

*Shining the Light on Research,
Student Outcomes and
Creating Action
Plans*

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Review of an Evidence-Based School Social Work Intervention: WhyTry, January 2009

This article provides supporting research and describes the WhyTry program as an effective tool that school social workers might use. WhyTry is a social skills program developed by a school social worker in the US in response to the lack of curriculums that specifically address student motivation and maladaptive patterns of dealing with failure. The curriculum was developed on the basis of solution-focused therapy and emotional intelligence and multiple intelligence theories. Alvarez, M. E. and Anderson-Ketchmark, C. (2009). Review of an Evidence-Based School Social Work Intervention: WhyTry. *Children & Schools*, Volume 31 (1), 59-61.

Examining the effectiveness of the *WhyTry? Program* for children receiving residentially based services and attending a non-public school, 2008

Baker, D. (2008). Examining the effectiveness of the *WhyTry? Program* for children receiving residentially based services and attending a non-public school. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Southern California.

- Quasi-experimental design
 - 36 students in control group
 - 42 students in experimental group
- Participants
 - Students aged 12 – 18, living in an out of home Licensed Children’s Institutions (LCI) placement
- Intervention
 - 16 weeks of WhyTry groups
 - 6 children in group
 - One WhyTry certified facilitator per group

Results for Baker's Children Receiving Residentially Based Services

- General Self Efficacy (GSE)
 - Youth in the experimental group showed significant improvement on the GSE from pre to post test indicating that they now perceive themselves as being more capable of learning and accomplishing tasks or actions.

Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment

- Results from the Teacher Report Form found statistically and practically significant positive changes for the following scales:
 - Anxious/depressed
 - Withdrawn/depressed
 - Attention problems.
 - Rule breaking behaviors
 - Aggressive behaviors
 - internalizing problems
 - Externalizing problems
 - Total problems
- Results of the YSR indicated statistically significant and practically significant positive changes for the following scales:
 - Anxious/depressed
 - Social problems
 - Attention problems
 - Rule breaking behaviors
 - Thought problems
 - Internalizing problems
 - Externalizing problems
 - Total problems
 - Social problems
- Results of the CBCL (completed by caregiver) indicated statistically significant and practically significant positive changes for the following scales:
 - Internalizing problems
 - Anxious/Depressed
 - Social problems

Results for the South Los Angeles Resiliency (SOLAR) Project, April 2008

The South Los Angeles Resiliency (SOLAR) Project is an elementary counseling demonstration grant funded for three years by the US Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. A Resilience Scale was formed combining the survey items. A paired t-test was used to compare pre-post test scores. A significant difference was found between the scores indicating that student resiliency increased for participants of “Why Try?” Specifically, a significant positive change was found in the students’ willingness to “keep trying to succeed;” a significant decrease in the desire to be “mean to others” when provoked; and a slight improvement in the areas of “asking for help” was noted. Acuna, A., Vega, L., Meza, J., Marquez, M., & Vera, D. (2008). *Outcome evaluation methods and results for the South Los Angeles Resiliency (SOLAR) project*. Paper presented at the 2008 School Social Work Association of America Conference, Denver.

Piedmont, Missouri Study, Winter 2007

“The WhyTry Tutoring has proven to be a vehicle for working toward student success. By coupling Christian Moore’s multi-sensory, strength-based program with tutoring, we have seen more students take positive steps toward academic success than we have experienced through tutoring alone.” Wymore, S. (2007) WhyTry? A report of an After-School Tutoring Program. *The Counseling Interviewer*, 39(2) 9-13.

Yakima School District Learning Center Results, March 2007

Norm Walker, an instructor at the Yakima School District Learning Center, tracked the results of his WhyTry class from October, 2006 through March 2007. He documented a 33% increase in the cumulative GPA of students participating in the WhyTry Program. The alternative education students he was working with rated the WhyTry class experience 7.96 out of 10.

Alpine School District Longitudinal Study December, 2003

The data summarized is based on 114 students who completed WhyTry Program at Pleasant Grove High School starting with the first WhyTry class in August, 2000. The control group consists of 88 students selected with the same academic and attendance profile as the WhyTry students at the start of each class. Both groups have been tracked since the WhyTry class was completed, for up to 12 terms.

Summary

The WhyTry Program appears to have a positive effect on academic performance, attendance and graduation. This is consistent with other research projects studying the effects of the WhyTry Program. The effects of the WhyTry Program also appear to increase over time. More longitudinal data will be forthcoming as these students continue their high school careers.

Los Angeles County Office of Education October, 2003

This study was conducted by Glade D. Eggett, a doctoral candidate at Nova Southeastern University, working for the Division of Alternative Education of the Los Angeles Office of Education.

Glade studied the effects of the WhyTry on the behavior of students in an alternative high school. The study consisted of a class of primarily African American and Latin American students, with a control group with the same demographics in the same school. Students were taught the WhyTry Program for two hours in each academic day for one term. Behavior was tracked weekly and compared to the control group.

After one semester, Glade concluded:

“Using a program called WhyTry...Students who participated in the program were more likely to have less attendance problems, lower negative attitude toward teachers and school, and a higher locus of control indicating

they...were more personally responsible for their behavior. Teachers rated a significant improvement in motivational attributes.”

Granite School District September, 2003

A study was conducted by Spectrum Consulting for the Granite School District in Utah. Dr. Eric J. Gee, Director of Research and Evaluation, reported the results to the school district. Rather than studying behaviors, this study focused on students understanding and insight into their behaviors. Dr. Gee concluded that students participating in the WhyTry Program reported significantly improved understanding of key social and emotional principles, including self-motivation, consequences, peer pressure, and obeying laws and rules.

“Analysis of the responses found statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups for all questions. This would suggest that students in the control group did indeed feel they had gained more knowledge regarding some of the information presented in the WhyTry Program. Given the control group comparisons, we can attribute this change in knowledge to the WhyTry Program,” wrote Dr. Gee.

Why Try Research Focus

- Fidelity Measure
- Pre-Post Test Validity Analysis
- Partner with Current Grant Programs such as Gear Up and Current Pilot Schools
- Recommended Assessments You can Use
 - Conners' Rating Scales-Revised (CRS-R)
 - The BASC-2 Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BESS)
 - Children's Hope Scale (CHS) Measure of Hope and Positive thinking.
Author(s): Snyder, C. R., Hoza, B., Pelham, W. E., Rapoff, J., Ware, L., Danovsky, M., Highberger, L., Rubinstein, H., & Stahl, K.
 - Additional tools:
 - <http://www.casel.org/assessment/needs.php>
 - www.interventioncentral.org
 - www.samhsa.org
- Move from Moderate Evidence to Strong Evidence with the National Dropout Prevention Center (NDPC) database of Model Programs, currently: These programs have been in existence for three years or more. They were evaluated using a quasi-experimental design conducted by an external or internal evaluation team and have adequate empirical evidence demonstrating program effectiveness in reducing dropout and/or increasing graduation rates and/or having significant impact on dropout-related risk factors

**Clover Park School School District
Woodbrook Middle School Intentional Guidance Action Plan**

Target Group: Students at risk of low academic achievement

Target Group selection is based upon the following data: Selected based on performance in remedial math and reading classes and willingness to participate in the intervention class

Counselor	American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Domain/Standard	ASCA Student Competency	Type of Service to be Delivered in What Manner?	Project ed Start and End	Projected Number of Students Impacted	Evaluation Method (How will you measure results?)	Intended Effect on Academics, Behavior or Attendance?
Sarachman	Academic Stan. A:, B,C Career Standard A Personal/Social Standard A, B, C	Academic Competencies: A1 Career Competencies C:A1.3 C:A1.4 C:A1.5 C:A1.6 C:A1.7 C:A2.7 C:A2.8 Personal/Social Competencies A1- Acquire self-knowledge – all components A2- Acquire Interpersonal skills, all components B1 – Self-knowledge application	Why Try Curriculum: -Reality Ride - Motivation Formula -Labels - Defense Mechanisms -Climbing Out - Jumping Hurdles - Desire, Time, Effort -Plugged in -Over the Wall - Daily classes 50 min. each	2/05 3/30	12	<u>Perception data:</u> - self report by students on a Questionnaire <u>Results Data</u> -Compare GPA/F's- Compare beh. Reports - Compare Attend.	<u>Results data</u> - Increased GPA -Decreased disruptive behavior in classes- Decreased incidents of suspension and/or referrals-Increased attendance - increased time in class- less suspension/purple bench

**Clover Park School District
Woodbrook Middle School Intentional Guidance Results Report**

Counselor	Target Group	Curriculum and Materials	Type of Service delivered in what manner?	Start Date End Date	Process Data: (Number of students impacted)	Perception Data: (Pre and Post Test or Activity or Student Data)*	Results Data: (How did the student change as a result of the lesson?)*	Implications (So what does the data tell you?)
Sarachman	6 th , 7 th , 8 th grade students at risk for academic failure due to low performance and/or disruptive behavior in remedial classes	Why Try Curriculum	Daily meetings 50 minutes for 1 quarter	Feb. 5 to Mar. 30	10 students -4 - 6 th gr. boys - 4 - 7 th gr. boys -1 - 7 th gr. Girl -1 - 8 th gr. boy	<p>PRE-</p> <p>60% of students believed program would help them before starting.</p> <p>POST-</p> <p>80% identified they learned more than they thought they would.</p> <p>Students who stated they practiced skills: - at home – 40% - in school - 60% - w/ friends - 40%</p> <p>80% believe the skills will help in the future.</p> <p>80% believe they now have the skills to be successful</p> <p>90% said they will use the skills</p> <p>1 student responded negatively to all items</p>	<p>Attendance</p> <p>50% had increased attend (4-16 more days)</p> <p>40% remained the same/didn't have attendance issues to begin with</p> <p>10% 1 student had decreased att.</p> <p>Grades</p> <p>70% increased GPA (range - .02 – 1.63 points)</p> <p>30% decreased GPA (.33 01.26 points)</p> <p>Behavior: Suspensions</p> <p>60% same – no suspension before/during or after</p> <p>30% Improved behavior (Suspensions decreased)</p> <p>10% - 1 student had a suspension during the program but none after participating.</p>	<p>- individual student data revealed that kids who started with attendance problems increased their attendance, while those who started with behaviors resulting in suspensions, decreased their number of suspensions</p> <p>-Students who had lower level behavior problems in classes that disrupted learning were able to improve or maintain their GPA's</p> <p>- Most students had confidence that they could/would use the skills after the completion of the program</p>

School: Bethel High School
Date Submitted: April 15, 2009

Our SIP (School Improvement Plan) this year is focused on “High Expectations” and “Student Engagement”. Our and Counseling Achievement Goals for All Students included: Decreasing failure rates, increasing graduation rates, increasing attendance rates, and increasing college-bound testing (AP Testing, SAT and ACT testing).

Our building is 10th-12th, however we collaborate with the junior high counselors to service the 9th graders at the junior highs as well.

Target grade level	Guidance Topic/ Program	ASCA Model	Curriculum and/or materials	Projected Start/ Projected End	Projected number of students	Presented how?	Evaluation Methods	Implementation Contact Person
10 th graders failing 2 or more classes	Intervention program for unmotivated, struggling students	A:A1 A:A2 A:A3 A:B1 A:B2 A:C1 PS:A1 PS:A2 PS:B1 PS:C1	WHY TRY Curriculum Grade Check Forms	April 22- May 6, 2009	Offered to over 60, approx. 10-20 students	10 group sessions (45 mins. each)	*Pre/post survey *Student self-eval. *Teacher eval. *Student Questionnaire *Grade checks	2 counselors: Alison Von Stein Pamela Boyle



AMERICAN
SCHOOL
COUNSELOR
ASSOCIATION

Closing the Gap Action Plan

Year 2009-2010

Target Group:

6th and 7th Grade Students at Olympic Middle School in Shelton, WA

Target Group selection is based upon the following criteria: Students with more than 4 TRY referrals from September '09 to December '09

Data that drove this decision:

TRY Referrals, Discipline Referrals and Grade Point Average (GPA) Data

Counselor	Intended Effects on Academics, Behaviors or Attendance	ASCA Student Competency	ASCA Domain/ Standard	Type of Activity to be Delivered in What Manner?	Resources Needed	Projected Number of Students Affected (Process data)	Evaluation Method How will you measure results? (Perception and results data)	Project start/ Project end
S. Adams T. Madden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased TRY Referrals. • Decreased Discipline Referrals • Increased GPA 	<p>Academic A:A1.2, A:A1.4, A:A1.5, A:A3.1 A:B2.1, A:B2.4 A:C1.4, A:C1.6 A:C1.6</p> <p>Career C:A1.4, C:A1.5, C:A1.6, C:A1.7 C:A2.7, C:C2.1, C:C2.2, C:C2.3</p> <p>Personal/Social PS:A1.3, PS:A1.5, PS:A1.8, PS:A1.9 PS:A1.10, PS:B1.1, PS:B1.2, PS:B1.3 PSB1.4, PS:B1.5, PS:B1.8, PS:B1.9 PS:C1.2, PS:C1.6, PS:C1.7, PS:C1.9 PS:C1.10</p>	<p>Academic - A, B, C</p> <p>Career - A, C</p> <p>Personal/Social -A, B, C</p>	<p>Two Grade-Level Classes (1 sixth & 1 seventh) Utilizing the Why Try Curriculum</p> <p>-Reality Ride -Motivation Formula -Labels -Jumping Hurdles -Defense Mechanisms -Climbing Out -Lifting Weights -Seeing Over the Wall</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why Try Curriculum • Classroom • Music • \$200 to purchase supplies for snacks & experiential activities 	<p>Two Groups:</p> <p>15-20 Sixth Grade Students</p> <p>15-20 Seventh Grade Students</p>	<p>Perception Data:</p> <p>-Pre-Survey results -Post-Survey results</p> <p>Results Data:</p> <p>-TRY Referrals -Discipline Referrals -GPA -Attendance</p>	<p>12/09</p> <p>To</p> <p>2/10</p>

Action Plan

Voyager Middle School in South Everett.

Nancy E. Beck, Counselor

April 30, 2009

Target Group: 6th grade students based on failing grades and/or teacher recommendation.

The Behavior and Emotional Screening System (BESS) is said to provide a reliable, valid, and systematic tool to assess behavioral and emotional strengths and weaknesses in children and adolescents. I added a few of my own questions and look forward to comparing pre and post surveys. I will also monitor the students' progress by tracking grades, attendance, office referrals, and suspensions.

Type of service to be delivered and in what manner?

The service will be doing the entire "Why Try" curriculum including the creative poems/music etc. Our trimesters are approximately 12 weeks long. Two groups of 28 students, meeting every other day, allows for much reinforcement, self reflection and creative thought provoking activities. The counselors plan to each spend an hour and a half a week as adjunct instructors to our trained "Why Try" classroom teacher.

6 groups of 28 students through this curriculum every year.

Evaluation method/Intended effects

We will use pre and post tests, grade in the Voyages class, changes showing up on the risk and protective surveys, and actual trimester grades and attendance. The Behavior and Emotional Screening System (BESS) is said to provide a reliable, valid, and systematic tool to assess behavioral and emotional strengths and weaknesses in children and adolescents.

WhyTry Curriculum Crosswalk with ASCA National Standards for Students

(COMPETENCIES AND INDICATORS)

Legend: A:A-1.1 = Academic Domain, Standard A,
Competency 1 and Indicator 1

Academic Development

ASCA National Standards for academic development guide school counseling programs to implement strategies and activities to support and maximize each student's ability to learn.

Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.

A:A1 Improve Academic Self-concept

A:A1.2 Display a positive interest in learning

A:A1.4 Accept mistakes as essential to the learning process

A:A1.5 Identify attitudes and behaviors that lead to successful learning

A:A3 Achieve School Success

A:A3.1 Take responsibility for their actions

WhyTry Lesson

REALITY RIDE; DESIRE, TIME, EFFORT

MOTIVATION FORMULA; JUMPING HURDLES; LIFT THE WEIGHT

REALITY RIDE; LIFT THE WEIGHT; DESIRE, TIME, EFFORT

REALITY RIDE, LIFT THE WEIGHT
DESIRE TIME EFFORT

A:B2 Plan to Achieve Goals

A:B2.1 Establish challenging academic goals in elementary, middle/jr. high and high school

REALITY RIDE; DESIRE, TIME, EFFORT; JUMPING HURDLES; LIFT THE WEIGHT

A:B2.4 Apply knowledge of aptitudes and interests to goal setting

JUMPING HURDLES, SEEING OVER THE WALL

A:C1 Relate School to Life Experiences

A:C1.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the value of lifelong learning as essential to seeking, obtaining and maintaining life goals

REALITY RIDE, MOTIVATION FORMULA, SEEING OVER THE WALL

A:C1.6 Understand how school success and academic achievement enhance future career and vocational opportunities

REALITY RIDE; SEEING OVER THE WALL

Career Development

ASCA National Standards for career development guide school counseling programs to provide the foundation for the acquisition of skills, attitudes and knowledge that enable students to make a successful transition from school to the world of work, and from job to job across the life span.

Standard A: Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.

C:A1 Develop Career Awareness

C:A1.4 Learn how to interact and work cooperatively in teams

CLIMBING OUT; GET PLUGGED IN

C:A1.5 Learn to make decisions

ALL LESSONS

C:A1.6 Learn how to set goals

REALITY RIDE; JUMPING HURDLES

C:A1.7 Understand the importance of planning

REALITY RIDE; DESIRE, TIME,
EFFORT; JUMPING HURDLES

C:A2 Develop Employment Readiness

C:A2.7 Develop a positive attitude toward work and learning

MOTIVATION FORMULA; DESIRE,
TIME, EFFORT; SEEING OVER THE
WALL

Standard C: Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training and the world of work.

C:C1 Acquire Knowledge to Achieve Career Goals

C:C1.1 Understand the relationship between educational achievement and career success

REALITY RIDE; DESIRE, TIME,
EFFORT; SEEING OVER THE WALL

C:C1.2 Explain how work can help to achieve personal success and satisfaction

MOTIVATION FORMULA; SEEING
OVER THE WALL

C:C1.3 Identify personal preferences and interests influencing career choice and success

MOTIVATION FORMULA

C:C2 Apply Skills to Achieve Career Goals

C:C2.2 Learn how to use conflict management skills with peers and adults

DEFENSE MECHANISMS

C:C2.3 Learn to work cooperatively with others as a team member

CLIMBING OUT; DEFENSE
MECHANISMS AND GROUP
KINESTHETIC ACTIVITIES

Personal/Social Development

ASCA National Standards for personal/social development guide school counseling programs to provide the foundation for personal and social growth as students progress through school and into adulthood.

Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

PS:A1 Acquire Self-knowledge

PS:A1.1 Develop positive attitudes toward self as a unique and worthy person

TEARING OFF YOUR LABEL
MOTIVATION FORMULA

PS:A1.3 Learn the goal-setting process

REALITY RIDE; JUMPING HURDLES

PS:A1.5 Identify and express feelings;

DEFENSE MECHANISMS

PS:A1.6 Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior

REALITY RIDE, DEFENSE
MECHANISMS

PS:A1.8 Understand the need for self-control and how to practice it

REALITY RIDE, DEFENSE
MECHANISMS AND GROUP
KINESTHETIC ACTIVITIES

PS:A1.9 Demonstrate cooperative behavior in groups

REALITY RIDE, DEFENSE
MECHANISMS AND GROUP
KINESTHETIC ACTIVITIES

PS:A1.10 Identify personal strengths and assets

TEARING OFF YOUR LABEL;
MOTIVATION FORMULA

PS:A2 Acquire Interpersonal Skills

PS:A2.1 Recognize that everyone has rights and responsibilities

REALITY RIDE; LIFTING THE WEIGHT

PS:A2.2 Respect alternative points of view

TEARING OFF YOUR LABEL; DEFENSE MECHANISMS

PS:A2.3 Recognize, accept, respect and appreciate individual differences

TEARING OFF YOUR LABEL; DEFENSE MECHANISMS

PS:A2.4 Recognize, accept and appreciate ethnic and cultural diversity

TEARING OFF YOUR LABEL

PS:A2.7 Know that communication involves speaking, listening and nonverbal behavior

DEFENSE MECHANISMS

PS:A2.8 Learn how to make and keep friends

CLIMBING OUT; DEFENSE MECHANISMS; TEARING OFF YOUR LABEL

Standard B: Students will make decisions, set goals and take necessary action to achieve goals.

PS:B1 Self-knowledge Application

PS:B1.1 Use a decision-making and problem-solving model

JUMPING HURDLES

PS:B1.2 Understand consequences of decisions and choices

REALITY RIDE; DEFENSE MECHANISMS; JUMPING HURDLES; LIFT THE WEIGHT

PS:B1.3 Identify alternative solutions to a problem

DEFENSE MECHANISMS; JUMPING HURDLES; LIFT THE WEIGHT

PS:B1.4 Develop effective coping skills for dealing with problems

DEFENSE MECHANISMS; JUMPING HURDLES; LIFT THE WEIGHT

PS:B1.5 Demonstrate when, where and how to seek help for solving problems and making decisions

PS:B1.6 Know how to apply conflict resolution skills

PS:B1.7 Demonstrate a respect and appreciation for individual and cultural differences

PS:B1.8 Know when peer pressure is influencing a decision

PS:B1.9 Identify long- and short-term goals

PS:B1.10 Identify alternative ways of achieving goals

PS:B1.11 Use persistence and perseverance in acquiring knowledge and skills

PS:B1.12 Develop an action plan to set and achieve realistic goals

Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills.

PS:C1 Acquire Personal Safety Skills

PS:C1.2 Learn about the relationship between rules, laws, safety and the protection of rights of the individual

PS:C1.6 Identify resource people in the school and community, and know how to seek their help

PS:C1.7 Apply effective problem-solving and decision-making skills to make safe and healthy choices

GET PLUGGED IN

DEFENSE MECHANISMS

TEARING OFF YOUR LABEL; DEFENSE MECHANISMS

CLIMBING OUT

REALITY RIDE; DESIRE, TIME, EFFORT; JUMPING HURDLES

JUMPING HURDLES

DESIRE, TIME EFFORT; JUMPING HURDLES

JUMPING HURDLES

LIFT THE WEIGHT

GET PLUGGED IN

REALITY RIDE; DESIRE, TIME, EFFORT; JUMPING HURDLES

PS:C1.8 Learn about the emotional and physical dangers of substance use and abuse

REALITY RIDE

PS:C1.9 Learn how to cope with peer pressure

CLIMBING OUT

PS:C1.10 Learn techniques for managing stress and conflict

DEFENSE MECHANISMS; GET PLUGGED IN; MOTIVATION FORMULA

PS:C1.11 Learn coping skills for managing life events

DEFENSE MECHANISMS; GET PLUGGED IN; MOTIVATION FORMULA

American School Counselor Association (2004). *ASCA National Standards for Students*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
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For more information on ASCA, or to order “The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs,” visit www.schoolcounselor.org, or call (703) 683-ASCA (2722).

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