

Children's Health Education Center

CHW-CH has been offering innovative online, game-based learning (GBL) programs under the trade name of BlueKids.org for the past seven years. During the 2010 – 2011 school year, CHW-CH educated approximately 2,000 students using Act Now! in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) offering between 6 and 10 lessons for each student in a blended approach. Act Now! is an innovative evidence-informed, game-based, e-learning bullying prevention program for students and staff, designed to help prevent bullying in the school setting. It utilizes design elements conducive to GBL by implementing strong narrative context, role playing, attending to research and proven practices to enhance overall learning and bullying prevention. Act Now! also reinforces implementation of the Positive Behavior Supports & Interventions (PBIS) now required in Wisconsin by the WDPI.

The primary audience for the evaluation of Act Now! will be Milwaukee Public Schools middle school students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades and in 6 elementary schools grades 4th and 5th. The research utilized, and will continue to be utilized, is the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire in a pre-test and post-test intervention and control group research design. We will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of a new teaching method for bullying prevention among youth and staff (online, game-based, evidence-informed). We will continue to work with the schools selected in 2011 – 2012 as a longitudinal study and will expand our research schools by ten, with students participating in the e-learning program and staff participating in the staff training module. Three additional schools will serve as another experimental group whose students will participate in the e-learning program without any staff training. Lastly, three additional schools will serve as our control group, whose students will not use the e-learning program, and the school will not implement the staff training module. All groups will be given pre and post-tests which will include content, attitude, and behavioral intent questions. All schools will also participate in the pre and post Olweus Bullying Survey developed and administered by the Hazelden Publishing Company.

During the initial rollout of Act Now! in the fall of 2011 in MPS, the funding provided by RMYF allowed the implementation and assessment of student behavior and knowledge of seven MPS schools. All schools involved grades 6, 7, and 8. The preliminary results are very promising, and are still being analyzed at this time. We will complete the analysis this summer and provide RMYF the results upon completion. An essential component of this research will be to follow our initial MPS research schools through a year using a longitudinal study and add nine more school schools to the research study.