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Method's teachers use to promote their pupil's mental health at primary school

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ABSTRACT

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METHODS'S TEACHERS USE TO PROMORTE THEIR PUPIL'S MENTAL HEALTH
AT PRIMARY SCHOOL

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This thesis deals with the observation and intervention of primary school teachers to promote mental health among their pupils. It was collaborated with KOPSY project which focuses on the mental health promotion of primary school pupils. Mental health promotion of the primary school pupils is a growing concept all over the world now days, because behavior problems among pupils are a growing concern for parents and teachers. The main purpose of this research is to find out based on their experiences, how do the primary school teachers ably aspects of mental health promotion to their works among pupils and how did KOPSY-project contribute to their work. The aim of the study was to produce information which can help a primary school teacher to deepen his understanding of mental health promotion and possibly help them to ably it among their pupils

The data collection method used in this research is qualitative approach and data is analyzed by qualitative content analysis method. Five class room teachers and one class assistance, which assists teacher in class, were interviewed separately in two schools. Interviews were conducted in two group interviews, with 3 participants in each interview.

The result of the research shows that teachers use their experiences to observe their pupils in school. In addition, methods teachers use to identify promotion of mental health in their pupils are adaptability, encouragement, social practice, routine and interference. Moreover, resources that support teachers' in mental health promotion of their pupils are family/home, teacher and administration. Also additional education in mental health such as KOPSY clearly encourages teachers to use of mental health promotion in their work

By using these methods and by co-operating with parents teachers can strengthen their pupils' mental resistance towards difficulties and disappointments in life. The need and methods to further educate teachers of mental health promotion should be researched further.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Mental health is an integral part of health. Behavioral problems among pupils are a growing cause of concern for parents and teachers all over the world. Millions of children in the world suffer from behavior related problems. Some of these behavior problems among children are general; some are psychological, while some other problems are anxiety related. Although it is difficult to get accurate of child mental disorders, the few available epidemiological data indicate that 12-51%; with the average around 29% of the world's children suffer from emotional and other mental problems that warrant mental health treatment. Out of this group, 6-19% is seriously emotionally disturbed children who need intensive psychiatric care. In addition, there are untold numbers of at risk children who need attention and secondary preventive service (National Mental Health Association 2003). Statistics has shown that, one in ten children between the ages of one and 15 have a mental health disorder. (The Office for National Statistics Mental health in Children and Young People in Great Britain 2005). Estimates vary, but research suggests that 20% of children have a mental health problem in any given year, and about 10% at any one time. (Lifetime Impacts: Childhood and Adolescent Mental Health, Understanding the Lifetime Impacts, Mental Health Foundation, 2005).

Biggest health problems among children are related to mental health. According to different estimates, the prevalence of mental health problems among adolescents varies from 10–30%. The most common disorders are depression, substance abuse, disturbance of attention and eating disorders. Emotional problems are more common among girls, and boys' problems are manifested in outbound disruptive behavior (Puolakka & Kiikkala & Kirsi-Maria & Pesu & Paavilainen 2010). According to school health survey 2006, depression especially among girls has increased in recent years in Finland. The number of 13-15 years old girls that need to be hospitalized due to mental health problems has increased sharply during the past ten years. According to the WHO statistics, the suicide rate among 15-24 years old girls in Finland is the second highest in the world. The Finnish boys are fifth on the list (Press release 12.06.2007).

Mental health promotion aims to support mental health, by providing methods to cope with difficulties and setbacks of life, and finding solutions that help support mental health on individual, family and society levels. All these levels are responsible for implementing this work. The promotion of mental health is a broader concept than preventing mental health problems. Mental health promotion can improve people's survival skills and ability to feel empathy and, consequently, not only protect their mental health but also improve their ability to support other members of their community with mental health problems. The promotion of mental health encompasses not only the support of individual mental health and provision of mental health services but also activities at the community and society levels. (Puolakka et al. 2010).

In Finland, health care is organized by municipalities and comprises of primary health care and specialized medical services. Health services are funded from tax revenue (Ministry of Social Affairs and health 2004 a, b). The Primary Health Care Act (1972) obliges municipalities to provide public school health care as a part of primary healthcare services. School-based services are effective because pupils spend the major part of their day at school. School healthcare supports the educational and teaching task of the school. It promotes the well-being of school-aged children, their families and the entire school community as an integral part of people welfare (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2004b, School Health Care 2002).

This thesis was made in collaboration with the KOPSY project, which is a joint project of five primary schools, in Tornio, Keminmaa, Kemi, and Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences. Project was brought to a conclusion at spring 2012. Projects leader was Hannele Pietiläinen of the University of Applied Sciences. The goal of the Project was to improve mental health promotion of the pupils of the target schools. Mental Health Promotion is used to improve mental well-being and, pre-emptive interventions to help increase the resistance against mental health problems. Aspects of mental health, affecting mental health promotion are: individual aspects, family, community and social factors (European Community Commission, Green Book, 2005). We chose to participate in the project because we are interested in the projects subject and because mental health and behavioral

problems are an increasing concern among pupils. It has also been hot subject of discussions in the society.

In Finland, children start the 9-year comprehensive school at age seven. The first six grades comprise the primary school, and these schools are usually smaller and closer to the pupils' homes. The last three grades of comprehensive school – attended from ages 12 to 16 – are usually located in a bigger school further away from home. (Puolakka et al 2010). In this thesis, primary school students are described as pupils because they are 7-13 years old according to our research and because they are in their mandatory education and are not studying as students for a degree but are beginners in their lives and at school world and thus called pupils.

Since the area of mental health promotion is so broad, it was impossible to cover all of its aspects in the limited amount of time granted for thesis study. To make the study possible the subject of mental health promotion had to be narrowed down. During our studies both of us have had a practice period in one of the KOPSY-projects schools. There it was surprising to notice how many different professionals work in a school. In addition to school teachers there are also school nurse, special needs teacher, school curator and even school psychiatrist. All of them have their part in the school system, but only one of them, the school psychiatrist, has a formal training in the field of mental health. Still the ones who had the greatest impact and most amount of contact with the pupils were their teachers. They spend the most amount of time with their pupils during school and because of this were able to observe them closely and were usually the first ones to notice if there is something bothering their pupils. They could immediately interfere and motivate their pupils to do better. With this motivation teachers became the focus of our thesis.

The goal of this thesis was to explore: based on the experiences of teachers; how do primary school teachers implement aspects of mental health promotion to their work, and has the KOPSY-project contributed to their work. The aim is to produce information which can help primary school teachers to deepen his understanding of mental health promotion and possibly help them to ably it among their pupils. The motivation for the thesis study

came from the fact that although there is a lot of literature on psychological problems of pupils and on the impact they have on the academic achievements of school children, (McGee & Prior & Williams & Smart & Sanson 2002; Achenbach & Dumenci & Rescorla 2003), there is scant research about how mental health promotion can be used pre-emptively raise resistance against mental health problems and more importantly how can teacher use mental health promotion in their work. Teacher is an important role model for pupils who have just started school. Pupil needs someone who can share his success and also failures with, and in this case pupil's own class room teacher can be in an almost as important role as his parents. A good and understanding teacher can ease pupil's fears and motivate him in his school work. In this research, we explore the role of primary school's teachers to promote mental health among their pupils.

Although teachers are not experts in psychology, they spend the most time with their pupils. They also have full collaboration of the school curator, psychiatrist, other teachers and the pupil's parents. Thus they are most important link between the pupils and the schools guidance service. With this motivation we were searching answers to following questions which were our thesis problems:

1. In what kind of behavior do teachers' pay attention to, when observing their pupils in relation to mental health promotion.
2. Are there some kinds of methods teachers can use to promote their pupils positive resources in mental health promotion.

In this research, we explain mental health promotion of the pupils, as a multidimensional concept which implies the creation of individual, social and environmental condition which enables optimal psychological development. It is focused on social skills, e.g. cooperation with peers and adults, self-confidence, positive attitude, respecting each-others, making friends, learning social skills, tolerance to disappointment, adaptability and coping with stressors. In addition, we described "mental health" of the pupils as an optimal good level of personal and social functioning. That means, pupils are able to get along with others, both peers and adults, are able to participate in educational and social activities and having

healthy self-confidence.

2 PUPILS, MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION

Mental well-being is defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It is an essential resource for health and a resource to deal with life's difficulties. While good capacity for mental health exists, support is required to achieve and maintain it. This process of enhancing protective factors ,contributing to good mental health, is called mental health promotion. (Woodhouse 2010, 178). Multiple theorists have defined the mental development of children

According to Piaget, by the age of 7, most children are capable of using logical thought structures that are increasingly objective and reversible, and they can solve the problems that involve class inclusion and transitivity. However there is still one major limitation in their thinking: their use of mental operations is still closely tied to concrete materials, context and situations. In other words, if children have not had direct experiences with the context or situation or if the materials are not tangible, they are not successful in using their mental operation. This is why this stage is called concrete operational thought (Littlefield Cook, Cook 2005).

Like Piaget, Erik Erikson maintained that children develop in a predetermined order. Instead of focusing on cognitive development, however, he was interested how children socialize and how this affects their sense of self. Erikson's theory of psychological development has eight distinct stages, each with two possible outcomes. According to the theory, successful completion of each stage results in a healthy personality and successful interactions with others. Failure to successfully complete a stage can result in a reduced ability to complete further stages and therefore a more unhealthy personality and sense of self. As the researchers worked with 7-13 years old pupils, they explained the stage of industry vs. inferiority.

During industry vs. inferiority stage, pupils begin to develop a sense of pride in their

accomplishment. They initiate projects, see them through to completion, and feel good about what they have achieved. During this time, teachers play an increased role in the child's development. If children are encouraged and reinforced for their initiative, they begin to feel industrious and feel confident in their ability to achieve goals. If this initiative is not encouraged, if it is restricted by parents or teacher, then the child begins to feel inferior, doubting his own abilities and therefore may not reach his potential (Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development, last updated 11.29.2011).

Pupils who are mentally healthy have been defined as having the ability to: develop psychologically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually, use and enjoy solitude, become aware of others and empathize with them, play and learn, develop a sense of right and wrong, and resolve (face) problems and setbacks and learn from them.

2.1 Mental Health Promotion and Positive Psychology

“Health Promotion is the art and sciences of helping people discover the synergies between their core passions and optimal health, enhancing their motivation to strive for optimal health, and supporting them in changing their lifestyle to move toward a state of optimal health. Optimal health is a dynamic balance of physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual health. Lifestyle change can be facilitated through a combination of learning experiences that enhance awareness, increase motivation, and build skills and, most important, through the creation of opportunities that open access to environments that make positive health practices the easiest choice”(Michael P. O'Donnell 2009).

Mental-health promotion is a part of positive psychology, which studies what is “right” about people. This includes their positive attributes, psychological assets and strengths. Through them mental health promotion aims to understand and foster the the factors that allow the individuals, communities and societies thrive. (Kobau & Seligman & Peterson & Diener & Zack & Chapman & Thompson 2011, e1.) Just like attention in public health has

shifted from disease prevention to health promotion, positive psychology and mental health promotion has shifted from pathology dysfunction to positive emotions and optimal functioning. Activities and programs that foster positive mental health are also used to prevent mental illness. (Kobau et al, e1.) Still mainstream psychology is not considered negative or less important, even as it focuses on pathology and mental illness. Unpleasant aspects of life, value of negative experience for development, coping and the critical need of alleviate distress, are not denied by positive psychology, but its focus is on the positive aspects of mental health. (Kobau et. al, e2.)

Mental health promotion that bases on positive psychology, focuses its studies and education on: 1. positive emotions, like happiness, gratitude, fulfillment; 2. positive individual traits, like optimism, resiliency, character strengths; 3. positive relationships among groups; and 4. enabling institutions schools or worksites, that foster positive outcomes. (Kobau et. al, e1-e2.) The affects of positive emotions to health and the mind are less well known than the affects of negative emotion. Positive emotions encourage the individuals to engage socially and to explore new things. It is also suggested that positive emotions affect individuals learning and mental capabilities, increases resistance and hastens the recovery from stressful situations. Numerous studies have also indicated that positive emotion and positive outlook on life decreases the risk of decease, encourages healthy behavior, increases immunity and increases longevity. To conclude positive emotions important psychological resources to be nurtured and grown rather than just briefly enjoyed. (Kobau et. al, e2-e3.)

Positive individual traits include multiple positive traits such as creativity, bravery, kindness, perseverance and optimism. When these traits are cultivated they can boost a persons resiliency, buffer psychological disorders and other adversities and promote mental health. Resiliency help's to cope with life's challenges and gives a sense of control, of ones life, to an individual. Resiliency can be boosted on: personal methods, for example coping, persons social methods, social support, and society's level, public health and education. (Kobau et. al, e3.) An example of a program to promote resiliency is the Penn Resiliency Program, which was a group intervention held for pupils of age 8 to 15. Pupils were taught

resiliency skills based on learned optimism. Those pupils were able to develop their explanatory styles, by detecting inaccurate thoughts, evaluating the accuracy of those thoughts and challenging negative beliefs by considering alternative interpretations. The program also helped the pupils to learn how to negotiate, make decisions and relax. Penn Resiliency Programs prevented disruptive behavior and relieved depression and anxiety, specially among pupils with more severe problems. Kobau et. al, e3-e5.)

Social factors and economy influence mental health. Some of these factors are: employment, safe work environment, education, income, housing and stable and supportive family. Institutions such as schools, homes, worksites, places of worship and health care settings are used as bases for mental health promotion interventions. (Kobau et. al, e6.)

Mental health promotion, does not concentrate only on preventing bad feelings, bullying, violence and conflict. It also includes encouraging a man to achieve his goals, experiencing joy and vitality and caring for others. (Honkanen & Moilanen & Taanila & Hurtig & Koivumaa-Honkanen 2010, 278.) Mental health promotion involves any action to enhance the mental well-being of individuals, families, organizations or communities. (Friedli 2000; Puolakka et al. 2010.) Mental health promotion of pupils includes promoting social and emotional learning and life skills, preventing emotional and behavioral problems, identifying and intervening early on, and providing intervention for established problems. In addition to teachers, pupil welfare and school healthcare also play a significant role in the school environment. The actual mental health services are multidisciplinary activities. In Finland, basic-level mental health services are mainly provided by three publicly funded institutions: healthcare centers, the education authority and social services (Puolakka et al. 2010).

An environment that promotes or hinders pupils' mental health involves the person's entire mental, physical and social environment, especially the school, home and friends. The family plays a key role. It is the primary, most important and most influential system to which the child belongs. In adolescence, friends of the same age become particularly important. Since all children go to school, the school is an obvious arena for mental-health

promotion. A set of pedagogic techniques, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), based on cognitive and behavioral methods, is available to teachers to train pupils to improve self-control, social competence, empathy, motivation and self-awareness, and has shown promising results (Durlac & Weissberg 2005).

2.2 Emotional and Behavioral Problems among Pupils

Some pupils experience a range of emotional and behavioral problems that are outside the normal range for their age or gender. These pupils are experiencing mental health problems or disorders. Currently around 10-20% of children are having mental health problems in Europe (Llopis & Brddick 2008). Researches have shown that the problems that children can face are emotional and behavioral difficulties for example phobias, anxiety, and depression; conduct difficulties for example aggression and anti-social behavior; hyperkinetic difficulties for example disturbance of activity and attention; habit difficulties and eating disorders.

Pupils' emotional and behavioral problems are commonly divided into two main groups, internalizing and externalizing symptoms. Internalizing refers to problems regulating emotions and mood, and externalizing to deregulation of behavior. Comorbidity is defined as the co-occurrence of two or more independent diseases or disorders (Caron & Rutter 1991).

Pupils' problems at school show a somewhat different spectrum than problems at home. At school, pupils are expected to co-operate with their classmates and teachers in a group and to wait for their turn. In this environment, externalizing problems may appear as truancy or bullying, while internalizing symptoms may manifest as social withdrawal or anxiety. Pupils with co-occurring problems have both kinds of problems, which is likely to make their situation especially difficult. Pupils might experiences emotional and behavioral difficulties as result of adverse experiences in the early years, difficult family relationships or ineffective behavior management. Furthermore, social competence and emotional well-being are link to language development and early school adjustment and learning (Miller-

Lewis & Baghurst & Sawyer & Prior & Clark & Arney & Carbone 2006; Phillips & Lonigan 2010; Pike & Iervolino & Eley & Price & Plomin 2006). Teachers express concerns that pupils, especially those living in poverty, enter primary school with limited social and emotional competencies, which are likely to compromise their successful transition into a formal learning environment (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta & Cox 2000).

Evidence has shown that it is possible to identify the factors that have an impact on pupils' mental health. Certain individuals and groups are more at risk of developing mental health problems than others, and these risks are located in a number of areas risk specific to the child, to their family, their environment and life events. There are a range of factors in children which can develop mental health difficulties: loss or separation, resulting from death, parental separation, divorce, hospitalization; loss of friendships, family breakdown that forces the child to leave his home. Additionally life changes, for example birth of a sibling, moving house, changing schools; and Traumatic events, abuse, violence, accidents, injuries, war or natural disaster (West Sussex CAMHS and school attendance project 2008).

2.3 Teachers and Mental Health Among Pupils

It is known that the main focus of primary schools is to provide academic achievement to the children and not to provide mental health services. However, students' psychological and physical well-being has been one of the most important factors impacting academic achievement (Weare 2000; McGee & Prior & Williams & Smart & Sanson 2002). In addition, psychological and behavioral problems of the children can impact their development by affecting their quality of life now and in future. Therefore, it should make sure that children growth toward achieving full potential is not disrupted.

What is normal and competent and what is problematic behavior overlooks the important role of culture. School aged children across culture are prone to several psychological difficulties as result of their developmental stage (Horowitz & Garber 2006). A lot of epidemiological studies have found concerning the rates of psychological symptoms among school aged children. For instant, Greek children have significantly higher total behavioral

problems scores in mental health questionnaires, than children from other Western countries; placing 40% of school children are high risk group for psychopathology (Motti-Stefanidi & Tsiantis & Richardson 1993).

Teachers have a crucial role to identify and taking necessary steps to prevent children from developing behavioral problems. Of course, teachers are not expert in issues of psychological and behavioral problems, but they are expert observes. After proper training, teachers can recognize the early warning sign of psychological problems (Maras & Kutnick 1999). Class room teachers spend plenty of time with the students, and thus their observation of student and judgment on characteristics of their cognitive and emotional behaviors would provide vital insight for preparing prevention and intervention programs for a healthy school environment. Teachers can serve like a bridge between school counselor and the students. Kutcher et al. (1996) suggests that teachers are the first help sources for the majority of the students even in the case of suicide attempts.

The current literature reports Teachers' perspectives on psychological issues among their students (Erdur-Baket & Özmen & Özmen 2011). Teachers' perceptions of school- age children's competence and mental health (Motti-Stefanidi & Besevegis & Giannitsas 1996), and behavior-emotional characteristics of primary school children rated as having language problems (Lundervold & Heimann & Manger 2008). One of these studies by Özgür et al. (2011) investigated that primary and high school teachers' observations of their students psychological difficulties were five main categories, they are:

1. Emotional difficulties, for example.: isolation/exclusive, being too introverted, lack of concentration, lack of self-confidence, Fear/feeling unsafe, shyness, adjustment difficulties, Test anxiety, learned helplessness and Inferiority.
2. Behavioral problems for example: Aggressive behavior fore examples: hurting others, harming school belongings etc. being rebellious, crying too much, No/ low attendance, telling lies, hyperactivity.
3. Academic difficulties, for example: Lack of motivation/interest, negative attitude towards school/courses, and fear of failure.

4. Interpersonal difficulties for example: Conflicts with opposite sex, unable to keep balance in peer relationship, Being bullied/excluded, selfishness, lack of empathic understanding.
5. Psychological problems: due to family issues

Psychological difficulties of students may hinder an effective learning environment, may negatively impact classroom management and may be confounded students problem behaviors or students misbehaviors (Maras and Kutnick 1999) as well as create professional anxiety among teachers (Axup and Gersch, 2008).

Furthermore, teachers and their judgments are the most important sources of referral for the counseling and guidance service of schools. In addition, teacher's interventions choices can be the effective treatment of psychological problems of students. Teachers support, nonjudgmental attitudes, tolerances and appropriate referral and collaboration with counselors and parents may prevent children from developing worse difficulties.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

The goal of the thesis was to find out, how do primary school teachers ably aspects of mental health promotion to their work, and has the KOPSY-project contribute their work. Qualitative approach was found to be the best approach, since it considers individual differences (Moule & Goodman 2009, 171). Individuals have different ways to think. Therefore, all teachers will definitely not think alike. They will have their own individual methods to identify their pupil's behavior and because we wanted to find these individual differences in methods, qualitative approach was chosen to be best suited research method to use in this thesis. Furthermore interview was found to be the best of the qualitative research methods to be used to find answers to the research questions mentioned in the introduction to the thesis.

3.1 Data collection

To collect data of teachers' individual experiences gained during their careers and at the same time allow discussion between interviewees' group interviews were used. "The technique is used when the research is trying to address questions that relate to exploring personal experience, personal accounts, perceptions, beliefs, opinions and can be used to access attitudes (Moule & Goodman 2009, 295)." Qualitative interview consecrates specially to seek out participant's perceptions, experiences and opinion, and allows participants to drive interview direction (Moule & Goodman 2009, 297), so it suits the purposes of the thesis. The project manager in charge of the KOPSY- project and one of our thesis supervisors, suggested that we might use group interviews to get better material for the study, since group interviews would produce more discussion among the interviewed teachers (Moule & Goodman 2009, 298). Group interviews also help to increase dialogue, but would create problems in organizing, and confidentiality (Moule & Goodman 2009, 298). These problems were solved during the planning of the thesis, with help from the KOPSY-projects manager and the go-operation we got from the participating schools and the interview participants themselves.

Interviews were organized in two of the three participating schools, in Kemi and Tornio, in the project KOPSY. Two because of the limitation of time which was reserved for the completion of the thesis we were unable to do more excessive study. The names of these schools will not be mentioned in this thesis, because of the confidentiality reasons mentioned above. Some of the teachers who participated into the interview were very clear that they don't want their identities or the schools name to appear in the thesis because of possible complications it could cause with pupils or pupils families. Through contact from the KOPSY-project manager and personal contacts from guided practice in those schools, meetings were arranged with headmasters of both of schools. In these meetings, the main concept of the thesis was presented to the headmasters along with pre-made material including an information letter and pre-made interview questions for the interview (Attachment 1&2). Information letter contains information the goal, ethics and confidentiality of the thesis. Interview questions were given to the participant's would have chance to prepare before the interview. This was done because answering these questions require deeper thought and thus making answering easier and saving time from the busy teachers schedule. Headmasters also signed a permit allowing the interviews to be conducted in their schools, which due to confidentiality will not be included in the thesis, since it contains a hint of school names.

At the end of these meetings the potential participants to the interviews were introduced. They had all taken a part to the KOPSY-project and attended multiple seminars and discussions within the project. From both schools three people were suggested to participate to the interviews, together making six participants. Among these six participants four were classroom teachers, one special needs teacher and one class assistant that helps teacher in class and attends to students with special needs. Verbal consent was asked from all the participants, and they all agreed to take part into the interviews. After the consent they were given the information letter and the interview questions so that they would understand the purpose and the meaning and the goal of the thesis and could prepare to the upcoming interview. Two days were reserved to the interviews, one for each school, 19th and 25th of January 2012. Around one hour was reserved for the interview, due to the busy schedule of the participating members. Both interviews lasted around 40-50 minutes.

To make them easier to remember the interviews were recorded. Recording allows better concentration, follow up and control the interview and it can later be listened again to remember what was discussed in the interview (Moule & Goodman 2009, 297). After collection data requires preparation before it can be analyzed. Data collected through interviews, is prepared through verbatim transcription, which results to a written record of conversation including all verbal interaction between participants and interviewer. (Moule & Goodman 2009, 346.) Which means to say that the recorded interviews were written open word to word, preserving the original words and structures' that participants used during the interview. In case of this thesis interviews were first conducted in Finnish, since it is the spoken language of the participants and it was thus easier for the participating teachers because the interview was in their own language. This also made it possible to get clearer and better answers, than if the questions would have been in English. After transcription, the interviews were translated to English to make it easier to Sarker Md.Abdur, to analyze the data.

3.2 Data analysis

After the data was transcript it was time to continue with analyzing the data. In this thesis qualitative content analysis was used. Content analysis is a method that can be used either with qualitative or quantitative data. As a research method it is systematic and objective means to describe and quantify phenomena. (Satu Elo & Helvi Kyngäs 2007, 108-109.) Since the data in this thesis is qualitative in nature, the analysis method was chosen to fit its qualitative data. Through content analysis, it is possible to distil words into fewer content related categories. It is assumed that when classified into the same categories, words, phrases and the like share the same meaning. (Elo & Kyngäs 2007, 108.) Basically data is better organized so that it is easier to interpret. From this more organized version of the data researcher forms his own interpretation of the data. The aim is to attain a condensed and broad description of the phenomenon, and the outcome of the analysis is concepts or categories describing the phenomenon (Elo & Kyngäs 2007, 108).

There are two methods to content analysis process; Inductive and deductive. Inductive method is used when there is not enough previous information about the phenomenon or the knowledge is fragmented. Categories are derived from the data. Inductive data moves from specific to general, as particular are observed and combined into a larger whole or general statement. In deductive content analysis the structure of analysis is operationalized on the basis of previous knowledge and the purpose of the study is theory testing. It is based on an earlier theory or model and therefore moves from the general to the specific. (Elo & Kyngäs 2007, 109.) This thesis is conducted with inductive content analysis, because even though there are previous studies on the subject, there are not many studies, of mental health promotion, targeting teachers and therefore very little previous information on the subject. Inductive data was collected from the interviews conducted with the teachers.

Inductive content analysis process includes open coding, creation of categories and abstraction. The written material is read through many times to produce as many headings as possible in the margins to describe the aspects of the content in every single detail. The headings are then collected into coding sheet and are used to freely create categories. This is called open coding. (Elo & Kyngäs 2007, 109.) Similar headings are then grouped together to form categories. These categories are then further grouped together under even larger categories. This is done in order to reduce the number of categories by, grouping similar or dissimilar categories into broader higher order categories. Creating categories is used as the means to describe the phenomena, to increase understanding and to generate knowledge. Interpretation is used to decide which things belong to which category. (Elo & Kyngäs 2007, 111.) Using generated categories to formulate general description of the topic is called abstracting. To make it simple, abstraction means making non-existent, in this case thought process, into a reality. Content-characteristic words are used to name each category. Main categories are formed from categories formed from subcategories with similar events and incidents.(Elo & Kyngäs 2007, 111.) Categories generated during the analysis process of this thesis are presented at attachment section of the thesis (attachment 3).

To achieve trustworthy and reliable conclusion, the analysis process and the results should

be described in sufficient detail. Reader has to achieve clear understanding of the implementation of the analysis process and its strengths and limitations. (Elo & Kyngäs 2007,112.) This means dissection of the analysis process and the validity of results. When reporting the process and the results, there are universal elements in validity, regarding qualitative research, that have to be addressed:

- Categories varied from the data have to be conceptual and empirically grounded. This means that the categories have to be clear and tied up with other scientifically proved data, to ascertain its trustworthiness. Created categories have to reflect the subject of the study and cover the whole range of the data. (Elo & Kyngäs 2007, 112.)
- To help readers to follow the research process demonstration of the reliability of the findings is needed. Researcher has to prove a defensible link link between the results and the data. He also has to prove the validity and reliability of the collected data. Both are done by giving a clear description of the data collection and the data analysis in as much detail as possible. Appendices and tables may be used to demonstrate links between the data and results. To facilitate transferability, the researcher should give a clear description of the context, selection and characteristics of participants, data collection and process of analysis. (Elo & Kyngäs 2007, 112.)
- Trustworthiness of a research can also be increased with authentic citations, which are direct quotes directly from the data, in case of this thesis work, the interviews. They give the readers a picture of what kind of data the categories are created from. It has to be made sure that the participants cannot be identified from the quotes taken from the data. Also authentic should not be used too much, since it will give the impression that the analysis of the data is not adequate enough. (Elo & Kyngäs 2007, 112.)
- Finally there is the matter of seeking agreement from other experts in the subject. According to Elo & Kyngäs (2007, 112-113), Internal validity of the content analysis can be taken as face validity, meaning that the data is proved valid in the thesis itself, with all the above mentioned facts, without expert review, or by using

other experts reviews to support the validity. Biggest argument against this is that the other experts view the data through their own eyes and might not agree with researcher. However expert review can also provide valuable information to a study.

In this thesis all of these points of validity will be addressed. Categories, the analysis process, and the results will be addressed in the upcoming chapter. Participants, data collection and the analysis process are already mentioned above. We have also expert help to review the thesis. Since this is a student study we have assigned teachers who will review our thesis and provide feedback. One of the teachers is also the project manager in the KOPSY-project.

Finally, in qualitative study, in order to ensure credibility of the study, those reading it must believe that the data presents research participant's views, experiences and beliefs (Moule & Goodman 2009, 188). As already mentioned before, our credibility comes from the expert help from the project manager and our assigned teachers. Results of the finished thesis were presented to the participant's, since according to Moule and Goodman (2009, 188) participant review is also a proof of the studies credibility. Because of the limited amount of time, spending a lot of time in the field doing observational research or using many different research methods to gain credibility to our thesis study (Moule & Goodman 2009, 188-189), was impossible. Dependability and confirm ability are established by presenting analytical processes as a decision trail, like mentioned above in this chapter (p.).

4. RESEACH RESULTS

During the planning phase of the thesis, two research questions were prepared from which the thesis was seeking answers about. These questions were:

1. In what kind of behavior do teachers' pay attention to, when observing their pupils in relation to mental health promotion?
2. Are there some kinds of methods teachers can use to promote their pupils positive resources in mental health promotion?

Based on these two questions, five interview questions were made (attachment 2). They were made to address both individual and group manifestations of the phenomena and one question to address observed negative behavior. An additional question regarding the KOPSY-project was added at the end of the interview (attachment 2). This question, "Has the KOPSY-project affected your teaching work", was added to give a picture of the effects the project had on its participants and to also provide feedback for the project manager, about the project.

Analysis of the two group interviews resulted into four main categories. These four categories are: "Teacher's observations among their pupils", "Methods used by teachers in mental health promotion", "Resources used by teachers in mental health promotion" and "What has KOPSY-project given to the teachers". First category, "Teacher's observations among their pupils", answers directly to the first research question (p.7 and 23) with both positive and negative manifestations of the behavior teachers observe among their pupils. In this thesis the focus is on the use of positive resources to encourage the pupils and to strengthen their ability endure difficulties and disappointments in life. Still to get the full picture of what teachers note when observing their pupils in relation to mental health promotion, a question of negative aspects observed by teachers was also included. Next two categories, "Methods used by teacher's in mental health promotion" & "Resources used by teachers in mental health promotion", answer to the second research question (p.7 and 23).

These two categories were originally part of just one category, but were separated into two categories because of the different natures these categories have, which will be better explained further in this chapter. Final category, “What has KOPSY-project given to the teachers”, was born from additional KOPSY related question, “Has the KOPSY-project affected your teaching work”, added to the interview (attachment 2). This question produced completely new data that did not fit into either of the earlier categories. It produced an entirely new answer to a new unintentional question in addition to the original two questions.

3. Does additional mental health education, like KOPSY, help teachers pre-emptive mental health work? How?

Categories will now be presented in following order: “Teacher's observations among pupils”, “Methods used by teachers in mental health promotion”, “Resources used by teachers in mental health promotion” and “What has KOPSY-project given to the teachers”. They will be explained using the categories presented at the end of the thesis (attachment 3). To make them easier to understand the related sub-categories were underlined from the text to make it easier for the reader to spot them from the text.

4.1 Observations among pupils

First of the main categories is “Teacher's observations among pupils”. This category includes both positive and negative behavior that manifests itself among the pupils and is then observed by a teacher. These observations are important, because based on these observations teachers develop the methods they use to support their pupils. This category contains four generic categories. These categories are Individuals strengths, Strengths of a class, Disruptive behavior, Negative family issues.

When talking about individual strengths that teachers observe among their pupils, supportive and happy home environment is highlighted as the main supporting factor. When everything is alright at home and the child gets positive support from his

environment, it is positively reflected at school-life as well. (Interview 1, 19.1.2012 & Interview 2, 25.1.1.2012.) This is manifested in pupils behavior, he is happy, co-operative, is willing to learn new things, does his homework accordingly and has a overall positive attitude towards everything. Child has to have a certain amount of *sisu*, which is a Finnish word meaning guts or spunk, and a resilient attitude to never give up too easily. That attitude also involves tolerating disappointments. This is not easy to learn and home plays a crucial part in learning it. (Interview 2, 25.1.2012.) By supporting the growth of pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem, teachers help the development of realistic self-image of their pupils. Realistic self-image means that a pupil is able to identify his own strengths and weaknesses and that they help them to accept themselves. (Interview 1, 19.1.2012.)

“If you think of a class and an individual, then a child with a strong self-esteem rises somehow to become a positive leader and a supporting force.”
(Interview 2, 19.1.2012.)

Teachers don't observe only individual pupils but also how they behave as a group in a class. This behavior was grouped as a category, strengths of a class. Strong class has good team spirit and a positive attitude that can be seen from how they interact with each other in the classroom and during recess. Group will always get a leader and this leader affect to the team spirit of the hole group Interview 2, (25.1.2012.) If the leader is positive, his good example will create a positive team spirit and a feeling of stability and security to the class.

“For example, in a class where everything is going well. Sometimes there is of course some conflict but no one is bullied and every one get along together well. Mostly it is boys together and girls together, but they are still together as a class. On the other hand there are groups that seem to have a lot of conflict. Pupils don't have friends in their own class so they retrieve them from other classes.” (Interview 1, 19.1.2012.)

What teachers' pay most attention to is disruptive behavior, which disturbs their teaching and normal routine of a school day. Need for attention was identified as one of the reasons

for disruptive behavior. Pupils want either the attention of their teachers or the acceptance of their friends. This they try to achieve by fooling around or some other underhanded method to get the attention they want to get. They might also be underachievers because they don't get the attention they need. (Interview 2, 25.1.2012.) Other forms of disruptive behavior identified in the interviews are restlessness, bullying and comparing oneself to others and competing among each other. Disruptive behavior is something that requires intervention from a teacher to make it stop. This intervention is better explained in the next chapter.

As the most important supporting factor for a child is home, if something is wrong at home it can have tremendous negative affect for that child. Interviewed teachers had multiple examples of negative family issues, having a negative reflection on the pupil at school.

“Many times if something happens in a pupils family. For example a divorce, it starts to show on the pupil. Many times even before the family even separates, pupils behavior changes. He becomes restless and his grades drop, for example.” (Interview 1. 19.1.2012.)

At this time school becomes less important for the pupil and that can be seen in his behavior. His interest towards school drops and he no longer wants to go to school. In addition of restlessness a pupil can also be withdrawn into himself observer, become indifferent, quiet and act as inconspicuous as possible.

“Some pupils try to take responsibility at home, of their younger siblings or the parent, and because of this don't have any strength left to concentrate at school.” “Sometimes child is afraid to leave a parent home alone and skips school because of that fear, or he develops a fever or head ache to skip school.” (Interview 1, 19.1.2012.)

In addition to underachievers there are also overachievers, the so called “kympin tytöt”, which means pupils, usually girls, who want to always score highest score on tests, thinking

that they will be less of a burden to their parents at home. (Interview 1, 19.1.2012,.) According to interviewed teachers observations, child with issues at home tend to have problems with low self-esteem. There might also have difficulties with dealing their own feelings, handling failure and they lack sisu, so they give up on things easily. They also tend to undervalue themselves and their self-confidence is low.

4.2 Methods used by teachers

Methods teachers identified as methods they use in promoting their pupils mental health, can be grouped into five generic categories (attachment 1). Additionally these promotion methods seem to address aforementioned observations and problems of the first main category: “Teacher's observations among their pupils”. These categories are: Adaptability, Encouragement, Social Practice, Routine and Interference. These categories further hold additional explaining sub-categories that can be used to further clarify the subject.

Adaptability is the first of these generic categories. In this case adaptability is an ability to handle constantly changing situations and to acknowledge differences in pupils and their abilities. Children are all different individuals and don't all learn in the same way or same rate. It is also important to note that pupils in this study are all in primary school and thus total beginners in the school world and society. Of course there is also a difference between pupils at first and sixth grade, but in general all pupils in primary school are still children and thus beginners in their lives. Adaptability involves the method differentiation. This method takes individual differences in pupils learning rate into account. It means those children who are faster than, and thus “better” than others in doing exercises are given different and more challenging exercises. Likewise pupils with difficulties could be given easier exercises. This is done to encourage learning and to reduce frustration. Disbanding mismatched groups is used to reduce tension, possible rivalry and disturbance within a classroom and thus calm the classroom down. Close friends sitting close to each other in class can disturb each other and other pupils in the class. Because of this one solution is to separate them from each other during class. If a group of friends causes too much distraction, more extreme solution would be for students to entirely change classes as well.

Over recent years there has been a talk going on about reducing the class sizes in Finnish schools. This is related directly to time that can be given to pupils during a class. Time management during the limited amount of it they have, was seen as an important point by the interviewed teachers. More time to acknowledge each pupil and support them during their school day. Teachers' opinion is that more adults in a classroom would increasingly help in this problem. This was clearly visible in the interview as well.

“And when there is time, it can be given even to the one who does not loudly ask for it, but stays by himself, and does not ask for attention.” (Interview 1, 19.1.2012.)

It is said that, to humans, acknowledgment and kind words are the best rewards. Encouragement was also identified by the teachers to be an important tool in teaching. When describing encouragement, keyword is “positive”. Most important encouragement is positive support given, by teachers, to individual pupils and also to the entire class together. Teachers act as stable support to their pupils' which creates a sense of security. This sense of security, which is built on trust, also creates a base to every other method teachers can use in mental health promotion. Teachers praise success, do not focus on mistakes, since it is alright to make mistakes and you can learn from mistakes made, but give positive feedback to encourage instead of discouraging their pupils to try and give their all. Even the pupils who are less interested in school or are slower to learn are not forgotten.

“When talking about disappointments and such, it is important that such child who is troubled by those feelings is given chances to succeed by his teacher. Multiple opportunities, where he can shine.” (Interview 2, 25.1.2012.)

“And like you said, what I liked, before, (Kaikki kerkiää junan kyytiin)”, which essentially means no one is left behind. “In this case also no one is abandoned. That kind of positive success and enjoyable school life to everyone. Even the most troubled student.” (Interview 2, 25.1.2012.)

Giving their pupils chances to succeed and positive experiences, to find, and nurture, their individual strengths. To give them the feeling that they did it, and the feeling of accomplishment is vital in encouragement. Teachers acknowledge their pupils abilities and use that knowledge to help their pupils to learn better. Final aspect of encouragement is rewarding. As individual pupils are rewarded with praise, kind words and feeling of accomplishment, rewarding is mainly used to reward the whole class, instead of individuals. When whole class works together, and behaves well they are rewarded for that.

“With small children there are, for example, these “smiley days”, where good behavior is rewarded with a “smiley”. When class has collected, lets say ten, of these marks they get rewarded with a nice moment playing board games together in the class.” (Interview 2, 25.1.2012.)

Other rewards include; reading, playing, craft work, etc. In Interview 2 (25.1.2012), offering a peaceful work environment to pupils to work at, was also considered to be a reward.

In Finland children start their school life at the age of 7. This is an age when child starts to develop his social skills and interaction with other children of his age. These friends become increasingly more important when child grows and develops. This is why school, especially primary school, is a good and safe place to practice social interaction with other children. This Social Practice is managed by teachers, as adults, who maintain this environment and also have the means to teach and guide child's social development. Co-operation and group works. Class works together or in smaller groups or pairs solving small tasks together, role-play or small trips to nearby park or forest. This develops their social skills. Mixing groups prevents best friends from always ending up as a pair and makes sure that no one is left outside a group and alone. One example was a gym class where children from first, second and third grade were grouped together to find small checkpoints hidden in school grounds. There was one pupil from each grade in each group together and they all got a map of these checkpoints and then went together to look for them. The goal of the

exercise was to encourage interaction between older and younger pupils and possibly give first graders older friends to support them in school.

Social practice is not the only thing that is practiced in school. Rules and good behaviour are also taught at school. Previous sub-chapter, (4.1), mentions that pupils have a tendency to test their boundaries to see how far they can be stretched. Clear routine and clear boundaries were seen by the teachers as a solution to this problem. Routine covers rules and boundaries that are set to enforce the atmosphere and work environment in schools. Routine also includes clear schedule that school is a place where you arrive in time and there is a clear image that classes are for learning and that breaks and playtime are separate. Schools have their own, school rules that cover behavior, safety and other aspects of school life. In addition to them each class can have their own separate, class rules that teach how to behave in classroom. Boundaries are created by these rules but to make them hold these rules have to be made clear by enforcing those rules.

“Man is so cruel that, even as a child, if he does not have a clear set of rules, they are making their own rules within their group. And they are not many times the best possible rules.” (Interview 2, 25.1.2012.)

“Yeah that is why at the first grade the rules are highlighted as school starts. First we go through school's rules and then class's rules, with which we are struggling forward and to which the whole thing leans on.” (Interview 2, 25.1.2012.)

When properly enforced, rules will create a sense of peace and tranquility. Clear routine, that every day is the same, nothing changes and that a child is always welcome to come to school without any fear or anxiety, enables work peace and security.

“It is support in the sense that same routine continues at school. That when you come to school, nothing has changed. We are still doing the same things. Friends are here and the same staff is here. Such things, that don't disappear

even if things at home might be changing.” (Interview 1, 19.1.2012.)

Last method identified in the two in interviews is Interference. In this thesis interference means identifying and solving pupils problems and troubles that could interfere and obstruct pupils' school life. All this is done in a narrow window which is school, since school can only intervene into something that happens inside school grounds or during a trip to school, but not into incidents outside of school. Teachers are required to interrupt conflicts, from a fight between friends to straight out bullying. It was also identified that from the limited amount of methods the school has available, talking and discussing the problem or dispute with its part takers was the most common one. School also easily takes contact with their pupils' parents for support and also gives information to homes about incidents at school.

“Well maybe our most important task in school is to notice these problems and interfere with them. To which is in our authority to interfere.” (Interview 1, 19.1.2012.)

“Since there limited possibilities anyway. At school, according to school procedures, best option would be pre-emptive approach. What happens at home is something that school cannot interfere in. Pre-emptive work rather than trying to fix issues later.” (Interview 1, 19.1.2012.)

Interview 2 (25.9.2012) also identifies limiting competition as important part of interference. Guiding pupils away from competition among each other means that pupils should not make everything a competition. For example the learning rate should not become an object of competition. This competition could also in a long run lead to discrimination between pupils.

“Yes, today children have all these TV programs and everything is this kind of competition or elimination game and they have too much of it. They have even made up their own games where someone is eliminated.” (Interview 2,

25.1.2012.)

4.3 Resources used by teachers

During the analysis of the interviews, three generic categories were identified to slightly differ from the main category, “Methods used by teachers in mental health promotion”. These three generic categories are; Family/Home, Teacher, and Administration. They are different, because they either involve contacts outside the school, professionals of another profession or involve self-improvement and reflection to maximize their affects. Rather than pure methods they are more like resources and most involve help from others. Thus these three categories were grouped together as “Resources teachers use in mental health promotion”.

First resource, Family/Home, was seen as vital help to teachers in their work. According to them, students’ home environment has great impact to their behavior and learning at school. The importance of home environment, and family, for a child has already been mentioned multiple times before in the earlier sub-chapter 4.1 (p.23). As a resource home creates a positive base, for handling difficult feelings and disappointments, that supports the child outside the home and this positive base helps him to better adapt to school-life. On the other hand if this base does not exist, it is very difficult and time consuming for a teacher to build it at school. If school receives positive support from home, is not overlooked or even berated at home, they can focus on teaching which their primary job is. This positive attitude from home, and respect towards school helps eases teachers work greatly.

“It is when parents are interested of their child's school, respect the school, don't berate the school” (Interview 2, 25.1.2012.)

“If parent has positive attitude towards school it is reflected through the child and can be clearly seen here at school” (Interview 2, 25.1.2012.)

School can also give positive messages to home. These could be about the child's

advancement or how well the whole class has fared etc. Teacher can also send support and instructions from school to the parents or refer them to get help from another source as well.

Teacher can also use himself as a resource. This means that he can use his own abilities knowledge, charisma and experiences as a tool to support his teaching. Professional experience is vital when observing students and to identify their positive strengths or their troubles and problems. Only experience allows a teacher to identify these factors among their students.

“How do you identify positive strength among your students? Can they be identified?”, “Yes in my opinion an experienced teacher can find and see them quite well. It is somehow”, “It is like somehow Experience.” (Interview 2, 25.1.2012.)

However mere experience is not enough according to Interview 2 (25.1.2012). Commitment is needed alongside experience to be able to make people to trust and understand you. You get experience from your work by doing, but commitment is something is affected by several factors. Personal willpower, support from co-workers and if you enjoy and like your work environment for example. Bettering oneself is vital for commitment.

Last but not the least of the three resources is administration. By administration is meant the upper echelon of the school, led by the principal and the multi-professional team which is at her disposal. Interview 1, (19.1.2012), calls this team a pupil maintenance group. They address issues that are outside of schools normal jurisdiction. These include, for example, mental health problems, learning difficulties and social services issues.

“At our school Student maintenance group includes the principal, special needs teacher, social worker, sometimes youth worker and school social worker, (School curator). Once a month we gather and discuss about these

issues”, mental health issues etc, “And if there is an acute situation we can hold a crisis meeting. That we cannot do much without help from the other parties. Also I forgot to mention school psychologist who also participates in the meetings.” (Interview 1, 19.1.2012.)

Members of the pupil maintenance group are not all teachers, but also professionals from multiple fields. This gives the school a much broader view than they would get if the members were all teachers. Psychologist offers knowledge of mental health and social worker has jurisdiction outside of the school, if there is a need for it. This could be for example when a pupils family has financial problems. A teacher who notices his pupil has problems which he cannot help with he can bring them to the notice of the pupil maintenance group.

4.4 KOPSYs' benefits to teachers

Last main category, “What has KOPSY-project given to the teachers?” has four generic categories. They are: Knowledge, Importance of home, Attentiveness and Change. These categories reveal how the KOPSY project has affected the interview participant’s views and knowledge related to mental health promotion and if they have received any new methods or support for their previous methods from the project .All of the participants had taken part into the project.

One of KOPSY-projects goals was to make teachers participating in it more aware of mental health promotion and its methods. This was done by providing knowledge with lectures and discussions with the participating teachers. Teachers participating in this thesis felt that the project gave them theory to support practice. This theory can be incorporated into practice and used as a tool to help them in their profession. Lectures also gave them clearer view to mental health. They now have a better understanding on what is mental health, some knowledge about current issues the social services has in Finland, what pre-emptive mental health work means and can evaluate their own work in relation to others experiences and knowledge received. This has given them tools to pre-emptively help their

pupils with their problems. Project did also provided them with some new work methods they can in their class. One of these methods is traffic lights.

“It went like this. One week at a time, after each lesson, pupils evaluated their own behavior during that class. How it went and how well they succeeded, and if they had done well they got to mark that class as green. If there was room for improvement, in child's or teachers opinion, color was yellow and from utter failure that class was marked as red. These colors then told how well a pupil had done. A lot of green meant that everything was fine, and a lot of yellow or red meant that there was some unresolved matters that had to be sorted separately. Every Friday these colors were counted and those with a lot of yellow and red had a separate discussion in the teachers' lounge. There the reason for those colors were discussed, but more important was to look for a way to avoid those colors next week. Those pupils with a lot of green color sheets got to do something fun together in the classroom. This was meant to encourage the ones who had to discuss with teachers to want to improve even more.” (Interview 2, 25.1.2012.)

This method provides a more concrete picture to the child, of what he should not do and explains what he can do to make things better in the future. It is more constructive than just pure punishment of detention. This traffic light method was continued for about a month since if continued any longer it would have lost its affect, since pupils were getting used to it. Most of the new methods and practices provided by the project are used to teach pupils the importance of the feelings of others, and oneself, and to make them better understand complicated feelings such as anger, frustration, sadness and anxiety. Learning to know and control these feelings, will help the child later in life.

After the project, teachers now understand the importance of home better. There are a lot of restrictions in what school can do alone. School cannot be responsible of raising children. That is a job for the parents. However school can support parents and parents can support school. Parents are a resource for a teacher and their support will also help the pupils to

proper in school. Importance of contacting home was among the first factors identified in the both interviews by the participating teachers. This means that parents are informed, not only about problems but also positive progress of the child and the class.

“Certainly my way of thinking has changed. That it, KOPSY, affects in the background, and some things are paid more attention to, and maybe making contact with homes earlier than before.” (Interview 1, 19.1.2012.)

In addition of earlier and more frequent information distribution to homes, another factor was to have positive relations with home. To have focus on positive progress of the pupils instead of focusing on the negative aspects that happen in everyday life.

“Something new we have used is a new focus during a parents' evening. We focused on that parents would get to be positive. We did not talk about failures or anything negative, but we started by asking that: What good do we have at school.”, “Then we asked, nicely, what could be done differently.” (interview 2, 25.1.2012.)

This change of focus towards a more positive attitude was seen as the key towards this co-operation between homes and school. Relations between school and the parents should also be positive ones.

New knowledge is usually incorporated into the existing knowledge and this improves the quality of ones work. In case of KOPSY-project, some of the interviewed teachers felt that it was easier to make better observations among their pupils after the project. After the project they were more alert and were able to pay better attention into individuals and their behavior than before KOPSY. They felt that they became more subconsciously aware of mental health issues and it was no longer necessary to meticulously ponder the reasons for, what causes a pupil to behave that way and what should be done. (Interview 1, 19.1.2012.) Now that they are more aware of mental health, teachers also felt that voicing concern is easier. Voicing concerns means, that if they notice that one of their pupils has a problem it

is easier to tell about it to others as well for example to the pupil maintenance group. However there was also a wish to get a better picture of what happens later in the process.

“I still want something concrete. There are multiple municipalities participating and different methods to function. It would be nice to have a map of for example how it works in Kemi. When you notice an issue what is the next phase. Who is responsible and for what. Make it clear that what happens after we have voiced our concern forward.” (Interview 1, 19.1.2012.)

In interview 2, (25.1.2012) teacher identify change as a factor that has to be accepted and as something that forces one to adapt.

“Children are not like they were 20 years ago and homes and parents have also changed. Ones we talked that we are from different era, us teachers. We are that much older so we have like, adapted to that.” (Interview 2, 25.1.1012.)

KOPSY has also helped teachers to accept change. Changing groups also produce different kinds of challenges. As previous pupils in previous classes finish primary school new pupils start school and teachers get a new class to teach. Teachers have to adapt to the needs of their class, because not all group are alike.

“I have noticed with years of experience, that when a group changes, every group has to be considered separately and we have to be able to adapt our own work accordingly. Simply lower the bar and to save our strength if needed. Other group requires more and more can be done with another group.” (Interview 2, 25.1.2012.)

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Conclusions

Mental health promotion, does not concentrate only on preventing bad feelings, bullying, violence and conflict. It also includes encouraging a man to achieve his goals, experiencing joy and vitality and caring for others. (Honkanen et al. 2010, 278.) Teacher can do this too. He can transmit a feeling of being adequate, capable and that he is known to manage on his own, to the child, (Honkanen et. al. 2010, 278). Results shown in chapter 4 (p.21) of this thesis also back this evidence among primary school children. Pupils are encouraged by praising their success and giving them changes to succeed, they are encouraged to work together by play and group activities and rules and routine create them a safe and secure environment to learn, to read write and much more, as well as to practice social interaction with other children of the same age and area.

Still a completely sheltered environment does not exist. Even if preventing mental health illnesses and problems is easier than to cure them, after they have already manifested themselves, it is impossible completely prevent exposure to hardships and disappointments. This aim in mental health promotion in addition of providing a child with good feeling and experiences is to also build up a resistance toward difficult feelings caused by hardships and disappointments. These emotional skills can be enforced and they are an essential part of mental health skills. These skills improve in a situation where child gets to identify strong feelings like anger and disappointments. (Hannukkala & Wahlbeck 2012.) The interview 2, (25.1.2012), mentioned a method called the traffic light, also mentioned in chapter 4 (p. 21), they tried in their school that was used to give the pupils a picture, of how their behavior in the classroom looks like to others, and get them to think themselves whether their behavior requires changing. The other aim of that method was try to teach the pupils, with a lot of red and yellow which represented the classes in which something had gone wrong, to understand the difficult feelings through those failures. Every Friday teachers had a discussion with these pupils on why did this come to pass, what they had done, how they felt because of it and what could they do differently next week. This was a

way to teach their pupils about handling those difficult feeling and gave them a chance to redeem themselves the next week. (Interview 2, 25.1.2012.)

Honkanen et. al. (2010, 279), mentions, that in northern Finland, teachers with eight year old pupils report 14 % of their pupils having mental health problems. Teachers also reported an increased amount of behavioral and emotional disturbances, with increased difficulty. Thesis results show that teachers can clearly observe disrupting behavior among their pupils at school. This is because disrupting behavior interrupts and interferes with their primary job which is teaching. The mental health problems they observed were clearly tied up with difficulties and problems at home. A broken or disturbed home causes emotional disturbances, like for example low self-esteem. Combined evaluation of parents and teachers predicted, eight years later manifested, externalized disturbances equally well among eight year old children in southern Finland. However teachers predictions were weaker than parents concerning internalized disturbances. (Honkanen et. al. 2010, 280.) At the same time, even if teachers reported of noticing mental health issues, they rarely recommended psychiatric help for the pupil. A possible reason is thought to be the teachers distrust in their, own ability to observe and the difficulty of voicing concern of mental-health problems. (Honkanen et. al. 2010, 279.)

Honkanen et. al. (2010, 281.), concluded that teachers have to be taken along to co-operate with parents and school health care, in mental health promotion, disturbance prevention and pre-emptive observation, among primary school pupils. Mental health should be taken as a part of teacher education and a clear contact channel should be built between special health care and teachers, so teachers could send a pupil to get special help if needed. KOPSY-projects participants interviewed for this thesis agreed that additional education, that reinforces their own knowledge as teachers with knowledge of mental health, does make them more aware of mental health and the importance of the promotion aspect of mental health (chapter 4.4, p.33). It also gives them new ideas on how to strengthen their students' mental resistance towards life's hardships. However they saw interacting and supporting home and parents as more important, than interaction and contact with special health care This is important since combining teachers and parents observations gives more whole

view into both externalizing and externalizing behavior.

Following conclusion can be drawn from the thesis' results:

1. Teachers observe, disruptive and family issue related behavior among their pupils. They interfere strongest against behavior that disturbs the class and prevents others from learning. Behavior related to family issues is more difficult to interfere with since teachers have less authority outside of school.
2. Teachers have multiple methods to support and teach them how to harness their own strengths as support against difficulties in life. They also receive support from parents, school administration and from their own personal strength.
3. Additional mental health education, such as KOPSY, gives teachers more objective and clear picture of promoting mental health. This helps them observe and support their pupils, and offers new methods of promotion to their use.

Best summary, however comes from the Interview 2, (25.1.2012).

"...That we create such success and positive school spirit for everyone, also for the ones who are slower to learn."

"Yes and child feels that; "I belong to this school and I have place here when I come at the morning," with his own predisposition. And if he along the road encounters trouble or behaves badly, he can always get a fresh start. A clean slate again. We forgive and move on."

5.2 Discussion and ethics

One aspect not yet mentioned in this thesis is the few major differences between the two interviews. Of the two group interviews, other one of them clearly concentrated on the emotional aspects of the pupils and making the environment and atmosphere of the school inviting and safe for the pupils, while the other of the interviews had more had more

analytical aspect to it and focused systematically identifying aspects of mental health and support from home and the multi-professional pupil maintenance group. The interviews did also have common points with each other's, but these differences make it difficult to make one single conclusion for both of the schools. It is possible that these differences result from the different principles and guidelines the schools have. These aspects are affected, for example, by the size of the school and classes, the neighborhood the school is in and the wealth and social status of the families of the pupils. There were differences between these aspects, in the two schools where the interviews were conducted. Because if these differences it is not possible to make one set of guidelines, for mental-health promotion, to fit both of the schools. So the conclusion would be that when making guidelines of mental health promotion and guidelines for referring pupils to psychiatric care, they should be customized based on the needs of the school they are made for. Honkanen et. al. (2010, 281), also recommends regional guidelines for mental-health promotion.

Another subject to consider is how much can be expected from teachers in addition to their main job teaching. Recently there has been plenty of discussion about mental health related topics concerning children and adolescents. In one discussion a senior classroom teacher brought out a point that constant new development programs for teachers have been interfering with teaching classes. How much can be expected from the teachers and which time would be a good place to give teachers mental-health promotion education? Current study program for classroom teachers, in Oulu University, contains a total of two to three hundred study points. Pedagogical studies contain 4 study point's pedagogical psychology and 4 study points of sociology. (WebOodi, 2012.)

Ethical consideration was a crucial part during this thesis study. Ethics were constantly considered on multiple occasions from the planning of the thesis to the implementation of the plan. From the very start of the study our thesis has been in collaboration with the KOPSY-project. We had taken part to the project, as student nurses who took their practice in schools under KOPSY-project, and when plans for the thesis were made, we have received information from the projects manager Hannele Pietiläinen. Collaboration with KOPSY was also the reason why the question: "Has KOPSY-project affected your

teaching? How?” was added among the interview questions.

However, even if our thesis is in collaborating to the KOPSY-project, it is also an independent research. With the projects help we received access to the schools and teachers and also provided support to KOPSY with our thesis. Despite this our research tool, the interview, was custom made to be used in this thesis study, interviews were conducted personally outside the project and we analyzed the data personally. Content analysis is complex. There is no simple way of doing it and the results greatly depend on the researcher’s interpretation and abilities. It is possible to describe some parts of this process in great detail, but other parts, such as the researcher’s own actions and insights, may be difficult to put into words. (Elo & Kyngäs 2007, 113.) In this view the results are clearly ours.

Throughout the whole thesis we have respected the autonomy of our interview participants. They received an information letter, (appendix 1), informing them that to help the analysis the interviews would be recorded, but to protect their privacy only our supervisors would have access to the tapes addition to the two of us. They were also promised that their names, names of the schools or names so any pupils would not be revealed in the thesis. We have kept this promise, and after we have kept the tapes for the required amount of time, we will delete them. Schools and teachers were also protected when we asked the permission from the principal, on paper, before meeting with teachers. Chapter 3.1 (p.16)

Because the native language of the participants is Finnish, the interviews were also conducted in Finnish. This was to make it easier for the participants to speak their mind and discuss with each other with common language. Because the recorded language was Finnish, Saker Md. Abdur, other researcher, who is an English speaker, could not completely understand them. Joni Vanhatalo, the other researcher, went through the interviews with Sarker and the recorded interviews were partially translated to him, so that he could take part into the analyzing the interviews. This did produce some excess work for Joni, but made discussion with Sarker regarding the interviews easier.

All of the teachers who participated to the interviews had taken part into the KOPSY-project. This means that before they were interviewed they had received mental health promotion education right before we questioned them. How much different would the answers be, if the exactly same questions would be presented to teachers who did not have that extra education.

Our thesis study has given a collection of methods that are used by teachers to support, strengthen mental-health of their pupils, chapter 4.2, (p.25). In addition we have identified what extra education such as KOPSY-project can offer to the teachers, chapter 4.4, (p.33). Hopefully this thesis can as an addition to KOPSY-project, this thesis will be presented as an associated research with the project, conveys the importance of mental health promotion to teachers reading it and possibly offers new ideas to teachers, how to ably mental health promotion to their own work. Further research on the need of the further education of mental health promotion to teachers should be considered. What kind of information would help the teacher's to better strengthen the mental resistance of their students. Also further consideration should be placed on how this extra education would be given to the teachers, so that it would not disturb their primary work, which is teaching, and would neither give excess stress on teacher's private life.

As a subject mental health promotion is very interesting to do research on. We became interested of the subject when KOPSY-projects manager Hannele Pietiläinen came to our class and gave us a presentation about KOPSY-project. We had already had an interest towards psychology and mental health, so the subject seemed perfect research subject to do thesis research of. Doing the thesis research has given us insight in, of course mental health promotion, but also how to do research and what it requires. From planning the thesis to writing it, it contains many separate phases of which we have learned of. All in all it has been a pleasurable experience.

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Interview questions to use in our interviews. Both in Finnish and in English:

Mielenterveyden edistäminen perustuu positiivisen mielenterveyden määrittelyyn. Tähän vaikuttavat: yksilölliset tekijät, (kuten itsetunto), perhe, yhteisö ja sosiaaliset tekijät.

1. Millä tavalla havaitset näitä vahvuuksia oppilaissasi?
2. Miten heikkoudet edellä mainitulla alueella ilmenevät oppilaissa?
3. Millä tavalla rohkaiset oppilaittesi yksilöllisiä vahvuuksia?
4. Miten havaitset luokan positiiviset vahvuudet?
5. Millä tavalla rohkaiset luokan sisäisiä vahvuuksia?
6. Onko KOPSY-projekti vaikuttanut opetustyöhösi? Millä tavalla?

English:

Mental Health Promotion is based on the concept of positive mental health, which includes: individual factors, (for example self-esteem), family, community and social factors.

1. In what way do you detect these strengths among your students?
2. How do weaknesses in pre-mentioned area manifest among your students?
3. How do you encourage individual strengths among your students?
4. How do you find positive strengths in your class?
5. How do you encourage this positive strength in your class?
6. Has KOPSY-project affected your teaching? How?

Hyvä Opettaja

Olemme kaksi sairaanhoitajaopiskelijaa Kemi-Tornion ammattikorkeakoulun kansainväliseltä linjalta. Teemme opinnäytetyönämme tutkimusta liittyen KOPSY-projektiin, jonka aiheena on mielenterveyden edistäminen ala-koulussa. Tutkimuksemme aihe on: **”Miten mielenterveyden edistäminen näkyy Luokanopettajan työssä ala-koulussa?”** Tutkimuksemme aihe liittyy mielenterveyden edistämiseen.

Tutkimusta varten haluamme tehdä ryhmähaastattelun, johon ottaa osaa 3-4 opettajaa kerrallaan. Haastattelut tehdään ryhmissä, sillä toivomme saavaamme aikaan keskustelua haastateltavien välillä. Samasta syystä haastattelun kysymykset toimitetaan haastateltaville etukäteen. Haastattelut video nauhoitetaan, jotta saadun tiedon käsittely myöhemmin olisi tutkimuksellisesti luotettavaa. Haastattelun jälkeen keskustelut kirjoitetaan kokonaisuudessaan puhtaaksi analysointia varten ja lopulta nauhat tuhoetaan säilytysajan kuluttua umpeen. Luottamuksellisuuden turvaamiseksi haastateltavien nimet tai koulu eivät tule missään vaiheessa esille. Kun tutkimuksemme on valmistunut, lähetämme sen teille arvioitavaksi, jotta näette miten näkökantanne tulee tutkimuksessa esille. Haastatteluja eivät katso lisäksi muut, kuin opinnäytetyöstämme vastaavat opettaja, Anne Luoma ja, KOPSY-projektin projektipäällikkö, Hannele Pietiläinen. Toivomme että tutkimuksemme tukee omalta osaltaan KOPSY-projektia ja tarjoaa opettajille mahdollisuuden jakaa omaa osaamistaan sekä omaksua uusia toimintatapoja muilta opettajilta.

Terveisin

Joni Vanhatalo & Sarker Md.Abdur

Same in English:

Dear Teachers

We are two international nursing students from Kemi-Tornio University of applied sciences. We are making a thesis work, for our studies, that is related to KOPSY-project, which subject is mental health promotion in primary school. The subject of our study is: **”How do primary-school teachers identify and manage behavioral and mental health problems of school children?”** Thus our study is related to the KOPSY-project and mental health promotion.

For our study we would like to conduct a group interview, where we would like to have around 3-4 teachers to participate. Group interviews would help us to encourage discussion between the interviewees, which would give us more data for our research. For the same reason the the interview questions will be delivered to the participants in advance so that they can prepare for the interview. Interviews would be recorded to help us analyze the data later and for the data analysis would be scientifically reliable. After the interview the data will be clean written for the analysis and finally the copy's will be deleted for securing confidentiality of the participants. For the same reason the names of the participants or their schools will not be revealed in any stage of the thesis work. When the thesis is finished it is send to you for you to evaluate, whether your views are sufficiently presented in the thesis. Due to confidentiality reasons, only our supervising teachers Anne Luoma and, KOPSY-projects manager, Hannele Pietiläinen, will see the interviews so that they can supervise us. We hope that our research will help support KOPSY-project and offers teachers a change to share their knowledge with others and also learn new knowledge from other teachers.

Yours Truly

Joni Vanhatalo & Sarker Md.Abdur

CONTENT ANALYSIS CATEGORIES

Attachment 3

| Sub category | Generic category | Main category |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Happiness Willingness to learn Positive “Never give up” Attitude High self confidence Tolerating disappointments Realistic self-image Can identify own strengths and weaknesses | Individual strengths | Teachers’ observations among their pupils |
| Positive leader Supporting force within a class Team spirit | Positive group behavior | |
| Need of attention Fooling around Restlessness Competing with others Bullying | Disruptive behavior | |
| Falling grades No interested in school Withdrawal No strength to concentrate in school “Giving up” easily Underachieving Overachieving Low self confidence Low self esteem Cannot handle failure | Negative effects from home and family | |

| Sub-category | Generic category | Main category |
|---|------------------|---|
| Differentiation Disbanding mismatched groups Time | Adaptability | Methods used by teachers in mental health promotion |
| Praising success Not focusing on mistakes Support Giving chances to succeed Rewarding Positive feedback Individual strengths Acknowledging every student | Encouragement | |
| Group work Co-operation Mixing groups Role-play Trips or visits | Social Practice | |
| Clear boundaries Clear routines School rules Class rules Work peace Tranquility Security | Routine | |
| Interrupting conflict Enforcing rules Noticing problems Talking Pre-emptive work Guiding away from competition | Interference | |

| | | |
|--|--------------------|---|
| Support/ instructions from school Positive attitude from Home Respect towards school | Family/Home | Resources teachers use in mental health promotion |
| Professional experience Commitment | Teacher | |
| Pupil maintenance group | Administration | |
| Theory supporting practice Clearer view of mental health New work methods | Knowledge | What has KOPSY given to teachers |
| Importance of contacting home Positive relations with parents | Importance of home | |
| More alert Subconsciously aware Voicing concern | Attentiveness | |
| Accepting change Adapting to changing groups | Change | |
| | | |

