known as "healthy schools," are schools whose ongoing development as a healthy school is an inherent part of their operations, which can then form the basis for those schools to become centers for promoting health in their local community.

The range of health and well-being issues affecting schools and local communities has diversified in recent years. These issues include children and teachers' physical and mental health, people's psychological responses to security incidents and natural disasters, and the impact of certain patterns of use of the internet and mobile phones. Instead of this diverse range of issues being tackled in isolation from each other, a more holistic approach will be required to identify them, and they will require measures that are characterized by a firm order of priority. HPS are an attempt to build comprehensive, organized bases in communities that encompass both such physical and psychological aspects of people's health. HPS are also a program that the WHO is promoting strongly.

Pupils, teaching staff, parents and guardians, local residents and specialists work together at health promoting schools to provide health education for the children, who represent the future heart of the local community, as well as for parents and guardians and local residents. HPS also develop specific action plans concerning the school and community envi-

ronment, such as banning smoking within the school and planting grass areas in the schoolyard, along with measures to reduce stress experienced by children and teachers.

At present, however, each individual HPS is acting under its own endeavors. That demonstrates the need for a strong research resource base both for Japan and other countries that promotes HPS, and we have launched a research project to that end with the participation of a diverse range of specialist academics from the Faculty of Education.

Results from this research

After participating in seminars and visiting health promoting schools in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore, we came to feel strongly that there was a need for a document along the lines of a comprehensive HPS checklist, and we have developed such a checklist which, by going through the different HPS elements described on the list, makes it easy to determine if a school can be described as "healthy" or not. We are currently also preparing specific examples for inclusion in the schools' PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Action) cycles, along with other forms and models they can use.

We presented these results at a symposium at the East Asian International Conference on Teacher Education Research in December 2010, and we are also presenting them at symposiums and research seminars which

we are holding for teachers to promote HPS (the first was held in February 2011, and the second is scheduled for November 2011). For more information go to Web Site.

[URL] <http://chiba-hps.org/about/>

Prospective developments

While developing support programs for particular health promoting schools in Japan, we are also in the process of constructing HPS models. In addition, we will be sharing information with other countries, which we hope will come to serve as an international resource base.

