



Connected Self

Connection Inspiration Innovation

Cowandilla Primary School Rock & Water Program

April to July 2009

Program Overview and Qualitative Evaluation



Tim Brenton, Andrew Cenuich and Ivan Raymond

September 4, 2009

Cowandilla Primary Rock & Water Program Program Summary and Qualitative Evaluation

REASON FOR EVALUATION

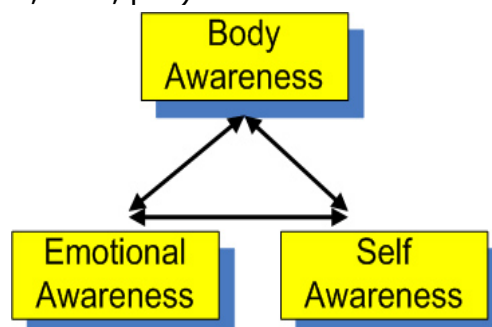
A whole school approach to the Rock & Water program was conducted by Connected Self program facilitator, Tim Brenton, for students of Cowandilla Primary School. This evaluation reviews the program, summarises the qualitative evaluation and provides recommendations for future programming. The evaluation has had contributions from Tim Brenton (program facilitator), Andrew Cenuich (program reviewer) and Ivan Raymond (psychologist).

PROGRAM CONTEXT

"Rock and Water" is a manual-based program that was developed by the Dutch educationalist, Freerk Ykema (2002; 2003). Ykema initially developed the program for boys aged from 10 to 18 in response to his perception that traditional educational programs were unable to support boys in key aspects of their development. Such areas included: (1) verbal and emotional expression, (2) emotional regulation, (3) self-management of impulse driven tendencies and (4) the ability to respond to and manage aggressive tendencies in both themselves and others.

Ykema (2002; 2003) designed the Rock and Water program upon a psychophysical intervention framework, with a number of existential and transpersonal philosophies built into the program (for detailed overview see Ykema, 2002). In other words, Ykema developed the program to support young people develop body awareness (e.g., the ability to control one's physical state, i.e. breath), which in turn, provides the platform for young people to develop emotional awareness (e.g., as emotions are expressed through the body). The program also provides physical exercises, group activities and role-plays to foster the development of self-awareness (e.g., the ability to link together one's environment, emotions and thoughts). In summary:

"The building-blocks of the Rock and Water program are self-control, self-reflection and self-confidence. Building on to this foundation, it is possible to pay attention to the themes of safety, assertiveness, communication and finding their own way (the inner compass) that connects them to others (solidarity) and gives them direction (spirituality)." (Ykema, 2003, p. 9)



An important component of the Rock and Water program are the symbolic references. For instance, "rock" represents a rigid and uncompromising approach to life, while "water" symbolises flexibility, communication and cooperation. The program teaches the consequences, both positive and negative, of approaching the world in either a "rock" or "water" manner.

Connected Self practitioners have designed and delivered the Rock and Water program for groups of young people within the South Australian alternative care system since 2002. The program had previously undergone continuous development and evolution as it attempted to match the learning and therapeutic needs of complex client groups (for a detailed overview of this evolution process see Raymond, 2006)

Initial evaluations of the Rock and Water program for guardianship clients were undertaken in 2005 (Raymond, 2005a; 2005b). These qualitative or descriptive research methodologies found that both clients and youth workers reported a range of positive outcomes from the program. A number of key performance indicators provided preliminary support for the efficacy of the program (e.g., high rate of program completion and attendance); however, apart from this, questions remained regarding the generalisability and longevity of the program outcomes.

A more systematic and robust qualitative evaluation of a Rock and Water program delivered to male and female young guardianship clients was conducted by Raymond and Simpson (2007). The quantitative results remained inconclusive and the authors were unable to indicate the degree program outcomes led to long-term behavioural changes, or, the degree the outcomes were generalised to other settings. Despite this, the qualitative findings replicated the previous evaluations and the authors concluded that Rock and Water represents a "program with a purpose".

"In summary, two important features of this and the previous Rock and Water program evaluations are noted. First, young people share a very positive regard for the Rock and Water program and this would appear linked to the high program completion and participation rate. Traditionally, young people residing in alternative care present with high rates of program drop-out and report very negative evaluations towards schools and programming in general. Second, the evaluation showed that young people and youth workers reported an overwhelming sense of "connectedness" to the Rock and Water program and to both youth workers and participants associated with the program. It would appear that the Rock and Water program provides the opportunity for children to experience fun and playful interactions with both peers and adults. Such activities remain a fundamental development task for male and female young people who have experienced backgrounds of abuse and trauma (Hughes, 1997; Perry; 2004). It is through these positive adult interactions and experiences, facilitated by fun and playfulness, that young people are provided alternative examples of adult-child interactions that challenge their earlier negative relationship

experiences. This provides a foundation for young people to reconstruct their experiences of trauma and abuse” (Raymond & Simpson, 2007, p. 12).

Connected Self has undertaken ongoing evaluation of the Rock & Water program delivered to students within DECS, Families SA and a range of non-government youth agencies. A recent qualitative program evaluation was conducted by Connected Self psychologist, Ivan Raymond, for male and female groups of Indigenous and non-indigenous young people (for further information, see Raymond (2008)). On the balance of evaluations conducted by Connected Self, there is strong evidence that Rock & Water program continues to be positively regarded by young people, teachers, youth practitioners and all stakeholders associated with the program. Overall, the outcomes achieved with Rock & Water are diverse and specific to the student and context. In summary, there is strong support that the program can assist teachers, youth practitioners and schools target specific social-emotional developmental needs of their students, and by doing so, achieve improvements in behavioural functioning and student wellbeing.

COWANDILLA PROGRAM

Program Aims

The program was developed in respect to the following broad aims:

- To increase the capacity of the Cowandilla Primary School to respond to the diverse needs of their students, but in particular, students who have trouble mixing and communicating with other children from diverse backgrounds.
- To deliver a “whole school approach” Rock & Water program with students from Grades 3 to 7, from both mainstream and ‘New Arrival Program’ classes.

Expected Outcomes

For Cowandilla Primary School

- The Rock & Water program to be utilized as a “connection” program for new arrival students of Cowandilla Primary.
- To increase the schools capacity to build meaningful relationships with students with complex needs.
- To provide a safe program for new students.
- To teach appropriate social skills and classroom strategies to assist learning.
- To provide a language to challenge and manage student behaviour.
- To provide a structured and common approach to the management of children and young people with complex needs.
- To foster school solidarity.

For Cowandilla Primary School Students

- To provide opportunities for young people to experience secure attachment relationships with key adult figures.
- For young people to experience the program environment as a “safe place”.
- For young people to learn and then practice a range of verbal and non-verbal self-protective behaviours.
- To increase the self-esteem and self-efficacy of the young people.
- To improve the young people’s body-, emotional- and self-awareness, and by doing so, improve their ability to regulate their emotions and behaviours.
- To teach and then support young people implement more adaptive social and problem solving skills.
- For young people to learn and practice relaxation exercises and to experience a state of inner calm (this may be a foreign state for some young people).
- For young people to complete a program and to achieve success, and for this to be used as a positive narrative that can lay the foundation for future positive outcomes.
- For young people to experience a sense of a positive school community.
- To connect different cultural groups around a common activity (e.g., Rock & Water, physical activity) and provide structure and boundaries within this relationship development process.

The Current Program

A whole school approach to Rock & Water was implemented across grade levels three to seven. Mainstream and new-arrival classes participated in eight lessons of the Rock & Water program that was delivered in term 2 over week’s two to nine. Tim Brenton, program facilitator, delivered nine sessions over 2 days a week. Tim also made himself available during recess and lunch periods in a mentoring role for all students participating in the program. A pre-program training session was conducted by Tim Brenton and Connected Self psychologist, Tracey Jane.

Participants included young people who:

- Were disengaged from their school community
- Recently arrived to Australia
- Presented with learning difficulties
- From Indigenous backgrounds
- Were attending the Cowandilla Learning Centre

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Participation Rates (Section Written by Tim Brenton)

Across the nine classes who participated in the program, the participation rate was at a very high level. Approximately 10 teachers and 160 students participated in the program and I can write with confidence that the participation rate was approximately 95% throughout the entire program.

There were very few instances of students sitting out and if there were times of young people needing time away, they were for short periods and irregular.

The presenter received a formal and supportive letter from the Aboriginal Support Worker of the school to be conscious of the need to minimise the pressure placed on young indigenous students to participate. The letter and recommendations assisted the presenter and played a positive part in the delivery of the program. It is pleasing to write that the indigenous students participated at a very high level and their relationship and connection with the presenter was strong and positive.

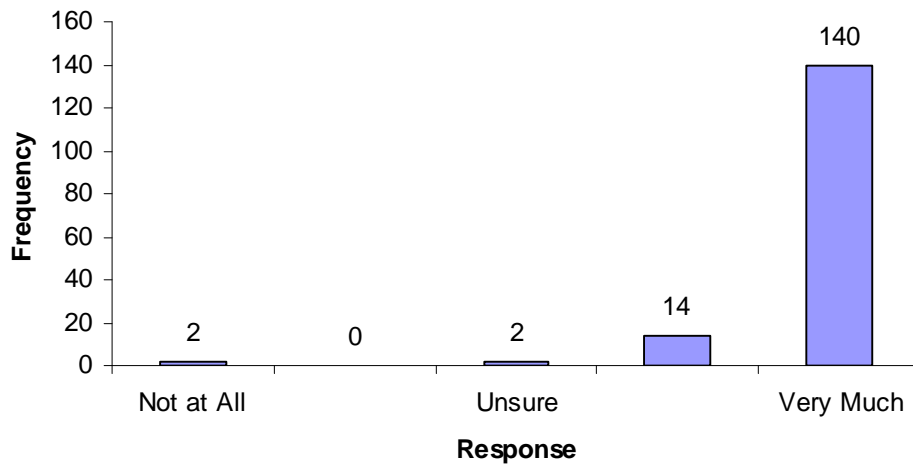
Student Qualitative Data

At the conclusion of the program, all students were asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire that tapped aspects of the program.

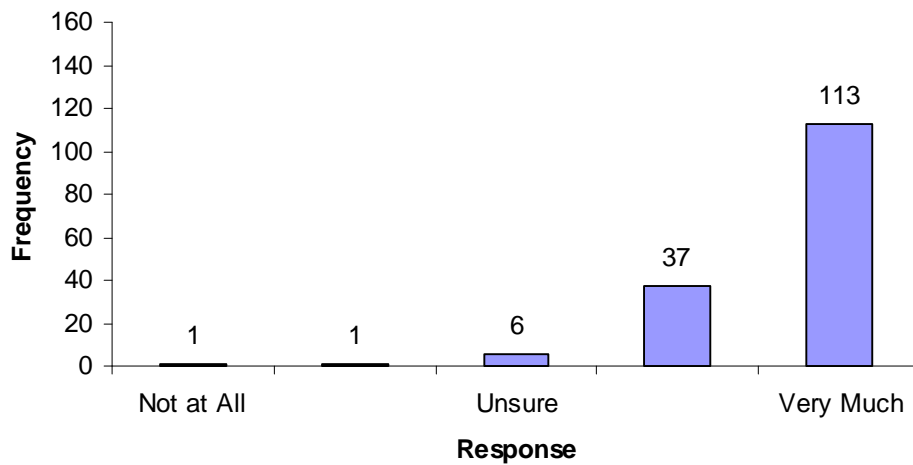
Likert Scale Questions

The post-program questionnaire asked participants to rate on a five point Likert scale, from not at all to very much, the level they agreed with items relating to the program. The frequency of participant responses was as follows:

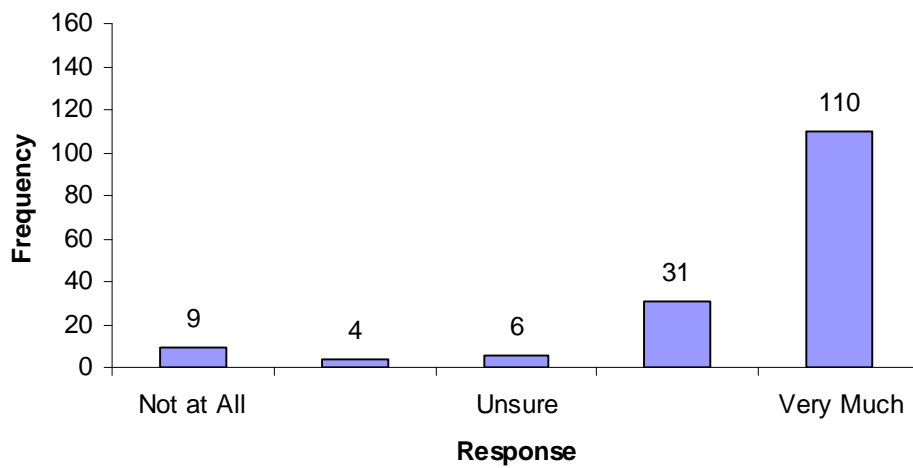
1. I really enjoyed the Rock & Water Program



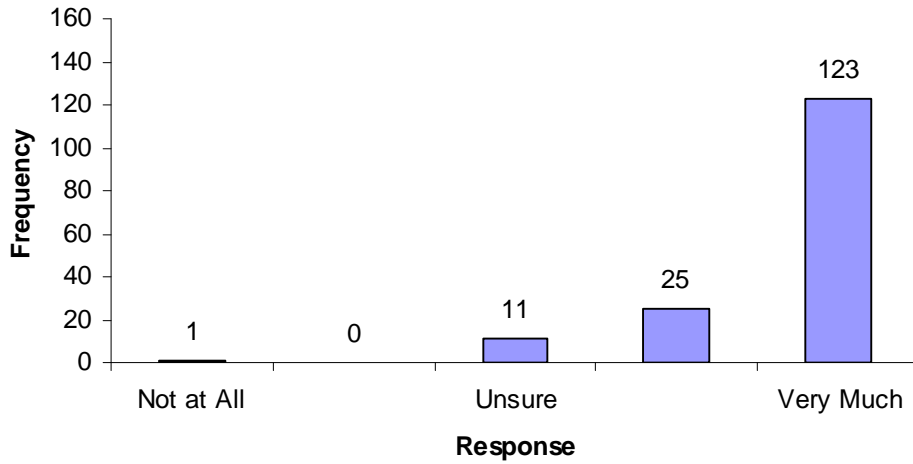
2. I learnt some valuable skills from the Rock & Water program



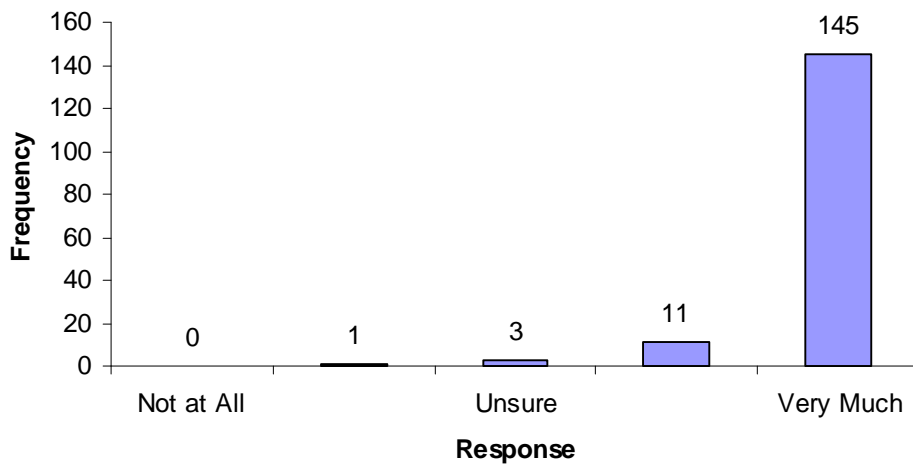
3. I enjoyed the relaxation exercises during the Rock & Water program



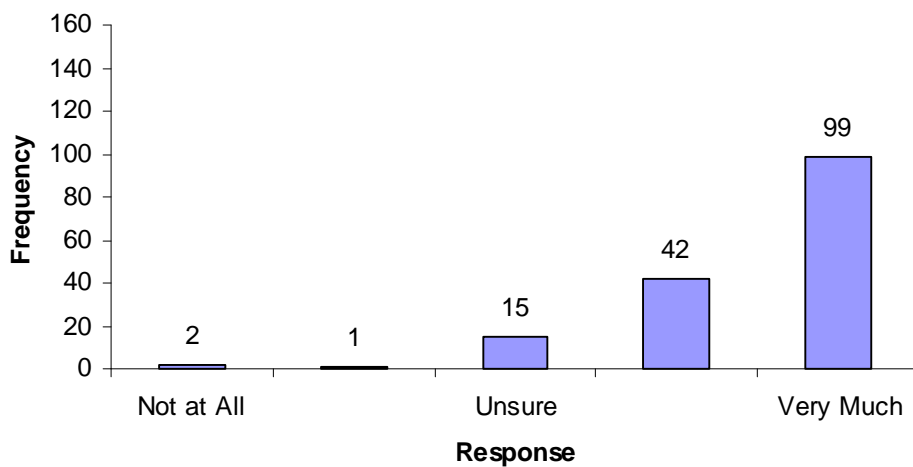
4. The Rock & Water program has given me skills to help me deal with kids who bully me.



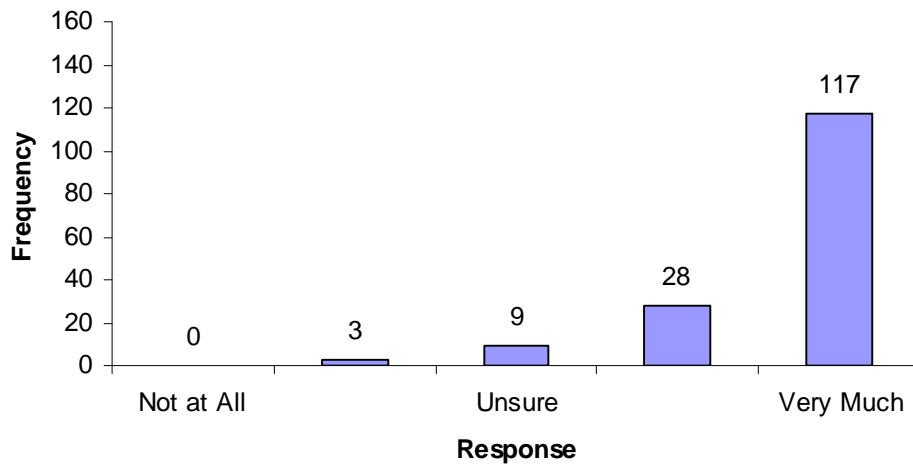
5. The facilitator who conducted the program did a good job



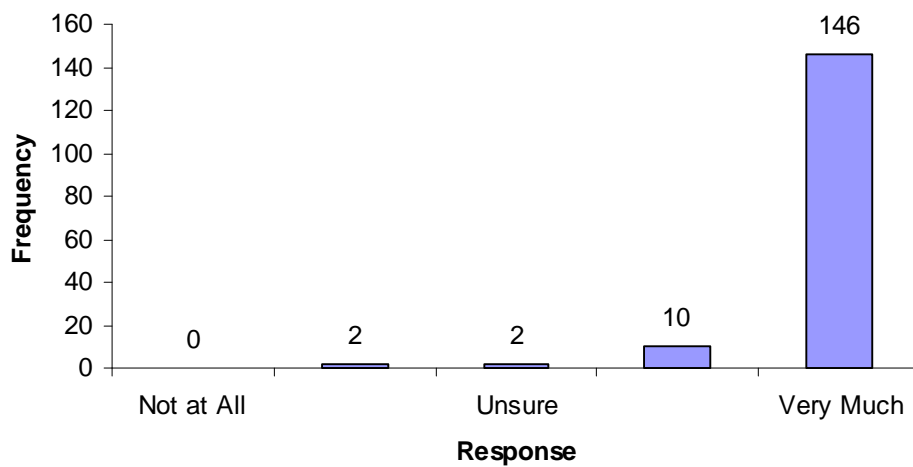
6. The Rock & Water program has given me the skills to deal with school better



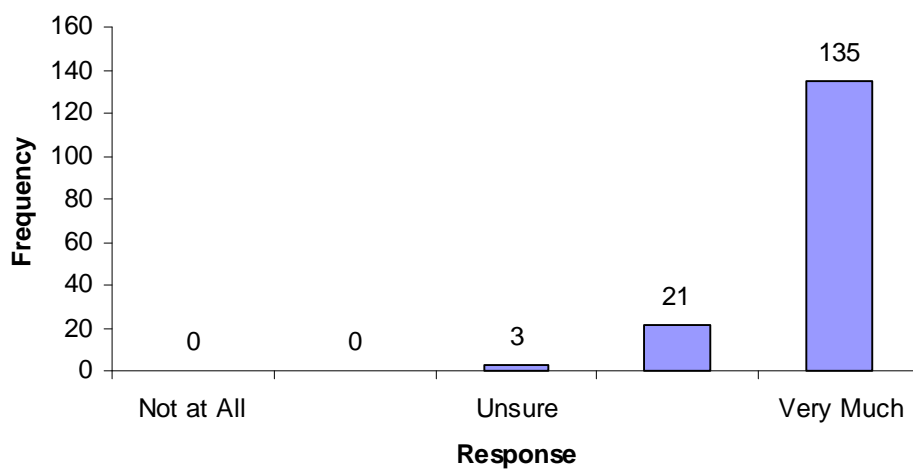
7. I participated at my best (e.g., gave 100%) during the last Rock & Water program



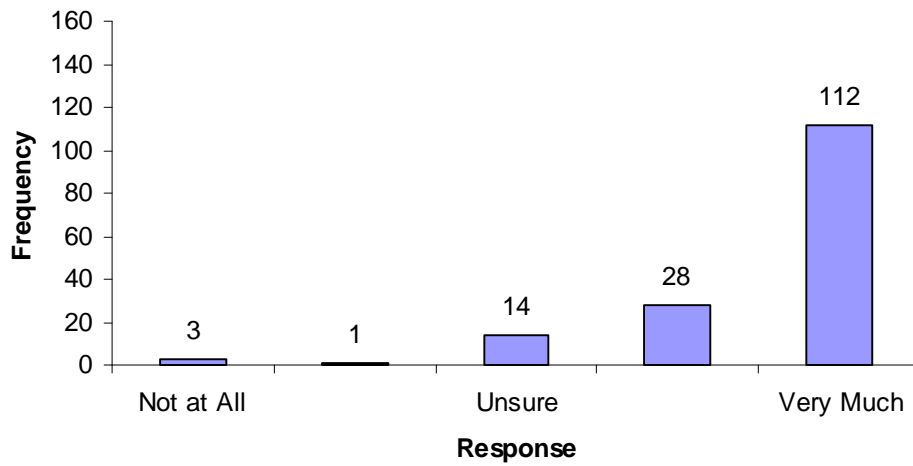
8. I had fun during the Rock & Water program



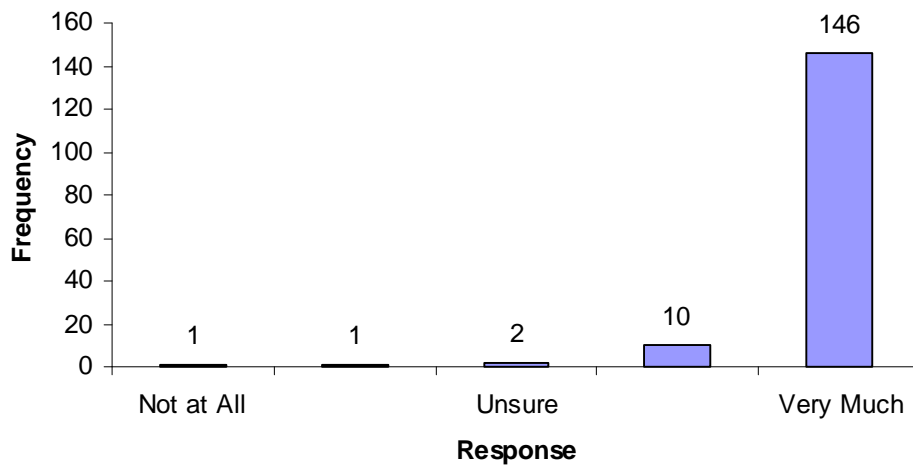
9. The facilitator who conducted the program made me feel safe



10. I learnt new life skills during the program



11. I would do the Rock & Water program again



Open-Ended Questions

The participants also completed a number of open-ended questions designed to tap their independent experiences of the program. Responses were as follows:

What are your two most favourite activities/games from the Rock & Water program?

Activity	Rank	Frequency
Sweeper	1	112
Tunnel of Silly Noises	2	40
Chinese Boxing	3	28
Eye Pillows	4	27
Romping	5	25
Golden Rooster	6	20
Turning the wheel	7	11
Chair Game	8	10
Rundle Mall	9	8
Beach Walk	10	4
Finger Fencing	11	2
Rocking your Partner	12	2
KIAI	13	1

What is something you will always remember from Rock & Water?

Some of the most common responses are listed below

"I will always remember...

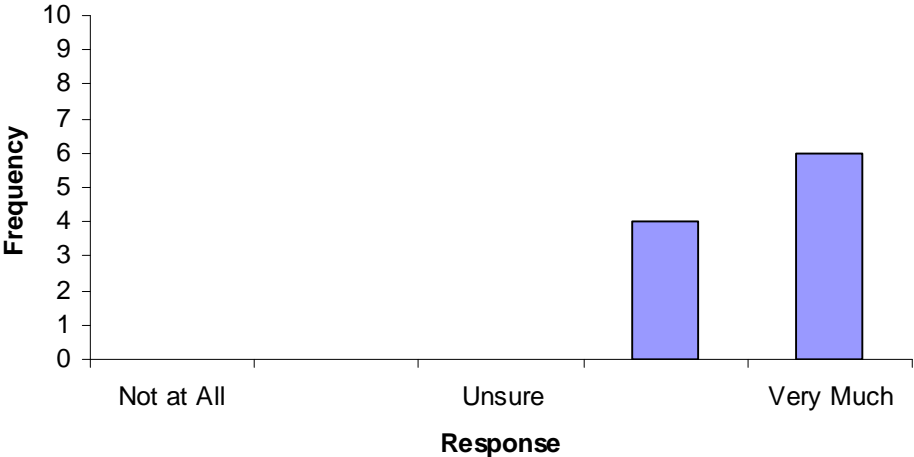
- Master Tim
- The fun games
- Eye pillows to make me calm and relaxed
- To take a deep breath to calm down
- How to deal with bullies (ignore them)
- To show rock at the right time and water at the right time
- Rock: because some things are worth sticking up for. Water: because you show people your nice side first

Teacher/Counselor Qualitative Data

Teachers who attended the program were asked to rate their experiences of the Rock & Water program through a program evaluation.

In the first section of the program evaluation teachers answered fourteen questions which asked them to rate on a five point Likert scale, from “not at all” to “very much”, the degree they agreed with items relating to the program. Respondents also had the option of providing “any further comments or observations” for each question. The frequency of teacher responses and further comments or observations (without alteration) was as follows:

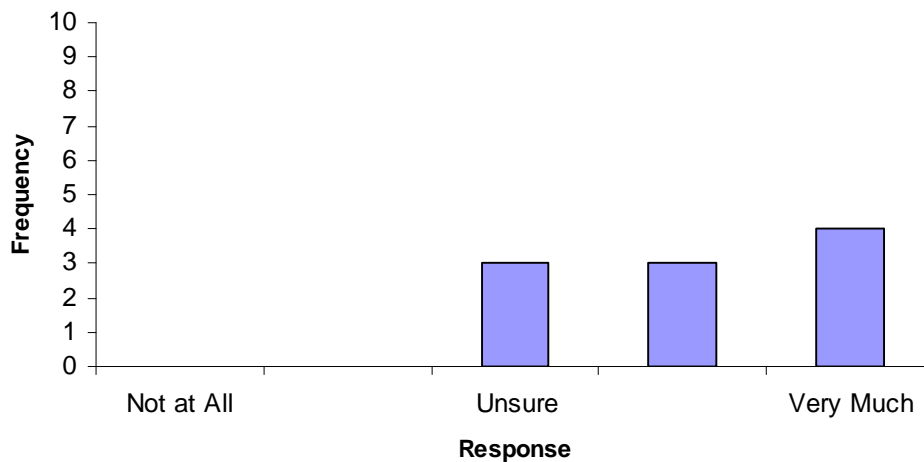
The Rock & Water program “connected” with the students of your class.



Further Comments or Observations

1. -
2. Connected by relationship
3. -
4. Could use rock and water language in class for behaviour management
5. Many students consistently use R & W language with each other and regularly play R & W games.
6. Students looked forward to each lesson and terminology was used back in the classroom
7. -
8. Very well presented.
9. Some younger children (as I had year 2’s as well and realize program is not necessarily designed for that age) did not fully understand the important messages behind the games.
10. -

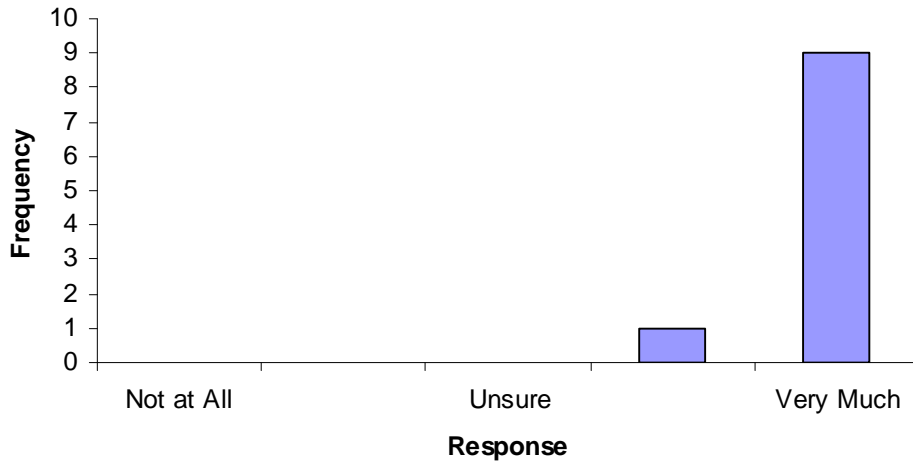
Within the Rock & Water program, the relationship/s with your more complex student/s improved.



Further Comments or Observations

1. –
2. Gives common language to calm down and begin conversation of what problems exist
3. –
4. Especially when things went wrong- I was able to use r/w language to change/calm situation
5. When attending (always the issue!) these students have enjoyed the program and it has enabled some conversation around issues which were hard to approach/ discuss. The program has aided relationships with complex students
6. Also improved relationships with other students in the class
7. In New Arrivals, teachers often have to intervene and help children solve very small and large problems. It didn't necessarily improve relationships but gave students and teachers a language to help solve and understand problems.
8. It gave me an extra way in which I could explain my/the schools behaviour expectations
9. Not all the time at this stage as they still use "rock-like" behaviour in times of stress. But there have been "moments" when I can remind them and they relax and go with the flow much more quickly
10. Does this mean between me and them or between themselves or something else?

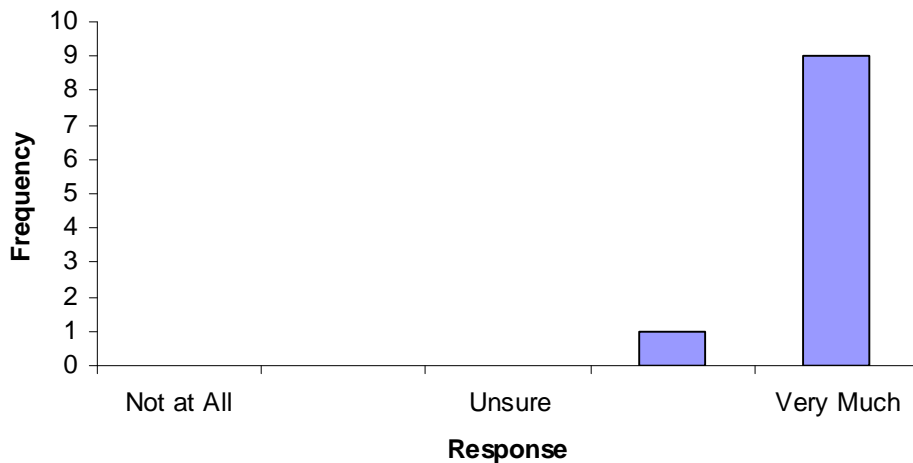
Do you believe the Rock & Water program was a safe program for your students?



Further Comments or Observations

1. -
2. Great safety strategies!
3. -
4. and fun!
5. All students always felt safe
6. -
7. -
8. -
9. It showed many students that being "tough" or rock-like didn't work in many situations.
10. -

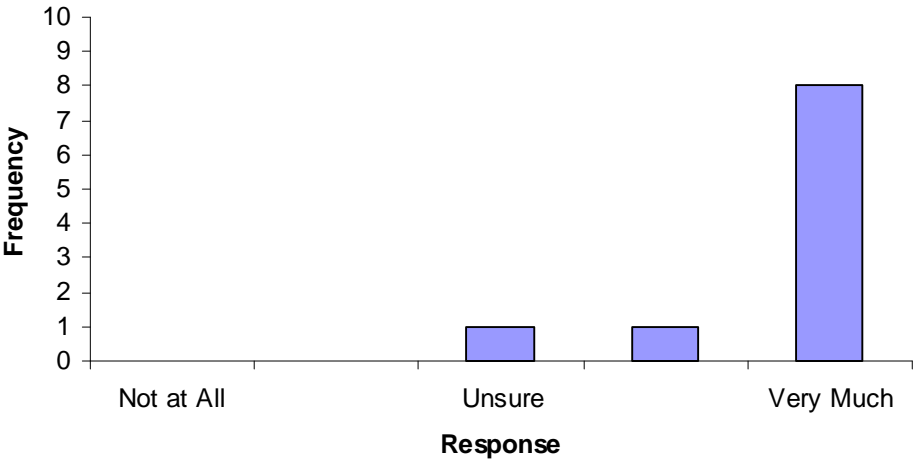
Do you believe the program taught appropriate social skills to your students?



Further Comments or Observations

1. -
2. Yes- especially with boys- and how to get in control before a problem occurs
3. -
4. Yes- it also taught respect
5. The accessibility of the language used to deliver these social skills was very valuable. The skills learnt are appropriate and will be useful in the future
6. Very relevant to situations they face everyday. Should be taught compulsory to all students especially as many students lack the mentors to pass on these skills
7. Some ideas are a little abstract for NAD students (culturally & linguistically diverse students) due to language barrier but once reinforced in the classroom, the program does offer many valuable social skills.
8. -
9. How to deal with bullies and (subtly) what happens if you are a bully – you just look silly and don't win.
10. -

From a teaching perspective, the program provided new classroom strategies to assist learning.

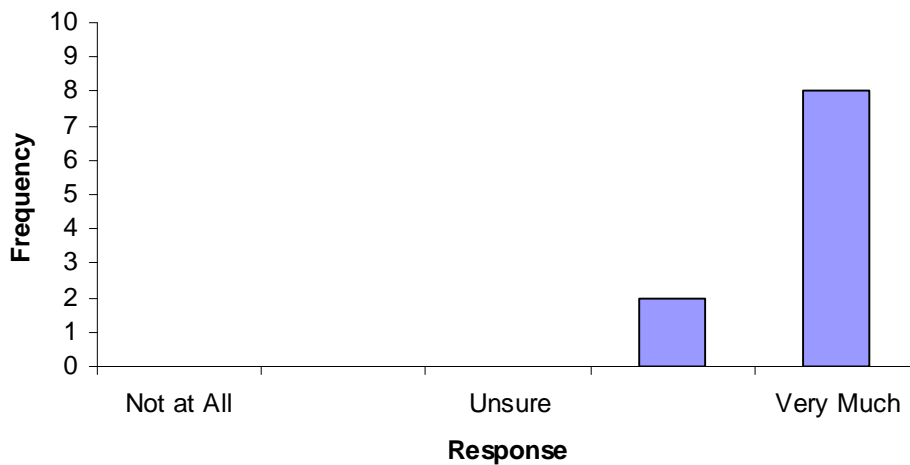


Further Comments or Observations

1. -
2. Language of rock vs water. Calming. Walking away. Ignoring tunnel of silly noises (insults). Would love an outline of program so we can follow and practice strategies
3. -
4. as mentioned

5. As said previously – the language used is extremely accessible to students and easily understood.
6. use language back in class
7. –
8. –
9. I think it was important to discuss what we learnt in rock and water back in the classroom to emphasise the learning. I could remind children that other learning could be done when people were water-like.
10. -

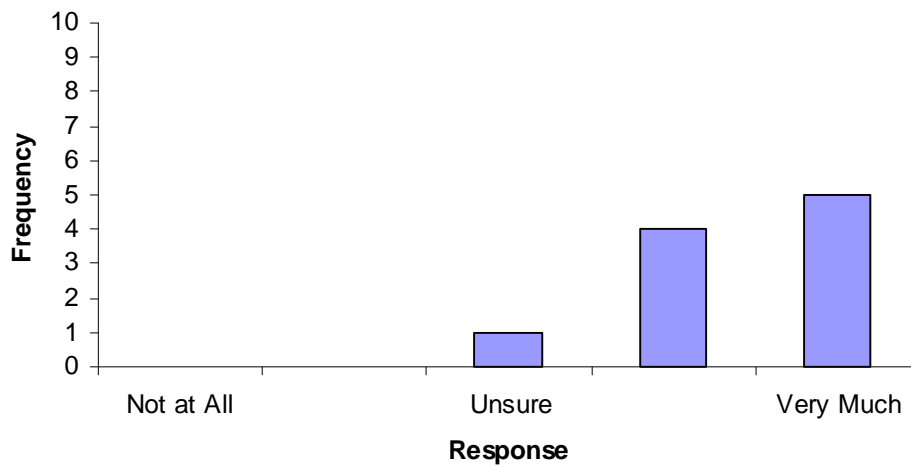
Did Rock & Water provide you with a new language to challenge and manage student behaviour?



Further Comments or Observations

1. –
2. See Q5
3. –
4. yes
5. This has been the most valuable
6. –
7. –
8. –
9. Yes – using “rock” and “water” is a quick, easy, understandable way of letting children know how their behaviour is affecting others and how I’m feeling
10. excellent metaphors for talking to the kids- they “got it”

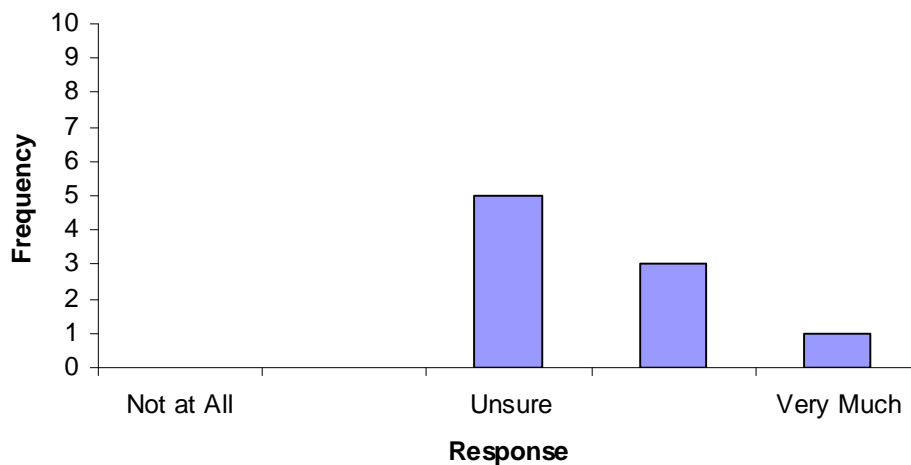
Do you agree the program provided a structured and common approach to the management of children and young people with complex needs?



Further Comments or Observations

1. -
2. Yes, but of cause it needs to be followed up as it is only a beginning!
3. Yes- structured & common approach
4. Yes- our kids have some very complex problems and these ideas helped them
5. This has been hard to judge as my students with complex needs have regularly missed the program
6. All of my more challenging students were engaged and felt secure as part of a group
7. -
8. -
9. -
10. -

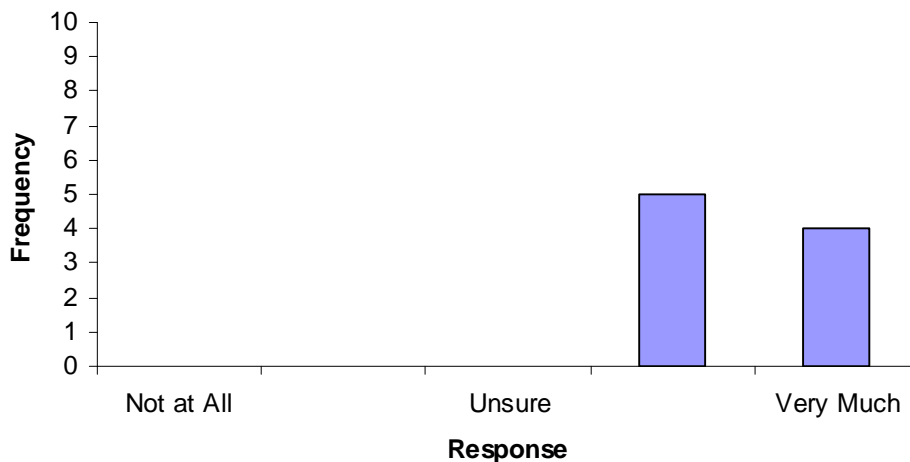
Did the program bring the school closer together (foster solidarity)?



Further Comments or Observations

1. –
2. Not too sure yet but beginning
3. I think so. We are all aware of the issues and language boundaries. Concept is great for everyone.
4. We probably need to do a yard survey to see, but I suspect yes
5. The common language has enabled this and I regularly see different class members discussing the program
6. –
7. How do we test this? It has definitely given us a common language.
8. It has helped me in my class. As a class we all now have a new way of explaining how we feel (Rock or Water)
9. I think this needs to be discussed as a group and be made a conscious effort.
10. -

Did the students of your class learn and then practice a range of (new) verbal and non-verbal self-protective behaviours.

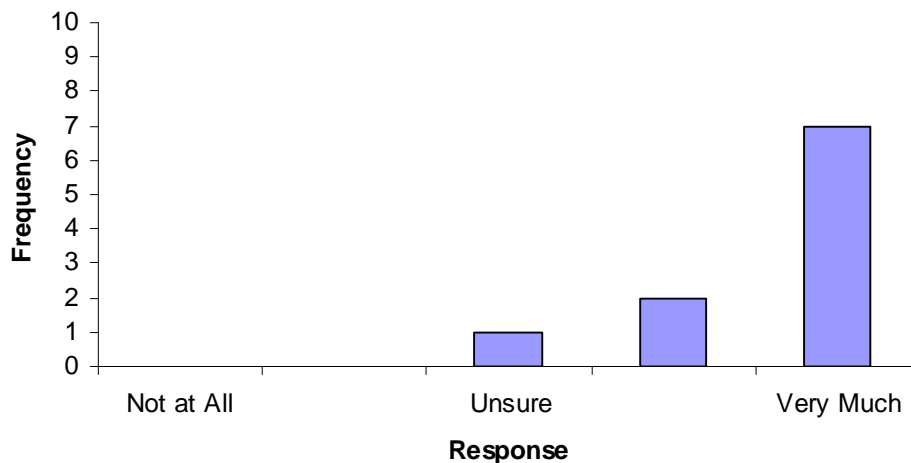


Further Comments or Observations

1. –
2. Yes- though the younger the students the less able to differentiate the abstractness of rock and water strategies
3. Especially around walking away from a fight, being able to stay stop and set your boundaries
4. We need to practice them more. We didn't practice enough after.
5. I am very keen to see more use of the non-verbal behaviours ... I have noticed the use of verbal s-p behaviours outside the program. Students have loved practicing/learning these behaviours.

6. Often arose during 'circle time' sessions. Terms like 'rock' or 'water' or 'that's like when master Tim was talking about...'
7. when reminded and prompted
8. –
9. Yes but at this stage it still needed practice when something had gone wrong and worked through which was a better way.
10. Will need to use and reinforce these – for the passive and aggressive kids they need much more practice

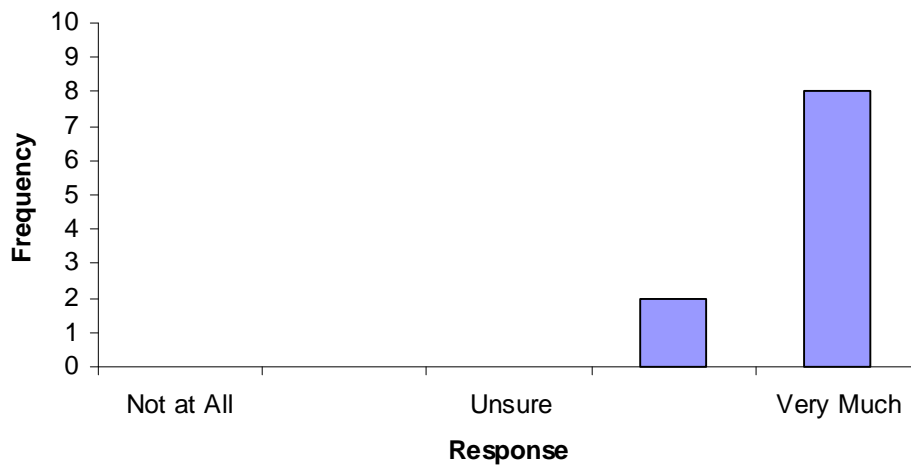
Did you feel supported by the facilitator to teach and implement more adaptive social and problem solving skills to your students?



Further Comments or Observations

1. –
2. not sure what this (more adaptive) refers to but I think yes as we apply these in class room outside to different situations
3. –
4. Very approachable
5. Any questions I've had or comments regarding the program have been well received answered thoroughly and I've always felt supported and if I needed help I got it/ would get it
6. Followed up during Health lessons about protective behaviours
7. –
8. Tim did a wonder job both with the children and myself.
9. –
10. -

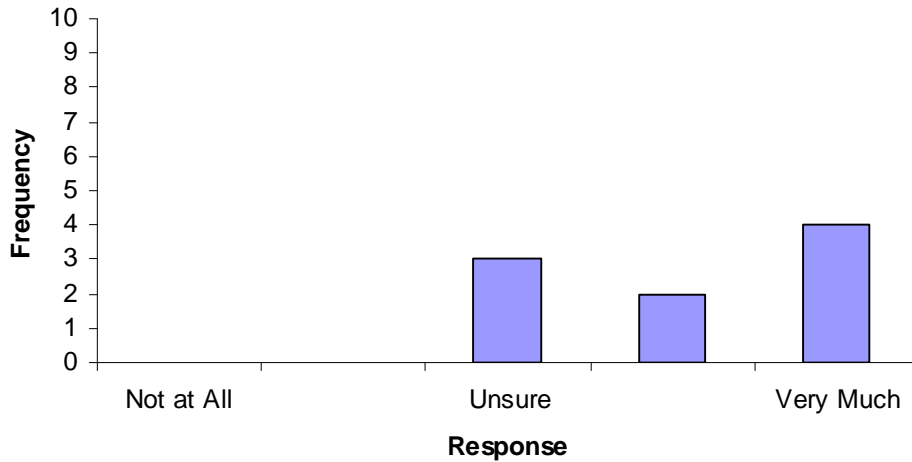
Did Rock & Water provide new strategies to teach young people calmness and relaxation strategies?



Further Comments or Observations

1. -
2. Yes! We and they ask for relaxation time often
3. -
4. yes
5. I would like to implement the relaxation technique every day- the eye pillow activity calms students instantly
6. -
7. -
8. -
9. Yes, I'd like to use eye-pillows in the class and have used "feet – bellies – breath" to get children to calm down.
10. -

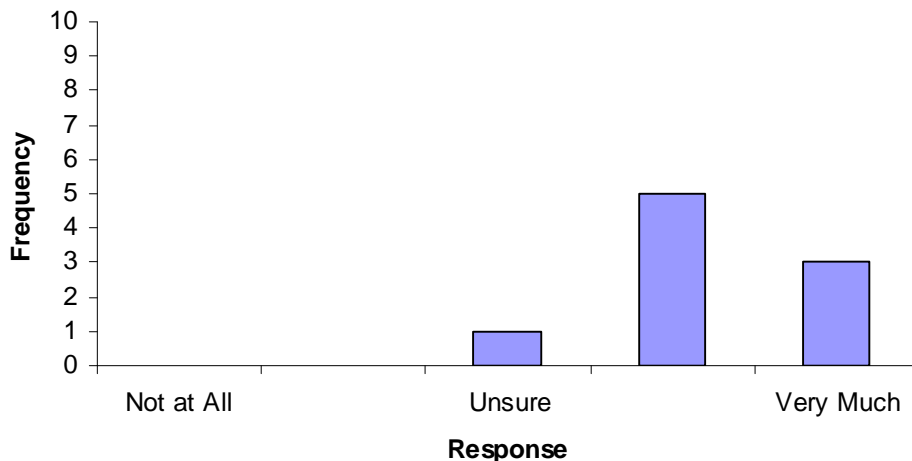
As the teacher of a classroom, I saw a positive change with complex students due to the Rock & Water program.



Further Comments or Observations

1. -
2. Beginning! 8 weeks beginning to change some rocks but it takes much longer
3. -
4. Still have lots of little rocks but they are becoming more fluid
5. It has been very valuable!
6. Gina- much calmer and could respond to the language. Brandon- used breathing to calm down.
7. For many students with complex needs it will take a long time to see positive change. It has been a reference point to re-visit constantly to stimulate positive change.
8. I have seen some change
9. Still ongoing.
10. -

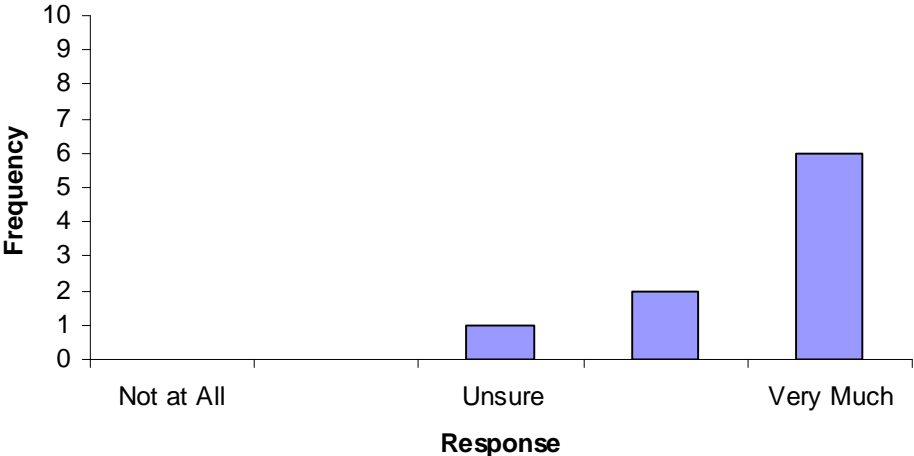
Did Rock & Water assist with your students learning?



Further Comments or Observations

- 1. -
- 2. -
- 3. -
- 4. -
- 5. It has and will continue to. It is very easy to refocus students on learning using R & W language
- 6. -
- 7. -
- 8. -
- 9. -
- 10. more about observable social skills and yard skills

Do you agree Rock & Water should be a part of the school curriculum? E.g. 15 minutes each day.



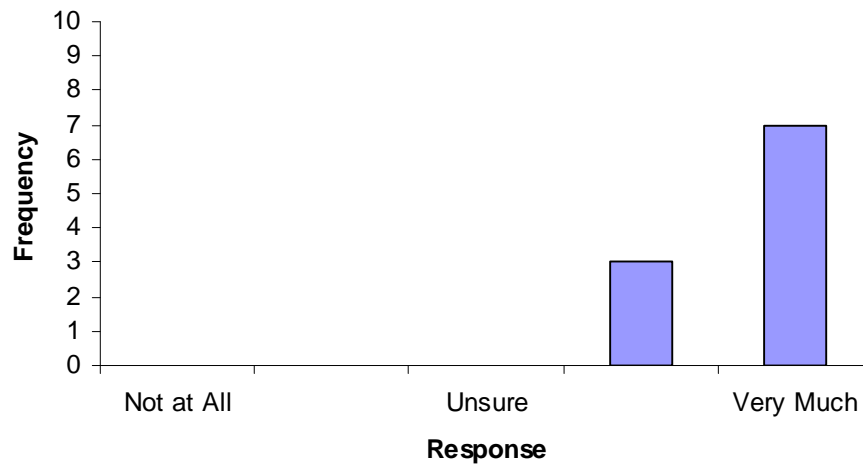
Further Comments or Observations

- 1. I think 30 Minutes a week can be enough
- 2. 2 or 3 times a week as the demands of curriculum are hard to fit in but it is needed to get through the curriculum
- 3. probably
- 4. Probably not. 15 mins –maybe dependant on day’s events. Some days may only need 5mins other days 20 min.
- 5. Yes should be part of curriculum (as program has been done) and I would love to see the relaxation being done daily.
- 6. Absolutely! I will continue with as much as I possibly can.
- 7. Will be difficult to do with such a crowded curriculum but it would set the scene for each day!!

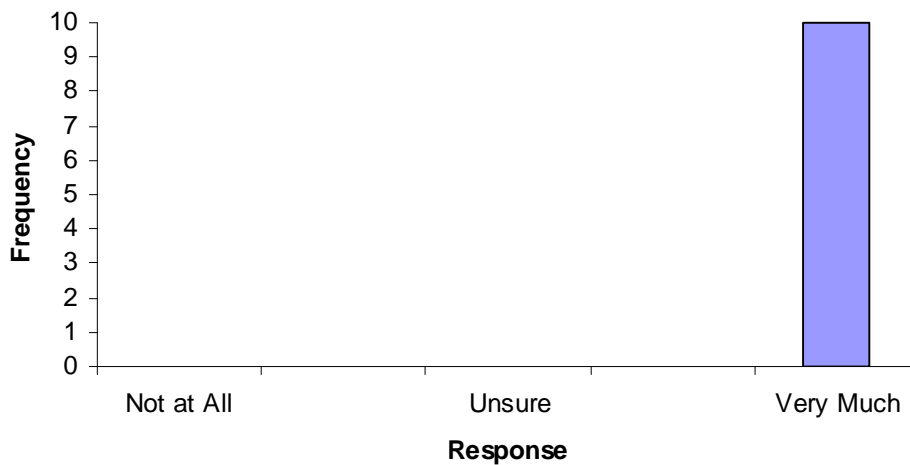
- 8. That would be nice. It would need to be a whole school approach
- 9. -
- 10. -

The second section of the program questionnaire consisted of ten questions in which staff were asked to rate on a five point Likert scale, from "not at all" to "very much", the degree they agreed with items relating to the program.

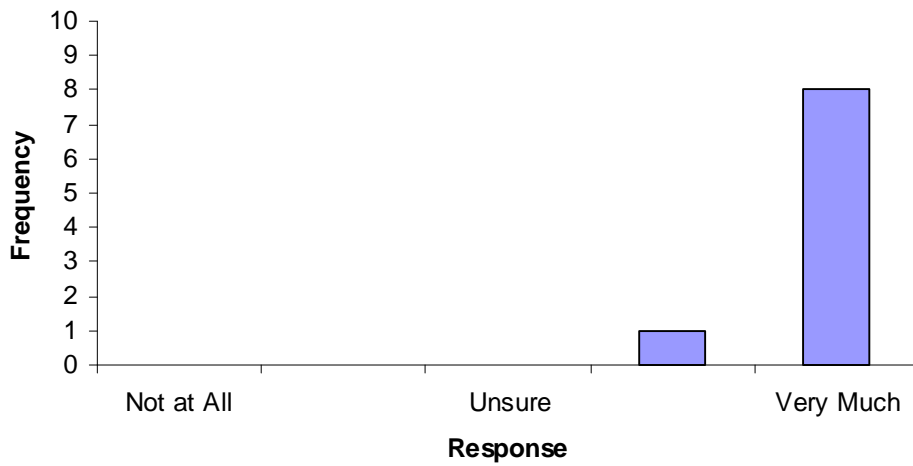
1. Rock & Water was a successful program



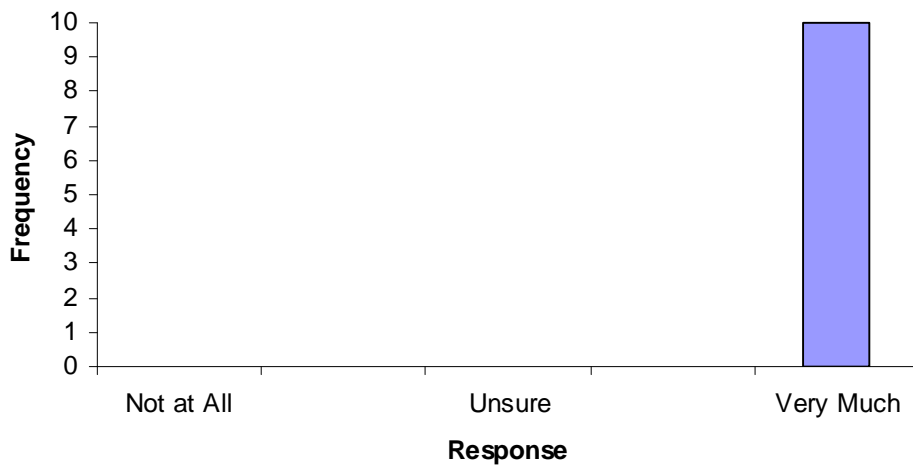
2. The facilitator acted professionally throughout the program



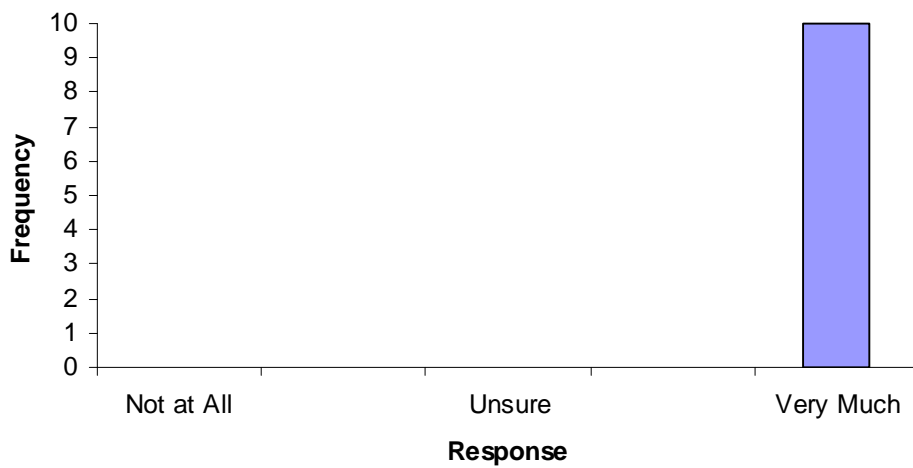
3. The young people who attended Rock & Water benefited from the program



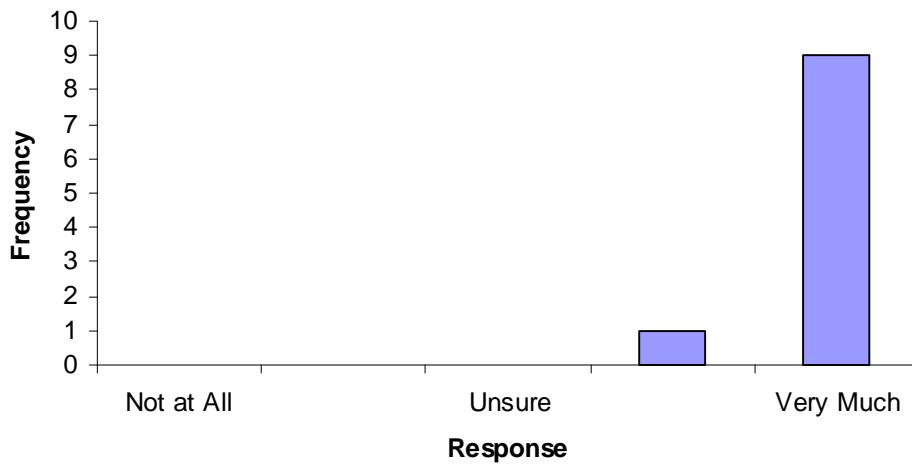
4. The facilitator was able to develop positive and trusting relations with the participants



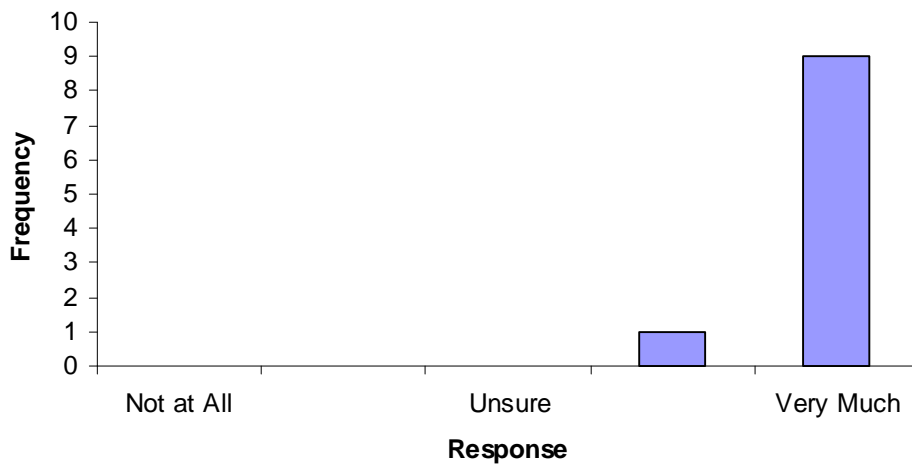
5. The facilitator was a positive role model for the participant group



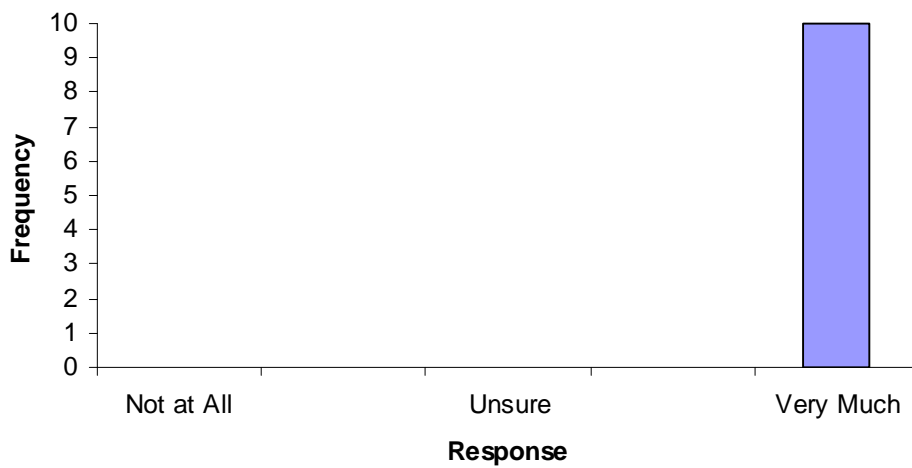
6. The facilitator appropriately managed the behaviour of the group



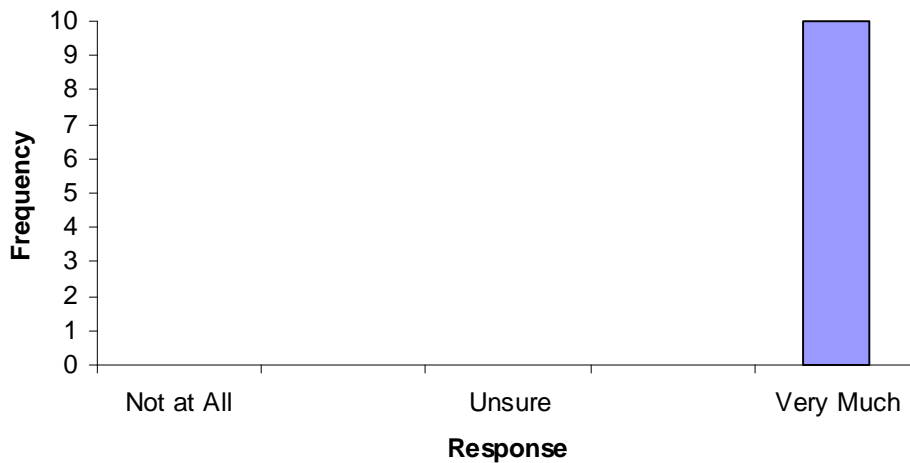
7. The facilitator was able to respond to the changing needs of the participant group



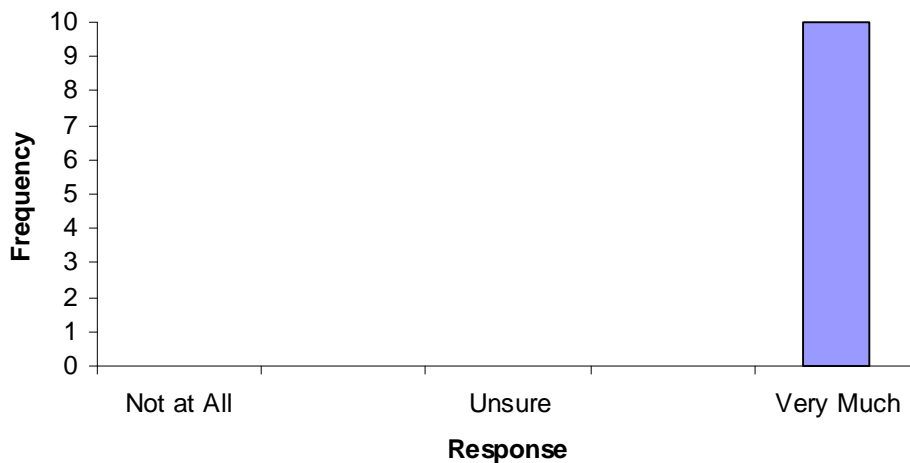
8. I felt that I was able to approach the facilitator if I had any concerns with the program



9. The participants felt safe around the facilitator



10. The facilitator had a sound knowledge of the Rock & Water program



In the final section of the questionnaire teachers completed a number of open-ended questions designed to tap their independent experiences of the program. Responses (without alteration) were as follows:

What were the highlights of the Rock & water program for you?

1. Rock and water touched the social, psychological, behaviour, respect aspects.
2. All- the games. The understanding of issues faced by the students every day
3. Bullying aspects- walking away techniques- language
4. 1. rock- over heart- worth standing up for; water- to go with the flow, respect etc. 2. Compliment the teacher! 3. Language to use in class. 4. the description of who biggest rocks in school are
5. The language which can be used in the classroom
6. Seeing the deep engagement of the students and the life long learning that took place
7. Calming experiences – fun & meaningful games

8. I can pick out one. Each day was worthwhile in different ways. Each one helped the children learn how to stay calm and in control.
9. Children's enthusiasm, but not going "over the top" with excitement so that learning still happened.
10. Seeing some of my really passive kids standing their ground

Please list any outcomes (positive/negative) your students gained from Rock & Water.

1. After rock and water, my students were using the sentences "be water", "I don't like you being a rock". Rock and water helped my kids to play nicely without fighting.
2. relaxation strategies. Walking away- ignoring w/o losing face
3. Language to discuss behaviour – rock and water. It was so obvious that ??? didn't want to work with one particular student
4. fun, enjoyment, knowledge of how to deal with difficult situations
5. Strategies to deal with harassment (positive). Language to discuss issues, including self-image/concept (positive). Games played were well received by all
6. Already mentioned
7. A language to talk about their feelings. An understanding of how they need to behave.
8. The children now understand why it is important to stay calm. Water people get along better
9. Children recognizing each others behaviour as 'rock-like' or 'water-like'.
10. Some of my boys who have friendship difficulties working more cooperatively with others

Please list any concerns you had with the delivery, facilitation or conduct of the last program.

1. It was really a good program
2. only s/time because of age or language or time the idea of lesson was a bit washed out- but because physical it still got through a bit
3. I liked the way you picked up on boys & girls working together
4. –
5. –
6. Nil
7. Some children did not see/understand the purpose of games and just saw them as fun. More reinforcement of the purpose of the games.
8. –
9. Putting the teacher "on the spot" to answer questions!
10. nil

In what areas could the Rock & Water program be improved for the future?

1. Teach more self defense. Teach children to be honest (tell the truth). Teach children to accept the mistake(s)
2. more reflection on real situations that have happened to students
3. I will think about this
4. in teacher prep lesson – less psych talk from Tracey. More – practical- lesson ideas stuff with Tim
5. Perhaps a course book/resource pack for the teachers to use in order to continue the program/ activities with the class
6. Longer sessions?
7. –As above
8. Re- visit next year and every year after that. (It could be part of a long term approach to B/M within the school)
9. Not absolutely sure- but sometimes it was worthwhile to observe rather than join in the activities as the teacher
10. By having an automatic boomerang of a yearly repeat for 3 to 5 years built into the assumptions/requirements of the program.

Please feel free to make any final comments in relation to the last program

1. The last program of rock and water was like the first lesson of this program, all my students wanted to go on with the program. They liked the program and the facilitator very much
2. –
3. I'm glad such a program exists & I'm sure you'll develop it further. Well done & thanks Tim
4. –
5. I loved it!
6. Thankyou, it is the best program I seen for young people.
7. NAP students need more frequent exposure to activity and program (3/4 x/week)
8. Thank you. A very proactive program.
9. –
10. I was really impressed.

Summary of Qualitative Data (Section Written by Andrew Cenuich)

Overall the responses provided by both students and teachers were overwhelmingly positive with the vast majority of responses falling at the positive end of the Likert scales. The comments provided for the open-ended questions were also extremely complimentary.

The student responses suggest that the majority found the Rock & Water program 'enjoyable' and 'fun', and were enthusiastic about doing the program again. Students also demonstrated high regards for Tim indicating that they thought he 'did a good job' and made them 'feel safe'. Importantly, a very high percentage felt that they had learnt 'skills to deal with school better,' had learnt 'new life skills,' and had been provided with skills to help 'deal with kids who bully' them.

The responses and comments provided by teachers were also positive and insightful. Tim's role and abilities as a facilitator were highly praised and all questions relating to his abilities received very positive responses.

Responses and comments relating to the program itself and its outcomes were slightly more variable but remained predominantly positive. The questions regarding the ability of the Rock and Water program to connect with students, teach a 'range of new verbal and non-verbal self-protective behaviours', introduce new language and strategies to help manage student behaviour, introduce 'relaxation strategies' and teach 'appropriate social skills' received unanimous positive responses on the Likert scales. These findings were also supported by the teacher comments and observations. Of particular note was the large number of comments praising the language and metaphors introduced by the Rock & Water program. These comments suggested that "the language used is extremely accessible to students and easily understood" and "using 'rock' and 'water' is a quick, easy, understandable way of letting children know how their behaviour is affecting others and how I'm (the teacher is) feeling."

Whilst the language and skills introduced by the Rock & Water program were widely praised, some doubts remained over the program's ability to improve relationships with complex students, bring the school closer together and produce a 'positive change with complex students'. This was demonstrated by higher numbers of 'unsure' responses to these questions. However, no negative responses were made. The attached teacher comments suggest that this stems from the fact that "for many students with complex needs it will take a long time to see positive change. Whilst the language has "enabled some conversation around issues which were hard to approach/discuss" teachers may "need to use and reinforce" this language and the new skills over a long period of time to see significant change. This also prompted the suggestion that "a course book/resource pack for the teachers to use in order to continue the program/ activities with the class" could be developed in the future.

Facilitator Qualitative Observations (Section Completed by Tim Brenton)

As the facilitator of the program, I drew the following observations from the program:

- The level of participation was high. There were very few instances of young people choosing to sit out and I didn't experience many occasions of negotiating with young people to join in.

- I believe the students viewed the program as fun. Although there were many life skills and awareness skills integrated into the program, many of the young people participated in the program with a consistent smile on their face.
- Young people felt safe around me. I believe I shared a positive relationship with all of the students who participated. The value of mentoring all young people during the recess and lunch periods was also successful. The mentoring provided another layer of safety for the students when they experienced playing a game with me (e.g. handball) and my strategies, approachability and responses were consistent with my messages within the Rock & Water program itself. Walking into and out of the school was an amazing experience for me hearing children from across the school yelling out "Master Tim" followed by a respectful bow of respect.
- The relaxation exercises "eye pillows" proved to be very successful and provided all participants with strategies to manage and regulate their own emotions. The feedback from the eye pillows was overwhelmingly positive and many young people enquired about the future use of the pillows.
- The students of Cowandilla grasped the concepts of "Rock" versus "Water" and this assisted each student's personal growth and "self-awareness". The concepts provided the teachers and counsellor with an alternative strategy to talk and manage students presenting with complex behaviours.
- The program provided an opportunity for young people to share games and experiences with other students whom they may have difficulties with in the past.
- The program provided an opportunity for mainstream and new arrival students to share games and experiences in a safe environment.
- The program provided the students to view their teachers positively outside the safety of the classroom. The teachers sharing personal stories and experiences within the context of Rock & Water was a highlight for me and the students of each class.
- The language and strategies of the Rock & Water program were transferred back into the classroom. I felt my relationship with the teachers was strong and positive and many of them reported examples of using the language of the program positively in their classroom.
- The program proved successful for several young students attending the Cowandilla Learning Centre. If this were to happen again, I would see the value in collective planning and sharing across the two schools before students from the learning centre participated.
- In certain classes, I believe some students improved their relationships with the classroom teacher and their peers.
- The language and verbal cues was the greatest strength for me as the presenter. The students consistently responded to my verbal grounding strategy "Feet, Belly, Breath" and this allowed me to gain control of the room in a safe and playful way.
- The "Rock & Water salute" was very successful and consistent with other approaches such as "Stop, think and do". The salute proved a great strategy for certain boys in particular who often find themselves in "doing" before "thinking" clearly.

- The classes in grades six and seven connected with me and the program at a deeper level and I believe we saw cases of young people showing signs of untapped resilience and improved confidence.
- Overall, the program had a positive effect across the school with many students and teachers asking for future programs. The Rock & Water messages, language and games were used in a positive way and I believe many of the young people would benefit from future programs.

SUMMARY & FUTURE DIRECTIONS (Written by Ivan Raymond)

The Rock & Water program is a “tool” that has demonstrated the ability to target important developmental needs of children and young people; most notably key social and emotional needs that underpin both behavioural functioning and student wellbeing. A feature of the Rock & Water program is that learning occurs in a manner and style (e.g., fun, experiential and action orientated) that increases the child’s responsiveness to the learning message. Prior to this evaluation, there has been strong anecdotal and qualitative evaluation support for the application of the program for promoting the social-emotional wellbeing of young people within educational, child protection, juvenile justice and youth support settings.

This evaluation indicates that the Rock & Water program, when delivered in the manner and style as indicated within this report, has the potential to have a significant positive impact on children and young people from new arrival backgrounds. This cohort of children is more likely to have experienced significant instability and possible trauma within their early development. Such instability has the potential to have a negative mediating impact on a child’s ability to regulate their emotions and engage in a “stop-think and do” response to emotional triggers. Children and young people from these backgrounds often function from higher levels of stress, fear and arousal (Perry, 2004). Furthermore, the current program was delivered in a manner that fostered play, safety and secure attachment relationship development, and was inclusive of a whole-of-school approach. These aspects are the cornerstone of working with all children and young people, but most importantly, young people with backgrounds of trauma and insecurity. The aspect of play-based learning cannot be overstated (Perry, Hogan & Marlin, 2000). Play is the medium by which children learn a range of social and emotional skills fundamental to their development. It is likely that many new arrival children have missed out on some play-based experiences, therefore, a tool like Rock & Water, when delivered in safe but playful manner, has the potential to increase resilience and student wellbeing. Together, the evaluation indicates that the current program achieved many of the goals it set out to do.

While the presented evaluation appears overwhelmingly positive, there is a need to highlight that there are a number of methodological shortcomings within the evaluation (e.g., was not a pretest-posttest design, non-validated instruments applied) which impact on the degree wide ranging conclusions can be drawn. Furthermore, the degree program outcomes were sustained beyond the intervention period remains unknown. Despite this, considering that new arrival students potentially represent a difficult cohort to engage around key developmental

needs, the fact that the program achieved high levels of engagement and many students were able to articulate the key learning outcomes, some of the program's skills appear to have been generalised.

Overall, the evaluation indicates that the Rock & Water program, when delivered in a manner that fosters safe, playful and secure attachment relationships, and is delivered from a "whole-of-school approach", has the potential to be the catalyst for increasing the resilience and wellbeing of new arrival students. While further evaluation is required to articulate the exact nature of these outcomes, there is overwhelming support for the future application of Rock & Water programming for this cohort.

Tim Brenton

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Andrew Cenuich

Program Reviewer

B.Psych(Hons).

Ivan Raymond

Psychologist

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