

I-Connect: Web-based Solutions to Self-management and Support Connections for High School Students with Learning or Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

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Adolescents with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (EBD) have drop-out rates exceeding 50% and extremely poor post-high school social and economic outcomes, difficulty with employment, high rates of criminality, and substance abuse (Bullis & Cheney, 1999; Greenaum, Dedrick, Friedman, Kutash, Brown, & Lardieri 1996; Quinn, 2004). Moreover, students with EBD are 50% more likely to have been arrested within five years of leaving school, with that figure exceeding 70% for dropouts (VanAcker, 2004). Students with Learning Disabilities (LD) do not fair much better with respect to drop-out with rates ranging from 42% to 54% (Edgar, 1987; Zigmond & Thornton, 1985). Although evidenced based strategies are available that address these concerns, technological limitations prevent them from maximizing their accessibility and outcomes for these students.

Purpose: This project will develop and implement *I-Connect*, a web-based solution to self-management and support connections for high school students with LD or EBD (mild/moderate). *I-Connect* will allow these students to work with school personnel to customize self-management forms to monitor both academic productivity and behavioral performance. They will be able to log on through wireless devices to enter and monitor their data as it relates to their goals and objectives. Finally, *I-Connect* will increase connectivity, accountability, and sharing of data with those that support them (e.g., special education case-manager, parents, and mentor). *I-Connect* will include: (a) web-based academic/behavior self-management forms, entry, and data; (b) training materials for getting started and utilizing data for decision making; and (c) accessible formatting for desktops, Netbooks, and Smartphones or other mobile handheld devices.

Method: *I-Connect* will integrate the two evidence-based strategies of *Check & Connect* and *Self-management* in a web-based solution to capitalize on an improved use of data in a Responsiveness-to-Intervention (RTI) model. This technology-based approach is an innovative combination of new technology and existing materials and methodologies. An iterative development process will be utilized attending throughout to the accessibility needs of students with disabilities and those that support them. As part of the development process, usability testing and a field trial will inform *I-Connect* until a fully operating program is launched. When *I-Connect* is fully developed, student-level benefits will include yet not be limited to an increase in: (a) attendance; (b) assignment completion; (c) positive contacts with a support system; (d) responsibility for monitoring progress; (e) use of ongoing data to inform intervention intensity/dosage; (f) use of targeted academic and social skills. Additional benefits of this investment in student outcomes will include: (a) contributions to our understanding of these students progress in math and science; and (b) contributions to the knowledge of how technology can be used to address the national priority of improved outcomes for high school students. Key collaborators in this project include Richard Young (BYU), Tim Lewis (MU), and Charles Greenwood (KU).