



**Program Evaluation of
Pilot JAYC Curriculum Groups
Fall 2014**

History of JAYC Curriculum at The Red Barn

In 2014 The Red Barn received a grant from the JAYC Foundation to hold two pilot programs of their Just Ask Yourself to Care (JAYC) curriculum. The JAYC curriculum was designed by Jaycee Dugard and the staff at Dr. Rebecca Bailey's organization, Transitioning Families.

Jaycee first met Rebecca and was introduced to equine therapy as part of Jaycee's reunification process with her family after recovery from an 18 year abduction. Through the reunification process, Jaycee learned her younger sister Shayna was often bullied at school by children teasing her about Jaycee's well publicized abduction. This inspired Jaycee and the team at Transitioning Families to create an equine assisted curriculum that would teach elementary and junior high aged students the character traits and leadership skills to "just ask yourself to care" about how their actions impact others.

The Red Barn learned of the JAYC curriculum in February 2014 through a "snowball" internet search while researching different types of equine therapy. After numerous phone interviews, we were selected to receive a three day training on implementing the curriculum in June 2014.

The curriculum is thematically based around the Pony Express and uses pioneer era concepts of the western expansion values and culture. The term "cow culture" is used as a metaphor for this time in history when people were longing for connection to their families "back home," as well as a time when honesty and integrity were essential to every day survival. However, this idealization of the time period also serves to contrast a grittier reality that included racism, vigilante justice, sexism, and living conditions that were often brutal and dangerous. The curriculum creators intentionally chose this dichotomous theme to emphasize that any event or time period can be perceived on multiple levels. Even in the imperfections of this time period in history, it still contributed positively to American culture through its emphasis on hard work, interconnected relationships, desire for increased communication, manifest destiny, and internal fortitude.

Curriculum Specifics

The curriculum includes one planning session for the implementation team to meet with the students' teachers or guardians and then eight sessions with the students. Each student session includes vocabulary words and activities that relate to the vocabulary words. Most sessions also include a horse related activity, although if horses aren't available a dog can be used. An appendix to each session lists how each activity is tied to many common core standards of literacy, history, mathematics, and physical education. Each session is

Session	Vocabulary Words
1	Connection and Caring
2	Respect and Safety
3	Awareness and Instincts
4	Attunement to Self and Others
5	Trust and Support
6	Integrity and Empathy
7	Creativity and Compassion
8	Celebration

also structured in ways to accommodate auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning styles. One unique feature of the curriculum is its emphasis on a shared meal or snack together, which was an especially important part of cow culture. The cook, often called Cookie, was an essential part of westward expansion and serves as another opportunity to discuss changing attitudes towards gender roles. Sessions conclude with everyone gathered at a table sharing a meal or snack in hopes of spurring an interest in family meal times because they have been shown to have significant physical and psychological benefits (Delistraty, 2014).

The curriculum is intended to be implemented by one mental health professional familiar with the curriculum, trained staff from the implementing agency (one whose role must be specifically to manage the horses), and community volunteers as needed. Even though a mental health professional is part of the implementation team, the curriculum is not meant to be considered therapy. The mental health professional is present to appropriately direct any conversation that may reflect a deeper need. The curriculum is meant to be an experiential learning framework, and implementation teams are encouraged to incorporate additional activities that will enhance the program.

Evaluating and Implementing the Curriculum at The Red Barn

During our training seminar, we discussed the need for a method to measure the curriculum's impact and were asked to create an evaluation process as part of our pilot program. For advice about how to evaluate the curriculum, we consulted with Leah Waller, LCSW who would lead one of the groups. She suggested that we use the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control instrument as a pre and post test. This instrument contains forty-nine questions designed to measure the extent to which a child may feel that they are in control of events occurring in his or her life. Higher scores indicate an external locus of control, with lower scores representing an internal locus of control.

Studies have shown that an external locus of control is considered an important factor in adolescent behaviors such as teenage pregnancy and delinquency, as well as being negatively related to school achievement (Kopera-Frye, 1991). Li and Chong (2009) found that students with a more external locus of control tend to have more anxiety before academic examinations. Peterson (1978) found that individuals with an external locus of control may make decisions based upon superstition rather than by reason. Those with an external locus of control "do not seem to try to better themselves because they do not believe that taking action will alter things" (Janelle, 1992, p. 5).

An internal locus of control is associated with individuals who take steps to improve their situations in life and resist subtle attempts to influence them (Janelle, 1992). A 2008 study by Jayne Brahler found that high school students with a more internal locus of control were healthier than those with a more external locus of control to the extent that she suggests using locus of control as a tool for screening adolescents for disease risk. Individuals with a more internal locus of control are more likely to believe they are able to self-initiate change and less likely to self-handicap themselves (Stewart & De George-Walker, 2014).

Well known child psychologist Jean Piaget believed that life experiences could influence a locus of control. Leah Waller theorized that the JAYC curriculum's emphasis on recognizing the impact of our actions would shift participants to have a more internal locus of control.

The Red Barn chose to offer the curriculum to two very different groups: boys from a foster care group home and homeschooled children.

The Implementation Teams included:

	Homeschooled Children	Foster Care Group Home
Group Leader	Joy O'Neal	Joy O'Neal
Mental Health Professional	Leah Waller, LCSW	Terry Timmons, LCP
Red Barn Staff	Alexis Braswell Courtney Day Connor Samples Terry Timmons	Kyle Butler Connor Samples
Community Volunteers	Kim Dicen	Suzanne Graham Diana Walker
Other		Staff from foster care group home

The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control instrument was given to each group at the first and last session. Questions were read aloud to the group by the mental health professional.

The homeschooled children group included eight children, six girls and two boys. They ranged in age from nine to twelve years old, with an average age of almost eleven years old. The boys from the foster care group home ranged in age from eleven to thirteen years old, with an average age of twelve years old.

As allowed by the curriculum's creators, we tailored the sessions as needed to the interests and abilities of the group. The activities for each group are listed below:

	Homeschooled Children	Foster Care Group Home
1	Connection & Caring Twine toss activity, intro to cow culture, photos of animals, Pony Express poster, intro to horses, snack.	Connection & Caring Twine toss activity, intro to cow culture, photos of animals, Pony Express poster, intro to horses, snack.
2	Respect & Safety Twine toss activity, create handle (nickname), discuss bandanas, decorate bandanas, groom horses, discuss mochila, discuss how horses and people show respect, safety concerns, snack.	Respect & Safety Twine toss activity, create handle, discuss bandanas, decorate bandanas, groom horses, discuss mochila, discuss how horses and people show respect, safety concerns, snack.
3	Awareness & Instinct Paint horses with symbols of the five senses, conduct the five senses exercise, discuss the five senses exercise, snack.	Awareness & Instinct Paint horses with symbols of the five senses, conduct the five senses exercise, discuss the five senses exercise, snack.
4	Attunement Play space bubbles, mirror grooming, snack.	Attunement Play space bubbles, mirror grooming, snack.
5	Trust & Support Approaching a horse, blind grooming, I Am poem, snack.	Trust & Support Approaching, blind grooming, I Am poem, snack.
6	Integrity & Empathy Leading a horse around the arena, snack.	Integrity & Empathy Tour another barn to demonstrate we trusted their behavior and to express our condolences as the owner's mother recently died, snack.
7	Compassion & Creativity Create an art project for the pony express trail, snack.	Compassion & Creativity Guest came to play music, learned about blues music, and wrote The Pony Express Blues, snack.
8	Review of all Vocabulary Words Lead a horse through the pony express trail, snack.	Review of all Vocabulary Words Farrier visited to demonstrate horse shoeing, snack.
9	Celebration Each person presented what they learned in a creative fashion and took a pony ride.	Review of all Vocabulary Words Lead horse in arena and through obstacle course, snack.
10	Did not meet this week due to scheduling.	Celebration Lead horse in arena and through the outdoor obstacle course, snack.

In all of these activities, but especially the horse related ones, participants were encouraged to observe the impact of their actions on the group itself and each individual personally. When working with the horses, the individuals received immediate feedback from the horse about how their (the student's) behavior was causing the horse to respond. It was powerful for the students to learn that their behavior could direct the actions of such a large animal.

Results

The results of the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control instrument are shown below. Note that norms for the instrument are reported as 11.01 – 18.80 and that it is expected for a child's locus of control to shift more internally as he or she ages. Since this shift is reflected by a lower score, it is interesting to note that the pre-test scores for the boys living in the foster care group home were significantly higher than those of the homeschooled children even though they are older. We considered this to be logical given the degree to which children in foster care generally have had no control over any decisions in their lives.

	Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control			
	Foster Care Group Home		Homeschooled Children	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Total	132.00	99.00	112.00	77.00
Mean	18.86	16.50	12.44	11.00
Median	18.00	17.00	13.00	10.00
Average Age	12.00		10.11	

As predicted, over the course of the curriculum, students began to show a more internal locus of control as evidenced by the lower post-test scores.

Before evaluating the results, we considered whether or not eight sessions would be enough time to see a shift in locus of control. However, in our research for this program evaluation, we found a similar study conducted by Nowicki (yes, that Nowicki) and Jarvis Barnes in 1972 about the impact of a structured five day camp experience on 261 inner city males. These results are listed below:

Group	# Students in Group	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	28	16.67	15.28
2	35	16.22	15.25
3	54	17.27	15.37
4	54	16.27	14.88
5	31	18.22	17.54
6	27	17.03	17.11
7	32	16.31	14.12
8	30	13.70	12.63
TOTAL AVERAGE		16.48	15.25

Additionally, a 2014 study by Pourhashemi and Zareian found that just eight weeks of participating in an aerobic exercise program significantly impacted the locus of control in sixty girls with an average age of thirteen years old.

Conclusion

Our internal program evaluation was not implemented with the same stringency as an academic research project, but we do conclude that it is reasonable to believe participating in the JAYC curriculum helped children to develop a more internal locus of control by encouraging them to understand how their actions impacted others. Nowicki (1972) predicted and found in his study that “a structured camp experience which makes clearer the connection between a youngster’s behavior and the resultant reinforcement [result of that behavior] should have the effect of making the students perceive themselves to be more in control of events and thus more internal” (p. 248). Our experience shows that even forty-four years later, that is still the case.

We plan to offer another JAYC program to our students this spring or summer, and the results from this pilot program will shape all of our other future camps as well.

References

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Your Name: _____ Date: _____

	Yes	No
Do you believe that most problems will solve themselves if you just don't fool with them?		
Do you believe that you can stop yourself from catching a cold?		
Are some kids just born lucky?		
Most of the time do you feel that getting good grades means a great deal to you?		
Are you often blamed for things that just aren't your fault?		
Do you believe that if somebody studies hard enough he or she can pass any subject?		
Do you feel that most of the time it doesn't pay to try hard because things never turn out the right way anyway?		
Do you feel that if things start out well in the morning it's going to be a good day no matter what you do?		
Do you feel that most of the time parents listen to what their kids have to say?		
Do you believe that wishing can make good things happen?		
When you get punished does it usually seem it's for no good reason at all?		
Most of the time do you find it hard to change a friend's opinion?		
Do you think that cheering more than luck helps a team to win?		
Do you feel that it's nearly impossible to change your parent's mind about anything?		
Do you believe that your parents should allow you to make most of your own decisions?		
Do you feel that when you do something wrong there's very little you can do to make it right?		
Do you believe that most kids are just born good at sports?		
Are most of the other kids your age stronger than you are?		
Do you feel that one of the best ways to handle most problems is just not to think about them?		
Do you feel that you have a lot of choice in deciding who your friends are?		

	Yes	No
If you find a four-leaf clover to you believe that it might bring you good luck?		
Do you often feel that whether you do your homework has much to do with what kind of grades you'll get?		
Do you feel that when a kid your age decides to hit you, there's little you can do to stop him or her?		
Have you ever had a good luck charm?		
Do you believe whether or not people like you depends on how you act?		
Will your parents usually help you if you ask them to?		
Have you felt that when people were mean to you it was usually for no reason at all?		
Most of the time, do you feel that you can change what might happen tomorrow by what you do today?		
Do you believe that when bad things are going to happen they just are going to happen no matter what you try to do to stop them?		
Do you think that kids can get their own way if they just keep trying?		
Most of the time do you find it useless to try and get your way at home?		
Do you feel that when good things happen they happen because of hard work?		
Do you feel that when someone your age wants to be your enemy there's little you can do to change matters?		
Do you usually feel that it's easy to get friends to do what you want them to?		
Do you usually feel that you have little to say about what you get to eat at home?		
Do you feel that when someone doesn't like you there's little you can do about it?		
Do you usually feel that it's almost useless to try in school because most other children are just plan smarter than you?		
Are you the kind of person who believes that planning ahead makes things turn out better?		
Most of the time, do you feel that you have little to say about what your family decides to do?		
Do you think it's better to be smart than to be lucky?		