REL Appalachia Ask A REL Response

Educator Effectiveness; Data Use
May 2019

Question:

What evidence exists of the effectiveness of using academic case management as a strategy to support low-performing students in elementary or secondary schools?

Response:

Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk regarding evidence-based information about academic case management. Ask A REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the 10 Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) that, by design, functions much in the same way as a technical reference library. Ask A REL provides references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations in response to questions about available education research.

Following an established REL Appalachia research protocol, we searched for peer-reviewed articles and other research reports on academic case management. We focused on identifying resources that specifically addressed the effects of academic case management with low-performing students in elementary or secondary schools. The sources included ERIC and other federally funded databases and organizations, research institutions, academic research databases, and general Internet search engines. For more details, please see the methods section at the end of this document.

The research team did not evaluate the quality of the resources provided in this response; we offer them only for your reference. Also, the search included the most commonly used research databases and search engines to produce the references presented here, but the references are not necessarily comprehensive, and other relevant references and resources may exist. References are listed in alphabetical order, not necessarily in order of relevance.

References

Kannel-Ray, N. V., Lacefield, W. E., & Zeller, P. J. (2008). Academic case managers: Evaluating a middle school intervention for children at-risk. *Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation, 5*(10), 21–29. Abstract available at https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ809356; full text retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251423631_Academic_Case_Managers_Evaluating_a_Middle_School_Intervention_for_Children_At-Risk

From the abstract: "For the past eight years, Midwest Educational Research Consortium (MERC), located at Western Michigan University, received two multi-million dollar grants through a U.S. Department of Education program entitled Gaining Early Awareness and Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). GEAR UP is a school/university partnership using a cohort model with the goal of increasing the number of students of poverty who graduate from high school and go on to postsecondary education. The MERC/GEAR UP project partners with two universities, two community colleges, and four school districts in Michigan and Ohio. Over the eight years of project funding, MERC/GEAR UP personnel have employed a number of successful strategies and interventions within the GEAR UP project schools. While many of these programs provided services to students and their families as well as their teachers, the most compelling of these programs has been the academic case management program. The case management process provides a network of positive support to help middle school students in low-income, urban settings with the challenges and barriers in their lives. The proposed academic case manager intervention focuses on two specific features: (1) facilitating students completing classroom assignments and (2) understanding the context of students' lives outside of school and using this understanding as a vehicle for developing specific interventions to help students relate to their school concerns. This model is premised on the idea that well-planned practical case manager interventions focusing on these two key features is essential toward overcoming the significant obstacles created by the gap between the school and community environments. The purpose of this study documents the effectiveness of this intervention within a formal CIPP (Stufflebeam, 1983, 2003) evaluation framework."

Parise, L. M., Corrin, W., Granito, K., Haider, Z., Somers, M., & Cerna, O. (2017). *Two years of case management: Final findings from the Communities in Schools random assignment evaluation.* New York, NY: MDRC. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?&id=ED579210

From the abstract: "While high school graduation rates are on the rise nationwide, too many students still never reach that milestone, with 7,000 on average dropping out every day. Recognizing that many students need additional support to succeed in school, Communities In Schools (CIS) works to provide and connect students with integrated support services to keep them on a path to graduation. CIS makes some services broadly available to all students at a school, and provides individual case management to those deemed most at risk of dropping out. This report presents the final implementation and impact findings from a two-year randomized controlled trial of CIS case management. This trial is half of a two-pronged national evaluation, the other half being a quasi-experimental study of the whole-school model. The report describes the implementation and effects of CIS case management in 24 mostly urban, low-income secondary schools in two states during the 2013–2014 school year. The study found that CIS case management services succeeded in getting targeted students into more support activities and improving several of their nonacademic outcomes. However, findings also showed that these services did not have a positive effect on students' attendance, academic performance, or behavior after two years. The study also estimated the effect of case management on students' nonacademic and more traditional school outcomes. The final chapter of this report includes implications for practice based on the evaluation findings. The report concludes by

considering the results of this random assignment study of case management together with the results of the quasi-experimental analysis of the whole-school model. Taken together, the results suggest that whole-school models of integrated student support offer the promise of positive effects. The results also indicate, however, some areas to which support providers may need to pay close attention, to ensure that students receive services that address their specific needs and that benefit them above and beyond the services already available."

Smith, A. J. (1995). *School-based case management: An integrated service model for early intervention with potential dropouts. A series of solutions and strategies. Number 10.* Clemson, SC: National Dropout Prevention Center/Network. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED393032

From the abstract: "This publication introduces school personnel concerned with early intervention with potential school dropouts to a promising school-based interprofessional case management model that has been successfully field-tested in 25 very different elementary school communities of Idaho and Washington State over the past 7 years: C-STARS (Center for the Study and Teaching of At-Risk Students). Case management is a service modality that cuts across several different human service systems, including education, that share common client populations of at-risk children and their families. Children and families who need case management services typically have two things in common: they experience concurrent problems which require assistance from more than one helper and they have special difficulty in using available help effectively. C-STARS involves partnerships among schools, community-based agencies that serve families and children residing in the schools' attendance areas, and universities for preparation of both school and community-based agency professionals. The following topics are reviewed: (1) C-STARS definition of case management; (2) seven functional components of the C-STARS model; (3) three structural components of the model; (4) the special roles and attributes of the case manager; (5) two most common applications of the model; (6) overall summary of evaluation findings; (7) benefits of school-based case management; and (8) getting started."

Zeller, P. J., Carpenter, S., Lacefield, W. E., & Applegate, E. B. (2013). Graduation coaching in a rural district school. *International Journal for Leadership in Learning, 1*(1). Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?&id=EJ1033208

From the abstract: "The GEAR UP graduation coach intervention developed by the GEAR UP Learning Centers at Western Michigan University (WMU) addresses the issue of academic failure of at-risk students in high school. This personalized early intervention strategy begins by assessing students' unique circumstances, academic histories, and strengths and weaknesses in 9th grade. Coach and student work together, networking with parents and teachers, to establish a plan that will bolster academic achievement. Intensive graduation coaching identifies internal and external resources to ensure the student's success and closely monitors the student's progress. This intervention has been implemented successfully in two urban school settings and results indicated substantial benefits. This study examines a replication of this model in a rural school setting for one year with an

incoming 9th grade class. The process involved several phases: program preparation and staff and student selection; implementing the coaching intervention and monitoring progress for informed, data-driven decision-making; and final summative evaluation. Two general questions were of particular research interest: Could students be identified proactively who are likely to benefit from this program? Did students selected as part of the coaching caseload improve their grades? A longitudinal, retrospective baseline study provided matched comparison groups for examining the effects of the intervention treatment. Results show that these graduation coached at-risk students as a group performed academically in core courses almost an entire letter grade better than would have anticipated based on comparative student results from baseline studies. Well over 50% of the treatment students, all of whom were predicted to fail, actually succeeded well enough to be prepared to progress to the next grade level. In this instance, graduation coaching appears to have significant potential in rural as well as urban school to promote student retention, success, and perseverance to graduation."

Methods

Keywords and Search Strings

The following keywords and search strings were used to search the reference databases and other sources:

- "academic case manage*"
- "case manage*" AND (elementary OR secondary)

Note. Using the search terms "academic counsel*" OR "academic guidance" did not yield any additional resources about this topic.

Databases and Resources

We searched ERIC, a free online library of more than 1.6 million citations of education research sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), for relevant resources. Additionally, we searched the academic database ProQuest, Google Scholar, and the commercial search engine Google.

Reference Search and Selection Criteria

In reviewing resources, Reference Desk researchers consider—among other things—these four factors.

- Date of the publication: Searches cover information available within the last ten years, except in the case of nationally known seminal resources.
- Reference sources: IES, nationally funded, and certain other vetted sources known for strict attention to research protocols receive highest priority. Applicable resources must be publicly available online and in English.

- Methodology: The following methodological priorities/considerations guide the review and selection of the references: (a) study types—randomized controlled trials, quasi experiments, surveys, descriptive data analyses, literature reviews, policy briefs, etc., generally in this order; (b) target population, samples (representativeness of the target population, sample size, volunteered or randomly selected), study duration, etc.; (c) limitations, generalizability of the findings and conclusions, etc.
- Existing knowledge base: Vetted resources (e.g., peer-reviewed research journals) are the primary focus, but the research base is occasionally slim or nonexistent. In those cases, the best resources available may include, for example, reports, white papers, guides, reviews in non-peer-reviewed journals, newspaper articles, interviews with content specialists, and organization websites.

Resources included in this document were last accessed on May 13, 2019. URLs, descriptions, and content included here were current at that time.