



School of Education
University of New England
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INFORMATION SHEET FOR PRINCIPALS

NOTE: This page remains with you for your records.

Research Project:

The Australian Science Enrolment Project

Dear Principal

We would like to invite your school to take part in a research project looking at students' attitudes and enrolment choices towards their different subjects, particularly Science, in secondary schools. The research is to be conducted between 2014 and 2017. My name is John Kennedy and I am conducting this research as part of my PhD in the School of Education at the University of New England. My supervisors are Professor Neil Taylor, Dr Frances Quinn and Dr Terry Lyons. The details of the study are below and we hope you will consent to your school being involved.

Aim of the Study:

This study aims to understand when, how and why students become less likely to choose a Year 11 or 12 science course compared to their other school subjects.

Outline of the study

High profile reports in both the newspapers and the academic literature over the last few years have identified that although students continue to enter Year 7 looking forward to doing Science, fewer students are actually choosing to study a Science course in Year 11 or 12 than at any time in the last 20 years. International studies such as PISA and TIMSS, as well as a number of Australian studies, including ones commissioned by the office of the Australian Chief Scientist, have identified some of the reasons for this. However, we do not know which are the most significant factors, or when these factors are most prevalent in student's lives.

This longitudinal study aims to follow a group of students over 4 years, from Year 7 to Year 10, to try to identify the relative effects of the different factors they use in making their decisions, and to discover the times when these reasons are most felt by students. Understanding the relative strength of these factors for different groups of students will allow the education community to better understand the decisions students make with regards to their Year 11 and 12 studies and thence to better support and guide them in these.

The results of this research will be presented in my thesis and may be reported in future conference proceedings and/or journal articles.

Time and other Requirements:

Participants will be requested to log on to a website once per term. Each time they will be requested to complete a simple electronic survey. This should take no more than 20-30 minutes for the first time and less than 10 minutes for the next rounds of the survey. There is no requirement for teaching time to be given over to completing these surveys.

Participants need to be in Year 7 in 2014 and have access to the Internet at home, at school or via a mobile device. If you consent to your students being involved in this study, we request that you complete the brief survey attached and return this to us at the address below.

Once we receive this form, we will send you a personalised information sheet for parents and an information sheet for participants. These will be supplied to you in an electronic or hardcopy format (as indicated on the form below) and we request that you distribute these to all Year 7 students and their parents following your school's normal procedures.

Completing the initial consent survey should take no more than 20 minutes. The student and parent information sheets will be supplied by e-mail, to your nominated e-mail address, in formats suitable for direct printing or electronic distribution, so as to minimise the time requirements for your school's staff in regards to distribution. We ask that you then collect the signed consent and assent forms and return them in the prepaid envelope to us. There should be no significant impact on teaching time as a consequence of this project.

Prize Draw

All students who complete the three rounds of the survey from four in each year, will be automatically entered into a prize draw to win a share of \$100 of 10 iTunes 1 gift cards. Winners will be randomly selected by computer and notified by e-mail after the draw.

Confidentiality:

Neither your school nor your students will be identified in any reports. Please note that participation by your students in this study is completely voluntary and they, or you, are free at any time to withdraw consent for the project without having to give a reason and without consequence.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study will remain confidential. Neither your school nor individual students will be identified by name in any publication of the results. All names will be replaced with pseudonyms ensuring that you will not be identifiable. School names will be replaced by pseudonyms and will only be described by the broadest criteria in any reports (e.g. an Independent Boys School in Southern Metropolitan Sydney). Data will be kept on a secure computer server and will only be accessible by the researchers. Any printouts will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the principal researcher's office. Identifying data will be kept for five (5) years following completion of the study and then deleted securely or, in the case of printouts, destroyed.

It is unlikely that this research will raise any personal or upsetting issues but if it does you may wish to contact your local Community Health Centre.

Research Process:

It is anticipated that this research will be completed by the end of 2017. The results may also be presented at conferences or written up in journals without any identifying information.

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE13-116 Valid to 04/07/2016)

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at the following address:

Research Services
University of New England
Armidale, NSW 2351.
Telephone: (02) 6773 3449 Facsimile (02) 6773 3543
Email: ethics@une.edu.au

Participating:

To accept this invitation and participate in this project, please complete the attached survey and return it by either e-mail (asep@une.edu.au), fax or post to Mr John Kennedy at the address below.

We thank you for your time and effort in assisting us in this important research,

Yours sincerely,

Mr John Kennedy

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ASEP

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Consent and Data Collection Form for Principals

Research Project: *The Australian Science Enrolment Project*

Section 1 - Consent	
1. I have read the information contained in the Information Sheet for Principals and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. I agree that students in my school may participate in the online survey realising that we may withdraw at any time without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3. I understand that participation by my students is voluntary and that they can choose not to participate in all or part of the project.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4. I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the survey for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5. I agree that any comments my students make may be included in reports and publications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Section 2 – About your School’s Location	
6. School Name <i>(as you would like it to appear in the survey tool for your students to select.)</i>	Enter School Name.
7. School Suburb	School Suburb.
8. School Postcode	Postcode
9. School’s Geographic Location	<input type="checkbox"/> Metropolitan <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/> Remote
Section 3 – About your School	
10. School Education System	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Catholic Education Authority <input type="checkbox"/> Anglican Education Commission <input type="checkbox"/> Independent (Religious) <input type="checkbox"/> Independent (Non-Religious)
11. School Year Range	<input type="checkbox"/> K-12 <input type="checkbox"/> K-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 7-12 <input type="checkbox"/> 7-10 <input type="checkbox"/> Other <div style="text-align: right;">Other</div>

12. Student Genders	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
13. Number of Students on roll (7-12)	<input type="checkbox"/> fewer than 500 <input type="checkbox"/> 500 to 750 <input type="checkbox"/> 750 to 1000 <input type="checkbox"/> 1000 to 1250 <input type="checkbox"/> 1250-1500 <input type="checkbox"/> greater than 1500
14. Student Enrolment Criteria	<input type="checkbox"/> None (Comprehensive) <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Academically Selective <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Academically Selective <input type="checkbox"/> Other Selective <input type="checkbox"/> Other
15. Which Year 12 assessment programmes do you offer?	<input type="checkbox"/> Higher School Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> International Baccalaureate
Section 4 – Contact Details	
16. Name of Nominated Contact (<i>This may be the Principal</i>) <i>This is the name that consent forms will need to be returned to.</i>	Contact Name.
17. E-mail address of Nominated Contact	Contact e-mail
18. Do you wish to receive electronic or hardcopies of the information sheets consent forms for parents and students?	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic <input type="checkbox"/> Hard copy (Number req: <u>Number</u>)
19. Principal's Name	Principal's Name.
20. Principal's Signature	Signature
21. Date	Date

Please return completed forms by e-mail, fax or post to: Mr John Kennedy, St Andrew's Cathedral School, Sydney Square, Sydney, NSW 2000, fax: 02 9286 9550, e-mail: asep@myune.edu.au