A BERNARD GROUP REPORT

You Can Do It! Education: A Social-Emotional Learning Program for Increasing the Achievement and Well-Being of Children and Adolescents

Michael E. Bernard, Ph.D.
Professor, Melbourne Graduate School of Education
University of Melbourne
Founder, You Can Do It! Education
(youcan.do.iteducation.com; youcan.do.it.com.au)
You Can Do It! Education

Contents
About Professor Michael E. Bernard ................................................................. iv
Context ................................................................................................................ 1
History of You Can Do It! Education ................................................................. 1
Theoretical Background of You Can Do It! Education .................................. 2
  Learning Dispositions (Behaviours and Attitudes for Learning) ................. 3
  Social Skills .................................................................................................... 3
  Emotional Resilience ..................................................................................... 4
The Goals of You Can Do It! Education ......................................................... 6
The Teaching of You Can Do It! Education ................................................. 10
  YCDI Curricula Programs ............................................................................. 10
  YCDI Classroom- and School-Wide Practices ........................................... 14
YCDI Parent Education .................................................................................... 19
  The Investing in Parents Program ............................................................... 19
  The Compass Program: Directions Parents of Primary Age Children Can Take at Home to Support Their Children’s Achievement in School ................................................................. 21
  Two Stand-Alone YCDI Parent Education Classes ...................................... 21
Professional Development of Teachers in You Can Do It! Education .......... 23
  The Theory and Practice of You Can Do It! Education ............................ 23
  The Resilient Educator ............................................................................... 23
  Positive Attitudes and Behaviours for Learning ........................................... 24
  Capability-Building for Teachers ................................................................. 27
Research on You Can Do It! Education ....................................................... 29
Concluding Statement ..................................................................................... 34
References ...................................................................................................... 35

List of Tables
Table 1. The 5 Social-Emotional Skills and 12 Habits of the Mind (Ways of Thinking) Taught in You Can Do It! Education .................................................................................. 8
Table 2. A Summary of the Seven Capabilities of Highly Effective Parents ................................................................................................. 22
Table 3. Examples of Teaching Practices that Help Students Set Goals for Learning and Develop Positive Attitudes and Behaviours for Learning Literacy and Numeracy ........................................................................... 25
Table 4. Case Studies of Schools that Have Successfully Implemented a Social and Emotional, Learning Program and Are Seeing the Positive Benefits on Student Attitude, Behaviour and Achievement .................................................................................. 26

List of Figures
Figure 1. Social, Emotional and Learning Skills Taught in You Can Do It! Education ........................................................................... 5
Figure 2. Goals of You Can Do It! Education .................................................. 6
Figure 3. Understanding Young People: Habits of the Mind Determine Thinking, Feeling, and Behaviour ........................................................................... 7
Figure 4. Capability Building for Teachers: Promoting Teacher Excellence and Improving Student Outcomes ...................................................... 28


© 2012, Michael E. Bernard
About Professor Michael E. Bernard

Michael E. Bernard, Ph.D., is an international consultant to universities, organisations, educational authorities, and governments, as well as a Professor at the University of Melbourne, Melbourne Graduate School of Education. He is the Founder of You Can Do It! Education, a program for promoting student social-emotional well-being and achievement that is being used in over 6,000 schools in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Spain, Vietnam, Singapore, England, Romania, and North America.

After receiving his doctorate in educational psychology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, he worked for 18 years in the College of Education, University of Melbourne, Australia. He was appointed as Reader and Coordinator of the Master of Educational Psychology Program. During this time, Dr Bernard was the first sport psychologist of the Collingwood Football Club and consulted with numbers of organisations including the AMP. From 1995 to 2005, he was a tenured professor in the Department of Educational Psychology, Administration and Counseling, College of Education, at California State University, Long Beach.

Professor Bernard has worked as a consultant school psychologist helping families and schools address the educational and mental health needs of school-age children. Professor Bernard is a co-founder of the Australian Institute for Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy and is the author of many books on REBT. For eight years he was the editor-in-chief of the Journal of Rational-Emotive and Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy. Over the past decade, he has focused on the design and conduct of high performance and resilience professional development programs.

Michael Bernard is the author of over 50 books, 15 book chapters, and 30 journal articles in areas associated with peak performance, resilience, parenting, mental health, and school improvement (please see References at the end of this Report).

Today, Professor Bernard continues to consult with education, business, and the public sector on principles of personal effectiveness and positive psychology. He is Managing Director of The Bernard Group. His newest professional development program and book for business, industry, and the public sector, The High Performance Mindset at Work (Bernard, 2010), is designed to bring out the best in people, thereby lifting full organisational capacity that delivers growth and sustainable competitive advantage.

Acknowledgements

The following are colleagues who over the years have made contributions to the development of You Can Do It! Education: Brian Bamford, Patricia Bernard, Leigh Blanton, Tina Coumbe, Brendan Cuppitt, Ann-Maree Kelly, Leah Koen, Heather Leary, Margaret Milne, Jenny Murray, Meg Roche, Elizabeth Sarah, Robert Steventon, Karen Stein, Debbie Taylor, and Jenny Williams. The illustrations by Roger Roberts have helped bring many aspects of YCDI alive. Additionally, ongoing financial and infrastructure support over 20 years from the Australian Scholarships Group has greatly helped the development of You Can Do It! Education.
Context

In 20th century Australia, the mission of schooling was largely fostering the academic development of children and youth for successful entry to the workforce and for active participation and contribution to their communities and to the prosperity of Australian society. The curriculum of schooling centered on the teaching of key academic learning areas such as English and maths.

Unfortunately, 21st century achievement data has indicated that far too many Australians, especially those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, are leaving school with substandard levels of academic achievement. Furthermore, the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALLS, 2008) reveals that Australian language, literacy, and numeracy levels have shown little improvement in the decade since the 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey.

The mental health of Australia’s children and adolescents has also rung alarm bells. High rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and disorders of conduct including a high incidence of bullying continue to be reported (e.g. Sawyer, et al., 2001; Bernard, 2008a).

To address the dual problems of low levels of literacy and numeracy as well as poor mental health of Australian youth, schools have had to change the way they go about their work. Reforms geared at improving educational outcomes continue to sweep in many changes to schools encompassing school policy, school leadership, management practices, and curriculum and instruction.

To combat problems of low achievement and poor mental health, there has been an increasing trend for schools to incorporate social and emotional learning experiences and programs into school culture, curriculum, and instructional practices. And a meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions points to the positive impact of enhancing students’ social and emotional learning (e.g. Durlack, et al., 2011).

History of You Can Do It! Education

During the 1970s and 1980s, I worked as a consultant school psychologist in primary and secondary schools with students (and their families) referred for a variety of emotional (anger, anxiety, depression), behavioural (non-compliance, bullying, aggression) and learning challenges (lack of motivation, under-achievement). The counselling approach I used was rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT) (Ellis, 1962) and its educational derivative rational emotive education (Knaus, 1974). I spent many years helping young people to cognitively restructure their negative, irrational ways of thinking about themselves, others and their schoolwork to more rational and positive ways. I also helped young people acquire a range of rational beliefs (self-acceptance, high frustration tolerance, acceptance of others). The strengthening of a rational mindset led to reductions in their emotional and behavioural problems and increases in their positivity and life satisfaction (e.g. Bernard & Keefauver, 1979).

During this period, I published several books for mental health practitioners detailing the theory and practice of REBT as applied to children and adolescents (Ellis & Bernard, 1983, 2006; Bernard & Joyce, 1984). Due to the success of this approach, I made a conscious decision to develop a prevention program that could be taught in schools by teachers to children of all ages and supported by parents. I felt that if schools and homes could help develop children’s innate capacity for rationality, as well as strengthen their social and emotional competence, they could make a real difference.
You Can Do It! Education (YCDI) was launched with the publication of You Can Do It! What Every Student (and Parent) Should Know About Success and Happiness (Bernard & Hajzler, 1987). At that time, the book was quite revolutionary insofar as it spelled out a range of rational attitudes and social-emotional competences (e.g., confidence, self-acceptance, persistence, goal setting, time management, exam anxiety management) that underpins achievement and well-being. The book achieved best-seller status in various states in Australia and New Zealand. I spoke extensively in the media and to educational groups around the country about the need to incorporate social and emotional learning within the mainstream of schooling.

In the 1990s and extending to today, I have continued to develop YCDI with significant contributions from many colleagues and through the generous and ongoing support of the Australian Scholarships Group, as well as observing the implementation of YCDI around the world in schools that have been successfully implementing YCDI. YCDI is a school-home collaborative program for developing rational beliefs and social-emotional competences that the research indicates supports a variety of positive outcomes of young people. Thousands of schools throughout Australia have received whole staff training in the theory and practice of YCDI and are using YCDI educational programs. YCDI sits squarely in the positive psychology movement founded by Martin Seligman in 1999, as its concern has always been not only helping free young people from emotional misery but also enhancing their potential to flourish.

The ‘up-take’ of You Can Do It! Education by schools in the 1990s was from individual teachers and school principals who attended an introductory workshop on You Can Do It! Education, purchased a grade-appropriate YCDI curriculum book of lessons from Program Achieve and implemented YCDI in their classrooms. Their success in terms of positive changes in student attitude and behaviour was communicated at staff meetings and, as a result, YCDI would be adopted on a whole-school basis.

The first decade of the 21st century showed exponential growth of YCDI with more than 2,000 schools requesting whole staff training in YCDI. Positive word-of-mouth communications by school administrators and teachers about the quality of YCDI and the high level of professional training available to schools contributed to the growth of YCDI Australia-wide. In 2008, The Age newspaper reported that ‘In Australia, the most widely-used social-emotional learning program is You Can Do It Education ... used by more than 5,000 early learning centres, primary and secondary schools.’ YCDI has been introduced in a variety of countries including Canada, Spain, England, Romania, Vietnam, Singapore, and the United States.

Theoretical Background of You Can Do It! Education

The theoretical origins of YCDI cover three distinct areas of research, which illuminate three types of social-emotional competence that moderate the achievement and well-being of young people: (1) learning dispositions, (2) social skills, and (3) emotional resilience. The three areas share much in common with the five social-emotional competences that the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional (Elias, et al., 1997) has identified as the fundamental skills for life effectiveness (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making).
Learning Dispositions (Behaviours and Attitudes for Learning)

In the monograph written for the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Education (Bernard, 2011) 'The link between students’ social and emotional characteristics and the development of literacy and numeracy skills,' I reviewed critical theory on school learning and research that identified different social and emotional learning characteristics of students that contribute to academic achievement (e.g. Bloom, 1977; Carroll, 1963; Fantuzzo, et al., 2007).

Learning dispositions of students that moderate teacher effectiveness and contribute to achievement include behaviours for learning (e.g. positive attitudes, persistence, flexibility, motivation) (e.g. McDermott, et al. 1999), academic self-regulation (setting performance goals, self-monitoring) (e.g. Zimmerman, 1989), academic enablers (intrinsic motivation/self-efficacy, social skills, engagement, study skills) (e.g. DiPerna & Elliott, 2002), internal locus of control (Rotter, 1966), learned optimism (e.g. Seligman, 1991), and rational beliefs (high frustration tolerance) (e.g. Ellis & Bernard, 1983). Additionally, there is extensive research that addresses student cognitive-affective and emotional characteristics associated with academic procrastination (and under-achievement) including: anxiety (fear of failure), task aversiveness/low frustration tolerance, poor time management, and disorganisation and hostility (Rosario, et al., 2009; Solomon & Rothblum 1984). In my own work (Bernard, 2004a), I have identified the following social and emotional competences as being less well-developed in students with reading achievement problems: work and social confidence, persistence, and organisation.

I have argued over the past 20 years that the explicit teaching of social-emotional learning dispositions and behaviours is the missing link in schools’ efforts to promoting school adjustment and achievement (2006a). In You Can Do It! Education, we teach many of these key social and emotional characteristics that moderate engagement and achievement.

Social Skills

Three separate influences underpin the YCDI theoretical framework concerning children’s social adjustment.

First, since the early 1970s, extensive work has been conducted investigating the cognitive-behavioural strategies that children and adolescents use to solve interpersonal problems and that appear absent in those with interpersonal difficulties (e.g. Pellegrini & Urbain, 2006; Spivack, Platt, & Shure, 1976; Shure, 2000). Through extensive investigations, five cognitive skills – or types of thinking – have been identified that appear necessary for effective interpersonal problem solving: (1) sensitivity or perspective taking, (2) alternative solution generation, (3) means-end thinking, (4) consequential thinking, and (5) causal thinking.

Second, significant to the YCDI conception of social adjustment is what Albert Ellis refers to as the rational belief called ‘acceptance of others’. Ellis defines this rational belief as preferring but not needing people’s respect and fairness all the time and refusing to globally rate another’s worth as a person based on their behaviour. Acceptance of others has been found to be associated with lower degrees of anger in young people (e.g. Bernard & Cronan, 1999).

Third, the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools was released in 2005 (Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training, 2005). The framework reflects the belief based on research that there are a set of shared values that constitute what can be termed ‘good character’. The framework contains a vision that all Australian schools provide values education in a planned and systematic way. The framework identified nine shared values, including care and
compassion, doing your best, fair go, freedom, honesty and trustworthiness, integrity, respect, responsibility and understanding, and tolerance and inclusion. Many of these values are represented in the positive Habit of the Mind taught in YCDI called ‘social responsibility’.

**Emotional Resilience**

Emotional resilience or emotional regulation in children has been defined as children’s developing capacities to use coping strategies (e.g. distraction, changing thinking, exercise, seeking support) that help them regulate the intensity of negative emotions they experience in the presence of adverse events (Bernard, 2004b; Bernard & Pires, 2006). It has been argued that failure to develop sufficient emotional resilience is largely responsible for the development of behaviour problems and can lead to a variety of serious psychopathologies (Landy, 2002; Saarni, 1999).

Albert Ellis took the position that all people are born with two instinctive biological tendencies that dramatically influence their ability to regulate their emotions: rational thinking and irrational thinking. Ellis saw irrational thinking as being at the core of emotional distress.

Of particular relevance to You Can Do It! Education is Ellis’ model of emotional upset and his psycho-educational methods for helping people to change irrational thinking to rational thinking. As can be seen in the diagram below, what determines the type and degree of feeling and behaviour in the presence of rejection or lack of achievement has much to do with the way the young person thinks about what happens. If a young person has the tendency to irrationally rate himself or herself as a failure on the basis of what happens, he or she will feel very down and may withdraw. Alternatively, if a young person is rationally self-accepting and does not readily take negative events personally, he or she will only feel disappointed and will continue to stay engaged.

A vast body of literature indicates that not only can children be taught the basics of how to think rationally, but also when children are taught to think rationally, dramatic improvements are seen across a variety of measures of adjustment and mental health (e.g. Hajzler & Bernard, 1991).
YCDI’s theoretical framework and derivative educational programs incorporate the three areas of learning dispositions, social skills, and emotional resilience.

Figure 1. Social, Emotional and Learning Skills Taught in You Can Do It! Education
The Goals of You Can Do It! Education

The goals of YCDI are represented in the model presented in Figure 2. While ‘Outside Influences’ are seen as important influences on student outcomes, ‘Inside Characteristics’ (the ‘5 Foundations’) are seen as primary: confidence (work, social), persistence, organisation, getting along, and resilience. Unless the 5 Foundations are well-developed, young people will be ‘at risk’ for adjustment and achievement problems. Community, school, person, home, and bio-temperamental factors are seen as influencing the rate of development of the 5 Foundations.
The model also represents 12 positive Habits of the Mind, which are cognitive-attitudinal supports for the 5 Foundations. A Habit of the Mind is an automatic tendency of a person to think in a certain way. By thinking in that way, the person experiences certain emotions and behaviours that will either lead to academic achievement and social-emotional-behavioural well-being, when his/her Habits of the Mind are positive, or underachievement and poor psychological health when negative Habits of the Mind prevail. For example, Accepting Myself, Taking Risks, and Being Independent are positive Habits of the Mind that help young people develop academic and social confidence. A definition of each of the 5 Foundations and 12 Habits of the Mind are presented in Table 1.

See Figure 3 for a visual representation of the way in which YCDI theory conceptualises the causes of behaviour of young people. The figure illustrates that while most attention by adults towards influencing young people is focused on their behaviour (above the water's surface), the major influences on behaviour occur well beneath the water’s surface at the very base of the iceberg. The Habits of the Mind of young people exert the greater influence on the thinking, feeling, and ultimately the behaviour of young people.

Figure 3. Understanding Young People: Habits of the Mind Determine Thinking, Feeling, and Behaviour
Table 1. The 5 Social-Emotional Skills and 12 Habits of the Mind (Ways of Thinking) Taught in You Can Do It! Education

**Confidence** means knowing that you will likely be successful at many things you study. It means not being afraid to make mistakes or to try something new. Examples of confident behaviour are raising your hand in class to answer a hard question, attempting hard work first before asking for help, or sharing a new idea with a teacher or the class.

Positive Habits of the Mind that help develop a young person’s Confidence include:

- **Accepting Myself** means when I make a mistake or someone is mean to me thinking that I am not useless or a total failure, I am still me.
- **Taking Risks** means preferring but not needing to be successful and thinking that it’s good to try something new even though I might not be able to do it.
- **Being Independent** means preferring but not needing the approval of others and thinking that it’s important for me to try new activities and to speak up even if classmates think I’m silly or stupid.
- **I Can Do It** means thinking that when learning something new, I am more likely to be successful than to fail.

**Persistence** means trying hard and not giving up when schoolwork feels like it’s too difficult or boring. Examples of persistent behaviour are continuing to try even when schoolwork is hard, not being distracted by others and checking work when it’s finished to make sure it’s correct.

Positive Habits of the Mind that help develop a young person’s Persistence include:

- **I Can Do It** means if I try very hard, I will probably be successful.
- **Giving Effort** means thinking that the harder I try, the more skilled I will become and the better my success will be.
- **Working Tough** means preferring but not demanding that things be exciting and never boring and thinking that to be successful, I sometimes have to do things that are not easy or fun.

**Organisation** means setting a goal to do your best in your schoolwork, planning your time so that you are not rushed, having all your supplies ready, and keeping track of your assignments’ due dates. Examples of organised behaviour include making sure you understand the teacher’s instructions before you begin work, having all your school supplies ready at a neat desk, recording your assignments and their due dates, and planning when you’re going to do your homework so that you have enough time.

Positive Habits of the Mind that help develop a young person’s Organisation include:

- **Setting Goals** means thinking that setting a goal can help me be more successful at a task.
- **Planning My Time** means thinking about how long schoolwork will take to get done and planning enough time to get it done.

[continued]
Getting Along means working well with teachers and classmates, solving problems without getting too angry, following the rules of the classroom and making positive contributions to school, home and the community including protecting the rights of others and looking after the environment. Examples of getting along behaviour are being helpful when working in a group, listening and not interrupting when someone else is speaking, talking rather than fighting when someone acts unfairly, following classroom rules, helping others in need and cleaning up the environment.

Positive Habits of the Mind that help develop Getting Along behaviour in a young person include:

- **Being Tolerant of Others** means preferring but not demanding that other people are fair and considerate; when someone is mean to me or different from me, thinking that he or she is not a totally bad person.
- **Playing by the Rules** means thinking that by following school rules, school will be a better place to live and learn.
- **Thinking First** means thinking that when someone treats me badly, I need to think about the best way to act.
- **Social Responsibility** means thinking that it is important to care for others, to be fair to others, to make sure everyone has the freedom to speak without fear, to be honest, to make sure that I do what I say I am going to do, to respect others and have nice manners, to act responsibly by making good choices, and to understand and include others who are different.

Resilience means when faced with difficult and challenging situations and people, being able to:

1. stop getting extremely angry, down, or worried,
2. controlling behaviour when very upset (not fighting, not running away),
3. calming down within a reasonable period of time,
4. bouncing back to work and play.

- **It’s Not the End of the World** means thinking it’s not the worst thing that could happen to me.
- **I Can Stand It** means thinking that, while I don’t like it, I can stand it.
- **Accepting Myself** means thinking I am not hopeless. I have friends and do other things well. I am still me.
- **Taking Risks** means thinking I don’t have to do things perfectly. It’s good to try something new even though I might not be able to do it.
- **Being Independent** means thinking I don’t need everyone to approve of me all the time. It’s important to try new activities and to speak up even if my classmates think I’m silly or stupid.
- **I Can Do It** means thinking I’m more likely to be successful than I am to fail.
- **Working Tough** means thinking I don’t always need things to be fun and exciting.
- **Being Tolerant of Others** means thinking I won’t judge people by their actions or differences.

Coping skills that develop a young person’s Resilience:

- Finding something fun to do
- Finding someone to talk to
- Relaxing
- Exercising
- Being assertive
- Solving the problem
- Changing negative self-talk to positive self-talk
- Not blowing things out of proportion
The Teaching of You Can Do It! Education

In the 1990s, I developed with Eve Ash, producer of Seven Dimensions, two highly successful video-based student development programs that contained student workbooks and activities that taught secondary students (Ash & Bernard, 1990) and primary students (Bernard, 1992) the steps to success and happiness, including confidence, persistence, time management, exam anxiety management, and friendship-making skills.

Today, there are a number of different ways that the 5 Foundations and the 12 Habits of the Mind are taught in YCDI including: YCDI curricula programs, YCDI classroom and school-wide practices, and YCDI parent education.

YCDI Curricula Programs

There are two YCDI social-emotional curricula that are used extensively in schools.

1. The You Can Do It! Education Early Childhood Program (ages 4-7) (Bernard, 2004c) that is used in over 2,500 kindergarten and year 1 classrooms.

2. Program Achieve (ages 6-18) (Bernard, 2007) is a curriculum series used in over 4,000 primary and secondary schools.

The You Can Do It! Early Childhood Program

1. The You Can Do It! Early Childhood Curriculum

A variety of structured and explicit lessons appear in this curriculum to explicitly teach young children the 5 Foundations and the 12 positive Habits of the Mind, including the use of self-talk. There are activities that help the teacher encourage young children to apply these social-emotional skills in a variety of ways both in the ‘classroom’ and the outside classroom play area. Teachers who have found the greatest success in using these lessons have selected and adapted those that suit their teaching style, as well as the cognitive-developmental level and attention span of their children. Almost all lessons contain role-play activities and require a fair amount of teacher involvement in employing five puppets (Connie Confidence, Pete Persistence, Oscar Organisation, Gabby Get Along, Ricky Resilience) to communicate important messages.

2. Practices That Establish a You Can Do It! Education Early Childhood

The program includes a large variety of teaching practices for embedding the 5 Foundations and 12 Habits of the Mind in the classroom and beyond. The visual appearance of the early childhood ‘classroom’ needs to communicate the central YCDI themes of confidence, persistence,
organisation, getting along, and resilience (being calm). The selection of books by teachers to read to children and the songs they select to sing can be discussed with children in terms of the various ways in which the YCDI themes are portrayed. It is also very important to catch children in the act of being confident, persistent, organised, getting along, and resilient, and provide them with behaviour-specific feedback/praise (e.g. ‘You sounded confident in telling us your story.’). In a variety of ways, teachers can help their children develop an awareness of how their self-talk can assist them.

3. The You Can Do It! Teacher Guide for Working with Parents

This guide program offers teachers a structured presentation format for introducing parents to the fundamentals of the YCDI program including the 5 Foundations in a 15- to 20-minute introductory session. Also included are three additional parent information sessions teachers can present to parents that provide guidance in what parents can do at home to support what is being taught in the YCDI program.

We have discovered that the strongest influence on the rate of development of young children’s social-emotional competence is the five puppets used in the program. Young children quickly come to identify with the distinctive character of each puppet and internalise their self-talk as well as their behavioural patterns.

Program Achieve

Program Achieve consists of a three-volume primary set and a three-volume secondary set each containing lessons covering five areas: Ready, Set, You Can Do It! (introductory lessons), Confidence, Persistence, Organisation, Getting Along and Resilience. There are six volumes: Vol. 1 – Grades 1-2, Vol. 2 – Grades 3-4, Vol. 3 – Grades 5-6, Vol. 4 – Grades 7-8, Vol. 5 – Grades 9-10, and Vol. 6 – Grades 11-12. The volumes in the primary and secondary sets contain an extensive range of activities (whole class, small group, individual) and present similar ideas at increasing levels of cognitive-linguistic complexity (lower-, middle- and upper-primary; lower-, middle-, and upper-secondary). The lessons contain a variety of activities that generally take two 50-minute class periods to present. Explicit guidance is offered in communicating Habits of the Mind. Some of the activities invite parent participation. All lessons contain suggestions for embedding content of lesson into classroom learning as well as activities for putting the content into practice.

- The accompanying sample curriculum activity ‘The Power of Self-Talk’ appears in Program Achieve (as well as The You Can Do It! Education Mentoring Program, Bernard, 2002). It illustrates the highly structured and scaffolded nature of YCDI lesson plans that provide the teacher with sufficient direction to enable the lesson to be presented effectively.
- Two new YCDI curriculum resources are You Can Do It! Circle Time. Activities for Strengthening the Social and Emotional Skills Needed for Student Success and Wellbeing (Bernard & Burston, 2009) and Bullying: Building the Capacity to Cope (Bernard & Ward, 2012).
Activity 5

The Power of Self-Talk

Directions: Write in the thought clouds examples of self-talk that determine whether the person continues to try or gives up.

Positive Self-Talk

Negative Self-Talk

Your self-talk can power you to success.

Are you a positive thinker or a negative thinker?
Notes to Teacher

Power of Self-Talk

You can begin the activity by explaining that all people have choices in the way they think about their work, themselves, and other people. The word used in YCDI! for thinking is ‘self-talk’. Self-talk and thinking mean pretty much the same thing.

Explain to your students that there are two different types of self-talk: ‘negative self-talk’ and ‘positive self-talk’. Examples of positive self-talk are:

- I can do this. ‘Even though I did not do well, I am still a worthwhile person.’ ‘There are many things I do well.’ ‘I accept myself with all my mistakes.’

Examples of negative self-talk are:

- ‘I can’t do this.’ ‘I’m a loser.’ ‘I’ll never be successful.’ ‘No one likes me.’ ‘I’ll never have a good friend.’

You can also say that a person’s self-talk has a very powerful effect on their success and happiness. The more positive self-talk, the more you are likely to be Confident, Persistent, Organised, and to Get Along.

Have students write in the thought clouds examples of positive and negative self-talk that will determine whether the swimmer keeps swimming in the rough waters. Explain that when students are faced with challenging situations, they should try to use positive, rather than negative, self-talk.

Discussion Questions and Sample Answers

1. Does thinking positively guarantee you success?
   Sample answer: No. If you cannot swim, no amount of positive self-talk will get you across the pool. However, positive thinking prepares your way to success by making you believe in yourself.

2. Does negative thinking doom you to failure?
   Sample answer: No. It is possible to shoot a basket in the hoop with the thought ‘I’m going to miss this.’ However, day in and day out you will tend to fail achieving the goals you have set if you have negative thinking and do not believe in yourself.
YCDI Classroom- and School-Wide Practices

In addition to teachers presenting lessons and activities from YCDI's curricula programs, over the years a number of different teaching practices have been identified that help develop students' knowledge and use of the 5 Foundations and the 12 Habits of the Mind (see Bernard, 2006b). Some of these practices include:

Practice 1. Have Discussions with Students About Each of the 5 Foundations

It is important for teachers to have conversations about each of the 5 Foundations and how important each is to everyone's success and well-being. Teachers should engage students in a discussion of the Foundations asking them for their views/definitions and making sure that at the end of the discussion, a definition is provided.

Practice 2. Describe to Students Examples of Behaviours to Be Practised that Reflect Each Foundation

After discussion, teachers should display on a poster a list of examples of behaviours of each of the 5 Foundations that students will need to practise in order to develop the Foundations (e.g. practicing times tables, spending time doing research in the library, practicing spelling, spending time reading). Teachers encourage students to practise these behaviours.

Practice 3a. Teach Students about the Important Role of Thinking/Self-Talk to Their Feelings and Behaviour

One of the important ideas to impart to students is that it is not what happens to them that determines how successful and happy they are. This idea has been around for some time. Epictetus, a Stoic-Roman philosopher, wrote in the second century A.D. that 'People are not affected by events, but by their view of events.' Shakespeare wrote that 'Things are neither good nor bad, but thinking makes them so.'
Practice 3b. Discuss with Students the Positive Habits of the Mind that Support Each of the 5 Foundations

Teachers will want to provide students with opportunities to learn the meaning of 12 positive Habits of the Mind and how they support the 5 Foundations. Teachers will want to illustrate through discussion and role-play how a positive Habit of the Mind can help someone to practise positive behaviour.

Practice 4. Provide Students with Behaviour-Specific Feedback When They Display Examples of the Behaviours that Reflect the 5 Foundations

When teachers catch a student practicing a behaviour that reflects the Foundation they are teaching, teachers should acknowledge the student verbally, non-verbally, or in a written comment (e.g. ‘You were confident.’ ‘You tried hard and did not give up. That’s persistence.’ ‘Doesn’t it feel good to be organised?’ ‘You are getting along very well when working together.’ ‘You stayed calm in a difficult situation. That’s resilience.’).

Practice 5. Teach Students Not to Blow Things out of Proportion

This is a very popular teaching practice that helps develop students’ resilience. Teachers discuss with students how there are different degrees of ‘badness’. Some things are ‘a bit bad’, some things are ‘bad’, some things are ‘very bad’, and some things are ‘awful and terrible’. Teachers explain to students that when ‘bad’ things happen to them, they should use their thinking to mentally place the negative events in the correct category of ‘badness’ and not to blow the badness of the event out of proportion.

Practice 6 – Integrate YCDI in the Academic Curriculum

The more teachers can incorporate the Foundations and the Habits of the Mind in other activities of their class or in one-to-one mentoring discussions, the more rapidly students will internalise them. A popular activity in Language Arts is for students to identify a character from a book they are reading or a movie they have seen and conduct a character analysis using key YCDI concepts.

Practice 7 – Integrate YCDI in Art, Music and Drama

YCDI should be expressed in the artwork and music that is found in school. Art classes can design murals and posters that illustrate the 5 Foundations and which can then decorate the school. Students create their own songs and plays to bring the YCDI themes to life. There are a range of YCDI songs created by Kevin Hunt and myself that communicate different social-emotional skills and rational attitudes taught in YCDI (‘I’m feeling confident today’; ‘I’ll be persistent’) for elementary-age students and a series for young children (e.g. ‘I’m Connie Confidence’).

YCDI has published a CD of over 100 colourful cartoon images portraying YCDI themes that schools can download, duplicate and display throughout classrooms and school grounds (‘The You Can Do It! Education Images Resource CD Program’).
Brilliant Resilience

Lyrics by Kevin Hunt and Michael E. Bernard
Music by Kevin Hunt, © 2008

Verse 1
I don’t have to get too angry
I won’t let it get me down
When there’s lots of bad stuff going ‘round.
I remember to stay cool, and think the whole thing through
And I know that nothing can make me feel real blue.

Chorus
I’ve got brilliant resilience.
I’ve got brilliant resilience in me.
I’ve got brilliant resilience.
I’ve got brilliant resilience in me.

Verse 2
When I start to spin right out,
If I want to scream and shout
I won’t let my anger get on top of me.
I don’t have to give up hope
‘Cos I know how to cope.
I’ve got brilliant resilience in me.

Chorus

Verse 3
If my temper rears its head,
I can talk it through instead.
I can count to ten and stay real calm and cool.
When my control starts to leave.
I tell myself to breathe.
And I work the whole thing through patiently.

Chorus

Lyrics from Brilliant Resilience (You Can Do It! Song Book, 2011)
Here is a list of recommended actions that experience has shown will build the critical mass needed for YCDI to become an intrinsic part of school culture so that all students are influenced.

1. **Awards.** Existing awards for student behaviour (classroom, school-wide) can be modified so that students are ‘caught’ and acknowledged by their teachers for displaying confidence, persistence, organisation, getting along and resilience.

   ![Student Achievement Awards](image)

   **You Can Do It! Student Achievement Awards**

   *This ACHIEVING STUDENT has been recognised for demonstrating:*

   **CONFIDENCE • PERSISTENCE**
   **ORGANISATION • GETTING ALONG**
   **RESILIENCE**

   in the following way ____________________________

   Student ____________________________ Teacher ____________________________

   **Student Certificate for Displaying YCDI Skills**

2. **Assemblies.** Assembly time can be used to invite speakers to talk to students about the importance of the 5 Foundations and 12 Habits of the Mind in their lives.

   ![Middle-School Students Display the 5 Keys (Foundations) at School Assembly](image)
3. **Excursions.** Adults who take students on excursions can prepare students for successful outings by reviewing in advance with students how the different YCDI Foundations can make their excursion a success.

4. **Celebration of Student ‘Success’ Stories.** These stories should be shared on a regular basis at staff meetings.

5. **School/Classroom Signage.** The five YCDI Foundations can be displayed in the library, reception area, corridors, and inside/outside walls and in select spots around the school grounds. These can be creative contributions made by school parents or teachers.

![The entrance of a You Can Do It! school](image)

The entrance of a You Can Do It! school

![The wall in a YCDI classroom](image)

The wall in a YCDI classroom
6. **Assessment.** For students and staff to take YCDI seriously, it is good practice for students to be formally assessed by their teachers on the school’s report card in terms of their display of their social and emotional learning skills.

---

**YCDI Parent Education**

Two separate streams of research have led to the development of YCDI educational programs for parents. First, there is extensive research that identifies different *styles of parenting* (e.g. authoritative) that positively influence children’s learning and adjustment, as well as styles of parenting (e.g. permissive, authoritarian) that contribute to poorer adjustment and achievement of children (e.g. Aunola & Nurmi, 2005; Dornbusch, et al., 1987). Second, there is a major body of parenting research that addresses ways in which parents can support the social and emotional development of their children (e.g. Albright, Weissberg, & Dusenbury, 2011) and, in particular, the learning of rational attitudes and social-emotional competences (e.g. Bernard, 1997).

**The Investing in Parents Program**

*Investing in Parents: What Parents Need to Know and Do to Support Their Children’s Achievement and Social-Emotional Well-Being* was published (Bernard, 2009) and consists of 10 classes or learning modules designed to present to parents the latest research on positive parenting practice. These classes are designed for use with groups of parents of both primary- and secondary-age students.
This program consists of 10 modules covering the following topics.

**Module 1:** Parents Today: What You Need to Know and Do

**Module 2:** Avoid Common Mistakes that ‘Good’ Parents Make

**Module 3:** Be Emotionally Resilient

**Module 4:** Develop Positive Relationships with Your Children

**Module 5:** Communicate to Your Children High and Realistic Expectations for Achievement and Behaviour

**Module 6:** Be Involved in Your Children’s Education
  - Part A. Show Interest
  - Part B. Manage Homework
  - Part C. Tutor Your Child
  - Part D. Steps to Take if Your Child Under-Achieves

**Module 7:** Provide Children with Responsibility and Involve Them in Decision-Making

**Module 8:** Provide Activities that Accommodate Children’s Interests

**Module 9:** Motivate Your Children

**Module 10:** Develop Your Children’s Social-Emotional Competence
  - Part A. Build Children’s Positive Mindset for Achievement
  - Part B. Help Children Getting Along
  - Part C. Build Children’s Emotional Resilience
  - Part D. Teach Children the Core Value of Social Responsibility

Each session includes the following: (a) background information for the leader, (b) complete description of all session activities, (c) complete description of parent homework activities, (d) overheads for the session, and (e) handouts for the session.
The Compass Program: Directions Parents of Primary Age Children Can Take at Home to Support Their Children’s Achievement in School

The Compass Program (Bernard, 2008c) consists of a guide, a DVD, and handouts designed for the parents of primary- and middle-school students. Its purpose is to communicate to parents what the research indicates are the actions they can take at home to support the achievement of their children at school.


The Compass Program is very structured in terms of the explicit directions provided to the facilitator as to how to conduct the activities in the program. It is designed for use by a teacher, a school counsellor, or a parent educator with groups of parents. The program is written to be delivered in two 120-minute sessions; however, it is quite commonly broken up into a larger number of shorter sessions (for example, four 60-minute sessions). The video program (approximately 30 minutes) can be shown on its own as part of an information session for parents. Alternatively, it can be shown during parent education sessions that employ the written program.

The materials in the written program can also be adapted and/or photocopied as regular ‘features’ in a school-home communication section of your school’s newsletter.

Evaluations of the program indicate high levels of parent satisfaction with the Compass Program. Moreover, before and after evaluation measures indicate a positive impact of the Compass Program on parent ‘self-efficacy’ – parents knowing that they have ‘what it takes’ to have a positive influence on their children.

Two Stand-Alone YCDI Parent Education Classes

I have also developed two stand-alone 90-minute parent education classes that can be offered by parent educators, interested parents, and professionals trained in YCDI. These classes that are frequently offered by schools to their parent community are suitable for parents of young people of all ages.

The Seven Capabilities of Highly Effective Parents (PowerPoint, handout) (Bernard, 2006c) reviews with parents what the research indicates as to the styles of parenting associated with high levels of achievement,
positive behaviour, and well-being of children that (see Table 2). ‘Not-so-good’ styles of parenting that parents use when they are not having a good day and that lead to negative outcomes in children (e.g. rebellion, low self-esteem, under-achievement) are reviewed including: authoritarian style, permissive style, powerless style, over-protective style, over-emotional style, lack of expectations style and excessive expectations style. During the session, parents are provided with concrete ways to strengthen their positive styles of parenting and overcome the negative styles.

Table 2. A Summary of the Seven Capabilities of Highly Effective Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. 1 – Developing a Positive Relationship with Your Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is very important but not always easy to do but includes spending extra time with your child, expressing physical affection, listening and not having a negative tone of voice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. 2 – Communicating High, Realistic Expectations for Children’s Achievement and Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children need to know clearly where you stand when it comes to them trying hard on their schoolwork and their behaviour. Discuss rules, expectations and the consequences of misbehaviour.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. 3 – Providing Children with Special Responsibilities and Involvement in Decision-Making</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We now know that children who are given some ‘say’ about the way things are done at home including being given special responsibility have higher social and emotional well-being.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. 4 – Supporting Your Children’s Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When children are able to participate in programs and activities that they are interested in, their general confidence and optimism grow.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. 5 – Being Interested and Involved in Your Children’s Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without being too involved and taking too much responsibility, the more interest you communicate in what your children is learning and about their teachers and school, the more interested and motivated they will be.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. 6 – Motivating Your Children’s Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents can motivate their children in different ways when their children are already interested in what they are learning as well as when their children have little interest and feel like giving up.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. 7 – Communicating to Your Children Social and Emotional Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The more parents model, communicate, expect and reinforce in their children values of good character and life skills such as confidence, persistence, organisation and ways to relate to people and manage their emotions, the stronger the personality and character of children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second stand-alone class is often offered to a school’s parent community to introduce parents to YCDI. *The Keys to Children’s Success and Well-Being* (Bernard, 2006d) class reviews with parents ways in which they can encourage and support their children’s confidence, persistence, organisation, getting along, and resilience. Part of the class is introducing parents to the idea of self-talk and providing them with illustrations concerning what they can say to develop their children’s Habits of the Mind. Parents are given an opportunity to complete a survey where they can identify their children’s social and emotional strengths and areas for development. The final
segment involves parents writing down an ‘action plan’ that they can follow at home to support the development of one of their child’s social and emotional skills.

The book *Strengthening the Social and Emotional Capabilities of Young People with Achievement and Behavioural Problems: A Guide for Working with Teachers and Parents* (Bernard, 2006c) provides advice and strategies for parents (and teachers) for increasing the social and emotional competence of children and adolescents who exhibit problems of adjustment and achievement.

Over the years, I have authored several popular books for parents that present the parenting capabilities that lead to positive outcomes in their children (Bernard, 1997) and a book full of tips and advice co-authored with my wife, Patricia Bernard, in 1993, *The you can do it! little book for parents*.

### Professional Development of Teachers in You Can Do It! Education

Key to the widespread use of YCDI in schools throughout Australia are YCDI trainers – experienced teachers and school principals – who are available to visit schools upon request to offer professional development to all teachers of a school. This work is coordinated by the You Can Do It! Education National Office in Brisbane, Australia (National Director: Jenny Williams). YCDI trainers receive training on an annual basis on the theory and practice of YCDI, including latest findings from research. Over the years, more than a dozen YCDI trainers have visited over 2,000 schools Australia-wide to offer initial and follow-up training.

There are four types of teacher professional development programs that the national organisation offers to schools.

#### The Theory and Practice of You Can Do It! Education.

In this half- to full-day program, teachers learn about: (a) the role of social-emotional competence in student academic performance and mental health, (b) the nature of the 5 Foundations and 12 Habits of the Mind taught in YCDI, (c) the use of the different YCDI curricula (e.g. YCDI Early Childhood program, Program Achieve), (d) additional classroom teaching practices (e.g. use of behaviour-specific feedback, visual displays, integration in academic learning, assessment) and (e) school-wide practices.

#### The Resilient Educator

I have discovered that in order for teachers to be effective in their teaching of YCDI, it is helpful if they are aware of their own social-emotional strengths that they will be teaching in YCDI to their students, including their confidence, persistence, organisation, getting along, and resilience. Based on my book *Taking the Stress Out of Teaching* (Bernard, 1990) and the chapter I wrote with Ray DiGiuseppe ‘Rational-emotive consultation: The missing link to successful consultation’ (1994), I developed a teacher professional development program called ‘The Resilient Educator’ that is presented to all teachers at a school. In this half-day workshop, teachers learn about: (a) characteristics of resilient and non-resilient teachers, (b) typical emotional reactions to adverse situations they encounter at school with students, parents, teachers and school administrators (e.g. poorly behaved student, students not achieving good results on their exams, ‘unfair’ treatment by a school principal, criticism by a parent), (c) the role of their thinking as a determining factor in the their emotional and behavioural responses to adverse situations, (d) the skill of keeping the ‘badness’ of adverse events in perspective (not blowing events out of proportion), (e) rational ways to think and coping skills to strengthen their resilience when faced with adverse events, (f) the use of action strategies (confidence, persistence, organisation
and getting along) to maximise effectiveness in dealing with adverse events, and (g) the development of a three-step action plan for strengthening resilience.

**Positive Attitudes and Behaviours for Learning**

The Attitudes and Behaviours for Learning Program (AB4L) (Bernard & Milne, 2010) consisting of written material and a DVD of teaching implementing the practices was developed to provide teachers with explicit instruction in practices that can be integrated throughout a literacy and numeracy lesson to teach students various attitudes and behaviours for learning. Over two or three professional development sessions, teachers are trained to integrate five core teaching practices throughout the different components of a literacy and numeracy lesson (before the lesson begins, during whole class, teacher-led instruction, during small group/dyadic/individual work, at end of session – reflection on learning, assignment of homework).

The five core teaching practices contained in AB4L that incorporate different attitudes and behaviours for learning that are based on the You Can Do It! Education. These include: (1) sharing with students the goals of a literacy lesson, having students set goals for what they want to learn/achieve, having students monitor their progress towards achieving their goals during the lesson, evaluating their success in achieving the goals they set at the end of the lesson and reflecting on any improvements or changes they may need to make to their learning methods and behaviours they use during a lesson, (2) discussing with students positive attitudes (self-efficacy, internal motivation), (3) presenting and reviewing with students concrete behaviours for learning they should apply during whole-class, small group, paired and individual work that can help them to stay engaged, focused and successful (listening, staying in seat, staying calm when you do not understand what to do, asking someone for help), (4) discussing with students the difference between positive and negative self-talk and helping students become aware of de-motivating, negative self-talk and positive self-talk that helps them to be confident, persistent, organised, to work together and to be emotionally calm and resilient, and (5) communicating to students using behaviour-specific feedback when they are observed employing positive behaviours for learning.

Examples of practices that enable teachers to integrate positive attitudes and behaviours for learning throughout a numeracy and literacy lesson can be found in Table 3. (The author would like to acknowledge the help of Tina Coumbe, Assistant Principal, Rye Primary School, for her assistance in applying the AB4L program to the teaching of numeracy.)

AB4L does not prioritise nor elaborate extensively upon learning methods and study skills that research indicates as being academic enablers. Behaviours for managing the social environment including seeking help when needed are discussed as well as a range of study skills for managing the physical environment at home when doing homework. However, the emphasis of AB4L is less on metacognitive learning, problem-solving methods and study skills (asking question, concept mapping) and more on the self-management skills and attitudes needed to be engaged in individual and cooperative learning during classroom instruction.
Table 3. Examples of Teaching Practices that Help Students Set Goals for Learning and Develop Positive Attitudes and Behaviours for Learning Literacy and Numeracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Develop Positive Mindset of Students</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Say: ‘Before getting started, it is important that you have a positive attitude towards what you will be learning.’ Provide one or more of the following examples. For example, you can say: ‘Let’s make sure everyone has an ‘I can do it’ rather than an ‘I can’t do it’ attitude to what we’re doing today.’ (Ask students to volunteer what this means).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Describe Behaviours for Learning</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Say: ‘For you to be successful in this next activity, it is very important for you to know how to be a successful learner. Here is a list of what are called “behaviours for learning” that will help you to be successful. I want you to practise these behaviours during this activity.’ Provide examples including raising your hand to answer a difficult question and reading out loud with a strong voice so that everyone can clearly hear you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Describe Self-Talk for Learning</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Say: ‘The self-talk you have when you are learning to read is very important. (Hold up an illustration of students with self-talk clouds over their heads. Make sure students understand self-talk.) Let’s review some examples of negative self-talk that makes it harder for you to be successful in reading and we’ll look at some positive self-talk that will help you to be successful in your reading. I’ll read some negative self-talk. Then, you change it to positive self-talk. Provide examples of negative and positive self-talk. Example: Negative Self-Talk: ‘I’ll never understand this.’; Positive Self-Talk: ‘If I keep trying I will understand.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Communicate Behaviour-Specific Feedback for Learning (to individuals or to the whole class)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide examples: ‘Good for you for putting your hand up and trying. The confidence you are showing will help you to be an even better reader!’ For example: ‘I like the way you kept trying and didn’t give up when you were trying to read that tricky word out loud. Your persistence is helping you improve your reading.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Have Students Reflect on Achievement of Goals</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Say: ‘At the end of a lesson, it is important to think about whether or not you achieved the goals of today’s session I discussed before we began. Could someone say what the goal was of the session and whether they achieved it?’ (For example, a student could say: ‘I achieved the goal of learning how to estimate curved distances.’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Have Students Reflect on Their Use of Behaviour for Learning</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions that require self-reflection. For example, ‘Who can share with us the “behaviours for learning” that you used in the session (e.g. “I was confident”, “I raised my hand to answer a difficult question”, “I really tried hard in working out maths problems that were difficult without giving up”, “I helped others in my group”, “I managed my frustration when I found something hard to understand and I stayed calm”)?’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Have Students Reflect on Their Use of Self-Talk for Learning</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions that require self-reflection. For example: ‘Who used positive self-talk during the session to help them be successful? What was the self-talk you used (e.g. “The more I try, the more I will learn”)?’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Communicate Behaviour-Specific Feedback for Learning (to group or individuals)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide examples: ‘I really liked the way you talked about what you learned in the session.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Describe Behaviours for Learning For Homework</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Say: ‘The literacy homework for tonight is really important for you to do as it will help you learn more about reading. When you begin your literacy homework, it is important to practise ‘behaviours for learning’ and ‘positive self-talk’ that will help you to be successful.’ Example: ‘Decide on a set time when you will do your literacy homework and how many minutes you will spend working.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Describe Positive Self-Talk for Learning for Homework</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Say: ‘The following self-talk can help you to do homework that is hard or is taking a lot of time.’ Provide examples such as: ‘The sooner I get it done, the sooner I can play.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comments by teachers about the AB4L program have been extremely positive. Teachers said they are now more aware, focused, and clear about the importance of student attitudes and behaviours for learning and that they were now able to provide students with a common language and understanding about how to learn. Participating teachers agreed on the value of discussing behaviours for learning, communicating behaviour-specific feedback and the use of positive self-talk to help students cope with distractions as well as the value of teaching the attitude ‘It’s OK to make mistakes’. Teachers were very positive about the impact on students; several commented on students having more positive attitudes towards learning; several comments on how student confidence has grown with students taking more responsibility for their learning and being more engaged; and one teacher commented: ‘The focus in my class has moved away from behavioural issues to learning behaviours and the talk is positive, not negative.’ Of interest is the lack of negative comments of teachers concerning the intrusiveness of AB4L in their daily teaching. No teacher expressed the opinion that the time spent in discussing attitudes and behaviours for learning took away from time needed to present the literacy lesson.

An examination of the comments of students whose teachers implemented AB4L reveals a view that their class was more focused on learning (‘Everyone’s on task’, ‘Class has settled down’). Students remarked on how the program helped them to be more positive and on being less stressed about learning because they no longer are afraid of making mistakes. Several students commented they were now trying harder. Students commented they were using positive self-talk to help them to be less distracted and to get on and complete work.

Table 4. Case Studies of Schools that Have Successfully Implemented a Social and Emotional, Learning Program and Are Seeing the Positive Benefits on Student Attitude, Behaviour and Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At Benalla 31 Primary School (VIC), Heather Leary, school principal,</td>
<td>The school culture identifies for students the value and priority of school success.</td>
<td>Achievement increased and behaviour problems reduced to minimum levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Morisset Primary School (NSW), Ann-Maree Kelly, former school</td>
<td>The school has seen students’ achievement scores rise dramatically from well below national averages to well above the performance of other similar low socio-economic schools.</td>
<td>Similar low socio-economic schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Woodridge State School (QLD), Garry Molloy, school principal,</td>
<td>The school staff communicate the social and emotional attributes that underpin lifelong learning to their students from over 30 different cultures as well as those with special needs.</td>
<td>The school from over 30 different cultures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Capability-Building for Teachers

The professional development program *Capability Building for Teachers: A Framework of Sustainable, Ongoing Professional Development Aimed at Promoting Teaching Excellence* (Bernard, 2004d) is based on the assumption that in order for teachers to perform at the highest levels with regard to their multiple roles and responsibilities (e.g., curriculum, instruction, assessment, classroom management, parent involvement), they need to possess two distinct sets of capabilities: *professional* (e.g., positive teacher-student relationships, communication of high expectations for achievement and behaviour) and *personal* (e.g., emotional resilience, confidence, persistence, organisation) (see Figure 2).

This program, which is designed to be presented by someone with experience in conducting teacher professional development sessions, including YCDI trainers, consists of two parts.

In Part 1, a variety of activities and exercises review with teachers the eight teaching practices that research continues to indicate support high levels of achievement, behaviour, and well-being of students of all ages including: (1) Develop positive relationships with students (especially those with achievement and behaviour problems), (2) Firmly communicate to students high, realistic expectations for achievement and behaviour, (3) Provide students with special responsibilities and involvement in classroom and school decision making, (4) Provide students with class and school activities that accommodate their interests (e.g. technical, social, artistic, enterprising, investigative), (5) Are sensitive to and accommodating of cultural-gender differences among students, (6) Make clear provisions for the safety of students in the class and at school, (7) Provide a quality curriculum and school culture, and communicate/model to students positive attitudes (e.g. optimism, high frustration tolerance, self-acceptance), values (e.g. honesty, respect, fairness, citizenship), and social-emotional motivational competencies (e.g. goal setting, time management, conflict resolution) and (8) Provide students with a quality curriculum, explicitly teaching academic/content standards and provide multiple opportunities for students to be successful.

Using highly engaging and stimulating workshop activities, Part 2 of this program focuses on the strengthening of teachers’ personal capabilities; those social and emotional skills that help teachers cope with the demands of the job and solve problems. These personal capabilities are the same ones that are taught in the YCDI program to students (confidence, persistence, organisation, getting along, and resilience). As such, Part 2 of the teacher capability-building program is an excellent introduction for teachers to *You Can Do It! Education*, making it easier for them to appreciate and to teach the program to their students.
Figure 4. Capability Building for Teachers: Promoting Teacher Excellence and Improving Student Outcomes
Research on You Can Do It! Education

Research on You Can Do It! Education can be seen in the article that appears in the *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, ‘It’s time we teach social-emotional competence as well as we teach academic competence’ (Bernard, 2006a).

In the first of several related studies summarised in this article, Bernard (1995) investigated the extent to which positive Habits of the Mind differentiated students identified by their teachers as achievers (defined as achieving to the best of their ability – not necessarily getting top grades, but working hard and toward potential) and underachievers (defined as a significant discrepancy between ability and achievement; putting in little effort). In one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school in a culturally diverse urban school district, 187 achievers and underachievers were identified by their teachers. Three teachers at each grade level (grades 1-12) identified three achievers and three students who demonstrated extreme degrees of underachievement. One third of the sample consisted of students who were African American, one third of the sample was Hispanic, and the remaining third of the sample of students were Anglo-American (Caucasian). Thirty-six teachers completed a survey called the Habits of the Mind Questionnaire (Bernard, 1995), rating 11 Habits of the Mind (Social Responsibility not surveyed) of three high-achieving students and three underachieving students. For all 11 Habits of the Mind, underachievers were rated lower than achievers. This finding was consistent when male achievers were compared with male underachievers (with the exception of the Habit of the Mind called Taking Risks), female achievers were compared with female underachievers, and the Habits of the Mind of African American, Hispanic, Anglo, and gifted achievers were compared with the Habits of the Mind of African American, Hispanic, Anglo American, and gifted underachievers. Results of this study resulted in the identification of a universalistic positive mind-set for achievement that that appeared to be associated with the achievement of all students regardless of cultural background, gender, and ability.

In a follow-up study, Brooks (1999) examined my conception of a positive mind-set for achievement in achievers and underachievers in regular and special education. Thirty-six middle school students placed in a resource class for children with learning disabilities and 151 students without disabilities in regular education constituted the sample. Two resource-special education and four regular education teachers completed the Habits of the Mind Questionnaire (Bernard, 1995) on all participating students along with providing a rating of each student's confidence, persistence, organisation, and getting along competencies (resilience not surveyed). Results indicated that students with learning disabilities were rated lower in academic confidence than students without disabilities. For the total sample, students rated as achievers demonstrated significantly higher levels on nine of eleven positive Habits of the Mind (not Accepting Myself or Being Independent) than students rated as underachievers. Results indicated that across the total sample, students rated as achievers were rated higher in confidence, persistence, organisation, and getting along than were underachievers. The Brooks study provides evidence that students with learning disabilities show delays in academic confidence. Additionally, students who demonstrate not only learning disabilities but who were not doing as well as they could (relative to what is predicted given their learning disabilities) show delays in the development of nine of eleven positive Habits of the Mind and four of the Five Foundations.

Eddy (2000) conducted a partial replication of the Bernard (1995) study. She examined the Habits of the Mind of students in grade 10 who were identified as achievers and underachievers by their teachers. All 80 grade 10 students (24 females, 56 males) enrolled in a metropolitan high school in Victoria, Australia, were rated by their teachers on a nine-point scale of achievement, where low scores
represented ‘underachievers’ (students achieving below their ability/potential), middle range scores represented ‘achievers’ (students achieving in line with their ability/potential), and high scores represented ‘overachievers’ (students achieving above their perceived ability/potential). A teacher other than the one who provided the rating of achievement who knew each student well then completed the Habits of the Mind Questionnaire on each student. Results indicated the following Habits of the Mind most strongly associated with the achievement of students in grade 10: Working Tough (high frustration tolerance), Giving Effort (internal locus of control for learning), Setting Goals, Planning My Time, Thinking First (reflective problem solving), and Playing By the Rules. The Habits of the Mind associated with Persistence, Organisation, and Getting Along differentiated achievers from underachievers.

Buddecke (2002) set out to determine whether students who are referred to student study teams because of academic problems differ from their non-referred peers with regard to their psychological characteristics. Specific positive psychological characteristics of interest were confidence, persistence, organisation, and getting along with others. Participants in this study consisted of 50 students (33 males and 17 females). Seventy-six per cent of these students were from culturally diverse backgrounds (e.g. mostly Hispanic, a minority of Anglo-American). Half of these students were referred to their school’s student study team because of academic or a combination of academic and behavioural problems. The other 25 students were not reported to have any academic or behavioural difficulties and were individually matched with students in the referred group based on grade level, gender, and cultural background. Each teacher who referred a child to the school’s Student Study Team identified a matched student with no apparent problem and completed a forty item survey on both students (Bernard, 1995) that measured the positive psychological characteristics of interest. Results revealed that the group scores for the referred and non-referred students differed significantly on the four positive characteristics. The psychological makeup of students with achievement problems was noticeably less positive than was the makeup of students who did not draw attention to themselves for demonstrating problems in achievement.

Finally, Bernard (2004a) investigated the association between the 5 Foundations and reading achievement of 158 children (80 males, 78 females; 66% Hispanic, 15% Anglo-American, 19% other) in half- and full-day kindergarten. Teachers of kindergarten children completed the Social-Emotional Well-Being Survey (Bernard, Magnum, & Urbach, 2003/2009) that asked them to rate children’s academic confidence, social confidence, persistence, organisation, getting along and emotional resilience. Additional data were obtained on children’s reading levels (running record) obtained in February and June of their kindergarten year. Statistically significant correlations were obtained between each measure of social-emotional-motivational competence (range .28–.52) and their reading achievement at the end of kindergarten. Kindergarten students’ rate of progress in reading from March to June as measured by their oral fluency in reading correlated with their positive mind-set for achievement (.39). The 49 kindergarteners referred for summer school for extra preparation for commencing grade 1 not only scored significantly lower in their reading achievement in comparison with the 85 children not referred, but kindergarten children not referred for summer school scored significantly higher on all measures of social-emotional-motivational competence. Of interest was the finding that male kindergarten children were rated lower in all social-emotional-motivational competencies that female kindergarten children. Overall, data from this study indicate that kindergarten children who are ‘at risk’ for reading failure demonstrate delays not only in academic skills but social-emotional-motivational competencies. In general, evidence from the above studies supports the proposition that students who present with learning disabilities and achievement problems present with delays in the development of academic confidence, work persistence, and organisational skills, and possess fewer positive Habits of the Mind and a greater number of negative
Substantial value-added gains were observed in students’ level of achievement in maths, English and science. Students showed increases in their use of the four Foundations over the course of the school year. One of the four Foundations to apply during the forthcoming week. Results indicated that 96% of participating students showed improvements in their class grades and persistence, organisation, and getting along skills necessary for effective working collaboratively with others.

Five studies in particular provide evidence suggesting a positive impact of teaching children social-emotional-motivational capabilities on their academic engagement and achievement. Two of these studies (Campbell, 1999; Day, 1998) fall into the category of case studies rather than strong inference studies, as neither contained a randomly assigned control group. While gains in achievement obtained in both studies were associated with the introduction of an YCDI intervention program designed to teach positive Habits of the Mind plus the 5 Foundations, it is not possible to draw causal interpretations. The studies are included here because they provide preliminary data that suggest that teaching social-emotional-motivational competencies can have beneficial effects on achievement.

Day (1998) conducted a program evaluation of the impact of Program Achieve on the class grades and truancy of 100 high school students (ages 14–16). Program Achieve is a six-volume curriculum (grades 1-12) of personal development activities designed to be taught by teachers and mental health practitioners that provide students with knowledge of and experience in using the 5 Foundations and 12 Habits of the Mind. The 100 students (60% male, 40% female) were nominated by their teachers for receiving poor grades (Fs or multiple Ds). The students were assigned to one of eight You Can Do It! Education tutorial groups, each group consisting of approximately 12 students. The eight YCDI tutors who presented the lessons from Program Achieve to students consisted of the school’s deputy principal, two school counsellors, the school psychologist, a physical education teacher, and three grade level coordinators. The YCDI tutors received three hours of training in the use of Program Achieve. Students were withdrawn from their regular classes to attend their YCDI class. The YCDI class met for 50 minutes during the school day once a week for a full semester (16 weeks). In order to minimise the amount of time a student missed of any one regular class, each YCDI class met at a different time each week. Results showed that over 70% of participating students showed improvements in their class grades and attendance. Moreover, the YCDI program results in more positive interactions between students and their YCDI tutors outside of the YCDI class. As no comparison group of students receiving poor grades and being truant was employed, it is not possible to rule out other sources of influence over the improvement of participating students.

Campbell (1999) – and other studies – conducted a program evaluation of the impact of teaching primary students from a disadvantaged community the social-emotional skills of confidence, persistence, organisation, and getting along on their standardised achievement test scores. In September of 1998, 32 students in grade 6 completed a baseline assessment of their achievement in maths, English, and science. If their school added no value to their academic achievement, then their performance in June would replicate their September results. ‘Value-added’ schooling would be demonstrated if student achievement rose over predicted levels obtained in September. Throughout the school year, grade 6 students were taught the four Foundations in a variety of ways, including teacher communication of behaviour-specific feedback when students demonstrated the Foundations in their behaviour, weekly lessons from the Program Achieve curriculum, visual representation of the four Foundations and Habits of the Mind throughout the school, student progress in applying the four Foundations provided in regular progress reports to parents and discussed during parent-teacher conferences, and weekly goal-setting, where students targeted academic knowledge-skills to learn and one of the four Foundations to apply during the forthcoming week. Results indicated that 96% of students showed increases in their use of the four Foundations over the course of the school year. Substantial value-added gains were observed in students’ level of achievement in maths, English and...
science. While the program evaluator concluded that You Can Do It! education was the main intervention responsible for the value-added increase in student achievement, one needs to be cautious in interpreting these results.

In the first of several studies showing the positive impact that instruction directed at teaching non-academic capabilities can have on academic achievement, Hudson (1993) investigated the extent to which the You Can Do It Too! Motivational and Personal Development Video Program (with accompanying group, interactive activities) could increase the reading and mathematical achievement of students. Sixty grade 5 and 6 students (34 boys, 26 girls) from a low-SES, high-migrant area in metropolitan Melbourne, Australia, were randomly assigned to an experimental and control group. A one-hour, once a week, program was designed that combined video viewing and interactive group activities and included the following: Part 1. Effort, Part 2. Confidence, Part 3. Liking Me, Part 4. Goal Setting, Part 5. Time Management, Part 6. Persistence, Part 7. Making Friends and Part 8. Staying Cool. Analyses of covariance indicated that the You Can Do It Too! Program resulted in statistically significant improvements in reading and mathematical achievement as measured by two standardised tests of achievement. Follow-up research was recommended to isolate the effects of the YCDI program from the effects of exposure to the experimenter.

Pina (1996) investigated the effects of Program Achieve on the homework performance, academic engagement, and achievement of underachieving fifth- and sixth-grade students. Forty-nine students (31 boys, 18 girls, 78% Hispanic, 22% Anglo) identified by their teachers as underachievers were randomly assigned to a treatment group (receiving for six weeks, twice a week, a 45-minute lesson from Program Achieve designed to teach confidence, persistence, organisation, and associated Habits of the Mind) or to a non-treatment control group. Based on the ratings of their teachers, results indicated that in comparison with the control group, the treatment group demonstrated significant increases in effort ratings of homework, overall quality of homework, and an overall borderline significant effect on their grade point average \( (p < .07) \) (univariate significant effects were obtained for the subjects of history, science). As well, significant relationships were obtained between positive changes in certain positive Habits of the Mind of students (Giving Effort, Working Tough, Setting Goals) and positive changes in effort, homework grades, and improvement in science and history.

In a related study, Brown (1999) was interested in determining whether the achievement of students with a variety of motivational, learning, and reading difficulties (no disability classifications of students available) could be accelerated through teaching them YCDI. Brown examined the impact of a mentoring program employed in an after-school homework club on the grade point average of both achieving students (students with a strong grade point average) and underachieving middle school students (students nominated to an after-school homework club due to underachievement with/without reading-learning difficulties) attending the club. Thirty-six students (13–14 year olds; 50% Hispanic, 20% African American, 10% Anglo) who enrolled in an after-school homework program during Term 2 were randomly assigned to a treatment group (receiving on Mondays and Wednesdays academic mentoring on homework plus instruction in confidence, persistence, organisation, getting along) or a control group (receiving on Tuesdays/Thursdays academic coaching only). An examination of students’ grade point average revealed that 50% of students in both the treatment and control groups were already achievers (GPA > 3.0), while the other 50% were low achievers (GPA < 2.0). The independent variable referred to as You Can Do It! Education consisted of the following elements that students received: visual images representing the four Foundations displayed in the classroom, twenty minutes of lesson work drawn from Program Achieve, behaviour-specific feedback provided by academic coaches when students displayed any of the four Foundations, and weekly goal setting between an academic coach and students on their use of the four Foundations. Results indicated that
the underachieving students who received YCDI Education in addition to academic coaching on homework demonstrated a significant increase in school achievement (overall grade point average) than did underachieving students who only received academic coaching on homework. There was no differential impact of treatment on the achievement of achieving students. The results of the previous studies suggest that the effort and achievement of students can be increased when they are directly taught social-emotional competencies that are referred to as the Foundations for Achievement (confidence, persistence, organisation, getting along, and emotional resilience). These preliminary findings require replication with students with different types of reading difficulties and achievement-related problems.

The study ‘The effect of You Can Do It! Education on the emotional resilience of primary school students with social, emotional, behavioural and achievement challenges’ (Bernard, 2008b) examined the impact of activities drawn from Program Achieve on the emotional resilience of students in grades 4 to 6 who were identified with achievement, behavioural, social and/or emotional challenges. 61 students were randomly assigned to either small groups receiving an eight-week YCDI cognitive-behavioural intervention or small groups receiving ‘eclectic’ counselling other than cognitive-behavioural. Results indicated a positive impact of the YCDI program on the resilience items contained in the ACER Social and Emotional Well-Being Surveys (student self-report; teacher survey) with no positive impact found for students receiving ‘eclectic’ counselling.

In 2011, we (Bernard & Walton, 2011) reported in the Journal of Student Well-being the positive effects of using a whole-school approach to the teaching of YCDI. In the study, YCDI was implemented on a whole-school basis in six primary schools with six matched schools serving as controls. At the end of the school year, students in grade 5 in both types of schools completed the Attitudes to School Survey (Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Education) and, again, at the end of the following school year when they were in grade 6. Results indicated significant improvements over time on different aspects of student well-being (e.g. morale, lower stress, school connectedness, student motivation, learning confidence, connection to peers, classroom behaviour and safety) in the YCDI schools and not in the non-YCDI schools. The positive impact of a train-the-trainer model used in this study in a variety of schools under naturally occurring conditions holds promise for low-cost, preventive mental health programs.

In 2012, we (Ashdown & Bernard) published in The Early Childhood Education Journal an article ‘The effect of the You Can Do It! Early Childhood Education Program on the social-emotional competence, wellbeing, and academic achievement of young children.’ This study investigated the effect of the You Can Do It! Early Childhood Education Program on the social-emotional competence, wellbeing, and academic achievement of 99 Prep and Grade 1 students attending a Catholic school in Melbourne, Australia. One Preparatory and one Grade 1 class were randomly chosen to receive YCDI, delivered by their classroom teachers over a period of 10 weeks, while the remaining Preparatory and Grade 1 class served as the control group. The results indicated that YCDI Early Childhood Curriculum had a statistically significant positive effect on levels of social-emotional competence and wellbeing for the Preparatory and Grade 1 students, a reduction in problem behaviours (externalising, internalising, and hyperactivity problems) for the Grade 1 students, and an increase in reading achievement (decoding text) for the lower achieving Grade 1 students.

A research project presenting the positive impact of YCDI is presented in a paper ‘The positive impact of teaching students attitudes and behaviours for learning on reading achievement’ (Bernard & Anglim, 2012, under editorial consideration). The project evaluated the impact of a new program, ‘Attitudes and Behaviours for Learning’ (AB4L) (developed with Margaret Milne) on reading achievement. Behaviours for learning are observable behaviour patterns that children display as they approach and undertake
classroom learning tasks. AB4L is designed to improve learning dispositions students need in order to self-manage their learning. Two teachers from two economically disadvantaged schools received three half-day training sessions over a three-month period from an experienced elementary teacher/literacy coordinator in five teaching practices that included: (1) helping students to begin a literacy lesson with a positive mindset, (2) before beginning the lesson, sharing the goals of the literacy lesson, (3) identifying and discussing behaviours for learning, (4) discussing positive and negative self-talk for learning, and (5) communicating behaviour-specific feedback for learning. Major findings included: (1) students who received the AB4L program showing statistically significant increases in their behaviours for learning, and (2) students in the lower 50% of their class in reading achievement who received the AB4L program showed statistically significant improvements in their reading performance.

Overall, the research summarised above points to the power of YCDI in promoting achievement and mental health. Of interest is that it does appear that students who achieve in the lower 50 per cent group are often significantly delayed in social-emotional competencies and when they are given educational opportunities to strengthen these qualities, their achievement improves.

**Concluding Statement**

There is little question that school prevention programs for young people that explicitly teach social, emotional and learning skills are critical for the prevention of adjustment and mental health problems and for the enhancement of well-being and achievement. Our experience with You Can Do It! Education reinforces this message. However, we have learned that unless schools integrate social and emotional education throughout school-wide practice and culture, such prevention efforts are unlikely to reach the young people who most need help.

Can one teacher impact the social-emotional well-being and academic achievement of all students in a school? Probably not. However, with all teachers uniting to work towards this common purpose ('collectivity'), there will be a shift in the culture of the school. With every staff member participating in this process of social and emotional learning, the effects of negative and non-supporting home backgrounds, previous negative school experiences, and negative peer group pressure can all be minimised. And the human potential of every child maximised.
References


Bernard, M.E. (2006a). It’s time we teach social-emotional competence as well as we teach academic competence. Reading and Writing Quarterly, 22, 103-119.


