



Right Track Project

Summary Report

May 2014

Highlights

- Significant increases in mental toughness
- Significant increases in engagement and relationships
- A quarter of disengagement explained by mental toughness
- A fifth of relationship explained by mental toughness
- Participant and teacher feedback very positive

Sample

Two subsamples, from Merseyside and Cheshire, completed two assessments of mental toughness and a questionnaire designed to assess their disengagement, activation, relationships, and aspiration at the beginning and end of the project. Further, teachers completed a questionnaire regarding each participant to add their perspective of behaviour or attitude change.

1,801 adolescents completed the first assessment of mental toughness and x completed the second. Excluding data from participants who did not complete both the beginning and end surveys, the final sample used for analysis was 255-324 depending on which questions were assessed.

Results

Mental Toughness

Overall mental toughness scores improved from a mean of 3.39 to 3.98. Indeed, all aspects of mental toughness presented an upwards trend, illustrated in Figure 1.

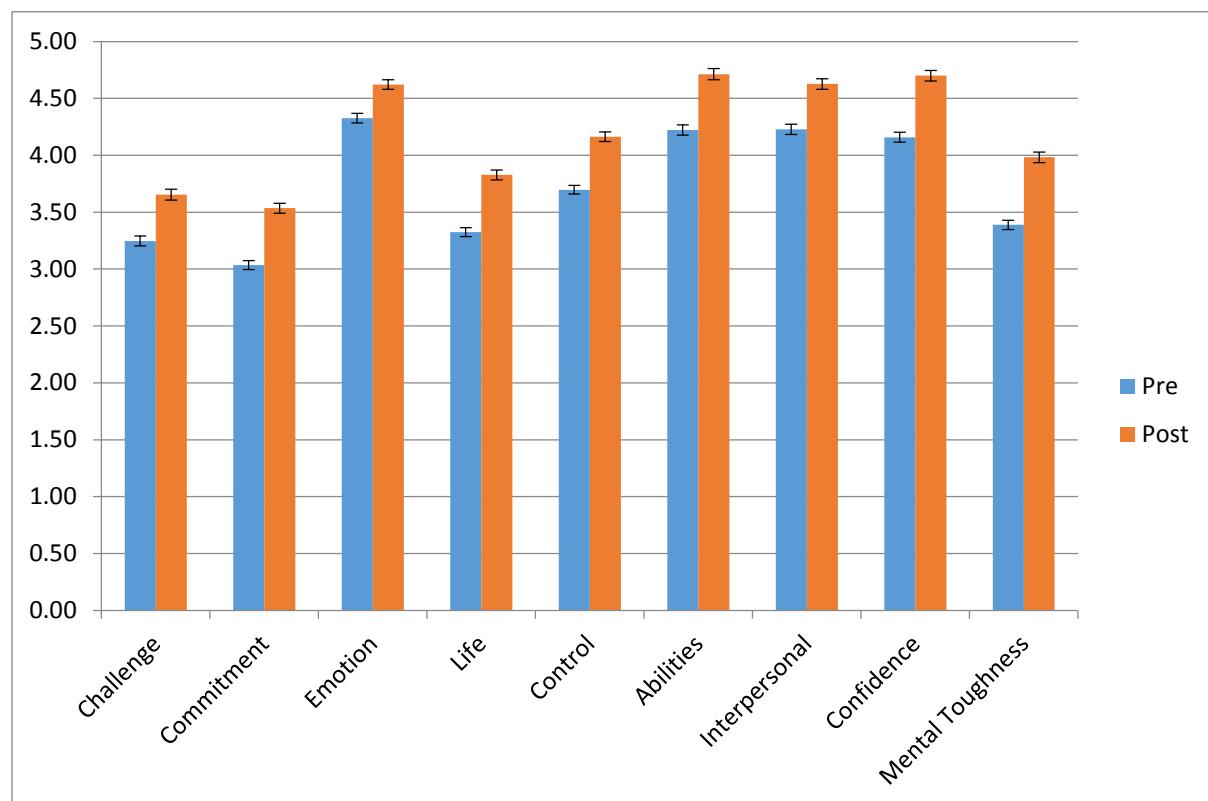


Figure 1. Mean (SE) pre and post mental toughness scores.

To examine the extent to which these improvements were statistically significant, a paired samples *t*-test was conducted. The results indicated that all improvements were statistically significant with *t*-values ranging from -6.66 to -15.77 ($p < .001$). The absolute effect sizes and probability values indicate that this was a moderate to large improvement in mental toughness that can be replicated across samples.

Right Track Survey

The Right Track beginning and end surveys contained questions pertaining to four key areas; disengagement with school, activation levels, relationships with family and friends, and aspirations for the future. Further, the end survey included feedback regarding participant satisfaction with the programme and information regarding their likelihood to recommend it.

Examination of the beginning and end survey results indicate a significant reduction in disengagement and a significant increase in relationships (See Figure 2). There were no changes in activation or aspiration.

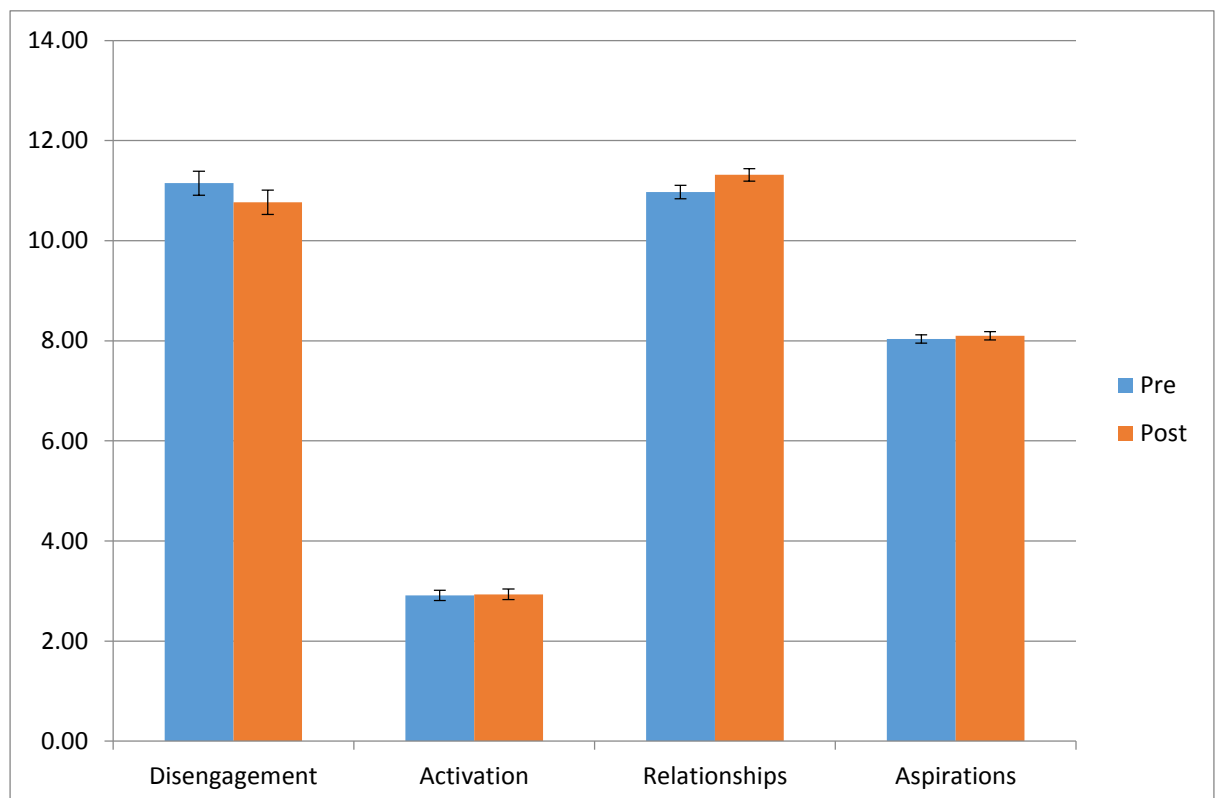


Figure 2. Mean (SE) pre and post assessment of disengagement, activation, relationships, and aspirations. Note. Each construct is assessed on a different scale so the baseline level should not be considered as the construct scoring high or low. Bars are for pre and post comparison only.

A paired samples *t*-test confirmed that the drop in disengagement was statistically significant ($t(254) = 2.06, p < .05$) and the improvement in relationships was also statistically significant ($t(254) = -2.68, p < .01$).

Mental Toughness and Right Track Survey

The next logical step in the analysis was to examine the relationships between results from the mental toughness questionnaire and the Right Track survey. To begin, Pearson correlations coefficients were examined between mental toughness variables and disengagement, activation, relationships, and aspiration. As an indicator, values (r) $< .2$ are very low, $.2$ to $.4$ is moderate and $> .4$ is moderately high.

Inspection of the correlations at the initial assessment (Table 1) indicate clear negative correlations between aspects of mental toughness and disengagement. In particular, commitment ($r = -.40, p < .01$) was strongly related. Lower correlations were found between mental toughness variables and activation, though all were positive. Stronger positive correlations existed with relationships, with overall mental toughness at $r = .36, p < .01$. Contrary to expectation, a series of very low negative correlations were found between mental toughness and aspiration. It is worth noting however that the size of these coefficients indicates there is effectively no correlation evident.

Table 1. Pearson correlation coefficients for initial assessment (n = 417)

Variable	Disengagement	Activation	Relationships	Aspiration
Challenge	-.27**	.27**	.28**	-.10*
Commitment	-.40**	.22**	.27**	-.14**
Emotion	-.12*	.10*	.13**	-.13**
Life	-.31**	.17**	.30**	-.17**
Control	-.25**	.15**	.26**	-.18*
Abilities	-.24**	.14**	.32**	-.17**
Interpersonal	-.02	.21**	.25**	-.01
Confidence	-.18**	.19**	.33**	-.11
Mental Toughness	-.33**	.25**	.36**	-.16**

*Statistically significant at $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

A very similar pattern was evident for the correlations at the end assessment (Table 2). Most notably, the positive associations between mental toughness and activation and relationships has increased from a mean correlation of $.19$ to $.28$ for activation and $.19$ to $.33$ for relationships. Similar strengths of relationships existed for disengagement and aspiration.

Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficients for end assessment (n = 258)

Variable	Disengagement	Activation	Relationships	Aspiration
Challenge	-.22**	.26**	.36**	-.06
Commitment	-.42**	.29**	.31**	-.09
Emotion	-.10	-.01	.13*	-.13*
Life	.20**	.25**	.37**	-.18**
Control	-.18**	.15*	.32**	-.19*
Abilities	-.18**	.21**	.41**	-.18**
Interpersonal	.02	.17**	.22**	-.02
Confidence	-.12*	.22**	.40**	-.12
Mental Toughness	-.26**	.25**	.42**	-.14*

*Statistically significant at $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Correlations examine the two-way relationship between variables. To test whether one variable can be predicted by another, a form of regression analysis is required. To determine the predictive capabilities of mental toughness on disengagement, activation, relationships, and aspiration, we constructed four regression models. In each one, mental toughness variables were predictors.

In the disengagement model, mental toughness explained 23.0% of the overall variance. The most significant predictor was commitment ($\beta = -.57$). This indicates that low commitment accounts for a significant portion of disengagement and overall, almost a quarter of disengagement can be explained by low mental toughness. In the activation model, mental toughness explained 14.2% of the variance. Most significant predictors were commitment ($\beta = .24$) and life control ($\beta = .32$). For the relationships model, mental toughness accounted for 20.8% of the overall variance. Confidence in abilities was the largest indicator ($\beta = .39$). In the final model, aspiration, only 5.6% of the variance was explained, with no real contributions.

Overall, the results indicate that mental toughness significantly improved in all aspects over the project. Disengagement in school decreased, and relationships increased. Statistical analyses indicate that mental toughness accounts for a quarter of the variance in disengagement and a fifth of the variance in relationships.

Participant Feedback

Satisfaction was assessed by reviewing the responses of 324 participants who answered the questions “The Right Track project met my expectations”, “How useful do you feel the Right Track project was?”, and “How would you describe your relationship with your advisor?” In terms of expectations, 83.64% agreed or strongly agreed that they had been met (Figure 3).

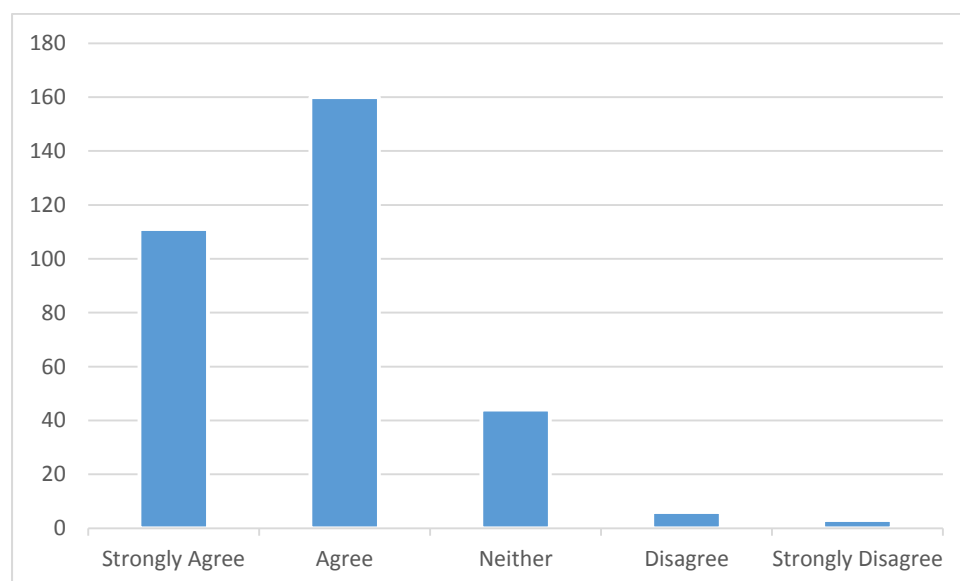


Figure 3. Participant responses to “The Right Track project met my expectations”

Regarding value of the project, 96.30% of participants believed that it was either very useful or fairly useful (Figure 4).

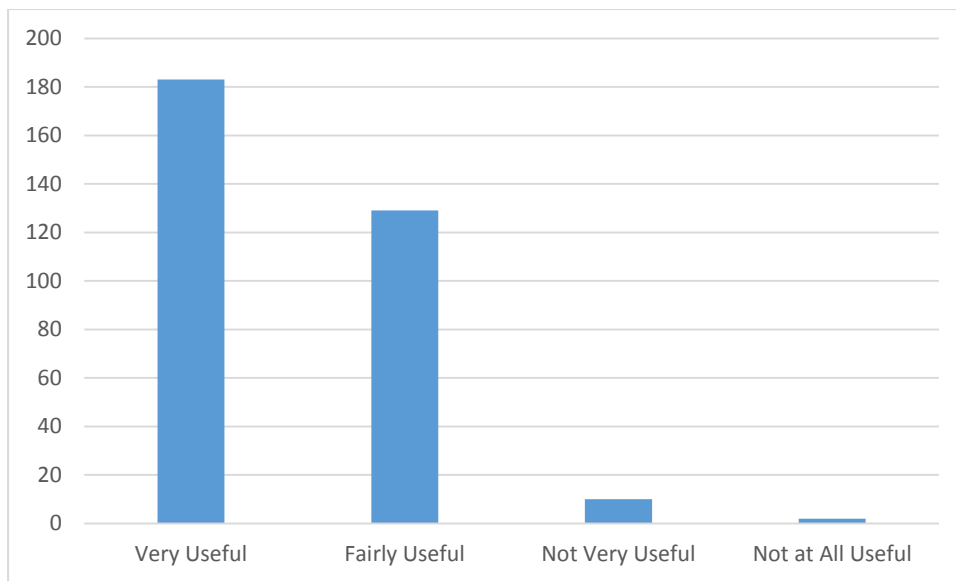


Figure 4. Participant responses to “How useful do you feel the Right Track project was?”

Relationships with advisors also obtained excellent feedback, with 91.98% of participants rating this as excellent or good (Figure 5).

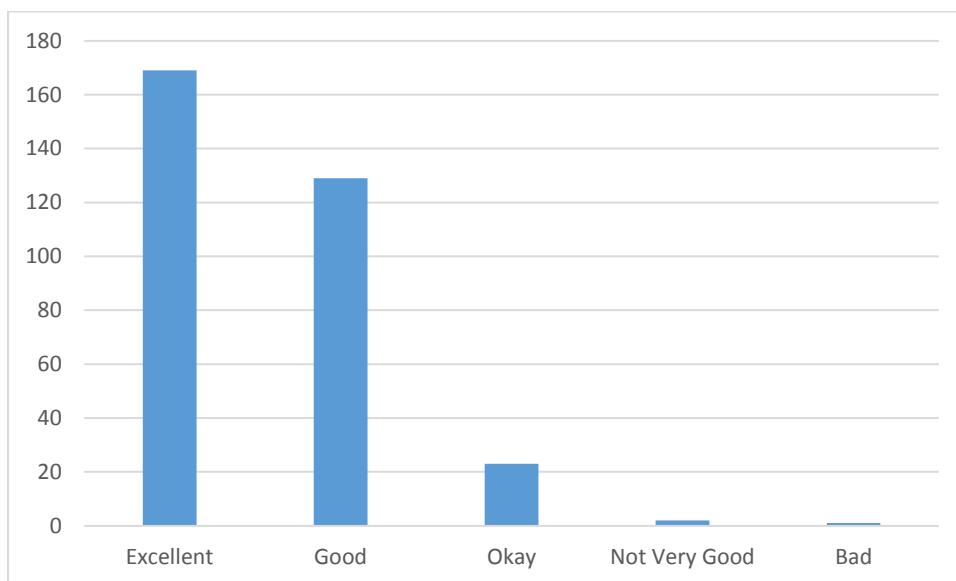


Figure 5. Participant responses to “How would you describe your relationship with your advisor?”

Of the 319 participants who completed the question pertaining to whether they would recommend the project, 276 (86.52%) said they would, with 37 (11.60%) selecting “don’t know”. Only 6 (1.88%) indicated that they would not recommend the programme.

Teacher Perception

An 8-item survey was completed by teachers on 321 participants to obtain their feedback on the project. The first three items referred to changes in behaviour, attendance, and work in class. The results indicate that generally, participants improved or stayed the same (Figure 6).

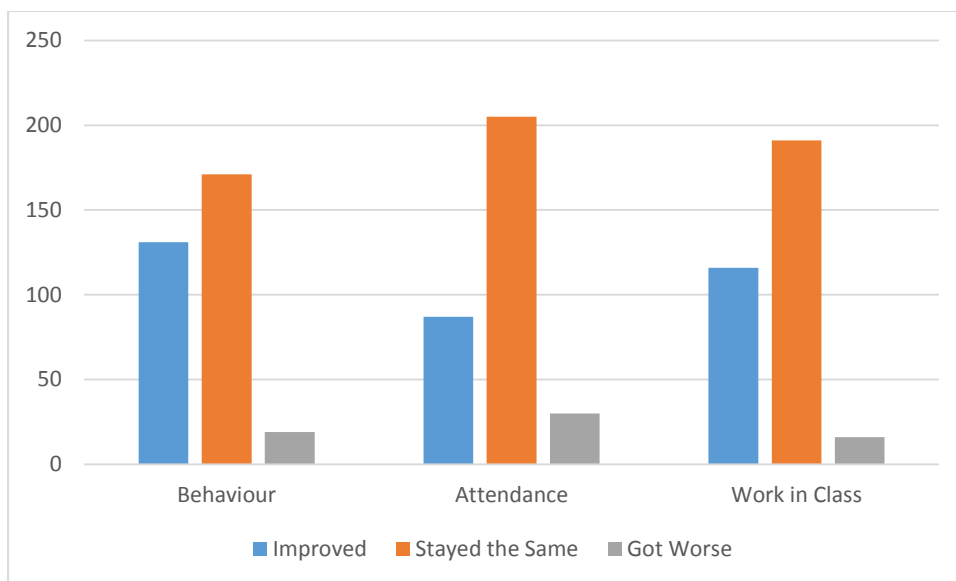


Figure 6. Teacher responses concerning changes in behaviour, attendance, and work in class

The following three items referred to the work of the Project Advisors in terms of support to improve behaviour, attendance, and attainment. Responses show that the vast majority were considered as appropriate or very appropriate (Figure 7).

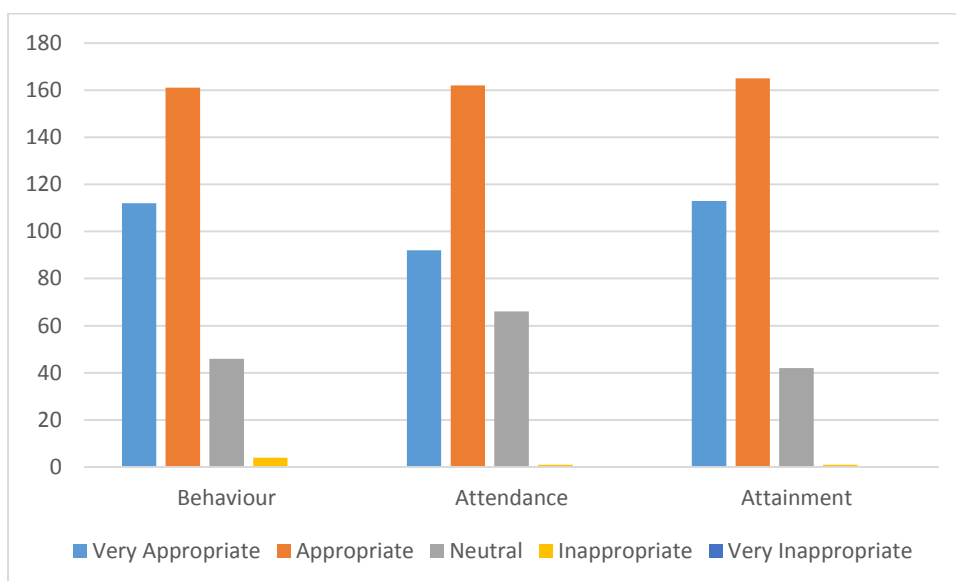


Figure 7. Teacher responses concerning Project Advisor's support for behaviour, attendance, and attainment

Question seven on the teacher perception survey states "At this point, I feel that the overall impact of the Improving Outcomes Right Track Project for this young person has been:" Responses found that 83.13% of teachers rated the overall impact as positive or very positive. The remaining rated it as neutral with no responses for negative or very negative.

The final question asked teachers if they would recommend the programme to another young person/family. 73.25% said that they would definitely recommend it and a further 20.38% said that they would possibly recommend it. 4.78% indicated that they were neutral and just 1.59% said that they would possibly not recommend the project.