

RESEARCH TITLE

Evaluation of a school-based health promotion intervention in a resource-constrained community

Name: Dr Mandiza Dinah (M.D.) Ngwenya
Supervisors: Professor Ronél (R.) Ferreira
Professor William (W.) Fraser
Institution: University of Pretoria, South Africa
Year of Award: 2019
Qualification: PhD (Educational Psychology)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the outcome of a school-based health promotion intervention that was implemented in three primary schools in a resource-constrained community in Bronkhorstspuit, South Africa, among Grade 4 to 6 learners. I accordingly investigated the learners', teachers' and parents' experiences, perceptions and potential behavioural changes in terms of healthy food practices after the implementation of the Win-LIFE (Wellness in Lifestyle, Intake, Fitness and Environment) intervention. The study forms part of a broader institutional project. I followed an evaluation research design, applying Participatory Reflection and Action (PRA) principles, an interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative approach. The conceptual framework was based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bio-ecological theory and Bandura's (1986) social cognitive learning theory. A purposeful sample of 31 learners, 18 teachers and 31 parents participated in PRA-based data-generation and documentation activities. In addition, I used observation-as-context-of-interaction, field notes, research diaries and audio-visual techniques. In terms of results, the teacher-participants valued the PRA-based nature and their involvement as partners in developing and implementing the intervention. They also perceived the intervention as valuable to others, experienced some challenges during the implementation and made certain recommendations for future implementation. The parent-participants indicated that they gained knowledge about healthy food practices because of the Win-LIFE intervention. They started applying their newly gained knowledge yet required additional guidelines. Finally, the learner-participants' experiences (reported as part of two master's studies) of the enriched Life Skills curriculum (Bentley, 2016) and Natural Sciences and Technology curriculum (De Vos, 2017) were positive. They valued the experiential and cooperative learning approach and supportive facilitators, resulting in positive learning outcomes and their application of the newly gained knowledge, despite some challenges they identified. The findings thus indicate that the Win-LIFE intervention was valuable to teachers, learners and parents, increasing their awareness of, as well as their knowledge and skills regarding healthy eating practices (food choice, production, preparation and storage) and healthy living, thereby enabling them to adopt a healthier lifestyle. Furthermore, the teachers' repertoire of

teaching strategies was extended. The learners, on the other hand, began to engage in their own learning more actively, based on the confidence, discipline and ability that they gained to retain information. Learners also transferred their knowledge and skills to their parents and other family members.

Keywords: Enriched school curricula; Food choice; Food consumption; Food preparation; Food production; Food security; Health-promotion intervention; Participatory Reflection and Action (PRA); School-based intervention; Wellness in Lifestyle, Intake, Fitness and Environment (Win-LIFE) intervention

The full thesis can be found at <http://hdl.handle.net/2263/69954>