



Summary of Research Findings: *Summer Credit Recovery Impact on Newcomer English Learners*, by Angela Johnson.

Research Findings - 2018
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This brief summarizes findings from a study of San Francisco Unified School District's (SFUSD) EL Village by Angela Johnson.ⁱ EL Village (now called Summer Academy for Integrated Language Learning - SAILL) was designed to improve academic outcomes for high school students who are newcomerⁱⁱ English Learners. The voluntary program offered free five-week content courses in English Language Arts (ELA), math, and science, which met the district's high school graduation requirements.

Recent education policy has focused on improving English Learners (ELs) academic success, but substantial gaps persist between ELs and their peers. Compared to 20 years ago, ELs today are lagging even further behind in National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math and reading scoresⁱⁱⁱ. Moreover, compared to fluent English speakers, ELs have lower high school completion rates and are 24 percent less likely to attend college^{iv}. Prior research shows that part of this achievement and attainment gap can be attributed to ELs' limited access to academic content^v. ELs are often required to take multiple English language development (ELD) classes and thus have few opportunities to take advanced math, science, and social science classes. As a result, they may miss out on chances to develop higher order analytical skills that are crucial for college and career success.

The research studied four summers (2013-2016) of EL Village implementation. During this time, 1,140 students participated in the program, approximately one-third of eligible students. The study focused on courses taken, California English Language Development Test (CELDT) scores, and graduation and compared eligible newcomer ELs to: 1) ELs with longer U.S. residency; 2) non-ELs, and 3) cohorts who graduated before program implementation. The full study data included 66,292 students who had complete demographic and attendance data, as well as course enrollment records between school years 2005-2006 and 2015-2016. The main results were based on 41,625 students in the graduation cohorts of 2009 to 2016 with more complete student data.

Findings

- **EL Village had significant positive effects on the number of academic courses newcomers take during their first four years of high school.** To meet graduation requirements, students need to complete four ELA, three math, two science, and three social science classes. Compared to other students, during their first four years of high school, newcomer ELs averaged:
 - 1.156 more ELA classes
 - 0.392 more math classes
 - 0.425 more science classes
 - 0.267 more social science classes than comparison groups.
- **CELDT scores show that EL Village also had significant positive effects on newcomers' listening, speaking, writing, and overall proficiency skills.**
- **EL Village had positive effects on graduation rates for the two latter cohorts of graduating newcomers. The average five-year graduation rate was higher than 99 percent for newcomers in the 2015 and 2016 cohorts.**

In the first three years of program implementation, the increase in newcomer EL exposure to academic content did not immediately translate into significantly higher graduation rates overall. This is consistent with results from previous research on math credit recovery. However, because of these early and repeated interventions, the program had positive effects on graduation rates for the two latter cohorts.

Implications for the San Francisco Unified School District

Given these promising findings, SFUSD has solidified and strengthened the following components of EL Village, now known as the SAILL program:

- **Professional Development**

SAILL includes a robust professional development component that develops educators new to teaching emergent bilingual students. SFUSD follows the Internationals Network for Public Schools (INPS) model for teacher collaboration, which includes interdisciplinary teams of four teachers working collectively to plan for students' success and develop curricular supports and scaffolds for various levels of language proficiency.

- **Instructional Model**

The instructional model of SAILL is grounded in California's 2012 ELD Standards which views language development as driven by meaning-making activities that require students to collaborate and communicate.

- **Wellness and Counseling Support**

SAILL has integrated wellness and counseling support for students and facilitated continued relationships with, and space for, counselors from community providers. Summer is often a time when students are without the support and familiarity of their home schools. Additionally, many immigrant youth left their home countries due to violence or poverty and have had traumatic experiences on their journey to the U.S., so providing not only academic but also emotional counseling services is an important component of SAILL.

- In addition, the study author recommends that SFUSD **expands program eligibility** to include rising 9th graders and continues to encourage participants to enroll every summer. This will provide newcomer ELs with more opportunities to complete academic course requirements within 4 or 4.5 academic years.

ⁱ Johnson, A. (2019). Summer Credit Recovery Impact on Newcomer English Learners *American Education Research Journal*. Advance online publication. doi:10.3102/0002831219883237; Gottesfeld, A. (2018, January 18). Summer Learning for Immigrant Youth: A Model from San Francisco [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-summer-learning-for-immigrant-youth-a-model-from-san-francisco/2018/01>; Johnson, A.S. (2018, January 15). Can Summer School Help English Learner Students Succeed? [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-can-summer-school-help-english-learner-students-succeed/2018/01>

ⁱⁱ Newcomer defined as a student who arrived in the United States less than three years prior to the calendar year of the summer program and be a rising sophomore, junior, or senior in the district

ⁱⁱⁱ Carnoy, M., & Garcia, E. (2017). Five key trends in U.S. student performance (Economic Policy Institute Report). Retrieved from <http://www.epi.org/publication/five-key-trends-in-u-s-student-performance-progress-by-blacks-and-hispanics-the-takeoff-of-asians-the-stall-of-non-english-speakers-the-persistence-of-socioeconomic-gaps-and-the-damaging-effect/>

^{iv} Kanno, Y., & Cromley, J. (2013). English language learners' access to and attainment in postsecondary education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 47, 89–121.

^v Lillie, K. E., Markos, A., Arias, M. B., & Wiley, T. G. (2012). Separate and not equal: The implementation of Structured English Immersion in Arizona's classrooms. *Teachers College Record*, 114(9), 1–33.

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