

Title: ActiveChat: Development of an 8 week school-based intervention to increase motivation for physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour in secondary school pupils.

Authors:

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Purpose:

The Models of University-Schools Engagement (MUSE) is an integrated project to promote collaboration between researchers, university students and school pupils. Within the MUSE umbrella, the aim of the ActiveChat project was to develop an 8 week student-centred learning programme to be delivered to S1-S3 secondary school pupils (11-14 year olds). Due to only 15% of children aged 11-15 meeting the physical activity (PA) guidelines in Scotland (Currie et al, 2011), the focus of ActiveChat was to promote the importance of increasing PA and reducing sedentary behaviour (SB), by actively engaging pupils in research-based learning. The constructs of the Self-Determination Theory (Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness) underpinned the programme, and lesson learning outcomes were aligned with the third phase learning outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

Methods:

CfE documentation was analysed and learning outcomes for the third phase of learning were extracted. Each lesson was designed allowing pupils to experience autonomy, competence and relatedness within the classroom whilst engaging and learning about the importance of PA, reducing SB and research within the area. Lessons were designed to incorporate learning outcomes for five key areas of the CfE (Health and Wellbeing, Literacy, Numeracy, Technologies and Expressive Arts) to provide a comprehensive school-based programme.

Results:

The outcome of this project was the development of a framework to allow secondary school pupils to participate in research that meets the requirements of the CfE, with a focus on PA and SB. The 8-week programme consists of 1x 2-hour lessons per week and addresses 29 different learning outcomes across five areas of CfE. This is provided through pupil voice, data collection and processing, and delivering of Power-Point presentations.

Conclusion:

CfE learning outcomes can be incorporated into an active, research-based learning programme to promote PA and reduce SB in secondary school children. The ActiveChat programme aims to enable pupils to learn about research processes and the advantages of an active lifestyle, while developing skills and knowledge in several areas of the secondary school curriculum. Further evaluation and testing of the programme in a school setting is required which will be the next phase of the project.

Word Limit – 350

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