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Media Literacy as a Violence-Prevention Strategy: A Pilot Evaluation

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Youth violence is a major unresolved public health problem in the United States and media exposure to violence is a synergistic source of this national problem. One media literacy curriculum designed specifically to address this issue is Beyond Blame: Challenging Violence in the Media*. The purpose of this pilot study was to examine the curriculum's feasibility as a full-scale intervention. Intervention and control groups were similar with respect to knowledge of the Beyond Blame curriculum at baseline. Intervention students scored much higher on the posttest compared with the control students. The majority (90.2%) of the intervention students reported a significant increase in pre- to posttest score compared with only 18.8% of the control students (*$p < .0001$*). The magnitude of the score increase for intervention students was much greater than those in the control group. Several intervention students (*$N = 49$*; 19.9%) improved their score by 12 or more points compared with the control students who showed only a 1- to 7-point score increase (*$N = 3$*; 18.8%; *$p < .0001$*). The pre- and posttest scores were similar for males and females. Three of the six intervention classrooms scored higher on both the pretest and posttest compared with the other three classrooms.*

Keywords: *media violence; media literacy*

Violence is ubiquitous in popular culture. It drives video games, animates films, and television programs and has saturated hip-hop and punk music—the stuff of young people's lives. That each of these domains has a system of self-regulation in place has made no significant impact on content or childhood exposure to it. The only tangible effect that self-regulation has had is that of letting the entertainment industry off the hook by placing the burden of exposure on parents, many of whom have expressed dissatisfaction with the options available to them—the v-chip and the ratings systems (Gentile & Walsh, 2002). Considering the contentious debate that has evolved between entertainment industry apologists and parents and their academic allies, media literacy education seems to be one of the more hopeful solutions to the problem of media exposure to violence (Strasburger & Wilson, 2002).

Despite the pervasiveness of exposure to violence in the media, media literacy efforts focused exclusively on this issue are rare. However, media literacy has been used as a successful public health approach for several other important issues, such as the prevention of alcohol and tobacco use (Gonzales, Davoudi, & Glik, 2004). Based at least in part on the positive outcomes of these efforts, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is a strong advocate for media literacy as an approach to violence prevention (AAP, 2001). The AAP recommends that parents, schools, and communities educate children to be media literate as a means of protecting them against aggression, antisocial attitudes, and violence from media exposure (AAP, 2001).

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The goal of this study was to conduct a pilot evaluation of *Beyond Blame: Challenging Violence in the Media* on knowledge outcomes among middle school students in Los Angeles. Specifically, the purpose was to ascertain whether the curriculum when adequately implemented, does what it purports to do, which is to increase youth's critical thinking skills and knowledge about violence in the media and the real world. In this study, the primary emphasis was on a comparison of pre- and posttests for those receiving the intervention. For the purpose of comparison and scientific validity, we included a control group.

BACKGROUND

A vast and robust body of empirical research, developed over the past 50 years, shows that exposure to media violence poses a significant risk to the health of children and adolescents (AAP. 2001; Grossman, 1995; Heath, Bresolin, & Rinaldi, 1989; Prothrow-Stith, 1991). This is especially true in American society where on average, a young person's engagement with visual media can total 8 hours a day (AAP, 1999). The three most pervasive and detrimental of these effects are (a) increased aggression and the development of attitudes and values approving of violent conflict resolution ("hostile attribution bias"), (b) a heightened sense of fear for one's own safety ("mean world syndrome"), and (c) desensitization toward the pain and suffering of others ("bystander effect"; Bushman & Anderson, 2001; Centerwall, 1992; Federman, 1996, 1997, 1998; Huesmann & Eron, 1986; Malmuth & Briere, 1986; Malmuth & Check, 1981; Paik & Comstock, 1994; Peterson & Pfost, 1989; Williams, 1986).

In more than 3,500 studies examining the relationship between media violence and violent behavior, 99% (N = 3,482) found a positive association (Grossman & DeGaetano, 1999). To date, the two largest meta-analyses of television violence conducted in the 1990s confirmed that exposure to media violence increases aggressive behavior (Federman, 1996, 1997, 1998; Paik & Comstock, 1994; Villani, 2001; Wood, Wong, & Chachere, 1991). Several longitudinal studies have confirmed that aggressive behavior resulting from violent media exposure often continues for several decades (Eron, 1963; Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz, & Walder, 1984; Lefkowitz, Eron, & Walder, 1971). To better understand the association between aggressive behavior and violent media exposure, consider that the magnitude of correlation found on meta-analysis is much greater than those widely accepted by the medical profession—lead ingestion and lower IQ, low calcium intake and bone mass, and condom nonuse and sexually acquired human immunodeficiency virus infection (Bushman & Huesmann, 2001; Paik & Comstock, 1994).

One intervention approach that has been adapted to counter the negative effects from exposure to media violence is media literacy. A broad pedagogical discipline aimed at deconstructing (analyzing and assessing) the ubiquitous media constructions, (entertainment, news, advertisements, etc.), which have evolved into an integral part of life in the developed world today, media literacy has had as its goal to cultivate an audience capable of critically viewing mass media (Thoman, 1995). Potter (1999) states that the primary purpose of media literacy is to help control the effects of exposure to the media. When applied to health and social issues, media literacy education, also referred to as "impact mediation," "inoculation," or "interventionism," focuses on the issues and outcomes that affect physical and social well-being. As such, in addition to violence prevention, it has been employed in the areas of racial and sexual stereotyping, eating disorders, consumption behaviors, alcohol, drug and tobacco use.

The core principles of media literacy include the idea that media messages are constructed and, importantly, construct our culture; that media employ identifiable techniques having to do with their own unique "language;" that media contain ideological messages and are embedded with values and points of view; and last that media messages can be deconstructed enabling viewers to gain a more critical understanding of its methods (Thoman, 2002). Currently, every state in the United States has an enumerated set of standards for media literacy education; however, only two states have an active media literacy curriculum (Maryland and Texas), developed for both by Hobbs in collaboration with Discovery

Communications (Hobbs, 2000). The curriculum has six units each for elementary, middle, and high school (Hobbs, 2000). In an evaluation study of this curriculum, results found an increase in awareness about advertisement and truth claims made by Internet-based information (Kubey, 2001). Within the context of the juvenile justice system, a formative evaluation study of *Flashpoint*, a media literacy program aimed at juveniles at high risk for involvement with the criminal justice system, provides some preliminary evidence that the media literacy approach is effective at increasing life skills including positive behavior, knowledge, and attitudes toward peaceful conflict resolution (Moore, Dechillo, Nicholson, Genoves, & Sladen, 2000).

The Center for Media Literacy developed the curriculum *Beyond Blame: Challenging Violence in the Media*, which continues to be the only media literacy curriculum exclusively focused on violence prevention in the United States. There are two other current English language media literacy violence-prevention curricula, both of which are based on and/or derivative of *Beyond Blame* (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2001; Metropolitan Toronto School Board, 1998). With a unit for elementary, middle school, high school, and parents/caregivers, *Beyond Blame* takes the position that media as American society's storytellers are "the messengers for violence as a way of life." *Beyond Blame*'s five "key goals" are (a) to reduce exposure to media violence, (b) to change the impact of violent images that are seen, (c) to locate and explore alternatives to media that focus on violence to solve conflict, (d) to uncover and challenge the cultural, economic, and political supports for media violence and, (e) to introduce skills of media advocacy and organizing for change.

CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION

The basic premise of *Beyond Blame: Challenging Violence in the Media* is that media play a role in the problem of youth violence largely through modeling violence as the primary means to solving problems and resolving interpersonal conflict (Thoman, 1995).

The curriculum is made up of eight lessons (One: What are you watching? Two: Why is everyone watching? Three: Violence doesn't solve problems, it causes them. Four: Heroes and heroines: Who's real? who's fake? Five: How much violence do you watch? Six: What's the big deal? The four effects of viewing media violence. Seven: Who's responsible? Eight: Sharing what you have learned.). Each lesson was designed to be used in a language arts, social studies, or health classroom setting and run approximately for 45 to 50 minutes. The curriculum contains a videotape of violent film and television clips to be used with the lessons and exercise worksheets exploring the concepts embedded in the lessons.

METHOD

During the 2005 fall semester, three middle schools in Los Angeles Unified School District conducted the intervention and one school was selected as a control. To avoid contamination of the control group with information about the curriculum, the control school was selected such that its teachers and students were unlikely to have contact with teachers administering and students receiving the intervention. Although the sample was too small to assign the intervention randomly, the characteristics of the schools were similar in terms of their racial and gender distributions. Although all children in the study were fluent English speakers, the majority were English language learners.

Six teachers delivered the curriculum. The teachers attended a teacher-training seminar conducted by the staff members at the Center for Media Literacy. The 1-day event involved reading through the eight *Beyond Blame* lessons, viewing the media clips, discussing the core concepts of media literacy, and addressing questions raised by the teachers.

Parental consent forms were distributed in English and Spanish and collected before the onset of the pilot study, and students received and signed assent forms. Pre- and posttests were administered to the students 1 week prior to and 1 week following implementation to measure the effect of the curriculum on change in knowledge. The pre- and posttests were linked by a unique identifying numbering system to determine the change in test score per student while maintaining confidentiality.

The pretest/posttest used in this study was divided into five sections. The first contained 24 content-based questions taken directly from *Beyond Blame's* eight lessons. Three of 24 questions were open-ended (What usually happens in a television show or movie when someone gets angry? What is the cycle of violence? What can be done so that TV shows and movies focus more on peaceful, nonviolent solutions to problems?), the remaining 21 questions were multiple choice. The second section contained 20 questions concerning attitudes and beliefs about violence and the media, and was drawn from the Normative and General Beliefs About Aggression Survey. For all questions in this section, such as, "In general, it is wrong to hit other people," students were asked to choose from one of four responses: *It's perfectly okay, It's sort of okay, It's sort of wrong*, or

It's really wrong. The third section contained 10 questions addressing media-related behaviors taken from the Leisure Activity section of the Teen Conflict Survey. The fourth section contained five questions addressing exposure to violence and perceptions of safety chosen from six validated instruments: Violent Intentions, Personal Safety, Empathy, Aggressive Behavior, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, and Modified Aggression Scale. The fifth section contained eight questions regarding nonviolent behaviors such as: "I helped someone stay out of a fight: A. *no opportunity*, B. *never*, C. *1 or 2 times*, D. *3 or 4 times*, or E. *5 or more times*." (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002)

All six intervention teachers were asked to participate in informal follow-up interviews and three agreed to do so. The interviews were open-ended feedback sessions and as such were not recorded. Rather, notes were taken during the interviews by one or both the interviewers present and afterward notes were written up, but not subjected to in-depth analysis. Additionally, although all six intervention teachers were asked to fill out a lesson evaluation form, only two did so. The lesson evaluation form asked that the following questions be put to each of the eight lessons of *Beyond Blame*: (a) I like this lesson because, (b) A weakness of this lesson was, (c) My students like this lesson because, (d) My students did not like this lesson because, (e) Please list any interesting student comments or anecdotes that you remember.

All six intervention teachers were also asked to allow the researchers to observe them deliver the curriculum and three teachers agreed to. Last, two of the three teachers that allowed classroom observation allowed the researchers to conduct focus groups in their classrooms, which involved roughly 60 students. Students were broken up into groups of 10 and each of the three interviewers led a group. The researchers wrote up questions to be put to the students before the focus groups were conducted, which included the following: (a) Did you like the *Beyond Blame* curriculum? (b) What were your favorite lessons and why? (c) What did you dislike most and why? (d) What would you change? (e) What do you think about violence in the media? (f) What do you think about violence in your community? (g) How would you recommend breaking the cycle of violence? (h) What do you think about the media? (i) What does it mean "all media are constructed"? (j) Did you have any questions about the pre-/posttest? Each researcher took notes during the focus group sessions and wrote them up immediately afterward to capture as much of the process as possible.

Data analysis consisted of computing basic descriptive statistics to determine changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs among and between intervention and control students. Summary scores were derived by adding students' responses. In the analysis, scores on the pre- and posttest were then categorized. The categories were chosen based on the baseline distributions of the data so that each category had sufficient sample size. The pretest score was then subtracted from the posttest score to determine a change over time. Chi-square tests were performed to determine differences between intervention and control student test scores. All questions on knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs were included in the pilot questionnaire to determine appropriate changes to wording, context, and structure.

The Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at the University of California, Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Unified School District's Program Evaluation and Research Branch approved the study protocol.

RESULTS

This pilot study included 246 intervention and 16 control students enrolled in Los Angeles Unified middle schools. Signed consent forms were returned by 87% ($N = 262$) of eligible students ($N = 300$). The sample of intervention students was predominantly Hispanic (61.8%), followed by White (19.9%), Other (16.7%), and Black (1.6%; Table 1). The race/ethnicity category of "Other" included Asian, Pacific Islander, and unknown. All the control students reported their race/ethnicity to be Hispanic. There was an equal representation of male and female students in both intervention and control classrooms. The intervention classroom teachers were two drama teachers, two media and technology teachers, one health teacher, and one math teacher. The six intervention teachers delivered the curriculum to sixth- (18%), seventh- (73%), and eighth-grade students (9%) in several classrooms (Table 1). The pilot control students were generated from a single classroom of seventh-grade students.

Intervention and control groups were similar with respect to knowledge of the *Beyond Blame* curriculum at baseline ($\chi^2 = 3.89$; $p = .1426$; Table 2). Intervention students' pretest scores had a mean value of 21.0 compared with the control group mean score of 18.4. Intervention students scored much higher on the posttest (mean = 27.6) compared with the control students (mean = 17.7).

The majority (90.2%) of the intervention students reported a significant increase in pre- to posttest score compared with only 18.8% of the control students (Table 2). The magnitude of the score increase for intervention students was much greater than those in the

TABLE 1
Basic Characteristics of the Study Groups

	*Intervention (*N = *246)*		*Control (*N = *16)*	
	n	*Percentage*	n	*Percentage*
Race				
Hispanic	152	61.8	16	100.0
White	49	19.9	0	0.0
Black	4	1.6	0	0.0
Other	41	16.6	0	0.0
Gender				
Female	125	50.8	8	50.0
Male	117	47.6	8	50.0
Missing	4	1.6	0	0
Grade				
Sixth	44	17.9	0	0.0
Seventh	179	72.8	16	100.0
Eighth	23	9.3	0	0.0

Note: Chi-square tests not valid because cell sizes are too small. However, the overall trend indicates that the two groups are similar with respect to basic demographics.

control group. Several intervention students (N = 49, 19.9%) improved their score by 12 or more points compared with the control students (N = 3, 18.8%) who showed only a 1- to 7-point score increase. The pre- and posttest scores were similar for males and females. Three of the six intervention classrooms scored higher on both the pretest and posttest compared with the other three classrooms. However, this difference was not statistically significant.

Attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors were measured in Sections 2 through 5 of the pre- and posttest. Overall, differences between intervention and control students with respect to changes in attitudes toward violence and nonviolent behaviors were not apparent (Table 3). More than 50% of intervention students reported increased beliefs that media is unrealistic and harmful to kids from the pre- to the posttest, compared with only a 28.6% increase among control students. However, this difference was not statistically significant. Increased reporting of exposure to violence and concerns about safety was also more common among intervention than control students (38.9% vs. 23.1%, respectively). Again, this difference was not statistically significant. There was evidence that intervention students were more likely than control students to decrease their engagement with media between the pretest and posttest (37.2% vs. 15.4%, respectively; p = .0407; Table 3).

Information from the student focus groups and interviews with the three intervention teachers indicated that the curriculum was well-received by everyone. One intervention teacher wrote,

> This has been a *transformational* experience of sorts for the students and myself . . . This week we did the last point of view lesson as a live talk show, with students playing the role of parents, filmmakers, government representatives, etc. It was unbelievable!

Numerous students participating in the focus groups said they liked "everything" about the curriculum, except "the writing." In their focus groups, they were able to identify the four types of violence analyzed in the curriculum, were able to readily identify some of the effects of violence discussed in the curriculum as well as the "cycle of violence." In a discussion on the math lesson in which they computed the number of hours they engage with media on a daily basis and the predicted amount of time devoted to media by the time they graduate from high school, students expressed alarm and disbelief. With this knowledge, numerous students stated that they would prefer to spend less time with the media and more time engaged with sports activities. In interviews with the teachers, all three expressed concerns that their students' literacy level was not adequate to understand all the terms offered by the curriculum and explained that they therefore had to spend additional time providing definitions.

TABLE 2
Pretest, Posttest, and Difference Scores for Questions on Knowledge of Beyond Blame Curriculum, by Intervention Status

	*Intervention (*N = *246)*		*Control (*N = *16)*	
Average scores				
Pretest	21.0		18.4	
Posttest	27.6		17.7	
	n	*Percentage*	n	*Percentage*
Pretest score[a]				
0–16	63	25.6	4	25.0
17–20	53	21.5	7	43.8
21–24	61	24.8	4	25.0
25–38	69	28.0	1	6.3
Posttest score[b]				
0–16	16	6.5	6	37.5
17–20	26	10.6	6	37.5
21–24	28	11.4	3	18.8
25–38	176	71.5	1	6.3
Difference score[c]				
Decrease (score <0)	19	7.7	9	56.3
No change (score = 0)	5	2.0	4	25.0
Increase (score >0)	222	90.2	3	18.8
Magnitude of score increase (no. of points)				
1–4	69	28.0	2	12.5
5–7	57	23.2	1	6.3
8–11	47	19.1	0	0.0
≥12	49	19.9	0	0.0
Total	222	90.2	3	18.8

Note: 38-point scale; higher scores correspond to more knowledge.
a. $\chi^2 = 3.89$; $p = .1426$.
b. $\chi^2 = 34.15$; $p < .0001$.
c. $\chi^2 = 65.1$; $p < .0001$.

DISCUSSION

Despite the fact that violent media dominate our cultural landscape and that the long-term cumulative impact of excessive violent imagery as *entertainment* on our individual and collective psyches is not known, media literacy violence-prevention education is currently not a priority for the national K-12 educational agenda.

The success of this pilot study suggests that media literacy may be a viable approach to addressing public health issues such as youth violence. Considering the 38-point pre-/posttest, intervention students improved their average score by 6.6 points, which was a 31% increase from the pre- to the posttest, compared with a slight decrease in average test score among controls. Both male and female intervention students exhibited improvement, which supports the universal appeal of the curriculum. Differences between intervention and control students with respect to changes in attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs were not as apparent as changes in knowledge. Changes to how students behave and what they believe may require longer interventions and longer periods of follow-up. The data presented in this article do, however, reflect that the intervention may have led to students thinking more critically about the effects of media and violence on their own lives, as greater proportions of intervention than control students reported an increased belief that media are unrealistic and harmful, a decrease in their engagement with media, and greater concern about safety on the posttest compared with the pretest. As this pilot study was conducted to determine the feasibility of a full-scale

TABLE 3
Difference Between Pretest and Posttest Scores for Violence- and Media-Related Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviors by Intervention Status

	*Intervention (*N = *246)*		*Control (*N = *16)*		
	n	*Percentage*	n	*Percentage*	p *Value*[a]
Section 2: Attitudes toward violence[b]	119	48.4	7	43.8	.8015
Decrease (score <0)	32	13.0	3	18.8	
No change (score = 0)	95	38.6	6	37.5	
Increase (score >0)					
Section 2: Attitudes toward media[c]					
Decrease (score <0)	85	35.0	8	57.1	.1574
No change (score = 0)	25	10.3	2	14.3	
Increase (score >0)	133	54.7	4	28.6	
Section 3: Engagement with media[d]					
Decrease (score <0)	90	37.2	2	15.4	.0407
No change (score = 0)	45	18.6	6	46.2	
Increase (score >0)	107	44.2	5	38.5	
Section 4: Exposure to violence and perception of safety[e]					
Decrease (score <0)	91	38.1	9	69.2	.0769
No change (score = 0)	55	23.0	1	7.7	
Increase (score >0)	93	38.9	3	23.1	
Section 5: Nonviolent behaviors[f]					
Decrease (score <0)	109	46.2	4	33.3	.6583
No change (score = 0)	27	11.4	2	16.7	
Increase (score >0)	100	42.4	6	50.0	

a. *p* value for chi-square test.
b. 48-point scale; higher scores correspond to violence.
c. 24-point scale: higher scores correspond to attitudes that TV is unrealistic and harmful to kids.
d. 12-point scale: higher scores correspond to more engagement with TV, video, and video games.
e. 20-point scale: higher scores correspond to greater exposure to violence and concern about safety.
f. 28-point scale: higher scores correspond to more nonviolent behaviors.

intervention, the results were analyzed with moderate rigor focusing primarily on the difference in pre- to posttest scores.

Observations in the intervention classrooms enhanced our test-based results by providing firsthand student reactions to the curriculum. The curricular film and television clips played a classical mediating role in the discussions concerning issues of great concern for the majority of the students. For instance, the clip from the 1985 Peter Weir movie, *Witness*, was particularly poignant. Represented therein is an act of bullying that incites a fight resulting in the "bullies" being beaten up by the hero of the film, Harrison Ford, an undercover cop pretending to be an Amish farmer. Witnessing this scene inspired an analysis of the dynamics of bullying in school, which in turn enabled the students to discuss their concerns (especially their fear) of being a victim to this sort of antisocial behavior. Whether or not this classroom discussion had any impact on student behavior is unknown, however, the fact that the students were discussing the ethics (the rights and wrongs, and who deserved what), was clearly an empowering and edifying experience for them.

LIMITATIONS

Because the specific aim of this study was to determine the feasibility of conducting a full-scale intervention, methodological aspects of the study limit our ability to draw conclusions. For instance, the intervention was not assigned randomly and analyses were unadjusted. We also recognize that there was an imbalance in the sample sizes of the intervention and control groups. This imbalance was unavoidable because two

of the three intended control group teachers pulled out and there was no practical way to replace them. Therefore, any observed differences between the intervention and control groups could be due to unstable estimates among the control group, confounding, or a response bias, such that teachers who agreed to administer the intervention taught students who were already more likely to show improvement from the pre- to the posttest, or such that controls who were lost to follow-up were different from those included in this study. Despite these limitations, the intervention was associated with increases in knowledge and improvement on several measures of violence- and media-related attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Furthermore, intervention and control groups were comparable in terms of demographic characteristics and pretest scores for the *Beyond Blame* content-based questions. Although the results presented in this article must be interpreted with caution, they demonstrate that the curriculum has potential, and a full-scale evaluation of the intervention is warranted.

Given that the majority of the students enrolled in this study were English language learners, teachers expressed concern that they had to spend a longer time than allotted for each lesson to cover the vocabulary essential to mastering the concepts embedded in the curriculum. This is perhaps a regional limitation given its multiculturalism and resultant linguistic diversity.

Learning from the limitations of the pilot study will undoubtedly improve the conduct of the full-scale evaluation. For instance, analysis of the attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs section of the test revealed needed changes to the structure and questions included in the survey. The authors were able to better identify the constructs that they wanted to measure and were able to conduct a longer survey. As a result, the entire Aggression Scale, Attitudes Toward Conflict and Normative Beliefs About Aggression from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2002): Measuring Violence-Related Attitudes, Behaviors, and Influences Among Youths: A Compendium of Assessment Tools was used. The revised survey was used in the follow-up study where differences over longer periods of time are being observed. In the full-scale summative evaluation, higher order analyses (e.g., hierarchical regression analysis) will be conducted to test other factors, such as the teacher effect.

CONCLUSIONS

The success of the pilot study demonstrated the feasibility of using *Beyond Blame* in a full-scale study of media literacy and violence prevention. Integrating the feedback from teachers and the pilot study results, we have revised all facets of the *Beyond Blame* curriculum and have launched a large-scale impact evaluation study. Although the revision was extensive, the core concepts and goals of the original edition continue to serve as the framework for the new curriculum. Additionally, the revised curriculum was designed to meet California English/Language Arts Content standards for Grade 7. However, to ensure that students understood the terms engaged by the curriculum, unique to the emerging field of media literacy, a glossary for each lesson was included. The evaluation study of the revised curriculum is currently being implemented among middle school students in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades in school districts around Southern California, and a concurrent process evaluation is assessing coverage, integrity, delivery, and utilization of the program intervention. To improve the scientific merit of the study, a quasi-experimental design was employed and an equal number of wait-list control and intervention classrooms were selected. In addition, half the intervention schools received a *Beyond Blame* 1-day teacher-training seminar to determine the training's effect on changes in student test scores. The sample will be large enough to conduct a thorough analysis, allowing for the control of confounding and the exploration of differences within and between grades, races/ethnicities, teachers, schools, and communities using hierarchical regression models. This study began in the fall of 2007.

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