

Glasgow Psychological Service Newsletter

Education Services



Glasgow Psychological Service
nurturing wellbeing and learning

FOCUS ON RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS

February 2016

Supporting Action Inquiry

To support Glasgow's improvement challenge and the work of the Local Improvement Groups (LIGs) an Open Doors event on Action Inquiry was held for teachers in Anderson primary school in December 2015 led by Dr. Patricia Murray and Mr. Joe Meloy from GPS. The input focused on the stages of action inquiry (plan, observe, act, reflect) and how to use action inquiry to identify areas for development within schools, take baseline measures, use research literature to inform their intervention, plan an intervention and measure the impact. A proforma to enable them to structure their action inquiry planning was also provided. The use of posters to disseminate their results was also discussed and they were shown an example of one. The 17 participants were given examples of practitioner summaries of teacher initiated action research projects, which gave an indication of how colleagues elsewhere in the UK had undertaken research in areas such as Mathematics and Reading (www.ntrp.org.uk). They were also given information on the IDOX service as a resource which would give them access to a source of current research in areas they may be interested in. Feedback from the participants was very positive with teachers commenting

"that the information provided was clear and understandable" and *"provided a better understanding of action inquiry"* which would help them in how to *"go about creating an action inquiry"* in their own schools.

They also stated that it helped them *"focus the research question to be clear about what we want to improve"*. They found copies of the *"research documents helpful"* and recognised the importance of *"having a tighter focus on the research question"* and for *"planning to be realistic – a bit at a time, look at everyone views"* as a means of triangulating their evidence of impact and need.

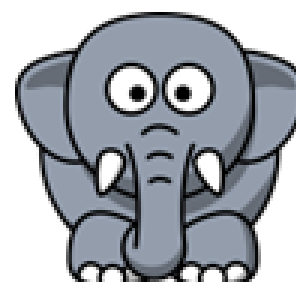
The practical areas that they identified that would be useful for them in applying these action inquiry ideas included:

Further information on the IDOX service

Examples of poster templates

Support to "share and moderate some of their action inquiry" projects

The final word goes to one of the participants who wrote when asked about something they had learned from the session which would help them with the attainment challenge was :- *"Focus on the topic – small steps, big changes e.g. How do you eat an elephant? A little at a time!"*



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NURTURING ME



Nurturing me is a GIRFEC tool which captures the voice of the child. The main purpose is to allow the child to have their voice heard in relation to their perspective on their wellbeing.

Nurturing me is a mediated tool using concrete materials which should be administered by a known adult with whom the child or young person has a trusting relationship.

The tool allows children and young people to identify key people in their lives alongside the child's perspective on the closeness and importance of that relationship.

Funding was acquired within a learning community in Glasgow to use this tool with a number of children and young people. Feedback was then sought from staff in relation to the content of the tool, administration of the tool and its impact on future planning for the child/young person.

The tool was used across early years, primary, secondary and additional learning needs establishments within this locale and completed with over 50 children and young people.

“The tool was easy to use. It was visual and that helped to stimulate meaningful conversations with the children about their life”

“One child identified a deceased family member in the circles which opened up a discussion about family which was helpful”

“In one case this information was very helpful for social work to get a perspective on the child's view of their natural family and care family (the child had previously been unwilling to articulate this)”

While some suggestions were made about adaptations to the tool, feedback from this learning community indicated that Nurturing Me is an extremely useable tool to capture the views of the child/young person. Its use allows valuable information to be gained from the child's perspective and the process of completing it with a trusted adult allows for that relationship to grow further.



The information gleaned through the discussion is found extremely useful to inform planning and delivering an intervention for the child. Within this learning community the establishments all intend to continue to use this tool and areas for development include supporting class teachers to use the tool and involving parents/carers more in the sharing of information. With this feedback in mind the nurture steering group now intends to develop an implementation plan and communication strategy to embed the use of Nurturing Me across the city.

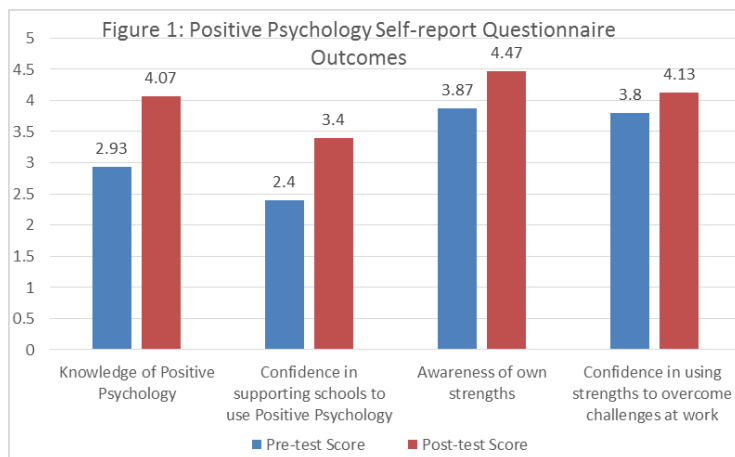
A Focus on Strengths: Positive Psychology

In 2014/2015 the GPS Strengths Based Psychology Group embarked on a project to implement positive psychology in Glasgow. Research in this area has grown considerably in recent years with an area of focus being on the use of character strengths in improving wellbeing (Waters, 2011). Therefore, the group felt it was worth exploring the use of positive psychology within our current frameworks and

Getting it Right for Every Child.

Following the principles of implementation science the project began in the service with a view to rolling out to schools. 26 EPs across the city signed up and 15 completed the project which involve attending information sessions on positive psychology, completing pre and post questionnaires, completing the VIA Character Strengths Survey and joining up in groups to set

goals using their character strengths and scale these goals over a four month period. The initial evaluation was positive with the majority of EPs showing increases in their goals related to overcoming challenges, applying strengths in new ways, and in helping others to identify their strengths. The EPs involved also reported increases in their knowledge of positive psychology, confidence in supporting schools to use positive psychology, awareness of own strengths and confidence in using their strengths to overcome challenges at work (see figure 1). Following intervention, increases were also seen in self-reports of sense of hope; which is linked to increased academic, physical & mental health and social outcomes. However, it should be noted the hope scale results were statistically analysed and were not statistically significant, possibly due to implementation issues and small sample size.



Test your Character Strengths

If you are interested in identifying your character strengths using the VIA Survey you can do so by following the link below

<https://www.viacharacter.org/www/>

Inclusive Practice in primary classrooms: What Works?

A small scale case study project was carried out by the service in 2015 looking at what best facilitated the inclusion of children with additional support needs into mainstream Primary 1 classrooms. It aimed to explore how the international and national context on inclusion impacted on practice in the classroom and to learn more about good practice in Glasgow's schools. Ten families from across the city were invited to participate in the project which involved their child's progress during P1 being tracked. A total of seven agreed to participate. Data was gathered over the course of the year via questionnaire to schools, parents and the case psychologist. In addition to data on the progress of the individual children information was gathered about the schools and the process of transition. The data was then analysed for common themes. A narrative approach was taken in two cases where full data was obtained which offered an in depth look at the enablers and barriers to inclusion of pupils. The other data was summarised.

The findings showed a number of factors that facilitated the inclusion of the pupils with additional support needs including:

- enhanced transition from preschool to primary
- strong relationships with parents
- CPD opportunities for staff
- input from inclusion support staff and from other agencies.

While the focus was on identifying factors that facilitated inclusion, data was also gathered on what made inclusion more difficult. These tended to be around staffing and resource issues. These findings indicate that a range of practices identified in the literature as facilitating inclusion is taking place in the primary schools who participated in the project.



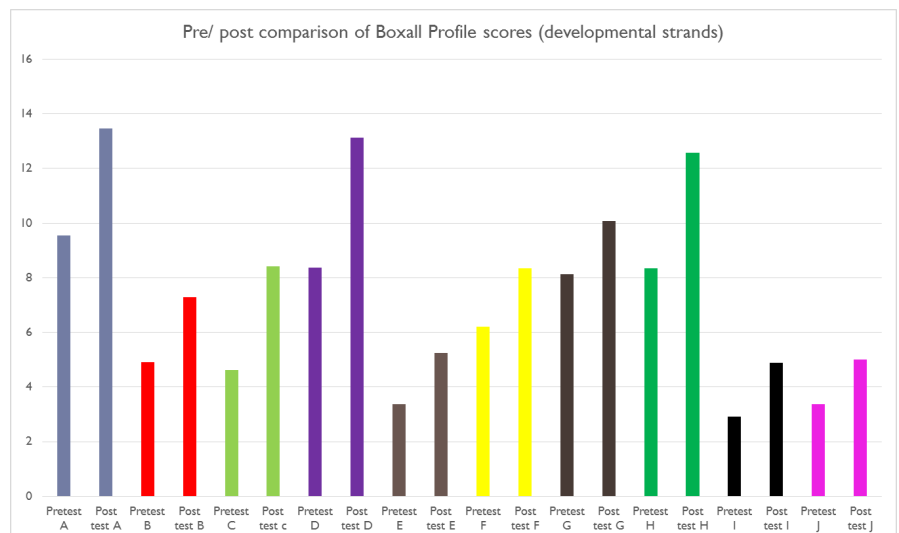
Research undertaken by Trainee Educational Psychologists

Secondary Nurture Groups

The study sought to test the impact and effectiveness of nurture groups in secondary schools through the analysis of pre and post Boxall profiles; pre and post Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) scores; and contextual information (inclusive of attendance and DHT referrals), for each child (n = 24) who attended a nurture group in the academic year 2014-2015. T-test results suggested a positive and significant increase in all but one of the developmental strands of the Boxall Profile following intervention. All diagnostic profile scores demonstrated a decrease, however only one result was statistically significant. SDQ scores could not be analysed due to low returns. Qualitative information, gathered from the questionnaires and interviews with Nurture Teachers and/ or Nurture Coordinators, was compared to established 'Procedures for the Operation of Secondary Nurture Bases', to investigate the fidelity of implementation of Nurture Groups. Data gathered indicated a high degree of fidelity, however there existed some notable differences between schools due to variables such as individual need of the young people attending and the demographics of the establishment. Supporting factors and potential barriers were identified.

Supporting Factors

- ⇒ Early identification of suitable pupils
- ⇒ A collaborative approach both in terms of whole school ethos and the Nurture team consisting of support from the SMT
- ⇒ Training and network meetings provided by the Authority



Working on What Works (WOWW)—long-term

The 8 schools that had completed WOWW in 2014-15 were contacted in November 2015 and invited to take part in the evaluation. Of these, 5 teachers were still in post and were sent a link to an online survey. 4 of these responded by mid-December. The responses show that teachers felt WOWW had the most positive impact on the class environment, followed by peer relationships and collaborative working. There was a moderate impact on learning and attainment. Teachers appeared less sure of the impact on teaching and teacher confidence. All teachers have taken aspects of WOWW forward such as the use of goals and scaling and WOWW as a classroom management strategy. Barriers faced included a high number of challenging pupils in the class and too short an intervention time to see change. There were positive comments regarding the EP facilitation such as gaining a different perspective. Teachers also appear to be happy with a move towards management or teachers facilitating WOWW with some seeing it as an opportunity for wider team working, although it should be introduced in a way that it is not seen as a method of monitoring. The findings have been included in a report to the Solution Oriented Approaches City Lead Group and is available on request.