



SES IQ²: June 2012 public webinar to review recent findings

Responses to participant questions in italics below the questions

Measuring the impact of SES on student learning:

Q: Will SES IQ² publish information regarding SES providers with positive impacts (successful) on student achievement?

Information on SES provider impacts for the five sites in our study is currently posted at this link on our study website: http://sesiq2.wceruw.org/documents/combined_provider_effects.pdf. We will be updating the website with 2010-11 provider effects information sometime in the coming months.

Q: Have you yet done any evaluation on the value of "enrichment" ie. music, art, athletics?

We do not have empirical analyses of the contributions of enrichment activities distinct from other activities in a SES session.

Q: In terms of assessing effectiveness of student achievement, have you reviewed any district which has used a 3rd party evaluation (pre- and post-test) to determine effectiveness?

We have examined third-party evaluations of SES completed in school districts that are participating in our study, as well as those in other districts. Our findings are generally consistent with these other studies, as we describe in several papers/reports on our website: <http://sesiq2.wceruw.org/papers.html>.

Q: Were these samples that were taken all inclusive of each model, one to one, web based, etc.. CPS is an LEA with large group tutoring with a minimum of 40 hours, how does that compare to one to one tutoring for say 24 hours?

Our study samples include a variety of SES program types and formats, including school based, home-based, community based, and web and/or computer-based formats—we examine these characteristics both qualitatively and quantitatively in our analyses. For example, in qualitative analysis, we are better able to observe actual groupings of students that give us a clearer picture of tutor-student interactions and ratios. We are still working on quantitative models to capture as much differentiation as possible in program offerings and to examine the influence of different approaches to tutoring students.

Q: What is the # of hours of instruction required for students to be included in the treatment group?

We include students with as little as 1 hour of SES in the treatment group, although we also estimate models that define treatment as reaching specific thresholds of hours attended, such as 20, 40 and 60 hours of SES.

Q: Were the students in the treatment group for Math tutored exclusively in Math, and were the

students used in the treatment group in ELA tutored exclusively in ELA. This would be a significant limitation if students tutored exclusively in ELA were counted in the Math treatment group.

In the data we received from school districts, most SES providers indicate that they plan to offer tutoring in both math and reading/ELA. The records for a given session do not indicate whether instruction was provided in reading, math or some fraction of one or the other.

Q: What about providers who tutored less than 40 hours? Some may have showed some effect was that measured.

We do report positive effects for some SES providers who tutored for less than 40 hours (see again the report at this link: http://sesiq2.wceruw.org/documents/combined_provider_effects.pdf). On average, we find statistically significant impacts are more likely to be observed when student SES attendance reaches 40 hours.

Q: Have you looked for evidence of fraud in your research? Some of these hours may not have actually occurred.

Early in our study, we saw inconsistencies in some data on invoiced hours and hours of SES attended by students with providers in one of our study sites. The district began cross-checking student signatures on invoices, and this helped to ameliorate the problem. The press has drawn attention to numerous cases of financial/invoice fraud with SES providers, but that is not the focus of our study.

Q: Have you studied the student completion rate vis-a-vis the # of hours in the program of any provider?

We have examined student completion of SES and are still working on developing this as a measure of treatment (that can be consistently defined across our study districts). Districts have different approaches to recording hours attended and program completion, which complicates this analysis (compared to the focus on hours of SES attended).

Q: The largest effects for ELLs and SWD were noted for SES in Chicago Public Schools. What was the difference between the private SES providers and the District provided SES?

As noted in this working paper on our website, http://sesiq2.wceruw.org/documents/Heinrich_Nisar_2011.pdf, we find that the district provider in Chicago Public Schools is, on average, more effective than other non-district providers in increasing student math and reading achievement. For ELLs, the district provider is significantly more effective than other providers in increasing reading achievement.

Q: What kind of training is available for tutors to improve their skills with ELL and SWD students?

There is limited training made available by providers to improve their skills with ELLs and SWD. One district in our study has tried to help build provider capacity in this and other areas by extending district-sponsored professional development to providers.

State and district policy:

Q: Have you examined the effects of facility use fees? Some districts now charge such high fees for facilities usage that providers are forced to move off-site. This tends to lower student participation.

Although we do not have data on facility-use fees, we are aware that access to district facilities

and/or the costs of facility usage affect hourly rates and the location of services. Our research suggests that on-site providers are, on average, more effective.

Q: Conversely, will the state policies and procedures correlating with those districts with less impact also be published?

This is an important question—we are working on ways to code and quantify these policy effects.

Q: Will you also publish the state policies and procedures of departments of education (i.e. Chicago) that led to positive impacts of the SES program on student achievement?

To the extent that we can quantify the effects of state policies and procedures on student achievement or document them well in the qualitative study, we will make this information available. We currently have four states and five sites in our study, which makes it challenging to draw empirical conclusions at this level.

Q: Hello, we are an SES provider. Regarding the idea of the performance based contract, I'm thinking that we can guarantee the number of hours a student receives, that they will receive a highly-qualified trained teacher to tutor. I wonder how I would guarantee student success?

To date, we have recommended performance-based contracts that include provisions for minimum hours of SES attended. We agree that this would be challenging to do with measures of impacts on achievement or effect sizes.

Q: How did you obtain information on students data regarding success or an increase in test scores associated with SES Providers? We as Providers are not given that information. I would like to have this information to use as a tool to better our program.

We have data sharing agreements with each of our study school districts and institutional review board approval from our universities to use these data. They have to be stored under special security provisions, and we submit to annual reviews. We are not able to share the data with any other entities. For these reasons, it might be difficult for providers to get access to these data.

Q: Does this study take into consideration that the parents select the subject that students must be tutored in when the parents submit the application? There are many situations where the student really needs math tutoring, but the parents selected reading.

We are aware of and have documented in our studies the lack of communication between parents, SES providers and schools in determining students' tutoring needs. We have made several recommendations in our reports for improving communication to better meet students' learning needs in tutoring.

Q: Do you foresee states setting rates?

We think that there needs to be a review of what factors should determine rate-setting for tutoring in SES, including factors such as where the tutoring takes place, the format, the instructional tools, forms of student-tutor engagement, etc. Until states and districts have more information in hand to systematically look at these factors, there may just be more arbitrariness in rate-setting.

Q: Your sites range across three states. What differences in the SEA administration of SES in each state's districts might impact the results you have seen?

Our sites range across four states. In each of these states, we have observed limited involvement of the SEAs in administration of SES. The districts have consistently reported that

the SEAs do not play a sufficiently active role in dismissing SES providers that might be fraudulent and/or ineffective in delivering SES (after receiving information from the districts about these problems).

Q: Even with fluxed attendance for high school students, I think interventions are valuable...will SES continue to be allowed to work w/HS students?

We make a recommendation that resources should be shifted from high school students to those in lower grades, because of the lower rates of attendance and engagement of older students. In cases where there are not sufficient funds to serve all eligible students, we think it makes sense to prioritize access for students for whom we are more likely to observe positive effects of SES. But this is our recommendation, not a formal policy.

Q: What are some of those other variables that make SES in Chicago effective other than lower hourly rates and more hours?

Chicago (CPS) reports using school-based coordinators of SES programs to improve program management. For the district tutoring provider, only teachers that teach at CPS during the regular school day are eligible to be tutors in SES.

Structure of this study:

Q: You mention that you have an observation instrument. What other instruments are available for us to use at this time?

We appreciate your interest. We also have developed focus group and interview guides to gather information on parents' and tutors' perspectives on program challenges and best practices. These instruments are available upon request.

Q: I am a small provider, however a Provider of Educators who are committed to making a positive difference and doing so utilizing Certified teachers. I do not feel represented in this study, although I feel this study is very beneficial. I would like to have a voice in your research.

We appreciate your comment. We are not able to estimate provider-specific effects of small providers (serving less than 30 students), as this would be unfair to small providers who might have average impacts skewed by a few students. But we encourage you to get in touch with us, and we will look for a way to further involve you in our study.

Q: Can you speculate about how your results might be different had you studied districts that didn't cut across the nation in the middle, north to south? Or had you studied districts that were not large urban areas?

It is difficult for us to speculate in this way. We intentionally chose larger districts in order to give us the statistical power necessary to estimate SES impacts and provider impacts. We are planning to expand in the coming academic year by including a large school district in the west, which still leaves us under-represented in other geographical areas. However, our SES provider sample does include providers that operate throughout the nation.

Q: When will this study end and final results be shared? Has AISD's TTIPS Only had a negative impact on the study?

We have not evaluated AISD's TTIPS program. We will continue to share study results as they become available on our study website.