

Summary of Research by Dr. Robert Bruce Thompson  
Riverton Elementary School, Portland ME

In summer of 2018 *Radiant Beginnings* and the Riverton Elementary School collaborated to deliver a comprehensive *Emotional Health Video Curriculum* as part of that school's Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program. From the beginning, the efforts to introduce the Curriculum had the goal of being *integrative*—not simply a “plug and play” resource to fill time, nor an intrusive or obligatory curriculum change that might create additional burden for teachers. Therefore, prior to initiating the Wellness curriculum, Julie Campilio worked closely with the Principal and teachers to establish a clear picture of what teachers felt they needed within the broader scope of the schools' SEL programming—taking into account availability of time, classroom structure, their own pedagogical goals, and how best to make use of the curriculum within their classroom. Importantly, part of the process focused on how the teachers would be able to contribute to evaluation of the Curriculum's outcomes, in order to fine tune the content and further align the program with the school's SEL goals.

This latter step involved working with Dr. Bruce Thompson - a USM research psychologist with a focus on early childhood social-cognitive development. Dr. Thompson also chairs the USM Institutionary Review Board and ensured that the entire data collection plan was in compliance with state and federal guidelines for data privacy and security as well as best practices for human subjects research. Dr. Thompson has completed preliminary analyses on hundreds of data points from the group of participating teachers at the Riverton School. His program evaluation focused on how individual teachers perceived change in their students' behavior, as well as their own sense of self-efficacy and well-being. This was not merely a “Pre-Post” data collection process (data collection at the beginning and end of the school year), but rather a repeated-measures, continuous assessment, designed to document fluctuations across school days when individual teachers used the video curriculum, vs. days they did not. To accomplish this, teachers were asked to complete very brief, online (under 5 minutes) “Daily Reflection Surveys,” completed at least three times per week.

The key student outcome measures included the following evaluation of students' behavior and readiness for learning:

- Attention
- Ability to continue with difficult tasks
- Ability to participate in group activities
- Maintaining personal space and respect others' personal boundaries
- Ability to transition between activities
- Ability to express needs or concerns appropriately

- Overall temperament and mood
- Frequency of conflict with peers
- Frequency of disruptive behaviors.

The key teacher outcome measures included the following areas

- Daily goals for the classroom
- Overall feelings of accomplishment
- Level of confidence
- Energy Level
- Motivation
- Emotional Well-Being
- Levels of Stress
- Feelings of being overwhelmed

Following is a summary of our results to date:

Student Behavior and Readiness to Learn:

- An important starting point in social-science research is to determine whether our key measures we have used to describe overall well-being, are in fact related and coherent. We computed the level of correlation among all of our student outcome variables (how each variable relates to every other variable) and found that they all are highly intercorrelated, which strongly supports the curriculum as integrative, and with broad positive impact.
- Our overall, *aggregated* data (all outcome measures consolidated) that were compiled from all days when the video curriculum was used, contrasted with days the video curriculum was *not* used. This resulted in a sweeping pattern of more positive teacher evaluations of the students' behavior and overall readiness to learn during wellness video days.
- Then we explored in more detail all the Individual domains of teacher evaluations of students' positive and negative behaviors separately, comparing video curriculum days vs. non-video days. A technique called "multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used, which yielded results showing that virtually every measure of student outcomes revealed more positive teacher evaluations on days they used the video curriculum.

Outcomes for Teachers

- How well to teachers' individual measure of self-efficacy and emotional well-being correlate? Our results were very similar to those found with the students' data: each of the measure of positive self-report areas were highly correlated with on another—confirming that our set of key self-report areas are highly integrated and coherent.

- How do teachers' self-reports about self-efficacy and emotional wellness differ between days they used the video curriculum versus non-video days? Our results here also strongly supported a positive effect of using the wellness video curriculum. Our MANOVA test resulted in a statistically significant overall positive effect of the video curriculum use. Moreover, when exploring individual measures we found, similarly to the students' outcomes, that our results were all in the hypothesized direction. Importantly, our composite scores for teachers, which summarize their overall feelings of efficacy/well-being (right side of bar chart) indicate a strong, positive effect of the video curriculum.