Connecting the Dots: Bridging Academia and National Community Partnerships When Delivering Healthy Relationships Programming

Authors : Nicole Vlasman, Karamjeet Dhillon

Abstract : Over the past four years, the Healthy Relationships Program has been delivered in community organizations and schools across Canada. More than 240 groups have been facilitated in collaboration with 33 organizations. As a result, 2157 youth have been engaged in the programming. The purpose and scope of the Healthy Relationships Program are to offer sustainable, evidence-based skills through small group implementation to prevent violence and promote positive, healthy relationships in youth. The program development has included extensive networking at regional and national levels. The Healthy Relationships Program is currently being implemented, adapted, and researched within the Resilience and Inclusion through Strengthening and Enhancing Relationships (RISE-R) project. Alongside the project's research objectives, the RISE-R team has worked to virtually share the ongoing findings of the project through a slow ontology approach. Slow ontology is a practice integrated into project systems and structures whereby slowing the pace and volume of outputs offers creative opportunities. Creative production reveals different layers of success and complements the project, the building blocks for sustainability. As a result of integrating a slow ontology approach, the RISE-R team has developed a Geographic Information System (GIS) that documents local landscapes through a Story Map feature, and more specifically, video installations. Video installations capture the cartography of space and place within the context of singular diverse community spaces (case studies). By documenting spaces via human connections, the project captures narratives, which further enhance the voices and faces of the community within the larger project scope. This GIS project aims to create a visual and interactive flow of information that complements the project's mixed-method research approach. Conclusively, creative project development in the form of a geographic information system can provide learning and engagement opportunities at many levels (i.e., within community organizations and educational spaces or with the general public). In each of these disconnected spaces, fragmented stories are connected through a visual display of project outputs. A slow ontology practice within the context of the RISE-R project documents activities on the fringes and within internal structures; primarily through documenting project successes as further contributions to the Centre for School Mental Health framework (philosophy, recruitment techniques, allocation of resources and time, and a shared commitment to evidence-based products).

Keywords : community programming, geographic information system, project development, project management, qualitative, slow ontology

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