

Successes of Emotionally Disturbed Clients

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Success of a school-age student at the Judge Rotenberg Center can be measured in various ways. In this study, we looked at academic gains, class attendance, passage of state standard exams and quality of life before and after JRC.

Method

Participants and Setting

There were a total of twenty-five participants in this study. Of the twenty-five participants, ten were male, while fifteen were female. Ages ranged from 15 to 20.2, with the average age being 18.2. Participants' IQ ranged from 82-103, with the average IQ being 88. Diagnosis included ADHD, Oppositional Defiance Disorder, Emotionally Disturbed and Learning Disabled.

All participants attended school at the Judge Rotenberg Center and lived in one of JRC's group homes.

While at the school, participants completed schoolwork that was aligned with the school's and their sending states' curriculum standards. Instruction was delivered in many different ways, to include 1-1 instruction, group lessons, independent study, videos, bookwork and computer instruction. Curriculum was modified when the participants needed it to be.

Measures and Instruction

Academic gains were looked at in the areas of Math Fluency and Spelling. Math Fluency was tested using the math fluency sub-test from the Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement, while Spelling was testing using the spelling sub-test from the Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement. Both of these areas were taught using proprietary software that used fluency based instruction. Fluency based instruction required participants to learn material to a pre-set mastery level. The material used was broken down into small steps. In math fluency, instruction was given using the see-type learning channel and achievement was measured using the see-write learning channel. In spelling, instruction was given using the hear-type learning channel and achievement was measured using the hear-write learning channel.

Class attendance was examined before JRC and while attending JRC. Pre-admission reports, school records and parents anecdotal information was looked at to determine if the participant attended class before they were admitted to JRC. Attendance records were looked at for information about attendance while at JRC.

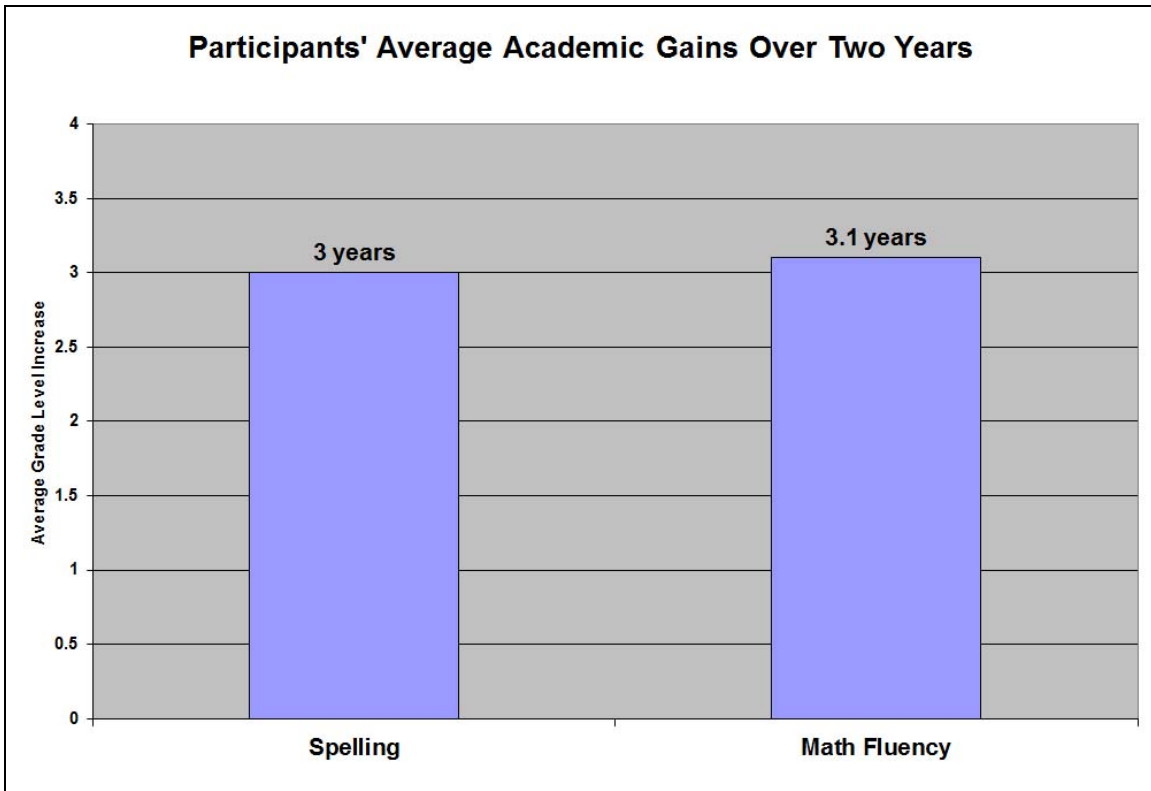
Success before attending JRC and after attending JRC looked at factors like gaining employment, returning to or attending public school, earning a GED and attending college. Information about participants success before attending JRC was obtained through pre-admission reports, school records and parents anecdotal information. Information about participants' success after leaving JRC was obtained through follow up interviews and general personal contact with the participant.

Passage of state exams looked at the number of exams a participant was able to pass while at JRC. Exams included the New York Regents exam, the New York Regents Competency Test (RCT) and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Achievement System (MCAS).

Results

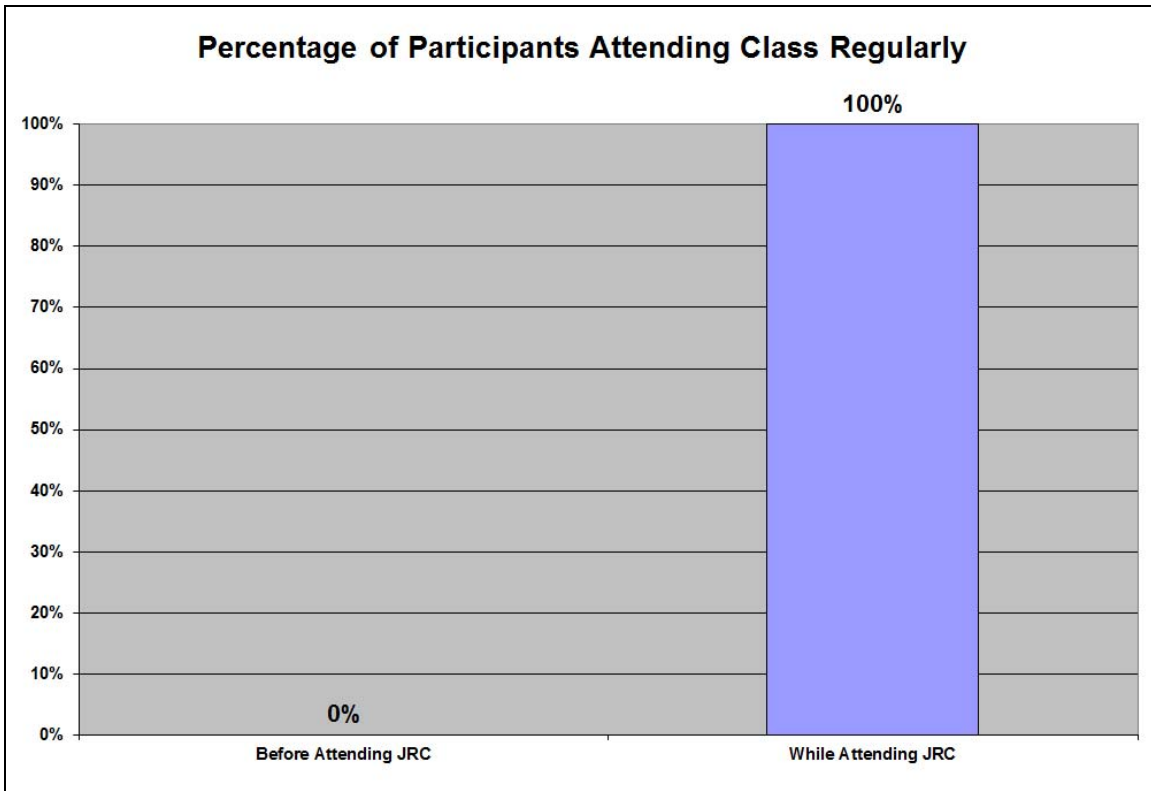
Academic Gains

Over a period of two years, participants gained an average of three grade levels in math fluency. Over a period of two years, participants gained an average of 3.1 years in math fluency. Both skills showed generalization to a different learning channel. This is shown in figure 1.



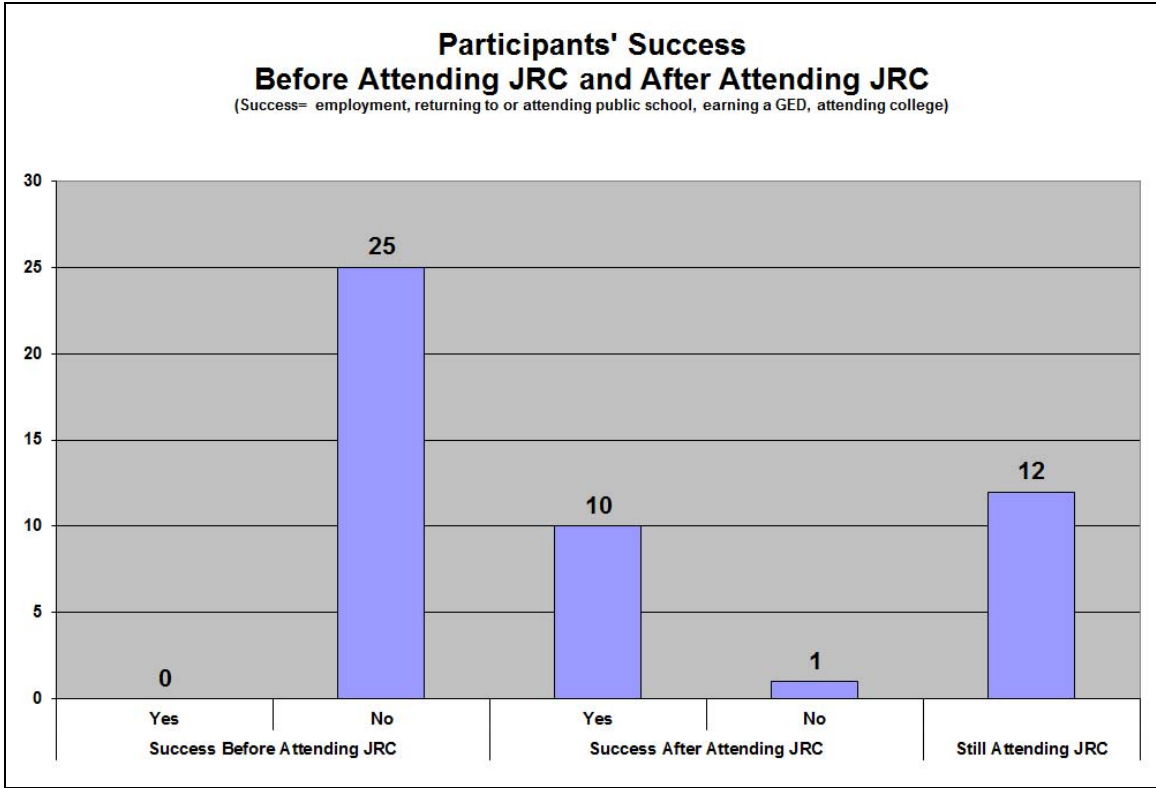
Class Attendance

Before JRC, no (0) participants attended class regularly. After being admitted to JRC, all participants (25) attended class regularly. This is shown in figure 2.



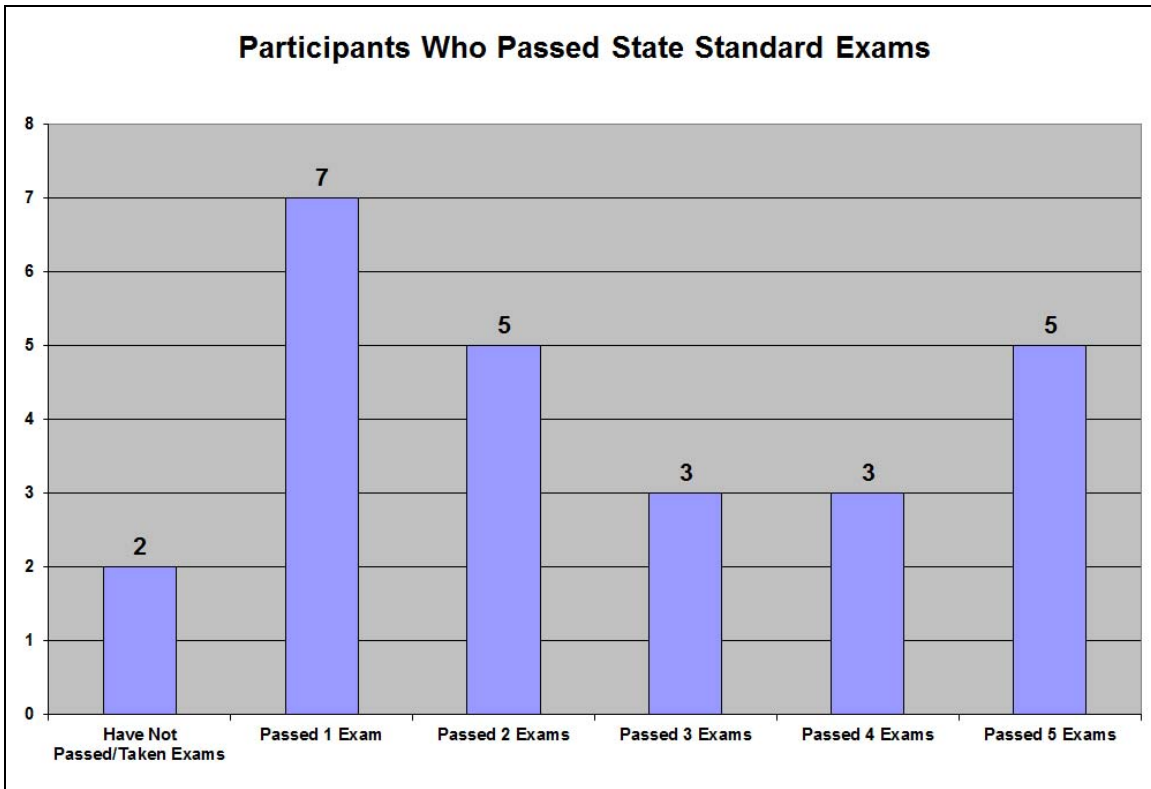
Success Before and After Attending JRC

Before attending JRC, no (0) participants had achieved success, as it was defined. After attending JRC, ten participants had achieved success. One participant had not. Twelve participants were still attending JRC. This is shown in figure 3.



Passage of State Standard Exams

Two participants were working towards taking and passing state standard exam, but had not passed one yet. Seven participants had passed one state standard exam. Five participants had passed two state standard exams. Three participants had passed three state standard exams. Three participants had passed four state standard exams. Five participants had passed five state standard exams. This is shown in figure 4.



Discussion

Through the program provided at JRC, participants were able to achieve success in the academic areas of their lives. This success was not present before attending JRC, but was present after they attended JRC. This success can be attributed to the behavioral and academic programs at JRC. Anecdotally, many participants thanked JRC for providing them with the resources to achieve this success and expressed appreciation for what they were given.

For follow up, we would like to look at a larger group of clients and try to see what determines if a client will succeed after attendance at JRC or if they do not do well. We plan to continue to collect data on all areas discussed in this study.