

Scientifically-Based Research: High School ELL Program Effectiveness

Client. National Geographic School Publishing

The Challenge. As the population of students whose primary language is not English increases, there is a growing demand for English Language Learner (ELL) instruction at the high-school level. At the same time, buyers and users of such programs are demanding evidence of effectiveness before adoption. SEG's client, a publisher of ELL curriculum and instructional programs, recognized the importance of scientifically-based research (SBR) in proving program effectiveness. As a leading provider of scientifically-based research services, SEG was asked to design and implement a controlled study of program effectiveness.

The Solution. SEG designed and conducted a scientific effectiveness study of the client's ELL instructional program. A quasi-experimental design was used to investigate program effectiveness. More than 100 schools participated in the study, with half of the classes using the Publisher's instructional program, and the remaining half using traditional instructional practice. Analysis of Covariance was used to adjust for potential differences between the groups resulting from non-random assignment. The English language skills of both groups were measured at the beginning of the school year and at the conclusion of the school year. The proficiency of the two groups was compared statistically to determine if users of the program showed greater improvement. The effectiveness of the Program was described in a report for use by the Publisher and schools considering the Program.