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SUNCETT MA Short Course: **Advancing Pedagogy in Post-Compulsory Education and Training**

A Positive Psychology Intervention in FE to Improve Growth Mindset and Well-Being

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Abstract

Due to the increased reports of depression among young people (Seligman et al, 2009) and the view that a quarter of mental health conditions develop during college (Department for Education, 2017), the difficult role front-line staff face when educating in the Further Education (FE) sector has become more apparent. The main aim of this research was to evaluate how well FE students, aged between 16-19, responded to a Positive Psychology Intervention (PPI) aimed at improving mindset and well-being.

Over the past decade there has been prominent research in positive education, with the work of both Dweck (2006) and Seligman et al. (2009) featuring prominently in educational research. Dweck coined the terms fixed and growth mindset to describe the attitudes and beliefs that people had about learning and intelligence (Dweck, 2006). Hart et al. (2004) also found that all young people can learn to high levels and that they do not have a fixed intelligence. PPI's are a set of scientific tools and strategies that focus on increasing happiness, well-being, and positive cognitions and emotions (Parks and Schueller, 2014).

The study provided students with a growth mindset journal that encouraged daily tasks to improve students' perceptions around mindset and well-being. Students were actively involved in the planning phase to increase ownership and retention during the study. Students completed the Journal for 30 days, a combination of focus groups and surveys obtained participants views and revealed that those who completed the journal recorded improvements in well-being. The findings reinforce previous work by Seligman et al. (2009) and Kidger et al. (2010) that PPI's have a positive effect on well-being and mindset. The journal also provided some comfort for students amidst and from the onset of a pandemic. Something which could not have been predicted. The fundamental limitation resides around the lack of tangible attainment to validate intervention success.

Keywords: growth mindset, positive psychology, well-being, happiness

Introduction

The increasing prevalence worldwide of depression among young people (Seligman et al., 2009) and the fact that a quarter of mental health conditions develop during the time when students are at college (Department for Education, 2017) highlights the difficult role front-line staff face when educating in the Further Education (FE) sector. As practitioners in an FE college that serves over 1500 learners, it was noted, albeit informally, how much our pastoral support system and the use of our college's Health and Well-being team had increased in use the past few years. Many of us have perhaps looked back on previous cohorts of students with rose-tinted spectacles on how well they achieved or how well they had coped with the rigours of adolescence and further education. However, our initial perceptions in recent years seems to show that many students these days seem to lack the emotional resilience required to withstand the demands of FE education and maturing into young adults.

Research conducted by Childline (2019) found that of the main reasons for children aged sixteen to eighteen years contacting them, the most common concern identified (34%) was mental or emotional health, followed by suicidal thoughts or feelings (12%). Similarly, the Association of Colleges' (AoC) most recent mental health survey found that 85% of colleges said they had experienced an increase of students declaring mental health issues and, in many cases these issues had first arisen while the young person was at college. Eighty-one percent felt that there was a significant number of students who had undeclared mental health difficulties and seventy-four percent had referred students to A&E for mental health-related issues in the previous year (Rimmer, 2018).

Even with our rose-tinted spectacles removed, it seemed the conversation around mental health in FE was indeed getting louder. Further research showed that this was a national problem, based upon a report by the Department of Health, Future in Mind (2015), strategies had already been put in place to try to ensure that health and education authorities worked more closely together to address the needs of young people with mental health difficulties.

So, we had our problem, but as practitioners focused on delivering our lessons mainly around sport and coaching, our experience in student well-being was limited to our role as tutors. This changed when we completed some college CPD (Continual Professional Development)

on growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) and the happiness advantage, as described by Shawn Achor (TED, 2012). This was also coupled with an interest in a number of current well-being interventions aimed at young children, such as the HappySelf journal and the Big Life Journal - Teen edition. Given the association of growth mindset with goal achievement, it was decided that perhaps changing students' mindsets through a journal intervention may in the future lead to improving academic achievement (Rattan, Savani, Chugh, and Dweck, 2015).



Figure 1: An image showing The HappySelf Journal and Big Life Journal - Teen edition. Journals that encourage children and teens to dream about their future and help them develop a mindset of growth, resilience, gratitude, and positivity.

Now we had our tool, and this manifested itself into an idea that a growth mindset and well-being journal that encourages daily tasks could help to improve students' perceptions around mindset and well-being. Robinson (2017) found that strategies and interventions that can be disseminated directly to individuals allow them to actively pursue greater levels of happiness through several self-directed tasks.

The main aim of our intervention is to evaluate how well FE students, aged between 16-19, respond to a Positive Psychology Intervention (PPI) aimed at improving mindset and well-being. The outcome of this study will hopefully provide a foundation for future research and pose further research questions as to how FE students respond to PPI's and if interventions that require self-directed and independent effort are viable with young adolescents.

It is possible that the findings of this investigation could have a direct impact on the pastoral support students receive whilst at college, but also significantly contribute to improving academic attainment in the long term.

Literature Review:

Rimmer (2017) wrote a love letter to the education system about a relationship that has lost its way. Exploring the need to change, asking both parties to stand back and think what is best for our new emerging 21st century future. He suggests we have been disconnected from teaching some of the necessary skills that it takes to be happy human beings. He believes spending more time focusing on the broader aspects of an individual's education such as resilience, confidence and self-awareness will lead not only to greater academic success and technical proficiency but a better and happier lifelong learner. This has resonated with many educational practitioners but yet remains totally anecdotal or at best observational. More stringent research is needed to validate, let alone galvanize his thesis.

Seligman et al. (2009) suggests similar thinking to Rimmer; in that the void between what parents want for their children and what schools teach is woven into the fabric of positive education by those responsible. That being said, most parents want happiness, health and confidence for their children, however, schools primarily focus on attainment, discipline and academic skills. These are without contradiction important but controversially the latter will prevail more or less so than positive mental health outcomes. To promote a symbiotic relationship between the two, a positive education approach to teaching is proposed, where educational establishments teach achievement, attainment and accomplishment in tandem with a positive mind-set and an abundant awareness of informed mental health skills. In other words, positive education wants to bring positive psychological goals of well-being and mental health support for everyone into the learning crucible.

Over the past decade there has been advancing research in both the topic of growth mindset and the use of positively psychology interventions, with the work of both Dweck and Seligman featuring prominently in educational research. Dweck coined the terms fixed and growth mindset to describe the attitudes and beliefs that people had about learning and intelligence (Dweck, 2006). Similarly, the main findings of educational research by Hart et al. (2004) is that

all young people can learn to high levels and that they do not have a fixed intelligence. All the factors that influence whether you learn or not, most importantly, can be changed.

Blackwell et al. (2007) found that adolescents who showed more of an open mindset held more positive beliefs about the effort they needed to put in, and also made fewer ability-based “helpless” attributions, with the result that they choose more positive, effort-based strategies in response to failure. The study also conforms with the research presented earlier, in that the adolescent years are an intriguing stage of development, and it is viewed as a time of challenge for FE students, with the potential for both positive and negative outcomes.

There are some limitations against the use of growth mindset interventions. Bahník and Vranka (2017) found that mindset did not predict a change in the test results for a university admissions test. They also found no relationship between the number of test administrations participants signed up for or the total number of tests taken by a participant. However, they do admit this lack of positive association and test results is in contrast to recent meta-analysis which found that growth mindset is positively, albeit weakly, associated with goal achievement (Burnette et al., 2013). The meta-analysis by Burnette et al. (2013) showed those with a growth mindset had a higher likelihood of achieving their goals. Bahník and Vranka (2017) also concluded that their results:

“...do not invalidate the notion that implicit theories of intelligence might be a promising target for educational interventions.”

A more recent study by Li and Bates (2019) found little or no support for the idea that growth mindsets are beneficial for children’s responses to failure or school attainment. They found that mindset had no impact on school grades, response to challenge, or goal orientation. Li and Bates (2019) conclude that the 80% of teachers who believed mindset matters but were unable to make effective changes in their own classes, should perhaps consider more the research of Finn et al. (2014), Ritchie et al. (2015), and Lindsey et al. (2014). This collection of research suggests that learning does not require or cause changes in basic ability but does require prosaic teaching practices such as systematic practice and feedback via appropriate testing. This does somewhat correlate with Hattie (2012) who classified ‘reciprocal teaching’ and ‘feedback’ as two of the highest influences on student learning.

However, Li and Bates (2019) contrasts with a very large study conducted by Adler et al. (2016). In the first of three replication longitudinal studies involving 694 secondary schools, intervention schools reported significantly higher well-being and that their students performed significantly better on standardised national exams at the end of a 15-month intervention. The results for both well-being and academic performance remained significant 12 months after the intervention ended.

Whilst there are several studies both in support and against Mindset theories (aka Implicit theories), our intervention alone is not explicitly focusing on growth mindset and educational attainment. Whilst this may be a long-term objective of future interventions, part of the objective now is to measure whether a Positive Psychology Intervention (PPI) can be used to improve student's mindset and well-being. Attainment is not being directly measured in this initial study.

The theory that someone who participates in activities designed to enhance happiness can show lasting increases in well-being is supported by empirical evidence (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). It is suggested that 'happiness improved well-being' can be achieved and enhanced through various channels, including social communication, gratitude practices and cognitive reformations. As such, all these factors were clustered together in practical techniques called positive psychology interventions (Parks and Schueller, 2014). PPI's are a set of scientific tools and strategies that focus on increasing happiness, well-being, and positive cognitions and emotions.

Since as early as the 1930's PPI's have been utilised in some schools more effectively than in others, so it seems reasonable to suggest the PPI's are used to supplement the existing traditional psychology in schools (Shankland & Rosset, 2017). Seligman, Dweck, Peck and other positive psychologists are in the belief that schools should aim for student well-being. Kristjansson (2012) supports this idea, indicating that philosophers as far back as Aristotle, and as modern as Noddings (2003) and Brighouse (2006) all make the similar claim that happiness should be the fundamental educational end-goal.

Kaplan et al. (2014), Seear and Vella-Brodrick (2013), both conducted interventions to increase well-being with positive outcomes. Kaplan et al. (2014) found that a gratitude intervention was successful in influencing self-reported gratitude, positive affective well-

being, and reduced absence due to illness, whilst Seear and Vella-Brodrick (2013) indicated that best possible selves significantly lowered negative affective well-being. For participants with lower initial mindfulness, those allocated to the best possible selves group experienced increased positive effects on well-being. A meta-analysis by Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) of 51 PPIs also highlights how a range of positive interventions significantly increased well-being and decreased depressive symptoms. Indeed, many studies have supported a relationship between mindfulness and both increased well-being and decreased anxiety and stress (Bränström et al. 2011; Brown and Ryan, 2003). Extending on this correlational data, mindfulness training (e.g., Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction) was found to increase well-being and decrease stress, particularly if practiced regularly (Carmody and Baer, 2008).

In relation to well-being and attainment, Seligman asked parents in two words or fewer what parents want for their children:

“Happiness, health, life satisfaction and meaning”. (2009, p93).

It would appear that Ven diagrammatically there are decimal degrees of separation between what school’s teach and what parents want for their children. From his 2009 paper it would suggest children do better with a greater sense of happiness, positivity, and well-being. The high prevalence worldwide of depression among young people, the small rise in life satisfaction, and the synergy between learning and positive emotion all argue that the skills for happiness should be taught in school. There is substantial evidence from well controlled studies that skills that increase resilience, positive emotion, engagement and meaning can be taught to school children.

Educators working in the professional field of teaching have clearly demonstrated the requisite passion for student well-being given its quintessential vocational label. However, notwithstanding their intentions their implementation of direct, intent student focused mental well-being has been found wanting in recent years as focus around attainment has driven the larger intentions as previously mentioned by Rimmer (2017). There is nothing ground-breaking or recently innovative about interventions which both clearly work and have worked for some time, there just needs a recalibration of the intentional lens of purpose. It is the belief of teaching professionals that the cultivation of student emotional health and well-being are “inevitably linked” (Kidger et al., 2010). In addition to this belief it is apparent that

within Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs that emotional support may be indicative of higher functions such as learning. Concurrently, recent research from Curby (2013) has reinforced the belief that offering more emotionally consistent classroom environments can be associated with students' academic and social learning.

Examining the research around mental health indeed shows that the topic is becoming much more prominent in both education and the health and care sector. Recent NHS data shows that one in eight (12.8%) children and young people aged between 5 and 19, surveyed in England in 2017, had a mental health disorder. More worryingly, only 30% of those adolescents will access support or intervention in the early stages of their mental health difficulties. Specifically addressing those studying in FE, the figures are more concerning, showing that one in six (16.9%) 17 to 19-year-olds were found to have a mental health disorder, with one in sixteen (6.4%) experiencing more than one disorder at the time of the interview. This age group had the highest rate of emotional disorder (14.9%) (NHS Digital, 2018).

With such alarming figures on young people's mental health coupled with promising research on student mindset and well-being, it is encouraging to find that government and national policy is also listening to this ever increasingly louder voice on student mental health and well-being. The aforementioned Future in Mind strategy has culminated in further discussions and papers on progressing national policy to further support the well-being of our young learners. The UK government's Green Paper: Transforming Children and Young People's Mental health includes key proposals on the direction of both the education and health and care sector. They openly support the idea that schools and colleges can provide the right type of support needed, including identifying those at risk and providing interventions where possible. They recognise that the school environment is non-stigmatising, making interventions offered in this context more acceptable to children and young people, and their parents (Department of Health, & Department for Education, 2017).

With national policy encouraging the use of interventions it was agreed that a PPI based around journaling and happiness tasks would be used. Our journal will be created with the idea that 30 days of interventions would be sufficient to register a measurable impact. In Seligman et al.'s (2005) study, the benefits of journaling three good things were evident from

the 1-month follow-up, rather than at the one-week stage. Seligman et al. (2005) noted that 1 week may have been insufficient for this activity. They found longer-term benefits for participants who continued the activity. Moreover, Sin and Lyubomirsky's (2009) meta-analysis found that greater increases in well-being resulted from longer interventions.

Journals or journaling tasks are also a useful source of data to support narrative inquiry (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). They allow us as researchers to compare the feedback we receive in the focus groups, to more individual and intimate comments that might be made during the completion of the daily tasks. Our student's personal feelings and experiences during this project are important data to consider here. Capturing the human experience, in what we see as a 'pilot' study for possible future interventions, will greatly shape our future research and the direction of any future interventions we might decide to do. As Van Maanen wrote:

"... reliability and validity are overrated criteria whereas apparency and verisimilitude are underrated criteria". (1988, p7).

An important consideration to conclude on.

Research Methodology

Our research was conducted in a large FE college in the South of England. We approached two cohorts of sports students, both second-year BTEC students including males and females. In total, 26 students were happy to be included in the study (21 males and 5 females). The students included were from the Sport and Public Services Department, one group was studying Sports Coaching and Development, whilst the other was studying Sports Performance and Excellence as part of the college's Football Academy programme. All 26 students were volunteers, each of which were assigned a pseudonym for the duration of the study. Each of the students involved completed:

- A consent form
- A preliminary focus group on the design of the journal (Appendix A)
- A 30-day Growth Mindset and Well-being journal (Appendix D)
- A focus group mid-way through the intervention. (Appendix B)

- A final reflective focus group at the completion of the journal (Appendix C)
- Each journal also had some reflective pages which would provide additional feedback that would be collected at the end of the study.

After initially agreeing to the intervention, both tutor groups completed a preliminary focus group (see Appendix A) in November 2019 on the construction and design of the journal. Various PPI's were presented to the students and they were asked to rank the preference in which activities they felt they could most engage with. The theory behind this was to create some ownership over the production of the journal and increase engagement levels. Weare (2015) highlights the importance of engaging pupils through student voice when outlining what works well in promoting social and emotional well-being in schools. Atkinson et al. (2018) do indicate however that some of these suggestions made for student involvement appeared to focus on decision-making about learning and school life. They note that the potential for student contribution helping develop effective mental health support and provision should not be overlooked.

It was important to us during our research that a mostly qualitative approach was used. We were very keen to hear the voice of each student as they experienced the journal and that students felt they had a platform which enabled them to have a voice and tell their stories. This viewpoint is fundamental in helping to create a narrative inquiry in collaboration-based research (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). Focus groups would be used and held during tutorial time to collect data. This would also enable us as researchers to track student engagement on a weekly basis and provide more support to those who may need it.

The journal itself will be constructed using several previously created resources and free-to-share website activities (Appendix D). In order to qualify as a PPI, Parks and Biswas-Diener (2013) propose that the intervention has to meet the following criteria to be called a PPI: it must address a "positive psychology construct" and have a body of research evidence supporting their effectiveness. Parks and Titova (2016) listed PPIs into seven main categories; savouring, gratitude, kindness, empathy, optimism, strengths and meaning. Our initial plan is to create a journal that would remove students away from their phones and return them back to writing and reflective practices. Whilst the idea behind a fully interactive and mobile based intervention may provide some benefits and home comforts to teenagers, there is an

association between excessive Internet use and mental health difficulties (Frith, 2017). Gratitude journaling, whether self-reflective or interactive has proven to improve well-being by increasing positive emotions, improving health, and decreasing depressive symptoms (Wood, Froh, and Geraghty, 2010).

The Intervention

This intervention aims to provide students with a growth mindset journal that encourages daily tasks to improve students' perceptions around mindset and well-being. In phase 1 of the intervention, students will be actively involved in the planning and development of the journal in the hope to increase ownership and retention during the study (preliminary focus group: see Appendix A). Ethical considerations will be outlined, and informed consent will be obtained by all participants. In phase 2 of the study, between January and March 2020, we hope to implement the journal itself. Students will be asked to complete 30 tasks over 30 days, with each task only being selected if it meets the PPI criteria laid out previously. A combination of focus groups and surveys containing open and Likert scale questions will be used to obtain feedback on students' progression and completion of the journal. Phase 3 of the intervention will be the data analysis phase. Qualitative responses will be analysed, from both the interview results and student comments in the journals reflective pages. Key outcomes will be identified, along with limitations of the study, followed by final conclusions.

Inclusion of emotional resilience can often be the prerequisite for successful academic outcome. It is evidently clear from research that chronic juvenile mental health conditions along with a systematic educational dislocation hinders a learner's journey and subsequent attainment. If the planned intervention is promoted and executed by the sample of level 3 learners, it is hypothesised that a subjective uplift will be observed within the individual's mindset which will foster improved engagement in the educational expedition, resulting in improved well-being, greater understanding of mindset and possible developments with academic attainment. It is expected that a high percentage of learners will engage and complete the study as growth mindset will be an embedded and holistic supplement to all lessons and tutorials. Learners should be actively engaged throughout the intervention as they themselves will be active authors of the journal construct. The research is abundantly

transparent that improved mind-set and student happiness (Seligman et al., 2009) improved learner experience and attainment (Adler et al., 2016). The issue as explicitly alluded to by Rimmer (2017) is that this is obviously not abundant in the landscape of education.

Ethical Statement

This study will endeavour to conduct research that complies with the British Education Research Association (BERA) Guidelines, 2018. All research conducted will respect the privacy, autonomy, diversity, values and dignity of individuals used for the purposes of this study. The most appropriate methods for the research purpose will be used, ensuring informed consent is attained prior to any involvement. Anonymity will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms to ensure due regard is taken in conducting and disseminating the research. All participants will be fully informed of the benefits of this project, and how any risks involved have been minimised. All participants will be made aware that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

As researchers we understand that as our project uses aspects of social media, we should remember that any digital information generated by individuals has been done so at the request of the study. It is important for us to consider then, that any data shared or created, we have a responsibility to account for how and with what consent that data was gathered; in accordance with Data Protection and GDPR regulations.

Although this research has been funded by the ETF, the foundation has in no way influenced the conduct of the research or its outcomes.

Data Analysis

Initial response and tasks

The design of the journal was very well received with all students giving a favourable response on the design and quality, with some students even saying it motivated them to attempt it. When asked “What were your initial thoughts around the journal?” Lucy said:

“I thought it was really well put together and it looked really nice which made me want to complete it”.

Whilst Nina added:

“Loved the cover and the back, very appealing and was exited (sic) to see the final product.”

Indeed, all responses around the appearance and quality of the journal were positive. When asked specifically about the most effective tasks, yoga was seen as very effective and mentioned specifically by a number of responses. Day 7 was also specifically mentioned by students as a really positive task enjoyed at the start. In the focus group Lucy said:

“I have been engaging in most of the tasks as it helps me stay positive as well as giving me something to look forward to doing, such as the yoga tasks.”

Whilst John continued with:

“Yoga. That was quite tough, but I enjoyed it. Never had done it before. I think it relaxes you whilst you do it. It’s quite calming. Yeah for me personally it’s been nice.”

Having positive comments on the journals design and its tasks does support the work by Weare (2015) and Atkinson et al. (2018) that student involvement in well-being interventions can lead to improved outcomes. Having the students engage with the choice of tasks is an important consideration, as Atkinson et al. (2018) noted that in their own student-led whole school mental health initiative, students actually wanted more young-person friendly and creative ways to communicate about mental health. It could be concluded then, that with a more young-person friendly design which included both journaling and interactive tasks, this helped bridge the gap in providing an intervention suited to FE aged students.

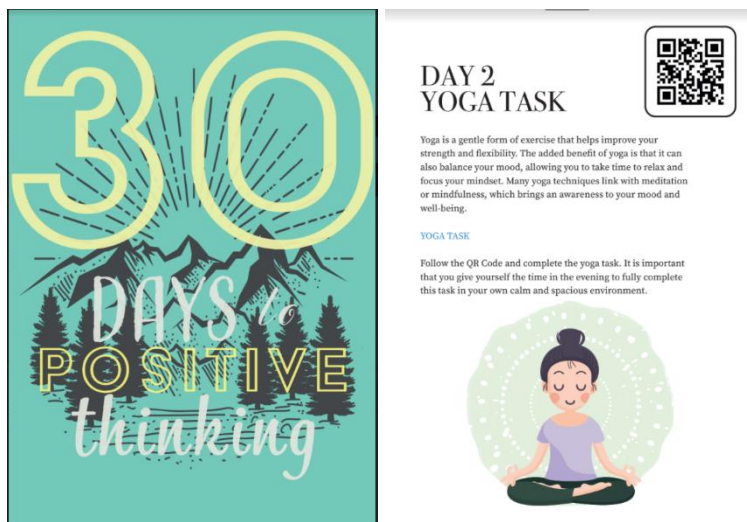


Figure 2: Images showing the front cover of our '30 Days to Positive Thinking' Journal, and one of the popular yoga tasks with interactive QR code. Students could scan this QR code with their phone it would load up the yoga video on YouTube.

Some of the final comments echoed the success of having a diverse range of tasks for those students who completed the journal. Over the period of the intervention, John found his opinion on the most effective tasks had changed.

"Gratitude Journaling - makes you think about things you have got, things you are lucky. I liked a lot of the tasks, it all had good balance".

Engagement

When asked about their engagement with the journal and its daily tasks, responses were mixed. The mid-way focus group was held 14 days after the intervention began. Student engagement ranged from some being at 10-12 days with others being between 2 and 5. One student had not started properly engaging with the tasks and the remaining 18 students either did not join the live Google Meet or complete the subsequent Google Form (Appendix B). Of those who did attend however, 57.2% of them gave a score of 4 or above when asked to rank if they felt the journal was starting to make them view things more differently (scale 1-5, 5 being 'I am starting to view things differently'). David responded to the question by saying:

"Yes it's driving me forward in improving myself"

Whilst in the focus group Lucy added:

"I defo feel like it's made me have a more positive outlook on daily life and tasks as well as preventing stress".

Having completed half of the journal so far, how do you feel your mindset is progressing?

7 responses

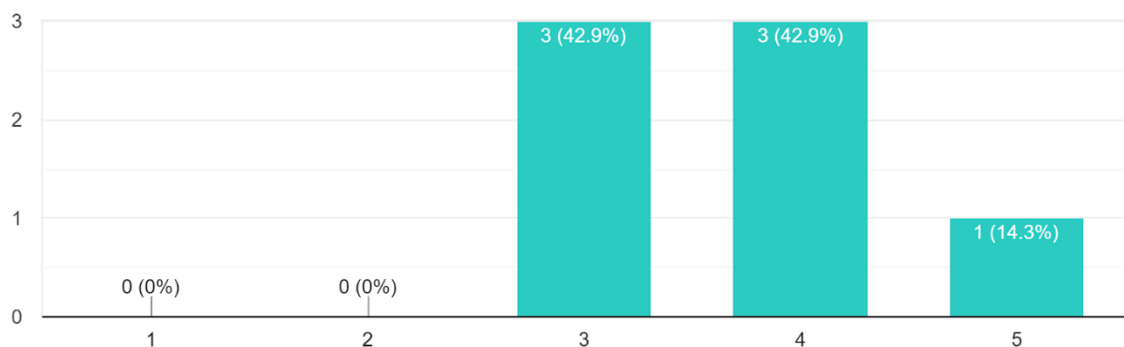


Figure 3: A bar chart showing the responses to the question on progression and mindset.

However, overall, the level of engagement during this intervention was disappointingly low. Of the 26 students selected for the intervention, only 8 responded at the mid-way stage (30.7%). Of these 8, only 2 completed the final focus group (7.69%) (Appendix C).

There could be several reasons as to why engagement was so low. Covid19 and the lockdown of schools and colleges stands out as possibly the most obvious answer. The original study relied on students being in college and having weekly meetings and catch-ups with their tutor. This level of monitoring was impossible to achieve when lockdown commenced, and we had to move much of the intervention to a remote setting. Some students may have lacked the motivation to complete the journal independently at home. Although our students were happy to volunteer for the intervention, aware that some level of self-administration and self-motivation was required, the remote setting made it difficult to fully support students. As these answers perhaps allude to, when asked ‘How has COVID 19 and isolation made you feel? How has it affected you and your mindset?’

“At first it affected me quite a bit as I was so used to seeing people and then all of a sudden I couldn’t do it got me a bit down and made me really unmotivated to do anything.” (Lucy).

“It has made me quite lazy. I haven’t done much and been out much. You know, ive been trying to do stuff but haven’t been able to.” (Simon).

“Been different but quite good in general more exercise sunbathing and reading.” (Jayden).

“Yes I did do the five things of gratitude and I did briefly do the yoga but I was not the best. I am only on day two at the moment.” (Tom).

Sin and Lyubomirsky’s (2009) meta-analysis concur with these findings, as they found that the mean effect size of interventions was largest for individually administered interventions, then group-administered, followed by self-administered interventions. Although self-administered interventions promote autonomy and flexibility, it is likely that some element of encouragement may have been needed to be built in.

Aware of the lack of contact from students as our intervention moved into July, we tried to capture thoughts about this by asking about student motivation levels. Even with just two responses, the feedback was mixed. When asked ‘Do you feel you would have engaged more with the journal had someone mentored you through the process, rather than it being an independent process?’ John answered:

“I am quite independent, so I do not think so”.

This was followed up by asking whether doing the journal maybe once a week rather, than every day might encourage higher levels of engagement, but John disagreed:

“I don't think doing it over 30 weeks once a week would be as good because you would switch off after a while”.

This does support the research by Robinson (2017) in that interventions given directly to individuals allow them to actively pursue greater levels of happiness through self-directed tasks. However, Jayden disagreed. He admitted he had not really been motivated to try the journal, and that:

“I always have to have someone to keep me going”.

This response does correlate with some of the findings by Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) and the fact engagement levels were so low might suggest that those who did not engage at all, were either lacking in motivation or that the freedom and responsibility given to them was not conducive to independent completion of the journal. This is further supported by Weare (2015) who found that shorter interventions of 6-10 weeks are less likely to make a sustained impact. Longer Interventions that also embed regular practice and time produce greater benefits (Adler et al., 2016, Carmody and Baer, 2008, Seligman et al. 2005).

In circumstances where motivation to perform an intervention is lacking, support in some form is particularly important to maximise potential benefits. The fact that us as researchers and tutors were removed from this intervention by lockdown cannot be ignored as a likely cause of low engagement. Furthermore, 8 students engaging at the mid-way stage, compared to only 2 at the end suggests some students did not have the motivation to continue with the study. It is likely that attrition in sticking to the daily tasks has played a factor and as Schueller (2010) found, attrition can be reduced in research if ongoing contact with participants is provided. For example, the use of reminder emails, as in Seligman et al.'s (2005) study, would encourage research involvement and prompt students to return to complete subsequent online measures. This supports the idea that had lockdown not occurred, engagement levels in the study would have been higher. Notwithstanding the fact that a lockdown also delayed the intervention itself, with students being asked to complete the final days of the journal in their summer holidays.

Contrary to the low engagement levels however, those students who did meet with us at either the mid-way stage or at the end, did continue to provide some beneficial, and at times, heart-warming feedback.

Well-being and Mindset.

The majority of students felt strongly (either ranked 4 or 5) that this journal was successful in attempting to improve well-being and mindset. 66.6% unanimously agreed this journal was helping them work towards their goals. Some key responses included:

"100% I am understanding my own feelings a lot more, day 7 made me realise I put myself down a lot more often than I thought and put other people before myself without thinking about how it might make me feel. I also think it has helped a lot with having a positive impact on people around me, I am more positive within myself meaning I'm able to then spread that happiness to others." (Nina).

"I've never been a firm believer in this (sic) types of exercises on the mind but participating in it has really changed my perspective and it has changed my mindset." (Tom).

And when asked what effect this journal had had so far on their daily life, students' responses generally indicated they felt the more they completed the journal, the more positive they felt they were becoming.

“I think the further into the journal I get the more effective it becomes, the first few days felt like a chore but it gets a lot more enjoyable and it is almost a highly routine now that I fill it out before bed so I can reflect on my day and really think about what I am writing.” (Nina).

“Every time I've gone back to it, it has had a positive effect. Clearing my mind and thinking about stuff more clearly.” (Simon).

In our final focus group, John felt that the journal did improve his overall well-being. He felt before the intervention he was ‘around a 7’ but now felt much happier and would rank his well-being ‘as a 9 out of 10’. Both our mid-way and final data does correlate with similar literature in this area. Kaplan et al (2014), Seear and Vella-Brodrick (2013), Lyubomirsky et al (2005), Seligman et al (2005) and Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) all found well-being improvements after using PPI interventions.

Limitations

Covid-19 has impacted the study in several ways. Some students felt the lockdown gave them more time to complete the journal, whilst others hinted that having the journal earlier in the lockdown period would have also been beneficial. Although, some did feel that if they were in a normal situation, they would have had less time to complete the tasks. One student felt it was difficult for her to complete the nature task due to where she lived:

“I don't like the yoga tasks so much because it isn't something I am interested in but maybe that is because I haven't ever done it before now so haven't had any background on it, I like the fact it relaxes your body but I seem unable to clear my mind. I also don't know how to complete the nature walks because there are no trails or exiting (sic) things to do in the city especially when you aren't aloud (sic) out of the house.”

An area we had not really considered prior to intervention was lockdown and the added impact this had on student's mindset and well-being. When adapting our focus groups questions, we tried to capture some of this feedback. As mentioned previously, some students struggled for motivation during lockdown or perhaps used their time working or sunbathing. In addition to some of the comments mentioned beforehand, student feedback was mixed.

“I have done a lot of thinking the last couple of months. I have been able to focus on things like uni and my future more. I reflected on my school.” (John).

“I’ve been working through Covid so it has not massively affected me because I’ve been getting out.” (Tom)

One final interesting finding is perhaps an indication towards some response bias, with one student answering to ‘help out’ his tutor, rather than for the benefit of himself:

“Yes, I feel like at first I wasn’t doing it for myself but to help Lee finish what he started and spent a lot of time on but the more the days went on the more affective (sic) it became, I felt myself actually enjoying the tasks and wanting to complete them.” (Tom).

It is interesting to note that the student did develop a likening towards the journal, which perhaps highlights some the positives mentioned previously over the design and daily tasks. It should be noted that an attempt to avoid response bias was made by ensuring all responses were anonymous but nonetheless this must be a consideration.

Key Findings

Holistically the methodological design and outcome of the study was a success. Reinforcing previous work by Seligman et al. (2009) and Kidger et al. (2010) alike that a PPI has a positive refractive effect on well-being and subsequent outcomes. It was evident that students engaged more positively to more practical tasks such as yoga, but this may have been indicative to the study’s specific demographic. Having said that, complex evaluation techniques such as reflectiveness and gratitude also demonstrated appeal to a high percentage of learners.

Learners identified value in the completion of PPI tasks and began to witness what they considered to be “developments in their happiness and well-being.” This may have been influenced by the fact students were exposed to these interventions for the first time, even learners with initial apprehension or response bias showed encouraging signs in completing the journal. Some eluded to continual practice post study.

Students indicated that they felt revisiting the journal at undefined sporadic intervals had and would continue to have a positive effect on students’ wellbeing, which is aligned with Adler et al.’s (2016) conclusions.

The journal had provided some comfort for students amidst and from the onset of a pandemic. Something of which could not have been predicted. Without question the extremely low completion rate could be justified by the lack of intended face to face interaction and the subsequent online remote substitute. It is suggested that dis-engagement throughout lock down resulted in learners not fully understanding the purpose of mindset and positive psychology. It was documented in the focus group that should the intervention have been supported by weekly face to face meetings, engagement was likely to have improved.

It could also be suggested that the lockdown itself caused such dis-engagement with the journal. Our student comments reflect that of a survey carried out by YoungMinds (2020) during the initial stages of lockdown. The survey of 2,111 young people found that 51% of students agreed that their mental health had gotten a bit worse, with 32% saying that it had gotten much worse from the introduction of government enforced restrictions. In addition to these figures, the key factors that young people said had affected their mental health included a loss of routine, minimal social connection, the challenges that remote support can pose and the lack of clarity in the guidance provided. As a result, many young people had reported increased anxiety, sleeping issues, panic attacks and more frequent urges to self-harm.

On the positive side, it was noted that watching videos, exercise and learning new skills were amongst some of the highest ranked coping mechanisms in terms of effectiveness. Other techniques young people suggested as helpful for their mental health included writing and journaling, spending time with pets, playing or listening to music, watching YouTube, being outdoors in nature and sticking to a routine (YoungMinds, 2020). Considering our journal covers almost every positive reason mentioned (Figure 4), this reinforces some of the positive comments made as to how effective the journal was at improving well-being and mindset.

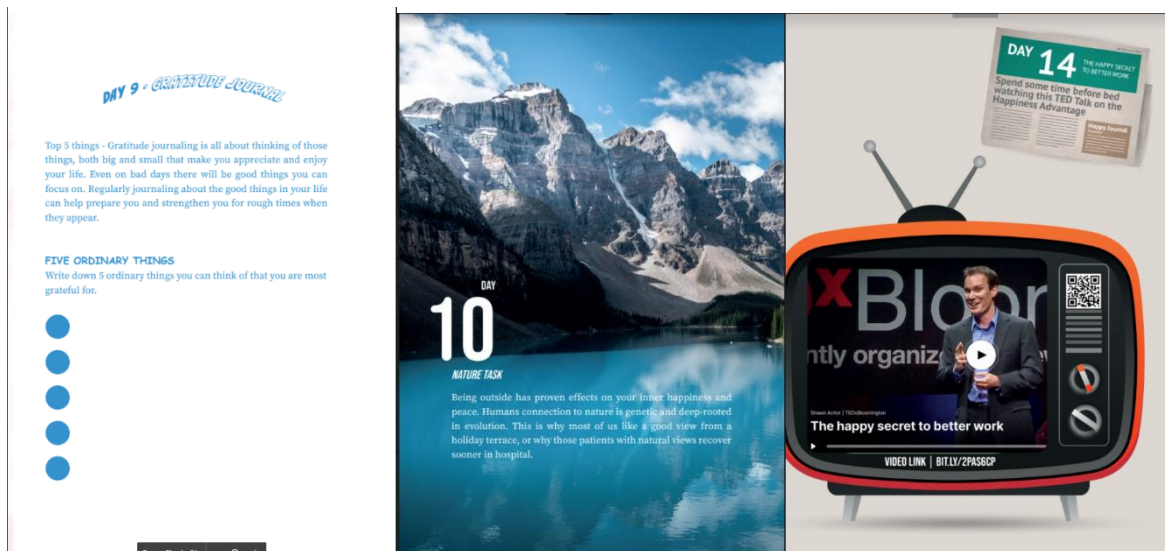


Figure 4: An image showing 3 pages from the journal that reflect some of the highest ranked coping mechanisms mentioned by student’s survey by YoungMinds (2020).

Surprisingly, only 38% of those surveyed said that breathing and meditation techniques were helpful, which contrasts with some of the responses we obtained. Also, 26% of those surveyed were unable to access reduced or adapted mental health support. This perhaps justifies the need for additional or more effective coping mechanisms and potentially paves the way for interventions such as ours.

Recommendations

Whilst this study identified a positive influence on well-being for students completing the journal intervention, a consideration of limitations must be applied.

The fundamental limitation resides around the lack of tangible attainment to validate intervention success. The longitudinal study conducted by Adler et al. (2016) would be a preferable model and approach for any future research. They also used a vast sample size of near 600,000 learners. This study was limited to 26 and uptake of that 26 was sparse. This is supported by Atkinson et al. (2018) and Weare (2015) who highlighted the importance of a student-led approach and engaging the whole community when developing effective methods to support mental health, proposing that genuine consultation could potentially promote self-efficacy and control. It is recommended then that any future intervention may be more effective if conducted with learners from a wider spectrum demographic inclusive of academic abilities, age, and diagnosed psychological profile.

A more thorough, robust and timely completion of the journal would be considered for future related studies. It had been identified that strong peaks of mindful progression had been experienced when completing the intervention however, troughs of positivity had been alluded to in focus groups between intervals of journal completion tasks, as such it is suggested that 4 intervals of journal completion should be implemented.

A further recommendation to any future research would be how to effectively measure student well-being before and after the intervention. Adapting to the demands of Covid-19, we used Google forms to reach some of our students remotely. We used a simple Likert rating scale of 1-10 to determine student well-being both before the journal and after its completion. In any future interventions, it might be better to use the Kern et al (2016) EPOCH Measure of Adolescent Well-being, which assesses five positive psychological characteristics (Engagement, Perseverance, Optimism, Connectedness, and Happiness) that might foster well-being, physical health, and other positive outcomes in adulthood.

Our final recommendation, and quite possibly our main consideration for any future intervention, is to consider and reflect on what we ourselves as practitioners have learned during our study. This does not explicitly mean what we learnt in our data analysis, but rather reflects a more holistic approach to our learning, including hours of research into to an area we almost knew little about one year ago. It may be considered no less noble to have the idea about improving student mindset and look to action that idea by trying to help others and help them enjoy college more. If the recent global pandemic has shown us anything, it is that social interaction and young people's mental health are sometimes fragile and cannot be taken for granted (YoungMinds, 2020). We had an idea which appeared simple in practice. However, as practitioners we have learnt that this is a global issue itself and the movement and research behind this is extensive. So, as we have learnt more, and seen more, and read more, our lens of how this problem can be addressed has widened.

This global issue resonates with the work of Revans (2011) who identified the difference of addressing problems, rather than puzzles. Puzzles were seen by Revans as situations where typically there was some sort of agreement and understanding that the issue might be complicated, but there was perhaps a solution that could be found to overcome this problem. However, problems were described by Revans as situations characterised by poor 'focus' and little agreement as to how this problem might be solved. There may be uncertainty and

ambiguity about how future improvements could be made. Problems tend to be complex and multi-faceted. Even now when addressing Revans definition of problems, there are synchronicities with the world of positive psychology in education. It is clear that the world is identifying a problem but as such, it can be said there is no one clear and obvious solution. Even our own journal, on the smallest of scales, was unsuccessful for many of our learners, despite the progress made by a small percentage of them. Their heart-warming and clearly measurable changes do provide a sense of accomplishment, despite all that has happened in the last 6-months and it just shows us as practitioners that the humanistic element of dealing with mental health and education intertwined can never be underestimated.

It is therefore somewhat positive that national policy is possibly attempting to address this (Department for Education and the Department for Health and Social Care, 2018). Perhaps any future intervention should be aligned more closely to national policy and current interventions in circulation. The research in this study has shown that the evidence available is vast and that the PPI movement is widespread throughout the education community. Rimmer (2017) and Seligman et al. (2009) have both continually reinforced the idea that focusing on the broader aspects of an individual's education will lead not only to greater academic success and technical proficiency but a better and happier lifelong learner. But how much can we expect the Government's Green Paper to achieve? (Department of Health and Department for Education, 2017). UK Government policy objective seems to follow the logic that children and young people's mental health is a puzzle that can be solved. They seek to understand the problem, analyse the data, formulate a solution, and then implement that solution (Edmonstone, 2014). Indeed, the follow up consultation might reveal some progress, such as designated senior leads for mental health in schools and colleges, and an additional £300 million of funding to implement all the proposals (Department of Health and Department for Education, 2018). Correspondingly, no one was scathing of our attempt to try, so should we find solace in government attempt as well?

Perhaps this is why we have seen so much diversity of PPI's across our research. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to tackling this problem. The nature of the student, the type of school, the location and socio-economic background all play their part in deciding someone's mental health and well-being. NHS (NHS Digital, 2018), The AoC (Rimmer, 2018) and Childline (2019) all tell us that we have a problem, for which multiple solutions are being offered,

therefore as practitioners we understand any future intervention would require refining and further alignment to the more successful interventions out there. James and Biesta (2007) tell us the role of the tutor cannot be underestimated in the significance of learning whereby the student themselves is a large driver in any success. Whilst we understand at the moment that a global problem cannot be solved by a small intervention in the South of England, it is refreshing to see so much research in an area where people are truly driving the voice for change, reflection and action.

We finish then somewhat agreeing with the words of Hillier and Jameson (2003), in that engaging with our own small-scale research has empowered us to examine the way we deal with our learners in our own environment. I suppose we can only start here and claim that as it stands, we have improved the lives of two of our students, and that we will strive to increase this number year on year.

Word count: 7087

Word count including direct quotations from students and research: 7864

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Appendix A

Focus Group Questions

1. How much are you aware of Growth Mindset?
 - *6/7 have heard of it*
2. How aware are you of the impact your mindset has on your learning/success?
 - *If you are positive, you are more likely to try something*
 - *Focus is important but also prioritising means focus is shifted*
 - *Mood affects me a lot and how hard I work*
 - *I feel I could learn more about my mindset*
3. Have you experienced or heard of any other interventions aimed at improving your mindset?
 - *6/7 said no they had not tried anything. One student had tried tapping therapy*
4. Would you complete Journaling Tasks if you thought it could improve your mindset or well-being?
 - *7/7 yes*
5. What would make you most likely to complete this intervention project?
 - *Practical tasks*
 - *Less explaining*
 - *30 days seems ok*
6. What would make you least likely to complete this intervention project?
 - *Will it a make change*
 - *As long as it doesn't take long*
7. Of the following topics, please rank which you would most likely complete, down to least likely to complete?
 - A. Gratitude journaling (journaling, writing, letters) 8
 - B. Interactive expression gratitude actions (talking face to face, visits, gifts) 1
 - C. Kindness boosters (random or planned acts of kindness) 3
 - D. Meditation related exercises (yoga, etc) 9
 - E. Mindfulness exercises 7
 - F. Exercise-related interventions 4
 - G. Imagined self-technique (imagining your best self and working towards this) 6

- H. Motivation Boosters (watching videos, reading quotes). 5
- I. Positive affirmations (Redirect the mind to focus on the positives) 2

8. Do you feel student well-being needs improving in 2019?

- Yes

9. Do you have any questions regarding this intervention?

- N/A

Appendix B

Focus Group Questions & Answers (Google Form) - [Focus Group 2 Google Form](#)

What were your initial thoughts around the journal? (appearance, quality, etc) *

Long-answer text

What were your initial thoughts around the journal? (appearance, quality, etc)

7 responses

The journal looked really good and really tidy. I liked the look of it looked really appealing from first looks.

JS - I think it was well laid, out, couldn't say anything bad about it. I agree the pages made it clear

DS - I think it was very well presented. the intro pages helped make it clear.

I thought it was really well put together and it looked really nice which made me want to complete it.

Loved the cover and the back , very appealing and was exited to see the final product.

Looked nice

Very good appearance lots of variation with activity and very enjoyable

I liked the appearance of the journal and the information inside was very good and detailed.

How has COVID 19 and isolation made you feel? How has it affected you and your mindset? *

Long-answer text

How has COVID 19 and isolation made you feel? How has it affected you and your mindset?

7 responses

Not too bad in a way sorta got used to it after a while and has improved my mindset for the future massively.

DS - I have done a lot of thinking the last couple of months. I have been able to focus on things like uni and my future more. I reflected on my school.

JS - It has made me quite lazy. I havent done much and been out much. You know, ive been trying to do stuff but haven't been able to.

At first it affected me quite a bit as i was so used to seeing people and then all of a sudden i couldn't do it got me a bit down and made me really unmotivated to do anything.

Very down but also given me time to reflect and work on a lot of thing in my social life. It hasn't really affected my mindset much if anything it has made me think a lot more about the future and if this has maybe even affect my entire life.

Been different but quite good in general more exercise sunbathing and reading

It's made me want to work hard on my body and make myself fitter and better as a person

Have you engaged with your studies remotely throughout lockdown? If not/ why not? *

Long-answer text

Have you engaged with your studies remotely throughout lockdown? If not/ why not?

7 responses

Yes I have

DS - I maybe wasn't consistent, but i did bits in one big go. sometimes i could not be bothered, but i got work in when i needed to.

JS - sometimes i also could not be bothered. But i did stuff when i needed to.

I have to an extent, however, sometimes i just didn't think i wanted to as i kept overthinking things and it ended up really demotivating me in regards to college work.

I finished all my college work as soon as possible to make sure I had completed it and it was out the way so I knew I had time to redo things if necessary and make sure they were as good as possible even if the lockdown affected my learning a little.

Not particularly hard to get it done on your own not in a working environment

Yeah

I've been revising my maths and I was in a reasonably good position with my chosen subjects but I have

Being a second-year student, how do you feel about missing a considerable amount of time from your last year at college? *

Long-answer text

Being a second-year student, how do you feel about missing a considerable amount of time from your last year at college?

7 responses

Little strange at first I found it hard to engage with work at home but as I got used to it it got easier.

DS - I would have been more concerned if it was at the start. happening now we know the routine and how google works. i was more comfortable with it. I still speak to my friends most days and havent missed not seeing their faces. Ive been active on snapchat and stuff.

JS - I would rather do face-to-face learning and missed college. I have seen my mates recently, but mostly using social media has kept me in touch.

At first i wasn't really to bothered by it but now, not being able to see anyone who you see everyday it made me realise that it's actually quite sad and a shame that we weren't able to finish college like previous years.

It was gutting knowing I wasn't able to spend the last moments of the year with the people I had been around for my entire college experience but I know I have made lifelong friends and will keep in touch with a small group of lovely people.

Absolutely gutted

I feel that we missed the good byes that we didn't get to say and no last games of football or anything

Have you been engaging with the journal and the daily tasks? Whether this is yes or no, please explain why as this will help us in future editions of the journal :) *

Long-answer text

Have you been engaging with the journal and the daily tasks? Whether this is yes or no, please explain why as this will help us in future editions of the journal :)

7 responses

I started the journal yesterday and engaged with days 1 and 2

DS - Yes. I think it is interesting doing it all and stuff. writing things. ive never wrote (great answer on video)
JS - yes and no (on day 5 atm.) see video.

I have been engaging in most of the tasks as it helps me stay positive as well as giving me something to look forward to doing, such as the yoga tasks.

Yes , I feel like at first I wasn't doing it for myself but to help Lee finish what he started and spent a lot of time on but the more the days went on the more affective it became , I felt myself actually enjoying the tasks and wanting to complete them.

No I still need to look it it properly

Yes I have it has helped me appreciate more in life

Yes I did do the five things of gratitude and I did briefly do the yoga but I was not the best.

What do you feel have been the most effective tasks? why? (is there something new you tried *
that you enjoyed that you had never tried before?)

Long-answer text
.....

What do you feel have been the most effective tasks? why? (is there something new you tried that you enjoyed that you had never tried before?)

7 responses

Having a look back on what u are grateful for in life and look at the positives.

DS - Yoga. That was quite tough but i enjoyed it. never had done it before. i think it relaxes you whilst you do it. its quite calming. yeah for me personally its been nice.

JS - the yoga as well. see video. learning from other people. then went and watched other videos.

I really like the yoga task as it's really relaxing and yoga isn't something i'd choose to do so it was good to get that experience and enjoy doing it as well.

I liked the tasks with the positive thinking towards yourself so circling certain things that maybe you aren't so good at or things you think you do , for example day 7 , I also like thinking about the things I am grateful for and just letting it all sink In and pick the best answers possible out of the infants list I could think of.

Haven't done it

Yoga was great for stress relief and something I wouldn't normally do

I believe the first task that mentioned the gratitude task because it made me realise that this things in life

What do you feel have been the least effective tasks? why? *

Long-answer text

What do you feel have been the least effective tasks? why?

7 responses

Didn't really have one yet

DS - Day 1 and Day gratitude tasks similar and too close together
JS - Day 3 self

I don't think any of the tasks aren't effective as so far they've all benefited me, however i would say some of the more longer writing tasks can be a bit boring.

I don't like the yoga tasks so much because it isn't something I am interested in but maybe that is because I haven't ever done it before now so haven't had any background on it , I like the fact it relaxes your body but I seem unable to clear my mind. I also don't know how to complete the nature walks because there are no trails or exiting things to do in the city especially when you aren't aloud out of the house.

Haven't done it

I feel that they are all effective

I did not like yoga because I could not get relaxed and never had the flexibility

What effect has this journal had so far on your daily life? *

Long-answer text

What effect has this journal had so far on your daily life?

7 responses

Gives me Task to complete each day.

DS - See video.

JS - everytime ive gone back to it it has had a positive effect. clearing my mind and thinking about stuff more clearly.

It's made me have more of a positive mindset and just the way you think about life.

I think the further into the journal I get the more effective it becomes, the first few days felt like a chore but it gets a lot more enjoyable and it is almost a highly routine now that I fill it out before bed so I can reflect on my day and really think about what I am writing.

Haven't done it

It's given me something to refer to everyday

Not a massive difference I'm a fairly active person so my well-being is reasonably good but it has slightly improved my wellbeing that's for sure.

One of the main barriers identified was time and effort? Has this changed? Has Lockdown impacted on this? Could this journal coming out at lockdown in the earlier stages have helped? *

Long-answer text

One of the main barriers identified was time and effort? Has this changed? Has Lockdown impacted on this? Could this journal coming out at lockdown in the earlier stages have helped?

7 responses

Yeah especially when we were only allowed to go outside only for exercise and food.

DS - i always try and do it at the same time. ill do it just before bed and have a routine. no i dont think it would have made me do any more or little work. this has been more about me as a person and myself.
JS - not really, cos i have been going back to it. lockdown easing means i have been less bothered at times. I think it coming out at the start of lockdown would have helped more.

I think it could be different outside of lockdown as they're isn't much for us to do as we've done college work so having this journal gives us something to do throughout the day, however, if life were normal it could be a bit more effort to complete this.

If I had this journal in the early stages of lockdown I think it would have helped a lot more , I seem a lot more motivated now I am filling this out and it did give me that positive mindset after a couple of days. It would have been lovely to have had this during the period of college work or just after finishing when it was time to relax and think about the future and yourself more.

I don't know

.....

If you had received the journal outside of lockdown do you think it would make you feel differently about completing the tasks and mindset? *

Long-answer text

.....

If you had received the journal outside of lockdown do you think it would make you feel differently about completing the tasks and mindset?

7 responses

Not really

DS -
JS -

yes probably, just because i would be doing things and may have found it hard to complete every task every day.

I think if I had had this before or even after lockdown I may have been a little more forgetful with doing it but also would have been more determined to have a good day and then being able to fill it out with a lot of positive things.

Don't know

I feel I would have maybe put it off more

I've never been a firm believer in this types of exercises on the mind but participating in it has really changed my perspective and it has changed my mindset.

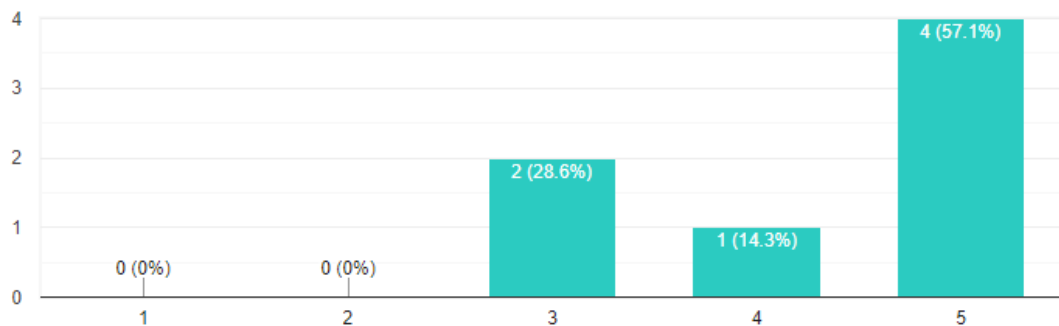
Many of you felt student well-being needed improving, do you think the journal addresses this successfully? *

1 2 3 4 5

Has not been designed to improved Well-being Is very much aimed at improving Well-being

Many of you felt student well-being needed improving, do you think the journal addresses this successfully?

7 responses



⋮

Some of you said previously you would complete this journal if it helped: More positive mindset ^{*} in general, Better work ethic, Understanding your own feelings, Viewing things in better ways, have a more open mindset, To help make you feel like you don't have much going on, To help you feel less stressed, To make stressful scenarios less stressful and take it in properly and calmly To see things differently/ train your lense, To have a more positive impact on other people, Do you feel any of these goals are being worked towards?

Long-answer text
.....

Some of you said previously you would complete this journal if it helped: More positive mindset in general, Better work ethic, Understanding your own feelings, Viewing things in better ways, have a more open mindset, To help make you feel like you don't have much going on, To help you feel less stressed, To make stressful scenarios less stressful and take it in properly and calmly To see things differently/ train your lense, To have a more positive impact on other people, Do you feel any of these goals are being worked towards?

7 responses

Yes

DS - yeah definitely
JS - not really.it doesn't really work towards anything.

i defo feel like it's made me have a more positive outlook on daily life and tasks as well as preventing stress

100% I am understanding my own feelings a lot more , day 7 made me realise I put myself down a lot more often that I thought and put other people before myself without thinking about how it might make me feel. I also think it has helped a lot with having a positive impact on people around me, I am more positive within myself meaning I'm able to then spread that happiness to others.

Don't know

Yes it's driving me forward in improving myself

Yes massively I believe it really helps to understand the position you are in life and the type of person you

How long do you spend daily completing your journal? ^{*}

Short-answer text
.....

How long do you spend daily completing your journal?

7 responses

20-40 mins

DS - however long the task takes. JS - 20mins per day

it depends what task it is but roughly 7-10 minutes

Around 10-20 minutes depending on the task and how long it may take me to get in the zone to be able to answer the questions with meaning.

None atm

Around 10-30 minutes depending on tasks

I normally target around 15/20 mins in the morning

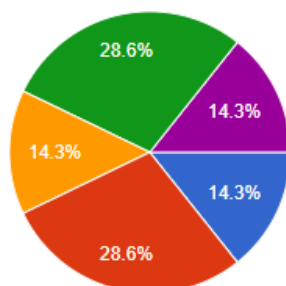
Do you share your journal with anyone, a parent/ friend? *

- Parent
- Friend
- Family
- I have not shown or shared this journal with others
- Other...

Do you share your journal with anyone, a parent/ friend?



7 responses



- Parent
- Friend
- Family
- I have not shown or shared this journal with others
- DS - told my dad. mentioned it briefly. see video JS - i havent shared it with anyone.

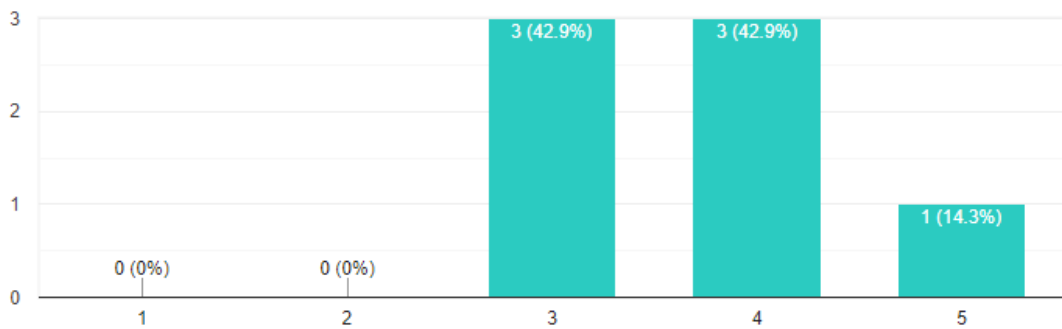
Having completed half of the journal so far, how do you feel your mindset is progressing? *

1 2 3 4 5

No change to my mindset I am starting to view things differently

Having completed half of the journal so far, how do you feel your mindset is progressing?

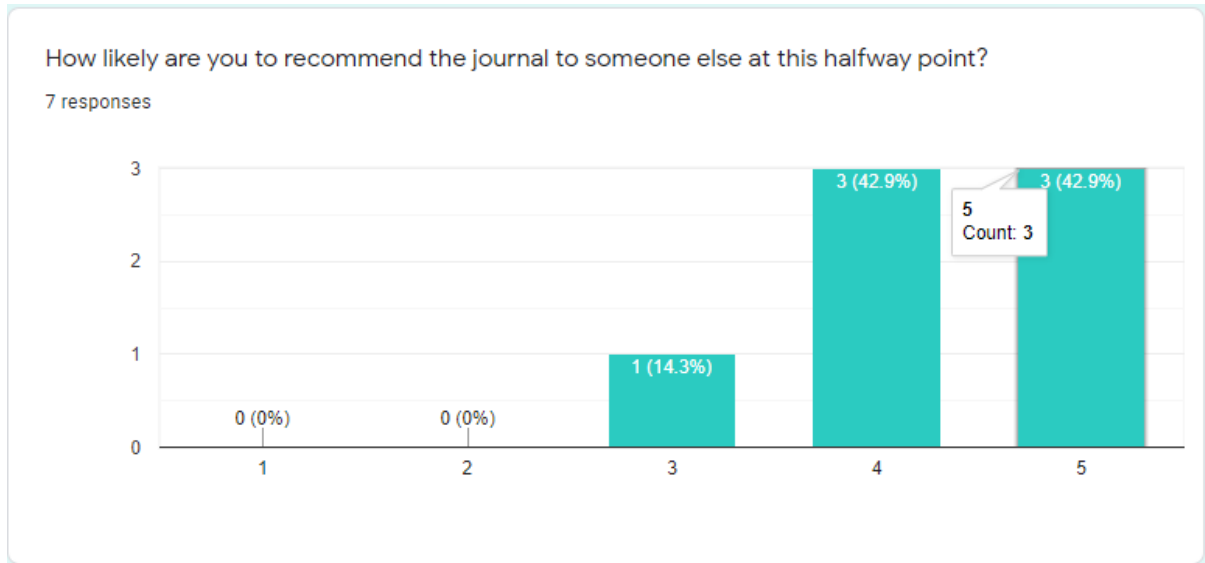
7 responses



How likely are you to recommend the journal to someone else at this halfway point? *

1 2 3 4 5

Unlikely Very Likely



Appendix C

Focus Group Questions 7 Answers (Google Form) - [Focus Group 3 Google Form](#)

Have you continued to engage with the journal and the daily tasks? *

Your answer

Have you continued to engage with the journal and the daily tasks?

1 response

DS - Yes. I did it every day. I did not do day 19.
MR -

Do you feel that this intervention being given to you directly has allowed you to pursue greater levels of happiness through the self-directive tasks? *

Your answer

Do you feel that this intervention being given to you directly has allowed you to pursue greater levels of happiness through the self-directive tasks? *

DS - a little bit. i have always been independent.

Do you feel you would have engaged more with the journal had someone mentored you through the process, rather than it being an independent process? *

*

Your answer

Do you feel you would have engaged more with the journal had someone mentored you through the process, rather than it being an independent process? *

MR - i always have to have someone to keep me going. see video.

DS - I am quite independent so i do not think so. I dont think doing it over 30 weeks once a week would be as good because you would switch off after a while.

What effect has this journal had so on your daily life? Has your opinion changed since the halfway stage? *

Your answer

What effect has this journal had so on your daily life? Has your opinion changed since the halfway stage? *

DS - Not much has changed since the half-way point. I still feel pretty good. I have been more organised recently.

What do you feel have been the most effective tasks? why? (is there something new you tried that you enjoyed that you had never tried before?) *

Your answer

What do you feel have been the most effective tasks? why? (is there something new you tried that you enjoyed that you had never tried before?) *

DS - Gratitude Journalling - makes you think about things you have got, things you are lucky. I liked a lot of the tasks, it all had good balance.

MR - no tasks completed

What do you feel have been the least effective tasks? why? *

Your answer

What do you feel have been the least effective tasks? why? *

DS - Planning your week. because I was at home due to lockdown.

How would you rate your well-being.... when you started the Journal

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Very Poor Well-being



Excellent Well-being

How would you rate your well-being.... when you started the Journal

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Very Poor Well-being Excellent Well-being

How would you rate your well-being....now you have completed the Journal

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Very Poor Well-being Excellent Well-being

How would you rate your well-being....now you have completed the Journal

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Very Poor Well-being Excellent Well-being

Do you think 30 days allowed sufficient time for well-being to improve? *

Your answer _____

Do you think 30 days allowed sufficient time for well-being to improve? *

DS - It wasn't too short and it wasn't too long. it didn't allow me to get bored.

MR - it looks very doable.

Do you think 30 days allowed sufficient time to change your mindset? *

Your answer _____

Do you think 30 days allowed sufficient time to change your mindset? *

DS

Many of you felt student well-being needed improving, do you think the journal addresses this successfully? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Has not been designed to improved Well-being	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Is very much aimed at improving Well-being

Many of you felt student well-being needed improving, do you think the journal addresses this successfully? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Has not been designed to improved Well-being	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Is very much aimed at improving Well-being

How likely are you to recommend the journal to someone else? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Unlikely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Likely

How likely are you to recommend the journal to someone else? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Unlikely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Very Likely

Do you feel that potentially having this journal under “normal” circumstances may have helped improve your college attainment? This could be improved work ethic, grades, attendance. *

Your answer

Do you feel that potentially having this journal under “normal” circumstances may have helped improve your college attainment? This could be improved work ethic, grades, attendance. *

DS - maybe a bit better work ethic and meeting deadlines better.

MR - would have been to do during covid 19. maybe would have been brushed off during college time as would have been too busy.

Now you are more aware of Growth Mindset, what are your thoughts and feelings around the topic? *

Your answer

Now you are more aware of Growth Mindset, what are your thoughts and feelings around the topic? *

DS - a little bit less negative. See video MR -

Do you have any final thoughts or reflections? *

Your answer

Do you have any final thoughts or reflections? *

DS- in general has made me feel more positive. See video. MR - . Id like to give it a go. see video

Appendix D- View the full [Journal here](#)

