

RESEARCH BRIEF

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
 Center for Research & Development in
 Dual Language & Literacy Acquisition

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
 Education Leadership
 Research Center

Summer Leadership Institutes for School Leaders Serving Underserved Campuses

Beverly J. Irby, Ed.D., Rafael Lara-Alecio Ph.D., Fuhui Tong, Ph.D., Donna Druery, ME.d., Roya Pashmforoosh, Ph.D., Nariman Eljaouhari, ME.d., Kara Sutton Jones, Ph.D., Hailey Harris, M.S., & Matthew J. Etchells, Ph.D.

Introduction

We focused on enhancing instructional leadership for underserved schools at the campus level via a summer leadership institute (SLI) over three summers, two within the grant, and one currently in planning for 2020. In addition to the significant increase in their perceived leadership competency scores, the participants were also more likely to rate themselves as competent in the leadership competency categories after completing the SLI program. The SLI participants felt more equipped with highly useful leadership skills and knowledge for impacting the schools and programs that serve a large number of low-income and English Learning (EL) students and their families after participating in the intensive professional development (PD) offered by the SLIs.

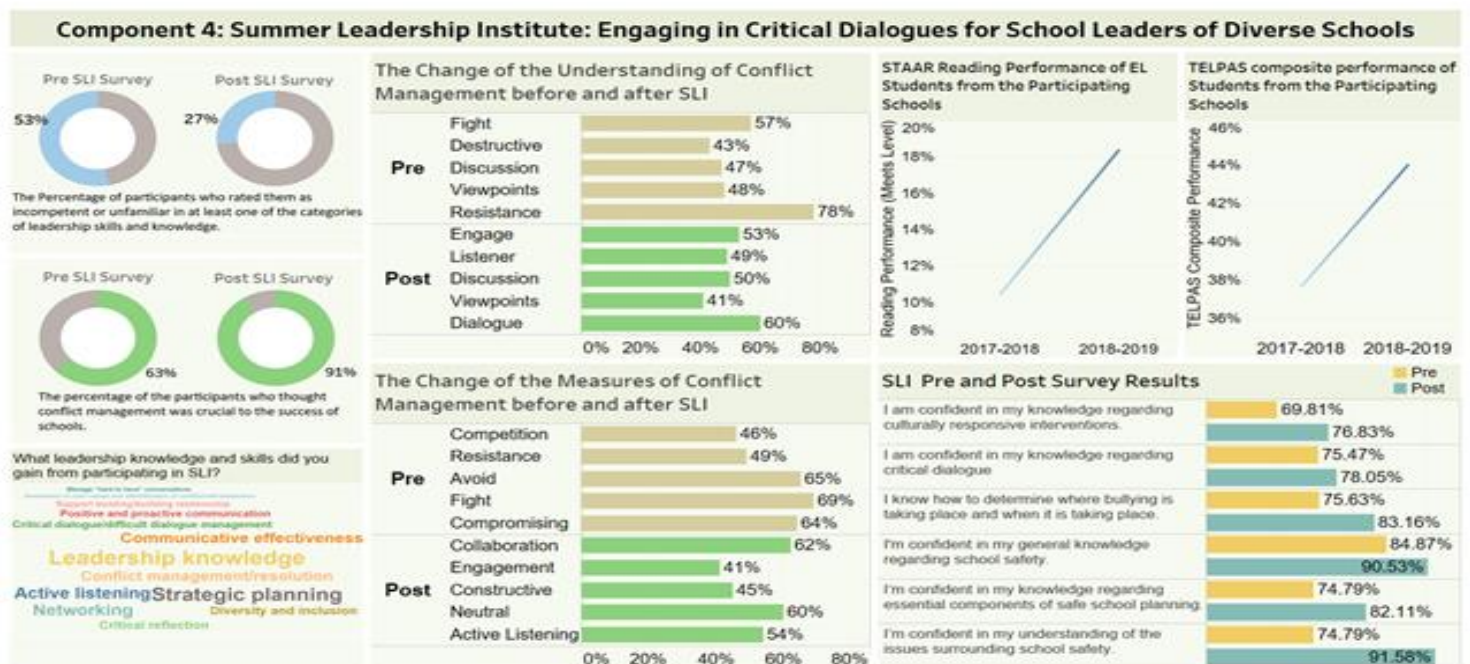


Figure 1. Effectiveness of A-PLUS Component 4 SLI for Campus Leaders.

Summer Leadership Institutes for School Leaders Serving Underserved Campuses

A pre- and post-survey study was conducted to evaluate the effect of the SLI on participants' professional learning and growth. In general, the total Mean of leadership competency reported by participants ranged from 3.18 in the pre-survey to 4.45 in the post-survey (the highest score was 5). In addition to the significant increase in their perceived leadership competency scores, the participants were also much less likely to rate themselves as incompetent in any category after completing the program. Before attending the SLI, 53% of the participants rated them as incompetent or unfamiliar in at least one of the categories of leadership skills and knowledge, while this number dropped to 27% after completing the SLI.

Conflict Management

Regarding one of the most important topics, which is "Conflict Management", after completing the SLI, participants' understanding shifted from negative or passive to positive and their strategies for dealing with conflicts in school settings shifted from avoidance to more proactive and cooperative strategies. For example, after completing the SLI, the participants' understanding of conflicts shifted from negative or passive to positive and their strategies for dealing with conflicts shifted from avoidance to more proactive and cooperative strategies.

The results indicated that the percentage of participants who selected negative terms relating to conflict dropped significantly from pre-survey to post-survey regarding the following: (a) "Fight" (from 57% to 13%); (b) "Destructive" (from 43% to 14%); and (c) "Resistance" (from 78% to 16%). In terms of the ways of coping with conflicts, the participants' perception has significantly shifted from "compromise" (54% to 21%) to "collaborate" (from 14% to 52%) after attending the SLI. Furthermore, the participants' attitudes regarding the importance of conflict management to a successful school organization has changed significantly after the SLI, from 45% of them thought it was important in the pre-survey to 91% in the post-survey.

Results from analyzing opening-ended questions revealed specific aspects that the participants thought were effective and had positive impacts on their professional growth such as the innovative design of PD activities, intriguing topics, critical dialogue, engagement and supportive learning materials (see Figure 2).

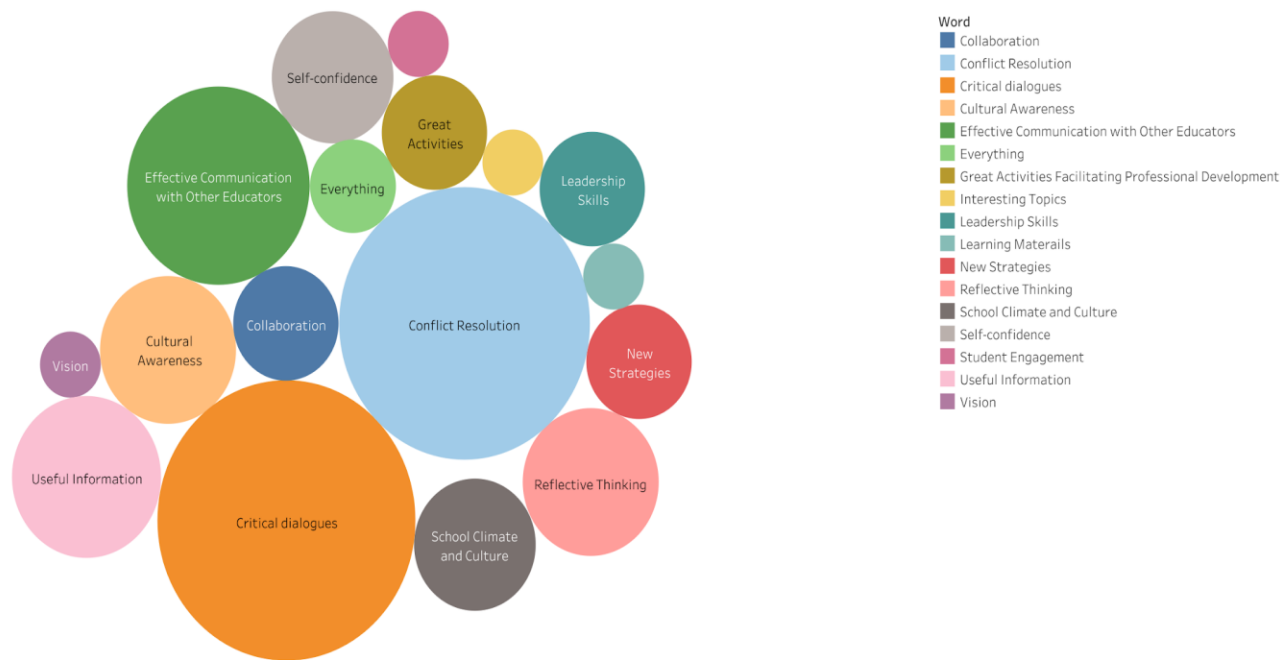


Figure 2. Benefits and Take-aways in SLI.

Critical Dialogues and Action on Safety and Challenges in Schools

The topic of this SLI was “Critical Dialogues and Action on Safety and Challenges in Schools”. The perceived overall quality of the SLI was evaluated on a 5-Likert Scale based on the following items: (a) content, (b) approaches, (c) organization, and (d) support. The Mean of the rating ranged from 3.83 to 4.35, with an overall Mean of 4.07 and standard deviation of 0.85. Participants had very positive evaluation regarding the overall quality of the SLI. For instance, for the content of SLI, 95.79% of participants rated highly regarding the organization of the SLI. In addition, 93.68% of the participants indicated that the content of SLI was understandable and helpful. Furthermore, participants were asked to rate whether the information presented at the SLI met their expectations. The Mean of the rating was 4.24 with a standard deviation of 0.57. Most of the participants (98.95%) demonstrated that the information presented at the SLI met or was above their expectations. Moreover, 90.53% of participants indicated that they agreed that the SLI helped them enhance their teaching and leadership competencies.

Peer Coaching and Professional Learning Communities

The topic of this SLI was “Peer Coaching and Professional Learning Communities”. The perceived overall quality of this SLI was evaluated based on the following aspects of the SLI, including: (a) content, (b) organization, (c) approaches, and (d) support. The Mean of the rating ranged from 4.05 to 4.50 with an overall Mean of 4.26 and standard deviation of 0.82. In general, participants had very positive feedback regarding the overall quality of the SLI. For instance, 89.30% of the participants rated good or very good regarding the content of the SLI. Specifically, regarding the different aspects of the content, 83.97% of the participants agreed that the content of the SLI is understandable. Furthermore, participants were asked to rate whether the information presented at the SLI met their expectations. The Mean of the rating was 3.62 with a standard deviation of 0.92. Most of the participants (89.31%) indicated that the information presented at the SLI met or was above their expectations. In addition, 83.21% of participants rated that they agreed that the SLI was helpful for them in improving their teaching and

leadership competencies.

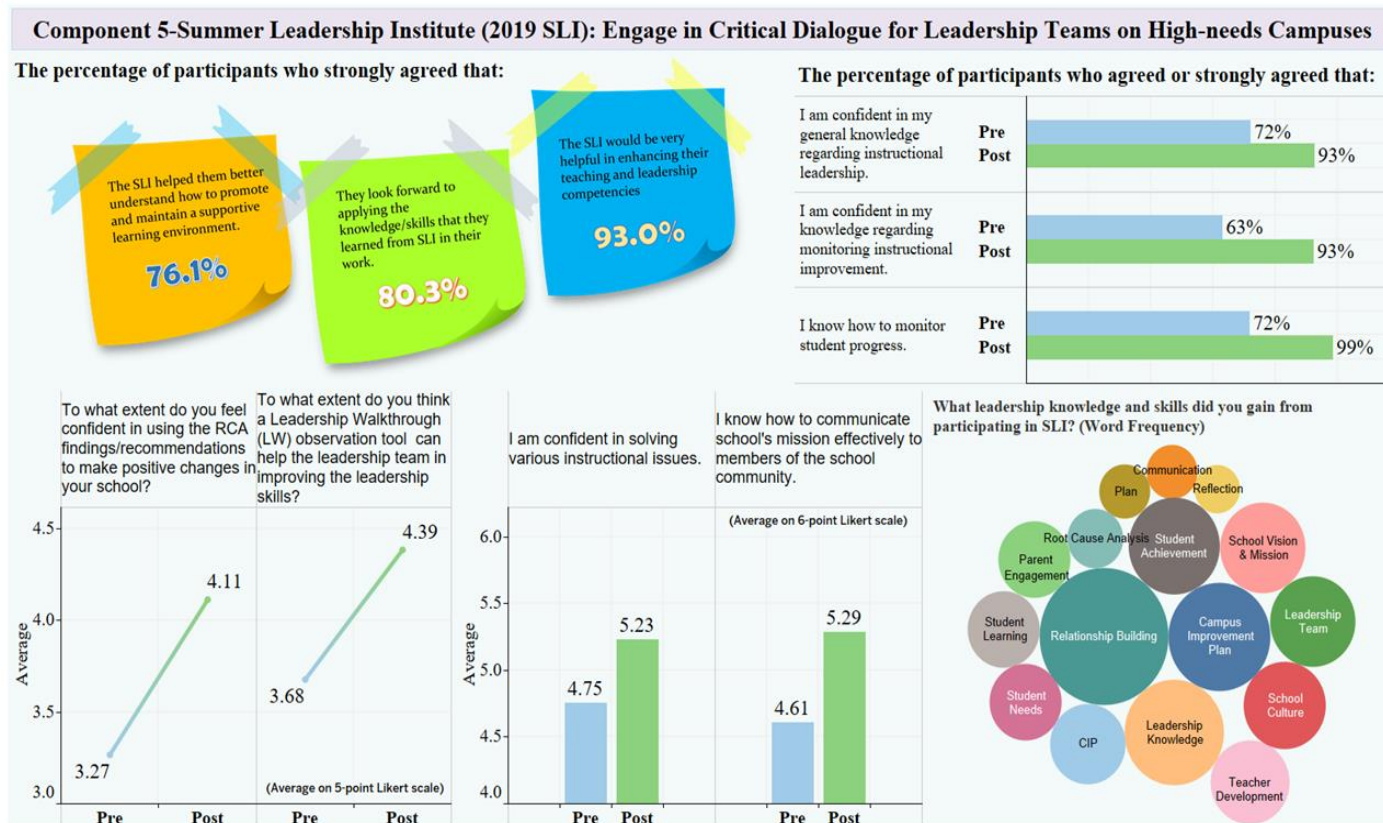


Figure 3. Effectiveness of A-PLUS Component 4 SLI for Campus Leaders.

Dual Language and Literacy Institute (DLLI)

The perceived satisfaction regarding the content of the DLLI was evaluated in terms of its suitability, consistency, and usefulness on a 6-Likert scale. The overall Mean of the rating was 5.86, and the standard deviation was 0.37. In total, 98% of the participants agreed that the content of the DLLI training was “suitable to my level of experience” and “interesting”. 98.33% of participants agreed that the content of DLLI training was “up-to-date”, “consistent with description” and “useful to my work”. In terms of whether the DLLI training met the participants’ expectations, participants were asked to rate the question as: “How well did the information presented meet your expectations?”. 98.33% of the participants indicated that the information presented in the DLLI training met their expectations, and 90% of them stated that it was very likely that they will recommend this institute to their colleagues.

Review and comparison of Campus Improvement Plans (CIP) pre SLI and post SLI

Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs) have been evaluated via content analysis before and after 2019-SLI to identify campus improvement. The research team utilized content analysis for 54 CIP documents (27 schools over the two years of 2017-2018 and 2018-2019) to see if there were any improvements identified in those documents, and the extent to which the CIPs were reliable tools for informing school leaders’ decisions. The preliminary findings of the analysis of the four domains of the CIPs (a) school mission and vision; (b) campus needs assessment; (c) improvement goals; and (d) school wide program indicated some positive changes in many of the

CIPs' domains as follows:

School Mission and Vision: Notable improvements were identified in the wording of the mission and vision of many schools. In the CIPs of 2017-2018 CIPs, the mission of various schools was more of superficial and not very specific to inform the actions needed to be taken by the school leaders to attain the school vision. However, the wording of both the mission and the vision improved over the two years of the analysis.

Campus Needs Assessment (CNAs): In the CIPs of 2017-2018, a number of schools did not include their CNAs in the CIPs and it was not clear how the leadership teams would be working on addressing the school needs if those needs were not identified in their CIPs. The domain of the CNAs, however, is still a work in progress because even with more schools including their needs in the CIPs of 2018-2019, not many of them included strategies to address those needs.

Improvement Goals: There are some improvements in this domain as well, but more work is still needed so that the goals are more explicit and realistic to inform the leadership teams' improvement decisions. Particularly, in the CIPs of 2017-2018, some schools included district goals, but did not include school goals. Other schools included goals that were not representing all areas needing improvement. For example, some schools set goals for improving student achievement, without including goals on teacher professional development for enhancing student achievement, or promoting family engagement.

School Wide Programs: The school wide programs, in which the schools are expected to include specific strategies and improvement programs for addressing the school needs, is still a work in progress. Few schools included strategies that are clear and informed by the school needs. Many schools did not provide explicit information in this domain. It would be beneficial that our team discuss with the school leaders in the coming SLI the relationship between CNAs, goals and the strategies included in this domain in order to assist develop strategies more relevant to their school needs.

The Effectiveness of Summer Leadership Institute (SLI): Voices from Participating School Leaders

Developing school leaders to assume leadership positions and meet education standards of accountability for student achievement has been critical for principals given the greater demand for productivity. This report provided an overall evaluation of the Summer Leadership Institute (SLI) for Texas school leaders. A total of ten school leaders participated in the focus group interview session after completing the SLI. The participants reported positive feedback on their perceived instructional leadership and increased knowledge and skills. The interview findings fell into different categories regarding the SLI efficacy and quality, relevance of the SLI, and their interactions.

In general, the participants' interview responses revealed that this PD: (a) provided principals with leadership support, (b) improved their instructional practices, and (c) resulted in school improvement and student learning, and their connections. In particular, the school leaders' interviews regarding their professional growth and efficacy of the SLI program revolved around: (a) the strategies they used for turning around or enhancing their campus; (b) the possible ways they involved in campus improvement plan (CIP) and revisited their plans during the school academic year; and (c) the degree of their engagement in critical dialogues and conflict management skills

based on the information they received after the SLI. The principals suggested further evidence-based PD programs for school leaders to equip them with tools and resources to influence school effectiveness

Determining the impact of the SLI has on student achievement on the campus where the principal and leadership team serve

STAAR and TELPAS data in 2017-18 and 2018-19 school year was collected to assess the changes of student achievements before and after the SLI. STAAR results from *t*-tests indicated that after attending the SLI, students' academic achievements in the participating school districts between 2017-18 and 2018-19 have increased significantly as given below.

At the meets-grade-level, EL students' reading performance in 2018-19 was significantly different from that in 2017-18 ($p < .05$). The reading achievement, on average, increased significantly from 10.47% (SD = 12.99%) in 2017-18 to 18.39% (SD = 17.39%) in 2018-19. The result yielded a medium effect size ($d = .52$).

Similarly, the reading performance among EL students at meets-grade-level was also significantly different between 2017-18 and 2018-19 ($p < .05$, $d = .35$). The average reading performance increased significantly from 12.04% (SD = 16.43%) in 2017-18 to 21.12% (SD = 17.81%) in 2018-19.

At the masters-grade-level, the 2018-19 reading achievements among both ESL and LEP students were significantly different from those in 2017-18. Specifically, the average reading score among ESL students increased from 3.97% (SD = 6.49%) in 2017-18 to 9.86% (SD = 12.18%) in 2018-19 ($p < .05$). The reading performance, on average, increased from 5.43% (SD = 8.13%) in 2017-18 and 9.88% (SD = 10.93%) in 2018-19 ($p < .05$). Both tests yielded the medium effect sizes with *Cohen's d* as .62 and .46, respectively.

Reading performance among Hispanic students at the masters-grade-level was also significantly different between 2017-18 and 2018-19 ($p < .05$, $d = .29$). The average reading performance increased significantly from 9.46% (SD = 9.32%) in 2017-18 to 12.53% (SD = 11.96%) in 2018-19.

The writing achievements among female students at approaches- and masters-grade-levels increased significantly from 2017-18 to 2018-19. Specifically, the average writing performance at the approaches-grade-levels increased from 55.68% (SD = 13.22%) in 2017-18 to 66.61% (SD = 19.89%) in 2018-19 ($p < .05$). The writing achievement at the masters-grade-level, on average, increased from 4.55% (SD = 4.02%) in 2017-18 to 9.78% (SD = 7.75%) in 2018-19 ($p < .001$). The mean comparison at the approaches-grade level yielded a medium effect size with *Cohen's d* of .64, while that yielded a large effect size at the masters-grade-level ($d = .84$). Writing performance among economically disadvantaged students at the masters-grade-level was also significantly different between 2017-18 and 2018-19 ($p < .05$, $d = .61$). The average writing performance increased significantly from 3.68% (SD = 4.68%) in 2017-18 to 7.39% (SD = 7.02%) in 2018-19.

TELPAS results from the *t*-test indicated that the TELPAS composite achievements (i.e., the overall level of English language proficiency in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) increased significantly from 2017-18 to 2018-19 ($p < .05$). The TELPAS composite performance, on average, increased from 37.66% (SD = 15.98%) in 2017-18 to 44.03% (SD = 13.5%) in 2018-19. The result yielded a medium effect size ($d = .43$).