

Encouraging Diverse Friendships with a Little Imagination

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What is prejudice?

“the holding of derogatory social attitudes or cognitive beliefs, the expression of negative affect, or the display of hostile or discriminatory behaviour towards members of a group on account of their membership of that group” (Brown, 1995, p. 8).



Manifests in a number of ways...

- Bias or preference for members of your own group
- Resource allocation
- Social exclusion
- Exclusion from clubs or peer groups
- *Preference* for others from the same group as you
- These develop through childhood driven by...
- Parents, peers, environment, education, cognitive development



Why are diverse friendship important? The Psychology



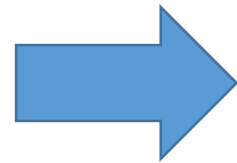
Diverse friendships positive impact on development....

Greater **leadership potential**, more **popular** (Kawabata & Crick, 2008; Lease & Blake, 2005).

Increased social competence
(Eisenberg, Vaughan, & Hofer, 2009; Lease & Blake, 2005)

Increased self-esteem, well-being, resilience (Bagci et al., 2014; Fletcher, Rollings & Nickerson

Why are diverse friendships important?

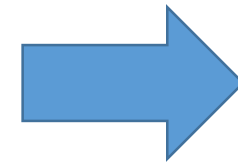


Trust

Empathy

Reduced anxiety

Self-disclosure



Time

Multiple settings

High quality

Shared interests/
common goal

What about minorities?

- Most of the time majority-minority friendship
- NB important for identity exploration and development
- Benefits for minorities: reduced impact of prejudice and racism at school, protective function, reduced prejudice.



Diverse settings not enough....

- Self-Segregation in the classroom, cafeteria etc
- Along multiple group lines: race, ethnicity, nationality, language.
- NB IMPORTANT for identity development
- CGF so many other benefits....



Barriers to Cross-group friendships

What if say
the wrong
thing....

They don't
want to be
friends
with me....

My parents
won't like
it....

Only see
them in
school....

They're too
different
from me:
nothing

What will my
friends
think....



Discussion point:

- Do children interact across group lines?
- Do they work together in class?
- Do they play together in the playground?
- Spend time together outside of school?
- Clubs, sports teams,
- Also....round each others houses, meals, sleep overs....
- Parental friendships?



How can we promote cross-group friendships? Teachers, parents & peer norms

- **School and peer norms:**

- Negative peer norms cited by children as a key barrier to cross-group friendship development (e.g., fear of rejection by in-group peers) (*Aboud and Sankar, 2007*).
- positive school / peer climate where children feel they won't be ostracised for CGF >>>more CGF



How change norms?

- Examples & experience: more children SEE positive IG interactions and CGF, more likely to think it is NORMAL and something they can DO
 1. Create contexts where CGF more likely (more on this soon)
 2. Think about promotional materials on wall: diverse friendships highlighted?
 3. Books, resources, diverse groups included?
 4. Adult behaviour in school, positive role models....even unconscious behaviours!



Are children picking up on adult non-verbal signals?

Castelli, De Dea & Nesdale (2008)

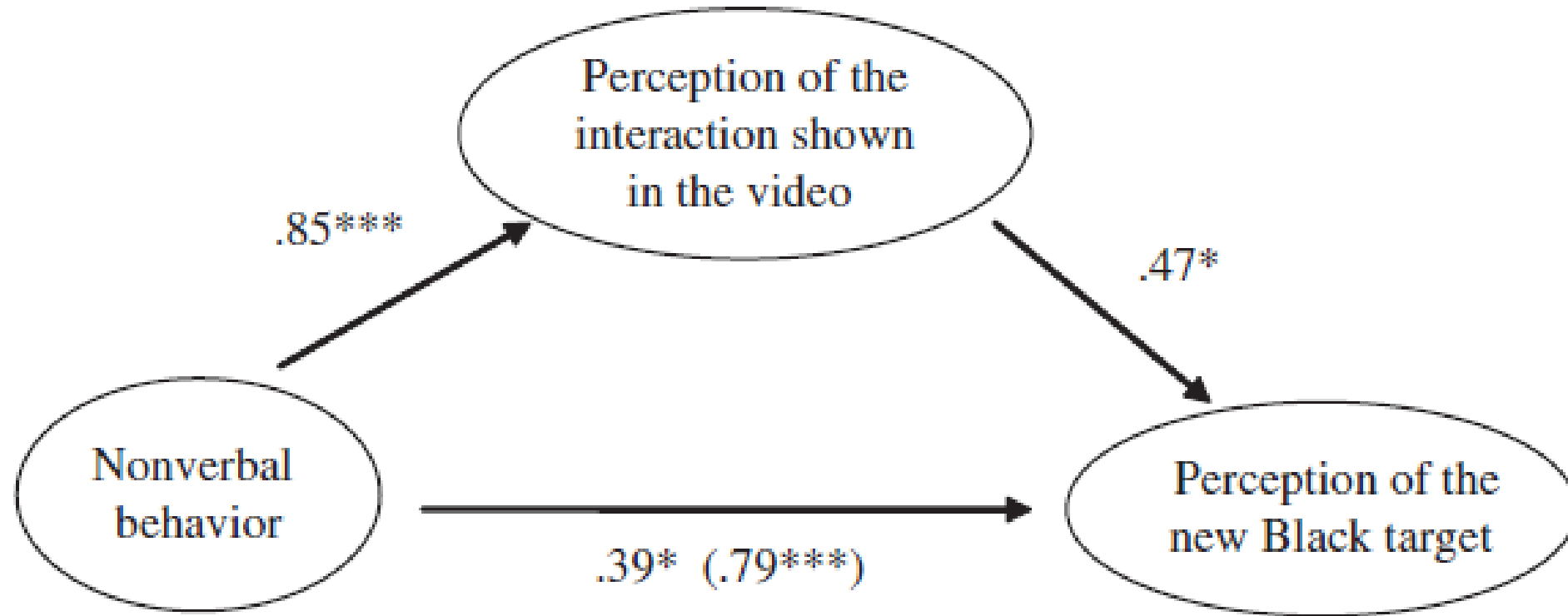
- *Videos of Adult* models (one white, one black) in interaction
- Manipulate eye contact (nonverbal)

Measures: perception of the interaction

How much do you think IG enjoyed talking to OG? Do you think IG could become friends with OG? Do you think that OG likes IG?

Presented with new out-group member: Perception of them?





Conclusions

- children sensitive to nonverbal behaviours
- use these to infer relationships
- this impacts on personal attitudes towards new outgroup member.

Essential role school staff

- Essential for building positive relationships: these provide excellent models for children
- Positive teacher interactions with children at other school: essential!
- Children watching at all times: verbal and non-verbal behaviours
- Neutralising/counteracting messages from home.

How achieve this?

- Leadership from teachers and facilitators
- Fairness and equality
- Knowledge –language, information, confidence

How can we promote cross-group friendships?

- **Be aware of friendship behaviours & opportunities in your school**
- **Create *time*** for friendship development
- **Cooperative games** with mixed groups
- Sports teams, clubs: are all children engaging? Any hard to reach groups?
Barriers...
- Lunch: are systems inadvertently in place that lead to segregation?



How can we promote cross-group friendships?

- Focus on **SIMILARITY – YOUNG CHILDREN** especially
- **Differences the default**
- **As well as recognising/acknowledging differences EMPHASISE SIMILARITIES**
- **Focus on ONE GROUP – common ground**
- **IF notice differences: try & use as talking point, not shush etc**
- **Team work: campaigns? Environmental issues?**

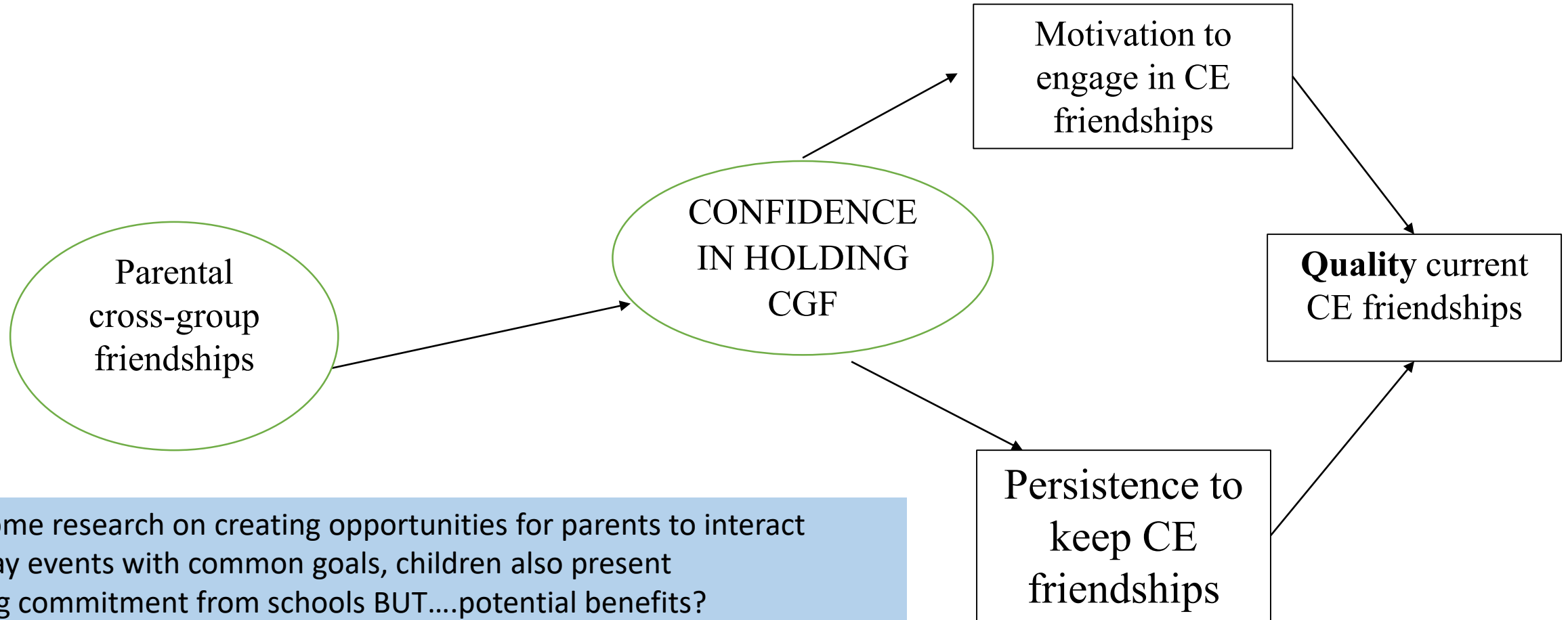


How can we promote cross-group friendship?

- **Older children: critical thinking skills:** where getting information from?
- **Multicultural education** – One Globe Kids
- **Language** – need to feel comfortable talking about race, prepared, know language
- -English language proficiency, AND valuing other languages.



How can we promote CGF? Parents...



Some research on creating opportunities for parents to interact
Day events with common goals, children also present
Big commitment from schools BUT...potential benefits?

What about low diversity settings? Educational resources

- contact through stories & imagination
- One Globe Kids,
- Can harness power of CGF in settings where no diversity – improve attitudes & openness



Power of imagination



What about low diversity settings?

Contact through stories, digital & imagination

Imagined contact



Ripple effect



The intervention

- The children used pictures and photographs of themselves and Asian children to help stimulate their imaginations



Impact of indirect contact





One Globe Kids



Valdo in Haiti

Gabou in Haiti

Floor in The Netherlands

Lars in The Netherlands

Aji in Indonesia

Luna in New York City

Jenissa in Burundi

Lucian in New York City

**Want to travel
and see the world?**

Globe

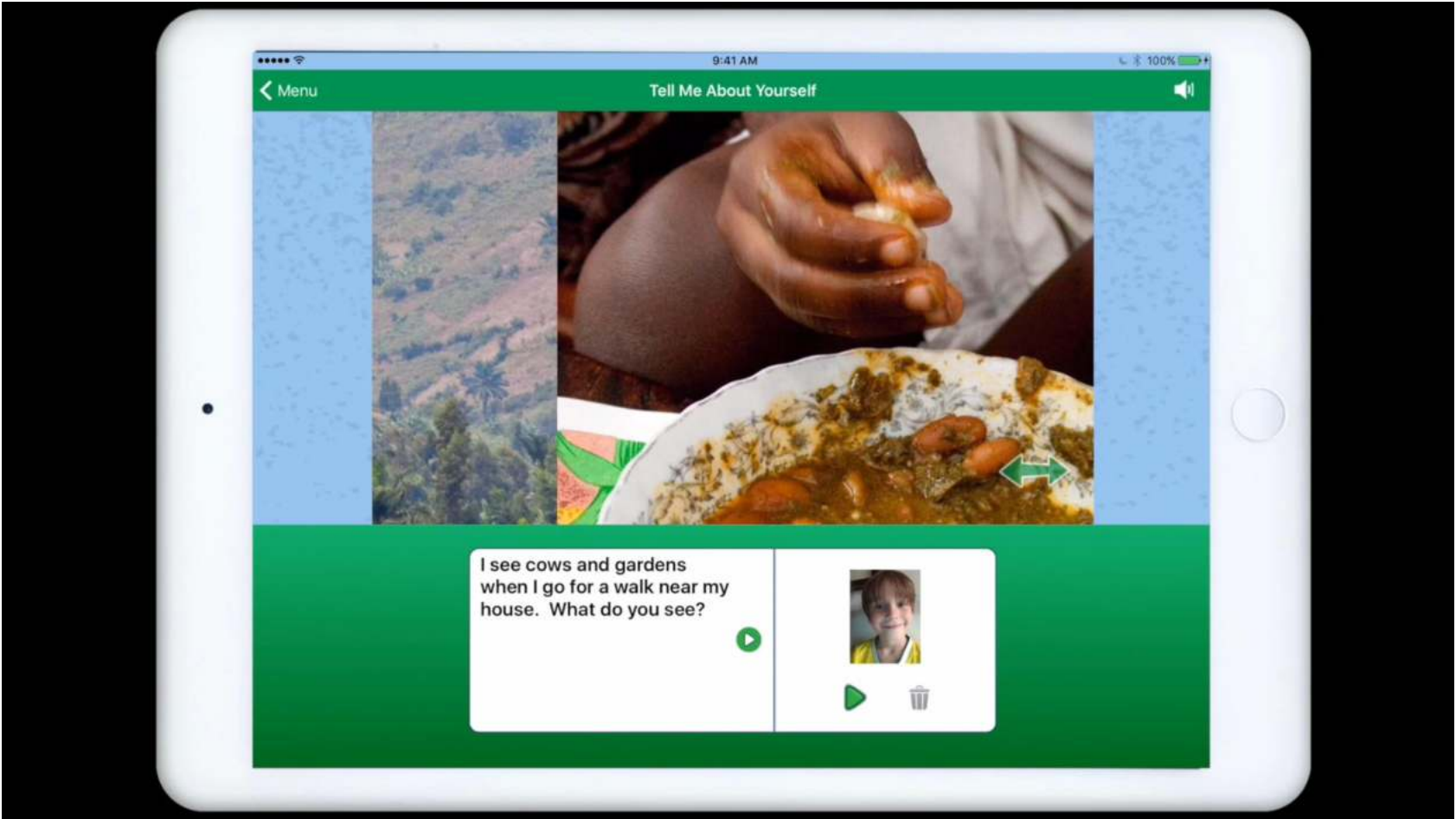
Friends

My Stuff

Adventure story control



Tell Me About Yourself



Evaluation of One Globe Kids

- Funded by the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) as part of their program to evaluate existing education programs that address prejudice and stereotyping in children
- Conducted by the University of Kent, UK
- December 2016 – March 2017
- 203 primary school students in 4 schools



Findings: Surveys with Children

- Funded by the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
- December 2016 – March 2017
- 203 primary school students in 4 schools
- higher cultural openness
- perceived themselves to be **more similar** to the children in the picture compared to those who had not used the app
- No change levels of perceived difference.
- No difference in intended prosocial behaviours

This suggests that the impact of the intervention was limited to children's openness to other cultures, and perceived similarity.

Findings: Interviews children

- **Focus on difference:** focus on the differences they observed between their own lives, and children on OGK.
- E.g. “different skin in different countries”; “speak different languages. Go to different schools. They do things differently.”;
- Importantly, there was no negative evaluation

Conclusion: Children need more support and guidance to attend more closely to *similarities* between people from different backgrounds. By increasing emphasis on similarities in this way, One Globe Kids resource could further increase perceived similarity across cultural boundaries .

Findings: Interviews with Teachers

- 8 teachers interviewed
- Children learned about life around the world in a more personal way
- The One Globe Kids resource gave pupils “actual insight” and that “they thought about life in other countries deeper than they would usually.”
- All teachers reported that the **resource led to spontaneous discussions in the classroom** (on cultural differences, differences in skin-color, material and environmental differences as well as similarities).
- **created atmosphere where diversity was collectively valued**

Next steps

- Improvements to resources based on teacher feedback and pupil responses
- Phd Student rolling out resource and evaluating in schools in London and Kent over next 3 years
- Recruiting very soon!



Take home...

- Be aware: is this an issue in your school? Who are friends? Outside of school?
- Create opportunities for friendships to flourish during curriculum time AND in more relaxed space
- Focus on similarities to reduce perceived difference
- Set the norm: unconscious behaviours, CGF normal, supported, how we do things...
- Children notice race, nationality, religion: be prepared.
- Non-diverse settings: Use learning resources to create positive attitudes, openness – lead to CGF now or in future when have opportunity for this
- Critical thinking important esp. older children.

Thank you!

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