

Just For A Laugh?
Evaluation Report
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Just For A Laugh? (JFAL) is a resource aimed at those working with young people with a desire to address risk taking behaviour and decision making. The programme has been designed as a method for delivering particular curriculum areas and school agendas, such as SMSC, Healthy Schools, SEAL and PSHE, but has also been used in non-school settings such as youth clubs. The approach is young person centred, focusing on risks that are relevant to the young people in the group but explored in an imaginary scenario. It is important that there are no personal disclosures so that the young people can investigate issues in a safe environment. It is hoped that through exploring a variety of risk taking behaviours, with the addition of factual information to support analysis, young people may be more prepared in dealing with possible real life scenarios now and in the future. The available materials and support include a resource pack, DVD film collection, a one day training session and a two day on-site visit from a drama and substance misuse specialist (details of which can be seen below). The resource pack and DVD collection provide the core structure of the programme and users can choose to access further support through the training day and on-site visit should they so wish.

Resource and DVD Collections

The resource pack introduces *Just For A Laugh?* (JFAL), the creators and the rationale behind the programme and then goes on to provide a series of lessons or activities in a methodological order so that the programme may be followed from beginning to end or alternatively may be dipped into if preferred. Activities are designed to support the teaching and learning process, with opportunities for both assessment for and assessment of learning. The DVD collections of films created by young people across County Durham provide inspirational material to share with other young people and display the work that has been created. There are two collections: one for young people aged four to eleven years and a second for young people aged eleven to nineteen years.

JFAL training day

A training day is offered to those working with children and young people who are interested in using the *Just For A Laugh?* programme in their context. The day aims to challenge thinking about risk taking behaviour, to provide factual information about substances (both legal and illegal) and to demonstrate the use of practical, creative and motivational activities that may be used back in schools/settings. Drama techniques are used to facilitate discussions in a way that can be mirrored with young people. The day aims to support attendees to try techniques and activities for themselves back in their settings and to encourage them to allow the young people to lead within the activities.

Two day on-site visit

A two day on-site visit is also available; this involves the expertise of a drama and substance misuse specialist who will work with a group of young people and those adults intending to use the programme. It is intended that through watching the activities in action with young people, adults will gain the confidence and inspiration to lead themselves. The specialist will work with the young people to create and record a short film that is then produced into a DVD that is added to the film collections and is given back to the school/setting and the young people involved. This film may then be used for future learning within the context, at home and with the wider community.

Evaluation methodology

This evaluation seeks to report on the impact of *Just For A Laugh?* (JFAL) on children and young people, together with the effectiveness of the training and quality of the resource, based on the following evidence collected between September 2011 and February 2012:

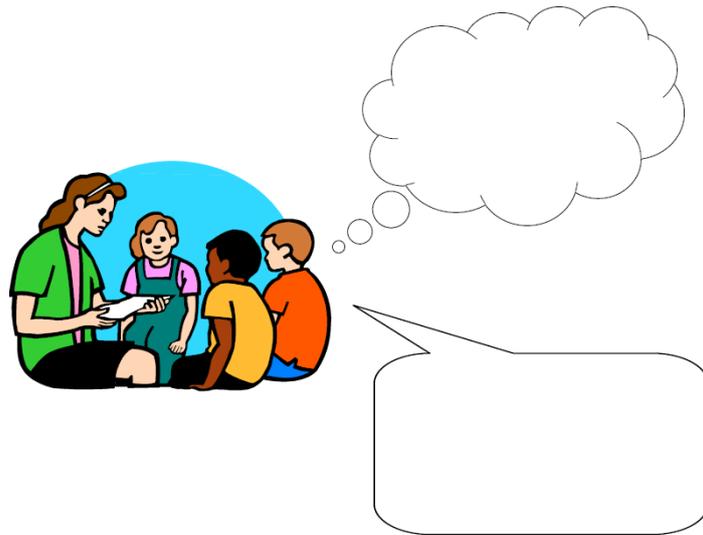
- Observation of a training session and a sample of JFAL practice in schools.
- Analysis of trainee feedback questionnaires and documentation.
- In-depth interviews with the JFAL writers and trainers.
- Four case study visits to schools using JFAL; all four schools had received the resource, DVD collection, had sent at least one member of staff on the training day and had received the two day on-site visit resulting in the production of a film.
- Email communication and a telephone interview with an additional trainee from the training day.

Case studies and participants were self-selected from a group of ten (9 schools and a youth provision) that were invited to take part in the evaluation due to their involvement with JFAL. Case study visits included: in-depth interviews with staff who attended the training session and were delivering the programme in school and where applicable other staff who were involved in delivering JFAL; use of Pupil Views Templates (PVTs) with pupils who had taken part in JFAL and other pupils who had been shown the film, together with interviews with a sample of young people who had produced the film (young people interviewed ranged from six to fourteen years of age); where possible an interview with the headteacher or member of the senior leadership team; and in one school an interview with a parent.

Interviews were semi-structured, based upon interview schedules (please see Appendixes 1-5) but intentionally flexible so that conversations could evolve around the responses and the answers given. The research team carried out all the interviews and works to, and within, BERA's (British Educational Research Association) Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Researchers (please see: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/files/2008/09/ethica1.pdf>). The nature of the research was explained to all participants, as was their right to withdraw at any time without any adverse personal effect. All participants gave positive consent to engage with the research and to having their unidentified comments and templates shared publically.

During school visits particular attention was given to assessing the impact of JFAL on children and young people's knowledge, critical thinking and decision making around risk taking behaviours. Pupil Views Templates (PVTs) were used as a method that has been proven to be successful in exploring and gaining pupil views about their own learning (Wall and Higgins, 2006). Two templates were used in discussion with the children and young people; the Participating PVT (Figure 1) was used with young people who had taken part in JFAL and the Watching PVT (Figure 2) was used with young people in school who had been shown the film produced by their peers but had not taken part in its production.

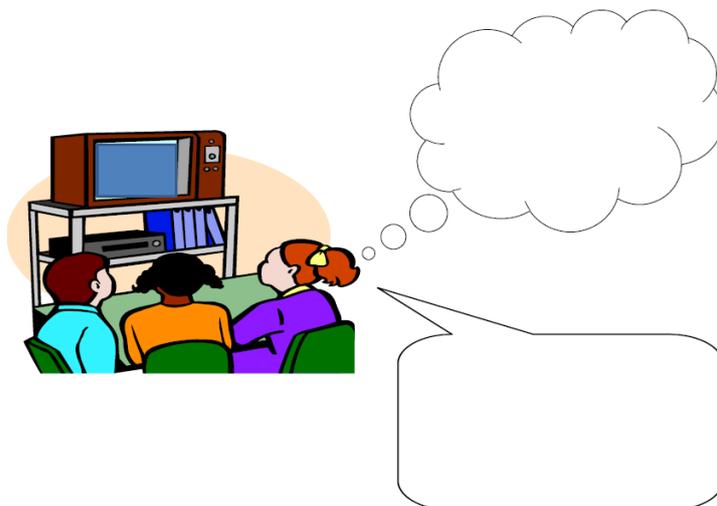
Figure 1: Participating Pupil Views Template for those who took part in JFAL



Here pupils who had taken part in the JFAL activities and production of the film were asked to imagine that the cartoon represented themselves or others engaged in a JFAL activity. The researcher asked the young people to record what the group might be talking about in the speech bubble and what individuals might be thinking about in the thought bubble. It was suggested that they should think about what they were learning and their reflections about that.

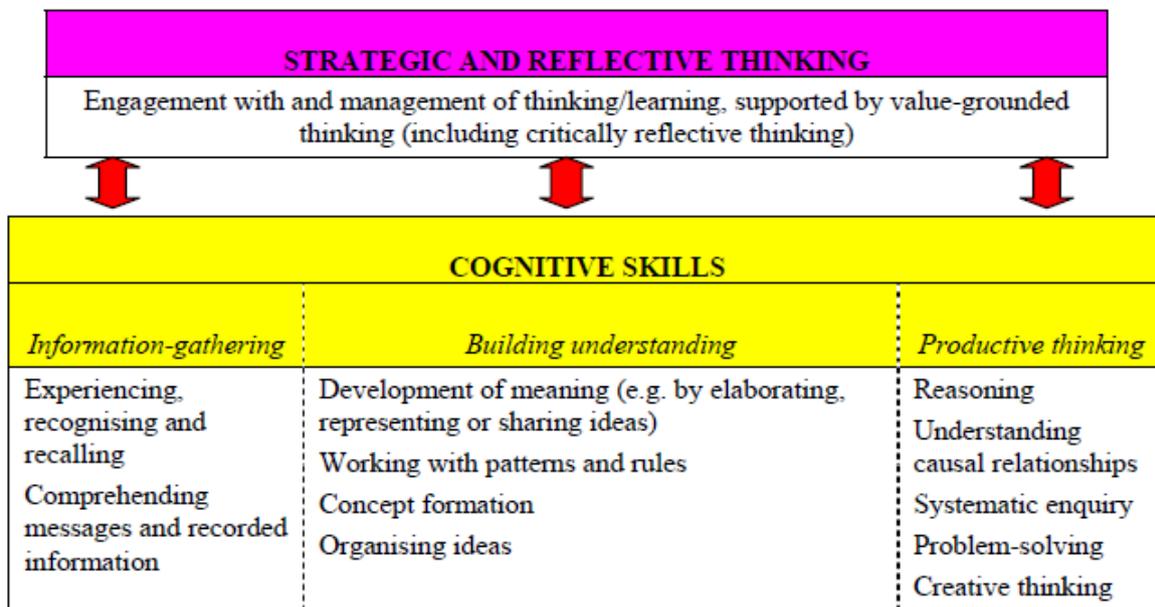
The second template shown below was used with pupils in school that had been shown the film produced by their peers; similarly the researcher asked them to imagine that the cartoon represented themselves or others watching the film and asked that they record what the group might be talking about or commenting on in the speech bubble and what they might be thinking in the thought bubble. Again it was suggested that they should think about what they were learning and their reflections.

Figure 2: Watching Pupil Views Template for those who watched the film produced by their peers



Templates were subject to a deductive analysis whereby statements recorded on the Pupil Views Templates were transcribed and imported into the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo 9. Each comment was tagged as to which template (Participating or Watching) it had come from, the school, the year group and whether it was recorded in a speech bubble or a thought bubble. The statements were then coded for evidence of cognitive skills (information gathering, building understanding and productive thinking) and/or evidence of metacognitive thought (strategic and reflective thinking) as outlined by Wall (2008), drawing upon Moseley et al.'s framework for thinking (Figure 3 below).

Figure 3: Moseley et al.'s (2005) Model of frameworks for thinking (p. 314)



All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, with the exception of one of the pupil interviews where participants requested that the conversation was not audio-recorded but agreed that the researcher could make notes in writing. Transcripts and notes were then used to carry out a thematic analysis, allowing key themes to surface from the data and inform theoretical understandings (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Evaluation findings

Findings from the evaluation have been organised under the following headings and will be discussed in turn:

1. Impact of JFAL on children and young people who participated
2. Wider impacts of JFAL
3. Evaluation of the JFAL resource and training

1. Impact of JFAL on children and young people who participated

Throughout the evaluation it was important to assess the impact that JFAL was having on the children and young people who participated and to gain their perspectives on what it had been like, what they had learnt and benefitted from, and what effect, if any, they thought it was having on their lives now and possibly in the future. Four case study visits to schools that were using the JFAL resource were conducted and in each case the research team worked with children and young people to elicit their views; this was done through the use of Pupil Views Templates, as described above, to mediate feedback about learning and through semi-structured interviews with small groups of pupils (usually three to five young people at a time, although there were also interviews with as few as two and as many as twelve as the conditions at the schools dictated).

Pupil Views Templates

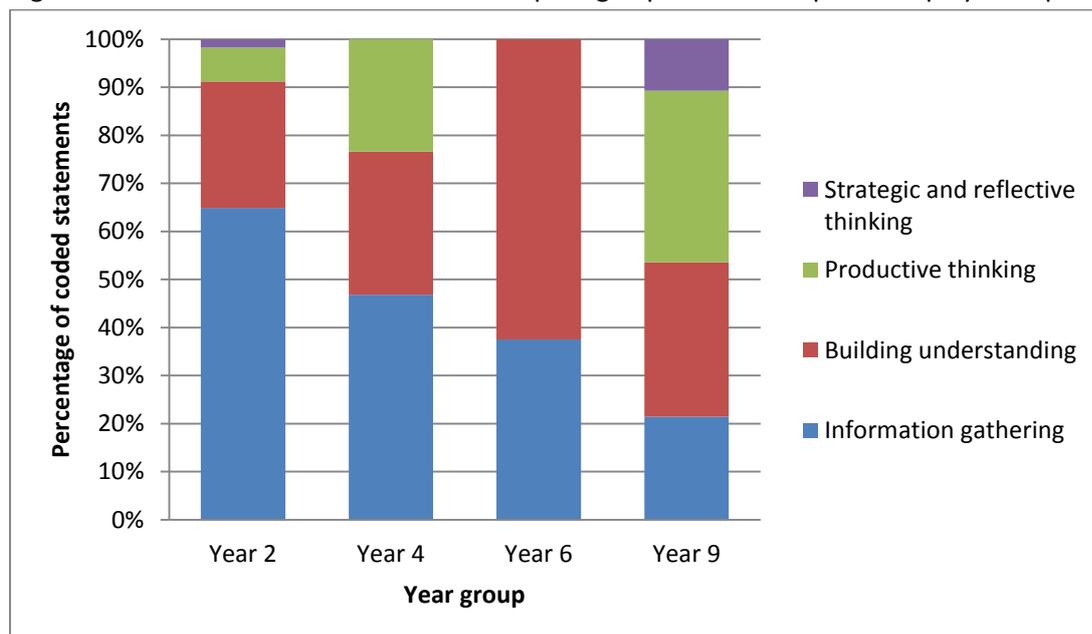
77 pupils who had participated in the JFAL on-site visit completed Participating Pupil Views Templates (PVTs). In each of the four schools a different year group had been targeted and Table 1 below displays the number of PVTs obtained for each year group. As can be seen the numbers varied; this was due to the fact that data collection was dependent on the variable conditions within each of the schools visited. In the cases of the Year 2, 4 and 9 groups the number of templates obtained was largely representative of the number of young people who had participated in JFAL at the school; the exception to this was the Year 6 group where less than half of those involved in JFAL were able to complete the template.

Table 1: Number of PVTs obtained for each year group

Year group	No. of PVTs
2	33
4	24
6	8
9	12

From these templates 148 statements were coded for evidence of: information gathering; building understanding; productive thinking; and strategic and reflective thinking. Figure 4 below displays the results from each year group as percentages.

Figure 4: Coded statements from the Participating Pupil Views Templates displayed as percentages



The largest proportion of comments was coded as information gathering. Such comments typically reported the activities young people had taken part in and the facts they remembered being told or finding out, for example:

We were talking about dangers and stuff. (Year 2 pupil)

Certain girl got drunk then came out with the person she fancies then main character gets to drunk and shows herself up. (Year 9 pupil)

We were playing Billy Billy Bop. (Year 2 pupil)

Cocaine pills are made up of 95% sherbet and 5% cocaine. (Year 6 pupil)

The second highest proportion of comments was coded as building understanding; these comments gave some organization to thoughts and recollections, with some reflection or development of thinking about the facts.

I didn't know how dangerous they could be. (Year 6 pupil)

How exciting it was going to be. What it was about. What the point of it was. (Year 9 pupil)

Why would you do that? It was fascinating. (Year 6 pupil)

Productive thinking comments displayed reasoning, problem solving and/or some evidence of more abstract thinking. Here pupils showed evidence of problem solving and critical thinking, both in relation to producing the film and in considering and analysing the risks and possible implications under discussion.

We were thinking about how we could make the video realistic and good. (Year 9 pupil)

Well I was thinking about how it would go and how it would turn out and how it would affect other people's life. (Year 9 pupil)

People smoke, well stupid people. Parents smoke so why can't children or teenagers? If you smoke and you have a baby the baby can die. (Year 4 pupil)

We could use a cigarette instead of scissors. (Year 2 pupil considering how the group could make their own film focusing on the risks of cigarettes as opposed to scissors which featured in a film they had been shown)

Finally a small number of comments were coded as evidence of strategic or reflective thinking, where pupils displayed an awareness of the process of learning.

We were talking about how we could make it good and what other people's ideas were and made them better with other people's ideas. (Year 9 pupil)

We did well in this opportunity and I thought it was very good and it helped me understand what it would be like in performing arts. (Year 9 pupil)

These comments all related to learning in relation to the designing and production of the film rather than risky situations.

In comparing the data in Figure 4, we can see the proportion of information gathering comments reduce, whilst that of productive thinking comments increase (with the exception of the Year 6 class who did not produce evidence of productive thinking) with age. This progression might be expected as pupils become more able of higher level cognitive skills, but it is notable that children as young as six years did show evidence of productive thinking, perhaps indicating that the JFAL resource may encourage or help to develop such cognitive abilities at a young age. This is a relatively small sample and further research to explore such a theory would be necessary.

Interviews with children and young people

In order to more fully understand the experience of children and young people interviews were conducted with 35 pupils who had participated in JFAL across the case study schools, ranging from six to fourteen years of age. Again there was some variability in the number of pupils available for interview in each school, the numbers for which can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Pupils interviewed in each of the case study schools

Year group	No. of pupils interviewed
2	5
4	5
6	12
9	13

The comments received from children and young people were almost exclusively positive and typically expressed enjoyment, fun and excitement; this remained constant across the age range of pupils interviewed. Drama techniques and games were particularly popular and primary aged children were also enticed by the use of props such as fake cigarettes, pills and alcohol for use in the film. Nevertheless, pupils also recognised that they were learning and alongside commenting that they had enjoyed being out of lessons and 'having a laugh', pupils also said that they had enjoyed

learning, that the JFAL activities had been interesting and that they had learnt new skills and knowledge.

It was like fun but we were learning at the same time. (Year 6 pupil)

The vast majority of young people interviewed felt that JFAL was preferable to 'normal' lessons, identifying the active nature of activities, the lack of emphasis on writing, the relevance to real life and the benefits of working with an adult who was not their usual teacher as important.

You got to do things. (Year 2 pupil)

Cause it's not like loads of writing and that and it's about things that actually will happen in your life. (Year 6 pupil)

It was good cause it was a boy teacher ... he had a joke ... and we didn't have to call him by Mr, you could call him his name. (Year 6 pupil)

These factors all brought an element of novelty that helped to make JFAL an engaging activity for the vast majority of young people.

Increased knowledge and skills

Primary aged pupils reported that they had increased knowledge about cigarettes, alcohol and drugs as a result of their involvement in JFAL. In interviews a number of young people were able to recite facts that they had remembered from their on-site visit, in most cases two months prior to interview.

Cigarettes are bad for your lungs and they smell. (Year 2 pupil)

Smoking can cause your teeth to go yellow and then you get a really bad cold. (Year 4 pupil)

There are more smoking deaths than there was with ecstasy. (Year 6 pupil)

Glue can make you hyper if you sniff it ... but it can kill you by making a bubble that pops. (Year 6 pupil)

A minority of pupils did comment that they found this new knowledge 'scary' and one pupil in the Year 4 class also expressed concern that the subject matter of alcohol and drugs might not be appropriate for their age group.

I thought ... was mad to get Year 4 children to drink alcohol and smoke. (Year 4 pupil)

When questioned further as to what might be the purpose of producing the film, the pupil acknowledged that it might be useful in the future but that she felt too young at the moment; this indicates that despite her concerns the activity had been successful in imparting knowledge and stimulating thought. On the whole pupils were very enthusiastic about their experience of JFAL.

Secondary aged students interviewed were particularly enthusiastic about the performing arts skills that they had developed, including acting skills, camera positions and stage directions, and also valued the development of teambuilding skills, working in groups and independently, and increased confidence to participate. One student commented that he/she had learnt some new information about drugs, whilst another felt that they 'already knew it'; on the whole students were less concerned with the subject matter of their film than the actual process of producing it. As seen above, this was also reflected in the Year 9 PVTs where we saw productive and strategic and

reflective thinking centring on the production of the film. For this group of students the focus on performing arts was significant and several young people in the group commented that that the JFAL experience had inspired them to take performing arts in their upcoming options.

Impact of watching and producing JFAL films

Children and young people interviewed particularly identified the impact of watching other young people's films and also watching their own film as important. Pupils reported being inspired by the films produced by others; as well as giving young people ideas to work with, the films displayed what could be achieved and supported individuals to try it for themselves:

I enjoyed watching what another group were doing. That gave you more ideas. (Year 6 pupil)

Yeah it was really exciting like, cause we'd never made a movie before and other schools had and when that day happened it was really exciting, it was like making a movie. (Year 2 pupil)

In watching their own film, young people of all ages expressed an initial feeling of embarrassment or anxiety about how it would turn out, followed by a real sense of pride and achievement.

I would never have thought of them ideas but we actually did, we did it all together, we like managed to come up with the ideas about what to do. (Year 6 pupil)

It was amazing , it makes you feel like you're going to be on TV and you're going to be famous. (Year 2 pupil)

There was further evidence from Year 6 pupils interviewed that watching the film with their class had made individuals reconsider the message of the film and its applicability to real life.

It was quite em funny but then I realised the story behind it, cause that could happen if you have like asthma or something and still you don't really need asthma to get harmed by drugs and alcohol. (Year 6 pupil)

I was thinking about it and like thinking what could really happen if we were like at the park and really drinking. (Year 6 pupil)

It is notable that whilst the Year 6 class did not produce evidence of productive thinking in their PVTs, such comments evidence that they were certainly capable of productive thought in relation to JFAL. Such comments suggest that JFAL prompted these young people to consider a range of possible scenarios and outcomes and relate them to their own lives. Some children were keen to state that they would not smoke when they were older, but on the whole primary aged pupils were much more inclined to talk about the impact JFAL had had on their thinking.

It made us think that if your parents smoke you don't have to when you're older. (Year 4 pupil)

You know I think young children can actually set an example for teenagers by not smoking. (Year 4 pupil)

Like thinking about what kind of drugs there are and which is really bad and which is not that bad but still is. (Year 6 pupil)

Secondary aged students interviewed focused upon the experience of producing the film and were reluctant to discuss the actual message of the film. In later discussion with the class teacher it was

revealed that the group had previously completed a unit on alcohol and drugs and so it is possible that they felt they had already covered such topics and now wanted to concentrate on the drama. In addition the JFAL on-site visit that they participated in was conducted in the drama studio, another factor that may have focused their attention on the performance and production of the film.

Reflections from teachers

In interview teachers commented that their pupils had thoroughly enjoyed participating in the JFAL experience and were particularly enthusiastic about the production and professional quality of the finished film. Teachers reported that children and young people had benefitted from considering a variety of scenarios and considering the risks. Some teachers felt that the work had been effective in combating some misconceptions and that they hoped participating would better prepare pupils for possible future situations. One teacher further felt that this approach had led pupils to ask questions of wider risks in their current lives and to achieve a greater understanding of why schools have certain policies to guard against risk.

2. Wider impacts of JFAL

In discussions with children and young people about JFAL the vast majority were enthusiastic about sharing their experiences with their peers and families; this section explores evidence that displays how JFAL was able to impact across schools, homes and the wider community.

Children and young people in school who did not take part in JFAL

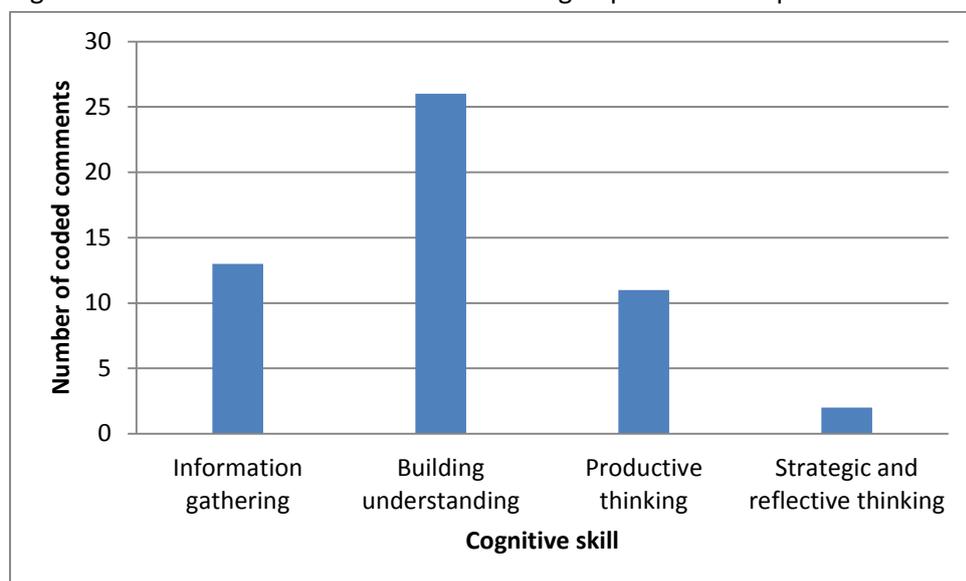
In school there was a general feeling that it had been a 'treat' or 'reward' to take part in JFAL and so those who did not take part were keen to find out what had happened. All schools had been able to show the film that was produced back to those who had participated plus some other pupils. From this experience 25 children who had not participated in JFAL but had watched the film produced by their peers completed Watching PVTs. Again the numbers of pupils available at each school was variable and in two schools only one pupil completed the template (please see Table 3 below); for this reason it was decided to analyse the templates as a whole and not to compare year groups as had been done with the Participating PVT.

Table 3: Number of PVTs obtained for each year group

Year group	No. of PVTs
2	1
4	4
6	19
9	1

In total 52 recorded statements were coded for evidence of: information gathering; building understanding; productive thinking; and strategic and reflective thinking. The results of are shown in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Coded statements from the Watching Pupil Views Templates



As shown, there was evidence of cognitive skills across all four of the categories coded for. Pupils of all ages appreciated the quality of the film and acting but also reflected on the message of the film.

I thought it was amazing and funny but really serious. (Year 6 pupil)

The film was good because they were really good actors. They kept in time and they knew what to say. (Year 4 pupil)

I understand from the DVD about drugs and alcohol that you should not take them because they can do damage. (Year 9 pupil)

I thought the DVD was well put together. Looked like a soap good acting. (Year 9 pupil)

It is interesting that whilst the Year 9 students interviewed were primarily concerned with the production rather than the message of the film; both aspects were relevant to their peer watching the film.

A further finding was that these children and young people were much more inclined to talk about what they would or wouldn't do in the future.

I never will drink or smoke. When people say stuff about drinking I will say no! (Year 6 pupil)

When I get older I am not going to smoke because after that DVD I wasn't so sure about it anymore so I have learnt a lesson. I am not even going to drink too much vodka. (Year 4 pupil)

If you take drugs you think you're clever but you could die and your friends could run away and you could get wrong of the police. (Year 6 pupil)

It is possible that watching the film, without taking part in the actual JFAL activities, led to a more 'black and white' interpretation. Nevertheless, there was clear evidence of these young people thinking about the messages of the film and applying it to their own lives.

Impact on teachers and across schools

Overall teachers commented that their experiences with JFAL had resourced them with a number of activities and strategies to use within the classroom that they felt would engage children and young people and facilitate discussions. Teachers appreciated the opportunity to open up discussions not previously attempted with their class and thereby gain new understandings. Additionally, in working with the JFAL specialist in school, a number of teachers commented that being able to observe rather than lead had enabled them to gain new perspectives of certain children and what they are capable of. At the time of the case study visits, the degree to which teachers were using activities in their own practice varied, with some embedding techniques into their overall teaching and others experimenting with isolated activities with the intention to develop at some point in the future. For one school that had been accessing JFAL resources for approximately the past four years, JFAL activities and strategies played an important role in the delivery of a number of curriculum areas including drama, English, PSHE, Life Skills and more targeted work with vulnerable groups. Several staff had attended JFAL training in the past and plans were being put in place to share learning and resources with the wider staff. Senior leadership support ensured that this remained a high priority for the school and in interview the head teacher spoke of the responsibility school has to prepare students for the multiple risks they face beyond the school gates. For this school, funding was still an issue and the on-site visit was thought to be added bonus made available by additional funding, but importantly sustainability was ensured through sharing good practice amongst staff and writing activities into curriculum plans. Unfortunately this level of commitment and structural support was not typical across schools and whilst one teacher from a further school expressed the desire to share JFAL practice with fellow staff, she also acknowledged the competing agendas that exist in school might make this difficult. Whilst head teachers were generally reported to be supportive of JFAL, it was largely left to individual class teachers to follow things up if they so desired. One head teacher commented that the school would be interested in working with JFAL in the future but only if there was additional funding available.

Impact at home and across communities

Young people reported that they were keen to share their experiences of JFAL with their parents, siblings and/or extended family members. On the whole, young people reported that parents were supportive of the work they were doing, with some primary age pupils elaborating that their parents felt it would help their children to be more informed and make better choices in the future:

My Mam and Dad were pleased cause they didn't think I understood what drugs could do. I did, but not as much. (Year 6 pupil)

My Mam was actually happy that em I learned about it cause she thinks like I'm not going to be daft. (Year 6 pupil)

One school had organised an opportunity for parents to come into school and be shown the finished film their children had produced; the event was well attended and the teacher commented that whilst some parents had found it initially 'shocking' they were supportive of the school's aim to prepare children for the future. A parent from this school was interviewed during the case study visit and commented that she felt it was relevant to children in their area and that experiences such as JFAL would help young people to make different choices:

Yeah because there's quite a lot of kids that smoke and drink, teenagers, so it sort of like brings them away from it. (Parent)

The parent also commented that her child had particularly enjoyed the drama aspect and taking part had increased her confidence.

Yeah, she loved it, she actually loved it. She's very shy as well, so it sort of brought her out of her shell a bit. (Parent)

Some pupils reported that after participating in JFAL they had changed certain behaviours in the home environment, most notably three children who stated that they now remove themselves from a room if a family member is smoking. This was reinforced in the parent interview when she commented:

Quite a few members of my family smoke and she won't be in the room with them when they smoke now. So where she would before, she won't now. (Parent)

A number of young people further expressed a desire to talk to others about what they had learnt with a view to changing certain behaviours; again this was particularly the case with family members who smoke cigarettes.

Obviously the more people I can tell, the more of them that will think about it. (Year 6 pupil)

My Dad used to smoke, then he stopped and then he started again, but when he came to see the DVD and I told him about stuff he said I've learnt my lesson and that's when he said to me he wasn't going to smoke anymore. (Year 4 pupil)

Three pupils reported that a family member had given up smoking as a direct result of their child's involvement with JFAL.

3. Evaluation of the JFAL training and resource

This section will examine and assess the effectiveness of the JFAL training day and resource and two day on-site visit. It will draw on data from the training day questionnaire and documentation collected by JFAL, together with interview data from staff in schools and researcher observations.

JFAL resource

The resource was positively received, teachers commented that they found it easy to use and particularly appreciated the class activities such as the ladder of risk and conscience alley for engaging children and young people in discussions and enabling them to take the lead. Ice breakers were also felt to be useful and teachers appreciated that both these and many of the activities were easily adaptable to use across the curriculum and with pupils of different ages and abilities. Some teachers further commented that they found the information about substances useful as it gave them the confidence to open up discussions with young people. A minority of teachers interviewed had not attended the training day, here it was felt that the resource, plus the support of a colleague who had attended, was enough to enable the teacher to use some of the activities in their own classroom.

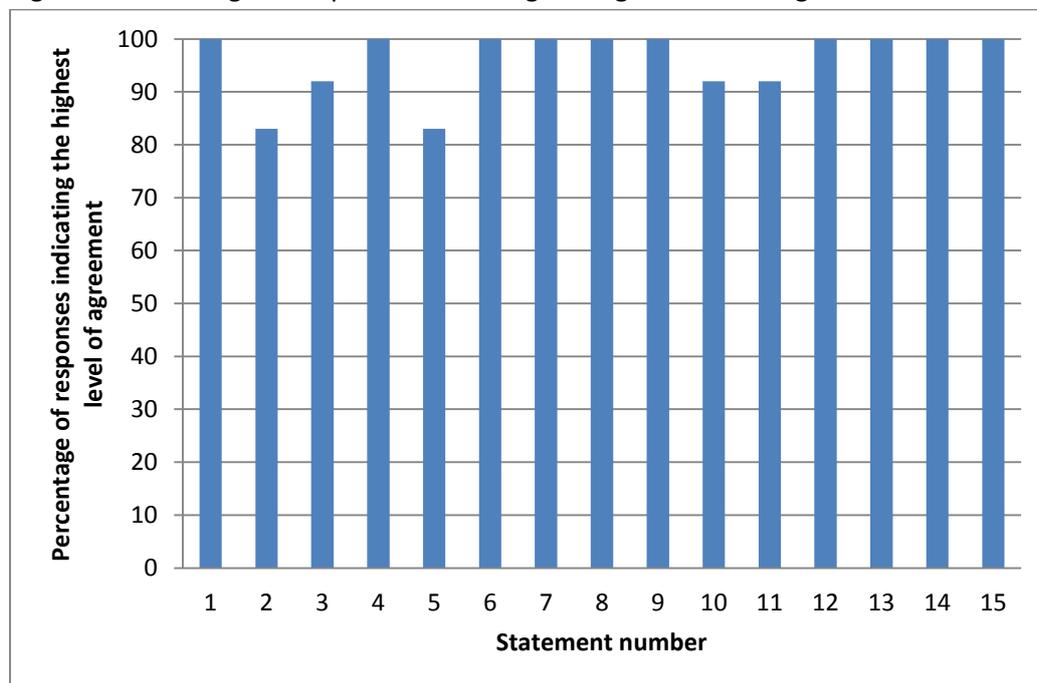
The DVD collection had only been used in class in one school at the time of interview; for this secondary school the films were widely used as a stimulus to engage young people in discussions. Here it was felt that the films were useful as young people appreciated the fact that they had been made by other young people and that they therefore had an element of reality and relevance as opposed to alternatives that may be scripted by adults. The remaining schools felt that the DVD collection might be useful in the future, but particularly appreciated their own film which they were using now and intended to use again with different year groups.

JFAL training day

Trainee questionnaire

The creators and trainers of JFAL designed a feedback questionnaire for the training day (a copy of which can be seen in Appendix 6). On the day that the research team attended, all 12 trainees completed the questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire asked respondents to rate the training day by indicating how far they agreed with 15 statements; these statements were grouped under the titles: administration and environment; leadership of the course; impact of course; and overall evaluation. All statements were positive and respondents were asked to indicate how far they agreed or disagreed along a 5 point scale. Results were extremely positive with the majority of respondents indicating the highest level of agreement to most questions, please see Figure 6 below. Analysing the responses as a whole 96% (173 out of a possible 180) of responses indicated the highest degree of agreement and only one response out of the 180 signalling disagreement.

Figure 6: Percentage of responses indicating the highest level of agreement for each statement



The second part of the questionnaire asked for more qualitative feedback in asking what three things participants had enjoyed/benefited from. Nine respondents commented that the drama techniques and activities, including shadow thoughts, corporate brain, conscience alley, freeze frames and scenarios, were particularly useful. Three respondents felt that they had enjoyed/benefited from games such as cowboys, fairies and dragons and the zip game, and two

commented that the alcohol and substance discussions had been beneficial. Other responses included discussion of approaches to a difficult topic, meeting and learning from other professionals, interacting with others and getting to move around, and discussing group rules. Secondly respondents were asked what three things they did not enjoy or would amend; only one respondent completed this question, suggesting that more time would have been beneficial. When asked whether the event had left individuals confident to use identified resources with children 11 out of 12 ticked 'yes', whilst the remaining respondent did not complete the question. Finally when asked for other/further comments respondents recorded their enthusiasm for the training day, its approach and the resource:

This was fantastic. I have learnt a lot more being able to participate than delivering this program in school alone. Thank you for the professional development opportunity.

Excellent day, great knowledge and ideas.

A great resource!

One respondent further expressed the desire to share skills she had learnt with fellow staff to enable other year groups to explore issues.

What We Know/What We Want to Find Out/What We Learned (KWL) Task

As part of the training day, trainees were asked to complete this exercise; eight completed sheets were handed in to the trainers at the end of the day. Summarised responses can be seen in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: What We Know/What We Want to Find Out/What We Learned (KWL) Task

What We Know

Respondents indicated that what they know is that children and young people are at risk from and are affected issues such as alcohol, drugs and teenage pregnancy and that young people need support to manage these issues. They also indicated that peer and family influence is a big factor and that young people often have misconceptions that needed to be tackled.

What We Want to Find Out

The primary concern across respondents (six out of the eight received) was how to teach and talk to children and young people about risk in an age appropriate way and how they could make children and young people feel comfortable and able to get involved in discussions. A secondary concern for some (two out of eight) was the desire for more knowledge and terminology for substances.

What We Learned

Finally in terms of what respondents had learnt the most common responses included the drama techniques, activities and games (six respondents mentioned at least one of these) and three respondents indicated that they had gained a wider understanding and knowledge of substances.

Interviews with staff that attended the training day

In interview teachers were enthusiastic about their experience of the training day, identifying the practical/hands-on approach in enacting activities that could be used in the classroom as particularly important. This approach enabled them to see how they might use JFAL activities themselves and also helped them to understand how they might use resources across the curriculum; this was appreciated by all, from the drama specialist who wanted new ideas to incorporate across her teaching to non-specialists who wanted structured activities to get them started. Some teachers

further identified the information about substances as helpful and the opportunity to learn from other professionals of different age phases or from different contexts was appreciated. These reflections support the findings of both the questionnaire and the KWL task discussed above.

JFAL on-site visit

The on-site visit from the drama and substance misuse specialist was appreciated by all. Teachers generally felt that it was a great opportunity for the children and young people to work with someone who was not presenting themselves as a teacher and that this enabled them to engage in a way that they felt was qualitatively different. All interviewees agreed that the children and young people had 'loved' and benefited from the experience.

The degree to which teachers embraced the opportunity for CPD varied, with some taking greater advantage of the opportunity than others. One teacher described the process as providing a 'cushion' between the training day and leading in the classroom herself; she described benefitting from seeing the specialist in action, delivering activities and facilitating discussions, and that this had given her the confidence to aim to repeat the two day event with a future year group. Others took a more passive role in the visit but were none the less enthusiastic about the benefits of having the specialist in school.

Summary of evaluation findings

The sample of schools recruited for this evaluation was unavoidably small. Nevertheless, we have collected some good quality data and have been able to present robust and interesting findings that suggest possibilities for future evaluation. Whilst we cannot claim that these findings are representative of all staff and all pupils that may benefit from *Just for a Laugh?*, we would be confident that the largely positive findings that the evaluation has produced are likely to be reproduced if other schools were to take part.

There is considerable evidence that young people gained knowledge, a variety of new skills and were able to engage critically with some very complex and sensitive topics during their participation with JFAL. This was true across the age range of children and young people who participated in the evaluation and indicated that the JFAL resources and approach may encourage and facilitate higher level cognitive abilities from a young age. The young people overwhelmingly enjoyed the experience of taking part and liked the way that JFAL was delivered. They acknowledged that it was not just fun, but that they felt they were undertaking some valuable learning too. JFAL inspired young people to think about the issues raised, and encouraged them to talk about them, not just with each other, but with family and friends. Watching the DVD also encouraged young people who had not taken part, to begin discussions about drug and alcohol use and misuse. A number of perhaps unintended, but nevertheless encouraging, outcomes resulted from participation. Three children reported that their parents had given up smoking as a result of discussions about smoking stimulated by taking part in JFAL. Where a school did invite parents to a showing of the film there was good uptake, indicating the potential to develop such engagement opportunities elsewhere. In addition, children reported that they had changed their behaviour around people who smoked, preferring to move away from them, and several young people also reported being inspired to consider performing arts as a GCSE option.

The resource pack would seem to be a relevant and useful tool for staff, who particularly liked the structured activities and icebreakers that could be used across the curriculum and the information on a range of substances. The training day also evoked very positive feedback and attendees reported that they felt enabled to use the techniques presented in their own practice. Similarly to pupils, teachers reported liking the participatory nature of the day. The on-site visit was welcomed by all and it was particularly noted that young people had benefited from and were perhaps more likely to engage with sensitive issues with someone who was not part of the teaching staff. The degree of teacher engagement in the visit varied, as did the observed and reported impact on individual teacher practice. However, in at least some cases the impact was considerable with strategies and activities being embedded in practice. In one school JFAL was being rolled out to support a range of curriculum areas across the school, with staff cascading knowledge, approaches and techniques; senior leadership was seen to be important in facilitating and supporting such an approach.

Recommendations

- JFAL has been shown to be successful in instigating a productive dialogue between young people, school and home in this sample of schools, with reported changed short-term behaviour in some young people and parents. This important outcome should be further discussed with schools and settings in order to maximise future opportunities.
- Data collected from children and young people shows evidence of productive thinking in relation to JFAL, some of which from children as young as 6 years old. This may suggest that the JFAL resource and approach can help to develop higher level cognitive abilities at a young age. Further research would be beneficial in exploring such a hypothesis with a larger sample.
- In the sample group there was a tendency for secondary aged students to perceive the benefits of JFAL in relation to scripting, acting and producing the film, rather than the benefits of considering risk and possible implications for their own lives. Whilst all benefits to young people are valued, and it is further acknowledged that the group interview methodology used to elicit young people's views may have inhibited some young people from discussing personal relevance, JFAL should be aware of these issues particularly in working with older young people (14-16 years).
- Trainees reported particularly benefitting from the participatory nature of the training day and the opportunity to observe the drama and substance misuse specialist on-site. Nevertheless, the degree of trainee participation during the on-site visit varied and so further thought may be given to how to encourage greater consistency in regard to this.
- Young people reported enjoying and benefiting from working with an adult who was not their teacher; JFAL have a history of working with and training multi-agency staff employed in a variety of settings and should continue to seek out such opportunities.

References

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Appendix 1: Interview schedule for adults delivering JFAL

- Did you receive the JFAL resource pack before attending the training event? If so, did it help to prepare you for the training day?
- After the training day, was the resource pack useful in helping you to prepare materials for use back in your school/setting?
- Was there anything in the resource pack that was particularly useful?
- Was there anything that you felt was missing from the resource pack?
- What were your overall impressions of the JFAL training day?
- What was most useful?
- What was least useful?
- Did you feel the training day prepared you for delivering the programme back in your school/setting?
- If visited by Les, what were your impressions from the two days in your school/setting?
- What were the main benefits?
- How did the pupils/young people respond?
- What, if anything, did you learn from the two days?
- Was there anything about the two days that could be improved upon?
- Can you envisage using the JFAL programme, either in its entirety or in parts, in your future teaching? If so how? If not is there anything that could support you to do so?
- What has happened, if anything, since Les' visit?

Appendix 2: Interview schedule for pupils who had participated in JFAL

- Can you tell me about what you did with JFAL?
- Can you tell me about the film you produced?
- Which parts do you think are most interesting? Why?
- What did you most enjoy?
- Did you learn anything new?
- Was there anything that wasn't so good?
- What rating out of 10 would you give JFAL compared to 'normal' lessons?
- Did making the DVD make you think about anything differently?
- Did you tell anyone that didn't take part, either in school or at home, about what you did?
What did they think?
- Have you used anything that you learnt through JFAL either at school or at home?

Appendix 3: Interview schedule for headteachers and/or senior leaders

- How did you (your school) first become involved with the JFAL programme?
- What were your initial impressions about what the programme could bring to your school?
- In seeing the work done with staff and pupils what are your impressions?
- Has anything surprised you?
- What have been the most beneficial aspects?
- Have there been any difficult aspects of the programme?
- What part, if any, do you see the JFAL programme having in your school in the future?

Appendix 4: Interview schedule for parents

- How did you first hear about JFAL?
- Did your child tell you about what he/she had been doing with JFAL at school? What were your impressions/thoughts?
- Did you attend the screening of the film in school? If so, what did you think?
- Do you feel that taking part in the activities and producing the film has made your child think about anything differently?
- Has it made you think about anything differently?

Appendix 5: Interview schedule for the creators and trainers of JFAL

- Can you tell me about the rationale for JFAL? What do you see as the main benefits and challenges?
- What do you set out to achieve during the training session? What is particularly important? What are the challenges?
- In regard to the resource pack and DVD collections, what role do you see them having in supporting teachers/facilitators that engage with JFAL?
- How important is the 2 day programme in school? What role do you see it having? What are your aims for the two days? What are the challenges? Do you feel that those schools who have the added input engage with the JFAL programme differently?

Appendix 6: JFAL feedback questionnaire from the staff training day

We would really value your comments regarding this course and so invite you to complete all parts of this evaluation. Your responses and comments will inform the planning, content and delivery of future courses. Please read the statements below and tick the most appropriate box.

ADMINISTRATION & ENVIRONMENT		Agree Disagree				
A1	The course was efficiently administered					
A2	Any pre-course information I received was clear and contained a Programme/Agenda					
A3	Refreshments were of good quality					
A4	The physical environment facilitated my learning					
LEADERSHIP OF COURSE: The leader(s) facilitated my learning by:		Agree Disagree				
B1	Being clear about objectives					
B2	Providing a variety of learning opportunities					
B3	Using high quality resources where appropriate					
B4	Demonstrating high levels of subject knowledge					
B5	Providing opportunities for me to reflect on my learning					
B6	Ensuring time was used effectively					
B7	Treating everyone with respect					
IMPACT OF THE COURSE		Agree Disagree				
C1	The course met its stated aims and objectives					
C2	The course is likely to have a positive long term impact on my work					
OVERALL EVALUATION		Agree Disagree				
D1	Overall this was a worthwhile course					
D2	I would recommend this course to others					

Further comments

Please add your contact details if you are willing to contribute to an evaluation of the long-term impact of this course

Name:		School:	Community setting:
Contact Details (email preferred)			

Please list up to 3 things you enjoyed/benefited from:

.....
.....
.....

Please list up to 3 things you didn't enjoy or would amend:

.....
.....
.....

Has the event left you confident to use identified resources with children?

YES NO

Any other comments?

.....
.....
.....