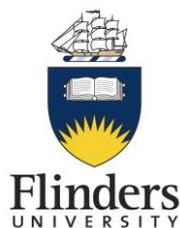


FLINDERS UNIVERSITY
ADELAIDE • AUSTRALIA



Flinders Human Behaviour & Health Research Unit

Releasing Children's Shining Potential

**Improving the social and emotional wellbeing of
primary school children through Journeywork**

Journey into Schools Report
August 2010

Results of Recruitment

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Chapter 4

Results of Recruitment

4.1 Participating school

The participating school is situated in metropolitan Melbourne and had an enrolment of 402 students (June 2008) covering Prep to Year 6. The school has a high proportion of non-English speaking background families (81.9%). These families come from 46 different cultural backgrounds (refer Table 1 for the participant group). The school is a Catholic school and the Education Maintenance Allowance received from the Federal government is slightly higher than average (20.3) compared to other schools. This indicates that the school has a slightly higher than average number of low-income families who have a current health care card attending the school.

4.2 Participants

All parents and children in Year 3 and Year 4 received the letter of invitation, information sheets and consent forms about Journeywork and the study (Appendix 8, Appendix 9, Appendix 10). In response to this information, eighteen parents had advised the Wellbeing Coordinator that they and their child wished to participate in the study and had consented to do so.

While two parent information sessions were scheduled; an after-school information session (3.30pm) and an evening session (7.30pm), only one parent registered for the after-school session and on the advice of the Wellbeing Coordinator, this session was cancelled and the parent advised of the evening session. The one and a half-hour session introduced Journeywork and a DVD of the comments from children, teachers and the Principal from the school in NSW already using Journeywork was shown. The nature of Journeywork and the research study was explained and questions answered to the satisfaction of the parents.

Seven adults: 4 mothers, 1 grandmother and 1 couple attended. Five children came along with their parents, two of whom were brothers, one in Year 3 or 4. The Wellbeing Coordinator commented that this was a good response rate of parents attending school meetings.

Following the information evening, twenty-four children from both Year 3 and Year 4 and their parents, had consented to participate in the study. This was in contrast to the intention of carrying out the sessions in one classroom, of either Year 3 or Year 4 students. Thus, on the advice of the school, a specific time-slot was allocated to bring these children together each week for Journeywork sessions. The effect this had on the study was three-fold:

1. It appeared that parents of children who were more challenged in resilience had volunteered to participate in the study. This perception was verified by a comment from one of the teachers that we “had the more difficult kids” and that 24 seemed a big class to control (*Teacher via Practitioner 2 field notes*). The expertise and

number of the practitioners (3 or 4 each session), and the nature of the intervention were able to accommodate this group of children.

2. Bringing individual children from different classrooms together required specific strategies by the practitioners to get the children working together as a group and ensuring they felt safe with each other.
3. Scheduling of lessons would be more challenging for the teachers.

Of the 24 students, eighteen (75%) were male and six (25%) were female; ranging from 8 to 10 years of age with the majority of children being 9 years of age (median = 9; mode = 9) at commencement of the program. Nine of the children (37.5%) were in Year 3 and fifteen (62.5%) were in Year 4. Their parents came from a variety of non-English speaking backgrounds; with Vietnamese being the most prevalent (refer Table 1).

Table 1: Characteristics of participant children

ID	Gender	Age at 1 May 09	County of birth Father	County of birth Mother	School Year
1	M	8	Philippines	Philippines	3
2	M	9	Italy	Colombia	4
3	F	8	Vietnam	Vietnam	3
4	F	9	India	India	4
5	M	8	Greece	Greece	3
6	M	8	Vietnam	Vietnam	3
7	M	8	China	China	3
8	M	9	Armenia	Armenia	3
9	M	8	Ireland	Malaysia	3
10	M	9	Philippines	Philippines	4
11	M	9	Vietnam	Vietnam	4
12	M	8	India	India	3
13	F	9	India	India	4
14	F	9	Vietnam	Vietnam	4
15	M	8	Vietnam	Vietnam	3
16	M	9	Australia	Australia	4
17	M	10	Australia	Australia	4
18	M	9	Vietnam	Vietnam	4
19	M	9	Vietnam	Vietnam	4
20	M	9	Chile	Sri Lanka	4
21	F	9	Greece	Greece	4
22	M	9	Australia	England	4
23	F	9	Italy	Italy	4
24	M	9	Sudan	Sudan	4

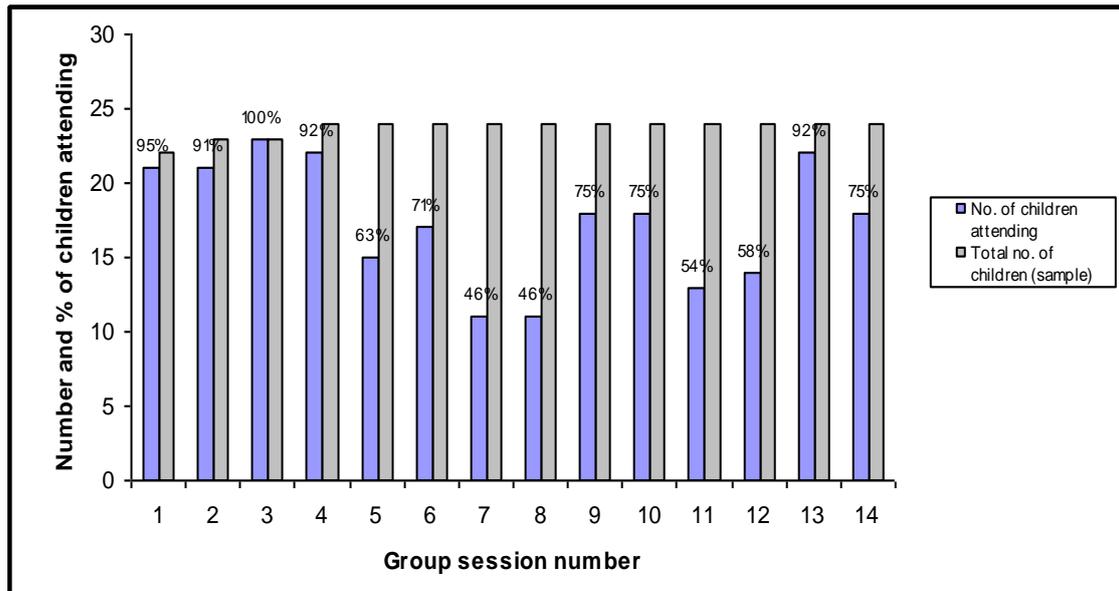
4.3 Implementation of the intervention

4.3.1 Confusion over voluntary participation

Participation in the Journey sessions was voluntary, and this was explained in the Information Sheets, on the consent form as well as during the introductory sessions with the Principal, Wellbeing Co-coordinator and parents. Initially however, the children thought that once they had signed the consent form to participate in the program, they

had to attend each week. When the practitioners became aware of this, they explained to the children (and to the Wellbeing Coordinator) that they had a choice each week of whether they wished to attend or chose to be elsewhere. This was clarified with the children prior to the 5th Journey session. As can be seen in Figure 6, there was a drop in numbers of children attending after it was clarified that attendance was voluntary. Thereafter, attendance varied, and some of the known reasons are listed below. For example, for sessions 7 and 8, some of the children had another compulsory practice session to attend.

Figure 1: Number and percentage of children attending group Journey sessions each week



4.3.2 Attendance at group and individual Journey sessions

Group Journeywork sessions commenced in the third week of Term 2 and continued each week for eight weeks, breaking for the term holiday, and commencing again in Term 3 for another six weeks: fourteen group sessions in total. Sessions were scheduled for 2.10pm to 3.10pm straight after lunch and playtime, and just prior to the children going back to their classroom for a short period before going home.

Individual sessions were conducted with any child assessed by the practitioners to require additional support during, or immediately after, the group sessions. Not all of these individual, as needed sessions were documented because the focus was on facilitating the session in response to the child’s needs and re-assessing the wellbeing the child, leaving them happy and at ease. In addition, scheduled individual sessions were also conducted over a 3-week period towards the end of Term 3. Table 2 shows the number of Journeywork sessions attended by each of the children. As shown, only 2 children attended all of the group sessions provided, and the majority of the children (n=15, 62.5%) attended more than 70% of the group sessions held. Child 18 was the only child who attended less than half of the group sessions (i.e. n=6, 43%). It is important to note that child 18 was one of the outliers identified in the emotional wellbeing questionnaire.

The following are the known reasons for children not attending all of the sessions.

- They were away from school sick

- They were overseas with their parents
- They chose to attend sports instead of the Journey session
- They were attending other school commitments such as drama practise. Some of the other school commitments were voluntary and some were compulsory.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter gave an overview of the participating school, parents and children.

Table 2: Number of Journeywork sessions attended

Child ID	Number of group sessions attended			Number of individual sessions attended			Total No. of sessions attended: Group + individual sessions
	Term 2 (n=8)	Term 3 (n=6)	Total (n=14) n (%)	No. of sessions determined by need*	Individual scheduled sessions (n=3)	Total No.	
1	6	2	8 (57)	-	1	1	9
2	5	4	9 (64)	-	2	2	11
3	8	6	14 (100)	-	2	2	16
4	8	6	14 (100)	-	2	2	16
5	6	4	10 (71)	1	2	3	13
6	4	4	8 (57)	-	2	2	10
7	6	2	8 (57)	-	2	2	10
8	5	2	7 (50)	-	2	2	9
9	6	4	10 (71)	-	2	2	12
10	7	4	11 (79)	1	1	2	13
11	4	3	7 (50)	-	2	2	9
12	5	5	10 (71)	-	2	2	12
13	5	4	9 (64)	-	2	2	11
14	5	4	9 (64)	1	1	2	11
15	8	3	11 (79)	-	3	3	14
16	6	6	12 (86)	-	2	2	14
17	6	6	12 (86)	2	4	6	18
18	3	3	6 (43)	-	2	2	8
19	8	5	13 (93)	1	2	3	16
20	6	5	11 (79)	-	2	2	13
21	7	5	12 (86)	-	2	2	14
22	7	6	13 (93)	-	2	2	15
23	†5	5	10 (71)	1	1	2	12
24	‡5	5	10 (71)	1	3	4	14

† = Commenced participation in session two. ‡ = Commenced participation in session four. * = Not all sessions determined by need were documented at the time

