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Pathway to Graduation: A Summer Reading Intervention Project for Middle School Students

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PATHWAY TO GRADUATION

Amanda Hilsimer, Ph.D.
Samford University
Outcomes from Presentation

- Identify the impact of academic and behavioral challenges on school, community, and society
- Provide background and an overview of the Pathway to Graduation program to impact dropout rates and school completion
- Discuss implications of current results and future goals
Statement of Need

- As students move to the upper elementary and middle school grades, the distance between struggling readers and successful readers widens—Matthew effect (Stanovich, 1986).
- As struggling readers proceed into the middle school years, there is an increase in the occurrence of challenging behaviors in the classroom (Oakes, Mathur, & Lane, 2010; Wang & Algozzine, 2011).
- The demands of general education content, lack of reading training in general education teachers, and special education programming or scheduling needs can prevent struggling readers in the middle school grades from receiving the intensive reading instruction needed to impact their learning during the school year (Santa, 2006).
- The National Reading Panel (2000) found that the majority of high school seniors read below grade level.
Reading and behavior
Matthew effect (Stanovich, 1986)

“The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer.”

- How could this statement relate to reading development?
Successful readers

More Reading Opportunities

Reading Success

Positive Feelings
Struggling readers

Less Reading Opportunities

Reading Failure

Negative Feelings
Outcomes for Students

- **In high school:**
  - 20% of students with academic and/or behavioral challenges are arrested before leaving high school (Garwood, Brunsting, & Fox, 2014; Malmgren, Edgar, & Neel, 1998, McDaniel, Duchaine, & Jolivette, 2010; McDaniel, Houchins, & Terry, 2014)
  - 65% fail at least one course
  - 55% drop out of school

- **After high school:**
  - Only 17% attended postsecondary school or training (Lochman et al., 2012; Neel, Meadows, Levine, & Edgar, 1988)
  - 31% not employed
  - 58% live at home
Opportunities during the Summer Months

- The summer months provide a great opportunity to address remediation of reading skills for struggling readers.
- Also, provides an engaging and enjoyable environment that is often not possible during the school year.
- An added benefit of reading instruction during the summer months is the opportunity to avoid the summer reading setback that can cause struggling readers to fall further behind their peers (Allington et al., 2010)
Beginning

History and how the Grant Originated
Background

- Borne out of a desire to help special education and at-risk students with identified reading deficits thrive and graduate
- Collaborative partners began meeting in the fall of 2010
- Requested funding for summer 2011, but deferred to summer 2012
- Program began in the summer of 2012
- Summer of 2014 will be the third year this is offered (pending funding)
Recognize

- A Call for Help
OUR KIDS

- “What can we do?” instead of “Not our job.”
Needs

- Anecdotal commonality among kids coming to the local Multiple Needs Team with severe problems in the school, home and community: Early school failure.
Average intelligence, low reading scores = increased risk of criminalization, drop out, mental health problems
Sponsors

- Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham
- Forensic and Strategic Solutions
- Independent Presbyterian Church
- Dunn Construction
- Charles T. Campbell
- Jefferson County Schools
- Samford University
- JBS Mental Health
- Coca Cola
Research

- Research has documented a relationship between reading failure and behavior (Oakes, Mathur, & Lane, 2010; Wang & Algozzine, 2011).
- Without continued reading intervention, reading failure often results in high school dropouts (Garwood, Brunsting, & Fox, 2014; McDaniel, Duchaine, & Jolivette, 2010; McDaniel, Houchins, & Terry, 2014).
- Summer reading setback further impacts reading deficits (Allington et al., 2010).
“Matthew Effect” where successful readers continue to be exposed to more challenging text (Stanovich, 1986).

Summer reading setback has been well-documented in minority, low income, and less skilled readers (Allington et al., 2010; Kim & White, 2008).
Goals of Pathway to Graduation (PTG)

- Prevent summer learning loss
- Reducing high dropout rate due to inadequate reading skills
What is PTG

- Pathway to Graduation (PTG) is a collaborative partnership between:
  - Jefferson County Schools
  - Jefferson-Blount-St.Clair Mental Health
  - Samford University School of Education
Components of PTG

- Six-weeks
- Reading Instruction
- Social Skills
- Transportation
- Lunch
- Motivational Speakers
- Exercise
- Tutors
Daily Reading Components

Reading Components

- Decoding: 70 minutes
- Vocabulary: 30 minutes
- Fluency: 30 minutes
- Comprehension: 50 minutes
- Social Skills: 40 minutes

Instructional Minutes
Connection

- Kids with Learning Problems also have Thinking Problems
Social Skills

- Cognitive-Behavioral Approach
Teaching Kids “How to be LD”

- * How to ask for help
- * How to be a good learner
- * How to use words to identify needs
- * MOTIVATION

I NEVER GIVE UP.

- Daily Affirmation -
  WWW.POSITIVEMOTIVATION.NET
Targeted Population

- IQ of 80 or Above
- Reading Deficits
- Social and Behavioral concerns
Data

- GORT-5
- TOWRE-2
- In addition, functional reading data, progress notes and teacher candidate observations and activity reports were collected and discussed among collaborators.
Results Summer 2012 Pre and Post

Summer 2012 % Increase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Low Range</th>
<th>High Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOWRE-2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GORT-5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summer 2013 % Increase

Low Range  | High Range

TOWRE-2: 12 | 14
GORT-5: 12 | 8
Results Summer 2014 Pre and Post

Summer 2014 % Increase

Chart Title

Low Range  |  High Range
---|---
7 | 17
7 | 8

TOWRE-2  |  GORT-5
Results Summer 2015 Pre and Post

Summer 2015 % Increase

Chart Title

Low Range  High Range

TOWRE-2

12
6

GORT-5

14
8
Results Summer 2016 Pre and Post

Summer 2016 % Increase

Chart Title

Low Range  High Range

TOWRE-2

15

8

GORT-5

18

7
## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reduction in office referrals</th>
<th>Increase in academic motivation for student participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ten Samford Tutors were hired</td>
<td>Standardized tests Academic Achievement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other Outcomes

- The social skills component has resulted in a reduction in office referrals and numerous anecdotal reports from parents and teachers.
- PTG tutors have been sought after and hired, $10+$ are now employed as special education or general education teachers by Jefferson County
Challenges for Implementation

- Funding opportunities
- Partnerships
- Determination of impact
Monitoring Our Progress

Progress Monitoring during the academic year

Track students through high school

Track office referrals and need for behavior plans

Results and successes are more likely to be seen long term, not short term.
Anticipated Future Outcomes

Reduction in office referrals
Improvement in overall academic achievement
Increase in Motivation
Reduction in High School Drop-Outs
Benefits for Samford Tutors

- Diverse populations
- Small group setting
- Evidenced-based reading instruction
- Effective teachers
References

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Questions