



INTERVENTION BRIEF

Supporting Postsecondary Success



InsideTrack® Coaching

Earning a college degree is one of the primary pathways to economic success. Median weekly earnings of full-time workers with an associate degree in 2017 was 17 percent higher than full-time workers with a high school diploma only.¹ Yet, large numbers of students who enroll in college do not complete a degree. Many programs and practices aim to improve college persistence and completion, including *InsideTrack® Coaching*.

InsideTrack® Coaching provides proactive, personalized coaching to help students identify and overcome both academic and non-academic barriers to college persistence and graduation. This What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) report, part of the WWC's Supporting Postsecondary Success topic area, explores the effects of *InsideTrack® Coaching* on students' persistence and degree attainment. The WWC identified 10 studies of *InsideTrack® Coaching*, one of which met WWC standards. The evidence presented in this report includes a study of the impact of *InsideTrack® Coaching* on four-year college students.²

What Happens When Students Participate in *InsideTrack® Coaching*?³

The evidence indicates that implementing *InsideTrack® Coaching*:

- may increase students' persistence in college
- may result in little to no change in students' degree completion

Findings on *InsideTrack® Coaching* from the one study that meets WWC standards is shown in Table 1. For each outcome reviewed by the WWC, an effectiveness rating, the study findings, and the number of studies and students that contributed to the findings is presented. These findings are based on 3,527 students on the persistence outcome and 1,346 students on the attainment outcome. See Box 1 for a description of WWC effectiveness ratings.

Table 1. Summary of findings on *InsideTrack® Coaching* from the study that meets WWC Standards⁴

Outcome	Effectiveness rating	Average performance (study findings)		Evidence meeting WWC standards (version 3.0)	
		Intervention group	Comparison group	Number of studies	Number of students
Credit accumulation and persistence	Potentially positive effects	66.4% retained	61.4% retained	1	3,527
Attainment	No discernible effects	35.2% graduated	31.2% graduated	1	1,346

Table Note: Average performance figures from study findings are based on one analysis conducted for each outcome, as reported by Bettinger & Baker (2014). These outcomes include retention in college at 12 months (credit accumulation and persistence) and completing a degree (attainment). The effects of *InsideTrack® Coaching* are not known for other outcomes within the Supporting Postsecondary Success topic area, including college access and enrollment; college attendance; academic achievement; and labor market outcomes.

BOX 1. HOW THE WWC REVIEWS AND DESCRIBES EVIDENCE

The WWC evaluates evidence based on the quality and results of reviewed studies. The criteria that the WWC uses for evaluating evidence are defined in the [Procedures and Standards Handbooks](#) and the [Review Protocols](#). The studies summarized in this report were reviewed under WWC Standards (version 3.0) and the Supporting Postsecondary Success topic area protocol (version 3.0).

To determine the effectiveness rating, the WWC considers what methods each study used, the direction of the effects, and how many studies tested the intervention. The higher the effectiveness rating, the more certain the WWC is about the reported results and about what will happen if the same intervention is implemented again. The following key provides a link between effectiveness ratings and the statements used in this report:

Effectiveness Rating	Rating Interpretation	Description of the Evidence
Positive (or Negative) Effects	The intervention is likely to change an outcome	Strong evidence of a positive effect, with no overriding contrary evidence
Potentially Positive (or Negative) Effects	The intervention may change an outcome	Evidence of a positive effect with no overriding contrary evidence
No Discernible Effects	The intervention may result in little to no change in an outcome	No affirmative evidence of effects
Mixed Effects	The intervention has inconsistent effects on an outcome	Evidence includes studies in at least two of these categories: studies with positive effects, studies with negative effects, or more studies with indeterminate effects than with positive or negative effects

How is *InsideTrack*® Coaching Implemented?

The following section provides details of how *InsideTrack*® Coaching was implemented. This information can help educators identify the requirements for implementing *InsideTrack*® Coaching, and determine whether those implementation requirements would be feasible at their institutions. Information on *InsideTrack*® Coaching presented in this section comes from the study that meets WWC evidence standards (Bettinger & Baker, 2014), from the developer's website, and from correspondence with the developer.

- **Goal:** Goals for *InsideTrack*® Coaching programs differ depending on the students served at each institution. These goals include increasing the college enrollment of admitted students and preparing students to succeed at a given institution; improving engagement, persistence, completion, and satisfaction of currently enrolled students; increasing rates of re-entry for students who have left a given institution; and supporting students' and alumni's career development. *InsideTrack*® also offers capacity building, training, and consulting services to institution staff; these services are outside the scope of this review.
- **Target Population:** *InsideTrack*® offers different coaching options for students enrolled in college, prospective students who have not yet enrolled, and recent graduates. All students are eligible to receive *InsideTrack*® Coaching, including traditional undergraduates, first-generation, low income, minority, graduate students, online and distance learners, adult learners, and military and military-connected students.
- **Method of Delivery:** *InsideTrack*® partners with universities to deliver its coaching program, supplying the personnel and technology. *InsideTrack*® provides coaching through phone, video, email, text, and mobile apps. The coaches gather relevant materials from the universities, including course syllabi, transcripts, and other student information to tailor the coaching to the student. *InsideTrack*® also supports institutions in building their own coaching programs.
- **Frequency and Duration of Service:** The intensity of *InsideTrack*® Coaching depends on students' needs and responsiveness to coaches' outreach. Intensity of coaching may also depend on the institution's goals, such as whether *InsideTrack*® Coaching is targeted to help students have a strong start at college or to improve rates of completion. In the study that meets WWC standards, students generally worked with coaches over two semesters and met with coaches at least five times.
- **Intervention Components:** The *InsideTrack*® Coaching intervention has two primary components, as noted in Table 2.

Comparison Group: In the one study that contributes to this intervention report, students in the comparison group had access to regular academic counseling and tutoring services that were already available at their college.

Table 2. Components of *InsideTrack*® Coaching

Key component	<i>InsideTrack</i> ® Coaching
Coaching	<i>InsideTrack</i> ® Coaching offers multiple types of coaching including prospective student coaching, “strong start” coaching, retention coaching, and career coaching. Coaches provide tailored, technology-enabled support to students. This support includes helping students clarify their goals; identify academic and non-academic obstacles to success; keep track of institutional deadlines; find and access resources; build time management and study skills; and learn to strategize and advocate for themselves. Coaches focus on students’ lives outside of school, including personal time commitments, caregiving obligations, and finances, as well as their academic experience in school.
uCoach® Technology Platform	The uCoach® Technology Platform enables <i>InsideTrack</i> ® Coaching to deliver proactive, one-on-one coaching through multiple channels; send automated messages at predefined intervals; track student engagement and coach observations; and predict when to reach out to students on particular issues. Students can reach out to coaches through the platform at any time, and vice versa. Automated messages remind students about deadlines, opportunities, and resources, and the platform also includes self-directed resources that students can access for guidance on key topics. The platform can be integrated with other institutional systems (e.g., learning management systems), increasing possibilities for monitoring students’ needs and delivering tailored information and resources.

What Does *InsideTrack*® Coaching Cost?

The cost of *InsideTrack*® Coaching varies depending on the objectives, scale, intensity, and duration of the program. The one study summarized in this report (Bettinger & Baker, 2014) reported that in 2004 and 2007 *InsideTrack*® charged about \$500 per student per semester for its most comprehensive program. This included a fixed charge for the cost of customizing its program to a particular university and a variable charge that depended on the number of students coached. A more recent *InsideTrack*® Coaching program launched in 2013 was reported to cost \$390 per student per semester.⁵

The WWC also identified several cost components from the intervention description in the studies reviewed. This preliminary list of costs is not designed to be exhaustive; rather, it is designed to provide educators an overview of the major cost components of implementing *InsideTrack*® Coaching.

- **Personnel Costs:** All *InsideTrack*® coaches have college degrees, and most have advanced degrees. They undergo a rigorous, formal credentialing process that includes an average of over 100 hours of professional development per year. Coaches’ interactions with students are recorded, and they regularly receive feedback on these interactions.
- **Facilities Costs:** *InsideTrack*® Coaching does not require physical facilities because most services are provided via phone, email, text messaging, and mobile apps.
- **Equipment and Materials Costs:** The uCoach® Technology Platform is one of the primary components of the *InsideTrack*® Coaching intervention. This platform can be directly licensed to institutions, even if *InsideTrack*® Coaching services are not purchased.
- **Costs Paid by Students or Parents:** Students need access to personal technology (e.g., mobile phone, computer) to communicate with their coach. They do not pay user fees for coaching services.
- **In-Kind Supports:** Colleges provide information to *InsideTrack*® to help customize coaches’ interactions with students. This may include information such as student transcripts, course syllabi, or data on course performance. Colleges may also work to integrate their existing institutional systems (e.g., student information systems and learning management systems) with the uCoach® Technology Platform.
- **Sources of Funding:** Colleges typically contract with *InsideTrack*® to provide coaching services to their students.

For More Information:

About *InsideTrack*® Coaching

121 SW Salmon Street, Suite 800, Portland, OR 97204

Web: <https://www.insidetrack.com/>. Phone: (800) 884-6371

About the cost of the intervention

Bettinger, E. P. & Baker, R. B. (2014). The effects of student coaching: An evaluation of a randomized experiment in student advising. *Educational Evaluation & Policy Analysis*, 36(1), 3-19. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1019184>

RevUp Montana. (2017). RevUp Montana. Project executive summary: Final report to Montana Board of Regents. Retrieved from https://mus.edu/board/meetings/2017/Sept2017/TwoYear/BoR_RevUp_FinalReport_Sept2017.pdf

In What Context Was *InsideTrack*® Coaching Studied?

The following section provides information on the setting and participants involved in the one study of *InsideTrack*® Coaching that meets WWC evidence standards. This information can help educators understand the context in which the study of *InsideTrack*® Coaching was conducted so that they can better determine whether the program might be suitable for their setting.

WHERE THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED



1 study, **3,527** students in **3** four-year colleges

GENDER

47%

Female

53%

Male

GRADES

PK

K

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

PS

Postsecondary (PS)



LEARN MORE



Read more about the *InsideTrack*® Coaching intervention and the studies that are summarized here on the [Intervention Report webpage](#).

ENDNOTES

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2018). Measuring the value of education. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2018/data-on-display/education-pays.htm>

² The descriptive information for this intervention comes from Bettinger & Baker (2014). The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) requests developers review the intervention description sections for accuracy from their perspective. The WWC provided the developer with the intervention description in December 2018 and the WWC incorporated feedback from the developer. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this intervention is beyond the scope of this review.

³ The literature search reflects documents publicly available by April 2019. Reviews of the studies in this report used the standards from the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook (version 3.0) and the Supporting Postsecondary Success review protocol (version 3.0). The evidence presented in this report is based on available research. Findings and conclusions could change as new research becomes available.

⁴ This report was revised following a routine WWC internal audit, which found that one study originally rated as Does Not Meet WWC Group Design Standards should be classified as ineligible for review (InsideTrack, 2017: Brandman University). This did not change the conclusions of the original report.

⁵ The RevUp Montana study (2017), which received a rating of *Does Not Meet WWC Group Design Standards*, reported the annual cost of *InsideTrack*® Coaching to be \$781 per student.