

# Study finds when self-determination model provided to schools with support, teachers and all students benefit

September 4 2024, by Mike Krings

---



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

For more than a decade, University of Kansas researchers have shown that giving students, especially those with disabilities, ownership of their education improves their outcomes. The Kansas University Center on

Developmental Disabilities' team recently concluded a project to implement the Self Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI) in 15 schools in Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania. They have published multiple studies, including an overall analysis that suggested when the SDLMI program is installed with robust teacher supports, it not only helps the educators but has better outcomes for all students.

Researchers with KUCDD, who are also affiliated with KU's School of Education & Human Sciences and the Life Span Institute, recently concluded a four-year project. They partnered with 15 schools in Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania to implement the SDLMI and test the effects of different supports for teachers who were installing the approach in their curriculum. Results showed that teachers that received instruction on how to use the SDLMI via online modules coupled with coaching implemented the SDLMI with greater fidelity, and students with and without disabilities set more goals, worked to achieve them and had better educational outcomes.

The SDLMI is an approach that can be embedded in general education classrooms or specialized instruction for students with disabilities to give students ownership and determination over their own education and lives by guiding them to learn to set goals about what they want to learn and accomplish and take steps to achieve their goals.

The KUCDD team has built an array of supports to support educators to use this approach, and research has long shown to improve educational and life outcomes for students with disabilities. Research is now showing it also benefits all students in general education classes. Further, this research shows that effectively supporting teachers is critical to lead to enhanced student outcomes.

"The goal of this project was to put the SDLMI in place in general education settings and help all students learn under the model. We also

wanted to test different ways of installing it in schools. I think it speaks to the strengths of SDLMI that schools stayed dedicated to this project and using the SDLMI, even through the COVID-19 pandemic," said Karrie Shogren, Ross and Marianna Beach Distinguished Professor of Special Education and director of the Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities.

The high schools in the project reflected rural, high- and low-income districts with a diverse cross section of students and teachers. Schools were randomly assigned to use the SDLMI in one of their core content departments with ongoing support provided for teachers to install into their curriculum either through online modules or via the modules with additional in-person coaching supports for teachers.

Evaluation of the schools' and students' progress showed the SDLMI was implemented with greater fidelity, and teachers and administrators had more satisfaction when they had both online modules and coaching. The finding confirmed the importance of providing robust supports for schools and teachers implementing the SDLMI, particularly when scaling up use. And, the research showed that when schools receive more support, they were more likely to sustain implementation.

"I think it matters how we support schools, especially when we're talking about large, systemwide changes," Shogren said. "If we don't give support up front, they might not be as successful. Helping students is ultimately what we're trying to do. But it is necessary to also consider what supports teachers and administrators need to make that happen."

And, with the more intensive coaching supports, the researchers found that the SDLMI could be implemented in general education settings to affect outcomes for students with and without disabilities. Students whose teachers installed the SDLMI and received online and coaching support showed better educational outcomes, including [goal setting](#),

attainment and academic achievement.

"We were able to confirm that the students can use the SDLMI in general education to setting and pursuing goals for their learning. And, when they are setting goals, they are more motivated. They benefit from setting goals for themselves," Shogren said. "When you support students through the SDLMI, students with and without disabilities can set goals based on knowledge of themselves, and their teachers can support and empower them to get excited about learning. And it works for everyone."

The final study documenting the implementation was published in [\*Teacher Education and Special Education: The Journal of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children\*](#). It was co-written by Shogren with Tyler Hicks, Sheida Raley, Kathleen Lane, Hunter Matusевич and Abdulaziz Alsaeed of KU; Carol Quirk of the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education; and Dale Matusевич of the Delaware Department of Education. In addition to this, the study team has published more than a dozen studies throughout the course of the grant project on teacher, student and [school](#) experiences.

The research is part of a large and growing body of literature documenting the positive outcomes of giving students ownership and self-determination in their own education. The KU team is currently testing an app-delivered version of SDLMI and will also test further test implementing the SDLMI with coaching supports. The goal is to build systems that enable schools to install and use the SDLMI to benefit students and teachers and improve outcomes.

**More information:** Karrie A. Shogren et al, The Impact of Teacher Supports for Implementing the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction on Student Outcomes in Inclusive General Education Classes, *Teacher Education and Special Education: The Journal of the Teacher*

*Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children* (2024). [DOI: 10.1177/08884064241255217](https://doi.org/10.1177/08884064241255217)

Provided by University of Kansas

Citation: Study finds when self-determination model provided to schools with support, teachers and all students benefit (2024, September 4) retrieved 5 September 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2024-09-schools-teachers-students-benefit.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.