

ENGLISH SAT/ACT PRE & POST TEST RESULTS AND SUMMARY

Submitted by Camesha Scruggs

Methodology

The Back to Basics Summer Institute was an intensive program with a focus on SAT/ACT test preparation for the selected students. This report is an analysis of the overall success of the English instruction of the program. The program entailed a two-week period, June 11 – June 22, 2012. The SAT session encompassed the first week, while ACT session encompassed the second week. In each week, the students received a pre-test on Monday, rigorous instruction and question drills on Tuesday and Wednesday, and then finally a post-test on Thursday. The students were allowed 30 minutes to complete a post test, which reflected the efficacy of the drill and practice that students received. Additionally, each pre-test and post-test were followed up by 30 minutes of feedback. On the days of instruction, the students received methodologies and strategies to help prepare them for the post-tests.

Both tests contained shared question varieties, which allowed time for increased instruction, as time for lecture and drills was abbreviated to 1 hour for two days of each week.

The students received 30 minutes to answer 20 questions on the SAT and ACT pre and post tests. The overall scores on the ACT were higher than that of the SAT, presumably because the lecture and drills for the SAT could also assist a student that needed to study for the ACT.

Students learned how to deconstruct words based upon the root terms and visual clues. Additionally, students were educated upon context clues which provided an advantage and greater probability of selecting the correct answer from selected reading passages. Students were also encouraged to submit words to the growing vocabulary list in addition to the “word of the day” from the website dictionary.com. Similarly, students answered sample questions and the “question of the day” from the SAT and ACT websites.

Results

Overall, the students exhibited marked improvement from the first pre-test (SAT) to the last post-test (ACT). The students’ ACT pre-test percentage was higher than their SAT pre-test percentage (see Figure 1). This suggests that information learned during the first week was retained and used during the second week (since most information is common to both exams).

This trend continued in an even smaller sample, where only the students who were present for all four exams were considered (Figure 3). The overall scores, in this instance, were higher, and the same trend of improvement was noticed. A marked difference occurred with one particular student. On the SAT pre-test, his score was average, which set the pace of instruction. His scores steadily increased as he scored even higher on the SAT post-test; and then higher on the ACT pre-test and then finally again, making the highest grade of everyone for any exam on the ACT post-test. This supports the evidence that students were able to benefit greatly from the English instruction.

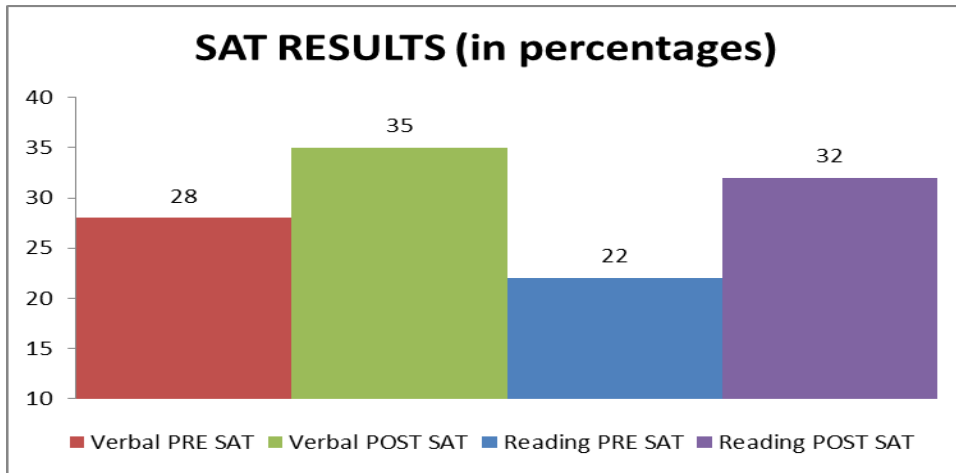


Figure 1

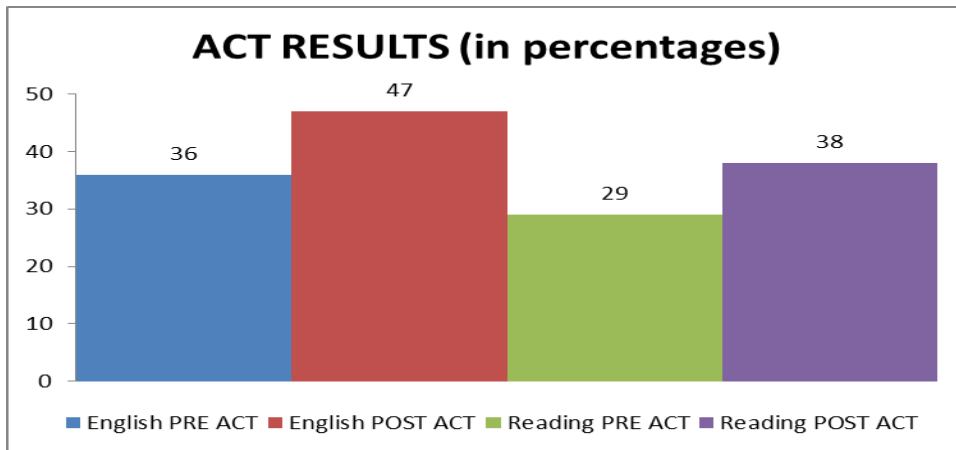
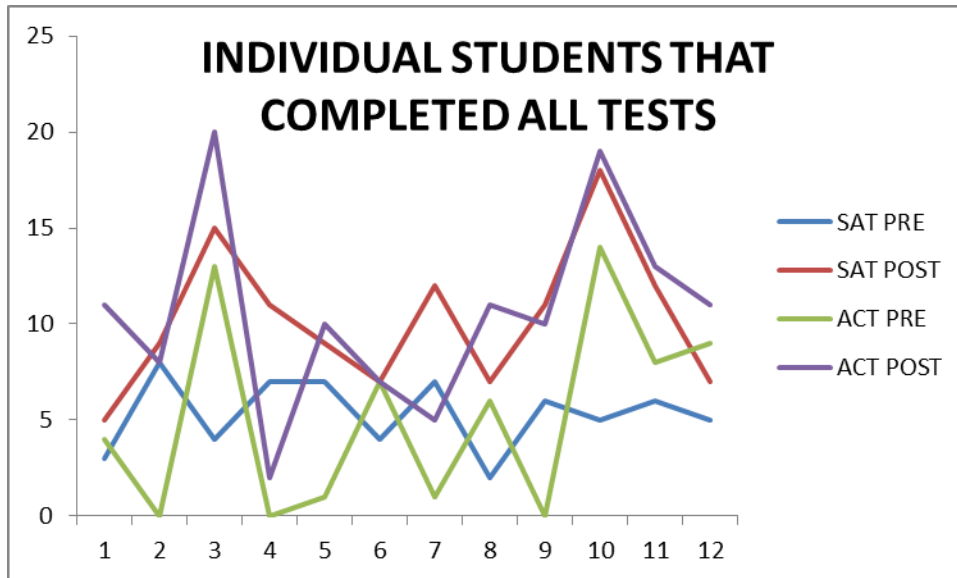


Figure 2

The chart below, figure 3 displays the individual performances for students who took all four exams. From the chart, it is clear that the highest score achieved increased per exam on average. Remarkably, by the end of the institute, every student answered on average five questions correctly. Whereas, at the start of the institute students answered a minimum of only two questions correctly.



Conclusion

From the charts, it is evident that the students benefitted from the vocabulary and critical reading lectures and drills. Not only were top students able to increase their scores, but students who struggled were also able to increase their individual scores. The augmented improvement throughout the institute is indicative of the applicability of the lectures and drills within the institute.