

Problems of Primary School Children

Dr. A. Masilamani

Introduction

Schooling has direct effects on children's educational achievement, their acquisition of literacy, numeracy and scientific knowledge. These basic skills provide the foundation for later "subjects" such as geography, physics and foreign languages. Formal educational qualifications are the key to a child's entry into higher education or training and also employment. The learning of specific knowledge and skills is a direct effect of classroom teaching. Such indirect effects of school are more elusive because they are mediated by children's motivation to learn or avoid learning, their conception of themselves as pupils, and the attributions they create for explaining success and failure. Cognitive and motivational mediators of indirect effects continue to exert influence on individual development outside and beyond school. There are several well designed experimental studies of the impact of preschool education which have included follow-up through young adulthood. These landmark studies employed randomised designs which contrasted the development of children who had and had not experienced pre-school education, thus allowing causal models to be devised which suggest lasting benefits of pre-school education, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

A Parents' Guide to Helping Children Manage Worry, Learn to Calm Themselves and to Manage the Challenges of Tough Times

Many children go through periods of time when they feel anxious, stressed, worried and sad. Sometimes this is because of a tough life experience – parents separating, family illness, grief and loss, bullying, struggles coping at school. Sometimes there is nothing in particular which seems to be causing problems, but the child has a tendency to be a “worrier” or get sad and they are having a hard time coping with their own emotions.

Despite the serious topic, there is plenty of humour and fun in the seminar, videos, case examples - as well as time allowed for questions about tricky kids and tricky situations.

“The parents and staff of our schools found the ‘Worried and Sad Kids’ seminar to be very beneficial and insightful. The information was easy to understand, coupled with practical strategies which helped parents to feel more equipped in helping their families. I would highly recommend the seminars from Developing Minds Psychology as a fantastic resource”

— Holly Taylor, Chaplain, Braeview Primary School and Happy Valley Primary School

Understanding and Communicating with the Next Generation

Our world has changed. In every area, life has changed dramatically in the last fifty years. What we often fail to recognise however is that a changed world has produced a changed generation.

Young people today are very different from us. They have different values, different expectations, different moral codes, different ways of thinking, speaking and acting. And when we fail to take this into account when dealing with young people we become confused and frustrated.

Then How to *use* this information to:

- Communicate with the next generation
- Work alongside the next generation
- Feel hopeful about the next generation
- And more

Understanding and Communicating with the Next Generation (for Educators)

This seminar is specifically for educators who work with teenagers and young adults. It covers the material as stated in the “Understanding the Next Generation” seminar above and goes on to address issues faced by teachers and educators in particular. Topics discussed include communication with young people, managing behaviour, incorporating youth culture into education and using interactive learning strategies.

Characteristics of Successful Senior School Students: A Parents’ Guide

Years 10, 11 and 12 can be a stressful and worrying time for parents. They are often unsure about how to help their teenager, how to work with the school and what to do in difficult times. Research and experience shows that parents are eager for any information that helps them care for their teens during this process. If seminars on these topics are included as part of a regular school evening, attendance rate increases dramatically.

In this seminar specific topics include:

- Understanding the differences between generations
- Helping young people with homework - without nagging!
- Most common pitfalls in dealing with a Year 12 student
- How to work with the school
- Enjoying the year!
- And others...

This seminar for parents is far from dry, dull and academic. Using humour, stories, anecdotes and real-life examples, parents are usually engaged and interested from the very beginning.

There are lots of information, it was extremely worthwhile and challenging (Parent)

- Great to feel we were doing things right, I learnt practical suggestions of how to talk to my daughter (Parent)

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- Wonderful to find out we are not alone. Many thanks. (Parent)
- Parents find her presentations highly valuable and other parents who are unable attend hear about how good they are - and ask for a copy of the notes! (School counsellor)

Calm and Confident Teens: A Parents' Guide to Helping Teens Stay Calm, Manage Stress and Frustration and Manage Tough Times

Parenting teenagers can be a job filled with frustration, anxiety and concern. Even harder is when young people are dealing with a crisis of some kind: depression, relationship break-up, loss of self-esteem, problems with peers or learning difficulties just to name a few. At these times, parents often feel helpless and don't know what to do to help, while everything they do try seems to backfire.

Feedback from parent seminars in the past includes:

- I felt more confident about the positive things I am already doing - learnt to hang in there!
- I came away with strategies to deal with teens' behaviour
- I realised other parents are going through the same difficulties - and that there is hope!
- Clear and simple steps - interactive presentation - good focus on the positive

This seminar is a professional development session for teachers and other educational/health professionals which covers the following topics:

- Understanding the latest data on mental and emotional health issues for young Australians
- How to effectively help and support young people in crisis - in very short periods of time (eg in between lessons)
- Some basic phrases to use with mad, sad and stressed young people: what to say and what not to say to teens who are struggling
- What to look out for and warning signs
- Protective factors: simple steps to keep teens afloat and safe
- Helping young people to make their own simple plans to get through difficult times
- Helping young people learn to stay calm and reassure themselves

Conclusion

An enormous literature has been skimmed to draw a relief map showing the major studies which establish the scientific evidence for the effects of school. Experimental studies, especially those on the impact of pre-school education, have demonstrated clearly that high quality, active-learning pre-school programmes can have lasting benefits which are measurable and cost effective. Researchers involved in the strongest of the studies pointed to "commitment to schooling" which was an important mediator between early intellectual gains and later educational and community outcomes in adulthood. The variable was an amalgam of elementary teacher ratings, scholastic attitudes and aspirations of teenagers, and whether or not the teenagers did homework . . . The direct relationship between commitment and pre-school education suggests that the direct effects of pre-school were motivational as well as cognitive. We assumed that commitment to schooling began as a response to school success.

Research on the impact of primary school is correlational and longitudinal, but rarely experimental. Its validity rests on new and powerful statistical techniques which School influences support causal arguments but do not prove them. It is tempting to say that the legacy of effective pre-school education is the "will and skill to do"; the legacy of the effective primary school is preference for learning goals, feelings of self-efficacy, belief in the power of effort and goals of social responsibility. Two powerful themes have emerged in the review. First the impact of school is potentially great, especially when schools are characterised by the management and teaching strategies documented in the Effective Schools literature. Second, many of the effects of schooling are indirect, i.e. they are mediated through change and development in pupils' cognitions and motivations. Social responsibility may be one of the most important of all and receives some support from the High/Scope longitudinal evaluation.

When schools change pupils' self-concepts, goals, beliefs about success and social responsibility they exert powerful influence not only on subsequent education but also on employment and community participation in adulthood.

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