EVERYBODY

in Schools (Chancellor)

Final Project Report

Lily O'Hara, Jane Gregg & Karen Shelley
University of the Sunshine Coast

September 2008
Introduction

This is the project report for the Everybody in Schools project, funded by the Queensland Community Partnerships Grants Program 2006, project number O-001-00114. Everybody in Schools was a joint project between Chancellor State College and the University of the Sunshine Coast. The report presents the impact of the project on student and teacher knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours with respect to healthy and pleasurable eating, active living, self esteem and resilience, and valuing body size diversity. It also presents the results of the process evaluation conducted after the professional development training course for teachers from the Sunshine Coast region.

1. Impact on students

The impact of the Everybody in Schools project on students via the administration of the Student Health Questionnaire pre and post the implementation of the Everybody in Schools unit. The Student Health Questionnaire collected quantitative data on the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of students with respect to the four domains of: healthy and pleasurable eating; active living; self esteem and resilience; and valuing body size diversity. Data were analysed with the assistance of SPSS version 14.0.

Ninety-five students completed both pre and post questionnaires yielding a 98% response rate. Summary scores for each of the four domains were created and transformed into a scale of 0 – 100. The Wilcoxon signed rank test was used to compare the pre and post median differences. There were improvements in the scores across all four domains, with a 4% improvement in the scores for healthy and pleasurable eating, 7% improvement for active living ($p<.05$), 6% improvement for self esteem and resilience ($p<.05$), and 7% improvement for valuing body size diversity ($p<.05$) (see Figure 1).
There were no significant differences in results across the four classes (Mann-Whitney U test).

2. Impact on adults

2.1 Impact on teachers involved in the development of the Everybody in Schools unit

In order to assess the impact of the project on teachers that participated in the initial design and trial of the Everybody in Schools unit, qualitative data were collected in the form of in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Teachers participated in a total of six hours of interviews with the Project Officer for the Everybody in Schools project.

Teachers were asked several questions about the impact of their participation in the project. Data analysis indicated relatively consistent results across the teachers involved in the project. Overall, teacher reported positive changes in their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours with respect to healthy and
pleasurable eating, active living, fostering self esteem and resilience, and valuing body size diversity.

2.1.1 Healthy and pleasurable eating
All of the teachers reported that the project had reinforced some of their beliefs about their existing eating patterns, which they rated as reasonably nutritious. They were particularly influenced by the concept of intuitive eating and all agreed that they had become more aware of this in regard to their own personal eating.

They saw the advantages of this approach as not having to follow strict dietary guidelines, but rather becoming more in touch with the needs of their own bodies. The teachers universally reported that this approach to eating was less prescriptive and healthier because it allowed them to enjoy the food they were eating and appreciate food for the benefits that it provided their bodies. Psychologically it gave them the freedom to enjoy a variety of nutritious foods while still enjoying occasional traditional high caloric foods without the associated feelings of guilt.

2.1.2 Active living
The teachers reported that their personal levels of physical activity had increased over the duration of the project. This was in part attributed to them having adopted a broader definition of physical activity through the project. For example, one of the teachers was particularly interested in the establishment of a class garden with her students, but prior to her involvement in the project, she would not have classified this as physical activity.

Teachers reported enjoying their participation in physical activity more since the project, and now appreciate and value exercise not only for the positive physical benefits, but also for the mental and social benefits that it brings. Teachers also reported feeling more capable and motivated to participate in physical activity with their classes as a result of their new-found confidence in the benefits of physical activity.
2.1.3 Fostering self-esteem and resilience
Teachers universally reported that as a result of teaching their students about self-esteem and resilience in the project, they too had felt that their personal levels of self-esteem had increased. They attributed this to the fact that they saw themselves as role models for the children they were teaching.

In terms of resilience they reported little improvement but felt that they were already quite resilient before they began their involvement in this process; a resilience that they claimed came with maturity and life experience.

2.1.4 Valuing body size diversity
This was the area that teachers reported the most significant shift in their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. One of the teachers reported having very strict attitudes towards what, in her opinion, constituted healthy body shapes and sizes. She reported that since her involvement in the project, she now has a more holistic view of health and recognises that healthy bodies come in all shapes and sizes.

Other teachers reported that the project confirmed what they had intuitively felt about their bodies – that they were reasonably healthy. Through the project they had learnt to assess their health by their levels of physical activity, eating habits, and mental and social health rather than the shape of their bodies. This experience seems to have broadened their views on health in the context of their own lives and in the context of how they will approach and teach health in the future.

In summary, all of the teachers involved in the Everybody In Schools project reported that it was a very valuable experience for them both personally and professionally. Significantly, the teachers reported that through the project they had developed a more holistic perspective on their own health and the health of their students. They now see further reasons to maintain and adopt healthy habits and behaviours, not just because of the obvious physical benefits, but also because of the increased mental, spiritual and social benefits that they can now identify.
2.2 Impact on school personnel involved in the professional development training workshop

A professional development training workshop was held at the University of the Sunshine Coast on 15 September 2008 to train school personnel in the use of the Everybody in Schools Resource Kit. The workshop was organised into three parts. Part one focused on developing an understanding of the philosophical foundations and evidence base for the unit, including the Values for Australian Schooling, and the Health at Every Size principles. Part two focused on the Everybody in Schools unit, including the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, and the unit’s relationship to the current Essential Learnings. Part three developed practical skills in applying the unit activities in the classroom.

Nineteen people participated in the professional development training workshop. Fifteen (15) teachers and one (1) Deputy Principal completed the workshop evaluation questionnaire.

Participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with the workshop, with 9 participants reporting that it was great, and the remaining 7 reporting that it was pretty good (see Figure 2).

![Figure 2: Overall impression of the workshop](image-url)
Participants rated the facilitators‘ knowledge in the content area very highly, with 15 participants it as great and one participant as pretty good (see Figure 3).

The majority of participants (10) rated the facilitators‘ skills in workshop facilitation as great, and six participants rated it as pretty good (see Figure 4).
The majority of participants (12) rated the Everybody in Schools Resource Kit as great and four rated the kit as pretty good (see Figure 5).

In response to the open ended question about the best parts of the workshop, many participants enjoyed learning about the philosophical principles that underpinned the unit, and others enjoyed the practical application of the Resource Kit.

Participants were asked what parts of the workshop could have been improved. Feedback indicated that the participants would have liked to spend even more time on the practical application of the Resource Kit.

In summary, participants found the workshop to be very informative and a valuable professional development activity that will enable them to increase their focus on healthy and pleasurable eating, active living, fostering self esteem and resilience, and valuing body size diversity.

**Conclusion**

Everybody in Schools was a joint project between Chancellor State College and the University of the Sunshine Coast. The project had a positive impact on the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of staff and students with respect to healthy and pleasurable eating, active living, self esteem and
resilience, and valuing body size diversity. The training program was well received and participants rated the quality of the Everybody in Schools resource kit very highly.

The results of this program indicate that teachers should be encouraged to plan and develop health education units based on the Health at Every Size paradigm. The nature of this paradigm, which incorporates a holistic view of health, encourages teachers to create teaching units and learning experiences based on pedagogical best practice, therefore enhancing the quality of learning and teaching.