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Maximizing potential:

The effectiveness of Project K on self-efficacy, resilience, and connectedness

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ABSTRACT

This longitudinal study aimed to investigate changes in self-efficacy, resilience, and connectedness to school in students participating in Project K, a positive youth development programme. Eighty secondary school students were recruited from five schools across New Zealand. These formed two groups: a Project K group made up of 49 students, and a comparison group made up of 31 students. Over fourteen months, six waves of measurement were completed by Project K participants and four waves of measurement were completed by a comparison group. Self-efficacy was measured using the Project K Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, while resilience was measured using the Resilience Scale, and connectedness to school was measured using the Hemingway Adolescent Connectedness Scale. Preliminary analysis confirmed variance in individual and group data indicating more complex multilevel analysis would be beneficial in investigating changes in self-efficacy, resilience, and connectedness to school. As expected, the Project K group began with lower self-efficacy than the comparison group. However, after controlling for differences in initial status, Project K participants improved at a faster rate over the course of the programme than the control group. Gender difference in initial self-efficacy scores were noted, with females having higher self-efficacy than males, however these initial differences were unrelated to rates of change over time. Project K participants had lower resilience at the start of the study but after controlling for the initial group differences, the Project K group was found to improve at a faster rate when compared to the comparison group. There was no difference between groups at the start of the programme, or in rate of change over time in the connectedness to school variable, and no relationship between gender and changes in resilience or connectedness to school scores over time. To conclude, implications for future research and practice are discussed.

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