

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, reports were compiled in 2012 and 2013 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 first report in 2012 provided detailed information on the programme content which will not be repeated herein. Since the pilot programme was introduced, all 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 of 378 students who had completed the MOT programme, and the FET Institute (UWC) produced a Report in 2013. This 2014 Report will therefore be the third successive report since the programme was piloted.

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

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

There were 455 students who completed the MOT programme in 2013 (up from 378 in 2012), spread across 8 campuses of 5 FET colleges in the Western Cape: Boland College, College of Cape Town, False Bay College, Northlink College and West Coast College. The distribution of MOT students by campus is provided in Figure 1 below, but there were 9 MOT classes in total that completed the programme in 2013.

ANALYSIS OF THE MOT DATA

The questionnaire administered to colleges has consistently had the same structure and elements as 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

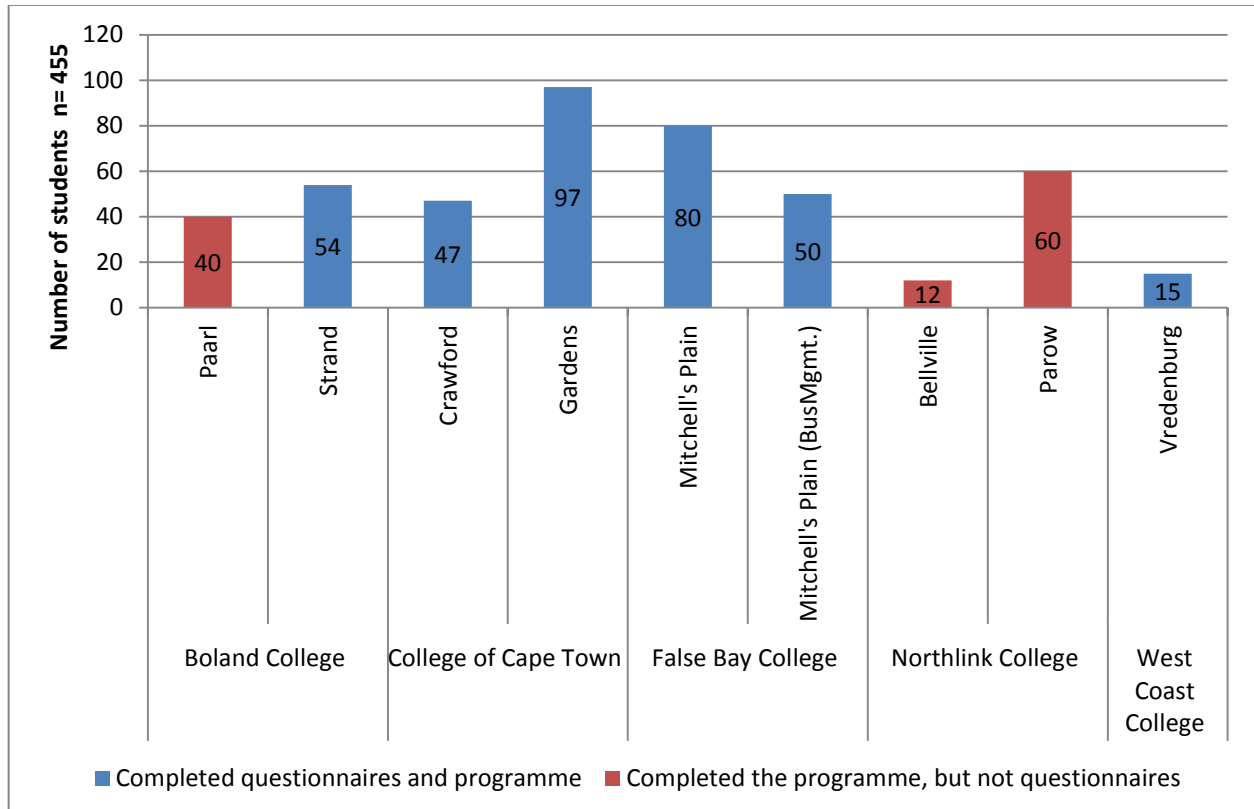
their personal choices. Students were asked to answer 'yes', 'no' or 'not sure' in 5 cloze procedure exercises, while the final section asked for written comments on the programme. The questions in each section were based on the content areas that were covered in the MOT curriculum, and students were 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.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

There were 455 students who completed the MOT programme in 2013. Of these 343 (75%) students responded to the questionnaire. The distribution of MOT students by campus is provided in Figure 1. This shows that there were 9 MOT classes at 8 campuses spread across 5 colleges in the Western Cape. Figure 1 also indicates the three campuses that did not respond to the questionnaire.

FIGURE 1: MOT STUDENTS AND RESPONDENTS BY CAMPUS



SECTION 1: ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

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

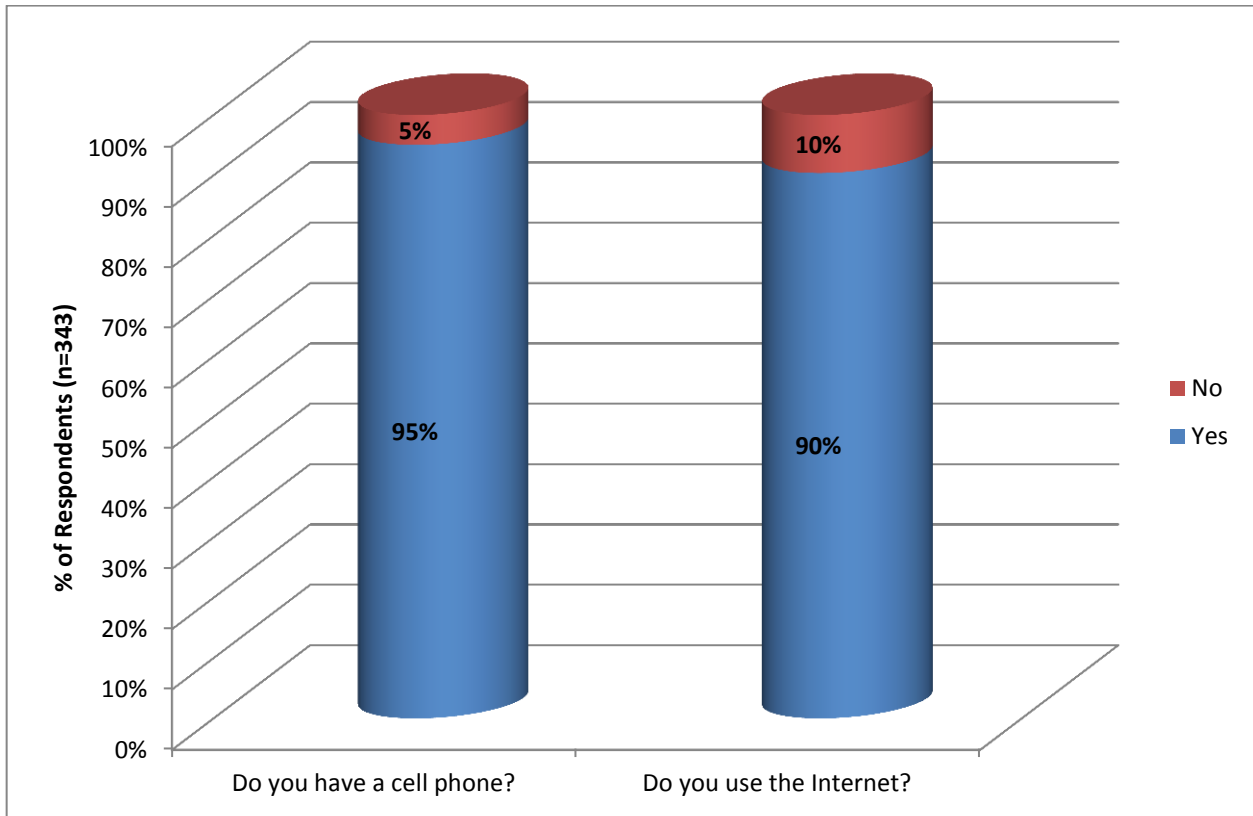
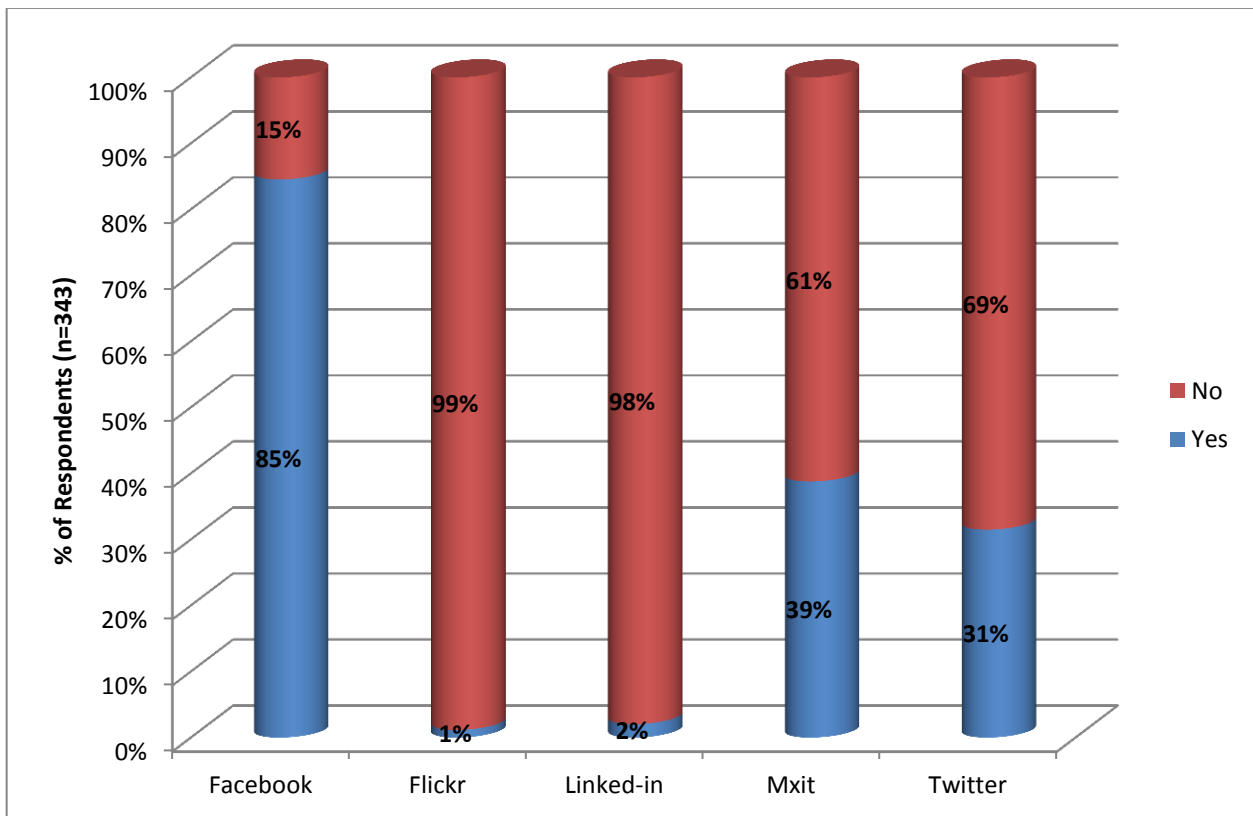


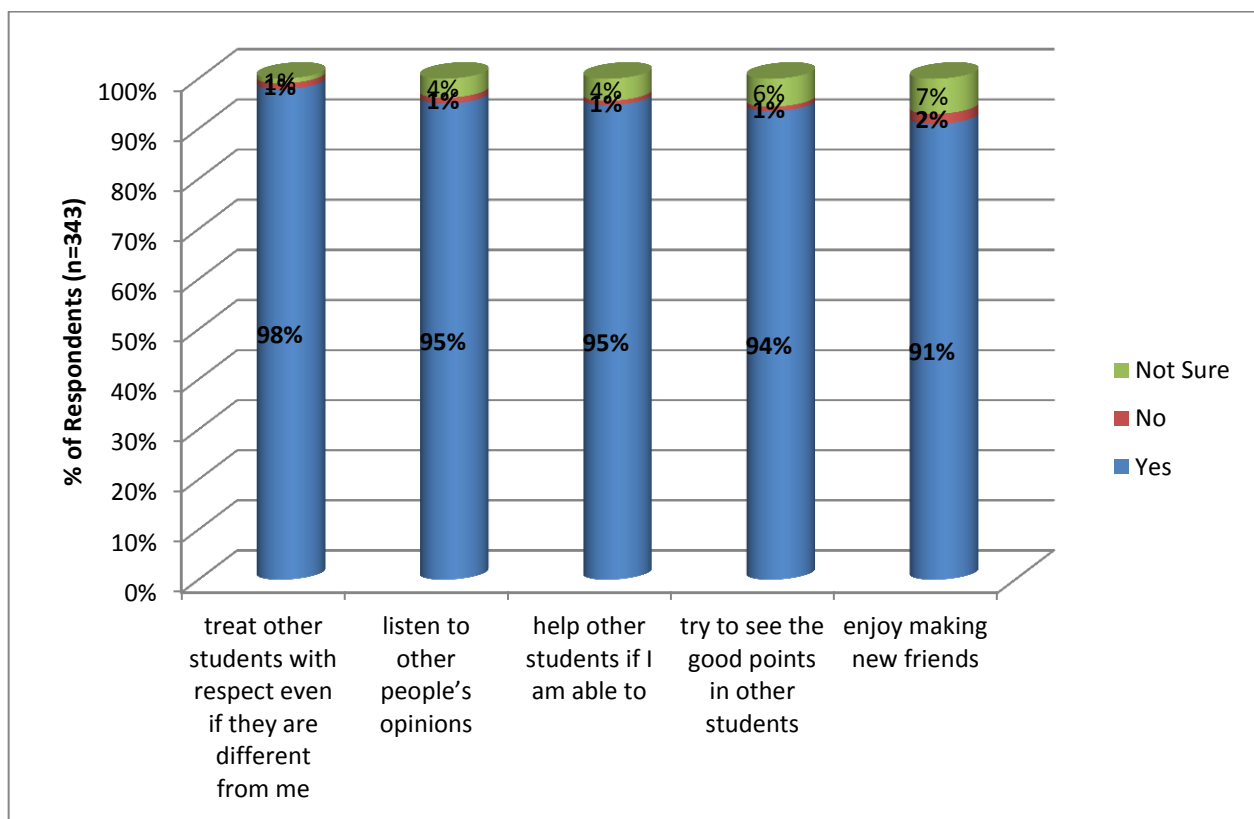
FIGURE 3: STUDENTS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA



As shown in Figures 2 and 3 above, nearly all respondents had cell-phones (95%), with only slightly fewer accessing the internet (90%). Of the social media applications, Facebook (85%) users were in the majority, with a smaller number using Mixit (39%) and Twitter (31%) and very few using Flickr and Linked-in. Mxit is a mobile phone application which is extremely low cost for messaging. Newer smartphone messaging applications like Whats App were not measured and this could perhaps be included in future surveys. Most smartphones are able to access Facebook and Twitter 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' and 'listening to other people's opinions' (95%) and 'try to see good points in other students' (94%) and 'enjoy making new friends' being equally positive at 91%. The responses which achieved the highest and

the lowest scores are identical to that depicted in the 2012 research with 'listening to other people's opinions' achieving a slightly higher rating.

SECTION 3: IMPACT ON PERSONAL GROWTH

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

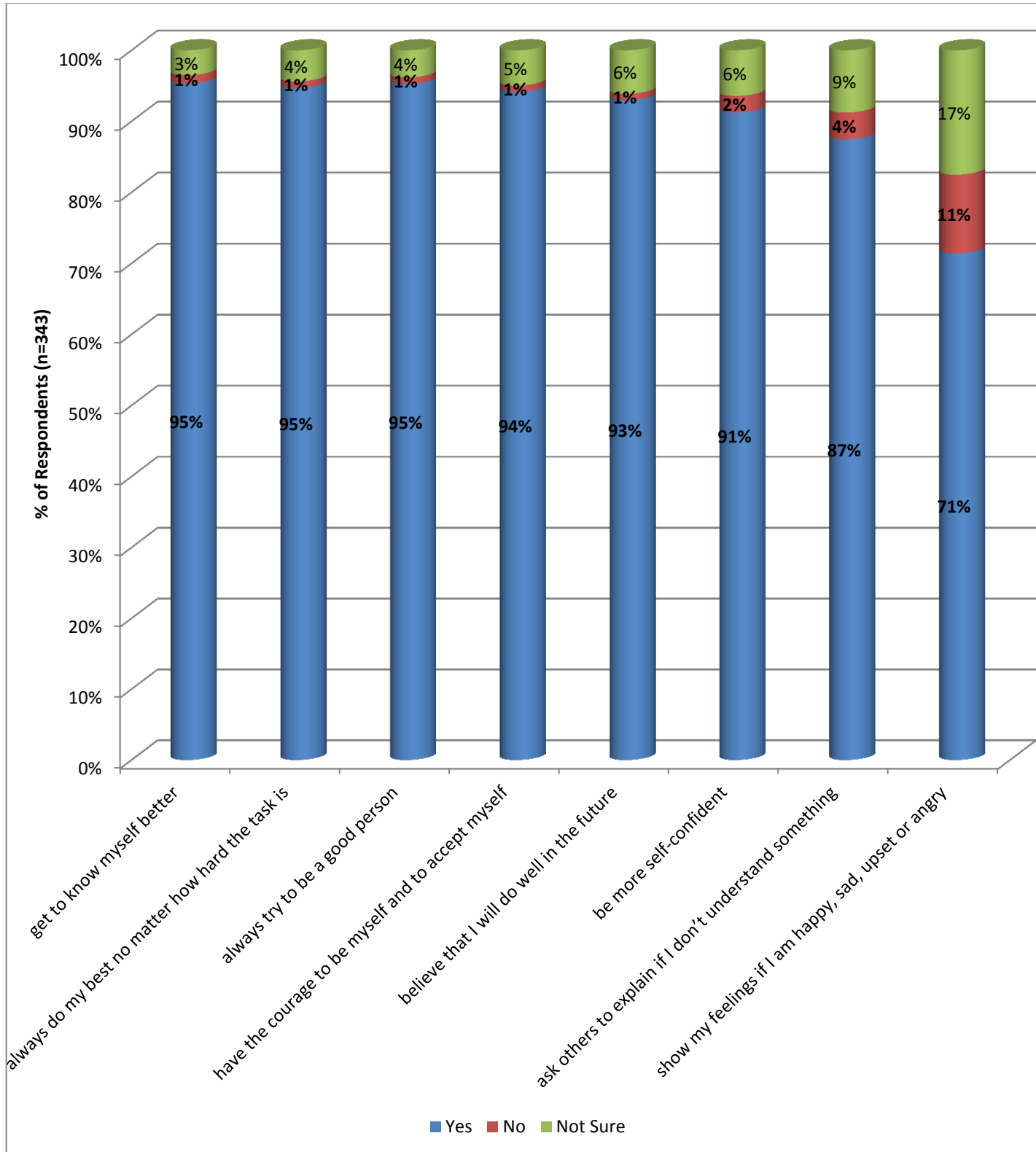
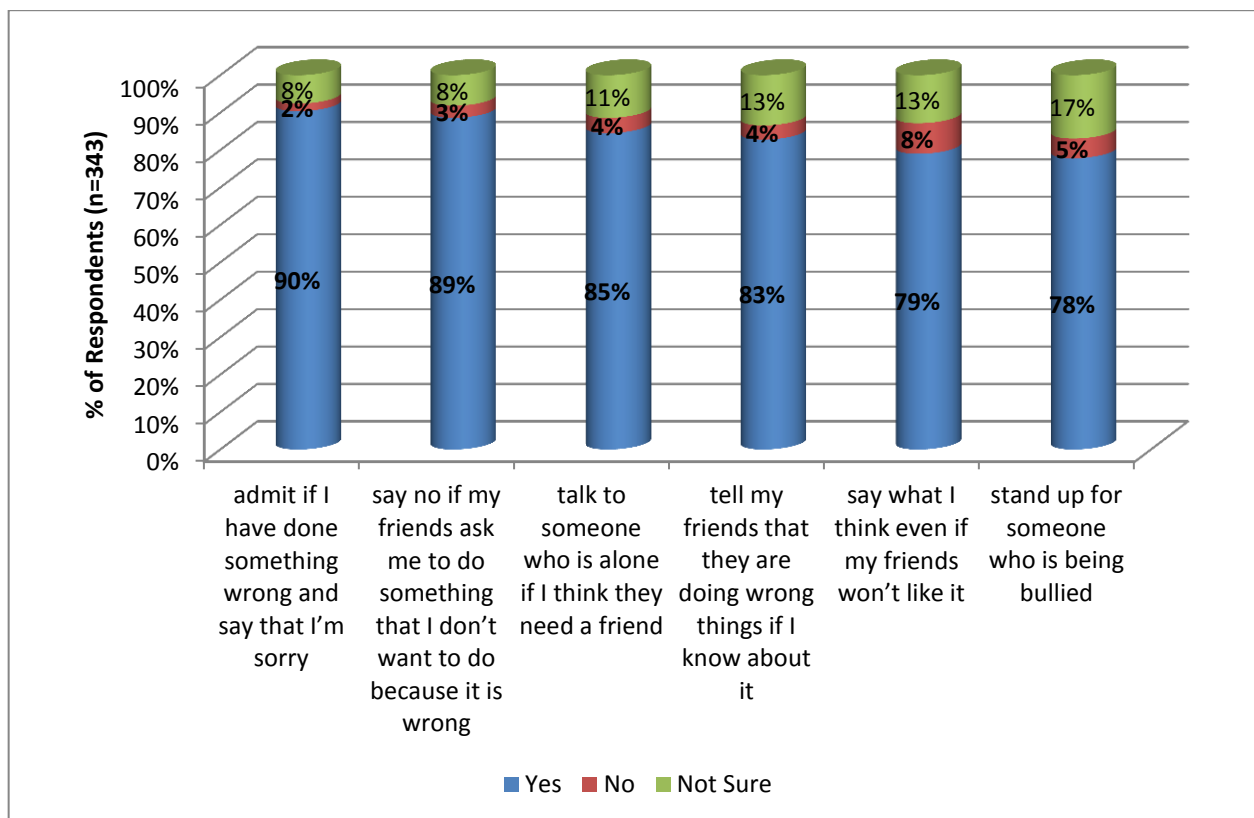


Figure 5 again shows highly positive responses to the impact of MOT on personal growth, particularly self-motivation, self-knowledge, and moral choice (all at 95%). Self-confidence was slightly lower at 93% relative to the other attributes, with ability to seek help (87%) and self-expression of emotions relatively low at 71%. Scores here are similar to the 2012 research. However, the lowest number of students (71%) again indicated that they had difficulty ‘to show my feelings if I am happy, sad, upset or angry’, dropping from 84% in 2012 (70% in 2011). Relative to 2011 therefore, there was a fluctuating 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

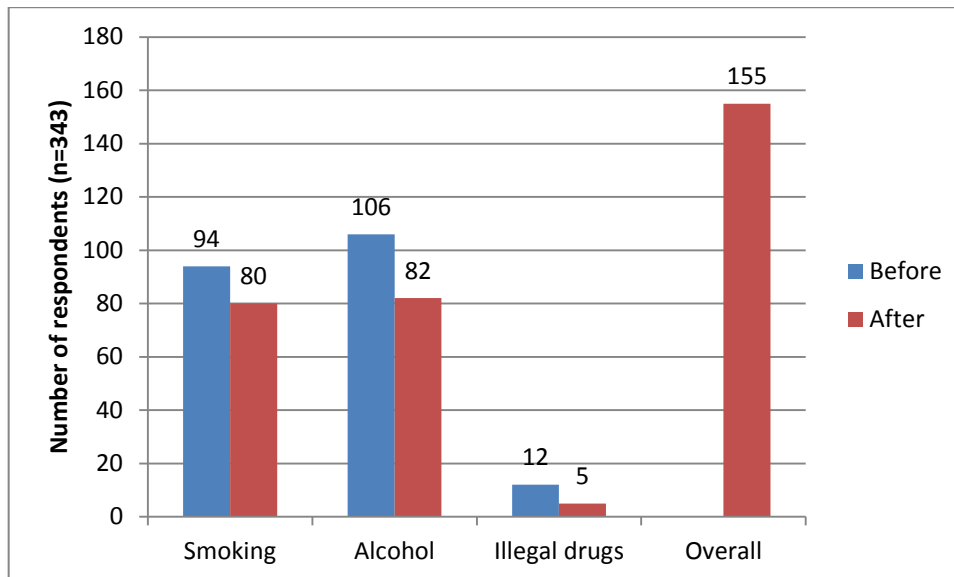


Here respondents were challenged to think about whether MOT had assisted them in how they responded to uncomfortable situations involving their friends, and which demanded some adherence to personal values. From Fig. 6 above, students were highly confident (91%) that they could refuse to do something 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 (79%) and to defend a peer against bullying (78%), which was marginally down from the 2012 research. Few students however indicated an

emphatic 'no' (5%) around defending a peer against bullying. It should be noted though that positive responses were uniformly high, with some higher than others. Fluctuations over the two previous years were marginal.

SECTION 5: IMPACT ON PERSONAL LIFESTYLE CHOICES

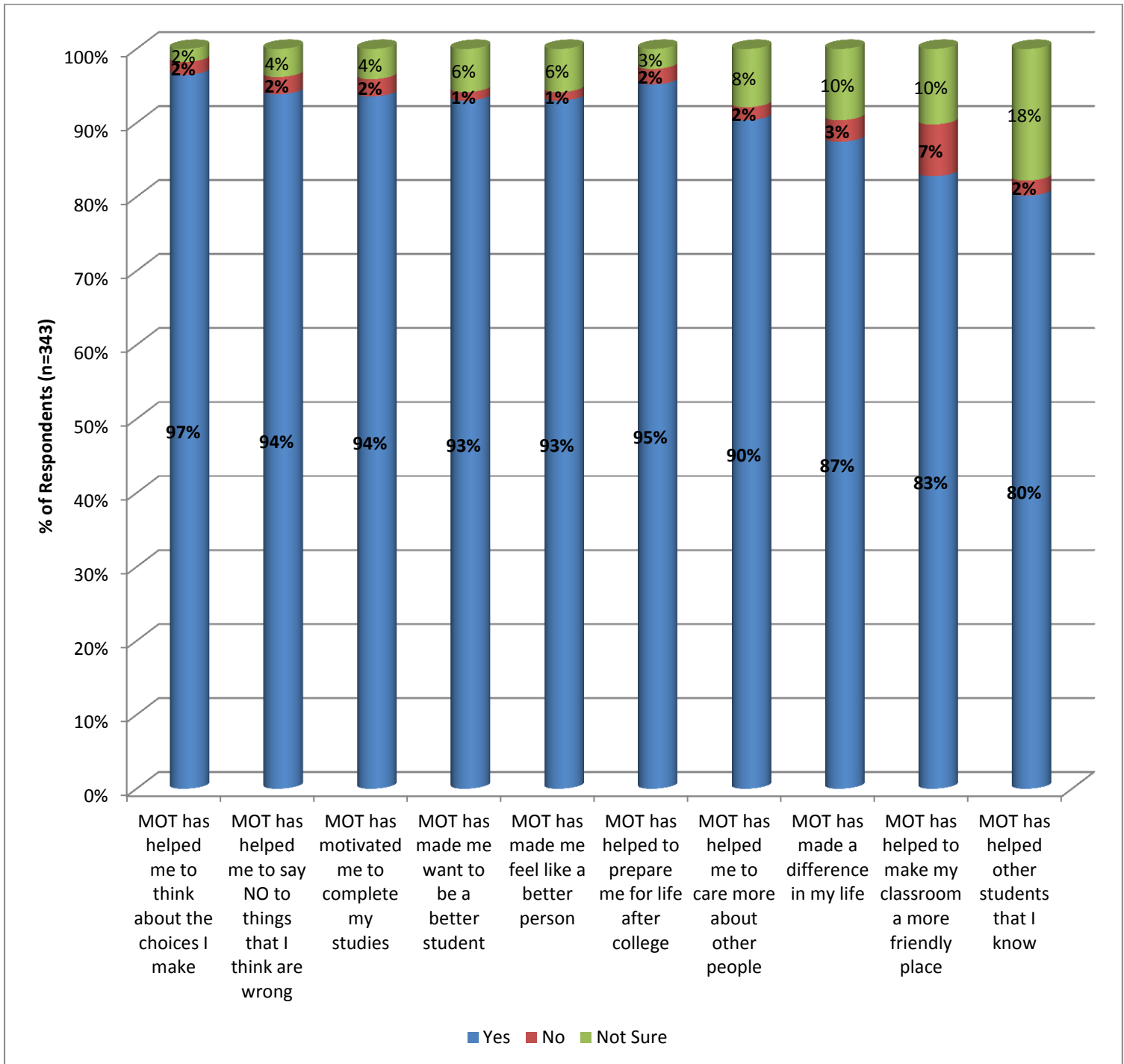
FIGURE 7: STUDENTS' LIFESTYLE CHOICES BEFORE AND AFTER MOT



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. In total 155 (45%) indicated that MOT had a positive impact on their lifestyle choices, though it is difficult to disaggregate the respondents for whom the question was not applicable. It is disconcerting nonetheless that of the total number of respondents 106 (30%) acknowledged that they had consumed alcohol, and 94 (27%) were smokers. Even though there were relatively few drug users (12 or 3% of respondents), the potential negative social impact of these lifestyle choices is considerable, therefore the indication that 7 people stopped using drugs is significant. In addition, 14 stopped smoking and 24 stopped using alcohol. These results suggest that fewer students engaged in negative lifestyle choices prior to entering the programme than in 2012. The reasons for this one might speculate and attribute to a number of reasons, however further investigation into this potential trend and its future implications for MOT could be useful.

SECTION 6: OVERALL RESPONSES TO THE MOT PROGRAMME

FIGURE 8: STUDENT RESPONSES TO OVERALL POSITIVE IMPACT OF MOT

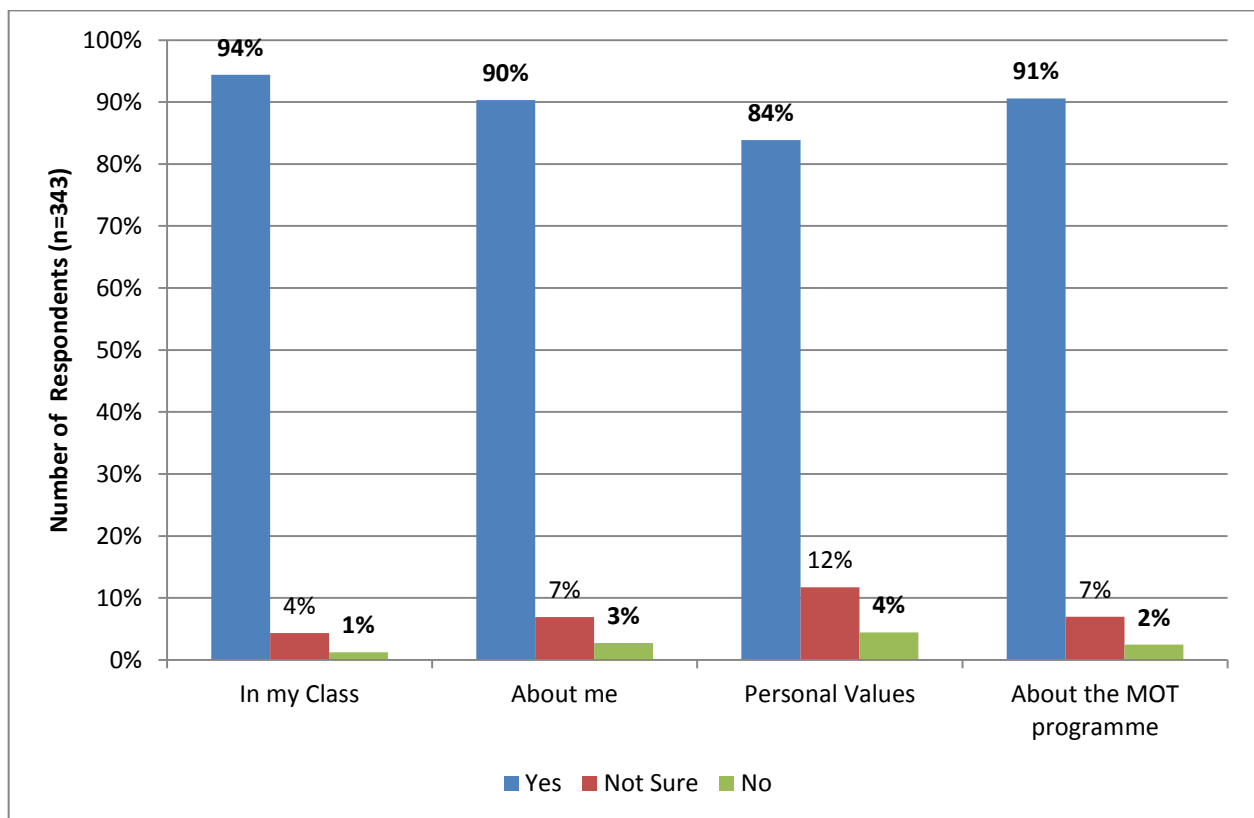


Section 6 of the questionnaire dealt with overall responses to the MOT programme, represented in Figure 8 above, which shows the percentage of students who attributed MOT to positively influencing them in the above behaviours/attitudes. The questions covered a range of issues regarding MOTs impact on choices, motivation in studies, caring for others, preparation for life, making a difference and classroom atmosphere. There were larger numbers of ‘not sure’ responses than in 2012, but the positive

responses were mainly above 90%. Only the element ‘...to make my classroom a more friendly place’, had a 7% negative response, which is low, but it is high relative to the other elements. MOTs influence on ‘thinking about choices I make’ was evident as 97% respondents agreed on this, and the impact on ‘motivation to complete my studies’ and willingness to ‘say no to things that I think are wrong’ was also high at 94%.

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 (94% and 90% 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 remained stable in 2013 (91%) with that of 92% in 2012.

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, attributes most positively affected by MOT (all above 95%), were mostly in relation to respect for difference, self-knowledge and self-belief. This contrasts somewhat with lower scores, between 70-80%, which were related to challenging others and being honest/open about personal feelings.

TABLE 1: RANKED LISTING OF ATTRIBUTES BY PERCENTAGE¹ OF STUDENTS POSITIVELY AFFECTED

| The MOT Programme has helped (me) to: | Yes | Not Sure | No |
|--|------------|-----------------|-----------|
| treat other students with respect even if they are different from me | 98% | 1% | 1% |
| think about the choices I make | 97% | 2% | 2% |
| listen to other people's opinions | 95% | 4% | 1% |
| help other students if I am able to | 95% | 4% | 1% |
| always do my best no matter how hard the task is | 95% | 4% | 1% |
| always try to be a good person | 95% | 4% | 1% |
| prepare me for life after college | 95% | 3% | 2% |
| get to know myself better | 95% | 3% | 1% |
| have the courage to be myself and to accept myself | 94% | 5% | 1% |
| say NO to things that I think are wrong | 94% | 4% | 2% |
| be motivated to complete my studies | 94% | 4% | 2% |
| try to see the good points in other students | 94% | 5% | 1% |
| feel like a better person | 93% | 6% | 1% |
| want to be a better student | 93% | 6% | 1% |
| believe that I will do well in the future | 93% | 6% | 1% |
| be more self-confident | 91% | 6% | 2% |
| enjoy making new friends | 91% | 7% | 2% |
| admit if I have done something wrong and say that I'm sorry | 90% | 8% | 2% |
| care more about other people | 90% | 8% | 2% |
| say no if my friends ask me to do something that I don't want to do because it is wrong | 89% | 8% | 3% |
| make a difference in my life | 87% | 10% | 3% |
| ask others to explain if I don't understand something | 87% | 9% | 4% |
| talk to someone who is alone if I think they need a friend | 85% | 11% | 4% |
| make my classroom a more friendly place | 83% | 10% | 7% |
| tell my friends that they are doing wrong things if I know about it | 83% | 13% | 4% |
| impact on other students that I know | 80% | 18% | 2% |
| say what I think even if my friends won't like it | 79% | 13% | 8% |
| stand up for someone who is being bullied | 78% | 17% | 5% |
| show my feelings if I am happy, sad, upset or angry | 71% | 17% | 11% |
| Grand Total | 90% | 7% | 3% |

¹ Rows may not add up to 100% percent as some rounding off may have occurred.

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 are illustrated in the extracts below. The selected extracts also show the range of student comments, many of which demonstrate deep insights gained by the students:

- *I would like to thank the MOT programme for helping me towards my goal that I want to achieve and for encouraging me to look forward to the future. This programme has helped me in many ways and staying positive to what I want.*
- *MOT has given me an opportunity to be more careful (sic) about myself and others. It also gives me the strength to keep on trying even if there are some obstacles in life.*
- *I have learnt a lot about myself as a person and accept that there will be challenges in our lives that we can overcome although it will be difficult.*
- *The MOT teacher is a good person. She motivates the students and encourages them to accept themselves the way they are.*
- *The programme is very enlightening. It helps us students to appreciate and understand each other and our similarities and differences. The presenter is so full of life; she is really suited for her job. MOT has given me so much to think about and things to understand. It has given me the opportunity to look at myself and to take charge of my life and the choices that I make. Thank you so much! Much love!*
- *I really enjoyed the MOT programme. It has helped me a lot to see various things in a different way. It also helps you to be a better person. The MOT presenter is really great. She makes you understand things better.*
- *The MOT presenter was absolutely STUNNING at what she did, there were times you really not in the mood, but she would do something that will just set your mood to HAPPY!! MOT is an AWESOME programme.*
- *The MOT programme is an interesting programme it helps you realise that you are also important to others. It gives courage and changes attitudes. The presenter is a friendly, talkative person and she doesn't make fun of your problem. She just encourages you. I would like to say thank you MOT for changing my life.*
- *A wonderful, happy, good spirit presenter. Always made us feel comfortable. MOT was motivating and gives courage.*
- *The MOT presenter has done a great job getting the message across and making all outcomes clear. The programme has shown me that I'm not alone in my way of thinking and my attitude toward different situations. It has made more aware of my own abilities, dreams, goals and expectations.*
- *MOT has helped me to be a better person. It has helped me with my decision-making what to do after college. It has motivated me to carry on with my studies and not to give up half way. It has helped me understand what a leader is and what type of person you should be as a leader.*
- *MOT taught me never to give up. It gave me the courage and motivation to move forward in life, no matter what. It made me think about what goals I have to look forward to for the future. MOT made me a strong believer in what I didn't believe in before. MOT changed my ways of negative thinking. I am proud of who I am now. Thanks to MOT.*

- *MOT is very helpful because it helped me to gain confidence about myself. I must not think that I am a bad person. It helped me to know other people. It also helped me to think positive about the future.*
- *The MOT programme really made me see life in a new perspective. Since I have become more self-confident in what I do, my mission and vision in life became much clearer and I am going to achieve what I have set myself out to do. The MOT programme really has been awesome because I have learned a lot.*
- *MOT motivated me to be a better student and our MOT presenter made the MOT classes enjoyable. It was never boring, there was always something to think about especially how I could make myself a better person. It was worth the time and effort.*
- *I would like to thank MOT for being in my college because I am so much a better person. Now that I have attended the classes, I am not only better in my school work, but better at home and with making new friends as well. I am no longer judging people as I used to, but I made them feel better about themselves. I am so happy for the privilege to attend MOT.*
- *The MOT programme was kind of fun, I just don't like the fact that it was after college hours. The presenter was friendly and made everything interesting and he wasn't too serious.*
- *It must be compulsory because now it seems as if it's not a must to attend. I believe students can learn more from it. I also believe it should be on a Thursday because we finish classes early.*
- *The MOT programme is great and an inspiring programme. It helps people accept each other and their differences. The programme helps people to stand up for themselves and say "NO". This programme has helped me and everyone I know that took part in the programme. My MOT presenter made the environment comfortable enough for everyone to be at ease to be open.*
- *Thank you to all the educators and lecturers involved in the MOT programme. I have learned a lot and will keep on learning to reach my full potential. I may have not stopped smoking or drinking, but I am planning to do so. It has been an excellent experience. I am a better person.*
- *MOT helped me realise so many things in life. Today I'm writing my last exam paper and MOT encouraged me to do my best to finish my studies. Next year I will be studying at CPUT and I got the courage from MOT. Thanks to MOT.*
- *It is a great programme and it is for a good cause. People are being transformed because of MOT. I was a little bit racist, but MOT taught me to love people which ever race they are. It taught me to care for myself first and others secondly. I used to please people, forgetting that I was hurting myself. Thanks to MOT.*

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. There were four responses that suggested classes should not be held after college as students were tired, and that sessions could be shorter.

Students were outspoken and emphatic about the impact of the presenter, and it was evident that the presenters had made a strong impression 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. The overwhelmingly positive responses of students in this regard could also indicate the students' need for affirmation, and for someone who creates the space to listen with compassion to their concerns.

CONCLUSIONS

From the overall data which is summarised below in descending order of emphasis, the perceived benefits of the MOT programme were considerable in the lives of the participating students.

Areas of key strength of the MOT programme: (93-98%):

- Treat other students with respect even if they are different from me
- Helped me to think about the choices I make
- Listen to other people's opinions
- Help other students if I am able to
- Always do my best no matter how hard the task is
- Helped me to prepare for life after college
- Have the courage to be myself and to accept myself
- helped me to say 'no' to things that I know are wrong
- Motivated me to complete my studies
- Try to see the good points in other students
- Made me feel like a better person
- Made me want to be a better student
- Believe that I will do well in the future

Areas of moderate strength of the MOT programme (84-92%):

- Be more self-confident
- Enjoy making new friends
- Admit if I have done something wrong and say that I'm sorry
- MOT has helped me to care more about other people

- Say no if my friends ask me to do something that I don't want to do because it is wrong
- MOT has made a difference in my life
- Ask others to explain if I don't understand something
- Talk to someone who is alone if I think they need a friend

Areas which show relatively weaker results (scores of 71-83%):

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

From the above it would appear that the MOT programme continues to make positive gains regarding how students perceive themselves and others, building positive attitudes and 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 FET colleges. Students continue to demonstrate the kind of peer pressure that they are under and that it is difficult to confront peers who act out wrong behaviours.

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.