Filling the **G**ratitude **A**ltruism **P**raise

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Filling the GAP programme

- A Universal Positive Psychology Intervention to promote Happy, Affirmative and Supportive school environments.

- Using evidence based Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs)

Gratitude

Altruism

Praise

Gratitude

- A growing area of interest within positive psychology is the potential for organisations like schools to promote wellbeing and resilience alongside achievement-related outcomes (Bird & Markle, 2012; Seligman et al., 2009; Diebel et al. (2016).

- Positive Psychology (PPIs) interventions are based on the principle that sustainable changes in wellbeing can be achieved through regularly engaging in simple and intentional activities (Diebel et. al, 2016).

- Diebel, Woodcock, Cooper & Brignell (2016) examined the effectiveness of a school-based gratitude diary intervention to promote school belonging for primary school aged pupils (age range 7 to 11 years). The students wrote a diary about things that they were either grateful for in school that day or about neutral school events for four weeks.

Gratitude

- Results showed that students who completed the gratitude intervention demonstrated enhanced school belonging and gratitude relative to the control group, although this was moderated by gender with the gratitude diary showing clearer benefits for males. Increases in gratitude were positively correlated with increases in school belonging. This study also illustrates how a gratitude diary intervention can be used to build social resources.

- Froh, Bono, Fan, et. al (2014) found in their study with 8 to 11 yr olds, using classroom discussions, writing assignments and role play activities, that children's awareness of grateful thinking can be strengthened and that this in turn makes children more grateful and benefits their well being in terms of increased positive affect.

Situational Influence on Altruism

PEOPLE NOWADAYS
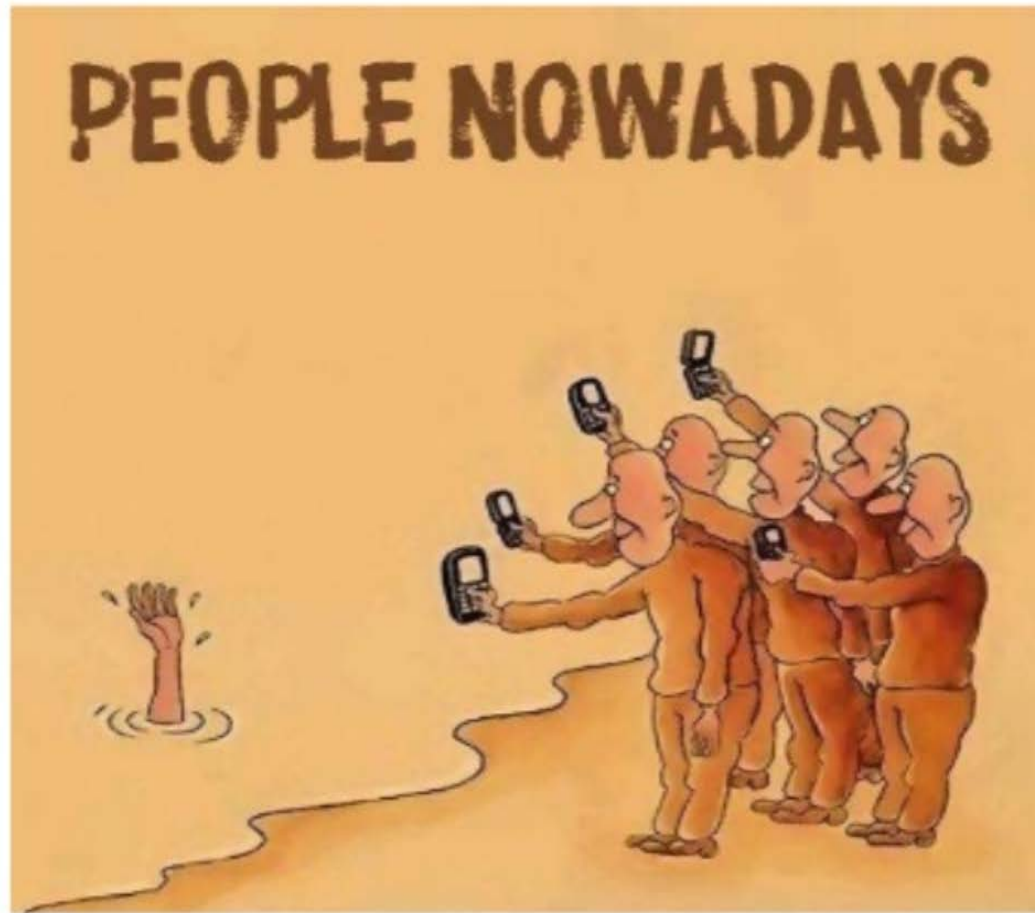
"OK, Mr. Altruism, real fast, name three selling points of loyalty that don't involve food."

Altruism

- Previous research has shown that altruism, or giving that is personally costly, can promote both physical and psychological well-being in adults. A new study extends this research to young children.

- According to new research on the nature and nurture of altruism in *Psychological Science*, a journal of the Association for Psychological Science, children as young as 4 years old may reap better health from altruistic giving

- Miller, Kahle and Hastings (2015) studied 74 pre-schoolers (average age 4 years old) local community. In the lab, the researchers played with the children one by one and explained that they would earn tokens that they could trade for prizes at the end of their visit. The children were given the chance to donate some or all of their prize tokens to fictitious sick children who weren't able to come to the lab.

Altruism

- As part of the visit, researchers attached (with parental consent) electrodes to each child's torso to collect physiological data, including information about heart rate and vagal tone. Vagal tone indicates the influence of the vagus nerve, which connects the brain with other key organs and provides a useful measure of the body's ability to regulate physiological stress responses.

- High vagal tone is related to feeling safe and calm, says Miller, and has been associated with better physical health, behavior, and social skills among young children. The data revealed that the children who sacrificed tokens to help sick kids greater showed vagal flexibility during the task, indicating better physiological regulation throughout and the act of donating was associated with higher vagal tone.

- The data also revealed that children from more wealthy families in the study shared fewer tokens than the children from less wealthy families.

- ''Our findings suggest that fostering altruistic tendencies might be one path to promoting better health and well-being for all children,'' Miller concludes.

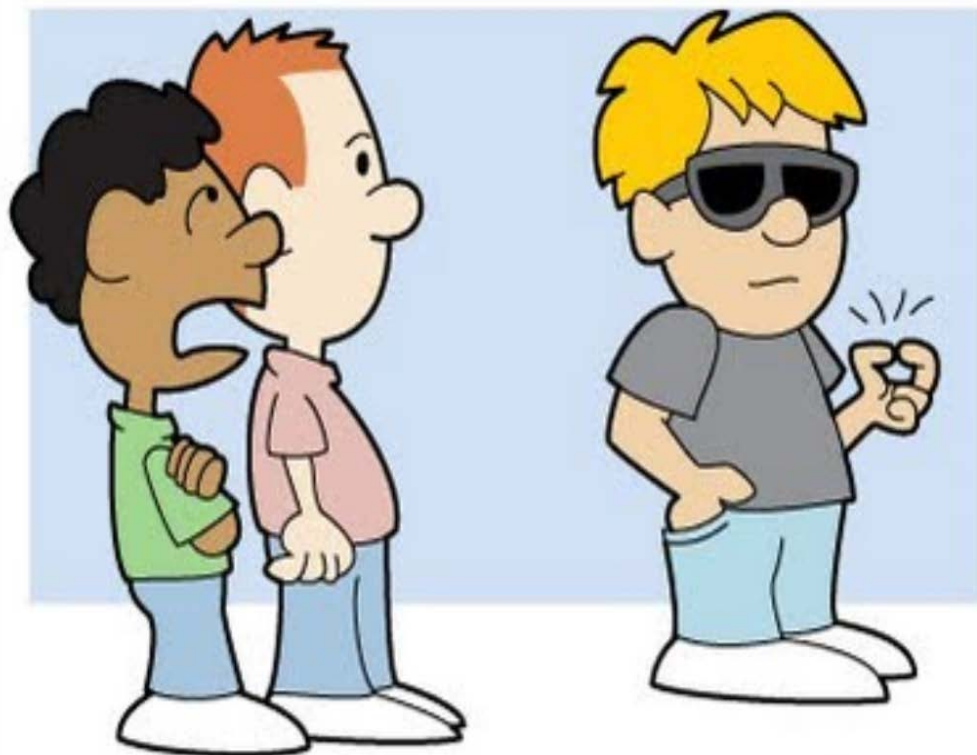THAT TIME BACK IN 2007 WHEN YOU TIDIED YOUR ROOM ....WELL DONE!

AUGUST 2045
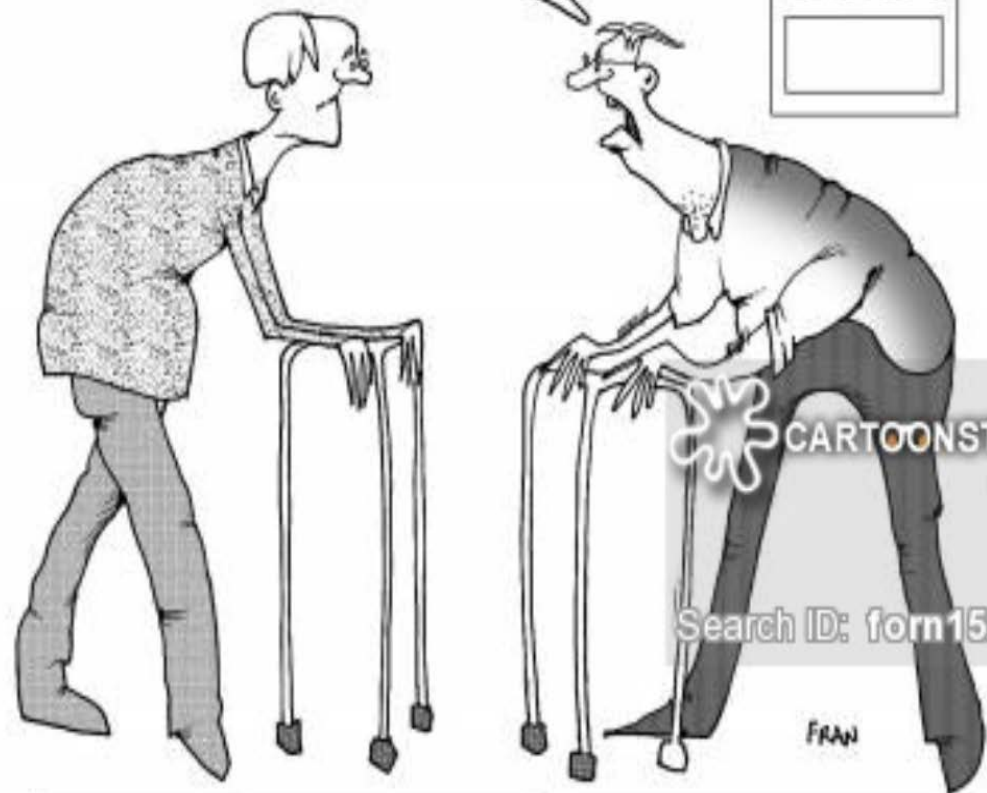
PRAISE WORKS BEST WHEN IT COMES STRAIGHT AFTER THE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

FRAN

© 2009 Kevin Spear   kevin@kevinspear.com   www.kevinspear.com

"He's been that way ever since the teacher praised him for his clean desk."

K.Spear

Praise

- International studies over the past 40 years show that teachers tend to respond more frequently to the inappropriate social behaviour of their pupils than to the appropriate behaviours that they may wish to see increased.

- Body of research indicates praise is an effective tool in increasing students academic and pro-social behaviour (Henley, 2010; Kerr & Nelson, 2010; Lee & Axelrod, 2005; Wheeler & Richey, 2010).

- A positive relationship between teachers' use of contingent, behaviour-specific praise and students' appropriate behaviour (Gable, Hester, Rock, & Hughes, 2009).

Aims of this 2nd Pilot Study

- This study aims to provide further evidence of the effectiveness of GAP

1. Does GAP enhance students positive perceptions of school?

2. Does GAP promote positive relationships within schools?

3. Does GAP increase students' sense of connectedness to school?

Methodology

- **Participants**

- A total of 9 schools were invited to participate in this research. Their profiles varied from rural, urban, single sex, mixed, DEIS or non DEIS schools.

- Students from 3rd class up were involved in this project with one or more classes being drawn from each school

- A total of 480 students participated in this study

Design

- A simple pre- post design was employed for this study

- The intervention took the form of a half day training session which all classteachers received

- The classteachers implemented GAP for a 6 week period

- Classteachers were visited at the midpoint by their school psychologists to discuss programme implementation

Measures

- <u>Student measures</u>

- An adapted version of the *My thoughts on school checklist* (and rating scale) which was employed previously for the GAP pilot study

- The *School Connectedness Scale* was added for this study. This scale measures self reported happiness, belonging, safety and closeness to others at school.

Procedure

- The method for the data collection was similar for pre- and post- intervention.

- Baseline measures were collected by a Trainee Educational Psychologist(TEP) in the week prior to the start of the intervention. Post data was collected by the TEP 1/2 days after the intervention completed.

- Questionnaires were administered as a whole class

Filling the GAP programme

Gratitude

Introductory Lessons, 4 core activities, youtube links, reading materials.

Altruism

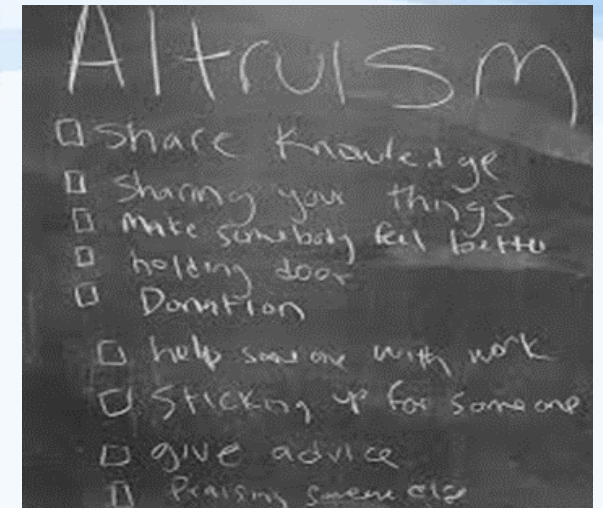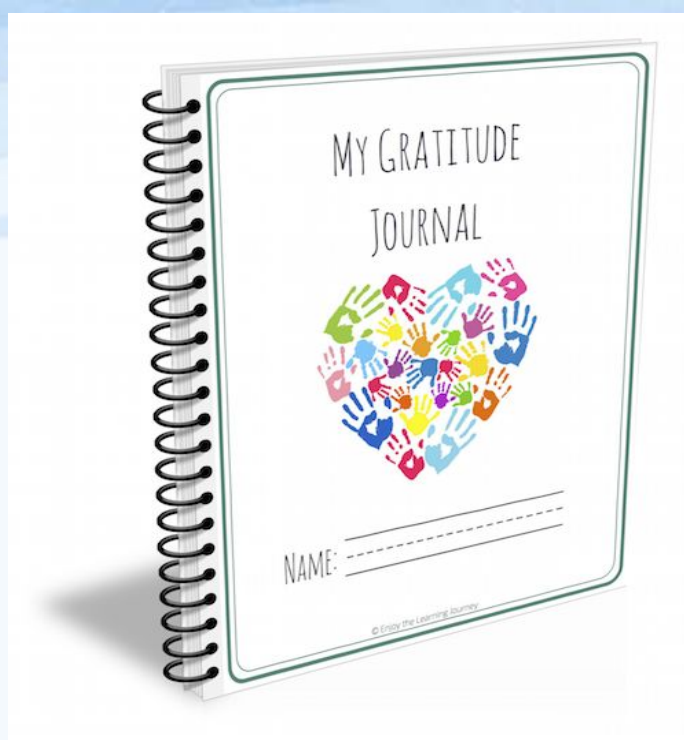Introductory Lessons, 4 core activities, youtube links, reading ,materials.

Teacher Training

Praise

Positive Greeting and Leaving Statements,

Academic Praise Statement,

Social / Behaviour Praise statement

Activities

Random Acts of Kindness

step 1: Pick a card
step 2: Make an impact
step 3: Post a Picture

MY GRATITUDE JOURNAL

NAME:

Altruism
- Share Knowledge
- Sharing your things
- Make somebody feel better
- holding door
- Donation
- help someone with work
- Sticking up for someone
- give advice
- Praising someone

WELL DONE! SUPER! GOOD WORK!
GREAT! SUPER STAR! EXCELLENT!
BRILLIANT! STAR EFFORT! SPECIAL AWARD!

Central Elementary Schools
Kindness Tree
Acts of Kindness!
Make Me Bloom

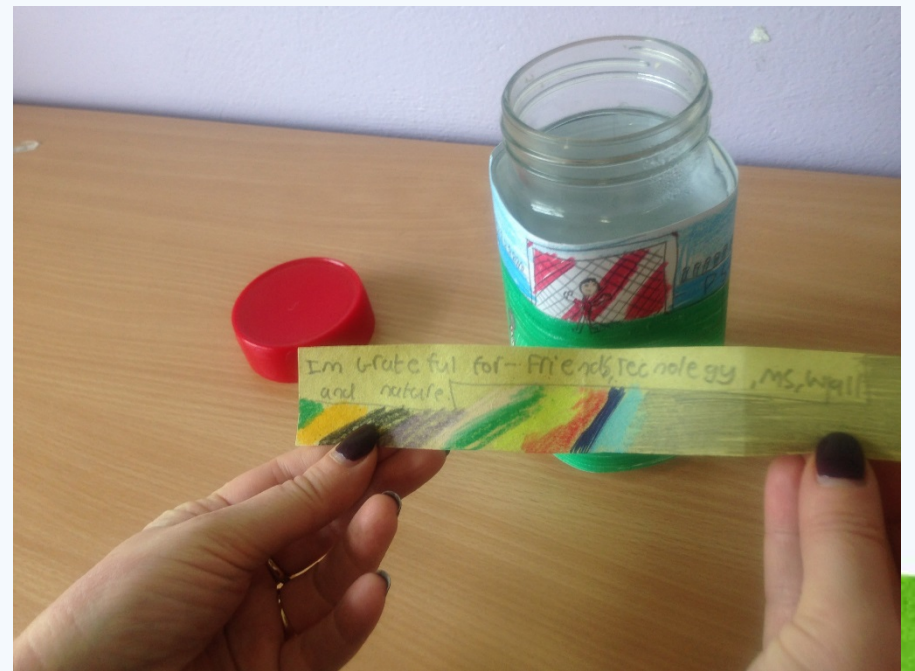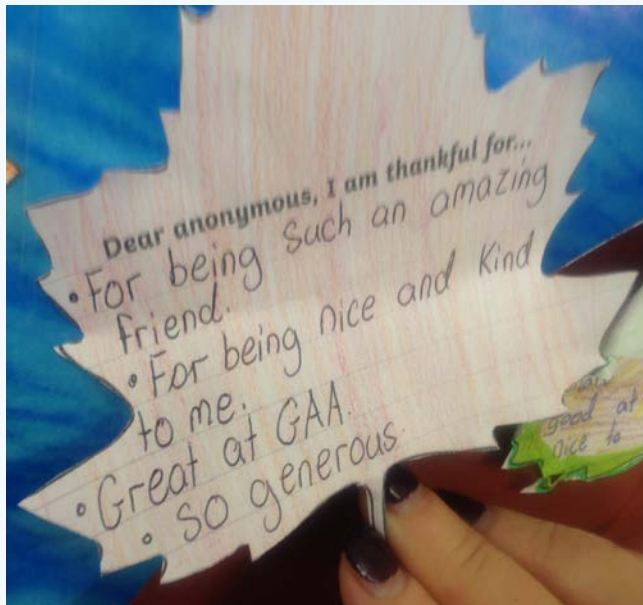we have a lot to be THANKFUL for

Daily for 6 weeks
Deliberate & modelled
Whole-class and individual activities
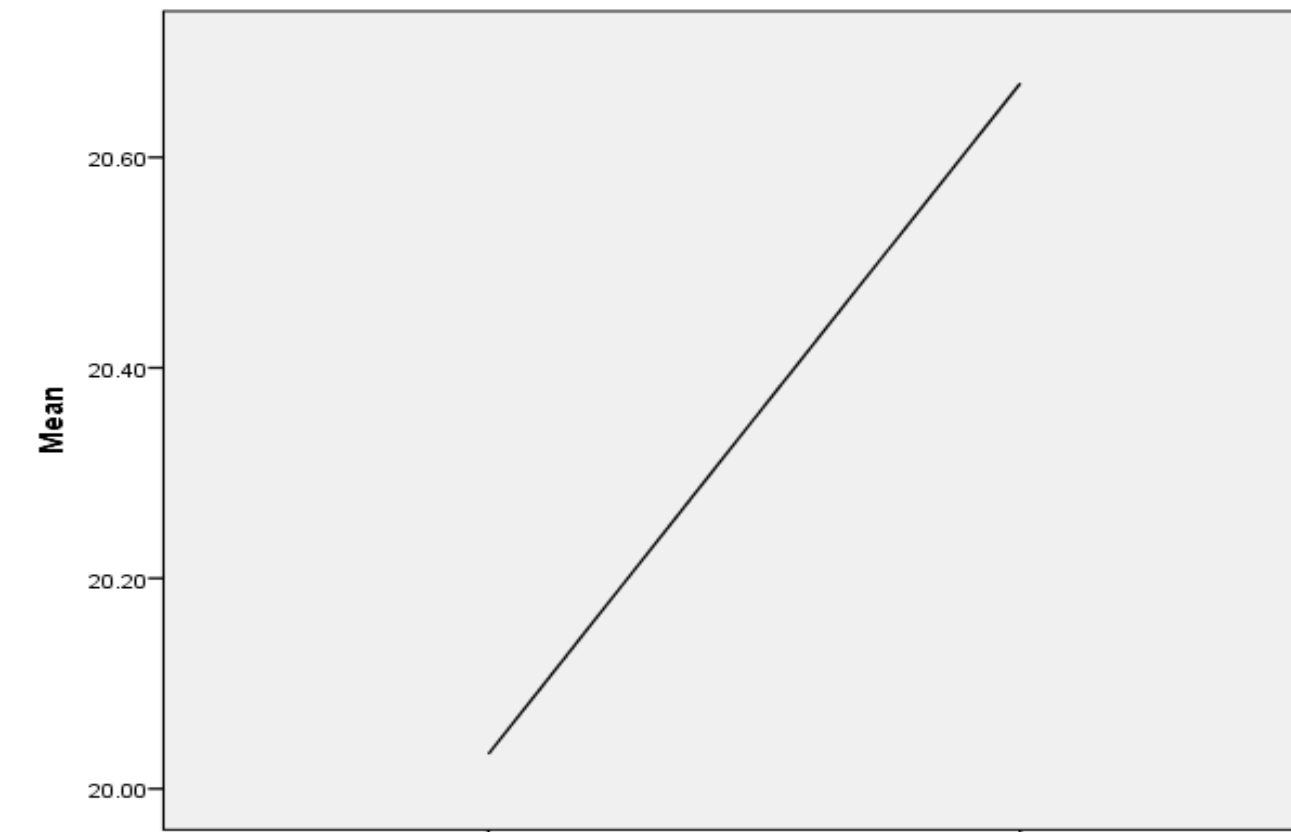
5.11.18.

5 Things I am greatful for.
1. I am greatful I had a lovely mid term break.
2. I am greatful for getting the part of Jasmine.
3. I am greatful that my best friend Maira came over yesterday.
4. I am greatful it is Winter.
5. I am greatful for my granny because she took me shopping over the weekend

Friends   Family   Health   Home

Dear anonymous, I am thankful for...
• For being such an amazing friend.
• For being nice and kind to me.
• Great at GAA.
• So generous.

Im grateful for friends, tecnolegy, ms wall and nature

Results

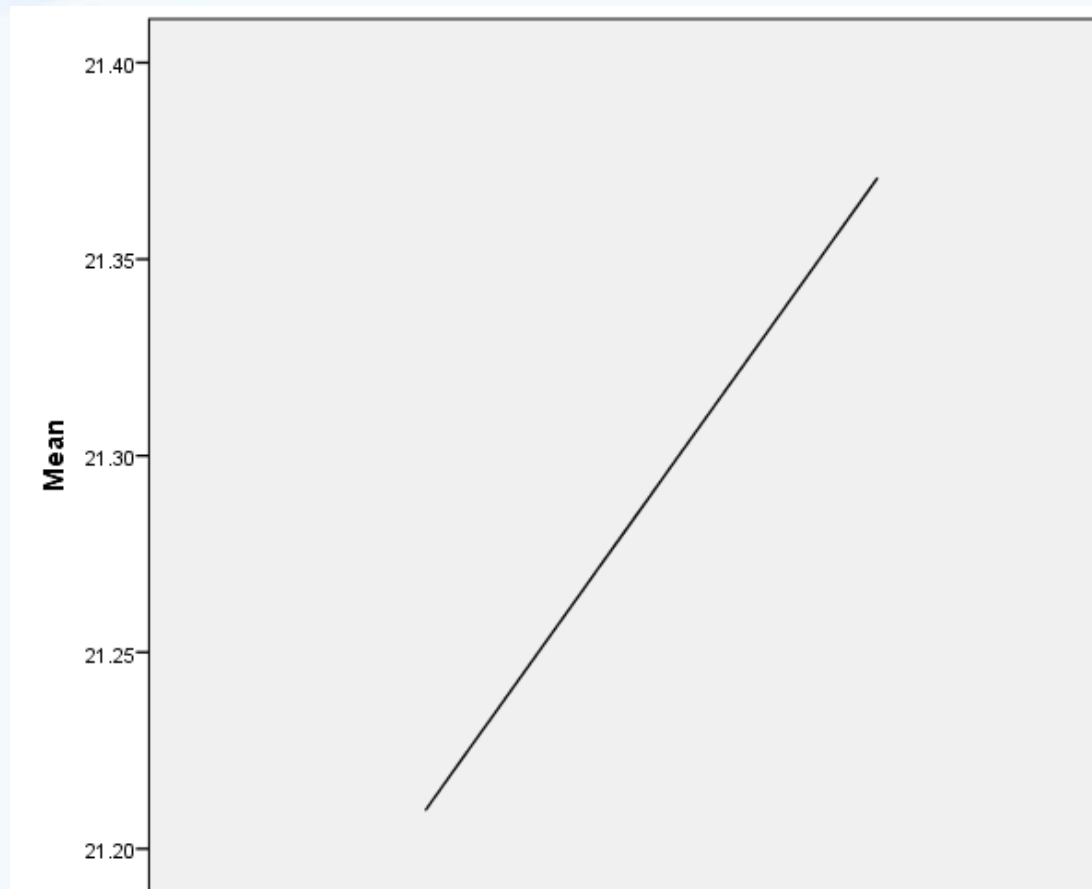# Does GAP enhance students' positive perceptions of school?

N=364   Time 1   Time 2   P = .015

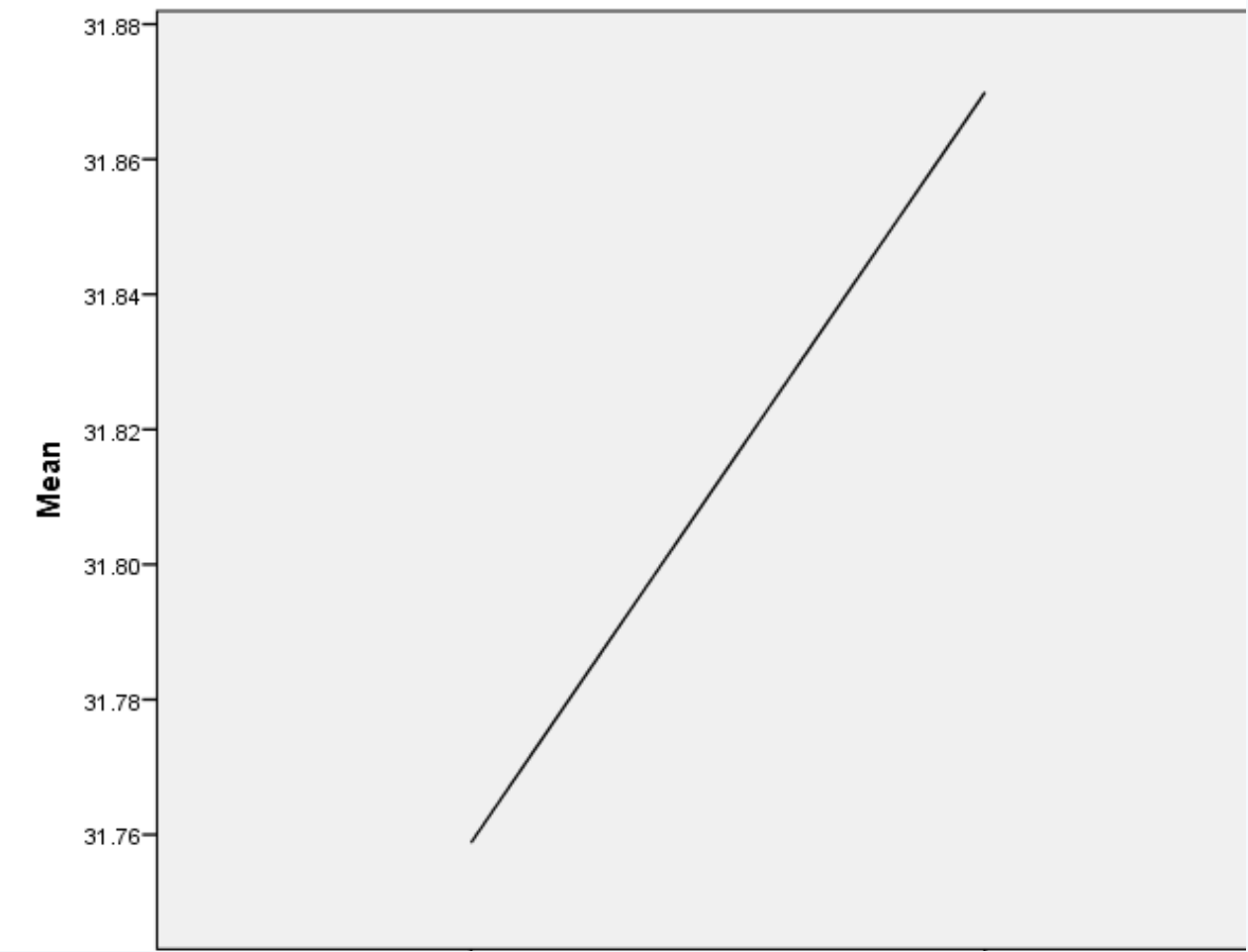# Does GAP promote positive relationships in schools?

N=348

P = .491

Does GAP increase students' sense of connectedness to school?

N=369   Time 1   Time 2   P = .716

Further Observations from the GAP Questionnaire

- Female students as opposed to male students reported greater gains in a positive attitude to school on the GAP questionnaire

- All class groupings reported a more positive attitude to school, especially 4th and 5th classes respectively.

- The improvement was more noticeable in Non DEIS schools.

- There was no notable difference between urban and rural schools.

Teachers' Comments

- "The response to the GAP programme has been great so far. Pupils really enjoyed the lessons and are very enthusiastic about the activities"!

- "Feedback from parents very positive at parent teacher meetings"

- "Other classes and schools looking to do the programme"

- "There has been less incidents in the yard".

- "Can be incorporated in the regular school day and is across curriculum"

- "Focus on creating a certain school climate / culture".

Limitations of The Study

- No Control Group

- Implementation Fidelity?

- Administration issues

- Time of Year (Mid Term Break)

- Developmental Stage– understanding of concepts?

- Further Analysis of Data

- Further Development of the Manual based on school feedback

- Explanations and activities for younger children

- Next research include Control Group

- Further training and roll out to other schools

- Longitudinal effects?

What Next?

Any Questions or Comments?

Thank you for your time

References

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