

Analyzing the Impact of ESOL/ELL School Counselor Ratios on Student Outcomes

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Summary of Findings

$n = 30$ elementary; $n = 19$ middle; $n = 20$ high school; $n = 1$ K-12) where FAU graduate-level trained ESOL school counselors were placed between the years of 2001 and 2019. To evaluate the differences in the schools before these school counselors were employed at the school and then after they were hired, paired samples t-tests were used. To evaluate the magnitude of the findings, Cohen's d was also computed. Traditionally, an effect size of .2 is considered low, .5 is considered medium and .8 or above is considered a large effect size (Watson, Lenz, Schmit & Schmit, 2016). Significant results of the paired samples t-tests follow:

Achievement Data:

- **Promotion Rate** (*researchers hypothesized this would increase*)
Before the additional ESOL school counselors were employed, the promotion rate was 83%, while after the promotion rate was 85%. A paired samples t-test was run from just before the ESOL school counselors were employed in the school, and three years after they were employed (when they completed their master's program). The difference was significant ($t(62) = -2.398, p = .01, d = -.302$). The effect size was in the small to medium size range.
- **Retention Rate** (*researchers hypothesized this would decrease*)
Before the additional ESOL school counselors were employed, the retention rate was 16.4%, and after the retention rate was 14.0%. A paired-samples t-test was run from just before the ESOL school counselors were employed in the schools and three years after, and the difference was significant ($t(63) = 3.931, p < .001, d = .455$). The effect size was in the small to medium size range.
- **Average GPA** (*researchers hypothesized this would increase*)
Before the additional ESOL school counselors were employed, the average GPA was 2.48 and after the rate was 2.57. A paired-samples t-test revealed a significant difference ($t(18) = -4.025, p = .001, d = -.923$) between before the ESOL school counselors were employed in the schools and three years after they were employed. A large effect size was reported.
- **Proficiency Level on Standard Assessment in Geometry** (*researchers hypothesized this would increase*)
The proficiency level on standardized assessment in geometry was 68.3% before the additional ESOL school counselors were employed, and after the proficiency level in geometry was 71.3%. Results of a paired-samples t-test indicated significance ($t(18) = -5.7793, p < .001, d = -1.329$). The effect size was in the large size range.

- Graduation Rate** (*researchers hypothesized this would increase*)
 Before the additional ESOL school counselors were employed, the graduation rate was 78.9%, and after the school counselors were employed, the graduation rate was 83%. A paired-samples t-test was run from just before the ESOL school counselors were employed and three years after, and the difference was significant ($t(12) = -1.9540, p = .037, d = -.507$). The effect size was in the medium size range.
- Number of Students in Course Recovery** (*researchers hypothesized this would decrease*)
 The number of students in course recovery was 82.11% before the additional ESOL school students in course recovery was 59.11%. A paired-samples t-test was run, and the difference between these two points in time approached significance ($t(8) = 1.789, p = .056, d = .596$). The effect size was in the medium size range.

Attendance Data:

- Number of Students Absent 21 or More Days** (*researchers hypothesized this would decrease*)
 The number of students with 21 or more days absent was 82.38 before the additional ESOL number of students absent 21 or more days was 97.95. A paired-samples t-test was run from just before the ESOL school counselors were employed in the school, and three years after they were employed. The difference was significant but needs further investigation. ($t(63) = -2.346, p = .011, d = -.293$). The effect size was in the small to medium size range.
- Percent of Students Absent 21 or More Days** (*researchers hypothesized this would decrease*)
 Before the additional ESOL school counselors were employed, the percentage of students with 21 or more days absent was 6.2%, and after the school counselors were employed the percentage of students with 21 or more days absent was 7.4%. A paired-samples t-test was

Behavior Data:

20-year period, results cannot definitively be attributed to the addition of the ESOL school counselors alone. Rather, the addition of these key personnel with specific training to address the needs of these underrepresented groups is likely one factor that contributed to student gains. Other contributing factors might include the implementation of evidence-based prevention curriculum, early identification and intervention for students in need, and a positive school culture and climate.

About the ASCA Research Grants

The American School Counselor Association awards research grants for projects examining the effectiveness of comprehensive school counseling programs, particularly the ASCA National Model, in improving student outcomes; projects investigating the optimal school-counselor-to-student ratio(s); and other projects that advance school counseling practice. ACT has provided funding support for the grants. Learn more about ASCA at schoolcounselor.org.