

Impact of a Self-Regulated, Computerized, Social-Emotional Learning Intervention on Disengaged and Delinquent Students At a Continuation High School

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ABSTRACT

Students who have previously dropped out or been involved in juvenile justice fill the “school to prison pipeline.” A real world, longitudinal study of Ripple Effects computerized, social-emotional learning (SEL) intervention examined two questions: To what degree would these adolescents comply with a mandate to use the self-regulated intervention? If they complied, what would be the objective and subjective impacts? Participants were 177 mostly African American and Latino adolescents enrolled in a continuation school. Treatment group (TG) students were directed to independently complete 42 multimedia SEL skill-building tutorials, over six weeks. Fifty-nine percent were minimally compliant. Of those, 96% also addressed issues of personal interest. Post-intervention, compared to the control group (CG), TG students had significantly higher GPA, and no difference in absenteeism. The ratio of TG students enrolled in the district a year later was double that of the CG, $p < .05$. TG students had zero suspensions, compared to one for every nine CG students; an important but not significant result. There was no significant impact on attitudes about marijuana or alcohol, or locus of control. Because of insufficient baseline administrative data, we cannot rule out factors other than the intervention, such as differing levels of student motivation, being responsible for effects.

KEY WORDS: dropout; achievement gap; educational software; disproportionality; juvenile justice