ENCOURAGING SCHOOL PLANNER
USE TO IMPROVE THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY STUDENTS

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“Learning to be organized is a process, a skill that needs to be taught, practiced, and honed.”
(Goldberg & Zwiebel, 2005)

Purposes of the School Planner

• Time Management
• Assignment Tracking
• Assignment and Homework Completion
Previous Planner Findings
Self graphing and planner use improved homework completion for:
• Average students with homework problems
• Students with disabilities with and without homework problems
  (Bryan & Sullivan-Burstein, 1998)

Additional Research
Students learn important new skills when reinforced for using the planner correctly.
  (Konold, Miller, & Konold, 2004)

Pilot Study and Follow-Up
Pilot Study
• Three classrooms of 7th or 8th grade students in their student advisory groups
• Two low achieving students in each classroom
Follow-Up
• Three low achieving students paired with three high achieving students in a 9th grade math class
Pilot Study

The goal was to increase assignment turn-in and improve grades as a result of using the school planner and applying organizational skills.

Participants & Setting

Class-wide
- 42 students

Individual
- 6 students

Student Advisory Classrooms
- Approximately 20 students
- Classes held 4 days per week and approximately 35 minutes in length
- Students taught organizational and other study skills, and provided time to complete homework

Setting

550 students
- Caucasian 85%
- Hispanic 11%
- Other 4%
- Low SES 38%
- ELL 5%
Planner Intervention

- Four 15-20 minute lessons in student advisory classes
- Four follow-up “booster” lessons
- Positive reinforcement in student advisory classes
- Individual contracting with individual students
- Treatment Fidelity

Lesson Objectives

- Time Organization: Planner Use
- Materials Organization: Using a Binder
- Goal Setting & Graphing
- Requesting Help from Teachers

Instruction in Three Student Advisory Classes ‘07-08

<table>
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<th>Teacher</th>
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<th>Students</th>
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<th>Finish</th>
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<td>5/2</td>
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Selection of Goal Class

- Students targeted a "core" academic class
- Grades tracked prior to and following planner instruction

Class-wide Data: Summary

The class-wide intervention didn't appear to help students over the long term, but may have prevented a decline in academic performance.
Class-wide Data: Limitations

- Data represent only students who chose a goal class
- Have "snapshots" of grades every week during intervention phase, but lack equivalent data for students during the baseline phase, except for one class
- Variability of the time the intervention was implemented in each classroom was not controlled

Class-wide Data: Implications

May be best to:
- Implement the intervention over a longer period
- Provide more booster lessons
- Reinforce students more frequently
- Gather weekly or biweekly "snapshots" of all students’ performance during baseline
- Involve core teachers in the intervention

Individual Student Data

Two students in each advisory classroom received intensive intervention including 1:1 adult support and behavior contracting at least two times per week
Social Validity Data: Students

- The planner helped me organize and get better grades
- Using the binder helped me remember to do my homework and turn it in on time
- The assistance I received from teachers or volunteers at school helped me complete and turn in my assignments on time
Social Validity Data: Teachers

- Teachers suggested communicating with parents more might have strengthened intervention effects.

Individual Student Data: Summary

- Grades in the goal class improved for five of the six students.
- The student who did not improve received a passing grade in the goal class.
- Social validity data suggested students liked the more intensive intervention and 1:1 adult support.

Individual Student Data: Limitations

- Non-continuous data were collected - thus no experimental control.
- The number of meetings with students was limited to two times per week.
- The school-year ended before the full effects of the individual intervention could be evaluated.
Individual Student Data: Implications

• Anecdotal data suggested students might have improved more if meetings with mentors had been more frequent.
• Involving parents in the intervention would likely have strengthened its effects.

What We Learned

• Focus on at risk students.
• Target one grade or subject area.
• Treat as a secondary level intervention.
• Include planner use as an outcome measure.
• Increase the feasibility of providing 1:1 support to students.

Follow-Up

• The goal was to increase assignment turn-in and improve grades as a result of using the school planner and applying organizational skills.
Participants

- 3 Caucasian males
- 8th and 9th graders
- Capable of doing the work
- Receiving D’s and F’s in algebra or geometry classes
- Selected for participation by their math teacher

Intervention

- 1 hour of initial training in peer mediated self-management
- Students fill out self-management card daily
- Daily points are tallied and recorded on a master sheet for each team
- Token reinforcement

Motivational Components

- Team Effort: Students succeed or fail as a team
- Positive Reinforcement delivered daily
- Peer-mediated self-management system
- Frequent communication between teacher and parents
### Data Sources

- Self-management card
- Daily access to teacher’s grade book retrieved online
- Student assignments
- Teacher’s behavior ratings
- School Planner

### Experimental Design

- ABAB designs
Student Example:
4th Period Algebra

- Student receiving all D’s and F’s
- Teacher questioned whether he could do the work
- Student was frequently off task during independent work
- Intervention Start Date: March 4, 2009

On-Task Behavior

Test Score Summary
Sam’s Improvement to Date

• Baseline grades (3rd term) - 52%
• Intervention grades (4th term) - 96%

Final Points

• Students who are capable of achieving high grades may simply lack the organizational skills to turn assignments in on time.
• Peer mediated self-management is a feasible means of providing low achieving students with intensive support.

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