

Can young people develop and deliver effective
creative anti-bullying strategies?

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Signed _____ (Andy Hickson)

Abstract

Using action research within a critical paradigm framework the author investigated young people's ability to develop a programme of work that raises awareness of bullying in schools. The research group was made up of six young people, to whom the author and other specialists offered anti-bullying and participatory training techniques. The group eventually designed their own anti-bullying activity programme, which they delivered in creative workshop style sessions to other young people in schools. The author located this research in critical enquiry, engaging the group in a self-reflective process that aimed to be democratic, equitable, liberating and life enhancing.

This report is written in the form of a narrative and evaluates the author's practice as an educative theatre practitioner. Central themes to this research are bullying, power, creative activity and youth participation.

Schools, teachers and adults are often described as *sucking* out the creativity of young people and thus not allowing many of them achieve their full potential. In this context young people are often powerless to deal with some of the difficult issues in their lives such as bullying. The author suggests that peer support is a key strategy to deal with bullying in schools. The author introduces a new concept of peer support called external peer support, which he has evaluated against the current literature.

The definition of bullying is explored in depth, as is its relationship to power. The author suggests peer support to be a key strategy in youth participation and ultimately helping youth empowerment.

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Abbreviations and key terms.

Core Group	The Core Group refers to the small group of young people who worked and trained with me during the course of this project. The ‘Core Group’ should not be confused with the ‘Users’ who were the young people whom the Core Group delivered their creative anti-bullying sessions to.
Users	The Users refers to the young people who the Core Group delivered their creative anti-bullying sessions to.
ZPD	Zone of proximal development. Theory of Lev Vygotsky who defined ZPD as the distance between the most difficult task a child can do and the most difficult task a child can do with help (Mooney, 2000).
EPR	Embodiment – projection – role. A child developmental theory developed by Sue Jennings (1999, 2009).
TIE	Theatre-in-education.
EPS	External peer support.
NGO	Non governmental organisation.
NPO	Non profit organisation.
SNS	Second night syndrome.