“Can We Talk?”
Back to Basics Institute
Texas Southern University

Back to Basics Stewardship Report
October 10, 2013
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Back to Basics Summer Institute (B2B) at Texas Southern University (TSU) is a two-week program for selected high school students and teachers. The purpose of the Back to Basics Summer Institute is “College Readiness,” which is the combination of skills, knowledge, and habits of mind necessary to participate fully in college-level courses (courses at the 100 level and above) to completion.

The program began operating in Summer 2010 with 50 high school students and 10 teachers. The program has since operated every summer, resulting in participation from over 200 high school students and approximately 30 teachers, representing over 20 Houston area high schools. Over the last four years, student attendance has averaged 90% during the 10 day program. A generalized make up of the students attending included 10% entering grade 9; 35% entering grade 10; 45% entering grade 11; and 10% entering grade 12. Approximately 53% of the participants were females and 47% were males; 75% of the participants were African/African American, 24% Hispanic, and .04% Caucasian/White. The demographic breakdown of the teachers over the past four years is eight African American teachers, one Hispanic teacher, and one Indian teacher.

During the morning sessions, TSU graduate students teach SAT/ACT test-taking strategies to the students, while the teachers are participating in technology application sessions. During the afternoon sessions, a TSU faculty member and high school students, continue the teaching of technology application to now include the students. Also, during the afternoon sessions, the B2B Coordinator teaches literature to the students and teachers. The students and teachers then integrate their study of literature and technology application into their final digital storytelling projects, which are presented at the institute’s closing ceremony. Lastly, during the lunch hour, distinguished guest speakers, including TSU faculty, local artists, and community leaders, enrich the participants with their motivational speeches.

One of the unique aspects of the institute is that Houston area teachers select gifted and talented students from their schools to participate in the institute. It is the belief that it is important for teachers to nurture their students and for students to remain under their teachers’ tutelage during the institute and throughout the remainder of the next academic year. Back to Basics Summer Institute staff also remain in contact with the students through their completion of high school, with the aim of recruiting these students to Texas Southern University and putting into place retention strategies.

Program Implementation Results

The B2B Summer Institute was implemented successfully, and showed a high level of satisfaction from students, teachers, and parents. Students shared that as a result of the institute they are more focused on their goals, including college preparation and on how to prepare for college. Teachers confirmed the students’ words by sharing that the institute provided students with the strategies, resources, support, and encouragement needed to prepare for college entry and college retention. Parents shared that they noticed their children were more excited about learning, acquired skills to communicate more effectively and, most importantly, and stimulated about higher education/college life.
INTRODUCTION

Texas Southern University (TSU) is committed to building partnerships with Houston-area schools, community organizations, and business leaders. The Back to Basics Summer (B2B) Institute, funded in large part by Chevron, is an example of such a partnership. Through the Back to Basics Summer Institute, Houston-area students and teachers participate in a ten-day intensive series of seminars, focusing on technology, multi-ethnic literature, and SAT/ACT preparation.

The genesis for this institute was from the 20 plus years of commitment to high school teachers by Dr. Elizabeth Brown-Guillory, Associate Provost and Executive Director for Back to Basics at Texas Southern University. For twenty years, Dr. Brown-Guillory worked with teachers in local teaching institutes, such as Houston Teachers Institute and Common Ground Teaching Institute, both initiatives sponsored by the University of Houston.

When she joined the Texas Southern University faculty in Fall 2009, she immediately began making plans to continue her work with teachers. She researched summer teaching institutes and decided upon a plan for an institute that would be tailor-made for TSU, one that would be in keeping with its mission. She decided that what would make this institute different from existing institutes—locally, regionally and nationally—would be to work simultaneously with teachers and students in a structured environment. In a competitive application process, high school teachers were selected, who then selected talented and gifted students to join them for the two-week institute.

One of the main goals of the institute is to prepare our youth for success. Her reflections on the vision of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. became the cornerstone for building the syllabus for the first summer institute. Dr. King’s blueprint for success is interwoven throughout the institute, especially in the selection of multi-ethnic literature that speaks to the need for our nation to recognize and respect all Americans. Dr. King’s dream that we teach our children well to become tomorrow’s leaders is a major part of the foundation of this institute.

It is Dr. Brown-Guillory’s hope that this institute will become a staple at Texas Southern University and will grow to reach students across the city . . . indeed, across the nation.

Program Selection & Description

Students are eligible for the program through the recommendation of his/her teacher. Houston-area teachers select gifted and talented students from their schools to participate in the institute. The program operates daily, over a ten-day period, during the hours of 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., consisting of two hours of ACT/SAT test-taking strategies daily for the students and approximately 40 hours of technology application training and literature studies for students and teachers.

SAT/ACT Preparation Sessions:

- SAT/ACT preparation sessions help prepare students for the SAT/ACT subject exams and primary tests in the college admissions process for bachelor’s degree programs. Two-hour sessions are conducted daily over the course of the program to adequately prepare
students for the Critical Reading, Writing and Mathematics sections of the SAT/ACT, thereby helping them to improve their scores. Instructors use various preparation materials in the classes, including Kaplan, Barron’s and Princeton Review workbooks, as well as develop their own curriculum. The sessions build students’ verbal and math skills for the examinations. Sessions also include studying, on average, 100 SAT/ACT vocabulary words each week.

**Literature Circles**

- Participants read multi-ethnic literature and participate in literature circles facilitated by the Institute Coordinator and high school teachers. The goal of the session is to develop critical analytical skills while discussing and analyzing/interpreting the various aspects of each literary work.

**Technology Applications**

- Participants learning various technology applications, including Digital Storytelling, which is later used to integrate participants’ selected literary work into a final project to be presented at the institute’s closing ceremony, in the presence of all of the institute’s participants, family and friends. Additionally, students and teachers learn how to create websites and navigate academic websites. Another critical aspect of the technology component is learning about computer copyright laws and the appropriate use of social media.

**Guest Speakers**

- Eight out of the ten days, during the lunch hour, distinguished guest speakers, including TSU faculty, local artists, and community leaders, enrich the participants with motivational speeches/talks/discussions.

**Campus Tour**

- At the close of the program, students and their parents participate in a tour of Texas Southern University.

**IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION FINDINGS**

In order to address the impact of the institute, data was gathered from multiple sources, including the program participants (students and teachers) and parents. Program staff was also able to examine demographics and program attendance data for the program participants. The purpose of the overall evaluation was to gain information and insights that can help demonstrate the impact of the program and lead to continuous program improvement.
Data Collection
Data was collected through a number of different means, including:

- Sign-In sheets
- Participant Applications
- Questionnaires/surveys administered to students, teachers, and parents
- Program observations

Appendix A contains the student, teacher, and parent questionnaires/surveys, and Appendix B contains the interview questions.

Findings/Results/Outcomes

Year 2010

Summary of the ACT/SAT Prep Sessions

One of the main objectives of the program was to enhance college readiness through college admissions test practices and preparation. The students were given sample ACT tests in addition to learning techniques and successful strategies and methods for achieving objectives.

In a comparison of the ACT test scores, on average, students achieved an accuracy score of 52% on the English portion of the pre-test (test administered prior to the ACT workshop) and 81% in the post-test (test administered at the end of the ACT workshop). Similarly, the pre-test results for the Math section were 36% correct while those for the post-test were 84% correct. The pre-test results for the Science section were 48% correct while those for the post-test were 58% correct.
As demonstrated by the above figures, the students showed a significant improvement in reading and verbal skills. This acquired skill set alone can help students score higher on standardized tests such as the SAT and the ACT.

**Summary of the English Language Program**

The program focused on developing vocabulary, as well as the correct pronunciation and enunciation from a list of high frequency words they may encounter on the ACT/SAT test. Additionally, students' writing skills were boosted through drills reinforcing the proper use of grammar and punctuation.

**Summary of the Mathematics Program**

The average scaled score on the pre-test was 60%; the average achievement score based on all mathematics activities at the end of the term was 85%. While these gains were achieved during the math portion of the program, achievement was reinforced through vocabulary development as well as the enthusiasm provided by the speakers, the teachers and the program coordinator. Students were highly motivated to make progress as documented in program activities and assessments.

**Summary of the Technology Program**

Students were taught principles of using social media and other Web 2.0 platforms, Power Point, website design, and digital storytelling (including podcasting and blogging). The students' culminating efforts included a project-based presentation to their peers, teachers, family and friends. The presentation integrated concepts of English language arts, science, mathematics, and performing arts, using the newly learned technology applications as the vehicle of display.

**Summary of Teacher Professional Development**

Teachers were provided professional development in the area of technology and English language arts. Additionally, teachers were present during the guest lectures and participated in the dramatic and performing arts as a teacher group. They facilitated a group of students each day of the seminar, reinforcing learning objectives that were shared during teacher professional development. Teachers guided students through the development of their technology projects and participated in the completion ceremony at the end of the program.

**Summary of Testimonials**

Students, teachers, and parents across the board were very enthusiastic about the institute, as evidenced by feedback provided during a survey. Students commented on the exceptional SAT/ACT prep as well as the exposure to the different computer applications. Most said they would return to the program next summer. Students were also asked, based on their Back-to-Basics experience, if they would consider attending Texas Southern University. Many said they would consider attending TSU, and several indicated that they had already begun the application process.
Teachers commented that the computer classes were outstanding, stating that they would incorporate what they had learned into their regular classes. Parents commented that they had seen significant positive changes in their children’s behavior as well as an increased interest in reading, math and higher education, in general.

**Program Successes**

**Student Testimonials**

"Taught me to value life, education and myself."

"Helped me set future goals ..."

"I loved the reading sections and just learning about writing."

"The teachers and guests impacted my life greatly!"

"The program showed me that if I work hard enough I can achieve!"

"I was able to get a taste of what the real SAT and ACT tests are like."

**Parent Testimonials**

"My child has a desire to read more and to use different technological tools in her learning."

“This institute was awesome. I am an educator in the H.I.S.D. and learned some new and innovative ways to push our students to greater levels."

“This program is one of the best experiences for our children...”

**Teacher Testimonials**

"Unlike most workshops that show how to use software, this one demonstrated how it benefits students as well”

"The literary works chosen were of interest to both teachers and students and this helped develop the final presentations”

"Gaining the knowledge of useful websites like Dictionary.com to aid daily instruction helped immensely."

"Back to Basics helped me learn the importance of setting goals, using resources, efficient study habits, personal learning style and time-management."

"...An opportunity for enrichment and networking.”
**Year 2011**

**Summary of the ACT/SAT Prep Sessions**

One of the main objectives of the program was to enhance college readiness through college admissions test practices and preparation. The students were given sample ACT tests in addition to learning techniques and successful strategies and methods for achieving objectives.

In a comparison of the ACT test scores, on average, students achieved an accuracy score of 68% on the English portion of the pre-test (test administered prior to the ACT workshop) and 81% in the post-test (test administered at the end of the ACT workshop). Similarly, the pre-test results for the Math section were 44% correct while those for the post-test were 80% correct.

As demonstrated by the above figures, the students showed a significant improvement in reading and verbal skills. This acquired skill set alone can help students score higher on standardized tests such as the SAT and the ACT.

**Summary of the English Language Program**

The program focused on developing vocabulary, as well as the correct pronunciation and enunciation from a list of high frequency words they may encounter on the ACT/SAT test. Additionally, students' writing skills were boosted through drills reinforcing the proper use of grammar and punctuation.

**Summary of the Mathematics Program**

The average scaled score on the pre-test was 70%; the average achievement score based on all mathematics activities at the end of the term was 81%. While these gains were achieved during the math portion of the program, achievement was reinforced through vocabulary development as well as the enthusiasm provided by the speakers, the teachers and the program coordinator.
Students were highly motivated to make progress as documented in program activities and assessments.

Summary of the Technology Program

Students were taught principles of using social media and other Web 2.0 platforms, Power Point, website design, and digital storytelling (including podcasting and blogging). The students’ culminating efforts included a project-based presentation to their peers, teachers, family and friends. The presentation integrated concepts of English language arts, science, mathematics, and performing arts, using the newly learned technology applications as the vehicle of display.

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Summary of Testimonials

Students, teachers, and parents across the board were very enthusiastic about the institute, as evidenced by feedback provided during a survey. Students commented on the exceptional SAT/ACT prep as well as the exposure to the different computer applications. Most said they would return to the program next summer. Students were also asked, based on their Back-to-Basics experience, if they would consider attending Texas Southern University. Many said they would consider attending TSU, and several indicated that they had already begun the application process.

Teachers commented that the computer classes were outstanding, stating that they would incorporate what they had learned into their regular classes. Parents commented that they had seen significant positive changes in their children’s behavior as well as an increased interest in reading, math and higher education, in general.

Program Successes

Student Testimonials

"Great SAT/ACT prep program ...

"Made new friends and enjoyed the lessons, teachers, ACT/SA T prep ...

"Enjoyed the computer applications ...

"Awesome program ...helped academically ...learned a lot a/new things."
"It was very interesting! "I learned things I didn't learn in school."

"...enjoyed the web design and grammar workshop..."

Parent Testimonials

"This was a positive program for the students .... I am certain this will prepare and give them a head start with the SAT/ACT.

"[Students showed] greater interest in higher education ... positive energy and improved self esteem..."

"[Students are now more] excited about reading ... eager to learn ...more respectful..."

Teacher Testimonials

"I will incorporate technology as a means of communicating and updating students."

"I learned to apply new technology and create interactive websites ... gained a wealth of useful web resources, as well as strategies in literature that can be integrated in science."

"I will implement technology that will allow parents and students to access and interact with lessons, resources, activities, projects, homework requirements, as well as feedback."

"Back to Basics helped us set future goals in planning lessons and interacting with students."

"...Real challenges, real applications, and the forum to showcase the students .”

Year 2012

Summary of the ACT/SAT Prep Sessions

One of the main objectives of the program was to enhance college readiness through college admissions test practices and preparation. The students were given sample ACT tests in addition to learning techniques and successful strategies and methods for achieving objectives.

In a comparison of the ACT test scores, on average, students achieved an accuracy score of 68% on the English portion of the pre-test (test administered prior to the ACT workshop) and 81% in the post-test (test administered at the end of the ACT workshop). Similarly, the pre-test results for the Math section were 44% correct while those for the post-test were 80% correct.
As demonstrated by the above figures, the students showed a significant improvement in reading and verbal skills. This acquired skill set alone can help students score higher on standardized tests such as the SAT and the ACT.

Summary of the English Language Program

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 was 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 those on 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 trained to identify 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](image1.png)

![Figure 3](image3.png)
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.

**Summary of the Mathematics Program**

The program consisted of a two-week duration, in which the students participated in drills and practice for the SAT and ACT. In each week, the students received a pre-test and feedback on that 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 test, followed by 30 minutes of test feedback. On the days of instruction, the students received an hour of lecture/drills to help prepare them for the post-tests.

Both tests contained common elements. This allowed for increased instruction, as time for lecture and drills were only 1 hour for two days of each week. The only major differences between the SAT and ACT exams were the time allotment, number of questions, and question types.

The students received 30 minutes to answer 25 questions on the SAT pre and post-tests, while students still received 30 minutes but had to answer 30 questions for the ACT pre and post-tests. In this sense, the ACT exam presented an increased challenge, yet 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.

Aside from the time allotment per question, the ACT considered two more subject areas that are not tested on the SAT: trigonometry and complex numbers. The information presented on the exam lacks detail, but students are expected to know how to determine the sine, cosine, and tangent of a given angle of a right triangle of known dimensions. Also, they must know elementary algebra using i, the mathematical symbol for -1.

**Results**

Overall, students showed significant improvement from the first pre-test (SAT) to the last post-test (ACT). This is even as the level of difficulty increased with each test. In fact, the students ACT pre-test average was higher than their SAT pre-test average (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. One student scored the highest on the SAT pre-test, which suggests that she was the most prepared from the beginning of the institute. Her scores steadily increased as she 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 suggests that the astute student was able to benefit from the mathematics instruction.
The charts below, Figures 3 & 4, show the individual performances per student (Figure 4 follows performance for students who took all four exams). From the chart, it is clear that the highest score achieved increased per exam on average. An anomaly is that the ACT pre-test highest score was slightly lower than the SAT post-test score for those who took all four exams. This is simply due to the fact that the highest scoring student for the SAT post-test was not present for the ACT pre-test. Remarkably, by the end of the institute, every student answered at least 5 questions correctly; whereas, at the start of the institute a significant number of students answered only one question correctly.
From the charts, it may be shown that the students benefitted from the math 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 increased improvement throughout the institute is indicative of the pertinence of the math lectures and drills, in particular, and the Back to Basics Institute, in general.
Summary of the Technology Program

The objective of the technology program was to make teachers and students familiar with various technological tools that help make learning more interactive. In the first week of the program, during the morning sessions, teachers were introduced to different software tools. The teachers then demonstrated the tools learned in the morning to the students in the afternoon technology sessions.

In the second week of the program, students were placed into groups, while teachers served as a mentor, and used the different software tools learned to create presentations based on their choice of literature, using graphics, music and animation. On the final day of the program, presentations were shown to their peers, teachers, family and friends.

Over the course of the two-week program, teachers and students were taught how to protect their privacy online, how to create classroom websites and e-portfolios, and how to use free tools for digital storytelling. They were introduced to websites where they could download royalty-free music and images. Teachers were also introduced to sites where they could develop lesson plans.

Summary of the Professional Development Program

The theme for the 2012 Program was “Can We Talk: Connections and Disconnections: Multi-Ethnic American Literature and Technology.” This theme was integrated throughout the duration of the program through professional development for teachers, who then taught the student participants how to use the different technology programs. The technology professional development included training in the following areas: Social Media: Web 2.0, Powerpoint, Website Design, and Digital Storytelling (including Podcasting and Blogging). The training was hands on, which allowed the teachers to create their own projects before actually teaching the use of these different types of technologies to the students. Teachers left the training with new skills that included: delivering effective powerpoint presentations, creating classroom websites, and integrating literature to retell the story through digital storytelling.

Another component of the teacher professional development was the study of various literacy pieces from Kate Chopin’s “Story of an Hour” and Elizabeth Brown-Guillory’s “Beacon Hill,” to Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise” and Alice Walker’s “Women.” Teachers studied, discussed, and explored the significance of the written text as it relates historically, culturally, politically, and socially.

After receiving professional development in the areas of both technology and literature, teachers were taught how to help students integrate the literary work into digital projects, which were showcased at the closing ceremony. Teachers facilitated a group of students each day of the seminar, reinforcing learning objectives that were shared during teacher professional
development. Teachers guided students through the development of their technology projects and participated in the closing ceremony at the end of the program.

Program Successes

Student Testimonials

"[The program] helped me believe more in myself" "I've gained more knowledge that will prepare me for the SAT/ACT."
"It helped me to learn how to become a better person and to want to have a better education to prepare for college."
"[The program] helped me where I needed help in math/technology."

Parent Testimonials

"He actually wanted to attend the program on his own after the second day."
"My daughter enjoyed it a lot and is looking forward to going to college."
"The program allowed [her] the opportunity to prepare for her college entrance exams; it also allowed her to network with like-minded students throughout the Houston area."
"It is a wonderful program from the presentation from the students and the closing ceremony; students are focused and know the college they want to attend ..."
"Fun while learning and preparing for the SAT."

Teacher Testimonials

"I will incorporate more technology in every phase of my instruction."
"Introduced me to tools that I can use daily in my classroom to engage my students."
"Through the speaker testimony, I am committed to being a better teacher and better student."
"I'll be a better teacher. My students will get more information and more understanding."
"In addition to the new ideas I was exposed to, I saw the pros and cons of incorporating new ideas in the classroom."

Year 2013

VERBAL AND CRITICAL READING REPORT
The 2013 Back to Basics Summer Institute verbal and critical reading component consisted of two weeks of vocabulary and critical reading skill development for the SAT and ACT exams. Four days of instruction and the equivalent of one day of testing was devoted to each exam (which will be further referred to as “exam work week”). Daily vocabulary building exercises and instruction of critical reading techniques were introduced and practiced during the institute. The students employed the use of smartphone and tablet apps, such as dictionary.com, for the vocabulary building exercises. The students also viewed editorials from the *New York Times* newspaper to enhance their critical reading skills. Additionally, the SAT and ACT websites were viewed and sample questions were given as class participation exercises.

SAT subject areas covered vocabulary and critical reading. The ACT subject areas primarily consisted of the same areas covered for the SAT, with the addition of sentence structure and completion. Since both exams had an extensive amount of vocabulary and critical reading, more time was devoted to these components during the week of ACT drills.

At the beginning of each exam work week, students took a pre-test exam in order to assess their current abilities prior to exercises. After the week of instruction, students took a post-test exam to determine the effectiveness of the respective exams. The students were given tests with 25 questions assessing their verbal and critical reading skills. On the SAT pretest, students demonstrated mastery at 40 percent. However, on the post test, the percentage increased by 5 percent to 45 percent, which proved a slight positive impact of the instruction in such a short time period. However, on the ACT pre-test, the students’ percentage reflected a marked positive impact. The pre-test scores demonstrated a mastery of 55 percent, which resulted from the retention of SAT instruction and immediate (next day) testing of students. The ACT post-test results showed an even greater increase. The students demonstrated a mastery of 70 percent, which reflected a 15 percent increase. Additionally, the ACT percentage increase in mastery was 3 times higher than the SAT mastery percentage. The results from the pre-test and post-test exams are shown in the graph below.

![SAT Verbal & Critical Reading Scores](image_url)

**SAT Verbal & Critical Reading Scores**

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SAT Pre

SAT Post
Based on the above charts, the students were able to increase the scores on both exams after an exam work week of instruction and exercises. Below are the individual student scores which contributed to the percentages in the above charts.
SAT Post-Test

ACT Pre-Test
Some students were able to take each of the four tests and are considered as the “all test group.” This group consisted of 23 students that took the SAT and ACT pre- and post-tests. The results of the group are given below. The all test group of students demonstrated a SAT pre-test mastery of 40 percent with an increase of 5 percent to 45 percent on the post test. Their SAT results were identical to the entire group. However, the all test group scores on the ACT were slightly higher. On their ACT pre-test, their mastery percentage was 65 with a post-test mastery of 80 percent, demonstrating an increase in percentage of 15 percent, which was identical to the entire group’s ACT results.

Below are the individual student scores which contributed to the percentages in the above charts.
Based on the results, the two-week vocabulary development and critical reading exercises aided the students in preparation for the SAT and ACT exams. Students with a higher attendance rate achieved higher scores than the students who obtained a lower attendance rate during the institute. This data indicated that attendance was a positive factor in efficacy of instruction and higher success in percentage of mastery.

In conclusion, based on the success of the students’ vocabulary development, enhanced critical reading skills, and knowledge and information from the standardized test websites, the institute proved to be a valuable experience with a higher return on investment.

**SAT/ACT MATH REPORT**

The Math component of the 2013 Back to Basics Summer Institute consisted of two weeks of intensive math drills for the SAT and ACT exams with one whole week devoted to each exam. Each week involved daily math problem drills that covered the exam subject area taught for that day. Students were given a pre-test before the week of drills and a post-test after a week of drills for each exam.

The SAT and ACT key areas covered were algebra, geometry, and probability, plus complex numbers. The ACT exam had an additional focus on trigonometry. Thus, the first week focused on algebra, geometry, and probability, while the second highlighted complex numbers and trigonometry.

**Results**

The students were given an SAT pre-test and then post-test, each 25 minutes in duration and consisting of 20 questions. The ACT pre-test was 30 minutes in duration and consisted of 30 questions. The ACT post-test was a full-length math section 60 minutes in duration and
consisted of 60 questions. The difference in time reflected the different testing formats for each exam. Since the ACT post-test was taken after all drills were completed, the opportunity was used to simulate actual testing conditions, given the completion of two weeks of drills.

1. Overall Results

Upon completion of a test, students were graded on correct answers. Since the tests consisted of a different number of questions, the scores were normalized to 100 for comparison. The overall results from the pre-test and post-test exams are given below by percentage.

![SAT/ACT MATH RESULTS](image)

Based on the above chart, overall the students were able to increase the scores on both exams after a week of drills. The increased overall SAT post-test score over the ACT post-test score was due to the increased time limitations on the ACT exam. The average test scores, however, still increased for each exam.

2. 4-Tests Completed Group

Some students were able to take each of the four tests and are considered as the 4-tests completed group. This group is notable because the group’s average SAT pre-test score is approximately equal to the overall group’s average SAT pre-test score, yet the 4-tests completed group’s remaining test scores on average are higher than the overall group’s test scores. Since the SAT pre-test was the first test before any drills, this may indicate that the 4-tests completed group may have benefitted more by being present for all drills and tests for each exam. The results of the 4-test completed group are given below.
Based on the results from both charts, the two-week intensive math drills aided the students’ preparation for the SAT and ACT exams. The percentage increase is lower for the ACT because the majority of the knowledge required for the ACT was necessarily learned during the week of SAT study. This is why the ACT average pre-test score is significantly higher than the SAT average pre-test score. Thus, the ACT percentage increase represents the knowledge increase from the study of complex numbers and trigonometry.

Moreover, students who were able to complete each day of the two weeks of drills and thus take each of the four tests given achieved a higher score on average than the other students who were not able to complete each day of the two weeks of drills. This may indicate that not only is attendance a positive factor in drill effectiveness, but perhaps increased weeks of drills may also be a positive factor in obtaining student readiness.

3. Individual Performance

The next two charts display individual results for all students and then results for the 4-tests completed subgroup, respectively. It is clear from the chart that the highest score achieved increased per exam.
As expected, each student was able to increase test scores based on the weekly drills. This is statistically significant because it shows that students were able to continuously increase individual skill sets as drills and testing increased.

**Conclusion**

Based on the aforementioned results, the program successfully increased the students’ preparation for the math section of the SAT and ACT exams. Moreover, this success was accomplished in only two short weeks of intense drills and practice. This is a direct result of the
paradigm of this program. Since the program’s paradigm equals success for its students, the Back to Basics Summer Institute can benefit many students for years to come.

**Summary of the Technology Program**
The objective of the technology program was to make teachers and students familiar with various technology tools that can make learning more entertaining and interactive. In the first week of the program, during the morning sessions, teachers were introduced to different software tools and innovative websites. The students were divided into groups and assigned a teacher mentor. As a group, they selected a literature piece that appealed to them the most.

During the two-week program, in the afternoon sessions, the student groups spent an hour further analyzing the literature and an additional hour in the computer lab visually presenting their analysis. The students used various software tools such as Windows Movie Maker and PhotoStory to create presentations using graphics, music and animation. The presentations were shown on the final day of the Back to Basics program to their peers, teachers, family and friends.

Over the course of the two-week program, teachers and students were taught how to utilize images and audio clips without violating copyright laws. They were also introduced to free websites and software tools for digital storytelling. Additionally, teachers were also introduced to websites where they could develop lesson plans, access educational video clips to enhance classroom instruction and effectively use Microsoft Office tools, such as mail merging and creating macros to automate tasks.

The teachers were very enthusiastic in their feedback about the technology program. One of the teachers has already setup a personal website and a blog for his non-profit organization. Some were already sharing their newly attained skills with family and friends. Some teachers were especially enthusiastic about implementing the technology tools learned in the upcoming academic year. The students were excited to learn about websites where they could download royalty-free high resolution images and background music. As a result, they were able to visualize their thoughts about the literature and better communicate their ideas with their family and friends.

**Summary of the Professional Development Program**
The theme for the Back to Basics Program 2013 was “Can We Talk: Connections and Disconnections: African American Literature and Technology. The professional development program included technological training and literature studies. During the sessions, a TSU faculty member taught technology application to include different software tools (Windows Movie Maker, PhotoStory, etc.) and innovative websites. Over the course of the two week program, teachers were taught how to utilize images and audio clips without violating copyright laws. They were also introduced to free websites and software tools for digital storytelling as well as websites where they could develop lesson plans, access educational video clips to
enhance classroom instruction and effectively use Microsoft Office tools, such as mail merging and creating macros to automate tasks.

Another component of the teacher professional development was the study of various literature pieces from Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise” and Elizabeth Brown-Guillory’s “Beacon Hill” to Langston Hughes’ “I, Too, Sing America.” Teachers studied, discussed, and explored the significance of the written text as it relates historically, culturally, politically, and socially.

After receiving professional development in the area of both technology and literature, teachers were taught how to help students integrate the literature pieces into a digital project. Teachers facilitated a group of students each day of the seminar, reinforcing learning objectives that were shared during teacher professional development. Teachers guided students through the development of their final digital storytelling project, which was presented at the program’s closing ceremony.

Program Successes

Student Testimonials
I love how [Dr. Peltier-Glaze] gave us [her] life stories and told us to never give up on ourselves."

"[Ms. Rizvi] is extremely knowledgeable. Thank you for everything."

"Dr. Peltier-Glaze's manner is vibrant and infectious. I can tell that she loves students, teachers and teaching. She is invaluable to this program."

"I want to also thank [Ms. Scruggs] for giving me excellent advice for SAT."

"[Mr. Kenyon] gave me good tips in math."

Parent Testimonials
"As a parent, I am very happy to see more time is being taken to educate inner city youth."
Keymesha Batts

"Thank you, Dr. Brown-Guillory, for allowing my child to experience as she would say 'two weeks of giving up sleep for a good time'. The exposure to the TSU campus has allowed her to feel closer to her goals." - Barbara Philips Williams

"I think this is a good thing to help all the kids. I am so proud of him!!" - LaDonna Lockett

Teacher Testimonials
"[The Back to Basics Institute met my needs very well. I have thought about and I was able to devise some new plans for media use in the classroom."
"[The program] placed me in a friendly learning environment of mutual respect where ideas could be shared among colleagues."
"I thoroughly enjoyed the technology training and the literature sessions. Also, the distinguished speakers were amazing."

Summary and Recommendations

Overall, the survey data, interviews and program observations support the value and impact of the Back to Basics Summer Institute.

Program Satisfaction

Students, parents, and teachers feel that the program is beneficial and will help prepare the students for college entrance. Students, parents, and teachers feel that the program is well organized and effectively implemented.

Quality of Program Staff

Program staff members were perceived as knowledgeable and supportive. Students, parents, and teachers also shared that program staff members were committed and passionate about working with the students.

Impact of Program

Students, parents, and teachers shared that as a result of the Back to Basics Summer Institute, students appear to be more focused on preparing to succeed in college. Several former participants are current students at the following colleges and universities: Texas Southern University, Texas Tech and Prairie View A&M University.

Teacher participants were also able to benefit from the program by acquiring strategies to incorporate in their own classrooms.

Future Plans

A future goal is to increase the amount of program participants, thereby increasing the funding amount. The program currently serves 50 students and 10 teachers. Projected enrollment for summer 2014 is 80-100 students and 15 – 20 teachers.

Recommendations

Whereas, students, teachers, and parents responded favorably about the program, recommendations for improvement were discussed among program staff. Currently, data is collected through qualitative measures only. In an effort to gather more comprehensive data and information, data-collection instruments will be revised to include both qualitative and quantitative measures, resulting in a mixed-method approach.
Appendix A

Back to Basics Summer Institute

Program Evaluation Questions

_____ Student (S)                                           _____ Teacher (T)

1. What skills did you learn in the Back to Basics Institute that you can use? (S/T)

2. What changes will you make in your instructional practice based on today’s program? (T)

3. How did the Back to Basics Institute program goals meet your needs? (S/T)

4. In what way(s) was the Back to Basics Institute useful to you? (S/T)

5. How will the Back to Basics Institute help you set future goals? (S)

6. Why did you participate in the Back to Basics Institute? (S/T)

7. Were the literature and technology classes beneficial to you? Why or why not? (S/T)

8. Did the Back to Basics Institute enhance your skills for college readiness? How? (S/T)

9. Which college do you plan to attend and what will you major in? (S/T)

10. What specific assistance would be helpful to you in implementing the new practices presented in this program? (S/T)

11. What will it take for you to implement the new practices/information provided in this program? (S/T)

12. What did you like most about the Back to Basics Institute? (S/T)

13. What did you like least about the Back to Basics Institute? (S/T)

14. What would you like to see this program offer next year? (S/T)
Appendix B

Back to Basics Summer Institute

Interview Questions

1. What year did you attend B2B?
2. Were the SAT/SAT Prep sessions beneficial to you?
3. Were the technology and literature sessions beneficial to you?
4. Did B2B enhance your skills for college readiness?
5. Are you in college or preparing for college? What college? Major?