
**Evaluating the Effectiveness of
Imagine Learning English
In Chula Vista School District
State of California**

AN INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT STUDY

October 8, 2008
JointStrategy Consulting

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Otay Elementary School

Otay Elementary is located three miles north of the Tijuana Mexican border; 71% of their student population consists of English learners. Otay first implemented *Imagine Learning English* in October of 2006. It was introduced in the form of a 30-day pilot, targeting far below basic, below basic, basic, and other at-risk students attending the sixth grade. In terms of California English Language Development Test (CELDT) levels, most of those students were in levels 1 and 2. The pilot was a success not just among students, who started making gains at a rapid pace, but also among teachers. At the completion of the 30-day pilot, the program was implemented in grades K–6. In the 2006–2007 school year, Otay was able to exit California’s Program Improvement status.

Last year Otay’s high scores on the California Standards Tests (CST) enabled them to be the only school in the Chula Vista Elementary School District to receive the California Distinguished School Award. Otay was also the recipient of the Title I Academic Achievement Award, the California Association of Bilingual Education’s Seal of Excellence Award, and the California Business for Education Excellence Honor Roll Award.

Method

This report presents results from analyses aimed at identifying whether students who participated in the *Imagine Learning English* (*ILE*) program exhibited greater improvements in scores on California state tests than students who did not participate in the program. This is an independent study conducted by JointStrategy Consulting.

Improvements in test scores from one administration of the test to the next were compared between *ILE* participants ($n = 45$, n being the number of participants in the sample) and non-*ILE* controls ($n = 114$). These analyses used scores from the English-Language Arts subtest of the CST. Additional analyses examined *ILE* participants’ scores for improvements on the Listening and Speaking subtests ($n = 35$) as well as on the Reading and Writing subtests ($n = 15$) of the CELDT. Analyses were omitted for the correlation between *ILE* participation hours and increases in test scores because the small sample sizes did not provide adequate statistical power to detect significant effects.

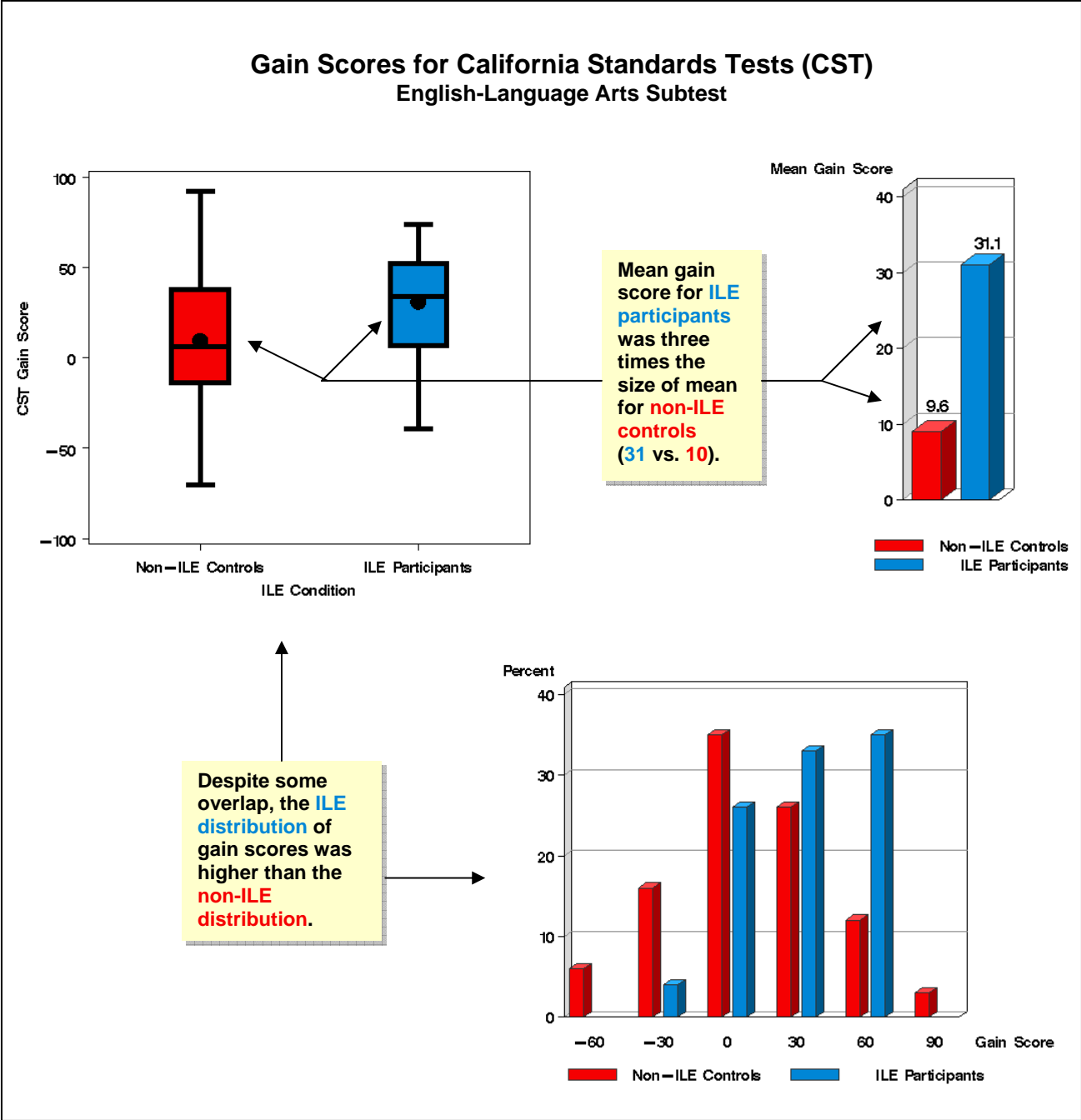
Results

1. *ILE* participants showed greater improvements on the CST than non-*ILE* controls. The mean increase in CST scale scores for *ILE* participants was three times the size of the mean increase for non-*ILE* controls (31 vs. 10, respectively; Figure 1). This difference was statistically significant ($t = 4.19, p < .001, DF = 102$). Despite some overlap between the two distributions, the *ILE* distribution of gain scores was generally higher (Figure 1).

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2. The mean increase in proficiency for *ILE* participants was one level and was significantly different from the mean of zero levels for the non-*ILE* controls ($\chi^2 = 15.48, p < .004, DF = 4$; Figure 2). The distribution of proficiency level changes was higher for the *ILE* sample compared to the non-*ILE* sample.
 3. The vast majority of *ILE* students exhibited increases in scale scores on the CELDT subtests for Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (mean gain scores of 88–135 points; Figure 3).
 4. Similarly, the majority of *ILE* students exhibited increases in proficiency levels (mean increase of 1–2 levels; Figure 4).

1. Gain Scores: CST Subtest for English-Language Arts

ILE participants showed greater improvements on the CST than non-ILE controls. **Figure 1¹** illustrates how gain scores compared between the 45 ILE participants and the 114 non-ILE controls. ILE participants' mean gain score was three times the size of the mean gain score for non-ILE controls (31 vs. 10, respectively). The difference between these means was statistically significant ($t = 4.19, p < .001, DF = 102$). Gain score distributions shared some overlap between ILE participants and non-ILE controls, but the ILE distribution was generally higher.



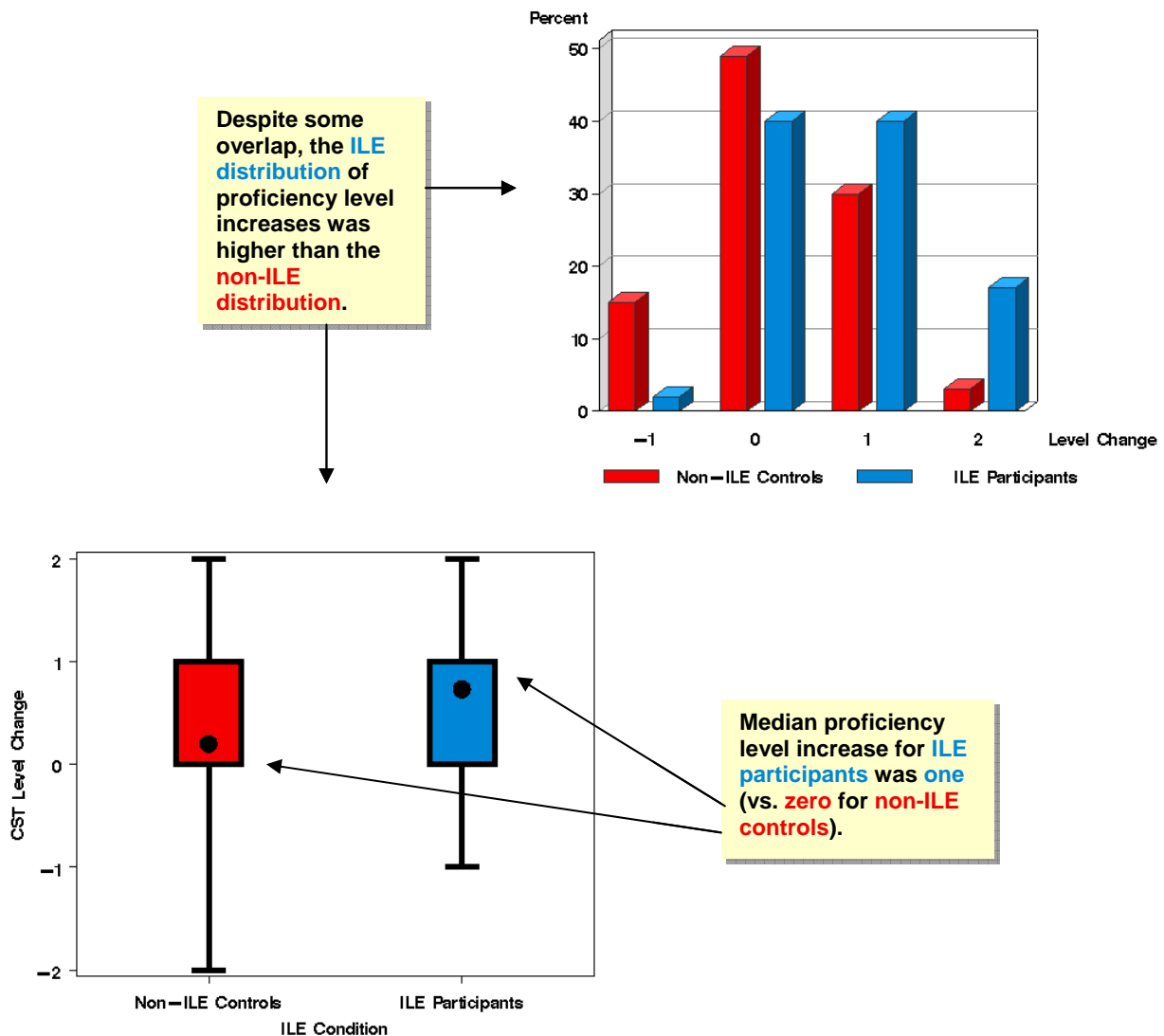
2. Proficiency Level Increases for CST Subtest for English-Language Arts

ILE students demonstrated greater proficiency level increases on the CST than non-*ILE* controls.

Figure 2 illustrates how increases in proficiency levels compared between the 45 *ILE* participants and the 114 non-*ILE* controls. *ILE* participants increased a mean of one proficiency level, whereas the non-*ILE* controls had a mean increase of zero levels. This difference between mean increases was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 15.48, p < .004, DF = 4$). Distributions for increases in proficiency level shared some overlap between *ILE* participants and non-*ILE* controls, but the *ILE* distribution was generally higher.

Figure 2

Proficiency Level Increases for California Standards Tests (CST) English-Language Arts Subtest

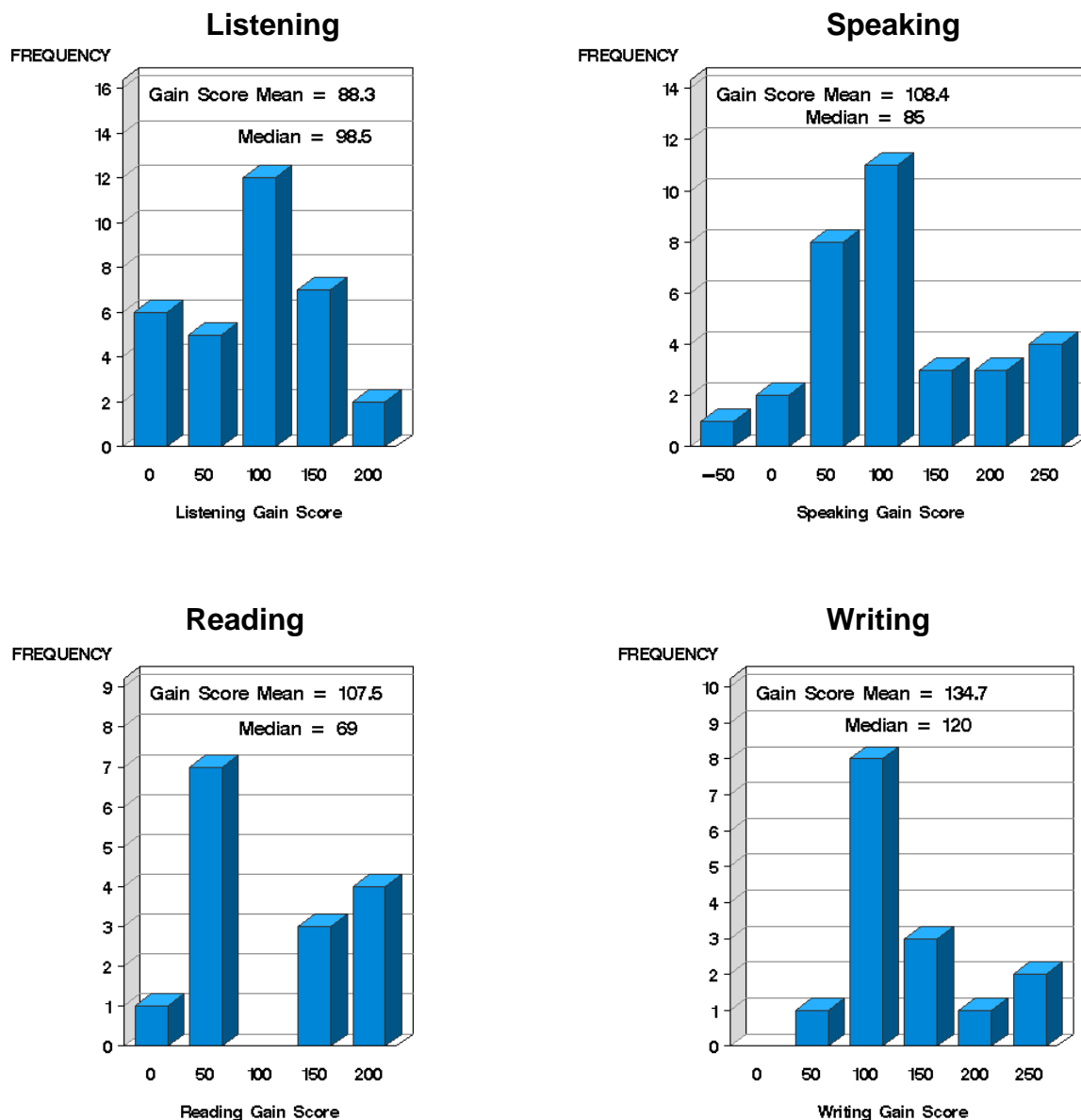


3. Gain Scores for CELDT Subtests

The majority of *ILE* students demonstrated improved scores on all CELDT subtests. **Figure 3** illustrates students' improvements in scale scores on the Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing subtests. Thirty-two students completed the Listening and Speaking subtests, and fifteen students completed the Reading and Writing subtests. The writing subtest gain scores were the highest relative to other subtests, with a mean gain score of 135 points. Mean gain scores for the other subtests were in the range of 88–108.

Figure 3

Gain Scores for California English Language Development Test (CELDT)

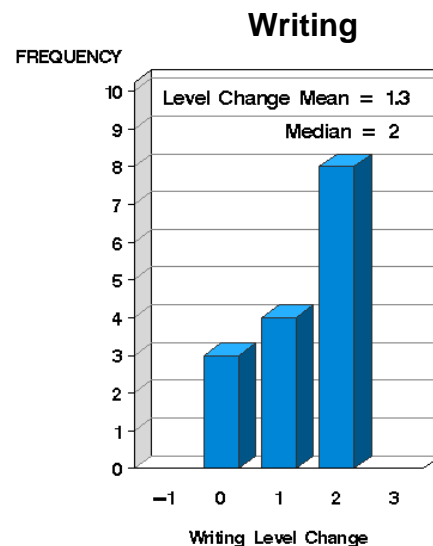
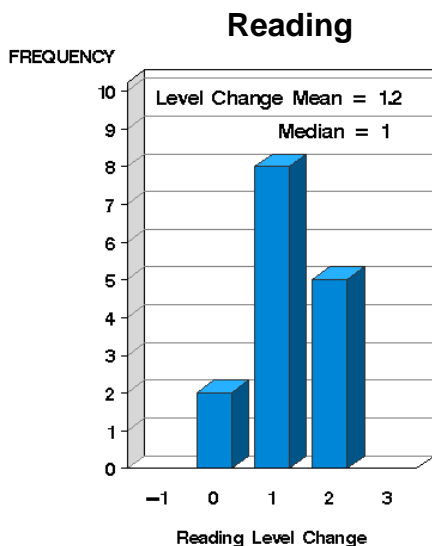
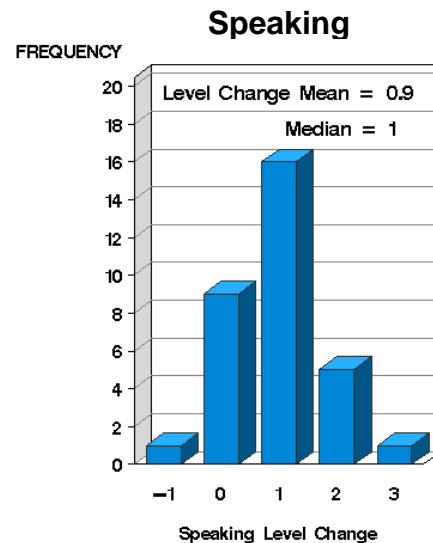
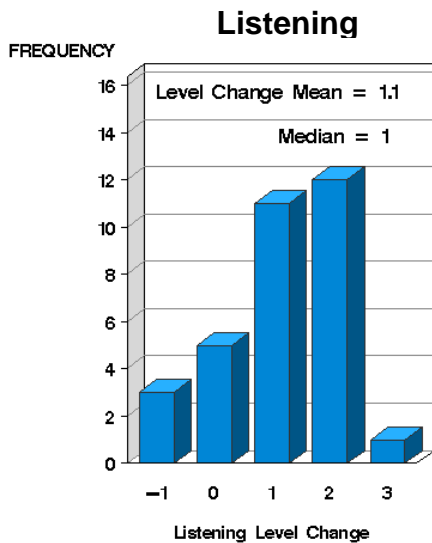


4. Proficiency Level Increases for CELDT Subtests

The majority of *ILE* students demonstrated increases in their proficiency levels on all CELDT subtests. **Figure 4** illustrates students' proficiency level increases on the Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing subtests, respectively. Thirty-two students completed the Listening and Speaking subtests, and fifteen students completed the Reading and Writing subtests. The average increase in proficiency was 1–2 levels. The Writing subtest demonstrated the greatest increase in students' proficiency levels, as was the case with gain scores.

Figure 4

Increases in Proficiency Level for California English Language Development Test (CELDT)



Conclusion

This report demonstrates how students who participated in the *Imagine Learning English (ILE)* program produced superior increases in CST (English-Language Arts subtest) scale scores and proficiency levels compared to students who did not participate in the program. *ILE* students also exhibited substantial increases in scale scores and proficiency levels on the CELDT subtests for Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.

¹ Box plots represent a useful way of presenting and analyzing data. The lower edge of the box represents the 25th percentile point and the upper edge of the box represents the 75th percentile point. Fifty percent of the data is contained within the box as shown by the colored area. The “whiskers” extending above and below the box show the full range of values of the data sample. The horizontal line through the box represents the median point of the data.

JointStrategy Consulting

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