

Health Education and Health Promotion in Health Promoting School

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Abstract

This article considers the findings of the project called ‘Szkoła Promująca Zdrowie’ by Polish schools. It emphasizes the importance of health promotion: a wholesome and physical education in our schools. As well as raising awareness of the subject, the article also considers the stages of the program as they were introduced.

Introduction

Contemporary education at school is based on the concept of the comprehensive education of the human being, according to which “education helps to develop all the aspects of people’s personality (physical, mental , social and spiritual)”¹.

The personal aim of the school reform is regarding a pupil as a person who has rights to their own fulfillment, dignity, distinctness and thorough development. Nowadays a student means the highest value – the subject of education². Therefore school education (teaching, training and educating) should be conducted in a friendly, welcoming atmosphere and should contribute to the students’ own development so that it would lead to their maturity and fulfillment as a person.

The subjective attitude requires adequate activities and educational processes. “Education should concern the person’s thorough psychophysical nature, the body and the soul”³.

The concept of integral education shows the necessity of the human being’s thorough education emphasizing the importance of all the aspects of education including health education.

Health education in a Health Promoting School

Kindergartens and health promoting schools are the institutions which implement health education in a special manner. Their educational work is aimed at teaching children and teenagers to adopt the right behaviour and attitudes towards health. Accordingly, it is important to emphasize a wider range of activities offered by health promoting schools in comparison with traditional schools (those which do not implement the health promoting school programme, though they are also obliged to conduct health education and health promotion according to “Podstawa programowa w zreformowanej szkole” – a basic curriculum in a reformed school)⁴.

¹See, Biblioteczka Reformy, *MEN o wychowaniu w szkole*, nr 13, Warszawa 1999; W. Furmanek, *Podstawowe zadania reformy oświaty*, in: „Oświata Podkarpacka”, Biuletyn Kuratorium Oświaty w Rzeszowie, nr 1, styczeń 2000, p. 5 – 24.

² To find more see: Założenia współczesnej koncepcji kształcenia i wychowania w zreformowanej szkole, in: Biblioteczka Reformy, *MEN o wychowaniu w szkole*, nr 13, Warszawa, 2000, p.3 – 5.

³ Biblioteczka Reformy, *MEN o wychowaniu fizycznym w szkole*, nr 26, Warszawa, 2000, p.8.

⁴ The reform of education obliged all educational institutions to implement health education. See, Rozporządzenie MENiS z dnia 26 lutego 2002 roku w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz kształcenia ogólnego w poszczególnych typach szkół [Dz.U.z 2002 r. Nr 51, poz.458].and Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 23 sierpnia 2007 r. zmieniające rozporządzenie w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz kształcenia ogólnego w poszczególnych typach szkół [DZ.U. z dnia 31 sierpnia 2007 r. Nr 157, poz.1100].

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The health education offered by health promoting schools is not limited only to the classroom, but it is also conducted by the family and the local community and concerns pupils' relatives and peers. It increases the effectiveness of education as a fast changing one from *autoedukacja* (self learning) into *heteroedukacja odwrócona* (teaching others) is characteristic of health education⁵.

Therefore, according to the considerations above as well as to the concept of European health promoting schools “ every child and every young person should have the opportunity to attend a health promoting school. The main aim of health promoting school is to introduce a healthy lifestyle among both students and school staff and to promote it outside school by inviting parents and all the other people who consider health important to join”⁶.

In a health promoting school “health” is regarded as an important value in a human being's life. It enables people to achieve happiness, thus it is an appreciated value in education. Health care should be encouraged by the family, kindergarten and school and other institutions which support education.

Education in a *Health Promoting School*

In a health promoting school the education of a young human being focuses on building and developing the awareness of the importance of your own and other people's health care. Adopting the right attitude to health requires the pupils to gain:

- the knowledge of health and the conditions necessary to stay healthy (knowledge is fundamental and forms the base for practical skills),
- the abilities to care about hygiene and your own and other people's health.
- the awareness of the value of health⁷.

According to T. Williams “a health promoting school is a value, an idea which cannot be achieved, but it can be implemented in life by long-term activities”⁸.

There is no a set recipe for a health promoting school , yet it can be observed that more and more educational institutions are introducing this programme⁹. It proves that the performance of health promoting schools is regarded as attractive and effective by all the subjects of school education (pupils, teachers and parents).

A big advantage of a health promoting school is the ability to adjust the programme to the individual needs of each educational institution. It means setting the aims, planning the

⁵ Compare: Szczeble wychowania zdrowotnego, in: M. Demel, *O wychowaniu zdrowotnym*, PZWS, Warszawa 1968, p. 125 – 149. Thanks to the activity of health promoting schools parents and siblings are educated even since the first school stage (years III of primary school) However, the parents' attitude of maturity is essential in order to promote a healthy lifestyle and make some changes regarding their bad habits. An attempt to apply the knowledge about harmful effects of smoking in their everyday life can be an example.

⁶ I.Young, T.Williams, *Zdrowa szkoła*. The Polish version. Warszawa 1990, p.12.

⁷ For more see, Rozporządzenie MENiS z dnia 26 lutego 2002 w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz kształcenia ogólnego w poszczególnych typach szkół (Dz.U.z2002 r. Nr 51, poz.458) Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 23 sierpnia 2007 r. zmieniające rozporządzenie w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz kształcenia ogólnego w poszczególnych typach szkół (DZ.U. z dnia 31 sierpnia 2007 r. Nr 157, poz.1100).

⁸ I.Young, T.Williams, *Zdrowa szkoła (Health Promoting School)*, p.15.

⁹According to the data of the Regional Group of Health Promoting Schools (by B. Wolny) in the districts of Tarnobrzeg, Kolbuszowa, Stalowa Wola and Nisko in 2002/2003 there were 40 educational institutions carrying out the programme. In 2004/2005 the number increased to 70. The latest data show that at present there are 99 of such institutions, whose professional performance have been confirmed by obtaining regional and provincial certificates.

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actions, drawing up programmes and projects as a result of the previous diagnosis and assessing systematically the effectiveness of the actions which were performed (partial and complete evaluation).

The actions to be taken are not obligatory or limited in time. The schools are not expected to achieve as much as possible in the shortest time, but to reach the aim (the pupil's right attitude to health) step by step. Education towards health value ought to be the discovery, the acquisition and the implementation of the health value in life.

The Stages of Creating a *Health Promoting School*

According to the creators of *Health Promoting School* concept the characteristics of health promoting school (kindergarten) are:

- health education included in the educational programme,
- the ethos of health in school (kindergarten), which means including health in school (kindergarten) life and caring about all the pupils' (children's) well-being,
- cooperation between school (kindergarten), the family and the local community¹⁰.

The tasks set by the programme enable the school, the family and the local community to integrate. There is a coherence in the interaction between all the subjects interested in education, particularly education towards health education values.

The activity of *Health Promoting School* is based on the following structure:

1. The introductory stage – the introduction of the idea of *Health Promoting School* among pupils, their parents and the local community;
2. The preliminary diagnosis (aimed at discovering the health problems concerning a certain institution);
3. Planning the action (preparing the plan and schedule of the activities);
4. Implementing the programme and monitoring it;
5. Evaluating the process and its results¹¹.
6. Careful planning of all the actions makes it possible for the school to modify and improve its performance in the field of education, care and prevention¹².

Evaluation is one of the most important stages in the activity of health promoting school. It helps to realize if the actions undertaken by the school enable it to effectively introduce all the subjects of school education (pupils, parents and teachers) to the right attitude towards health, regarding it as a top rank value in an individual system of values.

¹⁰ I.Young, T.Williams, *Zdrowa szkoła (Health Promoting School)* The Polish version, Warszawa 1990, p.18.

¹¹ See, Model (technologie) tworzenia szkoły promującej zdrowie, [Model (technology) for creating health-promoting school], in: B.Woynarowska, M.Sokołowska (red.), *Szkoła promująca zdrowie, doświadczenia z dziesięciu lat (Health promoting school, 10 years of experience)*, Warszawa 2000, p. 47 – 62.

¹² Health Promoting Schools (HPS) have been the first to evaluate their work, which inspired the educational authorities to evaluate the quality of work of all the educational institutions. It proves that HPS care about the quality of their work and observe significant effects in the form of good relationships (pupil-teacher, worker-parents), education based on dialogue regarded as the way of building up mutuality, friendly atmosphere, the pupil's opportunity of self-development (without harmful competition), especially concerning less talented pupils. In a health promoting school every pupil is important.

Physical education in the programme of *Health Promoting School*

A health promoting school understands and strongly emphasizes the importance of physical education because it regards the value of people's health and physical condition in a holistic way. This concept makes it possible to recognize various aspects of health.

A healthy person means a person who is physically, mentally, socially and spiritually healthy. Z. Żukowska stresses the necessity of health education among young people in connection with the right attitude towards health. She states that health promoting school not only teaches children and teenagers how to keep healthy, but it also teaches them self-evaluation and self-control of their own health enabling them to make right moral choices in order to care about health now and in their adult life¹³. Health promoting school, whose main aim is to promote a healthy lifestyle among the whole school community (pupils, parents and teachers), show the importance of all the school subjects, emphasizing the role of physical education as the subject responsible not only for physical, but also for mental, social and spiritual health. All the educational-didactic activities of a health promoting school are aimed at the pupil's integral development¹⁴.

The health promoting school claims that a human being is an entity whose health consists of several associated aspects. These aspects depend on each other and affect each other, thus only when integrated can they lead to happiness and well-being of a person.

To be able to control their own development pupils must be *physically healthy*, meaning in considerably good physical condition with a properly functioning body. They should also be *mentally healthy* being able to think logically. *Emotional health*, which means the ability to recognize feelings such as fear, happiness, sorrow or anger, should be mentioned, too. It is also important to know how to cope with tension and stress of everyday life. The necessity of being *socially healthy* means the ability to have a good relationship with people and finally *spiritual health* signifies being guided by rules and values of faith and human being's spiritual nature.

A Health Promoting School, taking into consideration the necessity of health care according to the holistic concept, takes measures to improve the health and mood of all the pupils. It prepares them for a healthy lifestyle in the future by teaching them how to live in a healthier way and it promotes physical activeness among the whole school community (pupils, parents and teachers).

In such a school physical education cannot be limited to a school subject of the set number of hours resulting from the curriculum. It is an integral part of educational, health and didactic tasks whose aim is to care about pupils' health during all the classes and

¹³See, Z. Żukowska, *Zdrowie człowieka rozpatrywane w kategoriach wyboru moralnego i odpowiedzialności*, (Human health in terms of moral choice and responsibility) in: Z. Dziubiński (red.), *Sport na przełomie tysiącleci: szanse i nadzieje [Millennium of the sport: chances and hopes]*, Warszawa, 2000, p.288 – 297.

¹⁴ In health promoting school the human aspect predominates the material aspect, human values are more important than utilitarian values. In such a school each pupil is important, each pupil is special and unique. It does not only consider the results of various contests as it takes place in so called "creative schools". A health promoting school believes in each pupil who is the most important value and all the activities are based on the dialogue: "A dialogue means mutuality" (J. Tischner). The dialogue – regarded as a method – is a way of communicating in which the subjects are willing to achieve understanding, rapprochement and cooperation(...), while the attitude of dialogue means the willingness to understand and cooperate (...) with the surroundings. (J. Tarnowski, *Jak wychowywać?*, Warszawa, 1993 p. 44). That is why the competition is based on a fair play rule and it considers the human nature of people's health. The pupils do not have to pay a high price of stress, nervous breakdown or depression for taking part in the competition. It is not a "horse race" – the results are not the most important. What counts most is each pupil's effort to show their abilities in different fields i.e. sport, art or music.

about their good rest. These include organizing mid-lesson exercise and breaks between lessons, as well as providing pupils with additional food at school and control their correct posture during classes. It also offers after school physical activities. Physical education of this kind requires the cooperation between all the educational institutions, teachers and parents. Only then can physical education become an integrated tool of general education, preparing pupils for caring about their health and physical condition after leaving school¹⁵.

Conclusion

To sum up, it should be emphasized that physical education and health education are strongly associated with each other¹⁶ and they affect each other. Both, physical and health education show the necessity of:

- Physical activity as a condition of being healthy;
- Balanced diet;
- Active attitude towards life;
- Education towards safety;
- Personal hygiene.

According to the above, there is a need to involve both spheres in health education as the contemporary concept of physical and health education is based on teaching pupils how to care for health and physical and mental condition through their whole life.

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¹⁵See, W. Osiński, *O pojmowaniu oraz miejscu wychowania fizycznego w kulturze fizycznej* in: *Zarys teorii wychowania fizycznego*, Poznań, 1996, p. 35 – 47.

¹⁶ I. Young and T. Williams (1990) name three cornerstones of health education at school: 1) *care for yourself*: physical activity and rest, healthy diet, safety, personal hygiene, appropriate use of drugs 2) *relations with other people*: social skills, friendship, emotions 3) *society and the surroundings*: care for the society, participation of the society, social services. See. I. Young and T. Williams, *Zdrowa szkoła*, p. 43.

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Biography

Barbara Wolny has a PhD in the study of social sciences. She is a tutor in the Off-Campus Faculty of Social Sciences in Stalowa Wola, which is part of the Catholic University of Lublin. Since 2002 she has guided a local network of the schools running health promotion program.

Her areas of scientific expertise include: a wholesome and physical education and health promotion.

She is the author of the following: 'Wychowanie fizyczne w zreformowanej szkole' part 1, 'Ranga i miejsce wychowania fizycznego w polskiej szkole', 'Wartości i wartościowanie wychowania fizycznego przez współczesną szkołę', 'Edukacja zdrowotna w szkole. Poradnik dla nauczycieli realizujących edukację prozdrowotną' as well as many articles and school curricula.