Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative

Creating College and Career Readiness (C3R)

DOES C3R IMPACT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, DROP-OUT RATES, GRADUATION RATES, AND POSTSECONDARY TRANSITION?

Project Overview

THE PROBLEM: What Challenge Did the Program Try to Address?

The C3R program[1] was implemented to improve student achievement, graduation rates, and college and career readiness in high school students. The program provided access to college and career supports early on, starting in 8th grade, for some of Kentucky's most impoverished students, and prepared students for relevant fields in the state, in particular middle-skill jobs that require some education or training after high school. Additionally, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has increased accountability for schools to prepare students for college and career, as well as the academic and social demands of adulthood.

THE PROJECT: What Strategies Did the Program Employ?

The Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative (KVEC), in partnership with Green River Regional Educational Cooperative (GRREC), received an i3 development grant[2] (2011-2017) to implement the Creating College and Career Readiness (C3R) initiative. This intervention included a software suite developed by WIN Learning for students in 8th-12th grades. The C3R program was implemented in 127 schools from 31 districts from 2013-2017 and was evaluated by a quasi-experimental matched comparison group design. A primary objective of the program was to raise awareness of career opportunities and the educational demands of those careers.

[1] Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative received an i3 development grant supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation program through Grant Number U411C110293.

[2] Development grants provide funding to support the development or testing of novel or substantially more effective practices that address widely shared education challenges. All i3 grantees are required to conduct rigorous evaluations of their projects. The quality of evidence required to demonstrate a project's effectiveness depends on a project's level of scale or grant type.

THE C3R MODEL

- **WIN Learning Software.** This suite of software included three applications: Career Readiness Courseware (CRC), SoftSkills, and MyStrategic Compass. These applications provided instruction in English language arts and math; social skills for the workforce; and personalized counseling on postsecondary training and career planning, respectively. Each application specifically addressed aspects of the KDE accountability system for students and schools.
- **Professional Development (PD).** WIN provided PD sessions and workshops to school staff to help them consider how to implement and engage the software.

Summary of Results

DOES C3R IMPACT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, DROP-OUT RATES, GRADUATION RATES, AND POSTSECONDARY TRANSITION?

Across all years of the program, as well as in the final year (year 4) of C3R, there were no statistically significant outcomes in achievement, dropout rates, or postsecondary transition.

- **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.** Academic achievement was measured in math and English with end-of-course (EOC) tests, as well as standardized tests ACT (American College Testing) and ACT PLAN. No statistically significant outcomes were found.
- **SCHOOL COMPLETION.** Neither the graduation rate nor the dropout rate was significantly impacted by the intervention.
- **POSTSECONDARY TRANSITION.** The transition failure rate, the percentage of graduates not admitted to two- or four-year colleges or vocational and technical schools, did not join the military, and had not joined the workforce, was not significantly impacted by the intervention.
- **COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS.** No statistically significant impacts on the college and career readiness rate were determined.

Please see Appendices B and C for information about the evaluation's design and the quality of the evidence, respectively.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The C3R program was implemented with less than 20% of students in the participating school districts.

- **STUDENT PARTICIPATION.** CRC, SoftSkills, and MyStrategic Compass had varying levels of participation and were generally below the intended levels of use. Only about 20% of eligible students logged usage time and only 5% used more than one software application in a year.
- **PARTNERSHIPS.** Teachers and software developers met regularly to discuss successes, challenges, and future directions. A successful adoption of the C3R curriculum would involve collaboration between school-based personnel and program developers with the goals and expectations of both parties in mind.
- **EDUCATOR BUY-IN.** Educators believed that C3R could support student readiness for college and career. Buy-in with teachers was cultivated with clear communications and by recognizing the critical roles of both the educators' expertise and the software applications to student success.
- **TECHNICAL CHALLENGES.** Technical issues with the C3R software was noted as one of the primary challenges to strong implementation. Students had issues accessing the software due to limited Internet connectivity, and in some cases the software was unreliable and "kicked out" users without recording the work.

For More Information

Evaluation Reports
Evaluation Report (RAND, 2018)[3]

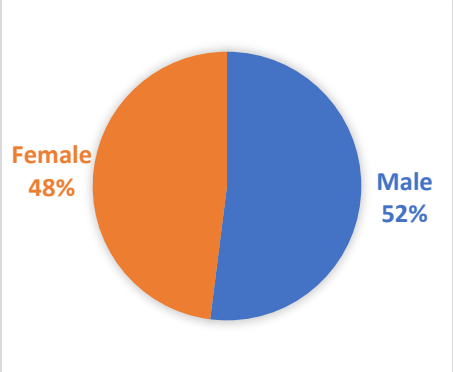
[3] The information and data for this result summary was collected from the most recent report as of 01/22/2020: RAND. (2018). *Evaluation of the Creating College and Career Readiness Initiative in Kentucky*. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2700/RR2745/RAND_RR2745.pdf.

Appendix A: Students Served by the Project[4]

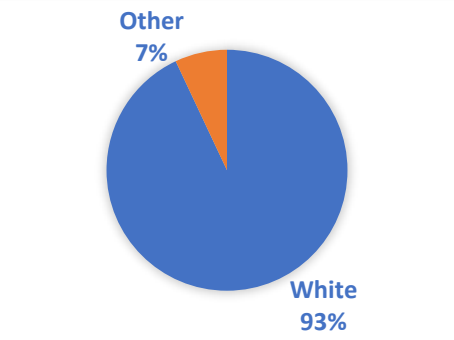
GRADE(S)

PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

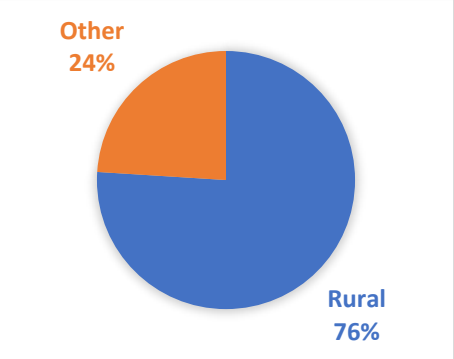
GENDER



RACE/ETHNICITY



COMMUNITY



HIGH-NEED STUDENTS[i]

Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	English Learners	Students with Disabilities
61%	Not Reported	Not Reported

[4]These data reflect the entire student population served by the intervention, not just the evaluation sample used in the impact study.

Appendix B: Impact Evaluation Methodology[5]

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Design:	Quasi-Experimental Matched Comparison Group Design
Approach:	The intervention was available to 127 schools served by KVEC and GRREC. School-level data from publicly available KDE data sets were used for the comparison. For the analytic sample, 34 schools were selected from the districts and 72 comparison schools were matched on key covariates including school size, Title I eligibility, poverty, race/ethnicity, and rurality.
Study Length:	Four years

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS: SECOND COHORT

Study Setting	High schools in Kentucky
Final Sample Sizes	▪ *Intervention Group:* 34 high schools ▪ *Comparison Group:* 72 high schools
Intervention Group Characteristics:	▪ Free/reduced-priced lunch: 61% ▪ White: 93% ▪ Male: 52%
Comparison Group Characteristics:	▪ Free/reduced-priced lunch: 52% ▪ White: 89% ▪ Male: 51%
Data Sources:	▪ KDE administrative data
Key Measures:	▪ Academic Achievement (End-of course tests in Algebra II and English II; ACT; PLAN) ▪ High School Completion (Graduation rates; Dropout rates) ▪ Transition (Transition failure rate – percentage of graduates who were not admitted to two – or four-year colleges or vocational and technical schools, did not join the military, and were not working full- or part-time)

[5] These data reflect only the evaluation sample in the impact study, not the entire population served.

Appendix C: Quality of the Evidence

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW[6]

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 01/22/2020	N/A

EVIDENCE FOR ESSA REVIEW[7]

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 01/22/2020	N/A

NATIONAL CENTER ON INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS REVIEW[8]

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 01/22/2020	N/A

[6] https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW
[7] https://www.evidenceforessa.org/
[8] https://intensiveintervention.org/

*The **Investing in Innovation Fund (i3)**, established under section 14007 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, is a Federal discretionary grant program at the U.S. Department of Education within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE). i3 grants help schools and local education agencies work in partnership with the private sector and the philanthropic community to develop and expand innovative practices that improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, and/or increase college enrollment and completion rates for high-need students.*

This summary was prepared by the Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Program Dissemination Project. The project is conducted by the Manhattan Strategy Group, in partnership with Westat and EdScale, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, under Contract No. ED-ESE-15-A-0012/0004. The evaluation results presented herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

[i] "High-need student" refers to a student at risk of academic failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students who are living in poverty, attend high-minority schools, are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, in foster care, have been incarcerated, have disabilities, or who are English learners. For more information see: Applications for New Awards; Investing in Innovation Fund-Development Grants, 81 FR 24070 (April 25, 2016).