

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Enabling Success at School

Professor Rhonda Craven from Centre for Educational Research is leading a team investigating ways to foster positive behaviour and academic success in school children. The research team is working in collaboration with the NSW Department of Education and Training. This research is supported through an Australian Research Council Linkage Project grant.

'Students with behavioural and emotional difficulties at school may suffer the long-term consequences of academic failure, mental health problems and anti-social behaviour', explains Professor Craven. 'Poor behaviour can also adversely affect schoolmates, who have their lessons disrupted or may be subject to bullying and harassment. The gap is also increasing in schooling success between our most advantaged and disadvantaged students, now placing Australia behind other industrialised countries. An innovative whole-school system intervention was introduced in 2005 – Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL), which features primary prevention, multi-tiered support and progress monitoring, within a team-driven process. This project seeks to determine more effective ways to facilitate PBL, enabling academic success for students in all school settings.'

The study will examine students' positive self-concept and motivation – variables not specifically addressed in international research – across primary and secondary schools in the South Western and Western Sydney regions. Both quantitative and qualitative studies will measure the outcomes of PBL using interviews, focus groups and analyses of academic results.

Factors such as students' sense of belonging, coping styles, emotional stability, peer relations and self-concept and how these impact on their social behaviour and academic performance will be included in these analyses.



The creation of a positive school-wide culture, often through explicit teaching in the social and emotional area, increases the likelihood of task engagement and reduces behavioural difficulties. This contributes to a better educated and socially healthier population, with reductions in mental-health care and unemployment costs to the community and more productive involvement in the workforce.

Project Title: Enabling schooling success: Psycho-social drivers and impact of Positive Behaviour for Learning intervention on behaviour, well-being, academic engagement and achievement.
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