

I Care about Eye Care: Don't Say Goodbye to Your Eyes

S. L. Scherrer, C. Wiltshire and D. D'Agostin

Macquarie Area Health Service, Dubbo NSW, Royal Far West Children's Health Scheme, Manly, NSW, & Dubbo Christian School, Dubbo, NSW

Eye injury can occur at home, on the farm, or at school, either in the playground or classroom. Eye injuries might cause visual disability, blindness and even loss of the eye, thus having major implications for future schooling and quality of life. The video target group chosen were children over eight years of age, as they are increasingly able to take more responsibility for their play. The paper discusses the process from the initial idea, a request from Year 5 students, to the end product, the video for sale and distribution. The Video, I care about eye care, don't say goodbye to your eyes, is an excellent resource for anyone involved in educating children on the importance of looking after their eyes, including school health nurses and school teachers.

Year 11 drama students of the Dubbo Christian School created a health promotion resource in order to educate 10-12 year-olds concerning eye care and prevention of eye injuries. Production of the resource was a collaborative project between the School Health Program, Macquarie Area Health Service, Dubbo Eye Specialists, the Dubbo Christian School, and the Royal Far West Children's Health Scheme, Manly.

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including school health nurses and school teachers.

The aim of this project was to produce a video on prevention of eye injuries and eye care for health education sessions to 10-12 year-old children. The project began as a request for information from students whereupon it was found that a suitable resource could not be located. Discussion with local eye specialists, the Royal Far West Children's Scheme Orthoptist, and the local School Health Nurse resulted in the formulation of plans to create such a video. This paper discusses the process of achievement for this collaborative health promotion project with the Dubbo Christian School.

The process involved determining the main messages necessary for the video to deliver to the children. Outdoor and indoor injuries happen to children from blunt objects, balls, stones, fingers and elbows and from sharp objects such as pencils, scissors, wire and even dog bites. Other injuries included in the video were from chemicals, infection (conjunctivitis) and cold sores (herpes simplex). Sun damage is also a major concern in country NSW. Management of

eye injuries was an important issue involving telling someone and seeking medical assistance. Each clinician involved in the project could relate stories where children were too frightened to tell someone for fear of getting into trouble.

The action plan for the project commenced with regular monthly meetings between eye specialist, orthoptist, and school health nurse. Later, the meetings included the high school English and Drama head teacher and the Drama teacher for Year 11. Dubbo Christian School had enthusiastically agreed to the challenge and opportunity the project presented.

Student-to-student delivery was deemed the most effective method of communication for the delivery of the video message; hence, Year 11 drama students would produce the video as a Term II Assessment Task. The students were involved in the research, scripting and acting stages of the video production.

The School's Perspective

The students were very excited at the prospect of being immortalised on video. Work commenced in early Term I with a visit from the orthoptist to explain vital information about eyes and eye safety. Brainstorming sessions by the students followed to look more closely at the purpose of the video, the target audience, and the actual production process from beginning to end. The remainder of the term was spent researching the knowledge and interests of the target audience, improvising scenes and characters, analysing other safety and health videos, learning about video production, script writing and storyboards, discussing options and ideas, rehearsing, liaising with the cameraman, and sequencing the ideas.

Term III saw the actual filming take place with the students stepping into their acting roles and gaining first-hand filming experience. Four sessions varying in length from one to five hours took place. The experience of filming gave the students a real

perspective of how difficult it is to create the 'perfect shot'. As a result of being involved in the project the students were able to incorporate a health promotion project into their curriculum making the study workload of the student more relevant to the real world. Unfortunately, the students were unable to participate in the film-editing phase of production.

Involving a school in the production of a safety resource such as the eye safety video has a number of benefits. The students assisting in the project have the opportunity to work in a communication medium in a professional way, and the drama students gain first hand experience of acting in front of a camera and how it differs from the live stage. They learn valuable skills in teamwork, research and deadline commitment. The fact that the video would be used by schools and health centres all over the state added extra incentive and value to the task. Dubbo Christian School is a parent-controlled independent school for which the video production supplied a great deal of worthwhile publicity.

The individual students had different aspects which they emphasised about making the video.

Joanna:

It certainly showed me a lot about how hard a video is to produce from start to finish. All up the eye safety video was hard but also fun, exciting, interesting and worthwhile. We are all very honoured that we could be part of the video.

Michael C:

I thought that making the video was a great insight into what goes on behind the scenes.

Rachel:

Creating the eye safety video was a really beneficial experience. We learnt all about the stages of video making from the development of a concept through to the launch of the final product. We

worked through each stage ourselves under the guidance of our Drama teacher and later the cameraman. We began by forming a concept. This involved a lot of creative energy and some interviews with an orthoptist, Cathie Wiltshire, about eye safety. We then developed this concept and formed a sequence. After a lot of rehearsal we began the shooting. This was a great experience for everyone as none of us had done any sort of camera work before. The video was then edited and the final product presented at the launch. Creating the video gave us a lot of insight into not only the creation of the video but also the presentation of safety issues to children and relating to them on their level. It was a great experience, and much was learnt by all involved.

The total length of time devoted to the project was 14 months. For the students this proved too long, as they became anxious to move on to something else. Technology provided solutions to the difficulty of communication for those staff involved but residing in Sydney. Dedication to such an immense project by staff with other detailed and busy day-to-day duties proved a challenge.

Video Evaluation

The video was launched at the Dubbo Christian School in August, 1998. Feedback from teachers, parents, community members, school health nurses and management was very favourable with many stating they would recommend that their

departments purchase the video. Importantly, at the launch the target age group, Year 5 students, were all very positive. In total, over the next 12 months, 121 students viewed and evaluated the video with over 85% of them enjoying the story line, the student actors and their characters, and found the length of the video appropriate.

An indication of what the students thought they learnt from the video is given here in summary from the evaluation sheets: Don't throw things; Don't play with dangerous chemicals; Not to play with dangerous things; To care about your eyes, they are important; About how many things are connected to the eye; Where would I go if I did anything to damage my eyes; To protect your eyes; When you get chemicals in your eyes wash your eyes straightaway; You learnt not to throw sharp objects around the room; Wear sunglasses and a hat when out in the sun; Be more careful with your eyes and wear protective clothing when playing sport.

Conclusion

This has been a successful intersectoral collaborative project creating a health education video for Year 5 students by Year 11 students with the support of the Far West Children's Health Scheme, Macquarie Area Health Service, local eye specialists and the Dubbo Christian School. Value cannot only be seen in the end product but also in the experience of the process by all those involved.

Acknowledgments

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S. Scherrer
 School Health
 Macquarie Area Health Service
 2 Palmer St
 Dubbo, NSW, 2830
 AUSTRALIA

D. D'Agostin
 Dubbo Christian School
 Sheraton Road
 Dubbo, NSW, 2830
 AUSTRALIA

C. Wiltshire
 Royal Far West Children's Health Scheme
 PO Box 52
 Manly, NSW, 2095
 AUSTRALIA

The video is available for purchase from the Royal Far West Children's Health Scheme.
 Contact Val Tossell, Orthoptist.

Correspondence to S. Scherrer.

Erratum

In the article by Cynthia Fan and Wally Karnilowicz, Attitudes Towards Mental Illness and Knowledge of Mental Health Services Among the Australian and Chinese Community, in Australian Journal of Primary Health—Interchange Vol. 6, No. 2, 2000, two columns in table 4 were transposed. Included below is the corrected version of the table. The publisher apologises for the error.

Table 4: Knowledge of services for acute and chronic cases among ethnic groups

	Acute cases		Total	Chronic cases		Total
	Anglo-Australian	Chinese-Australian		Anglo-Australian	Chinese-Australian	
Community mental health centre ^b	38	26	64	14	22	36
Crisis assessment and treatment team ^a	17	11	28	8	3	11
Local doctor ^{ab}	48	41	99	51	40	91
Mobile Support and Treatment Team ^a	5	1	6	17	3	20
Private psychiatrist ^{ab}	61 *	87 *	148	35	48	83
Private psychologist ^b	44 *	66 *	110	47 *	73 *	120
Psychiatric hospital ^a	29**	60**	89	24	33	57

^a Correct choices for acute cases

^b Correct choices for chronic cases

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