

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Classroom groups for positive growth

Dr Sue Roffey from the Centre for Educational Research is investigating the effectiveness of Circle Time as a universal social and emotional development tool in schools. The impact of the experience of Circle Time on prospective teachers is also examined. This research is funded by the Minister for Education and Training and administered by the NSW Department of Education and Training.

'Bullying, a sense of isolation and lack of emotional resilience can be a real problem in schools' says Dr Roffey. 'An effective intervention strategy is needed, so we are investigating the use of a group interaction framework called Circle Time. This interaction process enhances a sense of belonging, encourages school students to take responsibility for their behaviour, better understand their emotions and develop empathy and respect for self and others. There is evidence overseas that Circle Time is effective in improving the learning environment of schools, but little research has been done in Australian schools. This research seeks to supplement informal information that Circle Time has a positive impact on the well-being of students and their learning environment. The study will also examine UWS teaching student perceptions of the Circle Time process in the classroom. The UWS students will look at the changing interactions between the school students and examine the processes that make Circle Time more or less effective.'

UWS teaching students will assess the implementation of Circle Time in Greater Western Sydney schools and in schools in areas of social disadvantage. Using portfolios of their experiences with Circle Time in the classroom, a qualitative



thematic analysis will be carried out. This will identify the impact of Circle Time on teachers and school students and the contribution to the quality of the school learning environment.

This research will endeavour to determine if Circle Time can be a way of supporting NSW Education Department Frameworks that are designed to address bullying, strengthen the sense of community and build a friendly ethos in schools.

Project Title: Circle Time Solutions through a Learning through Community Service Initiative
Funding has been set at: \$12,663

Contact Details: s.roffey@uws.edu.au
<http://www.uws.edu.au/cer>

May 2009