The psychosocial experience of varying everyday activities of high school students who are visually impaired

FACULTY OF
HEALTH SCIENCES

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Glenda Jessup, Anita Bundy, Alex Broom, Nicola Hancock

SPEVI Conference, January 2015.

High school differs to primary school

Caution! Teenagers Ahead

› Big pond, small fish

› Changing classes, locations, teachers, classmates

› Time pressure & academic expectations increase

› Puberty

› Peer relationships take precedence

› Parental advocacy needs to be less obvious
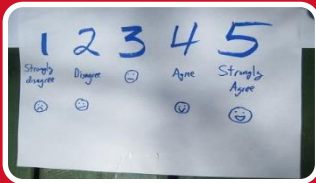
› Student has to take on more responsibility.

High school students who are visually impaired (with or without additional disabilities) and who attend a mainstream high school.

Look at their daily social experiences to explore what influences perceptions of inclusion/social isolation.

Data Collection

Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM)

- An 18 item questionnaire that indicates the extent to which students feel like an accepted, respected, and valued member of their school community (Goodenow,1993).

Everyday Experiences Survey (ESM survey)

- An in-the-moment survey asked randomly every 2 hours, 7 times a day for 7 days.
- 18 questions on activities and social interactions.
- Administered using the PIEL Survey app on iDevices (Jessup et. al. 2013). http://pielsurvey.org/

Follow-up Semi-structured Interview(s)

- Guided by the PSSM and survey responses
- Further explored school and inclusion experiences

Twelve Students (13-18yrs, grades 8-12)

Eye condition	iDevice used
Albinism, nystagmus	iPod touch
Albinism, nystagmus	iPod touch
Optic nerve hypoplasia	iPad
Optic nerve tumour	iPod touch
Pituitary related vision loss (additional disabilities)	iPod touch + voiceover
Stargardt's macular dystrophy	iPod touch + zoom
Macular dystrophy	iPad
Retinal detachment	Own iPhone – voiceover
Underdeveloped retinas, nystagmus	iPod touch + voiceover
Retinopathy of Prematurity (additional disabilities)	iPod touch + voiceover
Describes functional vision - not diagnosis (B2)	iPad
Describes functional vision - not diagnosis (B3 with glasses)	Own iPad

Psychological Sense of School Membership

› Scores for all 18 items averaged to create a single score for each student.

› Sample means & standard deviations for all 18 items.

Social Experiences Survey

› Z-scores created for internal dimensions of experience (e.g. loneliness, fitting in, acceptance, enjoyment) for each student.

Social inclusion/isolation

› These z-scores were aggregated and averaged to create single variables for each student across the various external dimensions of experience (e.g. where, with whom, what).
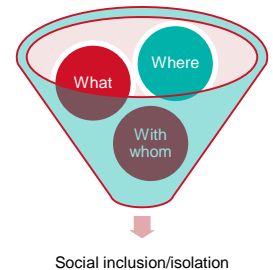
Interviews

› Interviews were transcribed. Everyday Experiences survey guided initial coding. Constant comparative analysis facilitated emergence of additional codes and themes.

Relatively high **overall PSSM** scores – most students have a positive sense of belonging and membership at school.

Low scoring items indicate they
- **Feel different** to most other students
- **Are not included** in lots of activities
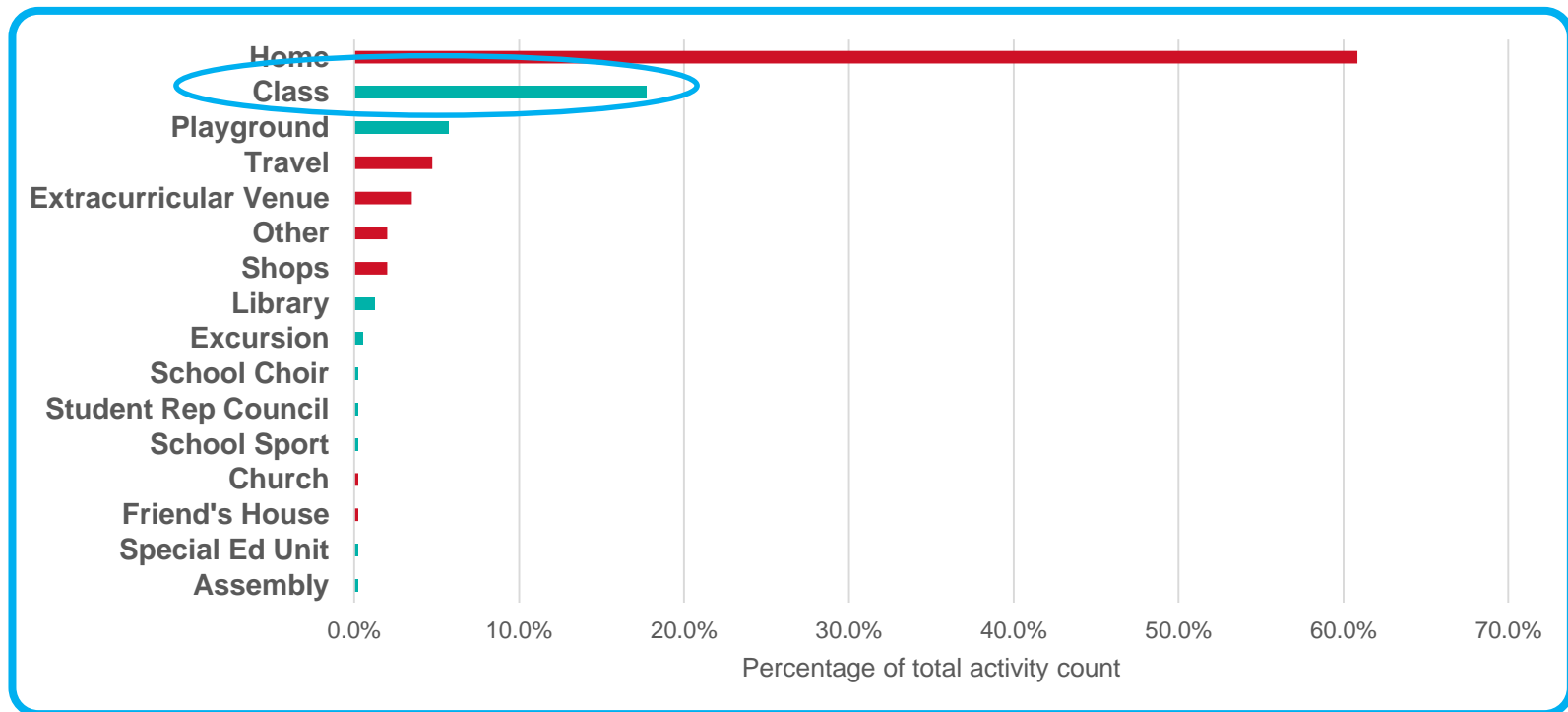- **Have difficulty being accepted**

High scoring items indicate
- Have a teacher or other adult at school to talk to
- People knowing I can do good work

PSSM score

Lowest to Highest PSSM Scores (MEAN = 4.25)
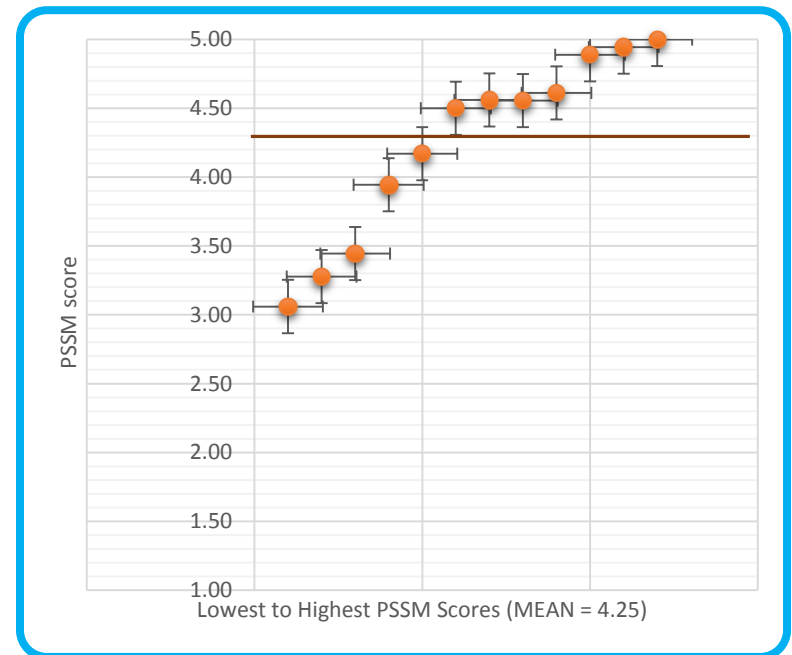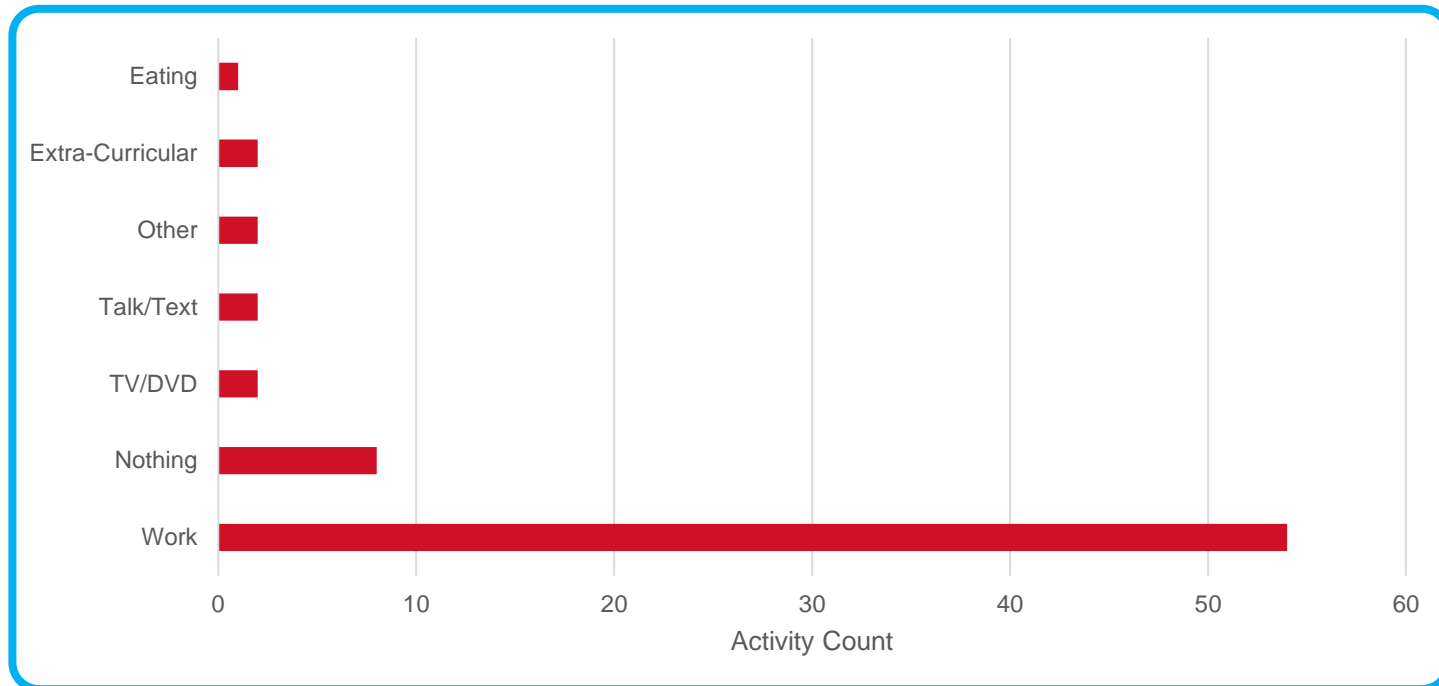
Where were you?

› 12 students, 7 days, 401 self-reports (7,201 data points!)

What were you doing in class?

› 71 self-reports

Fitting in, acceptance, loneliness, enjoyment.
Out of school vs at school (ESM data)

› Fit in significantly less at school than out of school.

› Feel significantly less accepted at school.

› Not significantly more lonely at school (some feel less lonely at school, others are never lonely).

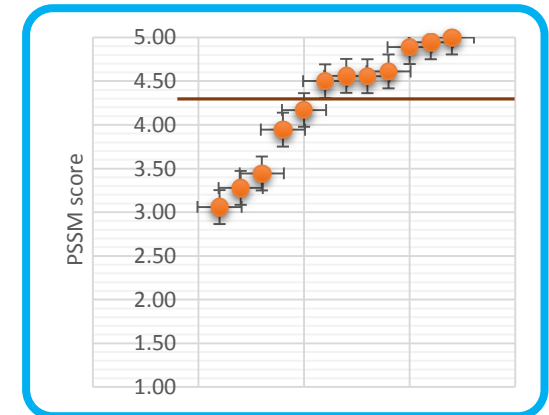› School is not significantly less enjoyable than elsewhere.
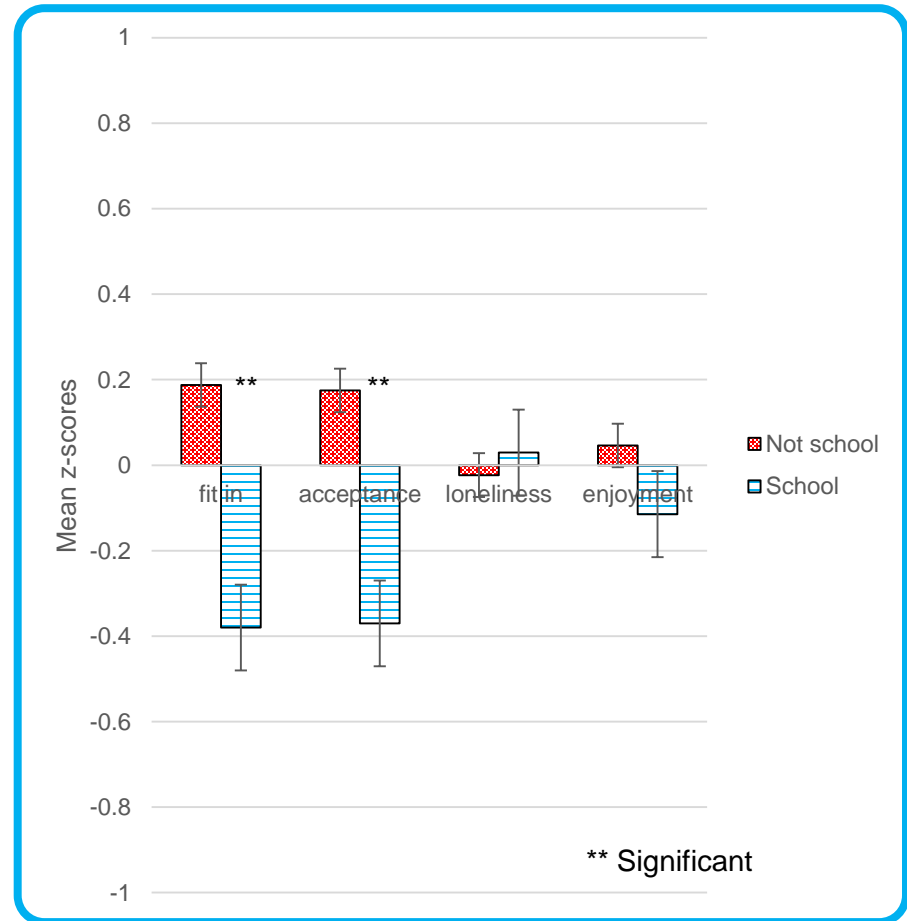
School (PSSM & Interviews)

Students whose experience of school is most positive:

- Are pursuing vocational or sporting, rather than academic goals

- Don't necessarily find school enjoyable

- Are fluent users of inclusive technologies

- Are satisfied with the support they receive from students and teachers.

- Have never had trouble making friends

Students whose experience of school is least positive:

- have difficulties keeping up, or trying to do well, in class

- have had difficulty making friends

- have no real friends with whom to interact at recess

- feel they need more support or have been unhappy with their support

Vision Support Teachers

Using Initiative

Teachers

Sickness

Inclusion Exclusion

Favourite subjects

Friends

Technology

› High school seems a tenuous balance of favourable and unfavourable circumstances, often beyond the young person's control.

› Being included is about "being noticed" and not being ignored.

› Enjoyment in class is subject specific.

› Assistance was welcomed by the students

› Acted as a reference point/consultant

› Provided wise advice

› Braille help/teaching

› Ability to influence the system

> **Missing out while others are learning**

- Not having timely **ACCESS** to lesson content

- Being told to **catch up later**

- **Doing nothing** while classmates watch movies or PowerPoint

- Chalk & talk, when the **talk is too fast** & you can't read the board

- **Lose auditory concentration** and you miss out
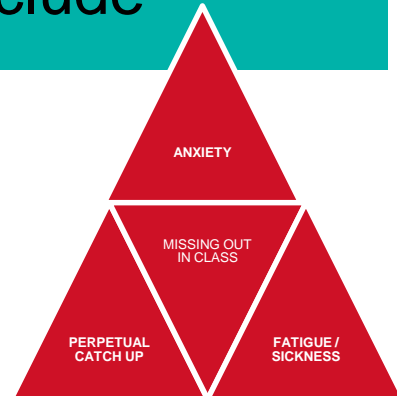
> **Compromised Autonomy**

- Not being allowed to "make mistakes"

- Naysaying - "you wouldn't be able to/ shouldn't do this"

ANXIETY

MISSING OUT IN CLASS

PERPETUAL CATCH UP

FATIGUE / SICKNESS

Inclusive high schools can still be socially challenging in terms of fitting in and acceptance

Full access and participation in class is vital to inclusion

References

› Goodenow, C. (1993). The Psychological Sense of School Membership among adolescents: Scale development and educational correlates. Psychology in the Schools, 30(1), 79-90.

› Jessup, G. M., Bundy, A. C., Broom, A., & Hancock, N. (2013). Sampling social experiences in school: Feasibility of experience sampling methodology on an iPlatform. Journal of the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment, 6, 79-85. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/11666

› PIEL Survey app: http://pielsurvey.org/

Acknowledgements