



Lifelong
Learning
Programme



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WP4: Evaluative interpretation of the results of the impact assessment

August Gächter & Juliet Tschank
P4 - Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI)

JUMP@SCHOOL PROJECT



1. Results based on the grade point average

There is no firm evidence that the intervention impacted the grades that students received at the end of the school year. Small differences in favour of the treatment group were obtained in schools ES02 (Mallila) and IT02 (Iglesias). This result could be due to insufficient duration of the intervention, insufficient intensity either because planned activities were too few or students did not attend regularly, and insufficient orientation of the intervention to grade improvement.

2. Results based on the soft facts

2.1. 1st cohort: Spain School 1: Juan de Garay (ES01)

In Juan de Garay the impact of the intervention was felt most with regard to improvement of learning technique and discipline in learning. This is represented predominantly by the sixth dimension of the soft questionnaire: 'self-regulation control'. Due to the intervention, the students who took part in the Jump@School intervention improved their learning techniques: case in point being that they more often than not made a plan before starting an assignment and checked their school work for mistakes.

Furthermore, the intervention improved the student's discipline in learning by it increasing their engagement with learning concretely by for example putting more effort in learning outside school regardless of whether they had a test coming up or not. In addition, the students reduced their tendency of doing school work at the last minute and were more determined to finishing anything they started.

These marked improvements in learning techniques and discipline in learning correspond to the theme of one of the two workshops carried out in this school on 'learning to learn'. It is worth mentioning that some of the individual sessions also worked on these aspects.

In addition, a very important result for this school is that compared to the four intervention schools, this is one of the two schools where the intervention seems to have had a direct impact on the students' intention to complete their school leaving certificate. Although this intention lessens from the pretest to the posttest, its change compared to the control group's change shows that belonging to the intervention group and therefore having taken part in the Jump@School intervention increases the likelihood of the students completing school compared to if they did not take part. In this regard, the intervention seems to have also improved the students' perception of the benefits of completing their high school diploma; this can be explained by the fact that they more strongly believe that by completing their high school certificate, they will no longer be told by others what to do, will therefore be more autonomous and that it will give them a sense of success.

The improvements due to the intervention noted above are very likely to be related to the fact that the levels of the students' stress that can be attributed to school was significantly reduced by the intervention. Additionally and possibly on a related note, because the students' school-related stress levels had been reduced by the intervention, they enjoyed school more and therefore also enjoyed telling others about what they had learned at school. Another possible explanation of the reason they liked telling others what they had

learned at school more after the intervention is that the activities of the intervention were quite different to the normal school learning; specifically during the workshops they enjoyed learning using different, creative methods and they carried out activities that they would otherwise not undertake at school. Contradictorily, the intervention seems to have reduced the students' assertion of liking going to school or caring about school. This could be interrelated to the point raised earlier that the intervention provided the students with alternative learning environments. The realisation of the possibility of learning differently to the way they had been doing up to then, could have reduced their school motivation and valuing learning in school.

Although, like above, the students seem to have improved on their learning skills, there is still an indication that they do not care about good grades and only work hard enough to pass. However, considering that the students chosen to take part in the intervention were the 'poorer' students with regard to their grades, putting all their efforts into just passing rather than excelling is not necessarily a negative result.

2.2. 1st cohort: Spain School 2: Mallila (ES02)

The intervention in the first cohort in Mallila like in the first cohort in Juan de Garay had the highest impact on the students learning techniques and discipline in learning represented by the sixth dimension of the soft questionnaire: 'self-regulation control'. With regard to the learning techniques, the intervention specifically heightened the students' abilities to make a plan before starting an assignment.

The students' discipline in learning improved in the sense that their perseverance increased; they did not give up learning just because they did not do well in tests, rather, they worked harder by for example studying at home even when they didn't have a test coming up and also they increased their tendency to finish what they started. Furthermore, although the tendency of participants of the intervention to do school work at the last minute increased from the pretest to the posttest, in comparison to the control group, participating in the intervention meant a lower probability of this.

Like in Juan de Garay, the improvement of learning techniques and discipline in learning correlates to the theme of one of the two workshops carried out in this school on 'learning to learn'. In addition, some of the individual sessions worked on these aspects. Collectively, therefore, the intervention increased the students' appreciation of the benefits of learning: for example that it leads them to getting better at school and it also improved their self-images as students due to the fact that after the intervention, they more readily agreed that they felt good about who they were as students.

Interestingly, the intervention helped to increase the students' concentration during classes in that they indicated that they less often think about other unrelated things during class. At the same time however, the intervention seems to have encouraged the students to pretend like they are working while in class. At the first glance, this seems contradictory to the former. However, it could to some extent be argued that this is a sign that the students' importance of school had increased in that after the intervention, they cared more about which image they portrayed to their teachers and would rather pretend like they are working than out rightly show disinterest. This argument has been cemented further by the fact that the intervention seems to have improved the students' valuing of school with

students who received the intervention being more likely to admit that they cared about school.

Despite the positive results of the intervention indicated above, another interesting finding is that the intervention in this school seems to have decreased the students' valuing of what they are taught at school. This is due to the fact that after the intervention, students who received the intervention more readily found that the things taught in school were useless. This could be interpreted in a couple of ways: On one hand, although this would need further scientific analysis of the school curriculum in Spain, it could be that what is learned in school is actually useless and therefore it would be a positive result of the intervention that it has increased the critical awareness of the students. On the other hand, because the intervention used new, creative methods to for example teach the students how to learn better in the learning to learn workshop, in comparison they find that what they are taught in school is useless.

Like in the other Spanish school, the intervention seems to have a positive effect on reducing the school-related stress levels of the students and this could have influenced some of the positive results described above or even vice versa. For example, by improving their learning techniques, they were less stressed with school. Following the same argument, being less stressed with school could have increased their delight in telling others about what they had learnt at school. Another possible explanation of the reason why they liked telling others what they had learned at school more after the intervention is that the activities of the intervention were quite different to the normal school learning; specifically during the workshops they enjoyed learning using different, creative methods and they carried out activities that they would otherwise not do at school.

The intervention in this school did not have any influence on the items directly relating to commitment to completing an education.

2.3. Italy School 1: Tortoli (IT01)

Unlike in the two Spanish schools where the impact of the intervention was felt most with regard to learning techniques and discipline in learning, in Tortoli the intervention seems to have impacted the fifth dimension on 'commitment to complete an education' most. In fact with regard to discipline in learning, the intervention in this school only increased the students' conformity to school rules, of which the intervention in the Spanish schools had no effect on, and also increased the concentration of the students in class in that after the intervention the students less often thought about other unrelated things during class time. The intervention in this school had no noticeable impacts on the items relating to learning techniques.

Besides ES01, this was the only other school that showed a direct impact of the intervention on the main dependent variable of the soft questionnaire: the commitment to complete the high school certificate. Although this intention lessens from the pretest to the posttest, its change compared to the control group's change shows that belonging to the intervention group and therefore having taken part in the intervention increases the likelihood of the students completing school compared to having not taken part in it. Furthermore, the intervention had a positive impact on the students' perception and motivation towards pursuing further education (college/university). Through the intervention they learned the benefits of completing their high school diploma as a

preparation for college/university as opposed to being told by others what to do therefore increasing autonomy and as a sense of success.

Unlike in the two Spanish schools where the school-related stress levels of the students decreased as a result of the intervention, in this school the intervention seems to have had no impact on this item directly. However, at the same time, it seemed to increase the students' level of anxiety associated with tests. Simultaneously, the participants of the intervention felt less affiliated to the school or less like they belonged to the school after the intervention. This could be as a result of increased anxiety. As seen in the Spanish schools, when the intervention manages to reduce the school-related stress levels of the students, then the feeling of belonging to the school does not change as a result. Another explanation for this phenomenon could be the nature of the intervention. It could be argued that before the intervention, the students did not know that there could be alternative ways of learning and also to some extent the intervention showed the participants what other possibilities are available outside of school. For example the workshops carried out, 'photo food' or 'guided-fishing' labs, gave the students an insight into the labour market. These workshops might have provided the students with role models who for example succeeded without having to complete formal education.

Nevertheless, interestingly, although the students feeling of belonging to the school significantly decreased after the intervention, their school motivation and valuing learning increased. This was clear because the intervention group participants more readily disagreed that they don't care about school, and they more readily agreed that they like going to school, they get a good education at their school and they enjoy learning because they get better at school.

2.4. Italy school 2: Iglesias (IT02)

Of the four intervention schools, Iglesias saw the highest negative effects of the intervention on the participants. Like in the other three intervention schools, the participants of this school as a result of the intervention enjoyed telling others what they had learned at school. As discussed previously, and taking the other results in this school into consideration, this could be due to the nature of the intervention; the new and creative methods that were implemented in the different activities such as workshops which are much more informal and which could to some extent be described as more fun (as proven by the results of the analysis of the Jump@School specific items) than regular school teaching methods.

Furthermore, the intervention improved the students' appreciation or valuing of school in that after the intervention the participants more readily admitted that they are getting a good education at school. On a related note but on the contrary, like in the other Italian school (IT01), the intervention seems to have made the participants feel more like they didn't belong to the school and that they more often felt like giving up on the school. With regard to feeling like giving up on school, this is the only school out of the four intervention schools that showed a significantly negative change for the intervention group: For ES01, participants less often felt like giving up on school while in ES02 and IT01 the intervention doesn't seem to have any significant effect on this item. The Jump@School intervention was a preventative measure of early school leaving, unfortunately in this case, it seems that taking part in the intervention increased the participants' inclination of withdrawal from school.

As a result of feeling more withdrawn, the participants fail to see the benefits of completing their school leaving certificate. For example, they believe that completing their school leaving certificate will waste their time, will not help them learn new things and it means that they will be told by others what to do. Interestingly however, the participants still see that completing a school certificate will give them a sense of success.

Although the realisation that completing school will give them a sense of success, this does not seem to be reason enough for the participants to work harder. The participants are convinced that they already put a lot of effort in doing their school work but at the same time they don't believe that they are capable of doing their school work well even if they tried hard. As a result, if they don't understand something in their school work, they are less prone to trying to figure it out.

With regard to the sixth dimension that deals with learning techniques and discipline in learning, the participants' symptoms of withdrawal pervades. After the intervention, they don't follow the rules in school, they more often think about other unrelated things during classes and they more readily agree that they never finish whatever they start.

In comparison to the results of the other intervention schools, the results of this school stand out but unfortunately, negatively. It is necessary to reflect on what specifically happened in this school to yield these results. In addition, with regards to the other schools, there were a number of results that were contrary to what was expected and thus there needs to be more reflection among the implementation teams and the consortium in general.

Below, the results of each item for within (pre to post) and between groups (control versus intervention group) analyses are presented according to the dimensions of the soft questionnaire.

2.5. 2nd cohort: Spain School 1: Juan de Garay (ES01)

Unlike with the first cohort in both schools in Spain where it was clear that most changes resulting from the intervention were related to the sixth dimension of the soft questionnaire – 'self-regulation control' – based on the group differences for the second cohort in both schools in Spain, it cannot be determined which dimensions were most affected by the intervention. This result is very likely linked to the small sample size of the second cohort in both schools; namely: in Juan de Garay both groups were made up of only nine participants each, while in Mallila, although the number of participants was slightly bigger, the control group involved 18 participants while the intervention group included 11 participants.

In Juan de Garay, one item, each in five of the seven dimensions observed significant group differences meaning that the changes observed, can be attributed to the Jump@School intervention. The two dimensions where the Jump@School intervention does not statistically seem to have had any impact on the changes in attitude of the participants are: Dimension 4 'Engagement with learning' and dimension 5 'Commitment to complete an education'.

Following in the theme of the first cohort in Spain, also for the second cohort in this school, the Jump@School intervention managed to reduce the school-related stress of the

participants and as a result, there were some indications that that the students of the intervention group followed school rules more after the intervention. Moreover, the decreased school-related stress in turn or vice versa considerably reduced the participants' apprehension of tests and assessments.

Additionally, the intervention increased the participants' valuing of learning in that after the intervention, they more readily disagreed with the statement: 'Most of the things we learn in school are useless.' Continuing with this idea; there were indications that the Jump@School intervention enlightened the participants as regards to the benefits of learning. Specifically, that learning facilitates improved school performance and arouses one's interests beyond the standard school curriculum; that is, it increases one's curiosity to learn about things that are not taught in school. Other than the students' awareness of the advantages of learning being raised by the intervention, there was an inkling that their learning abilities were also heightened in that they were more likely to check their school work for mistakes after the intervention.

Interestingly, despite these improvements, the Jump@School intervention seems to have increased the participants' feeling of giving up on school and feeling of hopelessness as regards to succeeding in school; exactly the opposite of what that intervention was aiming for. This is demonstrated by the increased assertion by the intervention group participants after the intervention that they regularly feel like giving up on school; that failing or not doing well in examinations does not motivate them to work harder next time and regardless of how hard they try, they cannot do well in school. These declarations all seemingly lead to a general feeling of not caring about school. These negative results could be a product of the nature of pre-post measurements, as described in the aftermath lessons learn report. It is possible that through the different individual and group activities of the Jump@School intervention, the topic of early school leaving was addressed directly. Meaning that even though the students may not have previously actively thought about this phenomenon, the fact that it was thematised led them to reflect on their own situations and as a result, they may have noticed characteristics within themselves that would potentially classify them as being at risk of early school leaving. In studies or interventions dealing with mobbing for example, the effect are similar as described above, in that interventions lead to increased awareness about the topic and therefore an increased sense of being a victim of the circumstances. However, after a while, the true effects of the intervention start being seen, in that this feeling of being mobbed eventually decreases. Since there were only two points of measurements in the Jump@School evaluation model, it was not possible to determine, whether these feelings of giving up on school eventually decreased and as a result proving or disproving this hypothesis.

Whereas the participants of the first cohort in both experimental countries enjoyed telling others what they had learnt in school more after the intervention, the intervention in the second cohort in Juan de Garay does not seem as to have impacted the participants' behaviour in this regard.

2.6. 2nd cohort: Spain School 2: Mallila (ES02)

Overall, the Jump@School intervention seems to have had a more positive effect on the second cohort of Mallila School compared to the second cohort of the Juan de Garay School. A similar scenario was replicated here like with the second cohort in the Juan de Garay School whereby at least one item in five of the dimensions showed significant group differences. However in this case, all except one item showed changes in the expected

direction. The two dimensions that did not observe any group differences and therefore making it not possible to associate the changes observed directly with the Jump@School intervention were dimensions 1: ‘School motivation and valuing learning’ and dimension 7: ‘Self-confidence with learning’.

Although, it cannot be statistically confirmed, most likely based on the small sample size in the second group in Mallila school, there is a strong indication that the most changes, like in the first cohort in both Spanish schools, caused by the intervention were regarding the sixth dimension on ‘self-regulation control’. These changes concur with the fact that one of the two workshops held, one was on ‘learning to learn’. Concretely, the Jump@School intervention increased the participants’ adherence to school rules and the ability of checking their work for mistakes improved. Furthermore, it contributed to the students’ increased self-exertion in that, after the intervention, the participants of the Jump@School intervention aimed beyond just passing their examinations; that is, they were more motivated to receive good grades rather than just passing grades. Furthermore, there was a strong indication of this self-exertion, in that the intervention group participants more readily agreed that if they did not understand their school work, they would keep trying until they did, they also studied at home and disagreed more to the statement that if they got too much homework, they just wouldn’t do it. On a related note, there were suggestions that their learning technique further improved in that after the intervention they were more likely to make a plan, before undertaking an assignment.

Like with the intervention groups in Spain, both in the first and second cohorts, here too, the Jump@School led to reduced school-related stress of the participants and as a result, the participants were more accepting of the school structure demonstrated by their increased readiness to follow school rules and their increased feeling of belonging to the school.

With regards to the main dimension of the soft questionnaire: ‘commitment to complete an education’, the results show that the intention of the students who participated in the Jump@School intervention to complete a college or university degree reduces with participation in the intervention. At the same time, they less readily agree that completing their high school diploma will waste their time. This suggests that, although the students see the usefulness of completing their high school diploma, they do not associate its usefulness with completing a university degree because probably they are aiming to take a different educational route after completing their education for example vocational training.

The results of each item for within (pre to post) and between groups (control versus intervention group) analyses are presented below according to the dimensions of the soft questionnaire.