MOT SA RESEARCH REPORT

TVET COLLEGE STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE MOT PROGRAMME

Research Report prepared by the Institute for Post-School Studies (IPSS), University of the Western Cape

June 2018







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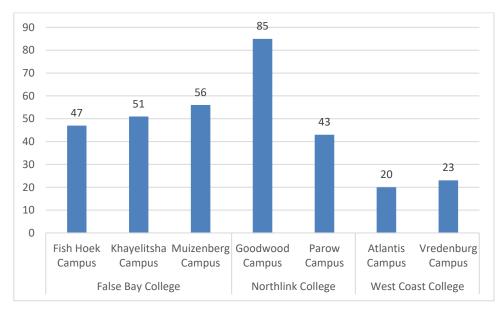
INTRODUCTION

The MOT programme has been growing steadily since it was first introduced to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in South Africa in 2006. Since 2011, MOT SA has annually surveyed students exiting the programme to determine their experiences of the MOT programme and its perceived impact on their lives. The questionnaire has been finessed through successive iterations. The 2018 report will be the sixth successive report since the research was piloted. The report is based on responses from students who completed the MOT programme in 2016/2017 and filled out the questionnaire.

The intentions of the MOT programme are expressed in the focus areas of the questions addressed to students in the survey. These focus areas concern culture of the classroom, personal development, personal values and choices. These are in line with MOT programme curriculum themes. A copy of the questionnaire administered to students is available on request.

Scope of Study

From the 657 students who completed the 3-year MOT programme, 325 responded to the research questionnaire. They included students from 3 TVET Colleges in the Western Cape (False Bay College, Northlink College and West Coast College). The distribution of MOT respondents by campus is provided in Figure 1 below.





ANALYSIS OF THE MOT DATA

The questionnaire covered biographical information, and categories of questions related to how the MOT programme had impacted on students' classroom interactions with other students, personal development, personal values and choices. Students were asked to answer 'yes', 'no' or 'not sure'. A final section asked for written comments on the programme. The questions in each section were based on the content areas that were covered in the MOT curriculum. Students were asked to reflect on their behaviour and attitudes before undertaking MOT and to decide when answering the questions,

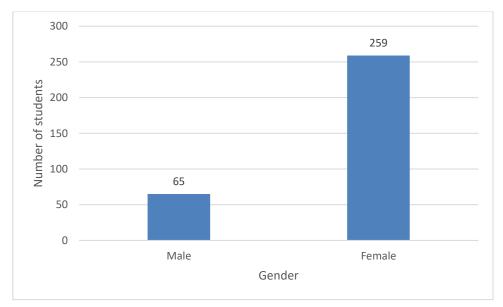
whether MOT had changed the way they thought, felt or behaved. Students could remain anonymous in the hope that this might make them answer more truthfully.

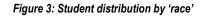
The following overall findings are set out in the sequence in which questions were answered in the questionnaires.

SECTION 1: PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

Of the students who completed the programme, 325 completed the MOT questionnaire in 2016/2017. The distribution of respondents by campus is provided in Figure 1. Figure 4 shows that students were drawn from an age range of 17 to 47 years old, with the mode for students being in the 19-25-year-old category (especially 19-22 years old). The sample contained 259 females and 65 males (Figure 2). The distribution by 'race' (Figure 3) was 133 'Black', 168 'Coloured', 9 'White' and 15 'Other'.







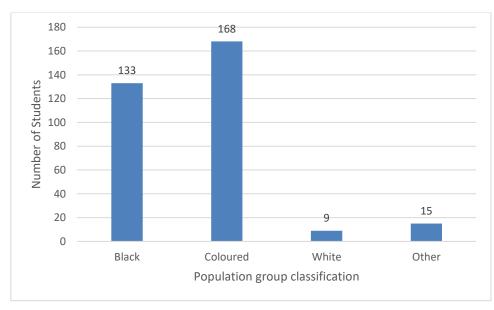
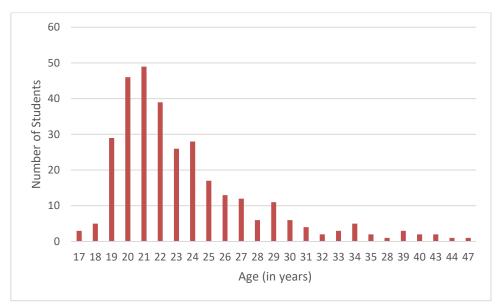


Figure 4: Student Distribution by Age



SECTION 2: CLASS CULTURE

Section 2 of the questionnaire asked students to individually assess the impact of MOT on how they treat other people with the overall intention of understanding how MOT contributed to the culture of the classroom. The responses were overwhelmingly positive.

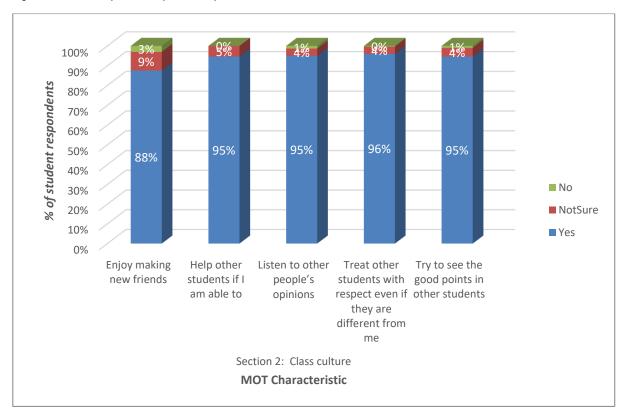


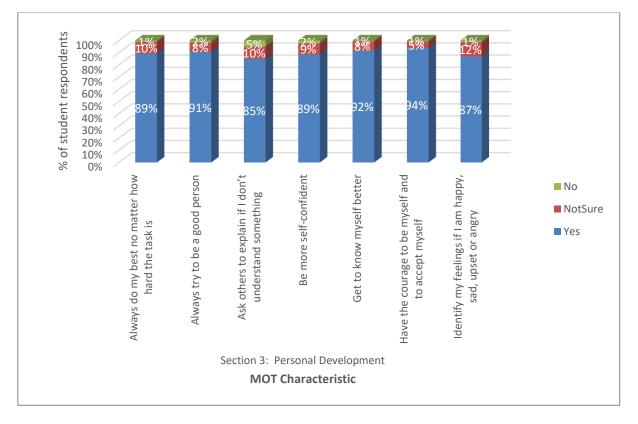
Figure 5: Student responses on positive impact of MOT on Class Culture

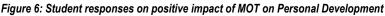
As can be seen in Figure 5, 90% and above of the students indicated that they were able to display positive characteristics in this regard. More specifically high percentage report that they were able to treat other students with respect even if they

are different from me (96%) listen to other people's opinions (95%) try to see the good points in other students (95%) help other students if I am able to (95%) enjoy making new friends (88%). Categories requiring students to care, value and respect others were particularly highly scored.

SECTION 3: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Self-knowledge and personal development were measured through student self-responses as to the current view of themselves. These constructs are held to be key elements of resilience. Figure 6 below shows the percentage of students who held positive views of themselves enabling to have the 'courage to act', a key attribute of the MOT programme. As can be seen over 90% of students attributed to themselves the characteristics of self-acceptance and therefore the ability to act positively and authentically in situations. Students responded that they 'have the courage to be myself and to accept myself (94%) get to know myself better (92%) always try to be a good person' (91%). Moreover over 80% of students responded that they were able to 'always do my best no matter how hard the task is (89%) be more self-confident (89%) identify my feelings if I am happy, sad, upset or angry (87%) ask others to explain if I don't understand something' (85%)' indicating that over 85% of the students felt that they were able to respond to others and tasks in ways that were confident and engaged.





SECTION 4: PERSONAL VALUES

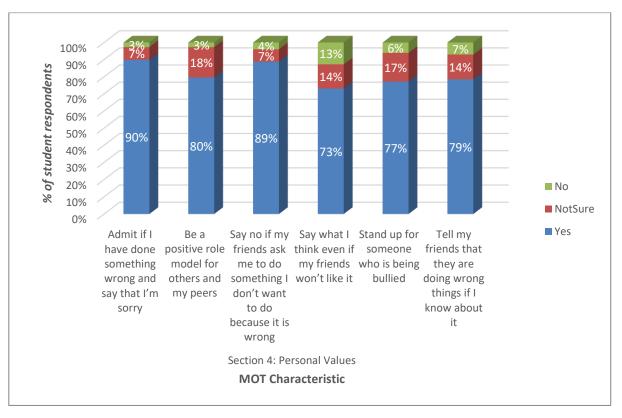
The category of personal values was measured by student self responses as to how they responded to the others and uncomfortable social situations. As can be seen from Figure 7, high percentages of students (about 90%) reported that they were able to admit to and/or resist personal wrong doing. Thus they were able to 'admit if I have done something wrong and say that I'm sorry (90%) say no if my friends ask me to do something I don't want to do because it is wrong'.

(89%). A smaller, but still substantial, percentage felt that they were able to challenge or attempt to influence their friends' behaviour in that they would 'be a positive role model for others and my peers (80%) tell my friends that they are doing wrong things if I know about it (79%) stand up for someone who is being bullied (77%) say what I think even if my friends won't like it (73%)'. These categories are consistent with the MOT attribute of 'the courage to say NO'. Notably a number of students indicated that they were 'not sure' which together with their written qualitative responses (reported in Section 8: Additional comments by students on the MOT programme) lends a measure of credibility to their other responses.

What is striking about these results is the high percentage of students who have affirmed that they now take personal responsibility for both avoiding and admitting to personal wrongdoing. Recent events in South Africa and internationally have pointed to the importance of personal ethics in corporate environments, and the growing value attached to the creation of an ethical culture as an antidote to endemic corruption. Moreover, popular management culture writers such as Stephen Covey have emphasised the importance of principle-centeredness, and the values-driven curriculum movement within the South African state at the turn of the century in South Africa had hypothesised that values were necessary, and had even convened a major conference listing a set of values; but had not necessarily provided the tools by which to develop said curriculum. This has remained a gap within the South African curriculum. Besides its inherent value, soft skills like personal integrity and responsibility have repeatedly been noted in employer view research on attributes enhancing employability (Papier *et al.*, 2016).

Whilst not as overwhelming as the personal values total, another striking result is that a substantial number of students have indicated their willingness to resist peers and to hold their own opinion, even if this risks sanction. Some of the most important discussions within TVET internationally have been the emerging conversations reconceptualising competence. There appears to be an emerging consensus that narrow technical competence – the thing that we teach and test – is no longer sufficient (Rauner *et al.*, 2013; Jacobs, 2016). It has for instance been posited that the current industrial age is characterised as a 'conceptual age'. Freethinking and intellectual assertiveness may become increasingly important components of competence in addition to the technical knowledge required by Fordist production. Intellectual assertiveness on the one hand ('saying what I think') and intellectual adaptability ('saying that I am sorry when I am wrong') may become important characteristics of productive 21st century workplaces and competence sets. Whilst the students are no longer teens, that the majority of students express this kind of maturity given the largely youthful cohort indicated earlier is encouraging. Naturally, all the results are based on student evaluation and could perhaps be tested by other means, but the large percentages and the qualitative responses give cause of cautious optimism.





SECTION 5: CHOICES

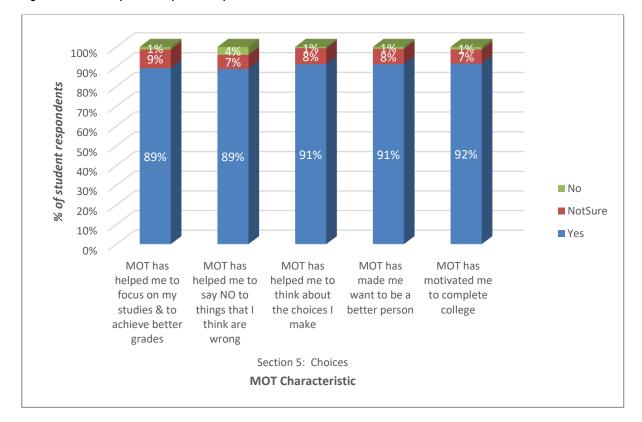


Figure 8: Student responses on positive impact of MOT on Choices

Section 5 focussed on the types of choices students made, with the academic persistence choices being particularly interesting. The questions referenced MOT's role in students making these choices. As seen in Figure 8, over 90% of 8

students indicated the positive role that MOT had in their academic persistence and personal desire to be better. Students reported that 'MOT has motivated me to complete college (92%) MOT has helped me to think about the choices I make (91%) MOT has made me want to be a better person (91%) MOT has helped me to focus on my studies & to achieve better grades (89%)'. A high percentage also reported that 'MOT has helped me to say NO to things that I think are wrong (89%)' which figure was consistent with the value reported in Section 4 on whether students should challenge their friends' wrongdoing.

The results suggest that, in the students' own view, they are both better people and better students due to the MOT intervention. As indicated earlier, this question specifically asked students to reference the impact of the MOT. It is striking that about 90% of students consistently reported that they have been assisted to make mindful choices, resist wrongdoing and strive to be 'a better person'. Moreover, students indicated that they were assisted both to focus and to strive to complete college. The latter results are particularly important for colleges. Academic persistence is an important consideration for college their key performance indicators (KPIs), and are expressed in terms of throughput rates, and pass rates. According to DHET statistics, in 2014, 46% of registered NCV students did not write and 30% passed. There is the range of factors that impact on TVET attrition (Lawrence, 2016), which makes it difficult and even risky to measure resilience. Nevertheless, the qualitative comments and student responses to questionnaire gives initial cause for optimism about the impact of the MOT programme in this critical area of concern.

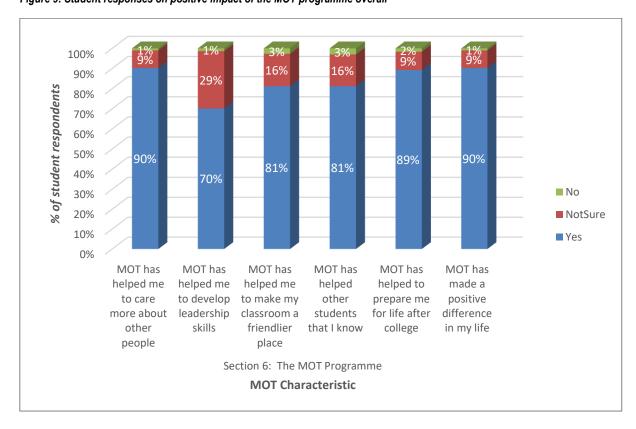


Figure 9: Student responses on positive impact of the MOT programme overall

SECTION 6: THE MOT PROGRAMME

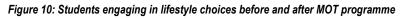
Section 6 asks students to specifically attribute the role that MOT played in their development as reported in previous sections. Students responses are provided in Figure 9. As can be seen in descending order the number of students

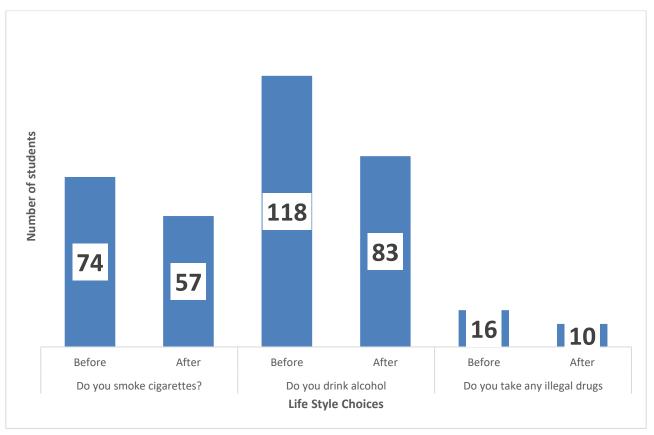
attributing personal characteristics' development to MOT, the responses were overwhlemingly positive. Caring and selfdevelopment were the areas that most people felt a positive impact with students reporting that 'MOT has helped me to care more about other people (90%) MOT has made a positive difference in my life (90%) MOT has helped to prepare me for life after college (89%)'. Other areas of substantial impact were in terms of classroom environment though the net impact of students indicating personal caring not always translating into a shared sense of students being able to pronounce on other students' sense of the programme. Thus, whilst very small numbers of students disagreed that the programme had an impact, higher numbers were unsure of the impact on other and their ability to influence others than was the case for previous sections where students commented on their own behaviour. MOT has helped me to make my classroom a friendlier place (81%) MOT has helped other students that I know (81%). Whilst at 70% the student count is substantial by normal metrics, relative to other responses to MOT successes, the lowest student count report was on 'MOT has helped me to develop leadership skills (70%)'. In many cases this was because students indicated that they were 'unsure' (29%) that this was the case (noting that this question required them to evaluate other people's response to them.

The results suggest that about 90% of students feel that they have undergone a change not only within themselves, but also in a more altruistic look toward others. This largely confirms results reported within other sections of the questionnaire.

SECTION 7: MY LIFESTYLE CHOICES

An area of impressive achievement over the years of the MOT programme has been the number of students who have forsaken potentially harmful habits like smoking, drinking and drugs. Students were asked whether they smoked, drank or did drugs before and after the programme. The results are shown in Figure 10. As can be seen 17 stopped smoking, 35 stopped drinking, and 6 stopped used illegal drugs. Whilst not all students stopped these habits, these are regarded as substantial personal successes in the cases of those students who did stop these habits. Given the difficulty that many experience in foregoing these habits, and the generally low success rate that many programmes achieve, the fact that students report having quit these habits at all and in so many cases attests to the impact of the MOT programme.





OVERALL RESPONSES

Question	Yes	Not Sure	No
Treat other students with respect even if they are different from me	96%	4%	0%
Listen to other people's opinions	95%	4%	1%
Help other students if I am able to	95%	5%	0%
Try to see the good points in other students	95%	4%	1%
Have the courage to be myself and to accept myself	94%	5%	1%
MOT has motivated me to complete college	92%	7%	1%
Get to know myself better	92%	8%	1%
MOT has made me want to be a better person	91%	8%	1%
MOT has helped me to think about the choices I make	91%	8%	1%
Always try to be a good person	91%	8%	2%
MOT has made a positive difference in my life	90%	9%	1%
MOT has helped me to care more about other people	90%	9%	1%
Admit if I have done something wrong and say that I'm sorry	90%	7%	3%
Always do my best no matter how hard the task is	89%	10%	1%
MOT has helped to prepare me for life after college	89%	9%	2%
MOT has helped me to focus on my studies & to achieve better grades	89%	9%	1%
MOT has helped me to say NO to things that I think are wrong	89%	7%	4%
Say no if my friends ask me to do something I don't want to do because it is wrong	89%	7%	4%
Be more self-confident	89%	9%	2%
Enjoy making new friends	88%	9%	3%
Identify my feelings if I am happy, sad, upset or angry	87%	12%	1%
Ask others to explain if I don't understand something	85%	10%	5%
MOT has helped me to make my classroom a friendlier place	81%	16%	3%
MOT has helped other students that I know	81%	16%	3%
Be a positive role model for others and my peers	80%	18%	3%
Tell my friends that they are doing wrong things if I know about it	79%	14%	7%
Stand up for someone who is being bullied	77%	17%	6%
Say what I think even if my friends won't like it	73%	14%	13%
MOT has helped me to develop leadership skills	70%	29%	1%

The table above ranks the different responses across the different sections in terms the number of students who felt that they displayed a particular characteristic.

Over 90%

Generally, students felt that they were able to be more caring towards others, and to themselves. Over 90% of students reported that they

- Treat other students with respect even if they are different from me
- Listen to other people's opinions
- Help other students if I am able to
- Try to see the good points in other students
- Have the courage to be myself and to accept myself
- MOT has motivated me to complete college
- Get to know myself better
- MOT has made me want to be a better person
- MOT has helped me to think about the choices I make
- Always try to be a good person
- MOT has made a positive difference in my life
- MOT has helped me to care more about other people
- Admit if I have done something wrong and say that I'm sorry

As indicated elsewhere, these results show that there has been a wide scale impact on students' self-awareness and identity and their commitment toward others. If correct, this bodes well for the participation of these students within a global society increasingly characterised by risk, uncertainty and change and poor global decision making driven by narrow, short term self-interest (Beck, 1992). The results are also encouraging given the broken history of the country and limited access to resources of healing to those most in need of it. That students are able to encounter experiences that result in them professing both a strong sense of self, and a strong sense of self in the world bodes well.

Over 80%

Large numbers of students (often up to 89%) reported that they were more focussed on their studies, were confident enough to request help and were engaging others more

- Always do my best no matter how hard the task is
- MOT has helped to prepare me for life after college
- MOT has helped me to focus on my studies & to achieve better grades
- MOT has helped me to say NO to things that I think are wrong
- Say no if my friends ask me to do something I don't want to do because it is wrong
- Be more self-confident
- Enjoy making new friends
- Identify my feelings if I am happy, sad, upset or angry
- Ask others to explain if I don't understand something

- MOT has helped me to make my classroom a friendlier place
- MOT has helped other students that I know
- Be a positive role model for others and my peers

It is interesting from the result that, whereas the most universal result mostly revolved around students' perception of themselves, the next most universal result revolved around students' ability to engage others in the world, particularly in their immediate community. Tinto's oft-cited theory of student retention in the higher education sector emphasises social integration as a major factor to student retention. This sense of belonging and interacting bodes well for classroom interaction and culture. In the narrow sphere of academic performance. Bourdieu's work on cultural capital and social capital as components of a student's 'habitus' suggests that students need to gain access to non-financial and non-academic resources to engage with educational institutions, particularly if they had not had access to these before. Lave and Wenger's social learning theory (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) suggests that these cultural adaptations are developed within communities of practice as students from disadvantaged backgrounds learn to navigate educational spaces. 'Building a culture of learning' was an important bulwark of post-liberation educational thought, and theory would suggest that this aspiration is built, at least in part, through modes of participation in peer groups. Though the impact of the reported engagement and potential peer solidarity would still need to be assessed, theory suggests that there should be an academic spinoff.

Over 70%

Areas of lesser, but still substantial, success revolved around willingness to influence others.

- Tell my friends that they are doing wrong things if I know about it
- Stand up for someone who is being bullied
- Say what I think even if my friends won't like it
- MOT has helped me to develop leadership skills

The third level of success appears to revolve around willingness to influence the behaviour of others.

SECTION 8: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY STUDENTS ON THE MOT PROGRAMME

At the end of the questionnaire, students were asked to write general comments on their experience/impressions of the MOT programme and/or their MOT coach. Commonly stated themes are illustrated in the extracts below. The selected extracts show the range of student comments, which were overwhelmingly positive. Although students were asked to comment on the MOT programme, many decided instead to comment on the impact that MOT had on their lives, and it is these sentiments are represented here. The effusive praise for the programme and its coaches is not reflected in the comments listed below.

Some students commented on the impact of the MOT programme on their life with specific, concrete examples of observable change. One such area of change, of interest to the college, is that a few students commented directly on their studies.

...helped me so much and I have improved my marks in all my subjects due the study skills that I have learned through the MOT programme. I have also shared ideas and helped most of the students with my MOT skills.

MOT has helped me a lot. In 2015 I was about to drop out of school because I thought I won't be able to come and I didn't even know why I was studying. But MOT gave me hope and a way forward.

The MOT Programme has helped me to have strength to finish all these 3 years [at the college]. At first, I felt that it is impossible but through courage that I got from MOT, it was possible.

MOT made us have healthy competition between our peers, which motivated me to work hard.

Students also commented on how either they had undergone specific personal transformations, or how the culture of the class had been altered, as in these extracts below:

I am now in a much better place than I've been before MOT. Now I know which road I should take to make my life and future better. I can say the same for my classmates as I have seen a change in their attitude. Thanks for the help you did in our college

MOT has changed many lives because I've seen a change in my classmates.

The programme has made a huge impact on our classmates. We have all learned to listen to others' opinions and to appreciate their criticisms.

MOT has helped me to express myself more emotionally. I can express myself without any shame. I can speak up for myself and it helped me see a better future for others I was surrounded with.

MOT helped me to get to know myself and my wants as well as to have more confidence in life. My life has changed a lot since I was introduced to MOT as I have stopped smoking and I don't have a desire to go back to it. I wouldn't want anyone to smoke and I will help anyone to stop smoking.

When I started this programme, I didn't care about other students and have been afraid to tell the lecturer when he/she has made a mistake or have done something wrong. But after doing the programme, I became a new person and I could think more of others and not be afraid to mention to the lecturer that he/she has made a mistake. I thank you, MOT.

MOT has helped me personally to develop from an introvert to someone who would speak to anyone at any time, especially on campus. I have made much better choices in choosing who I get close to as friends/relationships, as well as being helpful and kind to strangers whom I have chosen to ignore in the past.

Bullying has dropped drastically and a change in manner has changed as we now treat others with care and respect, regardless of their skin colour, background and physical appearance/values and health was also highlighted and uplifted

A recurring theme however pointed to less concrete, but tangible results in effecting student perspective changes, or changes in their thinking. Students commented, often reciprocally, that they had learnt to know themselves better, became more confident and learnt to treat others with respect, as illustrated below:

MOT has helped me to know myself better and to be more confident and able to make new friends and be able to stand up for myself

The programme has helped me to grow as a person. It boosted my self-confidence

I would like to thank the presenter of MOT for encouraging me to trust myself. Sometimes when you don't get what you want or achieve your goals, you feel like a loser, but ever since I was involve with MOT I have confidence. MOT has made me a better person for the future

All the MOT sessions I attended was very blessed. I see things differently and I will be doing things differently.

MOT taught me a lot and helped me to grow in my comfort zone and to appreciate myself more.

MOT has played a huge role when it comes to the way I carry myself and the way I see the world and my future.

In particular, students regularly commented that they had learnt skills and understood how to make better choices:

I have also learned to be aware of the choices I make and that they have consequences.

MOT has a huge impact on my life. It makes me take more responsibility and see things in different situations or problems. MOT helped me realize there is always a solution to a problem.

I truly can't describe when I first attended a MOT session. The emotions was overwhelming and at the same point it really captured my thoughts and made me analyse my past mistakes and decisions. And through that I came to learn and understand myself better. I felt as if, finally somebody understands how I felt. It gave me a lot of courage on pursuing my dreams and my goals. And for that I will be eternally grateful and with this I promise to liv by the values to uplift others as well as myself. [emphasis added]

MOT helped me to know myself, what I want and why I came to further my education. After I attended the MOT sessions, I developed confidence and courage in everything I do. MOT removed and eased every doubt I had about the course I chose

Students also commented on values changes in terms of being more caring, more involved (saying No) and taking responsibility, in line with the MOT slogans of 'courage to say NO, to care and to act':

MOT has helped me to be friendly and be able to communicate respectfully with others in my classroom because before the programme, I wasn't very friendly. ...Through this programme, I have learnt to care, love and to respect others, as well as to be able to express how I feel. I have learnt

to be a better person, to help my classmates where I can and to help those who are victims to bully and abuse. I appreciate the MOT presenters and I am grateful for the change MOT has brought to my life.

MOT has helped me to care more about other people, as well as to make good choices.

Above and beyond learning confidence, students commented on learning definite skills that enabled them to address life and themselves differently. Students noted that skills which are potentially taken for granted and not taught in the normal curriculum were learnt on the programme in a structured way which enabled students' personal and social development:

...we learnt new skills during the MOT sessions that improve the way we think about ourselves and others.

The MOT Programme helped me to know my values and what I should stand for in life, what to do and when to do it.

The MOT sessions have been very helpful because I learned to engage with others more better.

MOT has helped me develop and know more about different situations in life. I will keep on holding on to the MOT values and principles.

... [MOT] give you the courage to say no to things you do not agree to.

MOT has helped me so much as I have learned to treat my classmates with respect. I now have the courage to care, to live and to say no.

... taught me to think twice before doing or saying anything. I've learnt to accept my surroundings and people around me.

There were also comments about growing social interactions amongst students:

MOT opened my mindset as I have met new friends, gained more knowledge and have learned my students' cultures.

. I have learnt a lot in these sessions. I so wish that I can attend more of the sessions. I have made friends that I could talk to when I have problems.

In the programme, I've learned to stand in front of other people and how to communicate my own thoughts.

I like the MOT programme because it helped me to say no if I don't want something and it helped me to love others. I also know how to encourage other people and after attending the programme, I feel more confident.

Besides the generalised praise and support for the programme, some students offered specific comments about how the programme was run. Whilst it is important to contextualise these comments, since students mostly raised issues as

extensions and not criticisms, for the purpose of completeness these comments are mentioned here. There was a refrain that the programme should be extended to other communities. Individual comments were made that MOT coaches could come to campuses and that a camp would be beneficial. However, the general consensus was that the programme was fun and very helpful and that the coaches were "awesome". Perhaps the most representative quote of the general sentiment toward the programme was that:

MOT is a good programme as it changes the character of many people. It teaches you to behave respectfully.

CONCLUSIONS

As reported in previous reports, the results have been fairly consistent across the reports, with marginal differences. From the results, it would appear that the MOT programme continues to make positive gains regarding how TVET college students perceive themselves and others, building positive attitudes, increasing resilience, and influencing better choices. Students in the MOT programme have also reported being more motivated to become better students and to complete their studies, an important influence given the high drop-out and failure rates at TVET colleges. Though a majority of students report positive responses, there are a number of students who are less certain about whether they have overcome the difficulty of confront peers who act out wrong behaviours or of taking leadership.

As in previous reports, it is suggested that students who have experienced the MOT programme at college are tracked at later points in their lives in order to ascertain whether there have been any lasting impacts of the MOT programme, or whether they have retained the positive attitudes that they reported so soon after their MOT experiences

IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

The results of this report have various implications for policy and practice. Three areas in particularly are highlighted here. The first area is that students highlighted the positive impact of MOT on their academic motivation and persistence. Given that DHET reported a dropout rate of about 46% with only 30% of those registered passing, it is important that we understand this impact. If the impact can be validated by other means, then it would emphasise the importance of non-academic means to achieving academic results. The importance of non-academic activity to achieving academic performance KPIs may be counter-intuitive for college managements resulting in the marginalisation of non-academic interventions in timetabling and budgeting considerations and the allocation of appropriate status.

A second implication is that internationally thinking around what constitutes competence is being revised to move beyond narrow technical competence. However these understandings of competence have not necessarily taken root in the current teaching and assessment regimes in South Africa (Jacobs, 2016). There is some evidence that employers are concerned about so-called 'soft skills' gaps within the South African context and that this serves as an impediment to TVET student employability (Papier *et al.*, 2016), also a key KPI for colleges.

A third implication of the results is that students are reporting a positive impact on their value systems, self-esteem and life courses. Early policy attempts to develop a values-based curriculum did not develop mechanisms by which to do so. This failure has arguably contributed toward creating a climate for an instrumentalist, performativity based curriculum

measured in terms of 'academic performance' and 'employability', and has left the humane dimension of education to chance. Recent events in South Africa suggest the importance of leadership and a strong ethical culture, based on a self-aware and caring citizenry. Older events in South Africa's history which have continued into the present suggest a strong need for South Africa and South Africans to be granted opportunities for healing. And those students who have the least protection from disruptive life events and circumstance also tragically have the least access to resources to assist them to cope. Failure to specifically plan for such a curriculum which develops courageous, self-confident and socially aware human beings, and which provides access to a set of tools for the most vulnerable to develop a measure of resilience, runs counter to the history of this country. If the results of feedback from students reported here are any indication, then we can be cautiously optimistic that there are signs of a nationally replicable model that can be taken to scale from which can be drawn seeds of a renewed national conversation about the 'what' and 'how to' of values being embedded in curriculum.

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