

the LETTER

Volume 3, Issue 3



THE PACIFIC INSTITUTE®

Winter 2000

Go For It! – The Thistley Hough High School Personal Development Program *Interim Evaluation*

BACKGROUND

In order to raise levels of aspiration, expectation and achievement in its schools, the Stoke-on-Trent LEA (Local Education Authority) has initiated, for teachers in primary and secondary schools, a programme of personal and professional development, provided by The Pacific Institute. Through this initiative, teachers in all the Stoke-on-Trent LEA maintained schools are being offered the opportunity to participate in *Investment in Excellence*® (IIE), which The Pacific Institute describes as “an educational process designed to help participants become more effective in their personal and professional lives.”

The IIE training has been undertaken by staff in a number of the LEA schools. At Thistley Hough High School, where IIE has been completed by the whole staff, the initiative was seen as so successful that it was decided to introduce Year 10 pupils in the school to The Pacific Institute's *Go For It!* programme. This takes the IIE concepts and adapts them for the Year 10 classroom. As with the teachers' programme, *Go For It!* is envisaged as a process to help participants become more effective as individuals and more responsive to the educational opportunities available in the school and beyond. The programme

was delivered at Thistley Hough on four Fridays in May 2000, during days when normal timetable activities were suspended.

Framework for the Evaluation

This interim evaluation of the *Go For It!* programme at Thistley Hough has been undertaken by means of questionnaires, supported by pupils' free text comments and by a small number of informal interviews conducted by a researcher whilst observing part of the pupils' programme of activities. The first questionnaire was administered prior to the pupils' involvement with the programme, and the second administered after exposure to the programme. It was considered essential for the evaluation that baseline information about the views and attitudes of pupils be gathered before their participation in the Pacific Institute programme and that change and progress be monitored by repeating the process after participation.

The questionnaire design of the two survey instruments is such that most of the questions in the first pupil survey are replicated in the second. The only difference being that they are framed to anticipate attitudes in the first instance, and framed to be answered retrospectively in the second. Accordingly, we are including in the Appendix only the second questionnaire.

EDITOR'S NOTE

GO FOR IT! is quite appropriately the title of this report. By way of explanation, the *Go For It* program in the UK is derived from The Pacific Institute's Pathways® programs for youth, ages 13 to 18, and acculturated for the UK.

We are indebted to our colleagues in the United Kingdom, especially the author, Mike Johnson; David Tate, Linda Kilmurry and Dr. Neil Straker of our London office; the staff at the Stoke-on-Trent LEA schools; the teachers and staff of Thistley Hough High School; and to Keele University Center for Successful Schools. Your editor is pleased that this is the first issue of THE LETTER to be authored entirely by our colleagues in the United Kingdom.

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A Message from Lou & Diane:

This issue of THE LETTER is devoted entirely to an interim report of a very promising study performed in the United Kingdom a few months ago. The participants in this report are students in a tenth grade class in England. Since special current attention is being given to the application of our education to teachers and students in kindergarten, middle school and high school, we are pleased that an entire issue of THE LETTER is being devoted to this study.

Our colleagues in the United Kingdom modestly stress that this is an interim study, and we accept that designation. However, we believe that it is entirely appropriate that an issue of THE LETTER feature this study because of its timeliness and the careful attention the investigators gave to the design and management of the research. We look forward to follow-up studies.

Lou & Diane Tice

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All Year 10 pupils present in the school at the time of the administration of the questionnaires are included in the evaluation process. The data obtained from the questionnaires is tabulated by gender and ethnicity. In total, 129 pupils responded to the questionnaire, 65 males and 64 females. Five distinct ethnic categories are identified from the questionnaires but only two are present in sufficient numbers to be included separately in the analysis, 99 white and 21 Pakistani. The remaining 9 pupils are of various different ethnic origins and not included in the tabulation by ethnicity.

A number of areas are identified in The Pacific Institute literature as those in which improvement may be apparent as a result of the pupil programme. It is these areas which are included in the questionnaires and which provide

the focus for the evaluation. They include the following:

- increased self-esteem
- improved attitudes to teaching and teachers
- improved attitudes to learning
- improved patterns of behaviour
- increased interpersonal awareness and concern for the well-being of others

THE FINDINGS

(Note: The reader will notice that not all of the findings reported in the text are revealed by the data in the figures. The data in the figures portray some important general trends, while the numbers and percentages in the text are more specific. Together, the text and figures contain data that portray, in a convincing manner, the effectiveness of the Go For It! program.)

SECTION 1: *Pupil Attitudes to School*

The first section of each questionnaire addresses issues to do with pupils' general perceptions of the school and their work and relationships within it. The format of the questions can be seen in Appendix 1 of the evaluation. An analysis of individual questions from this section can be seen, tabulated by gender, in Figure 1, pre-test, and Figure 2, post-test, and tabulated by ethnicity, in Figure 3, pre-test, and Figure 4, post-test.

Analysis by Gender

In analysing data about pupils' attitudes to schools and teachers, it is not unusual to find that girls are more positive about their educational experiences than boys. The survey conducted at Thistley Hough conforms broadly to the normal pattern.

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School work is perceived as important to most pupils of both sexes, with well over 90% of them agreeing or “strongly” agreeing with this proposition both before and after undertaking the *Go For It!* programme. Furthermore, the number of pupils who “strongly” agree is markedly increased in the second questionnaire for both boys (54% compared to 43%) and girls (51% compared to 46%).

Girls are, overall, much more positive than boys about the influence of the peer group. However, change to a more positive view can be seen in all pupils’ attitudes to other pupils. Both boys and girls say they find their fellow pupils more encouraging after participation in the *Go For It!* programme.

Also, there are improved attitudes to the teachers in the survey carried out after participation in *Go For It!* This is particularly marked in the case of boys, with 67.8% agreeing that they get on well with their teachers compared to 46.9% before the programme. For girls, there is only a marginal increase from 73.0% before participation to 74.1% afterwards. Boys also become much more positive about the extent to which teachers are considerate and helpful.

Analysis by Ethnicity

The relative size of the racial groups involved in the survey – 21 Pakistani and 99 white – make the comparative data more volatile and the findings more anomalous. It is, nevertheless, the case that the young people in the Pakistani cohort are considerably more positive than their white colleagues, in the extent to which they find their educational experiences interesting, and in their relationships with teachers and fellow pupils.

The Pakistani pupils are much more positive about their schoolwork after experiencing the *Go For It!* training than before. The number of positive responses about school work being

interesting is almost twice as high among the Pakistani children as among the whites. The number of positive responses from the Pakistani pupils in this area rises from 67% before the programme to 78% afterwards. The corresponding figures for white pupils show little or no change – about 39% agreement in each case – although the number of pupils “strongly” agreeing that their work is interesting rises from 3% to more than 10%

In terms of relationships with teachers and fellow pupils, both Pakistani and white pupils are more positive after the *Go For It!* programme than before, but the Pakistanis start from a much higher level. Pakistani responses about the extent to which teachers are considerate and helpful move from 81% to 93% agreement compared to 66% to 79% for the white pupils. Fellow pupils are seen as supportive by 60% of Pakistani pupils compared to 47% of whites.

SECTION 2

Personal Qualities and Behaviour

Section 2 of the first questionnaire, not included in this report, covers the same ground as Section 3, Question 5 of the second questionnaire in Appendix 1. In the first questionnaire, the pupils are asked about personal qualities and the commitment they are bringing to certain areas of school life. In the second questionnaire, they are asked how important *Go For It!* has been in helping them improve in these areas.

Analysis by Gender

It can be seen from the data in Figure 5 that the pupils in general attach great importance to *Go For It!* in developing personal qualities. Where pupils already consider themselves as effective, for instance in being reliable or being considerate to other pupils, there is still a perception that the *Go For It!* course has made them even better. For example, 79% of boys and 80% of girls say it has been important in making them be considerate to other people and 78% of boys and 75% of girls say it has been impor-

tant in making them more reliable. In areas such as time-wasting, paying attention and organizing the work, rather less than 50% of their respondents consider themselves effective and *Go For It!* is perceived as important in bringing about improvement. 69% of boys and 68% of girls say it has been important in helping them not waste time, 70% of boys and 86% of girls say it has been important in helping them organize their work more effectively, 69% of boys and 75% of girls say it has been important in bringing about improvements in their behaviour.

Analysis by Ethnicity

More than three quarters of the Pakistani cohort of pupils see themselves as effective in all the questionnaire categories, in terms of the qualities and commitment they bring to their schooling. In the case of good manners and reliability, well over 90% feel that they get on well. In spite of this, it is the Pakistani cohort which is the more positive about the importance of *Go For It!* in bringing about improvement. More than 90% see the course as important in improving behaviour and attention in class.

Far fewer pupils from the white cohort say that they have the personal qualities and commitment necessary to make the most of their education. Only 42% say they take more than an average interest in their work. Only 45% say they do not waste time. Although they are less positive than the Pakistani cohort about the importance of *Go For It!*, some 70%, overall, say they feel that the course has been important in helping them improve.

SECTION 3

Pupil Attitude to Go For It

Section 3, Question 5 on the first questionnaire covers the same ground as Section 3, Question 4 on the second. In the first questionnaire, the pupils are asked to what extent they expect to benefit from doing the *Go For It!* programme. In the second, they are asked how helpful the programme has been for them.

Analysis by Gender

It can be seen from Figures 1 and 2 below that there are marked and positive differences, for both boys and girls, between the pupils' anticipation of the programme and their actual experience of it.

Only 26% of boys and 30% of girls are actively "looking forward" to *Go For It!* prior to the programme, with a further 34% and 46% respectively not sure but open minded. After involvement with the programme, 49% of boys and 64% of girls have found it "enjoyable and useful" with a further 33% and 21% respectively finding it reasonably helpful. Before the event, 12.9% of boys and 1.6% of girls feel it will be a waste of time. After completion of the course, only 7% of boys and none of the girls feel it has been of no value.

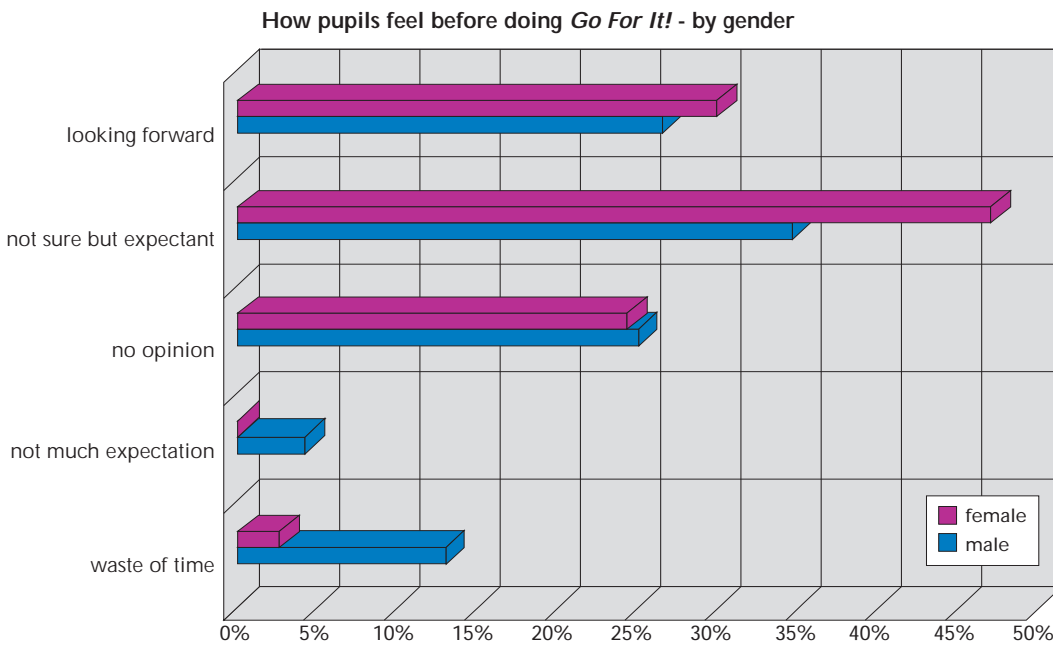


Figure 1

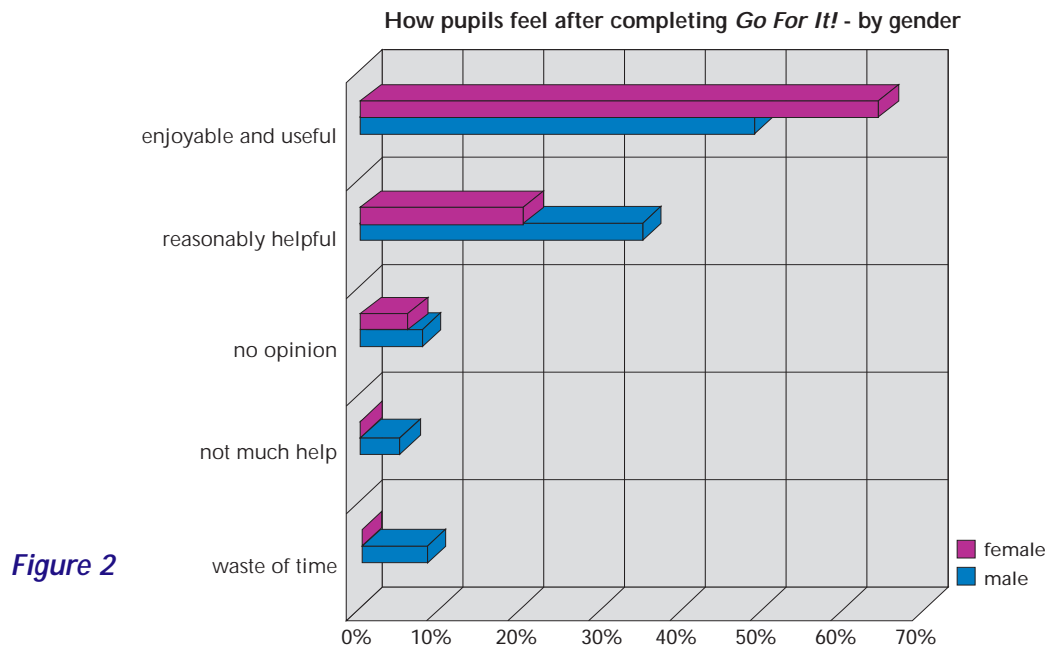


Figure 2

Analysis by Ethnicity

It can be seen from the data in Figures 3 and 4 below, that there are marked and positive differences, as with previous questions, between the Pakistani cohort of pupils and the white, with the Pakistani cohort being much more positive in its responses.

71% of the Pakistani cohort are actively “looking forward” to *Go For It!* prior to the programme, compared to 20% of the white, with a further 5% and 49% respectively not sure but open minded. After involvement with the programme, 86% of Pakistanis and 55% of whites have found it “enjoyable and useful” with a further 14% and 31% respectively finding it reasonably helpful. Before the event, 9.5% of Pakistanis and 7.2% of whites feel it will be a waste of time. Afterwards, none of the Pakistani group and 3.2% of the white group feel that the course has been of no value.

Section 3 (Question 6) – Areas in which *Go For It!* has been helpful

Section 3 (Question 6) on each of the questionnaires asks about the areas in which the pupils would expect to be helped by the *Go For It!* programme. In Survey 1, the pupils are asked to anticipate the potential importance of the course. In Survey 2, they are asked about the actuality.

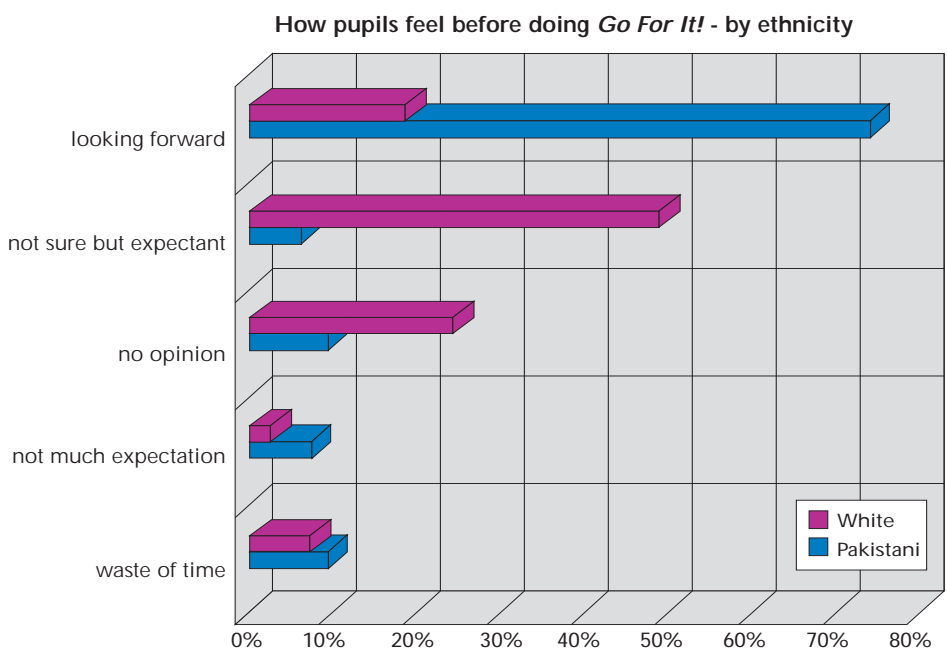


Figure 3

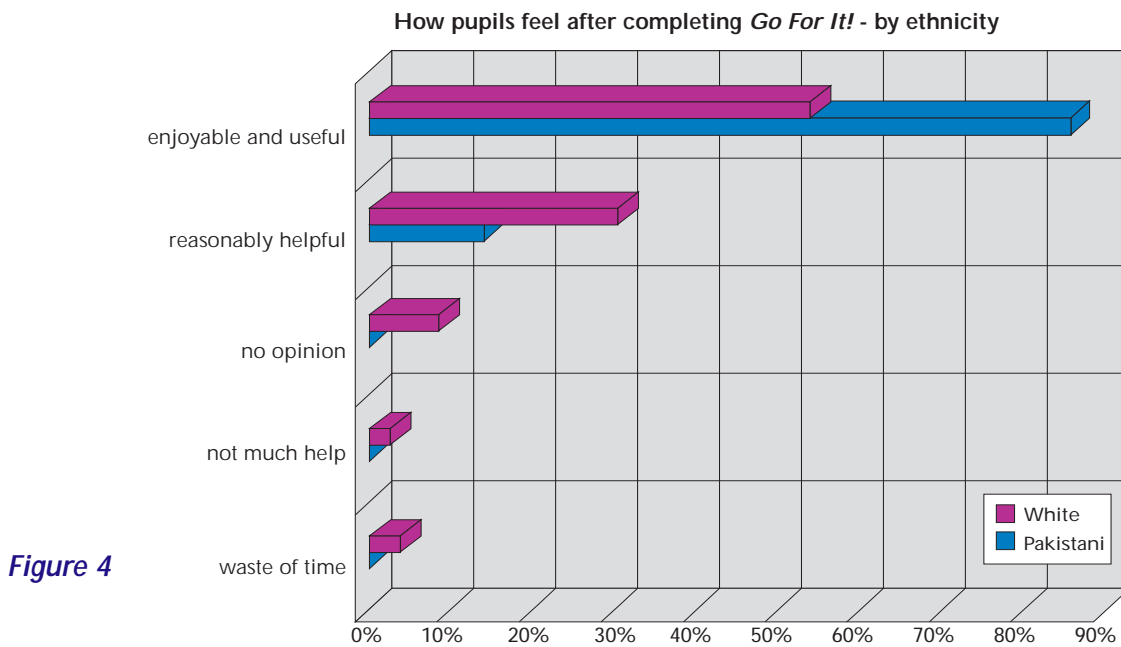


Figure 4

Analysis by Gender

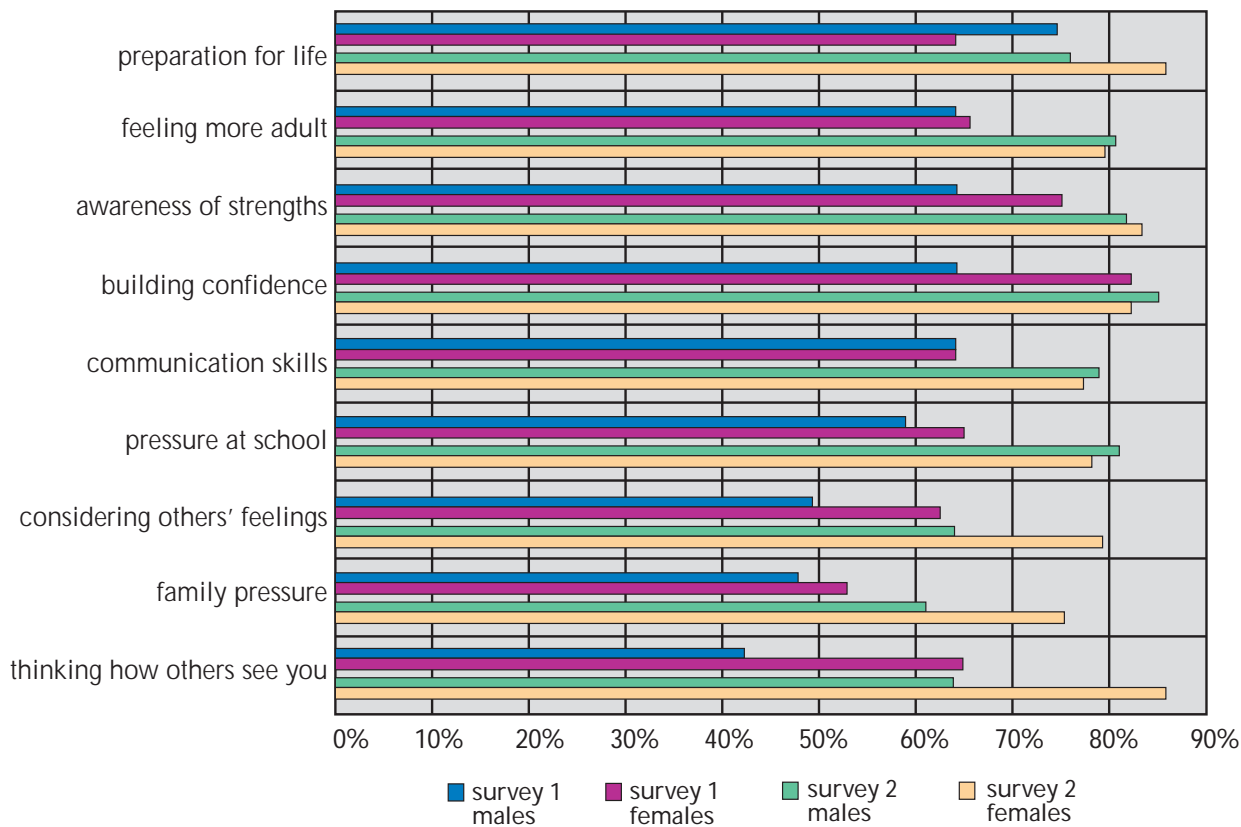
It can be seen in Figure 5 below, that there are marked and extremely positive differences between the two data sets. These differences can be detected by the increase in all categories in the effectiveness of the *Go For It!* program, by the increases in the survey 2 male and female response percentages (green and yellow bars) which reflect improvements in all measures for both genders from the pre- to post-questionnaire.

Before participating in *Go For It!*, girls are more positive about the course than boys in every respect other than its potential to improve communication skills and prepare them for life. After participation, the boys are more positive than the girls about improvements in maturity, confidence, communication skills and facing up to school pressure.

Before participating in *Go For It!*, 59% of boys and 66% of girls expect to be helped with school pressures. After participation, 81% of boys and 78% of girls say that they have been helped to cope with school stress. 64% of boys and 64% of girls anticipate support with communication skills, 79% and 76% respectively think they have been helped. 49% of boys and 64% of girls anticipate that the course will be important in helping them consider other people's feelings, 66% and 80% respectively think they have been helped in this area. Gender differences are very evident in "confidence" and "maturity" where boys have much lower expectations than the girls, but then say that they have been considerably helped. 65% of boys and 83% of girls anticipate support with building confidence, 86% and 83% respectively think they have been helped. 65% of boys and 80% of girls anticipate support with feeling more mature, and 80% and 80% respectively think they have been helped.

Figure 5

**Pupils finding *Go For It!* important before and after participation
By gender**



Analysis by Ethnicity

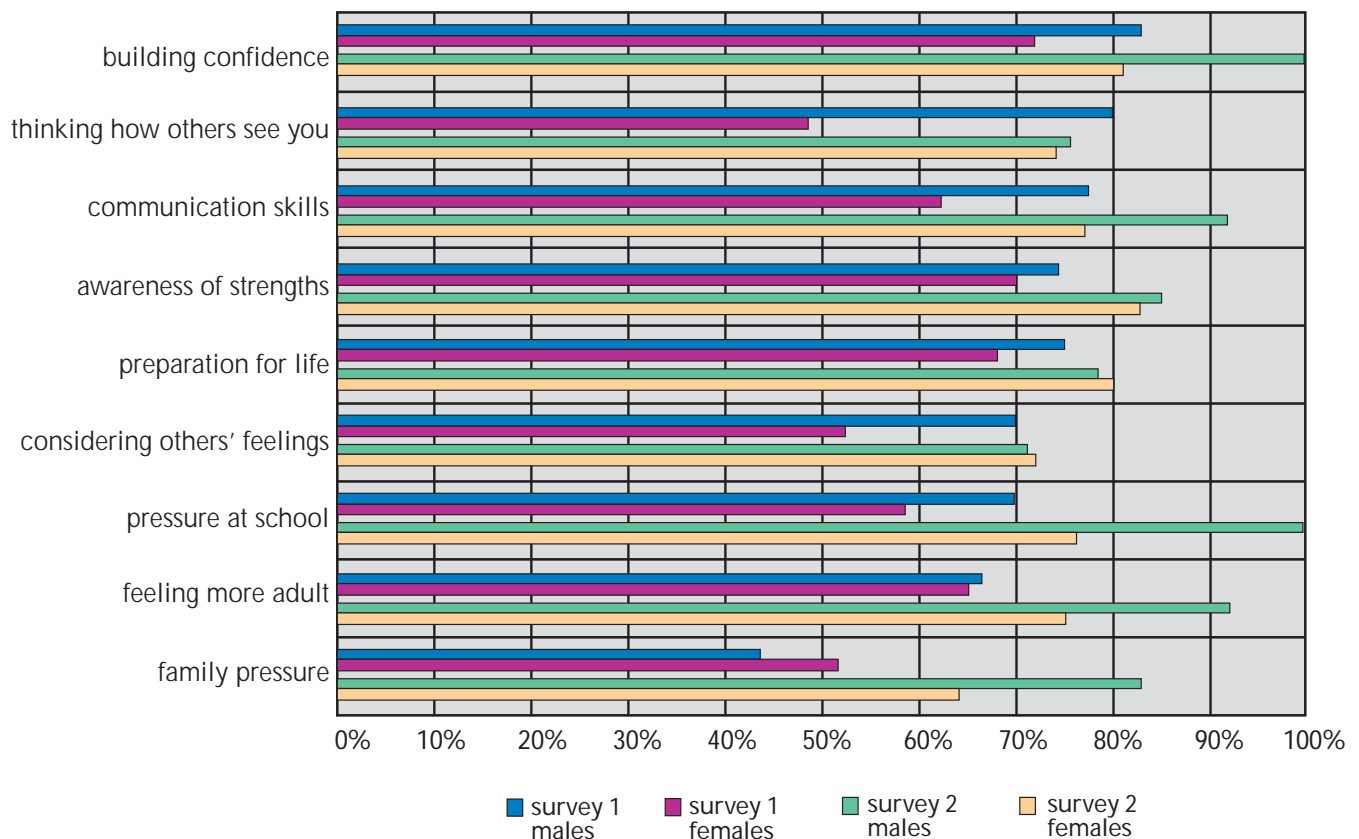
It can be seen from Figure 6 below that, once again, there are marked and extremely positive differences between the two data sets. These differences can be detected by the increases in all categories in the effectiveness of the *Go For It!* program, by the increases in the survey 2 male and female response percentages (green and yellow bars) which reflect improvements in all measures for both genders from the pre- to post-questionnaire.

Before participation, the Pakistani cohort of pupils has greater expectation than the white cohort in almost every area. Only in respect of “family pressure,” where less than 50% of the Pakistanis expect to be helped by the *Go For It!* programme, are the white pupils the more positive. After participation, both cohorts have shown substantial increases in the number of positive responses, although the Pakistani cohort is far more positive than the white. 85% them suggest that the course has even been important in helping them cope with family pressures, compared with 45% who initially expected it to do so.

The most significant areas of importance for the white population participating in *Go For It!* are “making you aware of your strengths” (83%), “helping build confidence” (81%) and preparation for going out into the world (80%). For the Pakistani population, the most important areas are, “helping build confidence” (100%), “helping develop communication skills” (93%) and “helping you feel more adult” (93%).

Figure 6

**Pupils finding *Go For It!* important before and after participation
By ethnicity**



CONCLUSION

It can be seen from the findings that a considerable majority of the Year 10 pupils of Thistley Hough High School believe they have benefited from participation in *Go For It!* This applies to all categories of pupil even though there are clear distinctions between the views of boys and girls and between the Pakistani pupils and the white. Almost invariably, the responses after participation are even more positive than responses that merely anticipated the likely benefits. Very few pupils make negative comments about the course. Responses to Question 5, about the value of the course, show that only 10% of boys and none of the girls think that it is less than helpful.

The statistical data provided above are supported by the free text comments (not shown in tabular form) where the pupils write about the impact of *Go For It!* on their personal lives, their school lives and in general. These comments show a degree of uncertainty during the first survey, prior to participation, but are subsequently very positive in most cases.

It is not possible at this stage:

- to determine the extent to which the initiative is really making a long-term difference to pupils' attitudes.
- to offer evidence of the ways in which the initiative has led to successful change in the work and ethos of the school.

On the evidence presented to date, the *Go For It!* initiative is a positive experience which enhances confidence and self-esteem and improves pupils' attitudes to learning, to teachers and to fellow pupils. It is perceived to improve communication and interpersonal skills and to give participants a greater appreciation of the views and needs of others.

In order to establish the long-term impact of the initiative, it will be necessary to allow time to elapse and then follow up the work already done with additional questionnaires and in-depth pupil interviews. The nature of the pupils' response to *Go For It!* certainly suggests that the initiative merits further consideration as a means of raising aspiration and self-esteem in the Stoke-on-Trent context.



Dr. Glenn Terrell earned his B.A. in Political Science from Davidson College, his M.S. in Psychology from Florida State University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa.

Dr. Terrell served as Chairman of the Department of Psychology, University of Colorado, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and as Dean of Faculties at the University of Illinois in Chicago before an 18-year tenure as President of Washington State University. He also served as President of the National Association of State Universities and Colleges, Commissioner for the State of Washington on the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, served on the Board for General Telephone Northwest and West for 23 years, was a Fellow for the Society for Research in Child Development, and a Fellow for the American Psychological Association.

Dr. Terrell has received numerous honorary degrees and awards, among them a listing in Who's Who in America: American Men of Science, and Distinguished Graduate of the Department of Psychology, University of Iowa. He has managed multimillion dollar technology transfers and faculty and student exchange programs throughout the world.

Christy Watson is Director of Marketing for The Pacific Institute, as well as acting as Associate Editor for The LETTER. In addition to her marketing responsibilities, Christy has played the editor's role in the creation and updating of many Institute programs. A Seattle native, Christy received her B.A. from the University of Washington.

Appendix 1 - Go For It! Pupil Questionnaire 2

Personal Details: *(please complete this section about yourself before answering the questions)*

Gender: male female

School Year: 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 *(please put a circle around your year group)*

How would you describe yourself?

Black African Black African-Caribbean Indian

Pakistani Other Asian White

Other *(please say what)* _____

Section 1: You and Your School

1. Please read the list of statements below about you and your school. In each case, say how much you agree or disagree with what is said by placing a tick in the box that is nearest to how YOU think.

	strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree
My school work is very important to me.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get on well with most of my teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am often bullied by other pupils.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My school work is usually interesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most of my teachers are considerate and helpful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most pupils encourage each other and get on well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am generally successful in my school work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most teachers praise me when I work hard.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I try hard to do the homework I am given	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other pupils often disrupt the lessons.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 2: About You

2. What do you think you will be doing when you leave school?

Do you expect to:

Have no clear plan about the future

Go to college and then university

Go to college and then get a job

Go onto a Youth Training scheme

Get a job with training

Get a job not requiring training

Go on to unemployment benefit

Be self employed or in the family business

Something else: *(please say what)* _____

3. When you finish education and go into employment which of the following would you most like to do?
(Please tick only the ONE alternative that is nearest to what you think)

- Stay in the local area
- Go where your friends go
- Move to another part of Britain.....
- Move to another country in Europe
- Live and work in some other part of the world

Section 3: Go For It!

4. How have you felt about doing the *Go For It!* program?
(Please tick the one answer that is nearest to what you think)

- I have enjoyed the program and found it very useful
- I have found the program reasonably helpful to me
- I really have no particular opinion about the program
- I haven't found the program to be of much help to me
- I feel the program has been a waste of time

5. How important do you think the *Go For It!* program has been in helping you improve in the following areas of your school life?

	very important	quite important	not sure	not very important	not at all important
Being polite and well-mannered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being considerate to other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not wasting time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being reliable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organising your work.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paying attention in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being interested in your work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having a good attendance record.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Behaving well in classes.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. In which of the following other areas do you think that *Go For It!* has been important?

	very important	quite important	not sure	not very important	not at all important
Helping you cope with pressures at school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helping you prepare for going out into the world.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving your communication skills.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helping you be more aware of your strengths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Building up your confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helping you consider other people's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making you think about how others see you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helping you cope with pressures in your family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helping you feel more adult and responsible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>