

MOT SA RESEARCH REPORT
FET COLLEGE STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE MOT
LIFE-SKILLS PROGRAMME

**Research Report prepared by the FET Institute,
University of the Western Cape**

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INTRODUCTION

The first cohort of FET college students completed a three-year pilot of the MOT SA life-skills training programme (hereafter referred to as 'MOT') in 2011. At the request of MOT, a report was compiled in 2012 by the Further Education and Training Institute (FETI) of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) on the basis of a student survey that MOT had conducted to ascertain the impact of the programme on college students who had completed the intervention. The 2012 Report provided detailed information on the programme content which will not be repeated herein. Since the pilot programme was introduced, five of the six Western Cape FET colleges have introduced the programme at their campuses and more facilitators have been trained.

During 2012, research was conducted with a second cohort who had completed the MOT programme between 2010 and 2012, and the FET Institute (UWC), was again requested to report on the results of student surveys with the exiting students. By the end of 2012, 378 students had exited the full programme and this 2013 Report is the outcome of the 2012 study. A copy of the questionnaire administered to students is available on request.

The goals of the MOT programme are expressed in the focus areas of the questions addressed to students regarding their experiences of the programme. The questionnaire places a strong emphasis on self-knowledge, personal development and responsibility, caring for others, respect and affirmation, in line with the themes of the programme content.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In this study, 353 student questionnaires were completed by students who had undergone 3 years of MOT training, a representative sample of the 378 students who had completed MOT. Compared with the 86 students in the 2011 study, there were 267 more students in the 2012 survey.

In the Western Cape, the programme was delivered at campuses of Boland College, College of Cape Town, False Bay College, West Coast College and Northlink College to students across the three levels of the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programmes.

ANALYSIS OF THE MOT DATA

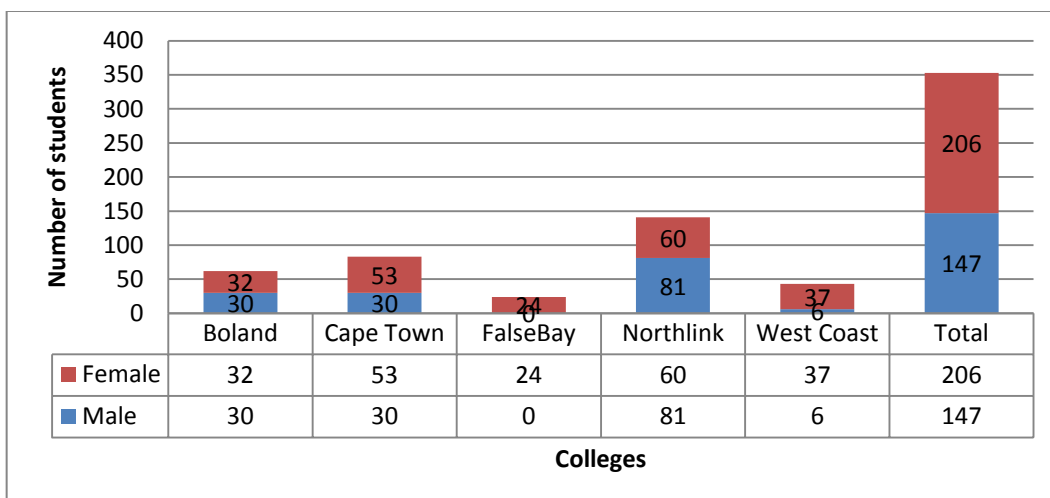
The questionnaire administered to college students contains the same set of questions students were requested to answer in the pilot research in 2011. Questions covered biographical information, and categories of questions related to how the MOT programme had impacted on students' classroom interactions with other students, on their personal values and attitudes, and on their personal choices. Students were asked to answer 'yes', 'no' or 'not sure' in 5 cloze procedure exercises, while the 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, and 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 were allowed to 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.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The respondents consisted of **206 female** students in the study, and **147 males** (see Fig.1). There were no male students in the study conducted with Early Childhood Development (ECD) students at False Bay College. The sample at West Coast College had a relatively small number of males. Only at Northlink College were male students the majority of the respondents.

FIGURE 1: STUDENT RESPONDENTS BY COLLEGE AND GENDER



SECTION 1: ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

FIGURE 2: STUDENT ACCESS TO CELL-PHONE AND INTERNET TECHNOLOGY

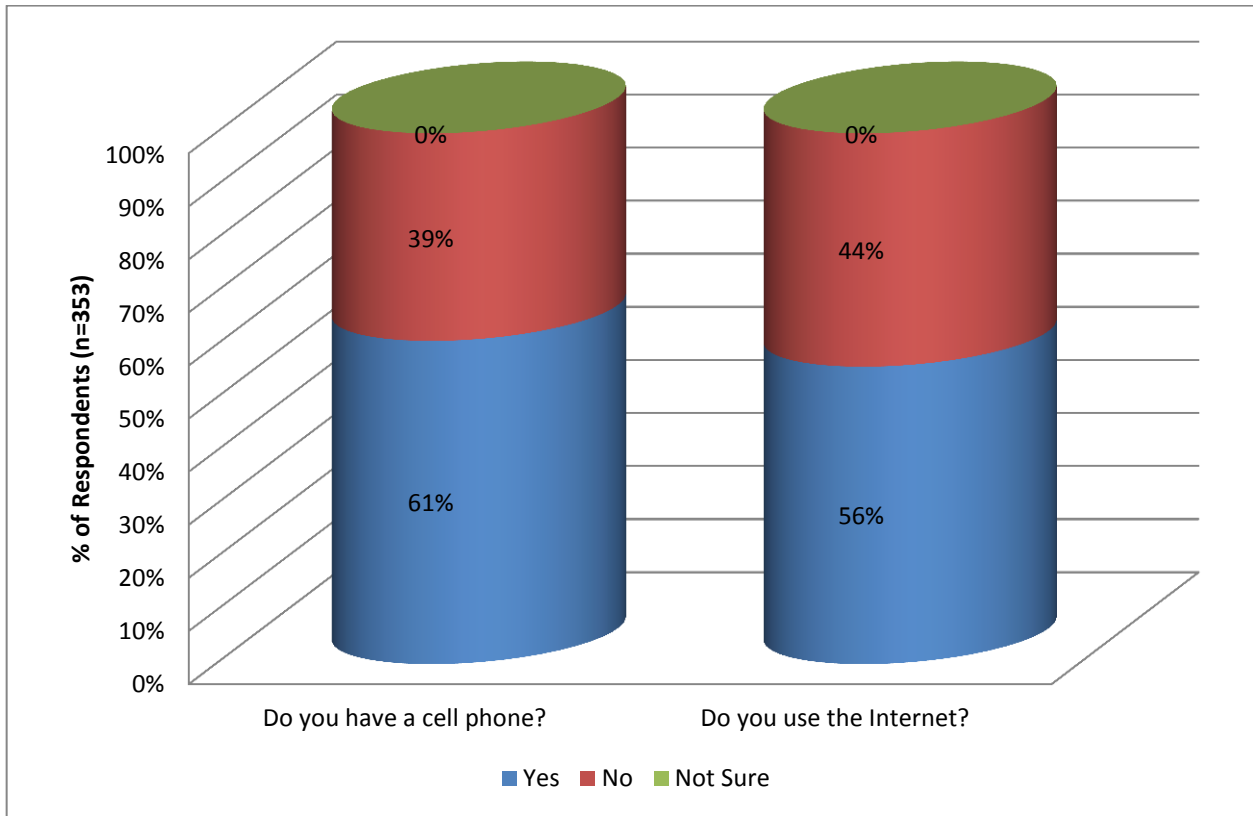
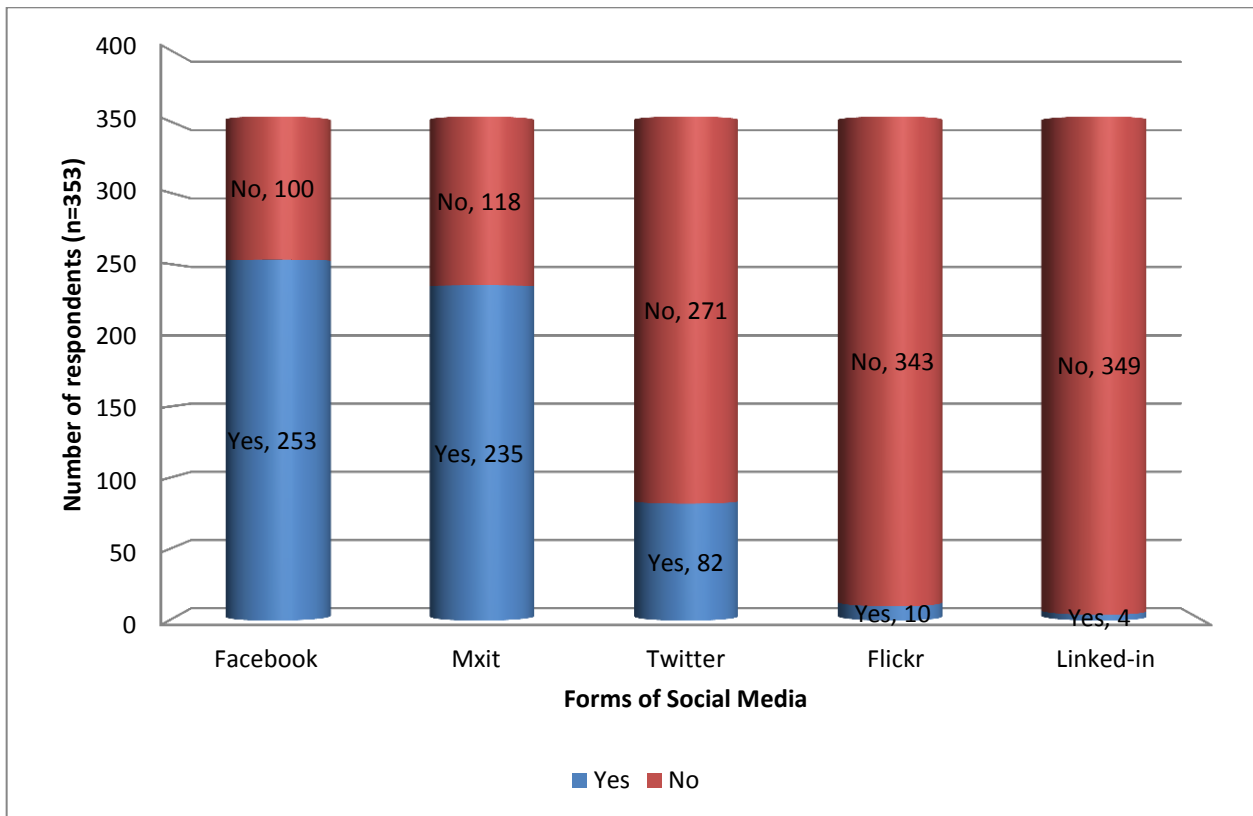


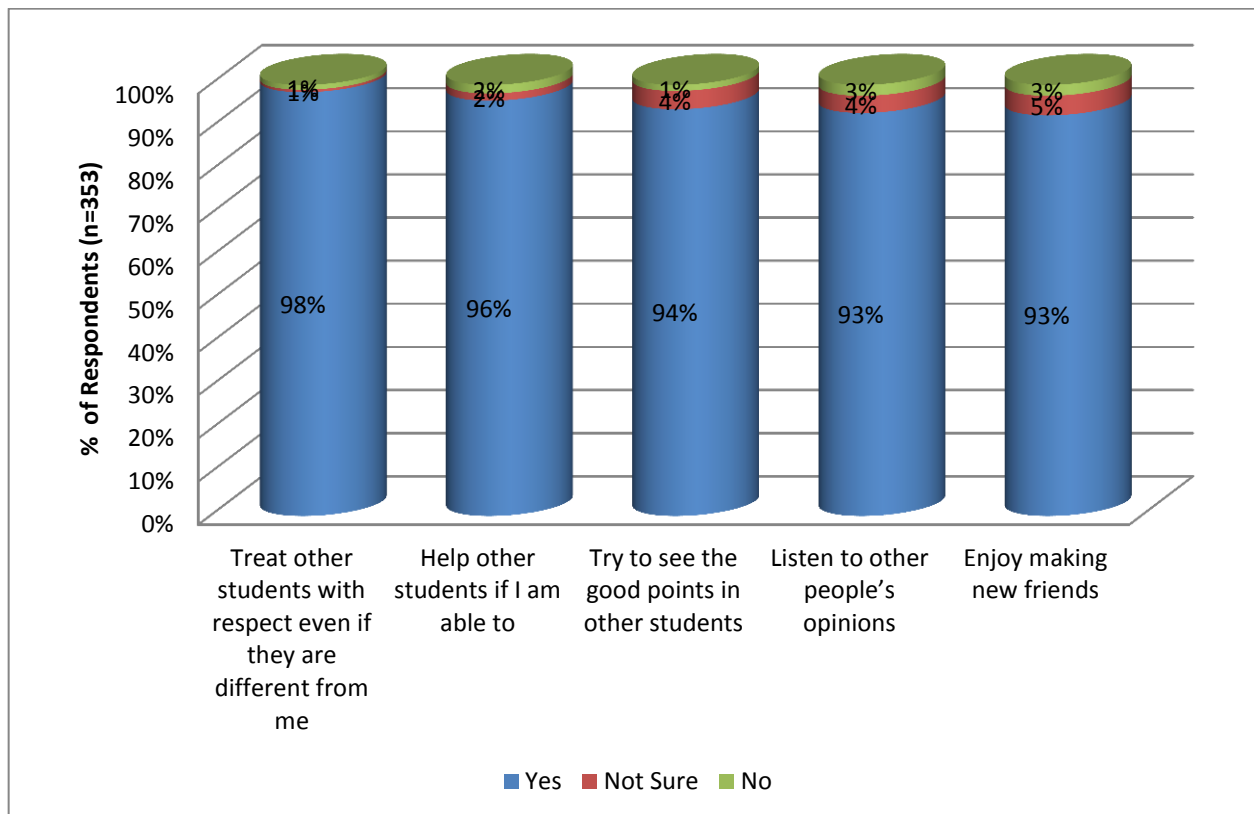
FIGURE 3: STUDENTS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA



As shown in Figures 2 and 3 above, most respondents had cell-phones (61%), with fewer accessing the internet (56%). Social media applications, Facebook (72%) and Mixit (66%) users were in the majority, with a small number (23%) using Twitter and very few using Flickr and Linked-in. Mxit is a mobile phone application which is extremely low cost for messaging, and most smartphones are able to access Facebook cheaply as well.

SECTION 2: IMPACT ON CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS

FIGURE 4: STUDENT RESPONSES ON POSITIVE IMPACT OF MOT ON CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS



Responses on the positive impact of MOT on classroom interactions with peers were overwhelmingly positive, with all of the elements achieving positive responses in the high 90's. 'Treating other students with respect' received the greatest affirmative response (98%), followed by 'Help other students if I am able to' (96%), with 'listening to other people's opinions' and 'enjoy making new friends' being equally positive at 93%. The responses which achieved the highest and the lowest scores are identical to that depicted in the 2012 research.

SECTION 3: IMPACT ON PERSONAL GROWTH

FIGURE 5: STUDENT RESPONSES TO POSITIVE IMPACT OF MOT ON PERSONAL GROWTH

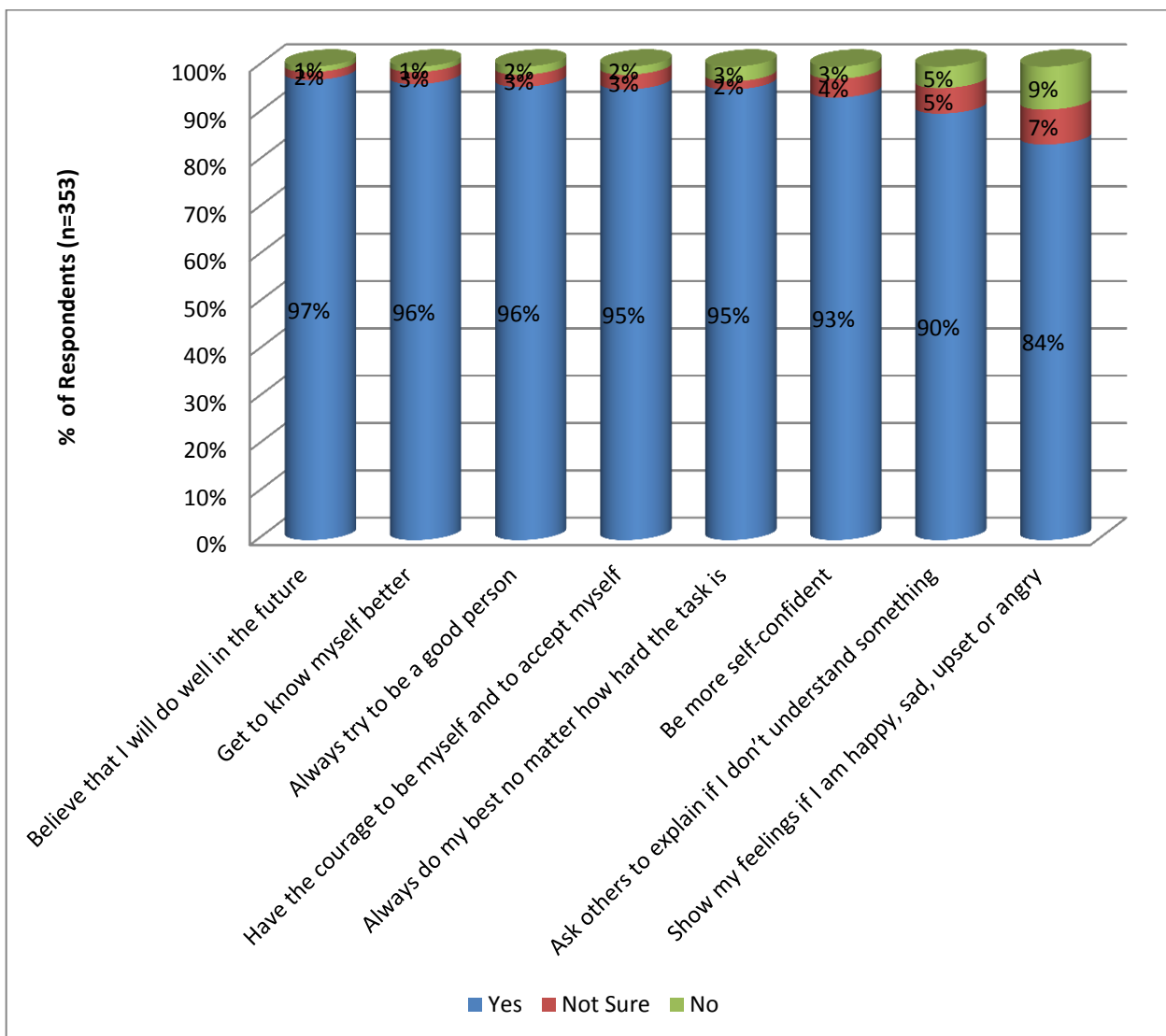
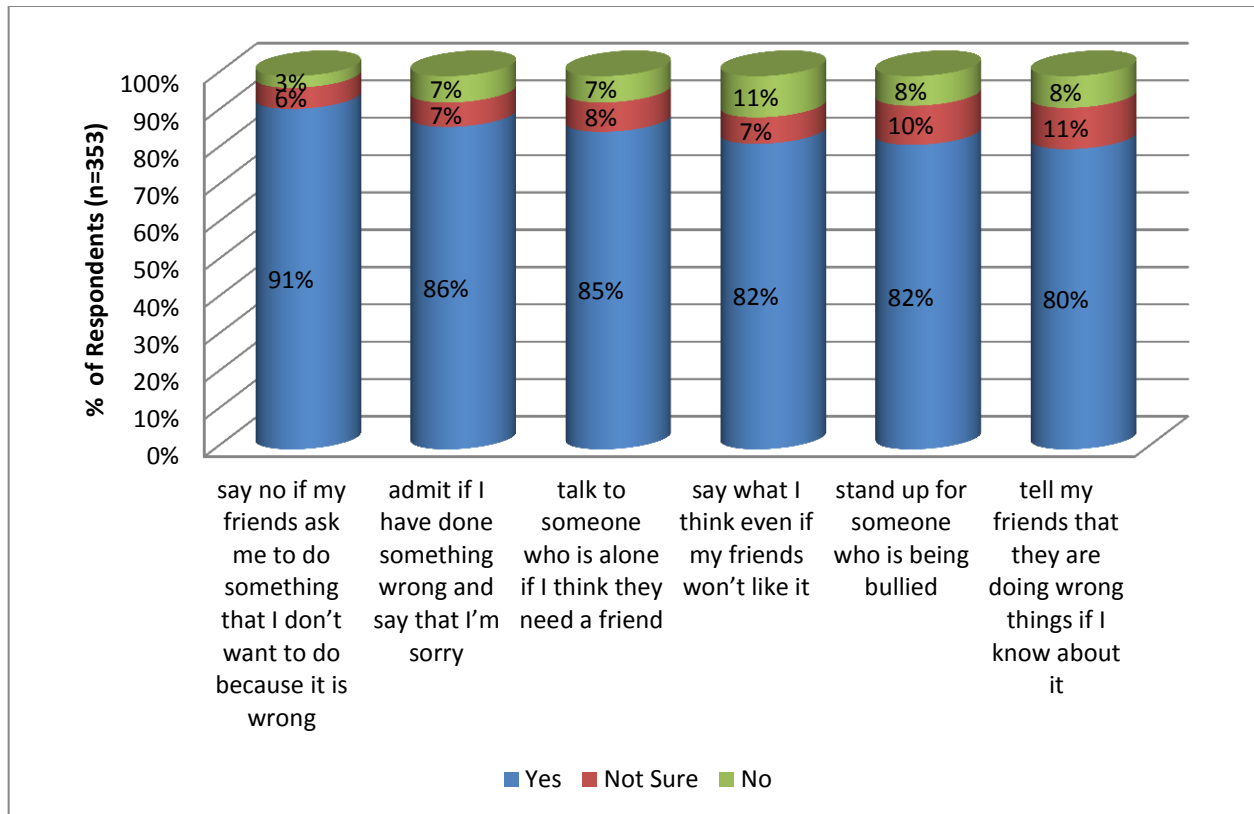


Figure 5 again shows highly positive responses to the impact of MOT on personal growth, particularly self-belief (97%), self-knowledge (96%), and self-acceptance (95%). Self-confidence was lower at 93% relative to the other attributes, and self-expression of emotions relatively low at 84%. Scores here showed an overall percentage improvement compared with the 2012 research. In contrast with the 2012 report where ‘have the courage to be myself and accept myself’ had been the highest score at 95% of respondents, in 2013, 97% of students said that they ‘believe that I will do well in the future. ‘Always try to be a good person’ also scored comparatively higher (96%) than in 2012 (91%). In spite of these shifts, the lowest number of students (84%) again indicated that they had difficulty ‘to show my feelings if I am happy, sad, upset or angry’, although overall the number of respondents who answered in this way increased from 70% in 2012

to 84% in 2013. Relative to 2012 therefore, there was an upward trend in the number of respondents who felt they would be able to show their emotions.

SECTION 4: IMPACT ON PERSONAL VALUES

FIGURE 6: STUDENT RESPONSES TO POSITIVE IMPACT OF MOT ON PERSONAL VALUES

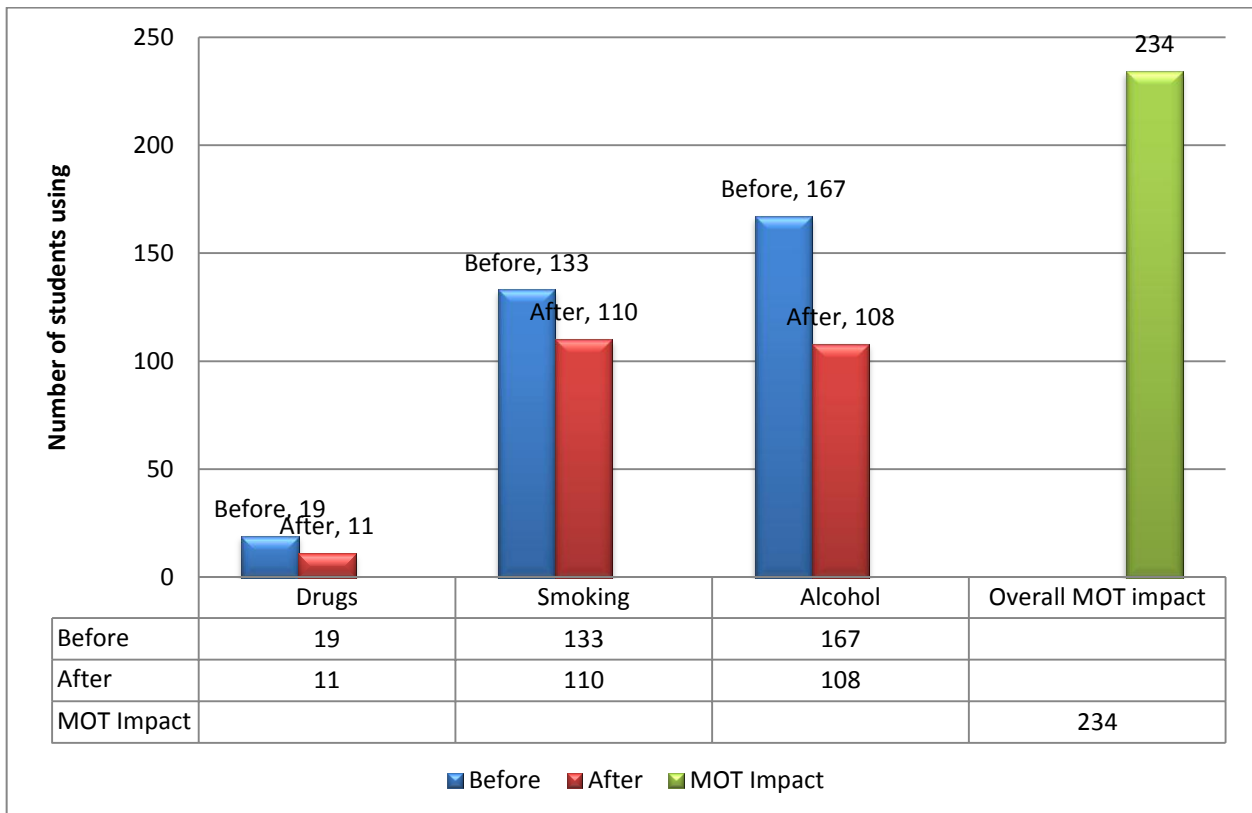


Here respondents were challenged to think about whether MOT had assisted them in how they responded to uncomfortable situations involving their friends, and which demanded some adherence to personal values. From Fig. 6 above, students were highly confident (91%) that they could refuse to do something if they knew it was wrong, but it appeared to be less easy to own up and apologise for wrong-doing (86%). It was even harder to discourage friends from wrong-doing (80%) and to defend a peer against bullying (82%).

However, there was a marginal improvement in 2013 in the number of respondents (82%) who would 'stand up for someone who is being bullied' (80% in 2012), and 'saying what I think even if my friends won't like it' (from 80% in 2012 to 82% in 2013).

SECTION 5: IMPACT ON PERSONAL LIFESTYLE CHOICES

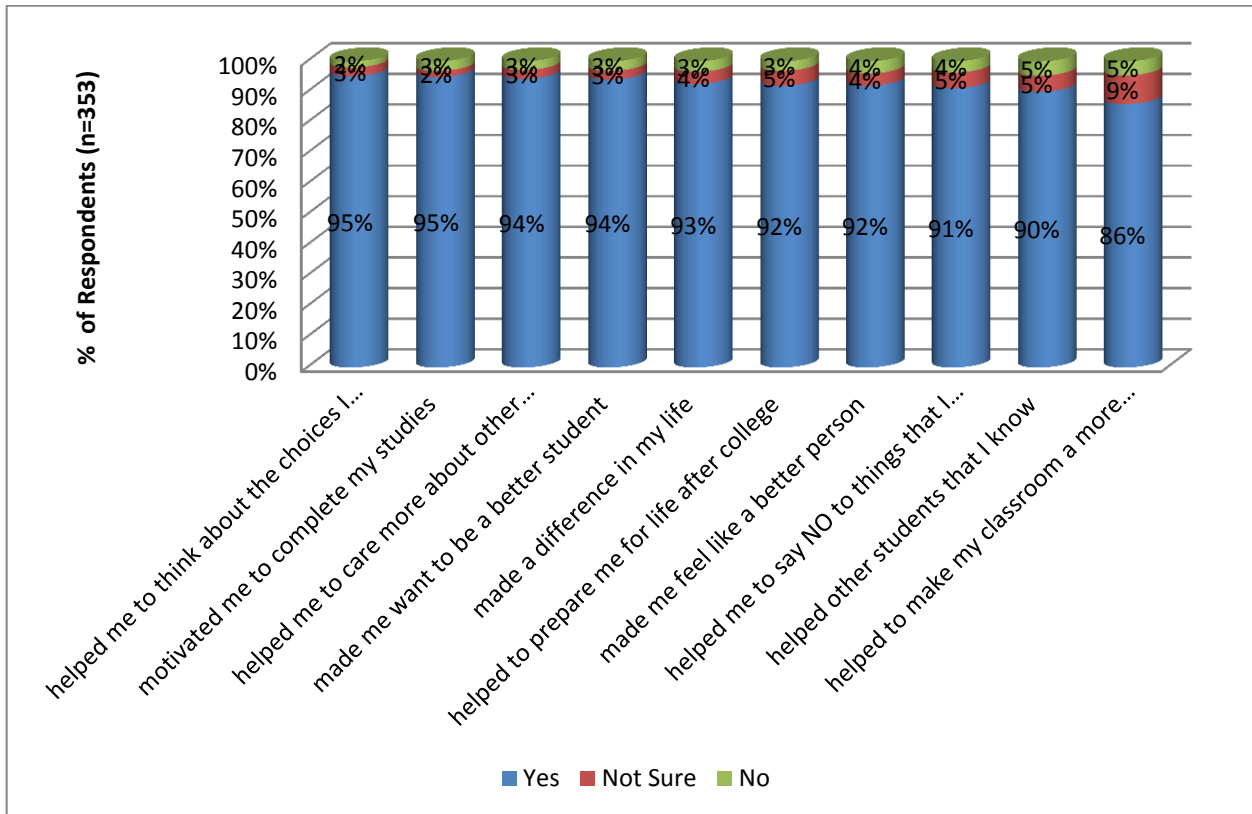
FIGURE 7: STUDENTS' LIFESTYLE CHOICES BEFORE AND AFTER MOT



In terms of MOTs impact on personal lifestyle choices, there was a decline in drug usage, smoking and alcohol consumption, attributed by respondents to the influence of the MOT intervention. It is disconcerting nonetheless that of the total number of respondents 167 (47%) acknowledged that they had consumed alcohol, and 133 (38%) were smokers. Even though there were relatively few drug users (19 or 5% of respondents), the potential negative social impact of these lifestyle choices is considerable. The decrease in the number of those consuming alcohol showed the greatest decrease (59 students), while 23 stopped smoking. This shows a larger overall decrease in the number of students who quit drinking and smoking between 2010 and 2012 as a result of the MOT programme (according to them).

SECTION 6: OVERALL RESPONSES TO THE MOT PROGRAMME

FIGURE 8: STUDENT RESPONSES TO OVERALL POSITIVE IMPACT OF MOT

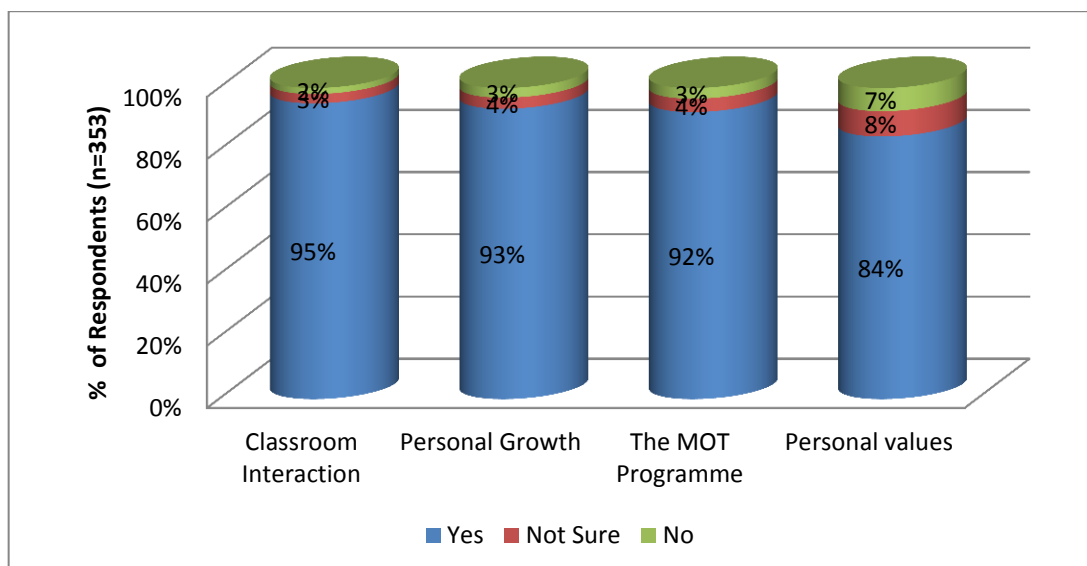


Section 6 of the questionnaire dealt with overall responses to the MOT programme, represented in Figure 8 above, which shows the percentage of students who attributed MOT to positively influencing them in the above behaviours/attitudes. The questions covered a range of issues regarding MOTs impact on choices, motivation in studies, caring for others, preparation for life, making a difference and classroom atmosphere. There were small numbers of ‘not sure’ responses to each of these elements, but the positive responses were all above 90%, except for the element ‘...to make my classroom a more friendly place’, which was 86%. MOTs influence on ‘thinking about choices I make’ was evident as 95% respondents agreed on this, and the impact on ‘motivation to complete my studies’ was also high at 95%. Overall, compared with the 2012 Report, there was an improvement in the numbers of respondents who agreed on the positive impact of MOT in relation to the items listed in Figure 8, particularly in the movement from 78% to 90% of those who said that ‘MOT has helped other students that I know’. This may be evidence of the expansion of MOT in the colleges, where, contrary to the first pilot

intervention which had a smaller number of students, students in this research ‘know’ more students who have been through the MOT programmes and have been positively affected by it.

Figure 9 below shows averages of the responses across all the items within each of the Sections of the questionnaire. It shows that the impact of MOT was strongest on classroom interactions and personal growth (95% and 93% respectively). The impact on personal values came in slightly lower at 84%. This averaged response shows that the overwhelming majority of students responded positively to the programme and found that it helped them across all the areas of the MOT programme goals. The overall positive response to the MOT programme increased in 2013 (92%) from that of 88% in 2012. The perceived impact on personal growth also improved from 89% in 2012, to 93% in 2013.

FIGURE 9: AVERAGED RESPONSES BY SECTION



To conclude this section on the quantitative research findings, a ranked table is provided below, listing the individual attributes referred to in the MOT questionnaire, and showing how students responded in a ranked order from highest to lowest (for positive responses) on all the items tested. It begins to highlight the areas in which MOT apparently had the highest success rates. From the table below, five attributes most positively affected by MOT (all above 95%), were in relation to respect for difference, self-knowledge and self-belief. This contrasts somewhat with the five that scored between 80-85%, which were all related to challenging others and being honest/open about personal feelings.

TABLE 1: RANKED LISTING OF ATTRIBUTES BY NUMBER OF STUDENTS POSITIVELY AFFECTED

The MOT Programme helped me to:	Yes	Not Sure	No
Treat other students with respect even if they are different from me	98%	1%	1%
Believe that I will do well in the future	97%	2%	1%
Get to know myself better	96%	3%	1%
Help other students if I am able to	96%	2%	2%
Always try to be a good person	96%	3%	2%
Think about the choices I make	95%	3%	2%
Always do my best no matter how hard the task is	95%	2%	3%
Have the courage to be myself and to accept myself (Motivated me to) complete my studies	95%	3%	2%
Care more about other people	95%	2%	3%
Care more about other people	94%	3%	3%
See the good points in other students	94%	4%	1%
Want to be a better student	94%	3%	3%
Be more self-confident	94%	3%	3%
Listen to other people's opinions	93%	4%	3%
Enjoy making new friends	93%	4%	3%
Make a difference in my life	93%	5%	3%
Feel like a better person	93%	4%	3%
Prepare for life after college	92%	4%	4%
Prepare for life after college	92%	5%	3%
Say NO to things that I think are wrong	91%	5%	4%
Say no if my friends ask me to do something that I don't want to do because it is wrong	91%	6%	3%
Ask others to explain if I don't understand something (and) helped other students that I know	90%	5%	5%
Admit if I have done something wrong and say that I'm sorry	90%	5%	5%
Admit if I have done something wrong and say that I'm sorry	86%	7%	7%
Make my classroom a more friendly place	86%	9%	5%
Talk to someone who is alone if I think they need a friend	86%	9%	5%
Talk to someone who is alone if I think they need a friend	85%	8%	7%
Show my feelings if I am happy, sad, upset or angry	84%	7%	9%
Show my feelings if I am happy, sad, upset or angry	84%	7%	9%
Say what I think even if my friends won't like it	82%	7%	11%
Stand up for someone who is being bullied	82%	10%	8%
Tell my friends that they are doing wrong things if I know about it	82%	10%	8%
Tell my friends that they are doing wrong things if I know about it	80%	11%	8%
Grand Total	91%	5%	4%

SECTION 7: 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 presenter. There were no noticeable differences that could be attributed to particular campuses, in the views expressed. The comments were overwhelmingly positive, with no significantly negative views. Therefore the commonly stated themes across all the campuses were as follows (the italicised parts are meant to illustrate the specific area of impact that students perceived the MOT programme to have on their lives):

Positive comments:

MOT is a good programme because it helps people not to give up on their dreams and be confident about yourself and *not to do things in order to please your friends*.

The MOT programme is great because they are encouraging young people to learn more about life *and how to live life and what you must expect*.

The MOT presenters are very friendly, kind and respectful. Sweet and caring for people. They are brilliant they helped me to *realise how my dreams are important to me*.

It really helps you to be more confident about yourself and how you *shouldn't let anything put you down*.

It has opened my eyes to actually think outside the box. It has *taught me to be more open-minded about new people* and they are caring and very friendly presenters.

MOT has taught me about values and morals, standards, how to make decisions, how to think positive (sic) *and to not judge people because of their skin colour*, I enjoyed it a lot and it will make me go an extra mile.

I am enjoying every moment with the MOT programme, I have learned a lot. *Thought my day was going to be bored but I was wrong it was very awesome*. Thank you for encouraging me and help us learn more about life, it already boost my confidence really. Thank you.

It was a great session, I learnt a lot and the MOT presenters made us feel welcome, they were very warm. *I'm a shy person but they made me realise that I can reach my full potential* and I can become a better person.

I enjoyed the MOT programme and learnt a lot about making choices. *Think before saying things* and sometimes it's good to help others and you always need to be friendly.

I would like to say the MOT presenters have done a great job, I learnt a lot and I hope that this programme will continue for years to come and continue *inspiring South African young adults*.

At the *first time we used to bunk the MOT sessions but as time went by, we saw what we missed out on*. So I'm trying to say MOT rocks. There is no need to go to a councillor. MOT is our councillor (sic).

MOT is good and it makes you learn to *believe in yourself and believe in your dream*. It teaches us to help other people and accept them the way they are and make your own decisions. You can continue with your studies. MOT teaches me how to make choices. I want to say thank you – I learnt a lot. I will never put myself behind – Show Courage.

I have had a great experience with the MOT programme and would very much love it if the MOT programme can continue making a difference in other people's lives. There are *many out there who have a difficulty believing in themselves and they let their hard every day circumstances determine their future* and say that they can never be anything in life. MOT can help those reach their full potential and give them the power to make a better, brighter future for themselves.

The MOT programme made me believe in myself. *Anything is possible in life*, it just depends on yourself as a person. MOT made me competent in my studies – I believed I could do it.

I enjoyed the MOT sessions a lot 😊. It helped me with all the things I have ticked off *and it was all for free*. Our MOT presenter is very funny. She is comfortable to work with. She is a person that I can look up to. She has a lot of patience with us and would always correct us. I think that she's the perfect person to present such activities. Her heart is on the right place. Thanks a lot!!

I really enjoyed my time attending the MOT programme. It is very *mind opening* and interesting and really made me realise lots of things about myself. *Even things that I really didn't want to deal with and it really changed the way I make my decisions*. The MOT presenter that we had was amazing and wonderful. She really spoke from the heart and I loved the fact that she could relate with us and that really made me feel comfortable to express myself. Thanks a million 😊.

The person that is presenting the MOT programme is the motivation. She does not speak what she doesn't practise or convey. I'm mostly motivated by her, as it is said "actions speak louder than words." *I haven't fully changed yet, but I'm in the process and I believe that I will change for a better character*. The programme is fantastic and it does send out a positive message. Overall, I'm impressed.

I liked MOT because *it helped me with my studies through Level 4* and now I am going to do my Diploma. So it helped me a lot throughout my studies. Thank you for being there all the time Meagan.

I'm grateful that I participated in the MOT programme. I wish that this programme could involve the community because *most of the teenagers need this guidance about how to live their lives and how to make a difference in someone else's life*. I hope my suggestion will be taken in action because I live in the community and I can see how *youth are destroying their future by doing the wrong things in life*. I really enjoyed this programme!

She is so passionate about it and she always encourages and motivates us to be part of the session all the time. *I wish I can also be a MOT facilitator one day*.

MOT *helped the students at this campus in drugs. Ever since we had MOT the rate of drugs reduced*.

The MOT programme has made me what I am today. The teacher that present MOT made me feel comfortable and I really enjoy it to be in class. MOT has given me the

courage and the person presenting MOT made me see that I can do anything that I want to do if I set my mind to it. *After a session I feel very positive about my life.*

MOT is the best. *It has helped me with my studies and exams. My marks have improved a lot. MOT is the best.*

From my side the MOT sessions must continue and I know it will make a difference in somebody else's life. The MOT programme and *the passionate MOT presenters must go on with what they are doing for they motivates and encourages me.* Thank you.

The MOT programme is a good tool to use in the near future. It developed me personally. *I am more confident and have courage to say no to things I don't feel comfortable of.* It helps me to do the right things and be more positive.

The MOT programme helped me to get a better study plan.

MOT *helped me to show respect to others even to myself, to care for others and to help them, to love others the way they are.* The MOT presenter was always and is still a loving, caring, helping and a respectful person. Always help others and try his best to get better for others.

I am very proud of MOT *because it encouraged me with so many things to be proud of myself.* MOT presenter helped me in a difficult time, if he was not here, I will not be able to be where I am today. I am also very proud of him.

MOT has helped me to care about others and made a better and stronger person in life. I also have the courage to stand up for myself and speak with more confidence. *I also learned to say no to wrong things in life and have a chance to make a difference in my life.*

Before the college introduce me to MOT, I was very shy and not comfortable with myself. After I started going to MOT programme, I started feeling more comfortable with myself and be more confident. *I start to speak in front of the class and made myself available for SRC.* I stand up for other people especially when a person gets bullied or being treated unfairly. I also start to take initiative in doing things in class without teachers/lecturers asking me to do.

Our MOT presenter is very encouraging, and *she helped me a lot, without knowing.* I've learned not to be negative. I have to embrace myself with positive people and a positive environment.

The MOT programme has taught me that *you shouldn't judge people just by their appearance.* It has also helped me to believe more in myself and it has helped me to *have a more open relationship with my mother.* The MOT presenter has proven to me that no matter what I go through in life, it's not the end of the world.

MOT has helped me *to see more in myself than what I used to.* After doing MOT I became a better person towards my family and friends and classmates. My MOT presenter really went way and beyond for me and my classmates. Thank you MOT.

MOT was fun for me. I enjoyed it so much and learned a lot. MOT made me a better person, *motivated me to complete my studies*, helped me to prepare me for my life after college, helped me also to say no to things that I think is wrong.

I think that it is wonderful that the MOT programme has been introduced to our college. It has helped me a lot in different stages *to deal with issues that are important to us*. I hope that it still be running in the future.

MOT has taught me to believe in myself even if no one else does. *What a fantastic way to boost someone's self-confidence!* I feel like a new person. My views about life changed from negative to positive and I have got to thank MOT for it!!!

Summary of students' views

It was clear from the views expressed above, that students were grateful for the opportunity to participate in MOT, and could draw on the values that the programme had emphasised, for example, courage to stand up for what is right, to be more accepting of others, to see oneself more positively, to pursue one's dreams and so on. The only two negative comments that could be detected were in regard to the length of the sessions, as in:

'It was very long...' ; and

'It was very nice being here. I learnt some stuff in life but it was a bit long for me'.

Most students mentioned the impact of the presenter, and it was evident that the presenters had made a strong impact on students' experience of the programme. Clearly the programme has been successful in selecting the right 'ambassadors' for the MOT programme in the people who have been trained as facilitators.

CONCLUSIONS

From the overall data, the perceived benefits of the MOT programme were enormous in the lives of the participating students.

Key perceived strengths of MOT (scores 95-100%)

- Treat other students with respect even if they are different from me
- Believe that I will do well in the future
- Get to know myself better
- Help other students if I am able to
- Always try to be a good person
- Think about the choices I make

- Always do my best no matter how hard the task is
- Have the courage to be myself and to accept myself
- Motivated me to complete my studies

Areas which show relatively weaker results (scores of 80-85%):

- Talk to someone who is alone if I think they need a friend
- Show my feelings if I am happy, sad, upset or angry
- Say what I think even if my friends won't like it
- Stand up for someone who is being bullied
- Tell my friends that they are doing wrong things if I know about it.

The areas of lowest impact could perhaps be attributed to how children are socialised in their home environments, and the kinds of peer pressure that youths are subjected to, particularly in areas where gangsterism, abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, and so on, are rife. In these depressed social circumstances, associating with particular persons, or disapproval of particular negative behaviours could be extremely dangerous. Nonetheless, the reasons for this would have to be explored further and be empirically determined. Within the scope of the MOT programme it would have to be ascertained whether specific interventions could perhaps strengthen student behaviours in these aspects. It is probable that a longer term intervention, starting at an earlier age, might be more successful in addressing the weaker behaviours.

In addition, there is still a need for long term tracking of MOT students to assess whether, or in what ways, MOT has had a lasting impact on students' lives and on the choices they have had to make along the way.

In closing, the FET Institute would like to thank MOT SA for giving it the opportunity to participate in this research. We are proud to be associated with such an important intervention in the lives of marginalised young people at FET colleges in South Africa.