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Learned helplessness, depression and academic achievement : a comparative study.

Fainstein, Daelle

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Appendix A

RESEACH REQUEST

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

The Headmistress 6 April 2009

Dear Ms

My name is Daelle Fainstein, and I am a Masters Student in the Department of Educational Psychology, University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). For the purposes of obtaining my degree, I am conducting a research study. The focus of my study is on the differences in learned helplessness, depressive symptoms, and academic achievement between children in a mainstream class, and those who experience barriers to learning. I would like to invite the learners in Grades 5, 6 and 7 to participate in my research project.

The research process will involve the completion of two questionnaires by each learner. I will administer the questionnaires on a group basis, in two sessions. Each session will last approximately 30 minutes. If possible, I would like to suggest that the questionnaires be administered during school hours on the school premises, during a school period that is convenient for both the teachers and the children. A group debriefing will follow administration of the questionnaires. Results will not be made accessible to the parents of the children nor the teachers, or SMT of the school, in order to ensure confidentiality. Additionally, in order to provide a reliable measure of academic achievement the disclosure of learners' marks is requested.

All questionnaires administered will be under full supervision of an Educational Psychologist from Wits University, who is supervising this study. Results of the questionnaires and school marks will be treated with absolute confidentiality. All questionnaires will be coded numerically, and therefore no child will be individually identified in any written or spoken report. All information gathered will be used exclusively for research purposes and will not be shown to anyone but the researcher and her supervisor. Confidentiality is also guaranteed since only group trends and correlations will be identified, from which it will be impossible

to identify any particular child. Results of the study regarding group trends and correlations will be made available to interested parties, on request. All data will reside with the researcher and her supervisor until examination of the research is complete in November 2009, after which, the data will be destroyed.

Your decision to accept or decline the invitation for the school's participation in this project will remain your decision and no explanation will be required, should you prefer not to participate. There is no preparation involved for both learners and teachers prior to administration. There are no direct benefits to participation in the study.

Once you have given consent, information letters will be sent to parents/legal guardians of learners in Grades 5, 6 and 7. Consent forms, to be signed by the parents/legal guardians, and assent forms to be signed by the children at the time of administration, will be required for each participant. Furthermore, participation in the study is entirely voluntary, and the parents/legal guardians' and child's decision to participate or not participate will have no negative consequences, either academically or personally. Participation will in no way affect or impact on any learner's academic progress. Any participant may withdraw at any point, or decline to answer specific items of the questionnaire, with no questions asked.

In the unlikely event that any participant experiences emotional disturbance as a result of participation in the research, an appropriate referral for free counselling will be made.

If you choose to accept this invitation, you have the right to withdraw the school from the project at any time, for whatever reason, without any questions being asked.

Should you have any queries about the project, please contact me via e-mail and I will endeavour to answer any questions you may have: daellef@yahoo.co.uk. You may also contact my supervisor, Ms Sue Thompson.

Kind Regards

Daelle Fainstein
Researcher/ Student Psychologist
Tel: 076 861 3392

Sue Thompson
Research Supervisor
Tel: 011 717 8330

Appendix A1

SCHOOL CONSENT FORM

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. Fax: +27-11-717-4559

I, the headmistress of Preparatory School, on behalf of the members of Preparatory School, and School Management Team, hereby give consent for Daelle Fainstein to conduct research on Preparatory School grounds, with Grades 5, 6 and 7 learners as informed and consenting participants. It is understood that confidentiality is guaranteed and that no individual results will be made available to parents, learners or staff of the school. I have read the information sheet, and have understood and accepted the conditions of this research project.

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____