

Prosocial and Active Learning (PAL) Classrooms - Abstract

Gainesville R-V School District, the Curators of the University of Missouri Special Trust, and eMINTS National Center propose the *Prosocial and Active Learning (PAL) Classrooms* **Early-phase** project to address **Priority 1 – Demonstrates a Rationale** and **Priority 2 – Field-Initiated Innovations – General**. The project increases student prosocial behavior in a context that challenges students’ social skills – technology-rich, collaborative, problem-based learning (PBL). Some teachers resist using PBL because their students lack social skills for group work, which disproportionately excludes high-need students from this powerful learning format. Our goals are to 1) create a replicable model of PD to help teachers establish *PAL Classrooms*; 2) improve teacher practices that increase student prosocial behavior as they implement PBL; 3) increase student prosocial behavior; and 4) increase student engagement and achievement.

The model will generalize to multiple subjects and grades, but this project targets **5th grade** mathematics and science, serving about **120 teachers and 2,520 students** with over 50% from **high-poverty, rural** Title I-eligible schools. The 5-year project includes planning (Year 1), iterative development (Years 1-3), and a randomized control study (Years 3-5). Seven high-poverty, rural Missouri school districts have volunteered for Year 1-2 implementation: Gainesville, Cabool, Plato, Dora, Raymondville, Laquey and Summersville.

We will provide teachers with 60+ hours of PD and 6 in-class coaching visits to create *PAL Classrooms*. eMINTs has a history of successful PD to promote PBL. We build on this foundation by adding research-based strategies for increasing students’ prosocial behavior. Our innovative approach (1) focuses on positive, rather than negative, behavior, (2) is integrated into the regular curriculum, not an “add on,” and (3) promotes prosocial behavior in a particularly challenging classroom context – technology-rich, collaborative, problem-based learning.