

Vietnamese Friendship Association

**Saturday English School (SES)
2010-2011**

Program Report and Evaluation



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I. Overview

Summary: In partnership with the Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center (SBOC) and with School-Community Partnership funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, VFA continued the Saturday English School, (formerly Supplemental Educational Services) a Saturday morning ELL and Math program that capitalizes on federal monies available to help supplement our students' education. From October 16th, 2010 to May 7th, 2011, the 4-hour Saturday program continued to focus on developing English and math skills for the SBOC' diverse group of newcomers, with an additional component around parent education. This year, we served more than 90 students (47 of whom were SES Eligible) and 10 parents. Our students continued to make academic gains, with 86% improving their English level and 89% improving their math level throughout the year. Through the help of linguistically diverse teachers, IAs, and VFA staff and volunteers we provided more than 90 hours of programming to students, with more than 400 hours of volunteer time donated.



SES: SES is a component of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) that mandates schools that fail to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) to provide additional support to its low-income students. Federal funding is provided to these schools to hire Supplemental Service Providers to provide academic services. Parents of eligible students must choose these services from a list of qualified service providers, of which VFA is one.



As with past years, enough parents chose VFA as a provider to enable us to open the program up to all students at SBOC, regardless of federal eligibility. This means our volunteer instructors were key in keeping our federally mandated staff-to-student ratio low. We were also able to allow students to continue with the program after they completed their SES billable hours.

Any parent of an SBOC student was eligible for participation. After discussion with students and staff at the school, we agreed that other family members – older siblings or aunts/uncles – occupied the role traditionally handled by parents. We therefore opened up the program to any adults in the child's household who performed parental duties.

II. Program Design:

The program engages three strategies: 1. Saturday morning English and Math support for students, 2. Simultaneous ESL classes for parents and 3. Engaging parents and students in leadership and culture through planned activities, including providing input into lesson selection and program development.



Students: The current program uses Content Based Instruction (CBI), where students learn new vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation as it relates to a specific topic, along with math, which has proven to be challenging to students due to language barriers. A key factor to our approach is a mix of native language and English language support from staff hired from the SBOC (thus, they are familiar to the students), combined with a structured and rigorous curriculum. During each 4-hour session, students engaged in 2 hours of

English, 1 hour of math, a brief lunch, and another 45 minutes of teambuilding games that focused on vocabulary learned during the day. For math, students were placed into three levels, again based on their placement at SBOC. However, SBOC's math placement process is more diverse with five levels, so students from levels 1 and 2 were combined into one group, as were levels 4 and 5. During each session, students alternate between large group instruction and small group practice to develop skills based on the daily theme while reinforcing basic skills. At the end of the day, students were brought back together and played a group review activity that incorporated the day's vocabulary to help strengthen students' retention.

Parents: The student model was applied to parents, who learned ESL, computing, and other skills while their children focused on math and English. Multi-cultural staff, primarily from the SBOC, were hired as instructors. These pilot sessions lasted 16 weeks and took place at the same time and place, facilitating convenience in transportation for parents.

Goals: The goals of the program this year can be divided into three components:

1. *Academic Improvement:* Our primary goal is for students to increase their performance in math and literacy. Milestones included recruiting students, hiring and training qualified staff, and assessing performance levels at the beginning and the end of the program.
2. *Social & Cultural Development:* In addition to academics, we expected or students to develop an increased commitment to learning and to furthering their education. The milestones included developing a formal assessment strategy,



developing the appropriate tools, and doing pre and post-program assessments, which were a combination of surveys and teacher observations.

3. *Family Communication and Interaction:* Our pilot parent program was developed with support from the Family Literacy model, which supports families by empowering parents to retain the natural position of leadership through bilingual competency. The outcomes for this project were for parents to develop English skills, with milestones Parents developed technology skills, such as using email and computers, which will be helpful for them to monitor student progress, contact teachers, and find resources. Our final goal was for parents to increase commitment to supporting students' education.

III Demographics of Clients Served:

Recruitment:

Students were recruited in their native language advisory groups at the beginning of the year. The program was open to all students at SBOC, regardless of submission of the SES paperwork. After initial recruitment, staff visited the school weekly to remind students about the Saturday program as well as phone calls the evening before the program.



Staff were recruited based on teaching qualification, experience, and linguistic ability. This year we had three certificated teachers, two IAs, and two instructors with master's degrees in addition to our professional, college and high-school volunteers. Volunteers were also recruited. Of the 78 students for whom data was reported, either through enrollment documentation or surveys, we found the following:

- Economic Status: 100% were low-income, as measured by whether or not they received free or reduced lunch at school
- Sex: 56% female and 44% male
- Age: Ranged from 11 to 21
- School attended: 100% of students initially attended the SBOC, but some moved on to Cleveland, Ballard, Franklin and Roosevelt high schools while still attending the program.
- Linguistic breakdown: 43% Vietnamese, 18% Tigrigna, 16% Amharic, 9% Spanish, 8% Chinese. The rest of the students came from Burma, Cambodia, Thailand, Somalia, and other countries.

Clients served/Geographic areas:

This project benefited the parents and students of SBOC as well as former students who return for service learning credits. The key zip codes served in this project are 98118, 98144, 98108, 98106, and 98125. Approximately 95% of the clients served in this program were recent immigrants who arrived within the past 2 years who are low-income, as measured by free/reduced lunch.

IV. Partners

- **VFA** – Program design, implementation, evaluation and financial management.
- **SBOC** – Help with recruitment of staff and students, also donated space for March, April and May’s program hours.
- **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** – funding for the parent component of the program.
- **ReWA** – 21st Century Learning Center program partner.
- **Social Venture Partners (SVP)** – Development and support around new attitudinal assessment.

V. Accomplishments:

- Attendance: half of the students attended the program on 70% of days available, a 4% increase from last year.
- Attendance 2: While we need to improve on regular attendance, our program’s daily average rose above 60 students per day, up from 38/day in 2009-2010 and 26/day in 2008-2009.
- Improvement: 86% of students improved their English language scores by at least one level over the course of the school year.
- 89% of students improved their Mathematics scores by at least one level
- Direct Service Hours: The program provided more than 96 hours of direct service.
- Volunteer hours: Our program leveraged more than 500 hours of volunteer time
- Instruction: We increased our number of certificated staff members from 2 up to 3, affording us one teacher per classroom.
- Connected learning: All four of the instructors from the weekday program, through the 21st Century Community Learning Center, were also staff at the Saturday program.
- Our program again succeeded in increasing the overall number of students served, program days available and increased partnership with the school-day teachers.



VI. Problems Encountered

- Parent Program: There were many challenges with the Parent Program which are enumerated in section VIII.
- Staffing: As usual, about 50% of our daily attendance came from SES billable students, but we still had to maintain our ratio regardless of billing status, we had to cover the cost of many of the staff internally to maintain our 1:5 ratio. This year we were not able to leverage 21st Century Community Learning Center dollars as we were last year.
- Classroom division: We ended up with 2/3 of the students being at level 2 English, meaning we had to have two classrooms with these students. This meant we had to divide up the students evenly every Saturday, though due to irregular attendance, we were unable to assign students a classroom. Managing student and volunteer placement next year will be a high priority.
- Cliques: We had some trouble, as with last year, breaking students out of their linguistically-based groups. Next year we will focus on having more volunteers in the classroom to deter students from speaking only their home language.
- Funding: There continues to be a cash-flow challenge with this program due to the timing of the SES billing. While the program begins at the beginning of October, billing for complete hours cannot happen until the beginning of January, typically. This means reimbursement for services cannot happen 3-4 months *after* the program has been running and using funds.



VII. Program Evaluation

The assessment of this program was based on student performance on the SBOC's English and Math placement tests as well as a student attitudinal survey.

Student Academic Assessment

Below is the final data regarding math and English language scores for the 78 students for whom we had data.

	# increased by one or more levels	# maintained initial level	Total reported	% showing increase
Math	70	8	78	89%
English	67	11	78	86%

Student Attitudinal Assessment

Student attitudes were measured by a four-point Likert scale survey that VFA developed in partnership with Social Venture Partners. This survey measured a variety of student attitudes, including feelings about school and learning, pride for their home culture, and relationship with parents. Each question asked students rate their level of agreement on a four-point scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Surveys were given to students at the beginning of the

program, and again after the program ended. There were 42 students for whom we were able to track and compare data.

Regarding School

Four questions assessed student attitude toward school.

- It is important to me that I do well in school
- In my classes I enjoy sharing my ideas
- I get excited about learning new things
- I see connections between what I learn in school and my life.

Responses to these questions were averaged into an aggregate *school score*. Using a matched group t-Test, results from the survey indicate that there was an increase in students' attitudes toward family from pre-test ($m = 2.74$) to post-test ($m = 3.01$) (p less than .05).

Regarding Culture

Seven questions assessed student attitude toward their culture.

- I talk to other people about my culture
- I am proud to be from my culture
- I like to go to my cultural events, activities and holiday festivals
- I think that my culture is an important part of American culture
- I would like to learn more about my culture
- I want to continue speaking my home language
- I understand what is the same and different about my culture and American culture



Responses to these questions were averaged into an aggregate *culture score*. Using a matched group t-Test, results from the survey indicate that there were not differences in students' attitudes toward culture from pre-test 2.86 (pre-test) to 2.97 (post-test)

Regarding Families and Parents

Five questions assessed student attitude toward their culture.

- I talk with parents about how I am doing in school
- I talk with my parents about things other than school
- I talk with my parents about how things are going in my life
- If I had a problem, I feel like my parents would help me
- I like to spend my free time with my parents and family members

Responses to these questions were averaged into an aggregate *family score*. Using a matched group t-Test, results from the survey indicate that there were not differences in students' attitudes toward school from pre-test ($m = 3.08$) to post-test ($m = 3.13$).

Evaluation Summary

The academic data indicates that almost all of the students in the SES program demonstrated academic gains across both English language and Math measures. Furthermore, over the course of the program students' attitudes toward their school lives improved. We believe that being more involved with out-of-school-time activities are one of the key factors in this increase.

VIII. Parent Component

This year we piloted a parent component at the Saturday English School in an effort to deepen the impact. While there were a few success stories for individual participants, the overall program was rendered ineffective due to the following factors:

- **Recruitment:** We had anticipated more time spent recruiting parents by program staff. This never became a reality due to lack of preparation, planning, and lack of relationship with the parents.
- **Attendance:** The program was scheduled to serve 35 parents for 10 weeks, though there were only three parents who completed the 10 week session.
- **Scheduling:** We believe that our original research returned inaccurate results. Our surveys and interviews projected Saturday mornings as a good time to hold programs for this population. However, too many parents were not able to make it due to other commitments, despite VFA offering childcare and transportation reimbursement.
- **Transportation:** Many of the newly arrived parents do not drive and as such transportation to the school was difficult. The students have the same challenges but are required to take Metro buses for after school programs, and therefore have a network of knowledgeable peers they are able to access.

While we value the attendance of the parents who were able to be with us, and we applaud their progress, we have decided to terminate this component of the Saturday English School and focus on the youth entirely.

IX. Next Steps



We have many areas in which we need to improve, as we do every year, and they are listed below:

1. As previously mentioned, the program should refocus implementation around the students. This includes more time refining the program model and removing parts that are ineffective, such as the parent component.
2. **Data collection:** Our attendance, surveys and academic monitoring was collected better this year, though could still use improvement. Additionally, our data entry system needs to be refined and standardized from the onset of the program.
3. **Volunteer management & Training:** We continue to

receive high quality and highly committed volunteers to support the program. This year VFA needs to improve our support to our volunteers. From classroom assignment to instructional delivery training to communication, there needs to be a system in place to ensure volunteers are engaged in every aspect of the program.

4. World School: the SBOC has undergone a major transformation and will be offering credit-bearing classes for ninth grade students, with a grade level being added on every following year and offering diplomas in four year. As such, our program will have to adapt and increase the number of levels and the rigor of lessons to meet the needs of the increased population demands.

We yielded many successes this year, and continued to refine our program to respond to the needs of our students and families, and we look forward to another terrific and reflective year at the Saturday English School – a part of the new Seattle World School.

