

Translating Caring Into Action:

**an Evaluation of the Victorian Catholic
Education Student Welfare Professional
Development Initiative**

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Contents

Section 1 :	5
Introduction and Summary of Findings	
Helen Cahill, Johanna Wyn and Gary Shaw	
Section 2 :	10
The Course	
Elizabeth Freeman and Desma Strong	
Section 3 :	18
The School System Initiative:	
The Catholic Education System Response to the Victorian Suicide Prevention Task Force Report	
David Huggins, Mary Tobin and James Montgomery	
Section 4 :	24
Methodology	
Helen Cahill, Johanna Wyn and Gary Shaw	
Section 5 :	29
Literature Review	
Helen Cahill, Johanna Wyn and Gary Shaw	
Section 6 :	41
Students' Perspectives on the Welfare Issues Affecting their Participation in School Life	
Helen Cahill, Gary Shaw and Johanna Wyn	
Section 7 :	48
Course Participants' Perspectives on the Value of the Course	
Helen Cahill, Gary Shaw, Johanna Wyn and Graeme Smith	
Section 8:	58
Principals' Perspectives on the Value of the Course	
Helen Cahill, Gary Shaw, Johanna Wyn and Graeme Smith	
Section 9:	63
Conclusion	
Helen Cahill, Gary Shaw and Johanna Wyn	
Appendices	66
1: Student survey: Primary School	
2: Student survey: Secondary School	

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Section 1

Introduction

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The Catholic Education Office Teacher Development for Mental Health Promotion Initiative

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV), informed by understandings of the need to address the challenge of mental health promotion, invested in a professional development program in student welfare as a central element of its mental health promotion and suicide prevention strategy. The strategy involved the purchase of a two-year professional development program - the Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Studies (Student Welfare) - from the Department of Learning and Educational Development at The University of Melbourne. The Course was initially provided for an intake of 146 teachers from Catholic primary and secondary schools across Victoria in the first cohort (1999) and 100 teachers in the second cohort (2000). (These two cohorts are the subject of this report.) Following the success of the initial program, additional intakes in 2001 – 2004 meant that the Course has been provided to approximately 700 teachers in the system.

An investment in professional development on this scale represents a substantial and innovative approach on the part of the CECV. It is a movement away from the provision of separate and specialist guidance services that concentrate on interventions around 'at risk' students, to an intention to equip large numbers of teachers with the skills and strategies both to meet the needs of specific students and to contribute to whole school change. The professional development program recognised the link between learning and student wellbeing and sought to develop a skilled welfare resource base in schools, which would complement existing professional psychology and social work services provided to schools.

Central to the philosophy of the selected postgraduate course is "translating caring into action". This is underpinned by the belief that all teachers have a welfare role which is

intrinsic to their teaching role, and that they can develop specific knowledge and skills which will enhance their capacity to perform this role effectively.

The Course

The Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Studies (Student Welfare) is a specialised program of professional development catering for the needs of experienced teachers wishing to undertake leadership roles in the development of student welfare programs and caring networks in their schools and colleges. The two-year part time Course is concerned with integrating theory and practice in the exploration of socio-political issues that impact on the provision of student welfare. It uses perspectives from Australian and overseas research and practice to assist participants to understand and develop appropriate systems within schools, and cooperative relations with community welfare services. The Course also provides opportunities for students to develop advanced skills in counselling, advocacy, conflict management and group participation and leadership and school-based action research. Participants having completed the Course should be able to demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of recent developments in student welfare, make effective use of that knowledge in addressing student welfare problems, and demonstrate an appreciation of appropriate professional responsibilities and ethical principles associated with student welfare practice.

The philosophy of the Course is that student welfare demands a whole school approach; and that school structures, school curriculum and increased teacher confidence and skills are essential in the development of preventative and early intervention strategies promoting the wellbeing of all students.

The Course provides training in interpersonal and counselling skills, develops knowledge of community resources and an

understanding of the school as an organisational system. The theme of the program, 'Translating Caring into Action' highlights the dual focus of the Course on both person change and system change.

The evaluation

The evaluation of the Course was set in the context of a discussion about mental health promotion in school settings. A summary of relevant literature addressing the mental health promotion, school change and teacher development, informed the evaluation. Research with primary and secondary school students explored their perceptions of how schools could best support student learning and social-emotional wellbeing. The Course was thus evaluated both within the context of the needs, directions and principles identified in the literature and those distinguished by the school students.

The ripple metaphor has been used as a framework within which to examine the impact of the Course on the Course participants, and of the Course participants upon their schools (see Figure 1).

The first, inner circle, represents the Course as an intervention. Its aims, processes

and design are documented, along with the Course participants' levels of satisfaction with the course. The key question explored at this level was: How do the participants rate the Course in relation to its stated goals and their perceptions of their professional needs?

The second circle represents the impact of the Course on the skills and understandings of the Course participants. The key question at this level was: To what extent do the Course participants develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes which the Course sets out to enhance?

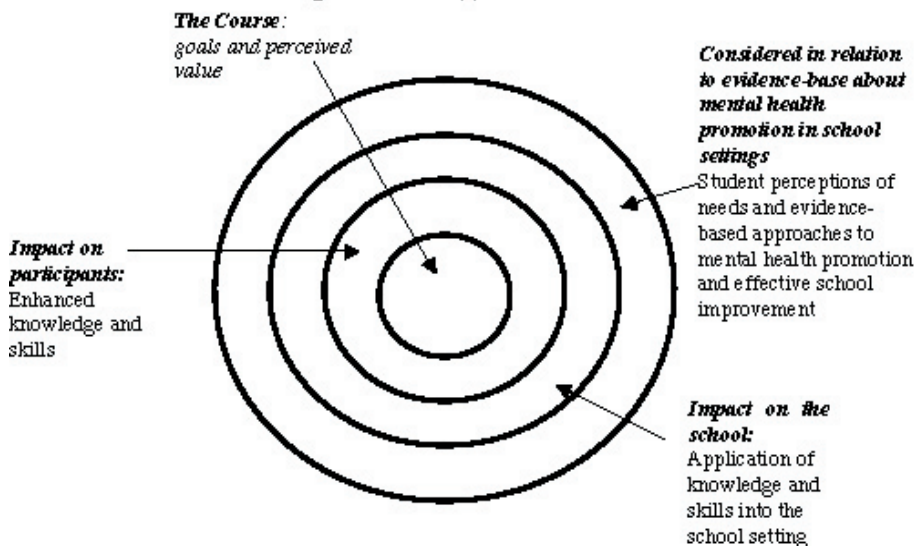
The focus of the evaluation within the third circle was on the documentation of the perceived effects of the strategy at the school level, using both Course participants and school principals as key informants. The key question at this level was: How has the participants' involvement in the course enhanced their capacity to contribute to mental health promotion in their school setting?

The next layer of investigation encompasses consideration of the role of the Course as a component of a system-wide strategy to enhance mental health promotion and suicide prevention in primary and secondary schools. Within this circle, the key evaluation question was: How does the Course as an intervention fit within what is known about recommended approaches to school-based mental health promotion?

At this level, the impact of the Course was considered in relation to the evidence-base in the literature focusing on school change and mental health promotion and in relation to student perceptions of their needs.

The significance of the evaluation lies in the production of evidence about the effectiveness of a student welfare professional development program of this nature in assisting schools to address the mental health needs of their students.

Figure 1: The Ripple Effect



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Course Outcomes

Rigorous and sustained engagement in a course that integrated the theory and practice of student welfare equipped participants with enhanced skills and understandings as generalists in student welfare. Consistently, graduates were able to contribute more effectively in their schools as a result of their:

Enhanced Pastoral Skills leading to improved relationships, incorporating:

- Effective listening and use of basic counselling techniques;
- Pro-active follow-up with troubled students;
- Use of problem-solving and conflict resolution processes with individuals and small groups.

The skills were informed by understandings of:

- the social and emotional needs of young people;
- the impact of family, community and culture on wellbeing; and
- concepts of prevention and early intervention.

Enhanced Leadership Skills, incorporating:

- Assertion and personal confidence in leadership contexts;
- Effective participation with peers on school projects;
- Teacher teaming;
- Enhanced capacity to initiate, develop or contribute to school health promotion prevention or early intervention strategies.

These skills were informed by concepts of:

- mental health promotion;
- organisational change; and
- whole school approaches to student welfare.

School Outcomes

Participants were equipped to contribute at both the individual and the organisational level in their schools, and subsequent activity encompassed a range of school change and mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention strategies. Activity varied from school to school, but consistently, participants

demonstrated an enhanced capacity to initiate or contribute to:

Promotion and prevention activity, including:

- Curriculum responses, eg development of social skills, pastoral care;
- Drug education or mental health curriculum;
- Refinement of pathways of identification, follow up, intervention and referral of individual students encountering social-emotional difficulties;
- Staff professional development;
- Awareness of professional development links, gaps and needs.

School-Based Action: Moderating Factors

The degree to which course graduates could contribute their enhanced skills and understandings in the school setting were moderated by a range of environmental factors including:

- designated role in school:
those in positions of leadership had a greater mandate to engage in change;
- strategic or supportive involvement of school leadership:
sustained action was more likely in those schools in which the Principal engaged with the course participants and sought to strategically utilise their input and leadership;
- readiness of school culture:
schools which were already actively addressing the welfare needs of young people provided a climate of readiness and were more receptive to additional projects built upon existing initiatives or structures;
- time to carry vision into action:
graduates distinguished that 'translating caring into action' and individual follow up of troubled students takes time and that effective school change activity requires the ongoing commitment and deployment of many staff; and
allocation of time for staff to meet and carry out projects was a facilitating factor.

Principals' Perspectives

School principals interviewed saw the course as a significant investment in staff development and school change. Their responses covered a range of key outcomes for their schools, including enhanced leadership and relationship skills, and the value of an action research approach occurring in the school.

Leadership:

- School principals observed an increase in the confidence and leadership skills of staff who had completed the course.
- Those participants who were primary school principals valued the contribution the course made to their own leadership skills, particularly those that assisted them to communicate with staff and parents.
- Many principals indicated that they either had already or would like to assign leadership roles in the welfare area to staff who had completed the course.
- Principals noted an increase in course participants' capacity to contribute to policy development in the school.

Relationships:

- Principals observed participants applying enhanced relationship skills in their work with students, parents or fellow staff.
- Principals saw benefit in their staff participating in an ongoing learning community in which professional exchange could take place.

Action research and ongoing change:

- The majority of principals described the action research projects as making a real and lasting contribution to the school.
- Principals valued action research projects which focused on issues such as social skill development and responses to bullying, enhancing pastoral care, review of student welfare policy and improved home-school links.
- Most principals identified that they could have more strategically utilised staff who were participants in the course, had they known more about the nature of the learning they were engaged in and been able to utilise their input in a more formalised way via in-house professional

development activity.

Maximising the investment in the course:

Principals were keen to offer advice about how to maximise the investment in the course.

Commonly recommended strategies included:

- maintenance of ongoing connection with the course group;
- further placements of staff into the course;
- connecting principals to the course via briefings, newsletters or consultations;
- strategic use of participants to deliver in-house professional development for colleagues;
- resourcing student welfare support in schools;
- funding of ongoing or additional action research projects in schools.

Students' Perspectives

Primary and secondary school students were asked how schools could best support them. It is clear from both the focus group data and from the student survey data that young people are greatly affected by the quality of the relationships they have with their teachers.

The teacher/student relationship

Students perceptions of the approachability of the teacher is likely to influence help-seeking behaviours. Teachers are the least preferred source of help, with students more likely to turn to parents or friends for support on most issues.

Help-seeking: barriers and supports

It is clear that students find it hard to seek help. Barriers to help-seeking identified by the students include:

- embarrassment;
- shame;
- pride; or
- fear.

Students believe that teachers should initiate helping conversations if they suspect a child is experiencing difficulties. (In this light, the emphasis in the student welfare course on skilling teachers in basic counselling and listening skills is very pertinent to the students' needs.)

Help-seeking and relationship with teacher

- 87% of those secondary students surveyed who report a good relationship with teachers will seek help from a teacher

-
- they like if they find their school work hard, as compared to only 44% of those who perceive a bad relationship with their teacher.
 - 45% percent of those secondary students surveyed would seek help about bullying from a teacher with whom they have a good relationship. Only 5% would seek such help from a teacher with whom they have a 'bad' relationship.
 - Of the primary school students surveyed, 75% of those who said their classroom experience was good would seek help from a teacher if they found their school work hard, while only 49% of students with negative classroom experience would do so.
 - Of those primary students who said their classroom experience was good, 73% said they would seek help from a teacher if they lost something, whereas only 54% of those experiencing a bad time in class would seek the teacher's help over a lost possession.
 - Only 48% of those primary students with positive class experiences said 'yes' to help-seeking about feeling sad or worried, and a significantly lower 29% with negative classroom experience said that they would seek help in this area from a teacher.

Longer term outcomes

Course outcomes were maintained over time. Follow up surveys completed at eighteen months post course completion (1999 course intake) and nine months post course completion (year 2000 course intake) provide data about participants' perceptions of the lasting impact of the course.

Role Change:

- 91% of respondents reported that the way they had fulfilled their school role had changed as a result of involvement in the course.
- 51% of the primary school intake identified that their assigned position in the school had changed since commencing the course.
- 52% of secondary respondents reported that their assigned role in the school had changed.

- 80% of respondents identified that their functioning as a teacher had improved as a result of participating in the course.

Daily interactions with individual students:

- 83% of respondents reported using the course skills in daily interactions with individual students.

Classroom management:

- 71% of respondents reported applying course skills on a daily basis in the management of their classes.

Enhanced communication skills:

- 86% of respondents reported enhanced communication skills.
- Skills acquired in the Basic Counselling and the Interpersonal and Group Skills subjects were maintained well over time. 87% of respondents indicated that their basic counselling skills were maintained at a high to very high level and 82% indicated that their group skills were maintained at a high to very high level.

Enhanced understanding of the interface between welfare and education:

- 85% of respondents reported enhanced understandings of how welfare issues impact on learning.
- 79% of respondents identified that they had enhanced their understanding of whole school approaches to mental health promotion.
- 66% of participants identified a high level of improvement in their skills as change agents.

Impact of the course on other staff and the school:

- The most significant contribution to fellow staff was perceived as occurring through membership of staff teams, with 76% rating this as a high to very high positive outcome of the course.
- 74% of respondents rated their engagement in mentoring or supporting fellow staff as

Section 2

The Course

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This section describes the Course evaluated in this study.

In recognition of the complex demands of the teacher's role, the Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Studies - Student Welfare (PGDES-SW) was developed in 1980 as an accredited postgraduate program for experienced teachers. For more than two decades, the PGDES(SW) has sought to equip teachers to undertake the welfare aspects of their role. The course has been designed to enable "teachers to more effectively facilitate the educational achievement and development of social and life management skills of students" (Council of State College of Victoria, Hawthorn, 1980: 3).

Evidence linking improved interpersonal functioning of teachers with improved climate and student behaviour in the classroom, higher academic achievement of students and improved organisational functioning, provided a strong rationale for initial course development (Aspey and Roebuck, 1977; Berenson, 1971; Bigelow, 1971). The course continues to be grounded in the increasing acknowledgment of the link between student wellbeing and learning outcomes (Hawkins and Catalano, 1992; McCarthy, 1998; Weare, 2000; Welsh, Parke, Widaman and O'Neill, 2001). The course philosophy and content is also consistent with research and policy developments at the local and international level that highlight the central role that schools have to play in promoting the social and emotional health of students (DEET, 1998; Hargreaves, 1997; Noddings, 2001; Stoll, 1999; World Health Organisation, 1996; Victorian Suicide Prevention Task Force, 1997).

Graduates are expected to act as a resource on issues related to student wellbeing in their schools and to be able to collaborate effectively with their colleagues in the development, implementation and evaluation of student welfare policy, programs and practices. The

program has been designed to complement school improvement initiatives to develop more flexible structures, a wider choice of curriculum, improved student-teacher relationships and closer links with the wider community.

Through its philosophy and structure, the course has sought to counter the commonly held view that student welfare is primarily reactive and only about helping suffering, disturbed or disruptive students and, therefore, the province of specialists. The aim of the course is to promote a preventative, whole school approach to student welfare that focuses on school improvement and incorporates the wellbeing of all students.

Course participants are introduced to an approach that suggests that student welfare will be reflected in the following dimensions of a school:

1. Philosophically, in the stated aims and objectives of the school;
2. Structurally, in the organisation of the school;
3. Practically, in the curriculum and its implementation and in the provision of appropriate facilities and resources;
4. In the relationships between staff and students, students and students, staff and staff, and between the school and its community.

The intention of the course is to empower participants to take a proactive leadership role across each of the above domains in the interests of maximising educational opportunities for all students. The course theme, 'Translating Caring into Action', highlights the course's dual focus on both person change and system change. The program seeks to develop participants' knowledge and skills, and clarification of values,

in two equally important and interrelated areas:

- a) a range of interpersonal, counselling and problem-solving skills grounded in respect for the individual and designed to empower the individual; and
- b) a knowledge of the way in which school systems function and a related range of skills to facilitate change to enhance the wellbeing and learning of students.

Course structure

The course is a sequential and integrated program comprising seven 30-hour compulsory subjects. Students undertake their studies part-time over two years.

contemporary society.

School Community Partnerships and Student Welfare

An investigation of community resources that complement and extend the student welfare provided by schools and an exploration of theories underpinning welfare services, models of welfare, ethics of referral and processes of developing effective school community networks and partnerships.

Interpersonal and Group Processes

An exploration of the interpersonal and group processes relevant to effective student welfare practice including assertion skills for advocacy, conflict management and mediation and effective leadership and participation in

STRAND ONE

STRAND

Semester 1	Counselling in Educational Contexts 1	The Socio-political Context of Student Welfare
Semester 2	Counselling in Educational Contexts 2	School-Community Partnerships and Student Welfare
Semester 3	Interpersonal and Group Processes	Organisational Change and Student Welfare
Research Project in Student Welfare		

Subjects

Counselling in Educational Contexts 1

An examination of the helping role of the teacher, the values implicit in effective helping and a study of the processes and skills of effective communication and counselling relevant to educational settings.

Counselling in Educational Contexts 2

An extended study of the helping role of the teacher, including selected models of helping, more advanced counselling skills related to goal setting and strategy development, and an examination of the link between discipline and student welfare.

The Socio-political Context of Student Welfare

An exploration of changes in Australian society that impact on students, their families and education, and the experience of childhood, adolescence and young adulthood in

groups.

Organisational Change and Student Welfare

A study of the impact of policies, organisational structures and culture on student wellbeing and the frameworks and skills required to work with others implementing change and improvement in educational settings.

Research Project in Student Welfare

Participants are required to undertake a project that is appropriate and practicable in their particular settings using collaborative action research. The research project provides participants with the opportunity to apply and consolidate the knowledge and skills developed throughout the course. Projects may be focused within the classroom or at a wider school level depending on the scope the participant has to initiate change.

The program seeks to integrate theory

and practice and provide participants with frameworks and the skills of observation, reflection, and critical analysis that will enable them to evaluate existing provisions for student welfare in schools. To achieve these goals the course draws selectively on perspectives offered by studies in sociology, psychology and the applied disciplines of social work and educational administration.

Participants and course delivery

Since 1981 the course has attracted participants from all school systems, State, Catholic and Independent, and from all levels of those systems from Kindergarten to TAFE. Since 1999, over 600 teachers have been sponsored to undertake the course by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) as part of a strategic professional development strategy to support mental health promotion in schools. These teachers have been given partial time release to attend classes. The course is conducted in both metropolitan and country locations and requires participants to attend 10 days per semester; a variety of modes is available including weekend/vacation and day/evening modes.

For over 20 years the course has been conducted in Victorian provincial centres such as Horsham, Wodonga, Bendigo, Geelong, Ballarat, Morwell, Sale, Wangaratta and Warragul. The delivery of the course to rural areas is intended to facilitate the participation of country teachers in further professional development. By taking the course to these centres, rural teachers as a group are given greater access to higher education and the students in rural schools potentially benefit through the improved knowledge, skills and confidence of their teachers in student welfare. Off campus delivery is of particular importance to rural women as family responsibilities often prevent them travelling to Melbourne to attend courses.

By taking the course to the rural students' own settings the material and application of the theoretical components to their practice is possible. Lecturers are able to assist participants to establish the necessary networks with local agencies and services thus facilitating the links necessary for teachers to work collaboratively with other professionals in their own community context.

Course processes

The teaching and learning processes in the course are designed to model the processes and

relationships that are central to the model of student welfare being advocated in the course. This model of student welfare has a basic human needs focus. Knight and Pearl (1999) contend that optimum learning environments will allow students to meet needs for security, belonging, usefulness, comfort, competence, meaning, hope, creativity, excitement and ownership. There has been a deliberate intention, in the design and delivery of a course for teachers studying student welfare, to create an environment that also allows teachers to meet these basic needs. There is a conscious effort on the part of teaching staff to establish a safe and secure environment in which participants can progressively engage, discuss their professional and personal experiences, and take risks. Staff model the values, attitudes and skills that are advocated in the course. A culture of confidentiality and trust is established that allows participants to grapple with workplace issues, experiment with new behaviours and reflect on current and past experience.

The course is underpinned by some key principles of adult learning. Although the field of adult education is alive with debate on the nature of those principles, there is agreement around a cluster of characteristics (Cranton, 1994). These key characteristics include:

- Adult learning is often voluntary and a choice is made about whether to participate;
- Adult learning is often self directed though the context influences the extent of that freedom;
- Adult learning needs are more directed and related to the person's key social roles such as current or future employment;
- Adult learning needs are more oriented to study of a subject for its use in addressing issues and solving problems, that is, it is more practical in nature, with content being applied to personal and professional issues (Knowles, 1980);
- Adult learning involves action; it is both participatory and collaborative (Mezirow, 1991).

In the conduct of the course, these characteristics are reflected in both the content and process of the course. Participants are normally experienced teachers who, given their voluntary choice to undertake the course, are highly motivated to learn more about student welfare. Course learning processes have been designed to build on teachers' initial motivation

through a highly interactive and participatory learning mode. Participants are recognised as having considerable knowledge and experience and are encouraged to use the new frameworks introduced to reflect on their professional experience with a view to contributing to school improvement. The course content is designed to have both personal and professional application.

There is a range of specific course processes designed to support participants. A course specific orientation session serves the dual function of beginning the process of working together and introducing key course concepts and processes. The session includes specific acknowledgment and discussion of the personal and academic challenges associated with returning to study for busy professionals. Staff actively seek to support participants with the challenges of returning to tertiary study from which many have had a significant break.

Group size is generally set at 25 participants and groups remain intact for the two years of the course. The group, with its wealth of experience, becomes an invaluable resource for participants and becomes a caring network that supports and extends each individual's learning. Clear and supportive protocols are also established with groups about attendance, expectations, and the roles of staff and participants.

The development of peer support and consultancy is an important aspect of course processes. In the first year of the course, participants are asked to pair, with the intent of providing mutual support during their progress through the course. In the early stages of the course, the peer support commonly focuses on emotional and practical functions. A more prescribed and formal peer consultancy relationship is built into the final semester of the course in which participants undertake their research project. Peer consultants support each other with the planning, conduct and reporting of their action research project. Spall (1998) discusses the benefits of peer debriefing in the conduct of qualitative research by education graduates. This 'conversational place' "offers a rich resource for collaborative learning about research and specific research questions" (p. 9). Besides providing methodological support, an equally significant aspect of the peer consultancy is personal support. Spall suggests that it "can provide personal support for the lonely business of data gathering in the natural setting" (p. 2).

The course processes described above are seen to be central in empowering participants to build on their personal and professional experience and take the risks that returning to study and acting upon their new knowledge and skills involves. There is an overt recognition of the importance of the interplay between the personal and professional development.

Assessment

The participatory and interactive processes of learning employed in the classes (role plays, group work, student presentations) ensure that students receive immediate feedback on their knowledge and skill development from both teaching staff and their community of learners, as well as the more formal feedback associated with assessment tasks submitted to lecturers.

Each unit of the course is designed to encourage participants to engage in 'reflective practice', a key concept in professional education (Fook, 1996; Gonczi and Hager, 1992; Loughran, 1996; Schon, 1987). Reflective approaches improve the practice of teachers by aligning their espoused theory (that which is consciously articulated), with 'theory-in-use' (that which is embedded in actual practice). Furthermore, implicit in reflective approaches is the concept of creating and developing new theory through the examination of practice, sometimes referred to as 'practice wisdom' (Ife, 1997).

Strategic well designed activities within the classes and more formal out-of-class assessment tasks provide the opportunity for reflection. These strategic tasks are designed to involve participants in direct examination of themselves and their work context in the light of new knowledge, and to encourage synthesis and new perspectives.

An example of a strategic assessment task is the self-change project in Counselling in Educational Contexts 2 in first year, in which participants engage in the process of changing an aspect of their personal or professional functioning that they would like to improve. Participants apply Egan's (2002) Skilled Helper Model of problem management to themselves. The self-change project provides a medium for reflection on the process of personal problem solving, and on the difficulties of change generally, as well as providing new insights about the specific improvement issue. These reflections and learning are extended further in the second year of the course, where the issue of change moves from the personal to

the organisational, with the assessment task entailing an action research project in which participants engage in changing an aspect of the organisation in which they work.

The final subject of the program, Research Project in Student Welfare, provides an opportunity for independent learning as participants are required to apply and consolidate the knowledge and skills developed throughout the course in an independent research project. Participants undertake a project that is appropriate and practicable in their particular settings using a model of collaborative action research. Participants design, implement and evaluate a student welfare related improvement. Projects may be focused within the classroom or at a wider school level depending on the scope the participant has to initiate change. Participants have developed a range of school policies and programs in areas such as transition, alternative programs, life skills curriculum, anti-bullying and school-community links. Many participants have initiated more effective organisational structures in their schools to support and promote a preventative and developmental emphasis on student welfare. Many of the action research projects become ongoing programs in participants' schools. At this final stage of the course, participants are challenged by having the direct opportunity to grapple with the issues that arise in introducing change and working collaboratively with others in real settings.

Course management and staffing

As an integrated and sequential program, the course depends on effective coordination for its success. The course has an academic coordinator, and since the CECV project, has had an additional coordinator of that program. Coordinators teach in the program and work to ensure that the program continues to reflect clear design and delivery principles and practices over the long term.

The total teaching team has included a mix of ongoing, contract and sessional staff. The course is currently taught by a team of 12 lecturers with qualifications and experience as psychologists, social workers, researchers or educational policy developers. Most also have a background in teaching in schools.

Staff have been very deliberately selected by the course coordinators for their capacity to bring up to date knowledge and practice to the course content. It has also been recognised in the selection of staff to teach in the course that

lecturers need to possess a broad understanding of schools and the social issues impacting on schools, as well as their specialist expertise, if they are to have credibility with participants. Demonstrated excellence in teaching skills is also a critical factor in staff selection.

With such a large and varied team, close coordination and support of staff is crucial to both ensure the continued quality of the program and the morale and enthusiasm of the teaching staff. Staff are supported by the course coordinators in a number of ways:

- through subject planning meetings held at the start of each semester;
- through subject review meetings held at the end of each semester;
- through moderation meetings to assist staff in assessing student work and to ensure equity for students.

These scheduled meetings and the less formal discussions held regularly ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and that the curriculum is 'owned' by the staff teaching it. The 'community of learners' concept that is central to the students' learning, is also relevant to the staff team in the continued development and review of the course.

Each unit is carefully planned by the course coordinators with the team of lecturers; teaching notes covering material to be taught, strategies and activities for teaching and appropriate multi-media resources are provided for each lecturer. This ensures that all students have access to the same quality of material and processes and that lecturers are fully familiar with all aspects of the subject. In a course which is integrated and sequential, this systematic preparation and development is crucial in maintaining the integrity of the course.

Curriculum development and review

The course was originally developed at the Hawthorn Institute of Education and underwent extensive accreditation and re-accreditation processes in 1980, 1985 and 1990. In its early years, a course committee representing the relevant educational sectors and systems performed an advisory function that ensured that the curriculum was matched to the identified needs in each sector. A further review in 1995, leading to approval by the Academic Board of the University of Melbourne occurred when Hawthorn Institute of Education amalgamated with the University.

Although many of the imperatives that led to the development of the course have remained unchanged, there has been conscious intention to update and review the course in relation to current developments in the education system and wider social context. Current policy developments at national and state levels and significant developments in educational research and theory around the concept of student welfare, student wellbeing and mental health promotion inform curriculum development in the course.

The course has also been a vanguard for promoting new ways of conceptualising student welfare in schools. Since its inception, school-community partnerships and the possibilities for creative co-ordination of school, health and welfare services have been critical elements of the course. Current policy and practice developments in mental health promotion in schools are now acknowledging the importance of such collaboration and partnership.

An important element in curriculum review is participant evaluations routinely collected by lecturers at the completion of each subject. In addition, information from the University's Quality of Teaching Survey is fed back to curriculum development and review meetings.

Conclusion

The PGDES(SW) recognises the need of teachers, in a challenging educational context, to be given the opportunity to engage in sustained and meaningful learning that supports their active engagement in improvement of their own practice and that of their schools.

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COURSE AND SUBJECT OBJECTIVES

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATIONAL STUDIES (STUDENT WELFARE)

Course Objectives

On completion of the course students should be able to:

- demonstrate a superior knowledge and understanding of recent developments in student welfare practice;
- express informed opinions about student welfare;
- make effective use of the findings of research and scholarship in addressing professional problems in the area of student welfare;
- demonstrate the depth of knowledge and understanding appropriate for leadership in matters of student welfare; and
- demonstrate an appreciation of appropriate professional responsibilities and ethical principles associated with student welfare practice.

476-822

COUNSELLING IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS 1

Objectives:

On completion of this subject students should be able to:

- participate in an informed way in debate about the welfare role of the teacher;
- develop and demonstrate a critical understanding of the values implicit in communication and counselling models;
- demonstrate expertise in a specific psycho-educational model of helping for educational settings;
- demonstrate increased intentionality and effectiveness in the use of interpersonal and counselling skills in all aspects of the teaching role; and
- critically reflect upon their own and their school's helping practices and assumptions.

476-831

COUNSELLING IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS 2

Objectives:

On completion of this subject students should be able to:

- evaluate the relevance and efficacy of selected models of counselling, personality and discipline for educational contexts;
- demonstrate the effective use of advanced helping skills related to goal-setting and strategy development;
- design, apply and critique a specific problem management program; and
- evaluate the effectiveness of their helping interventions with students, parents and colleagues and demonstrate an appreciation of appropriate professional responsibilities and ethical principles associated with student welfare practice.

476-852

INTERPERSONAL AND GROUP PROCESSES

Objectives:

On completion of this subject students should be able to:

- selectively apply a range of assertion skills to advocacy, internal consultation and formal negotiation in a variety of student welfare interventions;

- demonstrate a critical awareness of the theory and practice of conflict management;
- critically evaluate the relevance of mediation as a conflict management process in education;
- evaluate the effectiveness of a variety of adult and student groups on the basis of an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of small groups;
- plan grounded strategies to improve the functioning of dysfunctional groups; and
- critically reflect upon and increase the impact and effectiveness of their own involvement as leaders or participants in groups.

476-859

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF STUDENT WELFARE

Objectives:

On completion of this subject, students should be able to:

- demonstrate a critical awareness of changes in Australian society which impact on students, their families and education;
- analyse the implications for student welfare of particular experiences of childhood, adolescence and young adulthood in contemporary Australian society;
- evaluate the effects of government policy in relation to education in general and student welfare in particular; and
- engage where appropriate with issues impacting on education in contemporary society.

476-860

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND STUDENT WELFARE

Objectives:

On completion of this subject students should be able to:

- demonstrate a critical understanding of the range of approaches to developing school-community partnerships;
- develop a knowledge of and evaluate a range of community social welfare services relevant to schools and colleges;
- establish effective and coordinated cross-sectoral school-community partnerships to enhance student welfare provision in their schools; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the ethics that govern the liaison between professionals.

476-861

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND STUDENT WELFARE

Objectives:

On completion of this subject students should be able to:

- critically analyse the impact of organisational structures, policies and processes on the quality

of student welfare in their own educational settings and clarify their own role within these structures;

- critically analyse the social and political implication of student welfare in schools;
- explain the relationship between student and teacher welfare, and recommend processes for effective teacher welfare;
- identify and evaluate change processes in educational institutions, and identify a potential area of innovation or change in their own setting; and
- apply a range of advanced knowledge and skills to the development and implementation of student welfare policies and practices.

476-858

RESEARCH PROJECT IN STUDENT WELFARE

Objectives:

On completion of this subject students should be able to:

- conduct action research to develop, implement and evaluate an appropriate change in their own setting;
- apply appropriately knowledge of communication and problem solving, interpersonal behaviour, group dynamics and program development to the change process in an educational setting;
- work collaboratively and flexibly with colleagues in school improvement initiatives;
- manage time effectively in the conduct of self-directed project work;
- critically reflect upon their own role as change agent; and
- use peer consultancy skills to support and challenge colleagues undertaking change.

Section 3

The School System Initiative: The Catholic Education System Response to the Victorian Suicide Prevention Task Force Report

David Huggins, Mary Tobin and James Montgomery
(Catholic Education Commission, Victoria)

This section describes the context within which the Course evaluated in this study was made available to teachers in the Victorian Catholic Education System.

In July 1997 the Suicide Prevention Task Force, established in January of the same year by the Victorian Government, released its inquiry into the nature and extent of suicide, particularly youth suicide. The Task Force Report made a series of recommendations to the government on the identification of risk factors, strategies for prevention, early intervention, intervention and post-vention.

The Task Force Report provided a thorough overview and analysis of the problem of suicide. It collected a comprehensive range of data related to the complexity of factors contributing to suicide. Major risk factors contributing to suicide, and identification of risk factors relating to particular groups were outlined. The report cautioned against over-simplifying the identification and measurement of the level of risk for particular individuals.

The Task Force Report identified social factors as being particularly relevant ie social adaptability, family and peer relationships, child abuse, unemployment, local community factors and difficulties of non-English speaking background communities.

The Task Force Report sought to provide attention to six protective factors that were important to an individual's resilience:

- Minimising family stress (violence, discord and disharmony);
- Strengthening family relationships;
- Ensuring children and adolescents have a relationship with at least one competent caring adult;

- Promoting a sense of belonging at school or a similar situation;
- Contributing to positive social behaviours and problem solving skills;
- Fostering a sense of spiritual and communal belonging.

Concurrent with the establishment of the Victorian Suicide Prevention Task Force, a National Stocktake of Youth Suicide Prevention Activities was conducted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies. The analysis focused on three main fields from the database:

- Populations and risk factors targeted;
- The types of organisations involved;
- The main interventions used.

The national analysis indicated that no special targeting could be discerned and that community development strategies delivered by community organisations such as community health services and area/regional services were strongly involved in approaches to youth suicide prevention (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 1999, Youth Suicide Prevention Bulletin, No 3).

In the consultation phase of the Victorian Suicide Prevention Task Force, the Catholic Education Office, Victoria provided a submission to the Task Force and provided a briefing paper for Catholic Schools in response to the report.

The Director, Reverend T M Doyle, advised the schools that the Catholic Education Office had acknowledged that the findings of both State and National Reports confirmed the complexity and confounding nature of the issue

of youth suicide. Furthermore, the Catholic Education Office reiterated the State and National view that the rate of youth suicide was unacceptably high and that the impact of suicide was profound for parents, families, schools and the community.

In 1998 the Victorian Government announced a range of responses to the recommendations of the Suicide Prevention Task Force. The Catholic Education Commission prepared a proposal related to Catholic Education's broad philosophical stance, which combined sound knowledge and skills, with an overall personal development based in Christian values.

Preparing the proposal for the Catholic Education and University of Melbourne partnership

In preparing the proposal for Victorian Government funding, an investigation of the literature provided access to a considerable body of research and discussion on the impact of 'at risk' behaviours in young people. A range of social and personal problems were also evident in the literature. External risk factors such as poverty, family beliefs and practices, peer activities and attitudes appeared to also contribute significantly to participation in risk behaviours. However, while these may be notable predictors or influences, it appeared clear that where protective factors were available and personal resilience was evident, such risk could be reduced (School Focused Youth Services, 1996, Evaluation of the School Focused Youth Service, Jessor, 1991; cited in Golk and Edgecombe: 1).

The proposal was also influenced by the Task Force acknowledging the role of schools in implementing prevention programs through good teacher-student communication and curriculum based information and education. The Task Force Report emphasised the following in regards to schools:

- Young people spend more time in school than in most other structured environments outside the home.
- Schools are well placed to assist students in developing self esteem and self confidence and to identify and support students at risk.
- Achieving literacy skills, academic progress, and developing self esteem are so intertwined that a major preventative

focus in schools must always be on the learning needs of individual students.

- Because adolescents value security and a sense of safe limits there are many benefits of a middle school approach to organising schools.
- The need for schools to provide a wider range of academic opportunities is recognised.
- Suicide specific curriculum should not be built into the programs of schools. Rather, the curriculum should provide opportunities for students to develop strong communication and problem solving skills. The importance of communication skills was constantly highlighted.

In summary, the Task Force believed that educational attainment and the welfare of individual students appeared inextricably linked.

The Task Force also concluded that schools are not qualified to provide extensive health and welfare services and that high standards of welfare provision appeared episodic and inconsistent and were often tied to Commonwealth and State Government initiatives or through the initiative of individual teachers or principals. The Task Force advocated an holistic approach to young people's needs and a clearly articulated school welfare strategy which provided positive learning outcomes, enhanced social and emotional health of students and established better links with other professionals and support services.

In the final stages of the proposal development for the Victorian Government, consultation occurred with the Victorian Government Department of Justice who developed the 'Safer Cities and Shires' strategy in 1997. The Youth Community Safety and Crime Prevention strategy recognised that safer and more effective schools do not happen automatically. School safety depended upon collaborative strategies that integrate safe school planning with broader education effectiveness and improvement efforts. "Effective school behaviour management... is proactively linked to changes in teaching and learning strategies and supported by the appropriate outside agencies." (Department of Justice, 1997, Safer Cities and Shires, p 97).

In 1996 an audit was conducted on

the provision of student welfare in Victorian Catholic and Government schools which was included in a report on Youth Homelessness (Chamberlain and Mackenzie, 1997, Youth Homelessness: Towards Early Intervention and Prevention). The report concluded that there was a constant turnover of student welfare coordinators, that 40% of welfare coordinators had no professional training in 1996 and that time allocation for welfare staff was inadequate. The report concluded that an important strategy for changing teacher attitudes and practice was to incorporate student welfare issues, pastoral care and counselling skills into pre-service and inservice training.

Following a consultation process within Catholic education and focus groups with students regarding help-seeking behaviours, the proposal for funding was submitted to develop strategies and initiatives consistent with the evidence available and the findings of the Victorian Suicide Prevention Task Force.

Deciding on a Professional Development Strategy

The Catholic Education Commission focused upon a response which emphasised the need to build belonging, promote wellbeing, strengthen coping and reduce risk for young people through an investment in professional development.

Pope John Paul II in his address to Catholic Educators (12 September 1984) stated, "The Church looks upon you as co-workers with an important measure of responsibility... to you it is given to create the future and give it direction by offering to your students a set of values with which to assess their newly discovered knowledge... (the changing times) demand that educators be open to new cultural influences and to interpret them for young pupils in the light of the Christian faith. You are called to bring professional competence and a high standard of excellence to your teaching... But your responsibilities make demands on you that go far beyond the need for professional skills and competence... Through you, as though through a clear window on a sunny day, students must come to see and know the richness and joy of a life lived in accordance with Christian teaching, in response to his challenging demands. To teach means not only to impart what we know, but also to reveal who we are by living what we believe. It is the latter lesson which tends to last the longest." (Catholic Education Office, 2002, Office Personnel and

Office Procedures Manual, Part 1: 2)

The decision to engage in a significant long term postgraduate professional development strategy was based upon the belief that the Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Studies complemented the Catholic ethos and was congruent to the objectives of government policy, both State and National. The aim of the course, to promote a preventative whole school approach to student welfare which focused on school improvement and incorporated the well being of all students, related specifically to the intent of the Catholic Education proposal.

The course theme of translating caring into action embodied the philosophical, structural, practical and relationship objectives of the Catholic Education initiative.

The sound evidence base which guided the course structure and the explicit reference to adult learning characteristics encouraged the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria to form a partnership with The University of Melbourne.

The mode of professional development appeared to be conducive to an interactive staff development process which was likely to contribute to significant changes in skills, perspective, confidence and competence of teachers engaged in the course.

Principles of adult education as outlined by Brookfield (1996: 9-10) were applied to the proposal:

- Participation in the course would be voluntary;
- The course material was designed and delivered to increase the learner's sense of self worth;
- Facilitation and teaching emphasised collaboration and cooperative exercises/projects;
- Along with the content, the process of engaging teachers would enable the teachers to review their values, assumptions and interpretations;
- The learning process nurtured teachers to be self directed and empowered and to be pro-active in taking change of their own responsibilities.

The course emphasis on concepts of universality and targeting of support were complementary to the structural model of prevention, early intervention, intervention and post-vention.

The construction of the course provided interrelated fields of study which informed the professional development of the teachers. The focus on personal counselling/communication skill development complemented the evidence provided by the Task Force that teachers needed access to training in communication skills. The Egan Model of training used in the counselling subjects provided a universal approach for teachers and was not dependent on clinical skills.

The Socio-political Context of Student Welfare and School-Community Partnerships subjects were congruent to the Task Force report in emphasising program management through partnership and links to services which provide both targeted and clinical support. Both subjects emphasised the need for strategies which enhance the role of school in developing strategies which enhance support to students.

The subject on Organisational Change enhanced the school improvement capacity of the course by providing literature on effective leadership and organisational change strategies.

Finally, the action research project provided the opportunity for participants to apply the universal qualities of the course into a targeted school-based project which enabled the participant to actively apply knowledge and skills. In summary, the course appeared to be designed to be a vehicle for providing two sets of outcomes:

- Process outcomes which enabled participants to develop enhanced communication skills, leadership skills and behaviours;
- Task outcomes which enhanced participants' capacity to review existing patterns of school services and to be involved in constructing processes of change.

The participants' opportunity to engage with literature on organisational change, program evaluation, personal style, assessment and effective leadership based upon principles of adult learning appeared to the Catholic Education proposal as being relevant to the Task Force recommendation in regards to the role of the school.

The criteria the Catholic Education Commission applied to the selection of candidates for the course completed the

processes of the proposal. Catholic Education did not seek to reinforce the view that a designated person should be responsible for the complex issues raised particularly by the Task Force. The Catholic Education proposal established criteria that emphasised a universal response. Teachers in leadership positions were given priority. In secondary colleges, year level coordinators, subject coordinators, religious education coordinators and heads of middle and senior years were given priority. In primary schools, principals, vice principals and coordinators were given priority. Gender was also taken into consideration to provide access and equity based on teacher gender per capita distribution (ie 30% males, 70% females). Weighting of places to the secondary context was offered as the grant focused on students aged 10 – 18 years. A Prep – Year 12 combination of teachers within the classes was established in consultation with The University of Melbourne. Teams of teachers in secondary schools were encouraged to be involved in the initiative as a means of enhancing the efficacy of the approach in secondary schools in particular.

Finally, the quality of the teaching staff who had experience both in the field of research and service delivery, provided the confidence to develop a proposition for Catholic educators to engage in the two year postgraduate course, with tuition fees paid by the initiative and limited teacher release to be provided.

The partnership proposal received notice of a grant from the Victorian Government in December 1998. The professional development initiative was offered to schools in February 1999. In excess of 250 applications were received in the three week period of offering and 150 students commenced study as the first cohort in April 1999.

The uniqueness of the initiative and the significance of the response created a further partnership with The University of Melbourne and the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria. The partnership sought to investigate the impact of student welfare professional development as an early intervention health promotion and suicide prevention strategy in Catholic primary and secondary schools.

At the time of proposal development, it appeared that previous research had concentrated on small scale, targeted interventions and little was known about the long term whole school outcomes of professional development for health

promotion. The research proposal sought to address a significant need for an evidence-based response through professional development to a complex social issue.

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CECV/ CEOM Youth Services Strategy Update August 2004

The following provides an update of the Youth Services Strategy of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) that highlights how the system has sought to build on its investment in the professional development strategy subsequent to this evaluation.

In 2003 the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) conducted a Review and a restructure was implemented. The Youth Services Strategy now forms part of the newly established Student Wellbeing Team and enables a link to be established between the Youth Services Strategy and systemic, strategic approaches to school change with an emphasis upon whole school approaches to student wellbeing.

As part of the review and ongoing development of the Youth Services Strategy a range of initiatives that complement the professional development strategy have been implemented by the Student Wellbeing Team. Importantly these initiatives support the notion of school change and professional school and cluster based professional learning teams linked to leadership and core teams. This has emphasised the development of systemic based initiatives related to notions of a 'community of learners' and organisational and systemic approaches to school change

This new phase of the Youth Services Strategy has considered the issue of how to maximise the use of graduates in schools, to enable them to continue in their role as change agents through contributing to school change in the area of student wellbeing. The challenge for leadership in schools, including the graduates themselves, remains in finding the best ways of utilising their newly acquired knowledge and skills obtained through undertaking the PGDES (SW). As part of this process graduates and school leaders will have the opportunity to inform the design of further dimensions of the Youth Services Strategy through a formalised process of consultation. The following key areas and activities have been identified:

Selection Process

The process for the selection of participants to complete the course has always focused on leadership roles in schools. In 2003 and 2004 the link between the School Development Plan and the selection of participants has been investigated to determine and strengthen the way in which participants would be able to contribute to the development of school change processes, particularly in relation to student wellbeing. In structured selection discussions with principals, members of the CEOM Student Wellbeing Team explore the proposed linkage of the potential graduates to core teams and school change processes.

Continuing Professional Learning and Development:

In 2003 and 2004 graduates from the first four cohorts were invited to attend a Professional Development program entitled "Enhancing Models of Student Wellbeing". These days were facilitated by the CEOM Student Wellbeing staff in conjunction with the Course Coordinators from the University of Melbourne, with approximately 110 graduates attending. These days enabled graduates to reconnect with their colleagues from the course as well as to participate in professional development designed to provide input regarding the future of schooling and the challenges faced by educators in the new millennium, particularly in the area of student wellbeing. Evidence-based research, current literature and practice which demonstrated the important link between student wellbeing and learning outcomes was explored.

Regional Networks:

Graduates have been offered the opportunity of a regular regional network meeting possibly once a term. The purpose of these network meetings would be for graduates to explore ways of contributing to student wellbeing in their own schools, investigate opportunities for cluster-based activities and initiatives with surrounding schools and to develop and grow potential projects. It is anticipated that the networks will provide opportunities for ongoing Professional Development and learning as well as reflective practice through the contributions of guest speakers, the updating of current educational resources and the sharing of experiences between colleagues and with CEOM staff.

Involvement in System/System Wide Projects:

As a long term strategy for implementing and sustaining school change, the use of a core leadership team is recommended. Principals are encouraged to include graduates in these core leadership teams. One important role of these teams is to develop and implement a strategic plan which locates student wellbeing at the core of school community life.

Enhancing Leadership Capacity:

A key focus of the Youth Services Strategy has been the development of leadership capacity amongst Catholic school educators. The Student Wellbeing Team at the CEOM plans to collect further longitudinal data from a random sample of forty graduates using phone interviews to seek information on how the course has enhanced their leadership capacity within schools. This information will be used to inform the on-going work of the Student Wellbeing Unit in its work with schools, in particular the work with graduates as part of the Youth Services Strategy.

Action Research Projects:

All graduates as part of their assessment work in Semester Two, Year Two of the PGDES(SW) undertake, in consultation with the core leadership team at their school, a significant piece of action research designed to respond to the need of their particular school. The Student Wellbeing Unit of the CEOM is currently developing strategic ways of using this important research work to inform the on-going work of the unit and is exploring ways of disseminating the findings of this research more broadly across the system.

For updates on the Youth Services Strategy, please refer to the CECV website:

<http://www.ceo.melb.catholic.edu.au>

Helen Thomas, Ted Javernik, Mary Tobin

Section 4

Methodology

Helen Cahill, Johanna Wyn and Gary Shaw

This section of the report provides detail on the design and implementation of the evaluation methodology, and discusses the approach used to analyse and report on the data.

The evaluation of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Student Welfare Initiative was funded by an Australian Research Council (Strategic Partnerships with Industry for Research and Training) grant. The partnership involved the Principal Investigator, Professor Johanna Wyn at the Australian Youth Research Centre (AYRC) and the Victorian Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV), led by David Huggins. The research was supported by Helen Cahill, Gary Shaw and Graeme Smith from the Australian Youth Research Centre and James Montgomery and Mary Tobin from the CECV. Liz Freeman and Desma Strong, from the Department of Learning and Educational Development, at The University of Melbourne, developed and implemented the Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Studies (Student Welfare) and were also involved in the evaluation partnership.

The evaluation was a longitudinal study, conducted over a period of three years (2000-2002 inclusive). Participants in the study were members of the 1999 and 2000 intakes into the two-year Post-graduate Diploma in Educational Studies (Student Welfare).

Aims of the evaluation

The evaluation sought to provide evidence of the effectiveness of both processes and outcomes of the professional development activity. The evaluation aimed to study:

- a) The research context:
 - i) Literature review:

What evidence-based recommendations are available to guide schools in their efforts to enhance the mental health of their students?

A literature review was conducted to distinguish evidence-based recommenda-

tions about effective approaches to school-based mental health promotion. The literature review focused on school-based mental health promotion, school change, teacher professional development and student resilience and wellbeing. The review was active for the duration of the evaluation and was used to guide both methodological approaches and progress reports.

- ii) The student perspective:

What do students believe schools can do to enhance their learning and social-emotional well-being?

This research documented student perceptions of the stresses and challenges experienced by young people in relation to school, their perceptions of school climate and those factors that facilitate or inhibit their active participation in school life, and their attitudes towards seeking help from peers, teachers and parents. Alongside the literature review, this research provided a context within which to evaluate the Course goals and outcomes. Key questions explored in research with the students included:

- What are the common social and emotional challenges experienced by students?
- What enhances or detracts from the likelihood that they will seek help with practical, emotional, social or financial problems?
- How can/do schools enhance the social health of their students?

b) The impact of the Course on the participants:

Do the Course participants develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that the Course sets out to enhance?

This required a documentation of the program in operation and the development of measures of outcomes for participants, in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. It included exploration of the following questions:

- What did the participants perceive to be the impact of the Course on their capacity to engage in individual and school-wide mental health promotion activity?
- What were the aspects of the Course that participants particularly valued as contributing to their knowledge and skills development and as directly relevant in their professional settings?
- What was the fit between school students' perceptions of their needs and the Course aims and outcomes?

c) The impact of the Course on the school:

How have the participants' involvement in the Course enhanced their capacity to contribute to mental health promotion in their school settings?

The research documented the participants and their school principals' perceptions of the contribution Course graduates made to the broader mental health promotion efforts of the school. This included exploration of the following questions:

- What was the impact of the Course on participants' ability to enhance the effectiveness of school practices and structures?
- To what extent were Course participants able to transfer skills and understandings to fellow staff?
- To what extent were Course participants able to contribute to school-based change via their action research projects?
- What were the constraining and facilitating factors impacting on Course participants' application in the school setting of skills and understandings developed in the course?
- What were the school principals' perceptions of how best to maximise the investment of the Course at either a school or a system level?

Approach

Researching health promotion in school environments

The school-based health promotion literature reveals a tension between targeting of specific mental health problems and the provision of a health promoting whole school environment. Researchers acknowledge that it is difficult to know how effective health education is because traditional health research designs are not necessarily effective in school settings. Whitehead (1996) points out that most health education takes place in situations where people or communities cannot be randomised, where 'controls' cannot be prevented from acquiring health information intended exclusively for the experimental group, and where external factors may act differently on subgroups within the population. Whitehead argues that, because priority has conventionally been given to measures of effectiveness involving an experimental design, relatively small-scale interventions are most likely to be measured.

This observation is supported by the available literature. A review of 'effective mental health promotion' conducted by Hodgson, Abbasi and Clarkson (1996) limited the definition of 'effective' to small-scale interventions that target particular groups and that have been measured through the classic method of intervention and control groups. A review of research on school health promotion programs found that, while there was ample evidence of the effects of narrow intervention programs that focus on specific health issues such as alcohol, drugs or smoking (Tobler and Stratton, 1997; Tobler, 2000; Dusenbury and Falco, 1995; Midford, 2000), there has been little research on the effects of whole school approaches (Lynagh, Schofield and Sanson-Fisher, 1997). Furthermore, most research on health programs is based on 'snapshot' studies that record the effects and outcomes over a short period of time. Whitehead concludes that, while small, targeted interventions are of value, they do not shed light on the cumulative effects of interventions and broader policy changes over extended periods of time.

An exception to this trend is the Gatehouse Project of the Centre for Adolescent Health. This project, involving 26 schools, aimed to promote student engagement and school connectedness to improve student well-being and learning outcomes. The implementation

and outcomes of this project have been studied over an extended period of time from 1997 to 2001. The research on this innovative project focused on the manner in which the schools implemented the project as well as on individual change in students' well-being (Bond et al, 2001).

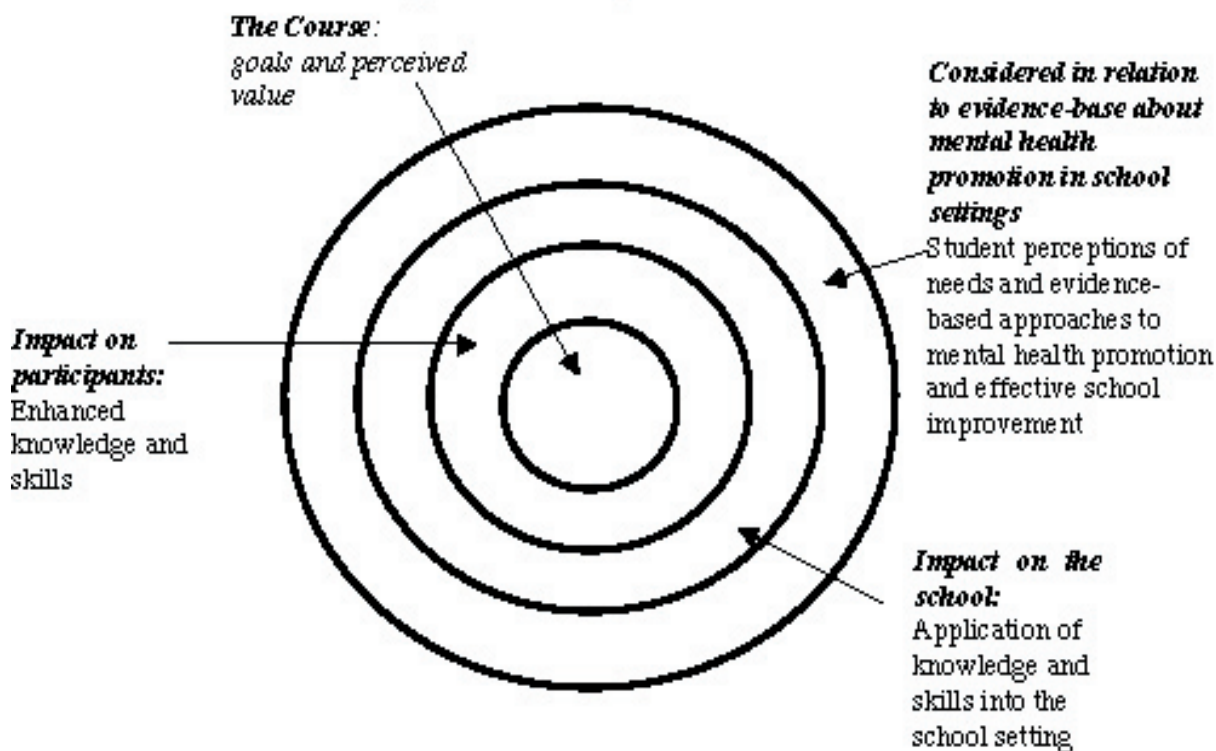
Teacher professional development is widely acknowledged within the school change and school effectiveness literature as a fundamental element in creating school change (Hargreaves, 1997; Stoll, 1999; Little, 1993). However, the literature provides few examples of effective, sustainable professional development in practice and even less of the effectiveness of professional development.

For these reasons, the methodological approach used in this project took a significant departure from the conventional approach used to establish evidence about school-based health promotion. The approach drew on measurement methods used in epidemiology (generating survey tools that surveyed whole populations), in conjunction with those more common to other fields such as policy analysis, organisational change, community development and youth studies (conducting interviews and focus groups with a range of stakeholders).

Evaluation design

The metaphor of a 'ripple' of concentric circles has been used informally as a framework for the research design. The first or inner circle represents the Course, its aims, processes and design and the participants' levels of satisfaction with the Course. The second circle represents the impact of the Course on the skills and understandings of the participants. The focus of the evaluation within the third circle is on the documentation of the perceived effects of the strategy at the school level, using both Course participants and school principals as key informants. The next layer of investigation encompasses consideration of the role of the Course as a component of a system-wide strategy to enhance mental health promotion and suicide prevention in primary and secondary schools. The outer circle also considers the impact of the Course in relation to student perceptions of their needs and in relation to the evidence-base in the literature focusing on school change and mental health promotion.

Figure 1: The Ripple Effect



A participant-centred approach

The Course participants' own assessments of the value of the Course were an important element in the evaluation design. This 'participant-centred' approach to the evaluation mirrors the student-centred approach that informs the pedagogy of the Course itself. Hence the evaluation documented and measured participants' subjective assessments of the impact of the Course, investigating both the immediate effects as well as the impact up to eighteen months following Course completion.

Using a capacity building approach to evaluation, relevant data about the Course has been shared with the Course leaders throughout the evaluation process. This has meant that the Course design has been modified in response to participant feedback.

Data collection

Data collected to evaluate the participants' experiences of the course included:

- a) Course entry survey administered by course leaders;
- b) Initial focus group: this informed the design of the interview schedule;
- c) Early course participant interviews (N=13) were conducted while participants in the 1999 intake were in their second year of the Course. Interviews explored participant perceptions of the value of the Course, its various components and the challenges of applying their learning from the Course in their particular school setting. This informed design of the Course Exit Survey;
- d) Early principal interviews (N=7) were conducted, exploring school leaders' perceptions of the mental health challenges encountered by the school and its community and the challenges and facilitative factors impacting on application of the Course in the school;
- e) Course exit survey at course completion, examining knowledge and skills gained in the course, and experience measures (Cohort 1: 1999 intake, N=130; Cohort 2: 2000 intake, N=100). The surveys assessed participants' attitudes to the relevance and applicability of individual subjects and of the value of the Course as a whole. The survey also addressed participants' perceptions of challenges encountered in doing the course, and in applying the knowledge and competence gained in their schools;
- f) Course follow-up survey at 22 months post course completion (cohort 1, N=70) and 10 months post course completion (cohort 2, N=40), examining lasting impact of the Course and school impact measures. This questionnaire investigated the long term impact of the Course on teachers and their schools, the use which schools have made of the skills gained by participants, and the challenges encountered as participants have attempted to apply their skills;
- g) Course participant interviews conducted six to nine months after Course completion (Cohort 1, N=36; Cohort 2, N=12). The Cohort 1 sample included 5 primary and 31 secondary teachers drawn from 4 primary and 16 secondary rural and metropolitan Catholic schools. The Cohort 2 sample included 8 primary and 4 secondary teachers drawn from 6 primary and 3 secondary schools. Interviews explored the value and impact of the Course on current school roles, on relationships with students, staff and parents, and on their teaching practice. Interviews also explored factors impacting on the Course participants' capacity to utilise and implement what they had learned. Participants were also asked to comment on their action research projects and to describe the supports, barriers and continuing challenges encountered in implementing a whole school approach to mental health promotion;
- h) Course participant follow-up interviews completed 12-18 months after Course completion (Cohort 1, N=32). The sample included 4 primary and 28 secondary teachers drawn from 3 primary schools and 11 secondary schools. Follow-up interviews explored the lasting impact of the Course and the capacity of the participant to contribute to school change;
- i) Principal interviews exploring the contribution of the course to the school conducted with principals (N=20; 9 primary principals and 11 secondary principals). In these interviews principals were asked to share their perceptions of the impact of the Course on the participants

- and on the school and to comment on how best to enhance the investment of the Course at school and system level;
- j) Student focus group interviews with 6-8 students at each year level (Years P-12) in nine schools (4 primary schools, 5 secondary schools). The student focus group interviews explored student perceptions of the social and emotional challenges experienced by students, the quality of school relationships and environments and help-seeking attitudes and behaviours. Information was analysed and grouped according to emergent themes including participation in class, student stress or worry, and help-seeking behaviours;
- k) Pilot student surveys were completed by students in Years 4-12 in the 9 schools (4 primary schools, 5 secondary schools). The survey instrument (see Appendices), developed at the Australian Youth Research Centre, was a comprehensive questionnaire evaluating student connectedness. Besides giving direct evidence of specific attitudes and experiences, such as willingness to seek help or frequency of experiences such as bullying, the instrument also provides scales of the following general aspects of student experience:
- Help seeking from friends, parents and teachers;
 - Positive and negative social experience, in and out of class;
 - Relationship with teachers;
- l) Refined student survey: The student survey was modified after the pilot and subsequently applied in 3 primary and 3 secondary schools (N=1284 students);
- m) Principals' survey: A follow up survey was administered by CECV to all participating schools (95 responses were returned);
- n) A further follow up survey of course participants from 1999 and 2000 was conducted by the CECV in late 2002. This questionnaire investigated the long-term impact of the Course on teachers and their school, the use schools have made of the skills gained by participants, and the challenges encountered as participants have attempted to apply their skills. 110 completed questionnaires were received (70 from 1999 cohort, 40 from 2000 cohort).

presented to the Catholic Education Welfare Initiative Reference Group at their bi-monthly meetings. Forums were held in 2001 and 2002 to report to a broader audience including staff from the Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Office, and staff teaching in the Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Studies (Student Welfare) at The University of Melbourne. This provided the team with an opportunity to reflect on the findings, provide formative feedback to the course leaders and engage in discussion around emerging themes.

Written reports were prepared at the end of 2001 and 2002. These technical reports, co-authored by the project partners, documented findings and provided a data source for formal publication of the project and evaluation.

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Reporting

The project team met at regular intervals to reflect on progress, discuss findings and integrate project activity. Progress reports were

Section 5

Literature Review

Helen Cahill, Johanna Wyn and Gary Shaw

Teacher development, school change and mental health promotion

This literature review sets out to scope a range of research in the areas of teacher development, school change and mental health promotion in school settings. It informs the evaluation of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Student Welfare Initiative launched as part of a mental health promotion and suicide prevention strategy for Catholic schools in Victoria. This strategy aimed to enhance the generalist welfare skills of a substantial number of teachers and school leaders via provision of a postgraduate diploma in student welfare.

Mental Health Promotion

In Australia, the National Mental Health Strategy in 1992 identified children and adolescents as one of six special risk groups. More recently, the National Action Plan for Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention for Mental Health in 2000 gave a high priority to the prevention of mental health problems in all groups of the population, including young people. This plan was informed by a population health approach, distinguishing the main elements of a model of promotion, prevention and early intervention for mental health (CHAC, 2000). It identified schools as a key site for mental health promotion and prevention.

Mental Health promotion is defined as “any action taken to maximise mental health and wellbeing”. Prevention refers to “interventions that occur before the initial onset of a disorder or to prevent the onset of a disorder” and early intervention is defined as those strategies that “specifically target people displaying the early signs and symptoms of a mental health disorder” (CHAC, 2000).

Mental health is defined as “not simply the absence of a mental illness”, but in terms of the “capacity of individuals and

groups to interact with one another and their environment in ways that promote subjective wellbeing, optimal development and use of mental abilities” (CHAC: 3). It is a “state of emotional and social wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively or fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (WHO, 1999).

A mental illness or mental disorder is defined as a diagnosable illness that “significantly interferes with an individual’s cognitive, social or emotional abilities” (CHAC: 3). Common illnesses include depression, anxiety, substance use disorders, attention deficit disorders, psychosis and dementia. Mental health problem is the term used when symptoms of such illnesses are experienced in a less severe and more temporary way.

Prevalence of mental health problems and disorders

More than one million Australians are estimated to have a mental health disorder. Around one in five people will be affected by a mental health problem at some time in their lives, including 14–20% of children and adolescents (CHAC, 2000). Over 20% of 12–16 year olds have had a mental health problem and around 24% of young people will have experienced depression by the age of 18 years (AIHW, 1999).

The suicide rate of young males in Australia increased steadily between 1977 and 1997. In 1998, deaths of young males outnumbered those of young females by a ratio of more than four to one, though the female hospitalisation rate for parasuicide was more than three times the rate as that for males (ABS, 2000).

Mental health promotion in the school setting

In addition to a broad education focus, many schools direct significant efforts towards the promotion of mental health and the prevention of possible health or social problems. These efforts may take the form of whole school approaches to the provision of pastoral care, or active citizenship, or at a prevention level may focus on drug education or anti-bullying programs. Early intervention work occurring within a school can be understood to include the targeted support provided in areas such as individual counselling, anger management, grief and loss education, or literacy support.

Developing positive self-concept

Educators, parents and health professional alike are concerned with the development of self-esteem, identifying positive self-worth as critical to both wellbeing and learning. Phillips (1990) offers a useful framework for understanding what is meant by positive self-concept. She identifies three interconnecting factors as central to the development of positive self concept, including a sense of control arising from experiences of capability; a sense of bonding, belonging or connection; and a sense of meaning created when a young person believes that he or she is significant and has the scope to make a difference. A developmental approach to mental health promotion in the school setting invites educators to address how to generate:

- a sense of capacity, responsibility and control;
- a sense of meaning and purpose in learning; and
- opportunities for students to build a sense of belonging, connection and care.

Resilience, risk and protection

Resilience literature addresses the challenge of promoting social and emotional wellbeing (Benard, 1996; Burns, 1996; Fuller 1998). It informs our understanding of the risk and protective factors which can have an impact on young people's well being (CHAC, 2000).

Luthar et al (2000) has identified three sets of factors implicated in the development of resilience as the attributes of the children themselves, the attributes of their families, and the attributes of their wider social environments (including the school environment). Of particular interest in this study is the role the school can

play in enhancing the protective nature of the learning environment and in using the education process to enhance the capacity of the students themselves. This entails a focus both on the health of the school as an organisation and on the wellbeing and learning of the individuals within it.

Moving beyond a focus on the individual

Research identifies that those young people who encounter adverse life events or circumstances are at greater risk of experiencing mental health problems which may, in turn, have an impact on their learning. Life situations which have been identified as risk factors include: physical, sexual and emotional abuse, school transitions, divorce and family break up, death of a family member, physical illness or impairment, war or natural disasters, unemployment, homelessness, poverty and incarceration (CHAC, 2000).

Benard (1996) identifies social competence, a capacity for problem-solving, autonomy, and a sense of optimism and purpose to be the four key attributes associated with resilience in young people. There has been a long tradition of school-based efforts to promote the capacity of the individual to deal with life challenges. A current focus in many school-based programs includes efforts to enhance the resilience of individuals so as to equip them better to deal with adverse life circumstances (Glover et al, 1998; Wyn et al, 2000).

Alongside the focus on using the classroom program to enhance the skills and understandings of the individual, there is a growing awareness of the need to take an ecological approach and place an additional and broader focus on enhancing the social and organisational health of schools. Research in the fields of resilience, social capital and the structural determinants of wellbeing have led to an increasing awareness of the importance of an environmental approach to enhancing wellbeing (Lynskey et al, 2001).

Understanding the psychosocial determinants of mental health

The determinants of psychosocial and mental health status at the population level comprise a range of factors including income, employment, poverty, education and access to community resources, as well as gender, age and ethnicity (Yen and Syme, 1999; Kawachi and Marmot, 1998). Children living in poverty are more likely

to be exposed to illness, family stress, inadequate social support and parental depression (Parker, Greer and Zuckerman, 1988). Community risk factors impacting on mental health and wellbeing include economic disadvantage, social or cultural discrimination, isolation, neighbourhood violence, population density and housing conditions and lack of facilities and services (CHAC, 2000).

The National Mental Health Strategy recommends an approach that recognises the complex and multi-factorial nature of the causes of mental health problems and addresses the importance of collaborative inter-sectoral partnerships to promote social and emotional wellbeing (CHAC, 2000).

An ongoing cycle of disadvantage that occurs in population groups experiencing poverty is heightened in those groups experiencing stigma and social marginalisation. This has particular impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who encounter additional disadvantage in terms of lack of resources, employment, housing and community infrastructure.

Social capital

Social capital is a term now used to refer to the levels of trust, mutual responsibility and reciprocity within a community (Putnam, 2000). This translates to the availability of perceived or actual social, emotional or instrumental support (Stansfeld, 1999: 156). The social environment is identified as critical to the wellbeing of the individual and the group (Burns, 1996; Cox and Caldwell, 2000; Hughes et al, 2000) and social support has a positive effect on learning and on physical and mental health. Communities with high levels of social cohesion have better health than those with low levels of social cohesion (Stansfeld, 1999).

Social support operates at both an individual and a societal level. Social integration may have a positive effect on the whole community. Social cohesion, the existence of mutual trust and respect between different sections of society, contributes to the way in which people and their health are cherished. There is increasing evidence that communities with high levels of social cohesion have better health than those with low levels of social cohesion. Social cohesion means cohesive community relationships with high levels of participation in communal activities and public affairs, and high levels of membership of community groups. (Stansfeld, 1999: 169)

Wilkinson (1999) identifies that income inequality is closely accompanied by a weakening

of social bonds and suggests that income is related to health “not so much through its role as a determinant of material living standards, but rather as a marker for social status” (p 258). Perceptions of relative status contribute to wellbeing, and significant disparity in wealth is associated with increased levels of mental and physical health problems.

Protective factors at a community and cultural level include a sense of connectedness to the community, networks within the community, participation in church or community groups, strong cultural identity and ethnic pride, and community norms against violence (CHAC, 2000).

Understanding of risk and protective factors and the psycho-social determinants of health invites an approach to school and system level health promotion which includes a focus on the environment, organisational health, teacher development, and effective partnerships with family, community and services. It incorporates and moves beyond the more traditional approach to mental health promotion which focused entirely on enhancing the knowledge, skills and capacities of the individual. In addition, it invites awareness that schools located in disadvantaged neighbourhoods can be seen to be serving a population at greater risk. Enhancing the protective nature of those schools may therefore be allocated a higher priority within a system level strategy.

A focus on the school as a community

Supportive and protective school communities have been demonstrated to enhance the resilience of young people. Benard (1996) outlines three characteristics of supportive and protective school communities as the presence of caring relationships which convey compassion, understanding, respect, and establish safety and basic trust; high expectation messages which offer guidance, structure and challenge; and opportunities for meaningful participation and contribution including opportunities for valued responsibilities, making decisions, being heard and contributing to community.

A sense of connectedness to school, family or community is the key protective factor for young people (Resnick et al, 1997; Fuller, 1998). Additional protective factors associated with positive school environments include a sense of belonging, the presence of a pro-social peer group, required responsibility

or helpfulness, opportunities for success and recognition, and school norms against violence (CHAC, 2000).

Conversely, risk factors in the school environment have been identified to include experiences of: bullying, peer rejection, poor attachment to school, inadequate behaviour management, membership of a deviant peer group, and school failure (CHAC, 2000).

Experiences of failure and bullying or rejection within the school environment place young people at increased risk of negative health and learning outcomes (CHAC, 2000). Those who have experienced bullying are more likely to experience mental health problems (Rigby, 2000). Many students do not see themselves as connected to a supportive community. Nearly a quarter of students (aged 13-14 years) report poor social connectedness at school, "having no-one to talk to, no-one to trust, no-one to depend on" (Glover et al, 1998). Kids helpline identified that, in 1999, they received 6,000 calls about bullying, with 80% of those calls coming from young people aged 10-14 years. Bullying was the third most common reason why young people in this age group called Kids helpline, with calls about family and relationship concerns ranking the highest of all (Kids helpline InfoSheet 7).

School responses to the challenge of mental health promotion

While the wellbeing of young people has always been the core business of schools, the heightened level of concern about young people's mental health means that teachers and school communities are required to explicitly address health promotion. This increasingly overt focus on the school as a key centre occurs in an era in which schools are experiencing the burden of overload and fragmentation as they attempt to deal with society's increasing tendency to use the school as the centre-point of community and as a site in which to intervene on issues relating to youth health (Fullan, 1999).

Questions of sustainability and staff development and wellbeing arise and are explored within discourses about whole school approaches to student engagement and wellbeing (Stoll, 1999). Staff connectedness, knowledge creation and moral purpose are of great importance in sustaining schools in times of challenge (Fullan, 1999). Integrative frameworks such as that of the Health Promoting School (AHPA, 1997) are recommended to assist schools to take a whole school approach to

enhancing social connectedness and to promote participation in learning (Glover et al, 1998, Wyn et al, 2000).

Ecological or environment-centered approaches to mental health promotion recognise that many interconnected factors impact on children's learning and wellbeing (Johns, 2002) and that student competence can be best facilitated in a positive school and classroom climate with an openness for learning and growth supported by highly competent teachers. The interaction and connection between a school's curriculum, policies, practices and partnerships is well recognised (Wyn et al, 2000; Bond et al, 2001).

Many contemporary school health promotion projects take as their starting point the need for a whole school or comprehensive approach (Wyn et al, 2000; Bond et al, 2001). The MindMatters resource (Wyn et al, 2000) draws on research about mental health promotion, particularly in relation to the importance of 'school connectedness', engagement, resilience and alienation. It invites a holistic response and a focus on the capacity of schools to enhance protective factors for mental health through providing a supportive environment and through developing personal resilience skills. The Gatehouse Project (Glover et al, 1998) supports a whole school approach to the promotion of security, social connectedness and positive regard as the means to promote mental health. These approaches invite schools to address all aspects of their operations, including review of policy, curriculum, pedagogy, partnerships with parents, community and agencies, as well as pastoral care and incident response practices.

Successful schools

Studies by Newmann and Wehlage (1995) identify that 'successful schools' focus on 'authentic' pedagogy and student learning. The notion of enhanced student progress, achievement and development is acknowledged as a focus or ultimate goal of school improvement (Stoll, 1999; Hill, 1997). Meaningful educational change designed to meet the real needs of students demands new perspectives and basic changes to the culture of schools. Enhancing student engagement has been identified as a key challenge encountered in the middle years of schooling (Cumming, 1996). Alienation is described as a key challenge for youth in our times (Bronfenbrenner, in Burns, 1996) and can be understood to encompass experiences of powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness

and social estrangement or isolation (Mau, 1992). Middle Years research has highlighted the need for a focus on learning as a social act (Otero, 1999) and on the generation of an interactive, engaging and purposeful pedagogy and an environment of respect, commitment and care (Cummings, 1996).

School change and the learning community

A great deal has been written about how schools can improve their capacity to cope with change (Hargreaves, 1997; Fullan, 1999; Bond, Glover et al, 2001). School change is often positioned as problematic and the literature commonly addresses the likely barriers or obstacles to effective change in schools.

Hargreaves (1997) identifies that school change often falters because the reason for the change is poorly conceptualised or demonstrated or because the change is too broad, causing teachers to have to work on too many fronts (Hargreaves, 1997). In addition, change is often poorly resourced or resources are withdrawn before the initiative is integrated. Innovation takes time. It takes about three years to achieve successful change in primary schools and about six years in a secondary school (Fullan, 2000). Without long-term commitment, resourcing and support from parents and key staff, change efforts may simply lead to teacher frustration, burnout and despair (Hargreaves, 1997; Fullan, 1997; Dworkin, 2001). Professionals who are denied autonomy, status and respect in leading and managing change are more likely to experience a burnout characterised by a sense of meaninglessness and powerlessness (Dworkin, 2001).

Community of learners

The development of a professional learning community involving the majority of teachers is widely promoted as a critical component of effective school change. Sergiovanni contends that “developing a community of practice may be the single most important way to improve a school” (Sergiovanni, 1994). Thus strategies to enhance the internal capacity of schools include a focus on the development of collective responsibility, positioning teachers within a community of learners supported by appropriate professional development and organisational structures, whilst acknowledging that the culture, community and organisational health of schools impacts on their capacity to deal with change (Fullan, 1999; Stoll, 1999).

As each school is unique, each must learn how to learn and how make their own change (Fullan, 2000). This requires teachers to be learners themselves, learning both within teams and as individuals. Historically however, teachers have worked in isolation. School structures tend to work against the development of collaborative work cultures, making it difficult for teachers to schedule time to work together (Fullan, 1997). Teacher isolation is a problem, as working in isolation from colleagues or the external environment makes change more difficult.

Systemic approaches to change

Conflict is an important part of change and it is important to incorporate difference within the change process (Retallick, 1997). This requires a systemic approach. Retallick defines the development of collective vision and a process of continuous learning, collaborative inquiry and dialogue as critical to a learning organisation. This process must be supported by systems to capture and share learning and connect the organisation to its environment. Silins et al (2002) define an effective learning organisation in terms of team learning, personal mastery, shared vision, and systems thinking. They distinguish risk-taking, trust, a collaborative climate, shared vision and shared team-oriented professional development as key supporting factors in effective schools.

Relationships and effective change

There is a need to approach change with an understanding of its complexity and of the emotional dimension to change. Fullan (1999) identifies that successful schools foster relationships to enhance the social cohesion required to generate and sustain change. The principal plays a key role in managing the incoherence or anxiety surrounding change and in developing the shared meaning and organisational connectedness necessary to sustain staff in times of change (Fullan, 1999). Collaborative work cultures in which teachers can be in productive dialogue also support the change process (Fullan, 1997; Hargreaves, 1997; Senge, 1990).

Teacher development and effective school change

Teacher competence can be enhanced by opportunities for learning and personal growth and teachers’ mastery can become the core of a

problem solving school. A study of Australian secondary schools conducted in 1995, found that one of the most significant barriers to mental health promotion activity in schools was the lack of teacher confidence with mental health issues (Department of Health and Family Services, 1996). Keegel and Freeman (1998) found that student welfare teachers reported a high level of uncertainty about their professional role in suicide prevention, both in individual counselling and intervention and in the development of whole school promotion and prevention approaches. Teacher professional development strategies are a key component of effective school change activity.

The discussion about the design features of effective teacher professional development is relatively fragmented. The literature represents a diverse range of areas that include teacher professionalisation, performance management, school effectiveness, school-based initiatives and teacher renewal. Across these areas there is debate about what counts as evidence of effective continuing professional development.

Trends in Continuing Professional Development in the UK and USA

The literature on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has been dominated by research that has been concerned with the implementation of and effects of various educational reform initiatives. These initiatives have tended to be focused on the achievement of short-term goals for the improvement of specific teacher competencies in separate subject areas. In particular, the research has reflected a strong interest in literacy and numeracy, documenting the extent to which schools and systems in the UK and the USA have reached performance management goals for teachers to gain pre-defined standards of skill and competency.

This research is exemplified by the work of Ingvarson (2002), who compares the effects of recent reforms in education in the UK and the USA. He focuses on the effects of policies that have aimed to improve the quality of teaching. These policies are directed at teachers' pay systems, career paths, the quality of teachers' work and professional development. Ingvarson argues that "investing in effective modes of on going professional learning is regarded increasingly as one of the most effective means of improving student learning outcomes" (2002: 1). His comparison focuses on management of 'reforming the teaching profession' through

'performance management' techniques involving the certification of teachers. As Ingvarson points out, these developments have relevance for Australia because, since the 1980s, there have been moves to develop performance management processes for Australian teachers. He identifies the 1998 Senate Report on the status of teaching in Australia (A Class Act) as well as the more recent Commonwealth initiative 'Teachers for the 21st Century' which was introduced in 2000. In New South Wales, the Ramsay Report (Ramsay, 2000) and the Institute of Teaching in Victoria, which was implemented in 2002, are both focused on the concept of certifying teachers.

These local initiatives have been influenced by the developments in both the UK and the USA that focus directly on the quality of teaching and learning and identify 'teacher status' and teacher certification through performance management as a key strategy for improving the quality of teachers. While Ingvarson identifies some important differences between the systems of teacher performance management between the two countries, essentially they are based on the same models in which authorities identify competencies or sets of skills that teachers are required to demonstrate in order to achieve certification. From the management point of view, the emphasis is on developing 'valid and clear' standards of measurement. These can involve very complex sets of criteria across many 'certification fields' (for example early childhood, primary, adolescence, young adulthood as well as subject areas). The criteria developed in the US by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, for example, typically involve documents describing standards that are 'thirty to forty pages long' for each field (Ingvarson, 2002).

While Ingvarson suggests that this places 'the agenda in the hands of teachers', in fact teachers are simply in a position of responding to these externally imposed standards. The effect in both the UK and the USA has been that individual teachers respond to these criteria by submitting evidence that they conform to the standards. In the UK, teachers submit a form and in the USA teachers submit a portfolio, both of which are provided in template form by the authorising body. These templates provide a structure for making 'entries' and inform teachers about how they will be scored. The

link with professional development is seen to be that in attempting to meet the standards set down, teachers will be engaging in a form of professional learning, through reflecting on their own practices. While Ingvarson argues that “teachers regularly claim that they have become better teachers as a result of the certification process” (2002: 11), there is a vigorous literature suggesting that this is a narrow and limiting approach to continuing professional development for teachers (for example, see Brice and Nations Johnson, 2000).

Whitty’s assessment of professional development in the UK is that there is a ‘struggle’ over the future of the teaching profession and teacher education in which different interests are represented (Whitty, 2000). He suggests that this is a struggle between ‘restricted’ and ‘extended’ professionalism. Policies and initiatives are judged very differently, depending on the point of view. For example, Whitty points out that, while some commentators believe that the educational reforms in the UK mean an increase in “the exercise of discretionary judgement within conditions of unavoidable and perpetual uncertainty” (Whitty, 2000), others take the opposite view. Some argue that the current moves towards ‘competencies and standards’ are “actually reducing the amount of control and discretion open to teachers individually and collectively” (Whitty, 2000: 285). He points out that it is possible that different elements of the teaching profession are developing in different directions. He concludes that the combination of school-based training and officially specified standards is likely to confine teacher professionalism, and that resisting this limitation is the challenge facing teacher professional development.

Different approaches to teacher professional development

The relationship between recent educational reforms and teacher professional development is the focus of Little’s work (Little, 1993). She identifies five streams of educational reform, and explores the extent of ‘fit’ between these streams and models of teacher professional development. Her discussion exposes conflicting approaches to educational reform and raises important questions about how the goals of these reforms can be met through different teacher development strategies.

Her analysis of these issues leads her to

conclude that

... the dominant training model of teachers’ professional development – a model focused primarily on expanding an individual repertoire of well-defined and skilful classroom practice – is not adequate to the ambitious visions of teaching and schooling embedded in present reform initiatives (Little, 1993: 129).

The mandated skills and competencies that Ingvarson identifies with teacher certification would, according to Little’s analysis, fall short of meeting the goals of current educational reforms. She argues that, in order for the reforms to subject matter, assessment, school organisation and the professionalisation of teaching to work, teachers need to be equipped to be ‘shapers, promoters and well-informed critics’ of reform agendas. Within these areas are embedded visions of what it means to learn, the role of teachers in schools and the role of schools in communities. The reform agendas are often expressed in terms of principles, rather than programs or specific practices. For this reason, the kinds of changes that are anticipated in the reforms are not “readily expressed in terms of specific, transferable skills and practices” (1993: 133). As Little identifies, this means that there is a poor fit between the ambitious goals of current educational reforms and the dominant training paradigm which is proposed by Ingvarson.

Little identifies six principles for continuing professional development that she derives from a comprehensive analysis of effective teacher development strategies:

1. Teacher development offers meaningful intellectual, social, emotional engagement with ideas, with materials and with colleagues, both in and out of teaching;
2. Professional development takes explicit account of the contexts of teaching and the experience of teachers;
3. Professional development offers support for informed dissent;
4. Professional development places classroom practice in the larger contexts of school practice and the educational careers of children;
5. Professional development prepares teachers (as well as students and their parents) to employ the techniques and perspectives of inquiry.
6. The governance of professional development ensures bureaucratic restraint and a balance between the interests of individuals and the interests

of institutions (Little, 1993: 138-139).

Little's research on continuing professional development has generated three criteria for judging the effectiveness of investments beyond the ordinary in teacher professional development. She argues that professional development projects are defensible if they meet one of three criteria:

1. credibly tied to a ripple effect (ie the effect extends beyond individuals to colleagues, thus reducing the overall per teacher cost);
2. direct individual benefit is far more certain than in a conventional program;
3. program contributes in demonstrable ways to increased organisational capacity beyond impact of individuals in program (Little, 1993).

Examples of good practice in Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

While Little (1993) has identified elements of good practice in a number of initiatives, there is very little evidence in the wider literature of professional development programs that have the vision and scale of the Student Welfare initiative of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV). This initiative is relatively unique in making teacher professional development a tool to achieve whole of school outcomes. The model of professional development, through in-depth and on-going education for classroom teachers and school leaders in an accredited course, is possibly unprecedented. However there are some initiatives that share important elements with the CECV initiative.

One such initiative is a continuing professional development program for sustainable education (Shallcross and Robinson, 1999). The motivation for this program is drawn from the United Nations priority on education as a means for achieving sustainable development. The sustainable education program sought explicitly to avoid "some of the pitfalls associated with the black box models of centralised, top down CPD provision" (Shallcross and Robinson, 1999: 405). They draw on Fullan's insights into the reasons for the failure of centralised professional development (Fullan, 1997). These include the lack of conceptual base in planning and implementation, the use of one-off workshops that are widespread but ineffective, the failure to address individual needs and concerns, and the failure to recognise

the impact of programs on different schools from which teachers are drawn. Shallcross and Robinson relate a number of these trends to the devolution of budgets to schools, which has meant that short-term needs and priorities determined by central government or inspection agencies dominate. In contrast, Shallcross and Robinson emphasise the importance of relating professional development to local circumstances and concerns. For this reason, they promote a school-based approach.

The sustainability project they cite involves training teachers to use the sustainable education program and assisting teachers to engage in action research projects that evaluate the impact of the program over an extended period of time. Shallcross and Robinson point out that there are few methodologies for researching the effectiveness of large-scale interventions over time. They ask "how much time should elapse before it is legitimate to draw conclusions about the effect of a policy or intervention" (1999: 418). Ball (1997) and Woods (1996) also raise this problem. Bolam also agrees that there is a lack of information about the effects of professional development because of the technical difficulties of carrying out systematic studies (2000).

Another initiative, somewhat similar in scope and model to that chosen by the CECV is a professional development program that was developed for Swedish teachers through an Anglo-Swedish collaboration (Goddard et al, 1999). In this program, the University of Greenwich in the UK linked with Lunds Universitet and other educational organisations in Sweden to participate in a Masters in Education degree from the Greenwich University. The motivation for the initiative was the interest by the National Agency for Education in Stockholm in developing teachers' knowledge about research and developing a 'questioning approach' to classroom practice. The program offered through the University of Greenwich drew on approaches that use teachers' knowledge and experience as 'critical reflective practitioners.' The professional development program used structured reflection and student action research projects as key elements in shaping their professional learning and development. The focus was on classroom practice framed by a holistic understanding of the school and its community. While teachers learned identifiable skills in problem solving and curriculum development, the program

aimed to empower them to 'deal with innovation and change' and to give academic recognition to teachers for their professional experience (Goddard et al, 1999: 15). While the program provided the teachers with an opportunity to be removed from their immediate work contexts, the students were also involved in work-based learning, as they conducted action research projects in their work settings and reflected on their learnings in their own schools.

A recent review of 15 different collaborative continuing teacher professional development programs (CPD) (Cordingley et al, 2003) distinguished that outcomes for participating teachers included enhanced confidence, enhanced belief in their power to make a difference to students' learning, a commitment and willingness to try new things in their practice and an increased enthusiasm for collaborative modes of working (p 4). The provision of time to discuss, plan and engage in collaboration was an essential ingredient supporting professional change, as was the provision of coaching and modelling. Positive outcomes sometimes emerged only after periods of challenge and risk as new approaches were tried and the professional development processes that supported teacher development included strong elements of peer leadership and support, the use of external expertise, opportunities for feedback and structures which encouraged collaborative interaction over time (p 5). Pedagogical features of effective programs included elements such as action research, modelling, building on teachers' existing knowledge, the use of research literature as a springboard for dialogue (p 6) and a focused and purposeful curriculum which allows for response to both individual and school needs.

Informing policy and assessing good practice in Continuing Professional Development

Cordingley et al (2003) argue that the evidence that CPD is "linked with a positive impact upon teachers' repertoire of teaching and learning strategies, their ability to match these to their students' needs, their self-esteem, confidence and their commitment to continuing learning and development" (p 8) should inform policy from local to national level.

Little (1993) argues that training will not, on its own, enable us to build reform, as real reform is systematic and collective,

whereas professional development tends to be highly individualistic. It is difficult to avoid the dominant training model over problem-solving approaches, but there is evidence that they deliver the most effective outcomes. Nonetheless, the literature provides some guidelines for assessing good practice in continuing professional development. These include the recognition that teachers gain intellectual, attitudinal and motivational support from each other, and that network groups of teachers offer the capacity to maximise this, compared with 'training packages' in which teachers are instructed (Little, 1993). Standardised programs and 'pre-packaged knowledge sessions' have the serious limitation of underestimating teacher knowledge and tend to ignore teacher knowledge and often do not link with local circumstances or needs.

There are some common themes that have characterised successful continuing professional development and school change initiatives. These themes have clear relevance for the Student Welfare initiative of the CECV:

- Problem-solving and enquiry-based approaches
Effective professional development involves teachers in skill development and cooperative learning exercises that provide opportunities for practice and coaching (Little, 1993).
- Local application and the relevance of a school's history
Each school is unique in various ways and part of the uniqueness is the school's history. Any professional development program needs to take the school's history into account, including the nature of the community, amalgamations, changes in leadership, recent innovations and policy changes (Turner, 1999). Effective professional development engages with the challenge of applying broad principles to practice within a particular school context (Little, 1993).
- The time factor
The effects of professional development take time to become evident. While teachers can identify new skills that they have learned, putting these into practice can be a longer-term process. Both participants and organisations frequently underestimate the amount of time that it

takes to demonstrate outcomes (Solomon and Tresman, 1999). In addition, teachers need time to develop local solutions in the complexity of the local context (Little, 1993).

- Shared vision and responsibility.

The implementation of sustainable and effective continuing professional development requires the development of a vision for new roles for teachers and schools (Retallick, 1997; Sachs, 1999). Effective professional development requires that organisations take responsibility to design and support innovative programs that are tailored to specific goals (Sachs, 1999).

- Collaborative approaches

Peer support and coaching and the engagement over time in both theoretical and practical responses to professional challenges is best provided within a collaborative learning culture. Teachers' knowledge, skill, self-esteem and sense of purpose can be enhanced as a result of engagement in an ongoing learning community outside the school environment (Cordingley et al, 2003). The systematic development of a collaborative approach to teacher development within a school community will best support school wide change. A school-based 'community of learners' model is most effective to build organisational capacity and supports staff through the complexity of change (Fullan, 1999). Organisational capacity is developed by involving teams in the development of system level change and moral purpose as well as personal mastery (Fullan, 1999; Stoll, 1999).

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Section 6

Students' Perspectives on the Welfare Issues Affecting their Participation in School Life

Helen Cahill, Gary Shaw and Johanna Wyn

This section provides a student perspective on welfare issues and accompanies the literature review in setting a context for the evaluation of the Student Welfare Professional Development Initiative.

The student perspective on the welfare issues affecting young people was investigated through the conduct of focus group interviews with students in all year levels from Prep to Year 12 and through surveys conducted with students from Year 4 to Year 12. This research documented student perceptions of the stresses and challenges experienced by young people in relation to school, their perceptions of school climate and those factors that facilitate or inhibit their active participation in school life, and their attitudes towards seeking help from peers, teachers and parents.

FOCUS GROUP DATA

Questions explored in the focus group interviews conducted with groups of around six students from each year level (P-12) included:

- What do students around your age find stressful or worrying?
- What would affect whether students around your age asked for help in dealing with these stressful or challenging issues?
- What should a teacher do if he/she notices a student who looks sad or worried?
- What helps student to join in class and school activities?
- What does a good teacher do?
- What sorts of things might make a student feel like they wanted to miss class or not come to school?
- What makes school a good place for students to be and to learn?

The responses were remarkably similar,

regardless of school or year level. Aside from obvious differences in the use of language, students of all ages tended to offer similar descriptions of what constituted a good teacher, and of the factors that affected help-seeking choices. Developmental differences were apparent in worries or stresses that concerned them, with additional concerns impacting on older students, though with a common set which remained across the age groups.

Participation in school life

In focus group interviews, students of all age groups reported that the extent to which they were prepared to participate or actively engage in class activities was affected by their readings of the class relationships and their judgement of their capacity to successfully accomplish the task. Embarrassment was a key word in responses. If students perceived that they risked looking stupid or being ridiculed by peers or the teacher, particularly for giving a wrong or inadequate answer, then they would be less likely to participate. Other reported barriers included negative relationships with class-mates or the teacher.

Students reported that their willingness to participate was enhanced when they felt capable or interested in the subject, when they were in a class in which they liked the teacher or where they had positive experiences of group activities and support from peers. They reported that group work, shared tasks, games, sports and arts activities, camps, orientation activities and seating plans which mixed students assisted them to mix with and get to know each other.

A summary of the student responses is

included in the table (next page). From these responses it is clear that students moderate their engagement in class and school-wide activities in accordance with the quality of the relationships and the social climate within

Participation in class activities	
What are the barriers to participation with fellow students?	What supports participation with fellow students?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • laughed at by class for the wrong answer; • if people put you down; • bad comments from teachers about wrong answers; • teacher doesn't like you or picks on you; • you get made an example of; • not having confidence; • being embarrassed; • some activities are just seen as for smart or popular kids; • if you think you are not good enough; • not motivated; • too tired; • not comfortable with others; • have no friends; • teacher doesn't give encouragement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group work; • shared tasks; • games; • sports ; • arts activities; • camps; • orientation activities; • seating plans which mix students; • when popular people let you join in.

which they are operating.

Missing school

At the extreme end of non-participation in class is the choice to skip class or to miss school. Students reported that the most common reasons for wanting to miss school or class were negative relationships with peers or teachers such as being bullied, having friendship problems or

having a 'mean' or a 'bad' teacher. In addition assessment or task pressures associated with completing work, failing, tests, boring classes or being in trouble could affect attendance, along with physical wellbeing issues associated with illness, stress, family upset or tiredness. A summary of student responses is included below.

Student perceptions: Reasons to miss school or class		
Negative relationships	Task Pressures	Wellbeing issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being bullied; • friendship problems; • don't like their classmates; • teasing; • not liking the teacher; • being in trouble with the teacher; • a mean or bad teacher; • a teacher who doesn't like you; • getting a punishment that day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work due is not complete; • test is scheduled; • work is too hard; • if you can't do the work and you're embarrassed to ask; • if you think you can't do it; • bad or boring classes; • no good subjects or activities to look forward to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sick; • tired ; • something happening at home; • running late; • being sad or down.

What is a good teacher?

Focus group interviews were used to explore students' perceptions about what makes a good teacher. From the student perspective, good teachers have a positive attitude to their job, communicate well and generate positive relationships with their students, providing encouragement and feedback on student activity. A summary of student responses is contained in the table below.

Student perceptions: What makes a good teacher?		
Positive attitude to their job	Positive relationships with students	Effective communication, feedback and follow-up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enthusiastic; • keen to help; • wants to be a teacher; • passion for subject; • trusting; • happy; • knows what they are talking about; • shows respect for the class; • explains things well; • interested in what they are teaching; • organises interesting work; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • friendly; • cares; • gets to know you; • listens; • can relate to students; • not out of touch with kids; • takes us seriously; • thinks about what you feel; • understands our thinking; • easy to get on with; • is fair and consistent; • doesn't play favourites; • is someone you can negotiate with; • is understanding; • has a sense of humour; • can talk to us; • has personality; • jokes but can be serious; • talks like a normal person; • respects you; • treats you as an equal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes sure everyone knows where they are up to; • encourages us; • compliments; • acknowledges your answer; • doesn't yell; • provides extra time; • explains and follows up; • recognises when you do something well; • takes time to tell you that you are working well; • lets you know how you are going; • gives extra help; • helps individuals and

Student stress and worry

Students reported worrying or getting upset about a range of things. Relationships with peers and teachers and school accomplishment were common concerns across age groups. Students also worried about getting into trouble at school. Worry about relationships with peers centred around issues of bullying, inclusion and having friends or fitting in with friends. By grades 4-6 and continuing into secondary school, additional key personal concerns centred around body image, intelligence, and family arguments or break-up.

Concerns about the teacher-student relationship centred around getting into trouble, equity and fairness of treatment, and not being liked by the teacher. In addition, secondary students reported receiving inadequate levels of feedback about their work or encouragement from their teachers. School work concerns centred around level of performance on tasks, keeping up with work, failing, having too much work or not being able to concentrate. Transition concerns were expressed around moving to high school, joining a new class, dealing with a new teacher and leaving school at the end of year 12.

Most of the issues students identified as leading to stress or worry were of a social or emotional nature. The survey data confirmed students' interview responses in indicating that these were the issues students were least likely to refer to teachers should they need help. To seek help with money problems was seen as a particularly embarrassing, and almost all students said that they would not do this due to the shame or embarrassment associated with the family not having enough money.

Barriers to help-seeking

In focus group interviews, students across the age groups came up with consistent messages about the barriers to help-seeking from teachers. Embarrassment and shyness were the most frequently cited reasons: If you're scared it's hard to ask for help and if you have a personal problem, people might tease you. Other barriers identified by students include pride, shame and autonomy or the belief you should work out the problem by yourself. In addition, concerns about privacy: they might talk about you and people find out, difficulty in gaining access to the teacher, or a perceived risk of encountering a reprimand from the teacher or reprisals from peers: the kids say I'll do something if you tell, could pose a significant

barrier. Students also assessed the quality of their relationship with the teacher identifying that you have to like them and trust them and you have to think they like you before they will feel able to ask for help.

Students related that they would commonly ask a friend for help first if finding their school-work hard. Barriers in relation to seeking help with school work included factors such as the teacher thinking you were dumb or the teacher telling you off for not listening and having to wait a long time for help. A summary of student responses is included in the table below.

Help-seeking supports

When asked what makes it easier to ask for help, students most commonly identified that the encouragement or support of friends would be critical in assisting them to go for help. The urgency of a situation, such as an emergency, could also override other concerns.

Teacher-initiated helping

When asked in focus group interviews what they thought the teacher should do if he/she noticed that the child was looking upset, students consistently commented that they believed a teacher should ask the child what was wrong,

Student perceptions: When is it harder to ask a teacher for help?	
Embarrassment and anxiety	Relationship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feeling shy; • thinking if you had a personal problem, people might tease you; • scared of what people might think; • when kids say "I'll do something if you tell"; • telling might make it worse; • you might start crying if you talk; • you can be embarrassed; • if you're scared it is hard to ask for help; • people thinking you are dumb. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when a teacher is angry or grumpy to other students or to you; • you have to like them; • you have to trust the teacher; • you have to think they like you; • when you think they might tell you off; • it is scary to ask a stranger or someone you don't know for help.
Privacy and access	Pride and shame
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when you can't get to the teacher because other kids or teachers are around; • they might talk about you and people find out; • if you don't know their name it is hard to ask them for help; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if you're new you don't know people to ask . • you try to work the problem out by yourself; • you don't want people to know you need help; • they might not believe you; • you think you shouldn't have a problem; • you think your problem is too small for them

listen to them and attempt to reassure them, help them or get others to assist.

This should be done with regard for the student's need for privacy and without passing judgements. Being taken seriously was thought to be important. The students suggested that though they may be highly unlikely to approach a teacher or staff member to ask for help, they believed pro-active offers of support were appropriate.

To be immediately sent off to a counsellor was not seen as appropriate. Students said they would prefer to talk with someone they knew and trusted, though were concerned about privacy and the tendency of teachers to pass information around. The sickbay was identified as a place for a primary child to be taken who was sick or sad. Various strategies were suggested to cheer the child up, such as being placed with supportive friends or timeout from the class activity. A summary of student responses is included in the table below.

Student perceptions: What should a teacher do if he/she notices a student is upset or down?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ask them what is wrong; • talk to them in private; • cheer the person up; • take them to sick bay; • ring parents; • put with some friends; • ask some friends what might be wrong; • tell them you have noticed; • ask them to come and see you; • work out a solution together; • give them a lolly / a cuddle / a sticker; • get them a group to play with; • get them into the game with other kids; • the teacher should not force the issue; • wait until the end of class, then talk to them privately.

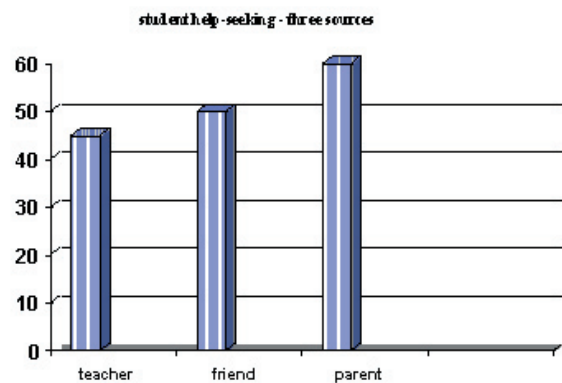
SURVEY DATA

Survey data was collected from students (Years 4–12). The questions addressed students' experiences in the classroom and schoolyard, their relationships with peers and teachers and their attitudes towards help-seeking from teachers, peers and parents (see appendices).

Sources of help

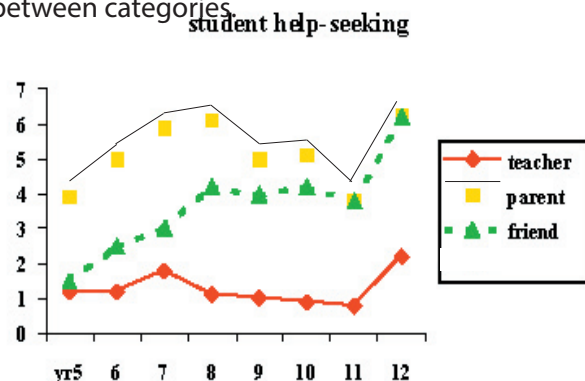
Students' attitudes towards help-seeking were sought in relation to three help-seeking sources: friends, parents/care-givers and teachers. A range of help-seeking categories was identified. These can be grouped as 'instrumental', including if the student felt sick, injured themselves, lost something, had difficulties with school work or had money problems, and 'social/emotional' including if the student felt sad, had a friendship problem, was being bullied, had a friend who was being bullied or had family problems.

In almost all situations, students seek help more readily from friends and parents rather than from teachers eg Teachers: 45%; Friends: 50.2%; and Parents: 60.2% for total respondents for all situations.



Year level and help seeking

At each year level, students are less likely to seek help from teachers than from friends or parents. There is a slight increase in reliance on friends as students move to higher classes, with a sharper increase at Year 11 and 12. In particular, older students feel freer to ask their peers for help on more personal questions such as money and bullying problems, compared to younger students. Parent help remains more constant across the year with some variation between categories.



Teachers as preferred sources of help

Teachers are the preferred options for help only in situations linked to their conventional roles of teaching and school management. They are less likely to be chosen to help in emotional or personal situations eg Teachers: 53%; Friends: 53%; and Parents: 63% for seeking help for bullying. Students show a steady decline between Grade 5 and Year 10 in terms of seeking help from teachers and then a rise again through Years 10 to 12.

Teacher behaviours and the likelihood of help-seeking

Further analysis of the survey data indicates that the teacher behaviours which were the strongest predictors of a 'yes' to help-seeking were when the teacher:

- smiles at me;
- says hello to me;
- talks to me;
- shows he/she is proud of me; and
- takes an interest in what I do.

Moderate predictors of a 'yes' to help-seeking from the teacher were when m... teacher:

- organises fun activity;
- notices my effort;
- sets interesting work;
- encourages me to join in; and
- helps me learn from my mistakes.

Schoolwork experience and relationships with teachers

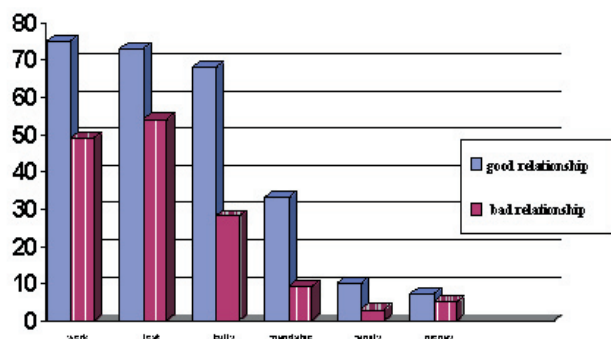
In the secondary school survey, students were asked about the likelihood that they would seek help from three different teachers: a 'teacher you like', an 'effective teacher' and a 'teacher you don't like'. 87% of secondary students with a good relationship with the teacher will seek help if they find their school-work hard, as compared to only 44% of those who perceive a bad relationship with their teacher. 45% of those reporting a good relationship with the teacher would seek help from a teacher regarding bullying as compared to only 5-7% of those with a bad relationship with the teacher.

Pupil experience in schoolyard and classroom

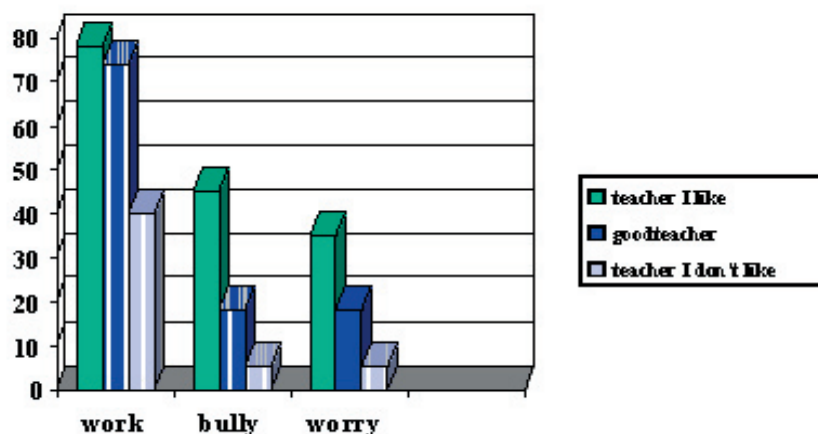
Data collected in the primary school surveys indicated that about 20% of students have significantly negative experiences in the classroom or the schoolyard.

In general those primary students experiencing higher levels of bullying and isolation are the least likely to seek help, especially from teachers. Of the students who said their classroom experience was good, 75% would seek help from a teacher if they found their school work hard, while only 49% of students with negative classroom experience would do so. Of those who said their classroom experience was good, 73% said they would seek help from a teacher if they lost something, whereas only 54% of those experiencing a bad time in class would seek the teacher's help over a lost possession. Significantly lower scales are identified should a student feel sad. Only 48% of those with positive class experiences said 'yes' to help-seeking on this issue and a significantly lower 29% with negative classroom experience said that they would seek help from a teacher.

primary students help-seeking and relationship with teacher

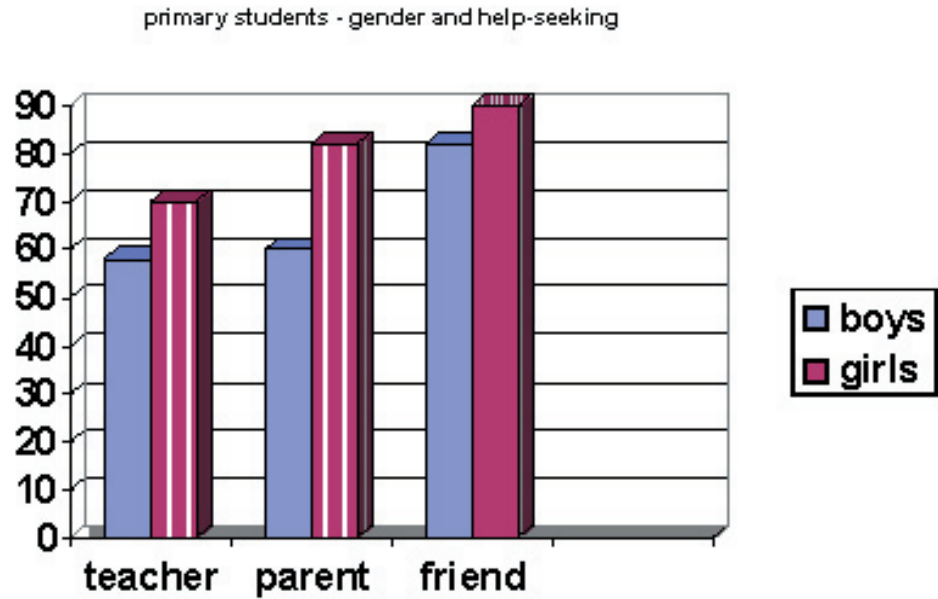


secondary students help-seeking in relation to teacher



Gender and help seeking

The survey data demonstrates that girls were more likely than boys to seek help in almost all situations, with the most significant differences occurring in relation to seeking social-emotional support, particularly from friends: 72% of girls compared to 28% of boys would seek help from a friend regarding a family problem. The gender difference is less marked on help seeking from parents.



Section 7

Course Participants' Perspectives on the Value of the Course

Helen Cahill, Gary Shaw, Johanna Wyn and Graeme Smith

This section presents findings from the surveys and interviews conducted with course participants.

Of the respondents from the 1999 intake, 71% were from secondary schools and 24% were from primary schools. Of the respondents from the 2000 intake, 54% were from secondary schools and 42% from primary schools. (Some respondents did not work in a school setting or did not indicate whether they were primary or secondary teachers).

Respondents represented a range of school roles as indicated in the table (right). Around two thirds of respondents filled some sort of leadership role in their school.

School role	Frequency 1999 intake	%	Frequency 2000 intake	%
other	2	1.8	1	1.0
curriculum, subject or faculty coordinator	10	8.9	18	18.0
class teacher	36	32.1	31	31.0
principal	3	2.7	12	12.0
vice principal	11	9.8	6	6.0
student welfare coordinator	17	15.2	7	7.0
year level coordinator	33	29.5	17	17.0
missing information			8	8.0
Total	112	100.0	100	100.0

to others.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Reasons for enrolling in the course

Participants had a range of reasons for enrolling in the course. Of greatest significance is that 96% identify that they enter the course with an existing commitment to student welfare. The course is thus 'preaching to the converted' in that a shared sense of priority around welfare and social and emotional wellbeing is already at play. Also significant is the high percentage of participants seeking professional renewal (85% of those from the 1999 intake and 79% of those from the 2000 intake).

High overall satisfaction with the course

I believe 100% in the course and if every teacher could do it there would be benefits to schools. Even though it was difficult and time consuming I found it to be absolutely brilliant. I would recommend it

REASONS	1999 intake (%) (N=112)	2000 intake (%) (N=100)
Professional renewal	85	79
Commitment to student welfare	96	96
Payment of HECS fee by employer	71	71
On recommendation of course participant	19	19
Support or encouragement by Principal or colleagues	45	45
Other	19	19

(participants could choose more than one reason, hence percentages add to more than 100)

(Year 10 coordinator: rural secondary school)

Course participant surveys and interviews distinguish a high correlation between the aims of the course and the experiences of the participants. Analysis of the course impact surveys reveals that 95% of participants rated

their overall satisfaction level with the course as high to very high. Interviews with the graduate participants show that they continued to rate the course very highly at six to nine months, and at twelve to eighteen months after course completion. The course follow-up survey identifies that up to 22 months after course completion, 91% of graduates continue to rate the course as having a high to very high impact on the way they fulfil their role in the school.

Enhanced pastoral skills

The course has improved teacher student relationships and has influenced the way I respond to incidents. I look more broadly at issues, using humour more, getting at the whole story not just punishing the behaviour - my detentions have dropped and it seems to have allowed me more time.

(Teacher: metropolitan secondary)

Consistently, graduates reported that they were able to contribute more effectively in their schools as a result of their enhanced pastoral skills. Data from the course exit survey indicated that the most valued gains from the course were those associated with improvement in helping and communication skills. 95% of course participants believed that the course had enhanced their helping skills to a high to very high level. 90% believed that the course had assisted them to understand themselves and to understand others better. 80% rated their improvement in communication and leadership skills at high to very high levels.

Participants described more positive relationships and an increased capacity to deal effectively with conflict when interacting with colleagues, students, friends and family members.

Enhanced leadership skills

I personally benefited and now feel more confident in dealing with difficult situations. I am also more confident in managing change in schools.

(Teacher: rural primary)

80% of course participants rated their improvement in communication and leadership skills as high to very high and 75% rated their capacity to operate as a resource to the school or to work towards a whole school approach at high to very high levels. In interviews, participants described an improvement in self-confidence and assertion which led to an increased capacity to initiate action with colleagues or school leadership, follow up concerns with individual students, access services for students, contribute on a school welfare team, and deal

more effectively with personal challenges in the domestic sphere.

Features of a high quality course

Analysis of the data collected from those 44 participants interviewed six to nine months after course completion reveals a high degree of consistency in participants' assessments of the strengths of the course. Four key themes emerged from their statements about the value of the course:

- the opportunity for professional and personal renewal;
- the challenge and continuity of ongoing quality professional development;
- the applied and relevant nature of the course; and
- their membership of an ongoing and supportive learning community.

Renewal: professional and personal:

The interpersonal relationships are the most important thing to work on. You can have 30 computers in your classroom but it doesn't matter unless you can get the relationships right.

(Teacher: rural primary)

Participants valued the course as a source of professional renewal, reporting that they felt affirmed and sustained to find in the course a valuing of relationship and care. The course vision of 'translating caring into action' was both inspiring and affirming at a personal level.

Challenge: personal and academic:

I have more confidence as a result of the course. The course adds to you as a person – whether you are dealing with work relationships or family or social relationships. In years to come I will draw on this as I meet different experiences.

(Teacher: rural secondary)

Participants found the return to study challenging as well as rewarding, requiring high levels of commitment across a sustained period of time. The key challenges associated with completing the course were those associated with juggling the competing demands of professional and family life with the requirements associated with attending classes and completing written assignments. 90% of participants rated this challenge as high to very high. The timing of written assignments in relation to the peak seasonal demands of the school year was also very demanding with 85% of participants rating this challenge as high to very high.

In interview, participants also identified challenge in the areas of writing those essays which dealt with the more theoretical components of the course, and engaging in some

of the more personally confronting learning exercises conducted within the Basic Counselling and Interpersonal and Group Processes units.

Despite these challenges, in interview participants made it clear that the rewards clearly outweighed the challenges and stresses associated with participating in the course.

Membership of an ongoing learning community:

The networking was good ...You learn a lot from each other plus I appreciated the group camaraderie and humour.

(Teacher: metropolitan secondary)

Membership of an ongoing learning community within the context of the course provided stimulus and support. Participants valued the professional advice and exchange, sharing of resources and ideas and the availability of personal support and friendship. In particular, they identified that ongoing membership of a learning community across two years, and the interactive and personal nature of learning activities, contributed greatly to the development of this level of cohesion and attachment to the group. As seen in the table (right), 95% of participants reported receiving high to very high support from their fellow course participants. This is significantly higher than the rating given to support from colleagues in their schools.

Relevance and quality of the course:

I got a lot out of the course. The lecturers were very good. They related well to us and demonstrated care - very professional - pushed us hard but did it well.

(Teacher: metropolitan secondary)

In addition to the support offered by fellow students, participants valued the quality of delivery by the teaching staff. Participants particularly valued the link between theory and practice and the applied and relevant nature of much of the course. They found that they could immediately begin to apply their enhanced listening and counselling skills in the school setting. Problem-solving models learnt in the course were also applied in the home setting, where participants described them as contributing to more positive relationships with partners, children, friends and family members. Professional learning was commonly described in terms of personal skills.

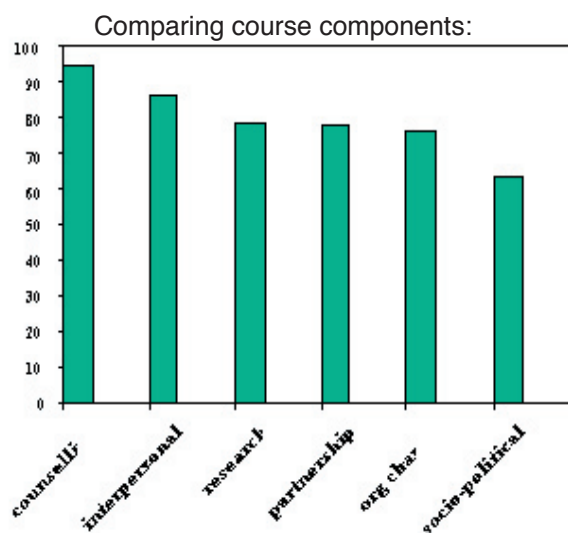
Evaluating the course components

Data collected via interviews and the course exit survey clearly indicated that those aspects of the course which directly equipped participants to communicate more effectively with students and colleagues were the most highly valued. A comparison of the value placed on the various subjects illustrates this with Basic Counselling Skills, Interpersonal and Group Processes and the Action Research Projects given the highest

Support from:		low	moderate	high	very high
2000	principal/leadership	7.0%	18.6%	27.9%	46.5%
	colleagues	5.4%	16.1%	48.4%	30.1%
	fellow students		5.0%	32.0%	63.0%
	lecturers		8.0%	54.0%	38.0%
	family	3.1%	18.4%	35.7%	42.9%
	friends	8.4%	29.5%	32.6%	29.5%
	funding	2.5%	2.5%	11.4%	83.5%
	time release	7.2%	15.9%	30.4%	46.4%
1999	principal/leadership	7.8%	20.4%	30.1%	41.7%
	colleagues	7.5%	22.6%	47.2%	22.6%
	fellow students		4.5%	29.7%	65.8%
	lecturers		21.6%	42.3%	36.0%
	family	1.8%	11.9%	38.5%	47.7%
	friends	5.6%	27.1%	41.1%	26.2%
	funding	1.9%	8.4%	14.0%	75.7%
	time release	8.9%	19.8%	27.7%	43.6%

ratings.

This suggests a particular valuing of the applied learning and skill development and a perception that it was through their relationships that they were able to make the greatest difference in their workplace.



High to Very High levels of satisfaction
Basic Counselling Skills

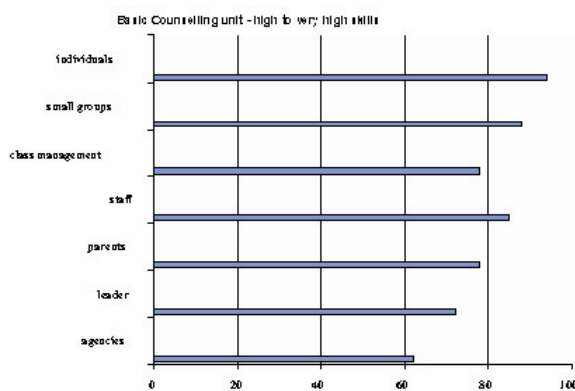
The two Basic Counselling Skills for Teachers units were the most highly valued components of the course. These units recorded a 95% high to very high level of satisfaction. Participants indicated that involvement in these units had improved their listening skills and approaches to problem solving with students who were experiencing social, emotional or behavioural problems. Participants reported an increased confidence to address the challenges that came their way. They were more likely to follow up when concerned about individual students. Many participants believed that all of their colleagues should receive basic counselling skills as part of their training.

I feel more confident when dealing with students who come to me with a problem. I have the necessary skills to be able to either help the student or know when to refer to others.

teachers valued. Course exit survey data reveals that 77% of participants rated as high to very high the contribution this subject made to their class management skills (similar to the gains experienced in this area as a result of participating in the basic counselling units.) Small groups skills were rated as high to very high by 88% of participants. 77% found this subject enhanced their skills in dealing with staff, and 68% indicated it helped them to deal more effectively with those in school leadership roles. In follow up interviews, teachers cited its usefulness in running or contributing within meeting structures of their school. A rise in personal confidence was described as directly contributing to their capacity to deal more effectively with colleagues and parents.

It has helped me perform these duties with more confidence, skill, compassion and understanding. More motivated to initiate change improvement especially in the welfare (student, staff) area.

(Follow up survey No 47)



(Follow up survey No 5)

Course impact survey data indicates that 94% of course participants found that the counselling skills units had equipped them to deal more effectively with individuals, and 88% found this effect in their dealings with small groups. Also of note is that 84% found that these skills had a high to very high effect in equipping them to deal more effectively with fellow staff and for 78% of participants this effect was also valued in their classroom management skills and in their dealing with parents.

Interpersonal and Group Processes

The Interpersonal and Group Processes (IPGP) unit was the next most highly rated unit with 86% of participants rating their level of satisfaction as high to very high. As with the counselling units, the focus on communications skills, in particular assertiveness and conflict resolution skills, and the practical and interactive nature of the class activities, were key elements that

Action Research Projects

The Action Research Projects was the next most highly rated component of the course. 79% of participants rated their satisfaction as high to very high. This too was a highly applied and practical learning opportunity and was valued for the mandate it gave for action and the invitation to adopt a reflective perspective. 77% of participants said that this project had given them an opportunity to engage in systematic research. In the course exit surveys, 88% of participants said that the action research project had enhanced, at a high to very high level, their capacity to initiate or support change in their school, and 93% said that the project had given them a high to very high opportunity to apply the skills and understandings they had gained in the course. In addition, 81% indicated that they had enhanced their skills in collaborating with colleagues as a result of conducting the action research project.

The action research projects generally had tangible outcomes and were generated in response to school needs. This gave participants the opportunity to connect their learning into the school, often in a way that was more visible to their colleagues and their school leadership team. In combination with a position of responsibility and supportive school leadership, many projects became significant vehicles of school change. Participants also identified that they learnt much from hearing the research presentations made by fellow course participants, and this became

part of the valuable transfer of learning between course participants.

I developed a new social skills program. It is a set program now and I believe it has changed the culture of the school. Before the program we had a lot of problems, put downs, bullying, but over time, with a slow determination, we have turned things around.

(Teacher: rural primary)

School Community Partnerships

78% of participants rated this subject at a high to very high satisfaction level. Participants cited improved awareness of the range of services and potential referral agencies available. 66% of participants indicated in the course exit survey that the school community partnerships unit had assisted them at a high to very high level to deal more effectively with agencies, and 62% perceived this effect in their capacity to deal with individual students.

Organisational Change

The Organisational Change unit was rated at a similar level to the School Community Partnerships and Action Research units, with 76% of participants giving it a high to very high satisfaction level. This subject took a more theorised approach to school change than did the unit on interpersonal and group processes. In the course exit survey, 65% of participants rated as high to very high the contribution that the Organisational Change unit made to their skills in relating with school leaders and with colleagues. This subject was perceived to be less effective in equipping participants to deal with fellow staff (65% high to very high as compared to the 86% rating for this area as an outcome of the IPGP subject.) The two subjects were given similar ratings in relation to enhanced skills in dealing with school leaders (65% as compared to 68% for IPGP.) Many participants identified that their enhanced understanding of school change enabled them to more effectively address change in their own school, particularly in combination with the skills enhancement they had gained in the Interpersonal and Group Processes unit.

Socio-Political Contexts of Student Welfare

This unit was rated as of high or very high value by 63% of the participants. This was the least valued component of the course. 50% of participants rated as high to very high the contribution this unit made to their awareness and skills in dealing with parents and school leaders, and 42% perceived that this unit had made a high to very high impact on their capacity to deal with individuals or groups. Follow-up interviews revealed that some found the reading and essay writing tasks associated

with this subject to be too theoretical to be directly useful to them. Nonetheless, others – most notably those in leadership roles – valued its focus on the ‘educational big picture’ and on the policies affecting education traditions and initiatives.

I am conscious of the whole school approach to pastoral welfare and the need for all teachers to embrace this idea for the well being and progress of the student.

(Follow up survey No 79)

Supporting participation in the Course

System supports – funding and access

90% of participants identified the provision of funding, in the form of University fees, as critical to their participation in the course. Most were clear that they would not have taken the course without this form of practical support. Rural participants also identified that the regional delivery mode made the commitment much more doable for them. A small amount of time-release (10 days in the first year and 9 days in the second year of study) was made available to enable participants to attend around half of their scheduled classes during working hours. Participants valued this support, as the balance of their class and study time was drawn from their personal and family schedule. Participants noted, however, that they were still required to prepare and follow up on teaching or leadership duties for the work days they missed, and that leaving classes caused some disruption. Those in leadership positions found that their non-teaching workload could not be handled by colleagues during their absence.

I recommend the course very highly and I think it was great that the CEO chose to put their funds into training teachers.

(Teacher: rural primary)

School support

Other factors which participants identified as providing support to them during the course included the supportive or strategic involvement of their principal, having fellow staff members enrolled in course, and working with an in-school collaborative group on their action research project.

At various times there was one or other of us who wanted to pull out but the others encouraged them to stay. Only one teacher here is currently doing the course and that was difficult for her at first. You need a few people from the school to maximise the benefits.

(Teacher: rural secondary)

SCHOOL CHANGE OUTCOMES

Enhanced pastoral skills contribute to professional effectiveness

In response to the follow-up survey (administered at 22 months post course completion for Cohort 1 and 10 months post-course completion to Cohort 2) participants addressed the question: How has the way in which you fulfil your role changed since being involved in the course? The pattern of these responses suggests that course participants identified their enhanced pastoral skills as impacting most significantly on their professional roles.

In the course follow up survey, 80% of respondents chose to comment on their enhanced skills in relating effectively to students, parents and staff. They cited improvement in their pastoral skills, identifying counselling, listening, problem-solving, conflict-management or communication skills.

It has skilled me to be a more effective helper/counsellor, with both students and families

(FS No 2)

Mediation and counselling techniques has ensured improved communication and solving problems

(FS No 28)

15% of participants chose to comment about their enhanced understanding of school organisation and their role as a change agent.

More motivated to initiate change improvement especially in the welfare (student, staff) area.

(FS No 47)

5% of respondents identified change to their teaching practice.

My teaching practices have changed. I'm a more concerned and compassionate teacher taking greater interest in students as individuals with their unique needs and stories

(FS No 39)

8% of respondents identified that they were more likely to work with or refer people to agencies or services external to the school.

I don't solve problems for people now, I help them to solve the problem for themselves... I am able to point parents, teachers to outside agencies who may be able to help.

(FS No 10)

Most participants commented on changes in the way they fulfilled their ongoing role in the school. Only eleven of the ninety-five respondents commented on a change of designated role or school.

Initiating change

Participants reported that the status of the course as an accredited university postgraduate diploma gave them a sense of the importance and legitimacy of their work and enhanced their endeavours in the eyes of their colleagues. In particular, involvement in the action research project gave participants a sense of 'permission' to take a range of initiatives in their schools. This component of the course was valued for the mandate it gave for action and the invitation to take a reflective perspective on school change. Participants also identified that their Action Research Project gave them a focus around which to work with school leaders and fellow staff, as well as a framework within which to engage in leading a school change project. As such, the project was a useful vehicle for implementing the skills and understandings gained in the course and for bringing learning from the course to the attention of their school community.

In combination with a position of responsibility and supportive school leadership, many projects became significant vehicles of school change. The projects selected are a good indicator of the type of activity that course participants were able to lead in their schools. Activity varied from school to school, but consistently, participants demonstrated an enhanced capacity to initiate or contribute at promotion, prevention and early intervention levels.

Examples of action research projects at the promotion and prevention level included:

- Resilience and anti-bullying projects incorporating parent forums, or development of new mental health or social skills curriculum;
- Staff welfare projects generating awareness of mental health at a broad population level or engaging staff in celebratory or therapeutic activity;
- Drug education projects involving curriculum development, or parent forums or review of school policy;
- Student leadership projects involving healthy play, student councils or peer support programs.

A number of projects were targeted at an early intervention level and ranged across projects focusing on:

- Integration, entailing follow up and support in the reintegration or retention of special needs students and early school leavers;
- Mediation, including training and piloting of peer mediation processes;
- Grief support, providing ongoing support to bereaved students or those dealing with family break-up;
- Literacy, entailing support for those identified as 'at risk' readers;
- Referral pathways, involving refinement of pathways of identification, follow up, intervention and referral of individual students encountering social-emotional difficulties.

School change: moderating factors

One of the major challenges of any model of professional development is that of translating broad principles into practice in the specific school setting. In the course impact survey, 75% of the participants anticipated that the major challenge they would encounter in applying the course in their school would be the restrictions of the timetable and their teaching loads. In follow up interviews however, it was clear that participants had encountered a range of challenges, each of which could significantly moderate their capacity to have an impact on school-wide practice. They are described below.

Time

Many teachers reported a limited capacity to follow up with individual students due to their heavy teaching loads. In addition, having large classes or many different class groups made it difficult to find the time to give each child attention and to get to know each child. The demands of the core business of teaching left participants with a restricted amount of time and personal energy to engage in extra-curricula projects or planning activity at a whole school level. This limited their capacity to drive or support school-wide change.

Role definition

Many of those participants who were not in a student management or leadership roles perceived that they had a limited scope to make a difference in their school despite the skills and capacity they had developed in the course. These participants believed those in middle management or leadership positions or those

who worked within defined roles, supported by time allowances, had a greater mandate for school-wide action. Some participants perceived that their schools lacked a strategy to accommodate and utilise their enhanced skills and expressed frustration at this limitation. The following quote is illustrative:

My role hasn't changed. This is disappointing. If you want to make a difference you need to be a Year Level Co-ordinator.... I haven't been able to apply the course as practically as I would have liked.

(Teacher: rural secondary)

Strategic involvement or support of principal

Participants whose principal was involved at a strategic level in identifying, supporting and utilising staff undertaking the course were more likely to report that they would be effectively employed as a resource to the school and that their action research projects would make a lasting difference in the school.

Opportunity to disseminate course to colleagues

Most participants reported that they were not given an opportunity to more formally disseminate aspects of the course to fellow staff through structured professional development activity at a faculty, year level or school-wide level. Despite this, participants believed that a degree of transmission of knowledge and skills had occurred within their own school as a result of their own modeling and advocacy.

School culture

Some participants were working in schools that already had highly evolved pastoral care practices and structures, having taken proactive approaches over the years to enhance student wellbeing. In such schools, the participants were able to link in to ongoing school priorities and teams. Other participants were faced with the challenge of beginning an advocacy for a school-wide focus on student welfare. Some felt thwarted by the range of different values and priorities prevalent amongst their colleagues, while others consciously employed the skill and understandings developed in such units as Organisational Change and Interpersonal and Group Processes to guide and inform their strategy of enlisting support and working towards change.

ON-GOING IMPACT

Follow up course evaluation survey

The follow up course evaluation survey was carried out to assess the long term impact of the Student Welfare course. The previous surveys completed by participants on completion of the course had indicated high levels of satisfaction with the content and the teaching processes of the course. The follow up survey was used to ascertain whether the levels of approval of the course by participants had been sustained over time.

The follow up survey questionnaire was mailed out to course participants from the 1999 and 2000 cohort. 110 completed questionnaires were received.

The questionnaire investigated role change in school, application of course material, maintenance of the skills and knowledge gained in each subject, and factors in the school setting which facilitated and thwarted the application of the course skills.

The survey recorded the school sector, role, the size of the school and extent of the teaching experience of the participants. This enabled a range of investigations of the factors which might influence the long term impact of the course. These were found to have relatively little effect on most of the areas of course impact.

Role change:

Almost all respondents (90.7%) answered that the way they had fulfilled their school role had changed since being involved in the course. As well, 54.6% reported that their position in the school had changed since commencement of the course. 64% of 1999 participants reported a role

change, as did 40% of 2000 participants.

Role change was particularly associated with the primary sector participants from the 1999 cohort.

Application of course skills

In the exit surveys participants were asked how often they expected to apply the skills and knowledge acquired in the course. In the follow up survey they were asked how often they now did apply these acquired skills and knowledge.

The following table (next page) contrasts the responses of the 1999 exit cohort with the follow up survey respondents. The proportions shown are of those participants who answered that they applied the course in each situation either daily or weekly. Though there is evidence of some small re-evaluations in certain areas, the figures show that participants have tended to apply the course learnings just as they had expected on leaving the course.

Of particular note is that 83% of course participants estimate that they continue to apply their enhanced skills on a daily basis with individual students. Also of note is that 71% of the respondents employ skills developed in the course on a daily basis to assist them with classroom management challenges. The course learnings, as anticipated by the participants, were not utilised to a great extent in curriculum design or delivery, reflecting an emphasis in the course on relationship rather than on pedagogy. At a similarly low level was application of the skills when working with agencies or community members. This may reflect lack of opportunity, as the majority of teachers do not have contact with external agencies as part of their ongoing work in schools.

commenced course			Q8 change in school position		Total
			has changed	Position changed	has not
1999	school sector	primary	13 68.4%	6 31.6%	19 100.0%
		sec'y	26 56.5%	20 43.5%	46 100.0%
2000	school sector	primary	6 33.3%	12 66.7%	18 100.0%
		sec'y	9 47.4%	10 52.6%	19 100.0%

	Daily: 2001 follow -up survey	Weekly: 2001 follow -up survey	Daily: 1999 exit survey	Weekly: 1999 exit survey	Skill improvements due to the course
individual students applied skills	90 82.6%	17 15.6%	89.3%	10.7%	The follow up survey asked about the extent to which the course had improved a range of teaching and personal skills. This duplicated questions asked of the cohorts on exiting the course. The table below shows the proportion who answered very high and high in the 2001 follow up survey, compared with the answers to the same question on completion of the course in 1999. Of note is that 88% of respondents rate as high to very high improvement in their understanding of others, and 86% rate improvement in their communications skills and their understanding of the interface between welfare and education at high to very high levels. Lowest ratings were given by respondents to changes in their capacity to
small groups applied skills	40 37.4%	49 45.8%	60.4%	36.0%	
curriculum design applied skills	8 7.6%	24 22.9%	9.3%	31.8%	
curriculum delivery applied skills	37 34.6%	33 30.8%	36.4%	34.6%	
class management applied skills	74 71.2%	17 16.3%	79.6%	18.5%	
staff members applied skills	69 63.9%	24 22.2%	73.2%	25.0%	
parents applied skills	35 32.7%	48 44.9%	37.8%	48.6%	
school leaders applied skills	32 30.2%	41 38.7%	45.9%	43.2%	
friends/family applied skills	55 51.4%	33 30.8%	71.4%	19.6%	
agencies/community applied skills	8 7.4%	25 23.1%	9.8%	36.6%	

Frequency of application of course learnings in selected areas: 1999 expectations and 2001 realities compared.

		2001: very high	2001: high	1999: very high	1999: high
functioning as teacher improvement	Count %	29 26.9%	57 52.8%	30.6%	53.2%
understanding of self improvement	Count %	44 40.0%	42 38.2%	49.5%	43.2%
understanding of others improvement	Count %	46 41.8%	50 45.5%	46.8%	47.7%
understanding systems improvement	Count %	26 23.9%	57 52.3%	29.7%	53.2%
communication skills improvement	Count %	37 33.9%	57 52.3%	48.6%	35.1%
resource person capacity improvement	Count %	24 22.2%	42 38.9%	17.1%	60.4%
leadership skills improvement	Count %	27 25.0%	53 49.1%	23.4%	57.7%
change agent skills improvement	Count %	21 19.1%	57 51.8%	22.5%	55.9%
personal well-being improvement	Count %	32 29.4%	40 36.7%	18.9%	50.5%
collaboration with agencies improvement	Count %	9 8.3%	24 22.2%	16.5%	54.5%
understanding welfare/education interface improvement	Count %	42 38.5%	51 46.8%	27.0%	57.7%
whole school approaches mental health understanding improvement	Count %	34 30.9%	53 48.2%	39.6%	47.7%

Impact of the course: Improvement of skills in selected areas: 1999 exit cohort compared with current realities in 2001

collaborate with agencies (30% high to very high) or to act as a resource person to the school (61% rating this as high to very high).

Maintenance of subject skills over time

This table shows the respondents who stated that the skills and knowledge gained in each subject had been maintained over time. The subjects of Basic Counselling Skills (87%) and Interpersonal and Groups Skills (82%) had been maintained to a very high or high extent by most participants. Other subjects showed lower levels of maintenance, particularly the Socio-political Contexts subject at 29% and School Community Partnerships at 48%.

		moderate/ low	very high/ high
basic counselling 1 & 2 skill maintenance	Count %	14 12.7%	96 87.3%
socio-political context skill maintenance	Count %	78 70.9%	32 29.1%
school-community partnerships skill maintenance	Count %	57 51.8%	53 48.2%
interpersonal and group processes skill maintenance	Count %	20 18.2%	90 81.8%
organisational change skill maintenance	Count %	50 45.5%	60 54.5%
action research project skill maintenance	Count %	47 42.7%	63 57.3%

Skill maintenance from course subjects

Support from other course participants

Of the participants who had fellow staff members in the course with them, only about half reported that this led to high or very high enhancement of aspects of the course.

The impact of the course on other staff and on the school

The follow up survey investigated the extent to which the participants, as a result of the course, had contributed to staff improvement projects, committee leadership, staff mentoring and skilling and training. Although formal training of other staff was less frequently undertaken (though not absent), many participants engaged in mentoring and role modelling and in general school improvement projects. The most significant differences made occurred via membership of staff teams with 76% rating this as a high to very high impact of the course, and via the mentoring or support of fellow staff, with 74% rating this outcome at a high to very high level. The skilling of fellow staff via more direct delivery of training was only rated as high to very high by 35% of the participants. (Interview data suggest that most participants encountered a lack of opportunity to engage in more

	moderate/ low	very high/ high
support, enhanced engagement through peers in course	56 50.9%	54 49.1%
utilising course in school through peers in course	62 56.4%	48 43.6%
enhance value of course for you through peers in course	62 56.4%	48 43.6%
provide support through peers in course	58 52.7%	52 47.3%

The effect of having fellow staff members in the course

	moderate/ low	very high/ high
school improvement projects as result of course	41 37.3%	69 62.7%
student and staff wellbeing through committee and team membership as result of course	27 24.5%	83 75.5%
skilling fellow staff through role modelling as result of course	41 37.3%	69 43.6%
mentoring /supporting fellow staff as result of course	29 26.4%	81 76.3%
skilling fellow staff through training, presentations, workshops as result of course	72 65.5%	38 34.5%

Section 8

Principals' Perspectives on the Value of the Course

Helen Cahill, Gary Shaw, Johanna Wyn and Graeme Smith

This section presents findings from the surveys and interviews conducted with school principals

The majority of principals interviewed valued the course as a considerable investment in the professional development of those of their staff involved. Principals cited examples of participants applying enhanced relationship skills in their work with students, parents or other staff.

The course has been an excellent stimulus for change in the school. Having the two Deputy-Principals and a number of Year Level Co-ordinators involved has proved beneficial in terms of policy review and development eg resilience, has given them the language and terms of reference. I have noticed impact in terms of the way Year Level Co-ordinators now interview kids and parents. This has improved. They are more inclined to let people talk and are able to offer alternative views. There has also been impact on relationships between staff.

(Principal: metropolitan secondary)

Equipping staff for leadership roles

Principals observed an increase in the confidence and active leadership skills in those staff who had completed the course and in the Principals' Follow Up Survey, one third of principals commented on the contribution the course graduate made to active leadership in welfare areas in the school.

There has been a growth in skills. Involvement in the course has heightened their awareness. Both staff have grown in the job. They are more proactive around the school eg Smoking Policy/Breakfast Bar. They are more realistic and their responses to issues are appropriate and more with a pastoral framework.

(Principal: metropolitan secondary)

Huge support for me having people in the course as it helped bring about some important changes in the school.

(Principal: rural primary)

Those who undertook the course have contributed to the development of our Pastoral Care Program and, since we had initiated a major change to vertical home groups, these graduates have been helpful in promoting and supporting their development.

(Principal survey No 1)

A number of principals indicated that they had placed course participants in positions of welfare responsibility as a direct result of the course.

Three teachers have completed the course. All three hold positions of leadership in the school this year.

(Principal survey No 6)

Teacher has been given three periods of time per week (50 minutes) to work in the welfare area. She has initiated 'communication' sessions with a group of Year 8 students and is liaising with the college counsellor re the college's bullying policy. The teacher is also working with the junior year level coordinators to further develop the college's pastoral care programs at those levels.

(Principal survey No 10)

Primary principals who had themselves participated in the course reported that they used the course as a way of improving their own leadership skills.

Everything in the course linked in well - the focus on leadership styles was useful. I feel I can apply a range of leadership styles. I used the process of organisational change to assist me to lead the school in a change from teaching mixed grades to teaching in single level groupings. I feel it was a very healthy process of change and it has benefited the school. The kids are more settled and staff are happier.

(Participant principal: metropolitan primary)

Change strategies and the action research projects

A majority of principals reported that the Action Research Projects made a valuable contribution

to their schools. They valued the focus on issues such as social skill development and responses to bullying, enhancing pastoral care, review of student welfare policy and improved home-school links. Some principals had taken a proactive approach to the Action Research Projects, incorporating them into formal school reviews and actions.

Through (the Action Research Project) - gathering the evidence was important. We think we know what students and thinking but we don't. We have surveyed students in regard to bullying and well-being but this needs further exploration. Relationships are very important. We have made changes to the Year 7 program: limited number of teachers, students in homeroom, team teaching (although there is a need to improve this), integrated studies, improved transition and an emphasis on engagement. The Year 8 survey proved that kids were not really interested in what's going on in the classroom.

(Principal: metropolitan secondary)

Many policies have come out of their action research projects.

(Assistant principal: metropolitan secondary)

Several programs have been introduced as an exact extension of the projects. Others have been used in part to develop a new leadership position (Director of Welfare and Discipline) and to instigate a major review of Pastoral Care and Curriculum.

(Principal survey No 13)

Not all principals reported favourably on the action research projects. In some cases the principal was unaware of the project or its impact and, in one school, with four participants, the principal reported that projects were of no advantage to the school.

Nothing of value for the school has come out of the projects. They all did their projects on something that was up and running anyway.

They did not take the opportunity to consult with us about what might be possible. We have not heard about findings and have not seen action on the action research. The Principal should be involved in commenting on the action research project as part of the assessment process and should also be more involved in choice and design of the projects. Principals should also be briefed on the requirements of the action research task.

(Principal: metropolitan secondary)

Challenge of skill transfer in the school setting

Only two principals reported that they had provided a structure within which course participants could conduct a formalised opportunity for 'in house' professional development sessions for fellow staff around the knowledge and skills developed in the course.

The remaining majority of principals suggested that some filtering through had occurred through school processes such as staff meetings, faculty meetings or year level meetings.

The skilling of other staff has primarily occurred through Year Level Co-ordinators meeting regularly with class teachers.

(Principal: metropolitan secondary)

Most principals identified that they may have missed a valuable opportunity to initiate some more purposeful design to support transfer of learning from the course participants to fellow staff. A number identified that they themselves were not adequately informed about the course and as such did not know what they could call upon their staff to contribute. Some had suggestions about more actively briefing or involving the principal in the course process and accreditation.

Part of the deal for getting into the course should be some requirement for teachers to transfer some of the course to their colleagues. This should be formally set up with the principal and he should have to validate that they have done this. They then could get some additional accreditation for this applied practice.

(Principal: metropolitan secondary)

Policy development

Many principals were able to report links between staff involvement in the course and subsequent involvement in policy review or development. A number of principals noted that the course assisted staff to 'tune in to policy' and therefore assist them in bringing about change. Involvement in policy review was often linked to the action research projects. Limiting factors, as identified by principals, included a lack of time for course participants to be involved in policy work or a lack of connection to their role in the school.

Having other people in the school who had been through the course helped generate the enthusiasm, support and confidence needed to review and develop welfare policy in the school.

(Principal: rural primary)

Positioning of the principal in relation to the course

During interviews with the principals, it became apparent that the principals themselves related differently to the opportunity that the course provided for their school. A minority of principals took what can be termed as a strategic interest in the course, seeing it as a way to prepare staff for leadership roles or to lead change within the school. Those

described the way in which they actively recruited staff, encouraged their enrolment, and sought to integrate the contributions of the course participants into broader school change initiatives. Participants who worked under the leadership of these principals tended to report the highest levels of satisfaction around the challenge of transferring the course into action in their school setting.

I have focused on the long term for this school community. I deliberately selected a core group of people who I knew would carry things through. Somebody to take the spirit and tradition of the school forward.

(Principal: rural secondary)

Most principals had a less developed understanding of the course or its potential application, and tended to respond to staff interest and to initiatives led by course participants, chiefly through their action research projects. These principals can be described as playing a more reactive role, responding to the initiatives of their staff. The majority of course participants working in these contexts experienced a sense of encouragement and valuing of their efforts, particularly in relation to their action research projects. In these schools, it was those staff already in leadership roles who were most likely to experience a sense that their efforts were integrated into broader school wide change processes.

A small minority of principals were less convinced of the relevance of the course for mainstream staff and saw it as suitable only for those teachers who were already trusted to leadership roles in the welfare area. They cited their own need to feel confident about the maturity and 'suitability' of the staff member who was displaying an interest in working in the welfare area of their school. These principals related to the course as a specialised offering which could potentially be misinterpreted by staff who may then overstep their role.

One staff member who did the course still does not understand the generalist approach and wants to do counselling. This is a problem.

(Principal: metropolitan secondary)

A small minority of principals saw staff members' choice to enrol in the course as a personal one which had no particular relationship with the school. They can be understood to have conceived of the course as a form of personal development.

I believe my staff have not dramatically changed, though I am confident that they have benefited in many ways personally from the course.

(Principal: metropolitan secondary)

These principals were less likely to be informed about the nature of the course and were less likely to see the opportunity to call upon the staff member's skills and knowledge in a proactive way. Staff members working under the leadership of these principals expressed a level of frustration and disappointment over the failure of the school to recognise or draw upon their enhanced expertise in any strategic way.

School change – the school's investment

Principals raised a number of issues in terms of cost of the investment to schools when they were called upon to facilitate staff involvement in the course. These centred on the disruption experienced by students when their teacher was absent for study days and the particular difficulty encountered in replacing those staff in leadership or welfare positions who were absent for study days. Financial remuneration to cover the costs of replacement staff was not perceived to have ameliorated this impact.

Principals also raised concerns about managing staff expectations that course completion would lead to promotion or enhanced leadership opportunities. While many would have liked to provide formalised opportunities to employ these staff, most were constrained by limited budgets or opportunities within the school leadership structure.

I have been concerned about how to maximise the course particularly the projects. Sometimes things grow and people have expectations about promotion in the school. Would I have to create a new position out of a finite budget? It was a problem. We like to recognise initiative and work with people's enthusiasm but our options are limited.

(Principal: metropolitan secondary)

Principals' perspectives on what would enhance the investment in the course

Principals were keen to contribute recommendations about what could be done to maximise the investment of the course, seeing it as a significant initiative which was worth ongoing attention and funding. Their recommendations are summarised as follows:

Ongoing connection with course group: Principals acknowledged the benefits of their staff's involvement in membership of the course group and suggested there may be advantage in keeping some links to this group. Some recommended the use of this group as a forum for booster professional development activity.

One of the strengths of the course was the mixing with other teachers from other schools, being able to analyse themselves and their practice and qualifications. Speeds up maturity.

(Principal: rural secondary)

Action Research Projects:

Principals valued most highly the action research projects, but some suggested that they could have begun earlier and should receive ongoing support. Some suggested that further funding support from the system for action research projects emerging out of the course would be a good investment.

Implementation grants would be useful. I got a grant from CEO to develop a social skills program – this made a significant difference.

(Principal: metropolitan primary)

The action research project would have worked better if it had begun at end of first year. This would have assisted in a more longitudinal focus and fitted better with our ways of planning our work in schools. Schools think in terms of year-long, three-year or five-year plans. Also ... it was a bit 'cold turkey' to lose the support of the class group in the course right at the point where you were embarking on the most challenging aspect of the course.

(Participant principal: metropolitan primary)

In-house delivery of professional development:

A number of principals reported that in-school professional development on teaching and learning strategies was a priority and recommended some means be addressed to embed the skills of the course into the school via school teams or school-based professional development activity involving the whole staff. They identified a need to have ongoing strategic professional development associated with the pastoral ethos of Catholic schools. School based professional development was preferred by most.

Good professional development has an ongoing component and this course is now complete. There should be an ongoing component. I prefer the model of professional development used in the ClASS project where there are teams working inside schools and returning periodically to do professional development together. They work with more accountability around results and strategies. This is a much more effective model of introducing school change than just putting people in the course.

(Participant principal: metropolitan primary)

Connecting principals to the course:

Most principals expressed a need to be briefed or consulted about the course and its application in schools. Some recommended the use of existing principal network meetings or professional

development forums tailored specifically to inform principals about the course and its implications for schools. Newsletters were also suggested as a means of keeping principals up to date with key initiatives or with the evidence-base informing the course content. Some principals believed they should have had some involvement in assessing the action research projects.

Principals as future course participants:

Many principals expressed an interest in taking the course but also expressed concerns about investing the amount of time required.

It would be good to support principals to do the course but they may need Long Service Leave or study leave to manage it. As a principal I would like to do the course – but haven't been able to quarantine the time.

(Principal: metropolitan primary)

Further enrolments in course:

Generally principals felt that it would be useful to have a broader enrolment in the course as a team could accomplish more than an individual.

Continue to fund the course to enable more people to participate – better to have more than one person in the school who has been in the course – ideally three to five people.

(Participant principal: metropolitan primary)

Resourcing student welfare support:

The issue of further funding for welfare support in schools was raised by a number of principals. The course was seen as a positive investment but it was perceived that continued support was required for welfare programs. Most principals reported increasing demands on their schools to respond to welfare issues.

We need a fund to apply to continue to do good work in the school.

Time is the greatest limiting factor – not lack of skill. We need enhanced budgets to enable us to do properly all the welfare work that must be done in schools.

(Principal: metropolitan secondary)

Supporting at risk students:

A few principals reported on the need to maximise the investment made in the course by providing further training opportunities for staff so as to equip them to deal with those students at risk of early school leaving.

We need now an investment in training for schools to do better with Vocational Education – these are at risk kids and it is not enough to counsel them – we need to work on pathways and education support too. We need to enhance the interface between welfare and careers especially for the lower

achieving kids who are most at risk.

(Principal: metropolitan secondary)

Continue to support welfare programs. Focus on the relationship with kids. Keeping the boys in school. Don't give up on them regardless of how difficult they may be. Action research projects in schools are a useful way of developing good ideas into useful programs.

(Principal: metropolitan secondary)

Accountability:

Some principals were keen to strengthen the accountability of the course participants to the school.

Make the research assignment accountable – given the stress time release can create in a school, it would be good if some tangible improvement could be made for the school community rather than just individual improvement.

(Principal: metropolitan secondary)

Ongoing need to equip general staff as well as to supply specialist staff:

While a majority of principals said they need both generalists and specialists, a number expressed a view that having a generalist approach strengthens a school's 'front line' contact response to welfare issues.

Teachers are at the coal face and must deal with issues on a daily basis. They have to deal with things first. It is important to develop the teachers' skills to remove the readiness to pass kids on to someone else too quickly.

(Participant principal: metropolitan primary)

We need to equip teachers as they are the people on the ground close to the kids and staff. Specialists are often run off their feet and are hard to locate or schedule.

(Principal: metropolitan secondary)

Who to target?

There was a considerable diversity of views expressed about who to target for future enrolments in the course. Some saw it as something to equip the less experienced teacher. Others were of the view that it should only be made available to those who were already experienced and are heading for leadership roles or for those who had a real commitment to learning in this field.

This course should be provided for student teachers who are not grounded in the required communication skills. The more teachers that do the course the better.

(Principal: metropolitan primary)

Target people who have been teaching for 5/6 years, not necessarily in leadership positions. They are ready to take the next step. They will be your future

middle management and leaders.

(Principal: metropolitan secondary)

People in the course need to want to be there. They have to be committed and willing to improve or have belief in what they do. We have selected people on the basis they are keen.

(Principal: rural secondary)

Publications:

A number of principals recommended the use of newsletters or publications as a way to preserve ongoing contact with the ideas and learning of the course – in particular those that had emerged from the action research projects. There was a real sense of interest in what other schools were doing to address welfare issues.

A booklet published with the various action research projects in it could be sent out to participants and

Section 9

Conclusion

Helen Cahill, Gary Shaw and Johanna Wyn

Translating Caring into Action documents a unique initiative in systematic, in-depth and high quality professional development across an education system. The key features of the program support many elements of current thinking identified in the literature about professional learning. As the literature review highlights, the Student Welfare program has also provided an opportunity to 'test' a number of assumptions underlying teacher professional development. The evaluation provides a compelling evidence base on which to undertake further analysis and on which to base further developments in professional development. The following points summarise the main findings:

High level professional development for course participants

The evaluation distinguished a high correlation between the aims of the course and the experiences of the participants. Graduates of the course consistently reported that they were able to contribute more effectively in their schools as a result of their enhanced pastoral skills. Rigorous and sustained engagement with the theory and practice of student welfare assisted participants to develop their skills and understandings as generalists in student welfare. Course participants valued the ongoing nature of the high quality professional development, their membership of an ongoing and supportive learning community and the applied and relevant nature of their course of study.

Graduates of the course were able to relate more effectively to students, colleagues and parents, utilising the skills developed in the Basic Counselling and Interpersonal and Group Facilitation subjects. In addition to enhanced communication and pastoral skills, participation in the evaluation provides evidence that the course facilitated leadership skills and generated innovation through the action research projects.

The action research project was a significant component, because it gave participants a sense of 'permission' to take initiative in their schools and a focus around which to work with school leaders and fellow staff. In combination with a position of responsibility and supportive school leadership, projects could become significant vehicles of school change.

Principals noted an increase in the confidence and active leadership skills in those staff who had completed the course and reported that the action research projects made a valuable contribution to their schools. Many principals were also able to report links between staff involvement in the course, and subsequent involvement in policy review or development.

Participants also valued the course as a source of professional renewal. They reported that the status of the course as an accredited university postgraduate diploma gave them a sense of the importance and legitimacy of their work and enhanced their endeavours in the eyes of their colleagues. Participation and retention rates were very high despite the challenges associated with juggling the competing demands of professional and family life with the requirements associated with attending classes and completing written assignments. Participants invested a considerable amount of their personal time to complete the course. They identified that the support from their education system in the form of payment of university fees, and partial time-release to attend classes (as well as the delivery in regional centres for those in rural schools) was critical to their participation in the course.

Relating the student perspective to the course as an intervention

Data gathered from primary and secondary school children indicates that students are greatly affected by the quality of the relationships they have with their teachers. Their perceptions of

the approachability of the teachers was shown to have an impact on a range of behaviours such as seeking help if they find the school work hard or if they are experiencing bullying. The evaluation found that school students would prefer teachers to take a pro-active approach to address the needs of students experiencing social, practical or emotional difficulties. In this light, there is a good fit between children's perceptions of the needs of the student body and the emphasis in the course on 'translating caring into action' via the development of basic counselling skills.

Limiting factors

Whilst participants could identify skills that they had learned, many teachers reported that due to their heavy teaching load, they had a limited capacity use their new skills to follow up with individual students. Participants also reported that the demands of the core business of teaching restricted the amount of time and personal energy they had to engage in extra-curricula projects or planning activity at a whole school level. This limited their capacity to drive or support school-wide change. In particular, those who were not in a student management or leadership role perceived that they had a limited scope to make a difference in their school despite the skills and capacity they had developed in the course.

Teachers have a finite capacity to engage in an ongoing way with projects in addition to their regular workload. The evaluation supports the findings of leading school change theorists, who advocate a more structural approach to school improvement and suggest that without long-term commitment, resourcing and support from the organisation, change efforts may simply lead to teacher frustration and burnout (Hargreaves, 1997; Fullan, 1997; Dworkin 2001).

The course as a strategy to support school change

One of the major challenges of any model of professional development is that of translating broad principles into practice in the specific school setting. Those participants working in schools that already had highly evolved pastoral care practices and structures found it easier to link in to ongoing school priorities and teams. Other participants were faced with the challenge of beginning an advocacy for a school-wide focus on student welfare. Thus the school context, leadership, history and culture

were important moderating factors impinging on the extent to which the skilling of particular individuals could become part of a whole school approaches to providing a safe, caring and supportive school environment.

Recommended strategies to enhance the internal capacity of schools include a focus on the development of collective responsibility and the positioning teachers within a community of learners supported by appropriate professional development (Fullan, 1999; Stoll, 1999). In this professional development initiative, the 'community of learners' was located outside rather than within the schools. Most participants reported that they were not given an opportunity to more formally disseminate aspects of the course to fellow staff through structured professional development activity at a faculty, year-level or school-wide level. Thus, whilst the unit on Organisational Change made course participants more aware of the need for organizational and systemic approaches to school change, there was no guarantee that a similar awareness or 'readiness' to engage with these issues would occur at the school level.

Structures that facilitated greater strategic involvement by the principals or some form of connection to the course at a leadership level may have ensured more effective in-school dissemination or utilisation of the course as an investment. The principals themselves suggested that they would like to have been more connected to the course, whether through newsletters, professional development forums or personal involvement in the supervision of the action research projects. In those schools in which the principals took an interest in the course, or strategically positioned the participation of key staff, there was a higher satisfaction level amongst the participants in relation to their capacity to use their enhanced skills for school change.

The course was clearly an outstanding individual professional development initiative. It was less well positioned however, as a school change initiative. A structural weakness in relation to the course as a system level initiative was the potential for participants to take the course as an individual venture, little connected to their school's development focus. An additional strand of activity which built in opportunities or requirements for connecting with school leadership and for generating a commitment to dedicating whole staff professional development and planning time to the issue of student wellbeing may have

protected somewhat against this.

Investing in change - questions for further study

The following statements and questions, informed by the field research and the literature review, prompt reflection about how best to maximise the investment in the course.

A key finding of this study is that the course enhances the pastoral and leadership skills of participants and equips individuals as change agents. Related questions emerge concerning how best to utilise the personnel who have these skills.

- How can school leaders strategically utilise the knowledge and skills of the course graduates?
- What strategies at a system level can be used to assist schools to make best possible use of this investment in personnel?

The literature on school change and on mental health promotion in school settings recommends whole school approaches involving the generation of a critical mass of staff support. Questions that emerge concern how best to utilise some of the strategies of the course at a school level.

- What strategies can a school use to develop and support a 'learning community' model and how can they utilise course graduates in this process?
- How is the complexity of school change best supported at a system level? What are the resource implications around school structures, teaching loads, staff allocation, class sizes and the provision of ongoing professional development?

The research evidence base and the experience of the course participants indicates that the strategic involvement and support of the Principal is an essential component of effective school change. A future focus could enquire into how best to equip or involve school principals in the leadership of school-based efforts to enhance the wellbeing of students.

- How can the system best support Principals to provide ongoing leadership of school-wide efforts to provide safe, caring and supportive school environments?
- How can schools be best supported in an ongoing cycle of research, action and reflection?

- What structures or processes can be used to stimulate and support ongoing change efforts?

This study illustrated that the course provided a highly effective combination of theoretical and applied learning. Participants developed communication and leadership skills that enabled them to work more effectively with students, parents and fellow staff on welfare-related issues. Research literature on continuing professional development recommends a mix of applied problem-solving and enquiry based approaches relevant to specific school settings. Key questions for consideration in an ongoing systemic approach to professional development could include a focus on the challenge of in-school professional development.

- What sort of whole school professional development activity will most effectively build upon the course initiative?
- What role could course-graduates play in contributing to professional development in schools?
- What role could the course providers play in offering booster professional development?

Exploration of these questions at a strategic level may assist the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria to build upon its innovative teacher professional development initiative and maximise the investment in "translating caring into action".

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Appendices

Student Surveys

The following documents provide a copy of the student survey tools, but are not presented here in the form that they were presented to students.

The original tools may be obtained from and used with permission from the Australian Youth Research Centre.

Appendix 1

Student Survey: Primary

A: Background Information

- A1 School:
- A2 Grade:
- A3 Male/Female
- A4 How many teachers do you have?
- A5 How many students in your class?

B: ASKING A FRIEND FOR HELP (tick one of the boxes)

	I would ask a friend for help if...	yes	not sure	no
B1	I found my school work hard			
B2	Someone was bullying me			
B3	A friend was being bullied			
B4	I lost something			
B5	I felt sick			
B6	I felt sad or worried			
B7	I hurt myself			
B8	I had a family problem			
B9	I had a money problem			
B10	I had a problem making friends			
B11	I had a fight or argument with a friend			
B12	I was worried about a friend			

C: ASKING MY PARENT OR CAREGIVER FOR HELP (tick one of the boxes)

	I would ask my parent or caregiver for help if...	yes	not sure	no
C1	I found my school work hard			
C2	Someone was bullying me			
C3	A friend was being bullied			
C4	I lost something			
C5	I felt sick			
C6	I felt sad or worried			
C7	I hurt myself			
C8	I had a family problem			
C9	I had a money problem			
C10	I had a problem making friends			
C11	I had a fight or argument with a friend			
C12	I was worried about a friend			

D: HOW OFTEN - IN THE SCHOOLYARD? (please tick one of the boxes)

In the SCHOOLYARD, other students	Never	Hardly ever	Every few weeks	Once or twice a week	Every day	More than once a day
D1						
D2						
D3						
D4						
D5						
D6						
D7						
D8						
D9						
D10						
D11						
D12						
D13						
D14						
D15						
D16						
D17						

E: HOW OFTEN - IN CLASS? (please tick one of the boxes)

In CLASS, other students	Never	Hardly ever	Every few weeks	Once or twice a week	Every day	More than once a day
E1						
E2						
E3						
E4						
E5						
E6						
E7						
E8						
E9						
E10						
E11						
E12						
E13						

- E14 smile at me
- E15 talk to me
- E16 share with me
- E17 encourage me

F:

ME AND MY SCHOOLWORK (please tick one of the boxes)

Me and my work

Never Hardly ever Some times Often Always

- F1 In most subjects the work is easy for me
- F2 In most subjects the work is hard for me
- F3 I work well in class
- F4 I join in class activities
- F5 I enjoy the work
- F6 I finish my work
- F7 I am proud of my efforts
- F8 I work well at home
- F9 I worry about what I wear to school
- F10 I am bored in class
- F11 I work well with others
- F12 I feel part of the class
- F13 I worry about what others think of me
- F14 I have someone to sit with
- F15 I sit with lots of different people
- F16 I feel safe in class
- F17 I talk to lots of students
- F18 I am lonely in class

G:

ME AND MY TEACHER

(Circle)

G1 My TEACHER knows my name yes / not sure / no

G2 My TEACHER likes me yes / not sure / no

H:

ASKING MY TEACHER FOR HELP

boxes)

(please tick one of the

I would ask my teacher for help if...

yes not sure no

- H1 I found my school work hard
- H2 Someone was bullying me
- H3 A friend was being bullied
- H4 I lost something
- H5 I felt sick

- H6 I felt sad or worried
- H7 I hurt myself
- H8 I had a family problem
- H9 I had a friendship problem
- H10 I had a money problem
- H11 I was worried about a friend

J:

MY TEACHER: HOW OFTEN?

boxes)

(please tick one of the

My Grade Teacher

Never Hardly ever Every few weeks Once or twice a week Every day More than once a

day

- J1 smiles at me
- J2 says hello to me
- J3 notices my effort
- J4 encourages me to work well
- J5 helps me with my work
- J6 treats me fairly
- J7 talks to me
- J8 notices if I have worked well
- J9 notices if I am not working well
- J10 puts down students
- J11 treats students fairly
- J12 sets interesting work
- J13 gets the class to cooperate
- J14 encourages me to join in
- J15 helps me learn from my mistakes
- J16 embarrasses students
- J17 gives people a second chance
- J18 punishes everyone when only a few are to blame
- J19 walks around the room
- J20 organises group work
- J21 organises fun activities

Appendix 2

Student Survey: Secondary

A: Background Information

A1 School/Campus:

A2 Year level:

A3 Male/Female

A4 How many teachers do you have?

A5 How many students in your class?

B:

ASKING A FRIEND FOR HELP (tick one of the boxes)

	I would ask a friend for help if...	yes	not sure	no
B1	I found my school work hard			
B2	Someone was bullying me			
B3	A friend was being bullied			
B4	I lost something			
B5	I felt sick			
B6	I felt sad or worried			
B7	I hurt myself			
B8	I had a family problem			
B9	I had a friendship problem			
B10	I had a money problem			
B11	I was worried about a friend			

C:

ASKING MY PARENT OR CAREGIVER FOR HELP

(tick one of the boxes)

	I would ask my parent or caregiver for help if...	yes	not sure	no
C1	I found my school work hard			
C2	I was being bullied			
C3	A friend was being bullied			
C4	I lost something			
C5	I felt sick			
C6	I felt sad or worried			
C7	I hurt myself			
C8	I had a family problem			
C9	I had a friendship problem			
C10	I had a money problem			
C11	I was worried about a friend			

D:

HOW OFTEN - IN THE SCHOOLYARD?

(please tick one of the boxes)

In the SCHOOLYARD, other students	Never	Hardly ever	Every few weeks	Once or twice a week	Every day	More than once a day
D1						
D2						
D3						
D4						
D5						
D6						
D7						
D8						
D9						
D10						
D11						
D12						
D13						
D14						
D15						
D16						
D17						

E:

HOW OFTEN - IN CLASS? (please tick one of the boxes)

In CLASS, other students	Never	Hardly ever	Every few weeks	Once or twice a week	Every day	More than once a day
E1						
E2						
E3						
E4						
E5						
E6						
E7						
E8						
E9						
E10						
E11						
E12						
E13						
E14						

K:

(circle)

K1 TEACHER Y (a good teacher)
knows my name: yes/not sure/no

K2 TEACHER Y likes me yes/not sure/no

YH:

TEACHER Y: ASKING FOR HELP

(please tick one of the boxes)

I would ask my TEACHER Y (a good teacher) for help if...		yes	not sure	no
YH1	I found my school work hard			
YH2	I was being bullying			
YH3	A friend was being bullied			
YH4	I lost something			
YH5	I felt sick			
YH6	I felt sad or worried			
YH7	I hurt myself			
YH8	I had a family problem			
YH9	I had a money problem			
YH10	I had a problem making friends			
YH11	I had an argument or fight with a friend			
YH12	I was worried about a friend			

YJ:

TEACHER Y: HOW OFTEN?

(please tick one of the boxes)

TEACHER Y (a GOOD teacher)	Never	Hardly ever	Every few weeks	Once or twice a week	Every day	More than once a day
YJ1 smiles at me						
YJ2 says hello to me						
YJ3 notices my effort						
YJ4 encourages me to work well						
YJ5 helps me with my work						
YJ6 treats me fairly						
YJ7 talks to me						
YJ8 notices if I have worked well						
YJ9 notices if I am not working well						
YJ10 puts me down						
YJ11 treats students fairly						
YJ12 sets interesting work						
YJ13 gets the class to cooperate						
YJ14 encourages me to join in						
YJ15 helps me learn from my mistakes						
YJ16 embarrasses students						
YJ17 gives people a second chance						
YJ18 punishes everyone when only a few are to blame						
YJ19 walks around the room						
YJ20 organises group work						
YJ21 organises fun activities						
YJ22 shows he or she is proud of me						
YJ23 takes an interest in what I do						
YJ24 gets the class working hard						
YJ25 helps me to learn						
YJ26 explains the work clearly						
YJ27 gets students to behave well						

L:

(circle)

L1 TEACHER Z (a teacher I don't like)
knows my name: yes/not sure/no

L2 TEACHER Z likes me yes/not sure/no

ZH:

TEACHER Z: ASKING FOR HELP

(please tick one of the

boxes)

~~I would ask my TEACHER Z (a teacher I don't like) for help if...~~ **yes** ~~not~~ **sure** ~~no~~

- ZH1 I found my school work hard
- ZH2 I was being bullying
- ZH3 A friend was being bullied
- ZH4 I lost something
- ZH5 I felt sick
- ZH6 I felt sad or worried
- ZH7 I hurt myself
- ZH8 I had a family problem
- ZH9 I had a money problem
- ZH10 I had a problem making friends
- ZH11 I had an argument or fight with a friend
- ZH12 I was worried about a friend

ZJ:

TEACHER Z: HOW OFTEN?

boxes)

(please tick one of the

TEACHER Z
(a teacher I don't like)

	Never	Hardly ever	Every few weeks	Once or twice a week	Every day	More than once a
day						
ZJ1 smiles at me						
ZJ2 says hello to me						
ZJ3 notices my effort						
ZJ4 encourages me to work well						
ZJ5 helps me with my work						
ZJ6 treats me fairly						
ZJ7 talks to me						
ZJ8 notices if I have worked well						
ZJ9 notices if I am not working well						
ZJ10 puts me down						
ZJ11 treats students fairly						
ZJ12 sets interesting work						
ZJ13 gets the class to cooperate						
ZJ14 encourages me to join in						
ZJ15 helps me learn from my mistakes						
ZJ16 embarrasses students						
ZJ17 gives people a second chance						
ZJ18 punishes everyone when only a few are to blame						
ZJ19 walks around the room						
ZJ20 organises group work						
ZJ21 organises fun activities						
ZJ22 shows he or she is proud of me						
ZJ23 takes an interest in what I do						
ZJ24 gets the class working hard						
ZJ25 helps me to learn						
ZJ26 explains the work clearly						
ZJ27 gets students to behave well						