

# The Personal and Academic Impact of Pre-College Mentoring on Elementary Students

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## Objective

To determine the overall personal and academic impact of pre-college mentoring on elementary students in the Eau Claire and Altoona, Wisconsin Area School Districts.

## Abstract

Blugold Beginnings is a pre-college access program designed to help inspire and educate underrepresented youth, specifically students of color, low-income students and first-generation students, on the idea that post-secondary education is a viable option for them in the future. This program provides mentoring opportunities by pairing college role models with participating students, enhancing their ability to achieve by supplying them with the tools and resources needed for admission to a post-secondary institution. A pre-assessment survey was distributed during the elementary mentor sessions by University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire mentors in the Fall of 2010. A post survey was given in the Spring of 2011 to determine the impact and benefits of mentoring elementary students in the Eau Claire and Altoona, Wisconsin school districts.

## Methods

A total of 33 elementary students between the ages of 9 and 11 participated in this research project.

Participating elementary schools included: Lakeshore Elementary (Eau Claire, WI), Altoona Elementary (Altoona, WI), Sherman Elementary (Eau Claire, WI), and Putnam Heights Elementary (Eau Claire, WI).

Each participant completed a pre-assessment to determine their personal and academic confidence in themselves, behavioral patterns at school, and their view on access to post-secondary institutions before the mentoring sessions.

Each student then participated in a two-hour mentoring session, three days a week, with their assigned mentor. In these sessions college mentors helped students with their homework and discussed post-secondary options as well as future career paths. Each mentoring session included interactive games and thought provoking activities with the Blugold Beginnings mentors.

Participants completed a post-assessment after six months of mentoring sessions to determine each student's individual change in attitudes, behaviors, and confidence levels (both personally and academically).

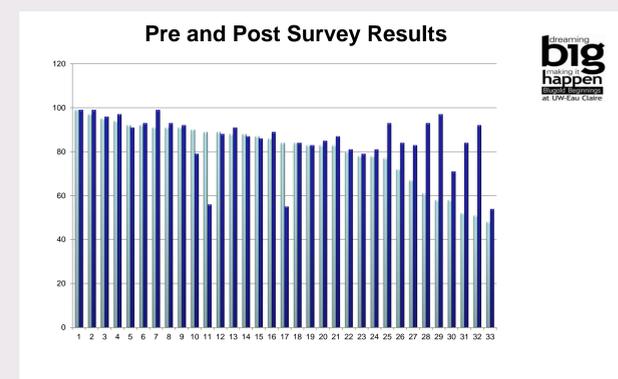
Each student's decision to participate in the study was completely voluntary and parent permission was obtained.



<http://www.uwec.edu/blugoldbeginnings>

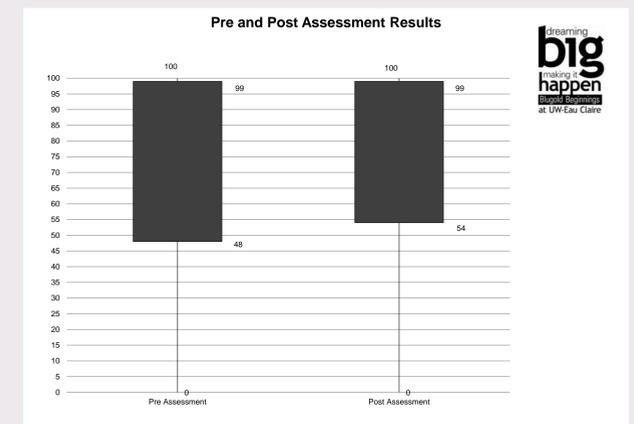
## Results

Our data indicates that 26 out of 33 participants regardless of age, gender or ethnicity had an increase in their confidence levels, both academically and personally, along with more positive attitudes towards post-secondary education. Out of the total 33 participants, 94% showed an increase in their post assessment scores compared to their pre assessment scores, partially credited to the six months of working with Blugold Beginnings mentors three days a week



This graph displays each participant's pre and post exam score. The minimum score was 48 points and the maximum was 99, out of a possible 100 points.

This graph demonstrates the increase in the lowest scored assessment from both the pre and the post assessments. The high score for both pre and post assessments was 99. The low score however, increased from 48 for the pre to 54 for the post.



## Discussion

There were limitations to this study. Student participation was dependant upon parent permission. Language barriers encountered restricted students from participating. Lack of consistent attendance of participants to mentoring sessions presented limitations to the research. Furthermore, the students who voluntarily chose to participate in this program were already likely to be relatively open-minded and seeking to learn which affected the level of change in pre and post survey scores.

This research may demonstrate that exposure to post-secondary education through mentoring, increases a student's knowledge, confidence, and ability to pursue post secondary education.

Future research may also include a longitudinal study. There is also potential for future studies on fourth-grade students and the impact in which mentoring and intervention has on their academic success in post-secondary institutions.

Majority of the surveys completed by teachers and mentors expressed support of program efforts and students' personal and academic gains.

Support for the project came from:  
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Faculty/Student Research Collaboration Diversity Mentoring Program and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs