

Summary: *Middle Grades Research Journal*

Developmental Designs (DD) is a practical way of teaching that integrates academic and social learning to create an optimal learning environment. Students are given the opportunity to feel confident and secure both within themselves and in their interactions with classmates. With this approach, teachers foster in their students an increased ability to accumulate skills and knowledge, to problem solve and think critically, and to create meaningful work. Students learn better when they are given choices, when they and their teachers have a growth mindset, and when their learning is active, interactive and relevant to their lives. Students are better able to focus on and rise to academic challenges when they feel part of a community of individuals with self-control and healthy, positive social interactions, and when they have teachers on whom they can rely to keep the group balanced and safe.

In the Fall 2011 volume of the *Middle Grades Research Journal*, four research articles discuss the *Developmental Designs* approach to professional development and teaching. They link the DD approach to teacher confidence, and to positive outcomes in student academic performance and social experience, as well as to increased overall school climate and adequate yearly progress status. This finding is particularly true if the teachers have participated in training for two years rather than only one, and if they are in their second year of classroom implementation. The following are some key findings from the articles:

Finding 1:

Schools' AYP status improved.

A higher number of *DD* trained teachers at a school is associated with positive AYP status at that school. The more trained teachers at a particular school, the stronger the effect on student academic performance can be seen.

Finding 2:

Teacher confidence increased, as did successful classroom implementation with more training.

When teachers receive two years of *DD* training rather than one, their confidence in teaching increases, and their level of *DD* practice implementation is higher. The second year of *DD* training is crucial both to a teacher feeling sure about the work and to fidelity of strategy implementation in the classroom.

Finding 3:

Even more success is found with individual coaching following training.

Classroom-based one-on-one coaching adds further value to the success of teachers' classroom implementation of *DD* practices. When teachers receive individual, on-site consulting, their classroom implementation of strategies becomes more successful.

Finding 4:

Student academic and social learning outcomes increased.

Learning outcomes for students, both in the academic and social realms, increase after two rather than one year of *DD* teacher training, and increase further after classroom coaching. When teachers receive more training rather than less, and when those teachers also receive consulting in the classroom, their students' academic success increases as does their social ease.

Finding 5:

High-poverty schools' AYP status improved.

There is an increase in AYP success at high-poverty schools when 75% or more of those schools' teachers implement *DD1* and *DD2* for two or more years. When at least $\frac{3}{4}$ th of teachers at high-poverty schools receive a second year of training, those schools' AYP status increases.

Finding 6:

Students' attendance increased, their positive behavior became more frequent, their academic achievement was higher, and the school's overall climate increased positively.

When a school's staff perceives its leadership as supportive, and when there is present in a school a greater level of teacher training and implementation in the classroom, there is a corresponding increase in student attendance, positive behavior, academic achievement, and overall school climate.

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