

Welcome to the Webinar!

Designing a Structured Immersion Model for English Language Learners: Learning From the Success of Synergy Academies

We will be starting soon.



Designing a Structured Immersion Model for English Language Learners: Learning From the Success of Synergy Academies

March 23, 2012



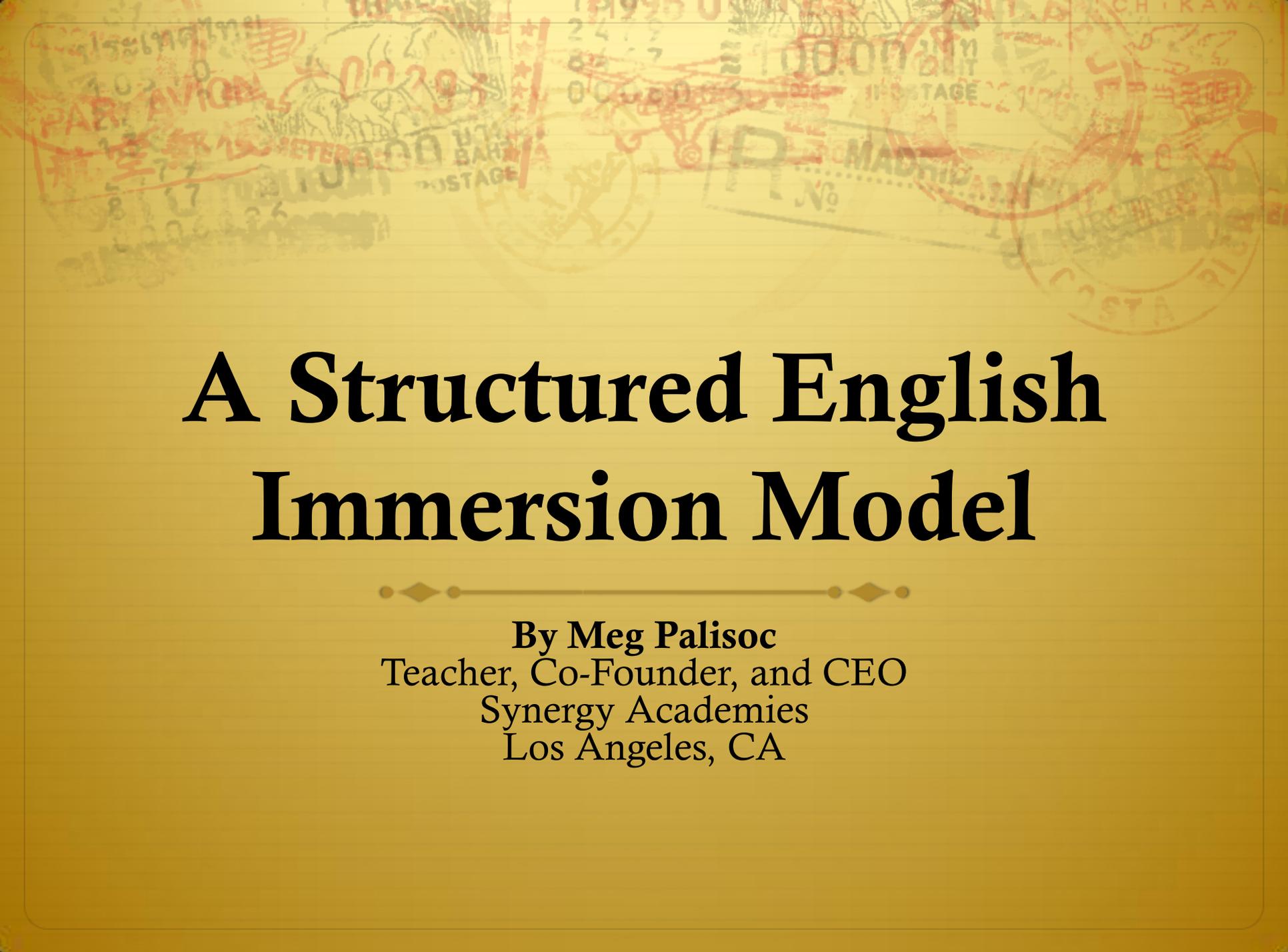
About the Resource Center

The **U.S. Department of Education** is committed to promoting effective practices, providing technical assistance, and disseminating the resources critical to ensuring the success of charter schools across the country. To that end, the Education Department, under a contract with American Institutes for Research, has developed the **National Charter School Resource Center**.

Presenter

Meg Palisoc

Teacher, Co-Founder, and CEO
Synergy Academies



A Structured English Immersion Model

◆ —◆
By Meg Palisoc
Teacher, Co-Founder, and CEO
Synergy Academies
Los Angeles, CA

Presenter's Background



- ✧ Former university administrator
- ✧ Became an inner city elementary school teacher
- ✧ Started three charter schools:
 - ✧ Synergy Charter Academy (gr. K-5) in 2004
 - ✧ Synergy Kinetic Academy (gr. 6-8) in 2008
 - ✧ Synergy Quantum Academy (gr. 9-12) in 2011
- ✧ Not a direct feeder pattern:
 - ✧ 80% of students at Synergy's middle and high schools did not attend a Synergy school prior to enrollment

Synergy's Mission



To eliminate the achievement gap that has persisted for generations among educationally disadvantaged students

SYNERGY

Est. 2004

ACADEMIES

Synergy's Demographics

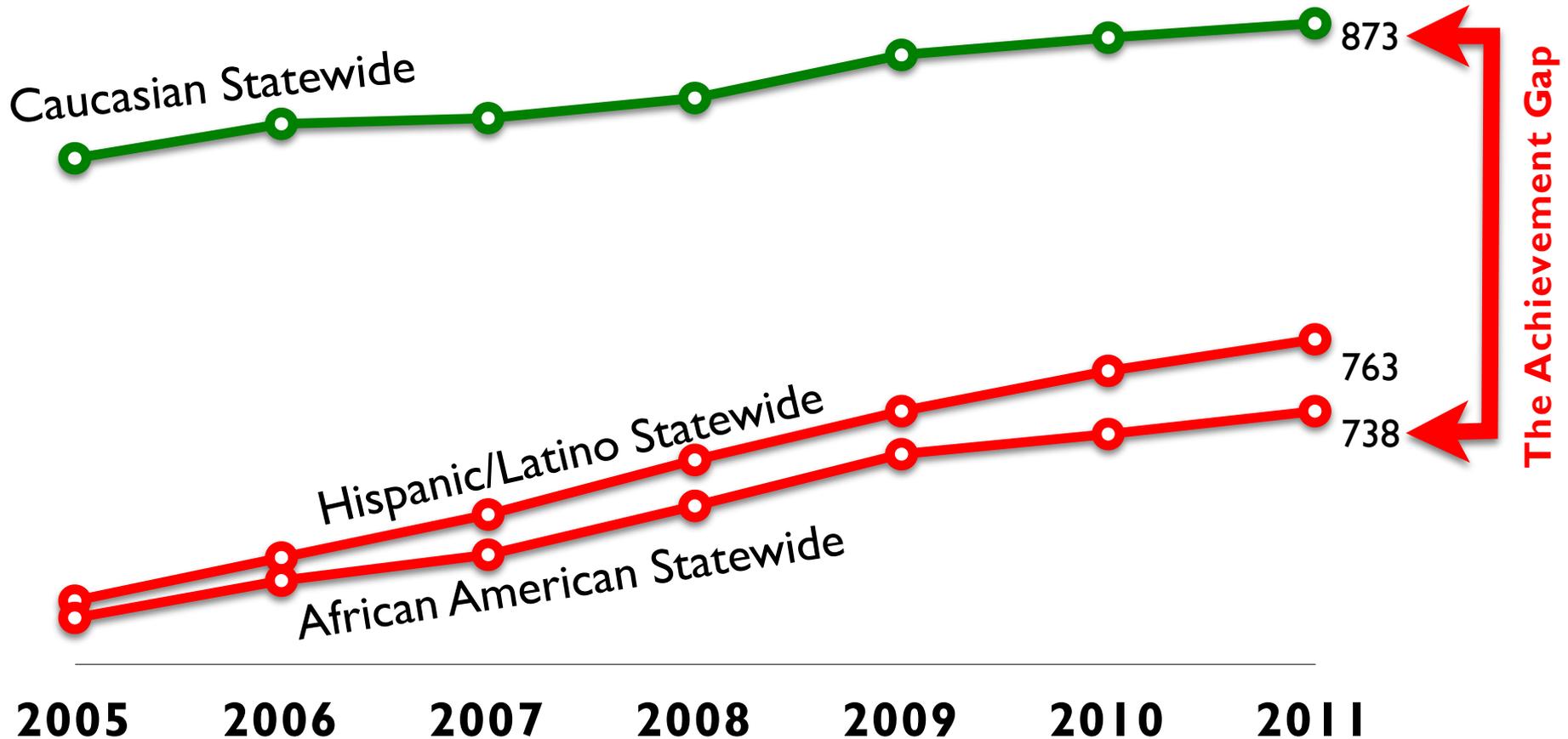
Location of Schools: South Los Angeles, CA (*historically known as "South Central"*)

- ✦ 90-97% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch
- ✦ 22-52% English Learners (100% Spanish-speaking)
- ✦ 8-10% Special Education
- ✦ 92-96% Latino
- ✦ 3-8% African American
- ✦ 0-1% Other



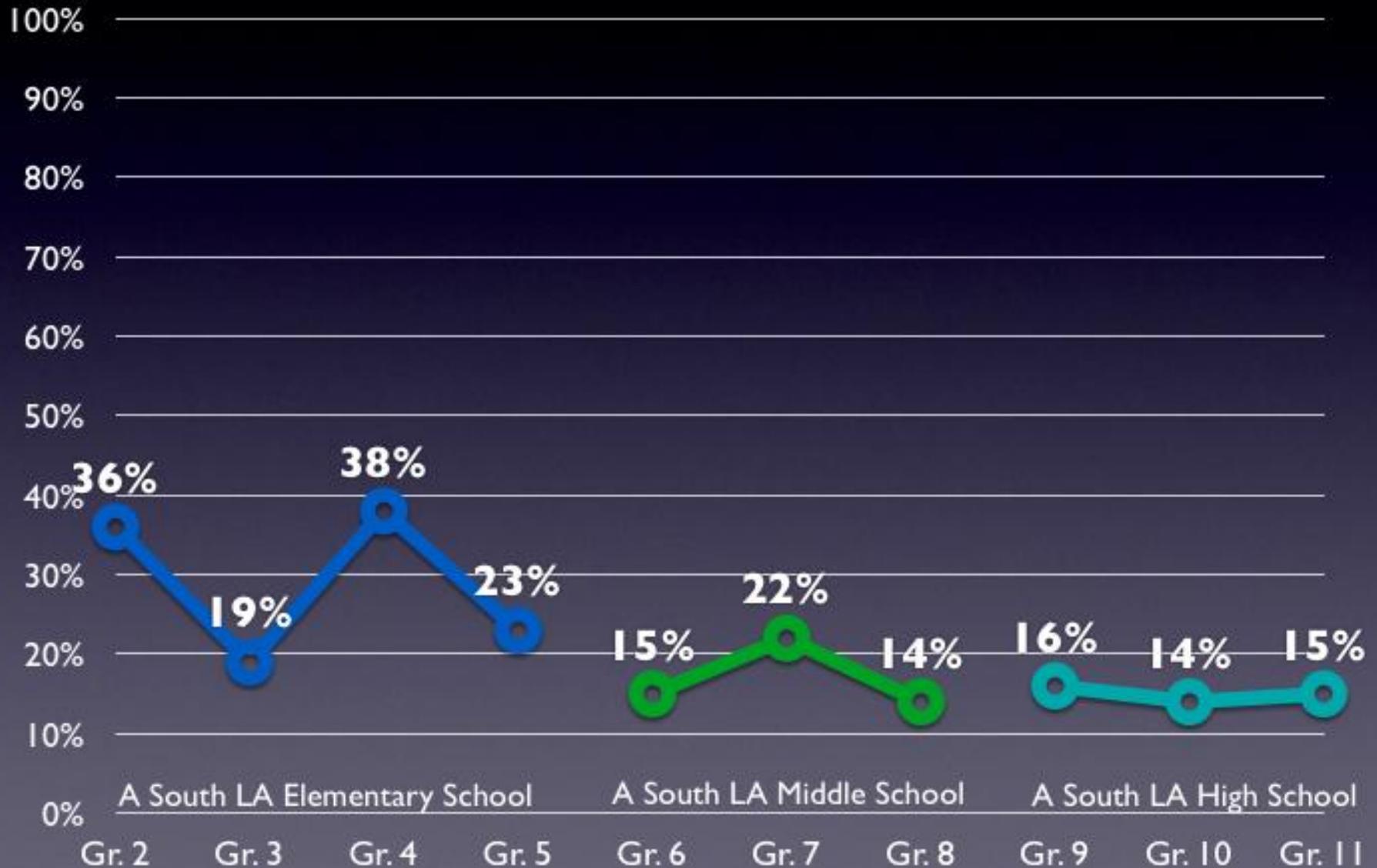
The Achievement Gap in California

Elementary Academic Performance Index Scores • 2005 to 2011



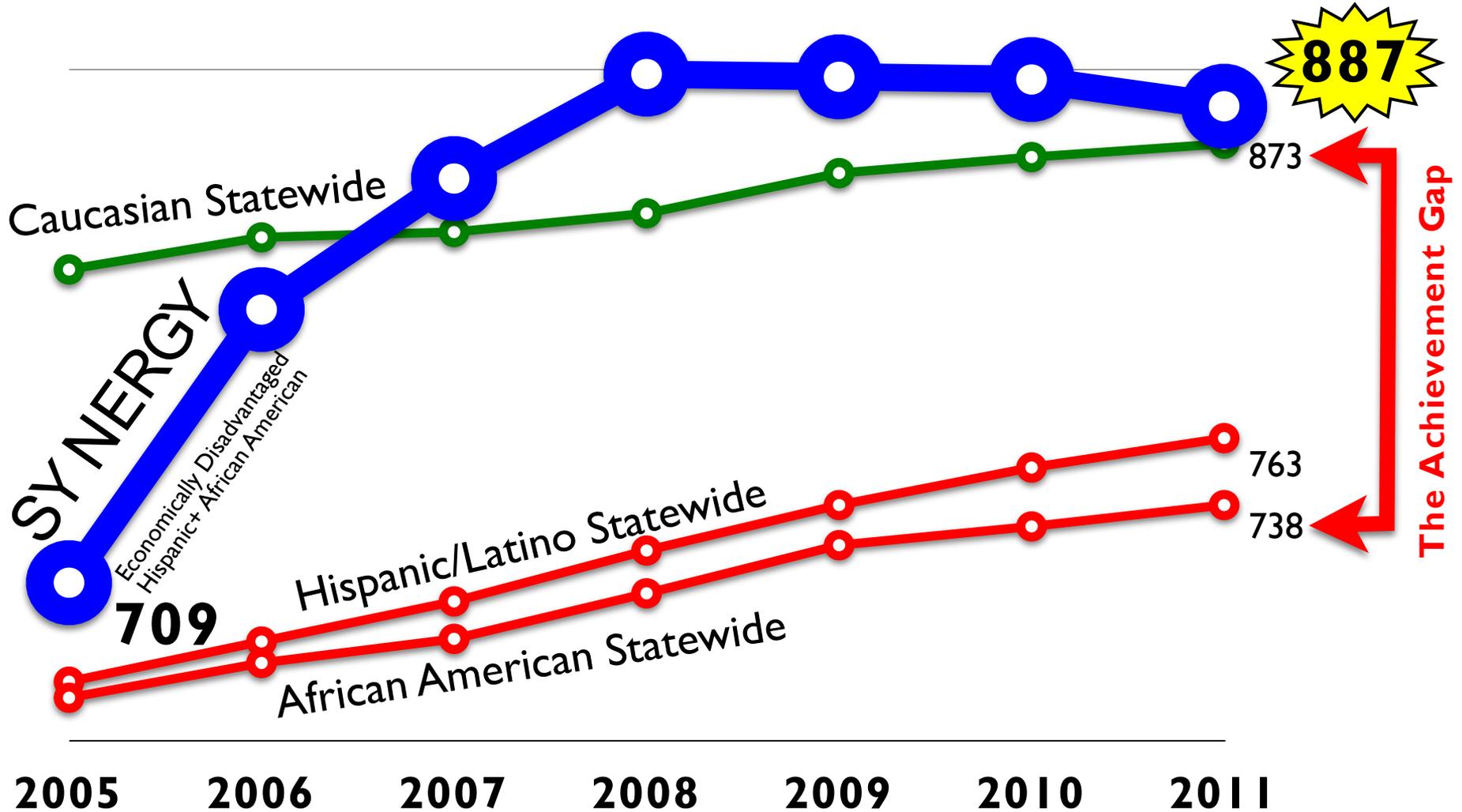
2011 Neighborhood Reading Proficiency

(% at or above grade level in reading based on state standardized tests)



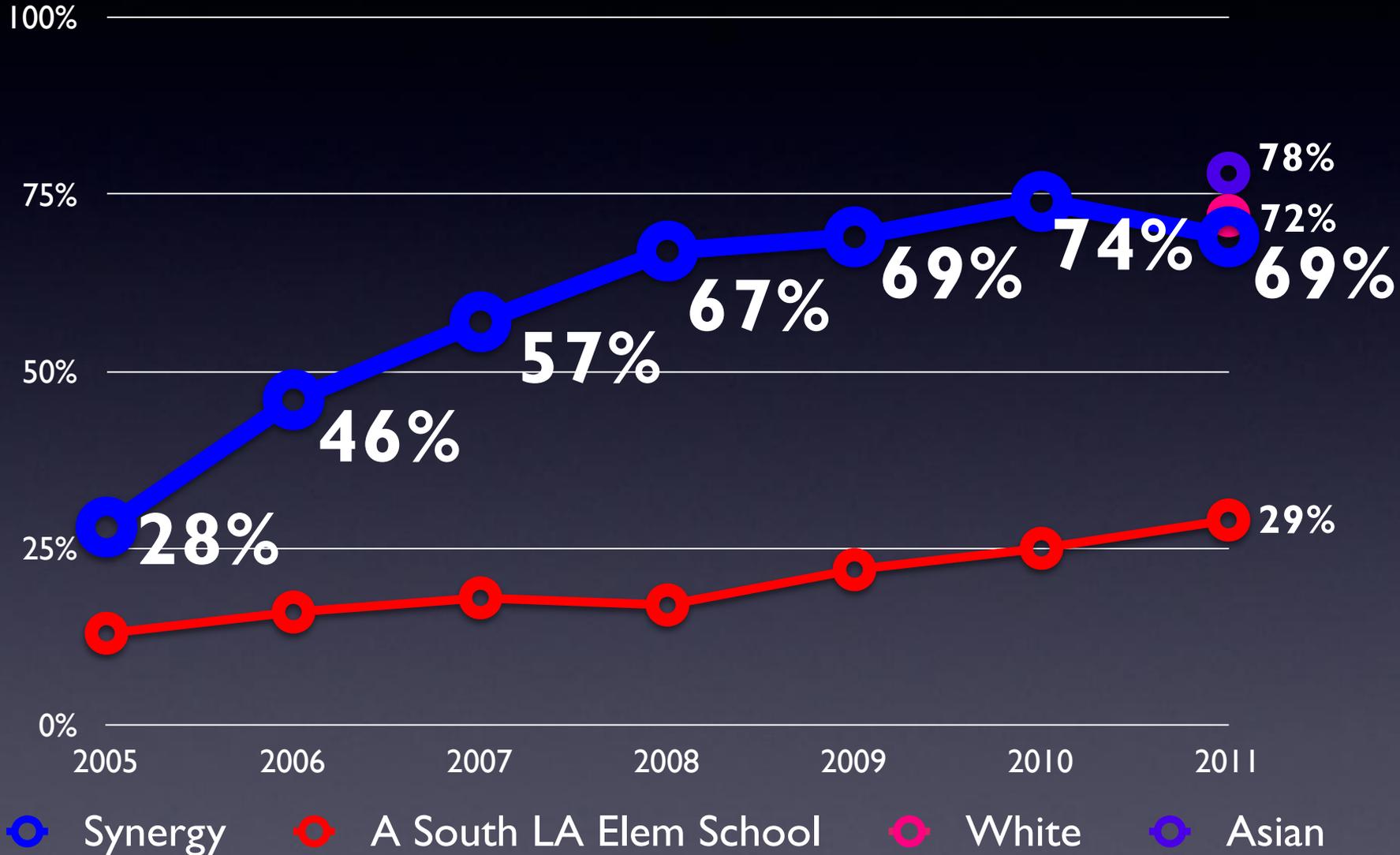
A National Model for Educational Equity

Elementary API Scores • 2005 to 2011

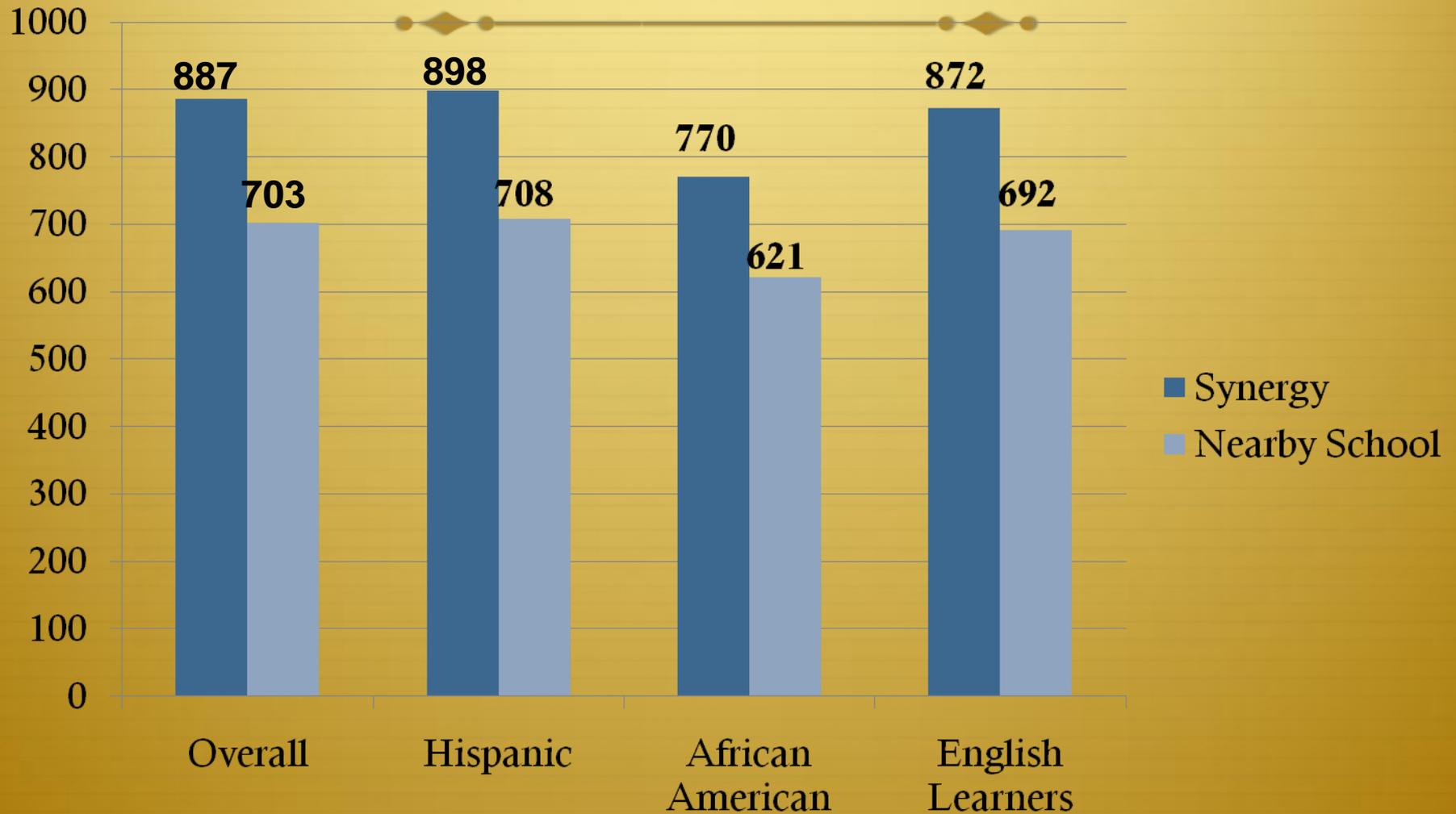


Language Arts CST

Grades 2-5



2011 Elementary School Academic Performance Index Scores



** Goal for all California schools is 800 or higher*

Awards

✦ 2010 National Blue Ribbon Award

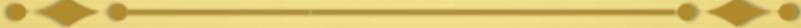


- ✦ Highest honor that an American public school can earn
- ✦ First elementary school in South LA and first charter school in LA to receive this award

- ✦ 2007 National Charter School of the Year
- ✦ 2008 California Distinguished School
- ✦ 2008 California Charter School of the Year
- ✦ 2009 Title I Academic Achievement Award
- ✦ 2008 and 2009 EPIC Silver Gain Award



Instructional Philosophy



✦ **Replicability**

✦ **Traditional School Year**

- ✦ 180 days of school

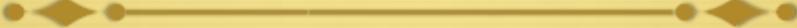
✦ **Traditional School Day**

- ✦ 8:00 a.m. to 2:25 p.m. (elementary school)
- ✦ 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or 3:30 p.m. (middle and high school)

✦ **Traditional Instructional Methods**

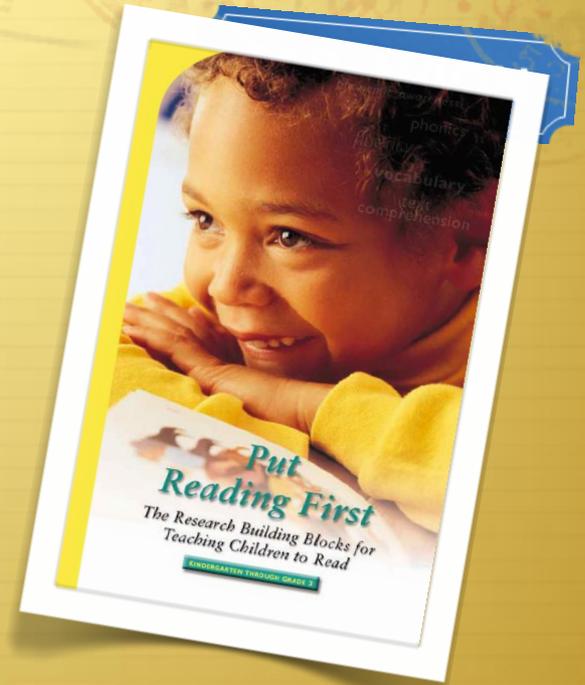
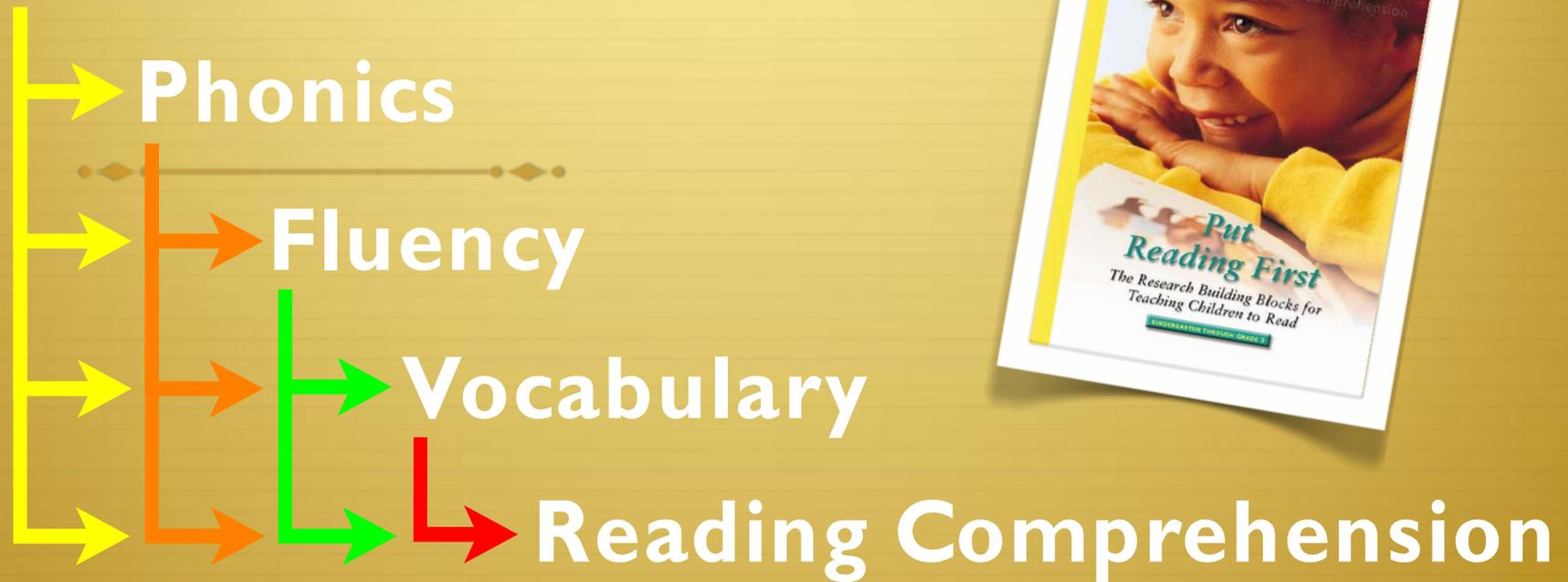
- ✦ tweaked by Synergy to increase instructional efficiency and effectiveness

Instructional Strategies



- ✦ **Explicit direct instruction** of the English language (Moats, 2000)
- ✦ **Gradual Release of Responsibility** (Fisher & Frey, 2008)
- ✦ The “**Sandwich Approach**” by Meg Palisoc, Synergy Academies
- ✦ Provide **hands-on** opportunities such as field trips
- ✦ Use a **variety of modalities** (visual picture cues, songs & chants, Total Physical Response, etc.)
- ✦ **Read, Read, Read**
 - ✦ Teach literacy throughout all subjects and at all grade levels

Phonemic Awareness



Explicit Direct Reading Instruction:
Five Factors That Most Influence Reading Success

Finland: #1 Education System

PAR AVION



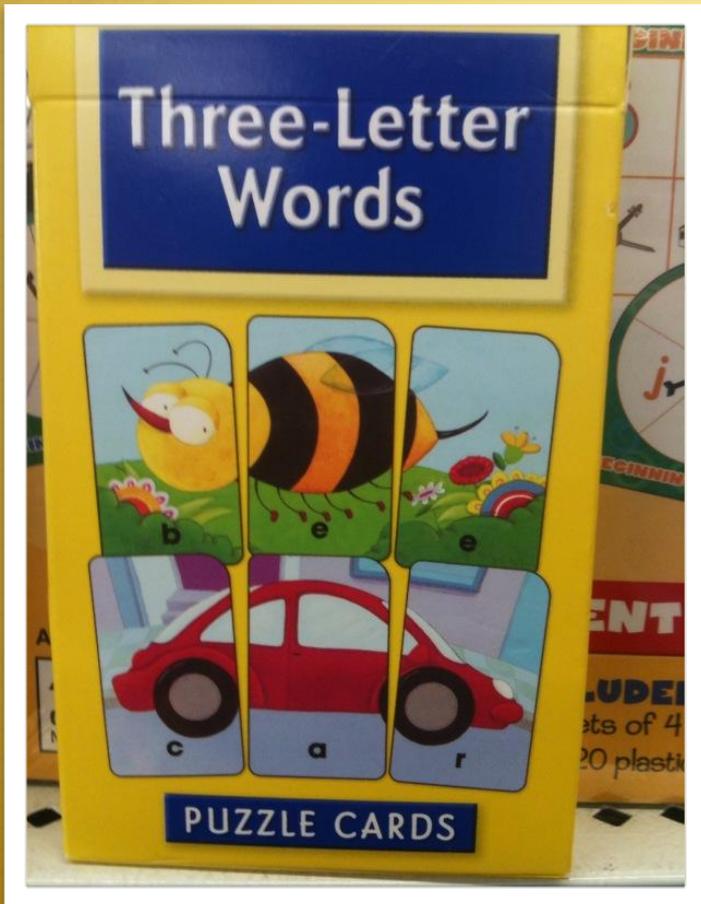
- Different demographics
- Don't start school until age 7
- Must use subtitles when watching American TV
- Tougher screening process to become a teacher

PAR AVION



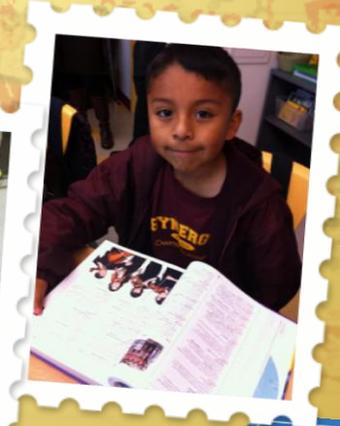
What do you notice in the photos?

PAR AVION



English	Finnish
big	suurikasvuinen
bee	mehilainen

BIG words are NOT just for BIG people



PAR AVION

Gradual Release of Responsibility

I Do We Do

You Do Together

You Do (by yourself)





The Sandwich Approach

*Be efficient with your time
so you can teach both
foundational level and
grade-level skills*



PAR AVION



AVION



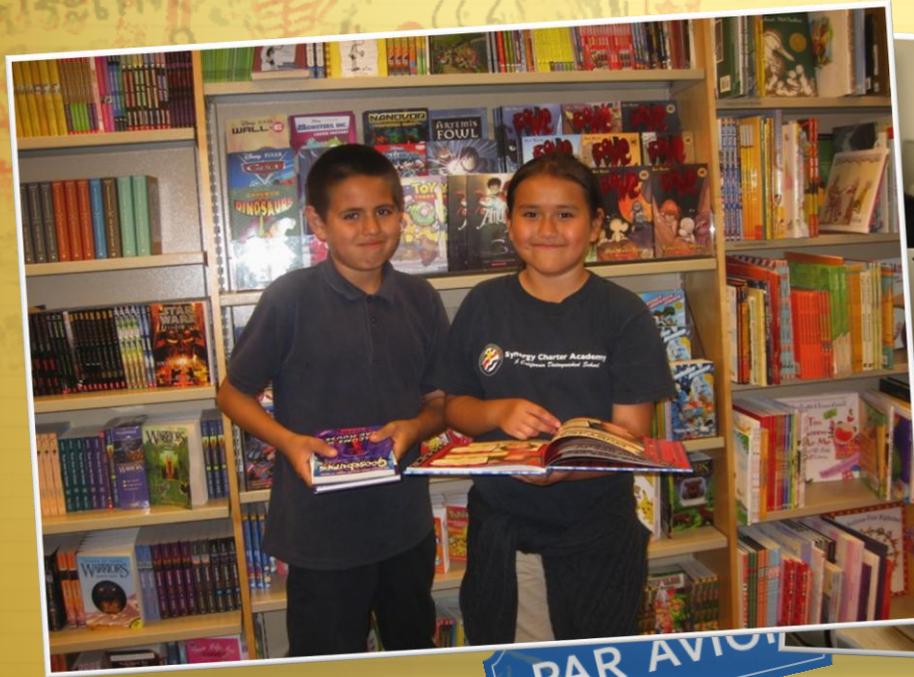
Hands-On Opportunities

Whenever possible, we provide our students with opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom to interact with other students and adults as well as experience new adventures outside of their immediate community.



Use a Variety of Modalities

- Hands-on projects and experiments
 - Organized P.E.
 - Songs & Chants
- Total Physical Response (TPR)
 - Visual picture cues



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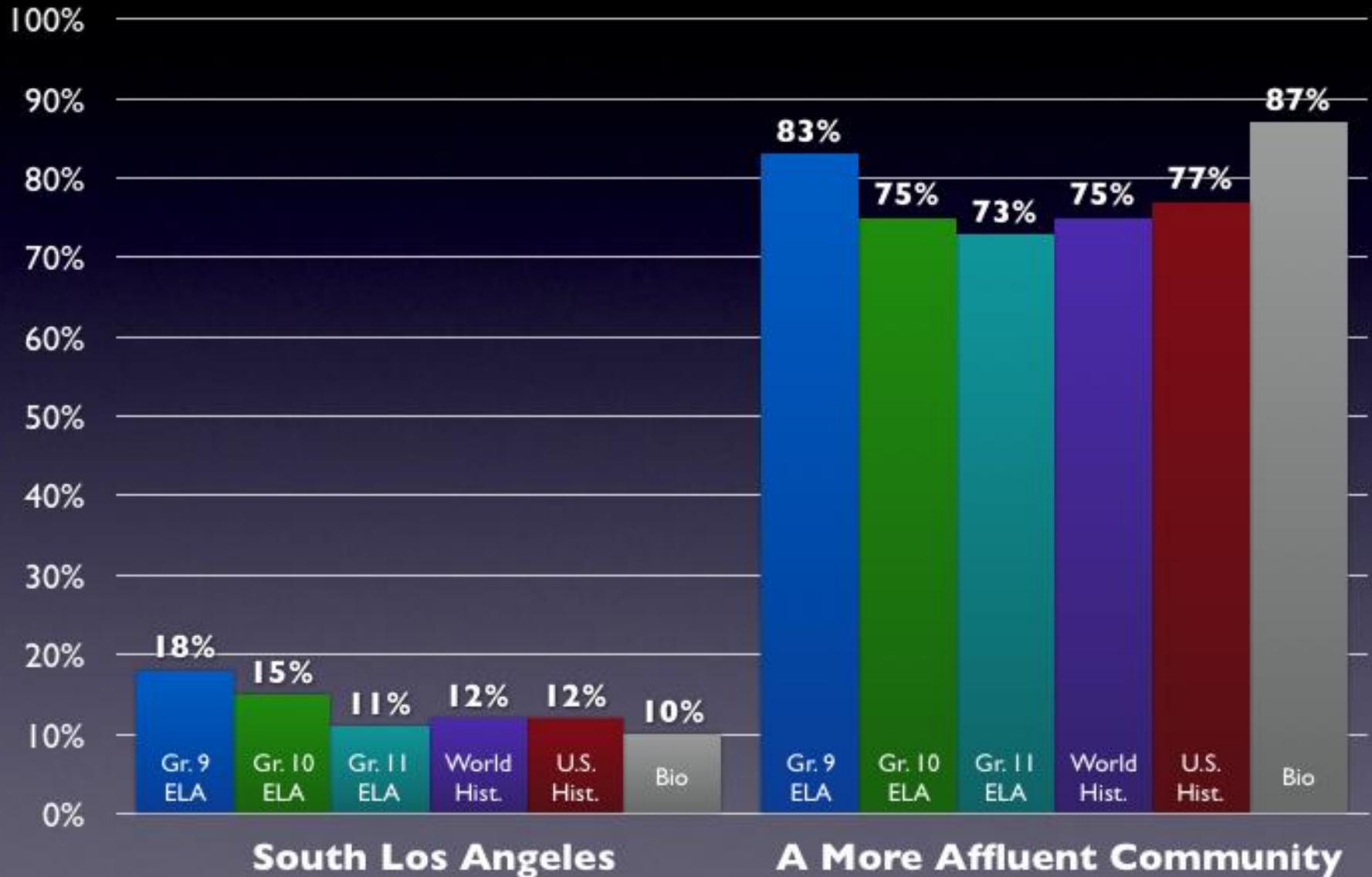


PAR AVION

Read, Read, Read

We train all of our teachers, regardless of what grade or subject they teach, to integrate reading strategies instruction into their lessons. In addition to reading grade-level text in class, students in grades 2-12 also read books at their independent reading level and take comprehension quizzes about the books they read via a computer program. Our English Learner students also engage with literacy-based computer programs such as Rosetta Stone in English.

How Reading Ability Affects Other Subjects





Lessons Learned

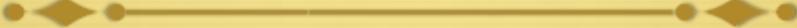
Successes

- ✦ Reading gains consistently increased over multiple years
- ✦ *The exception to this was in 2010-11, when our elementary school expanded and two-thirds of our students were brand new*
- ✦ Many students who arrived below grade level in grades K-8 are now reading at or above grade level
- ✦ Teachers can effectively teach English Learners without knowing how to speak the students' primary language

Challenges

- ✦ Easier to implement strategies at the elementary school level
- ✦ Secondary teachers often have a higher learning curve to overcome in regards to learning how to integrate foundational reading strategies into their lessons
- ✦ It is more difficult to help high school students who are on average, five or more years below grade level in all subjects

References



- ✦ Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement. (2001). *Put reading first: The research building blocks for teaching children to read*. Washington, DC: Author.
- ✦ Dutro, S., & Moran, C. (2002). Rethinking English language instruction: An architectural approach. (Unpublished article).
- ✦ Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2008). *Better learning through structured teaching: A framework for the gradual release of responsibility*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- ✦ Goldenberg, C. (2008, Summer). Teaching English language learners: What the research does – and does not – say. *American Educator*, 8-23, 42-44.
- ✦ Moats, L.C. (2000). *Speech to print: Language essentials for teachers*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Company.
- ✦ Southern Regional Education Board. (2009). *A critical mission: Making adolescent reading an immediate priority*. Atlanta, GA: Author.

Any Questions?



Questions?



Raise your hand or enter your question in the chat box
on the left side of your screen.

Thank you for participating.

- Learn more about future webinars in the ELL series hosted by the National Charter School Resource Center:
<http://registration.airprojects.org/NCSRCELL/register.aspx>
- This webinar will be archived at the following website:
<http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars/>
- Please share your feedback with us through the evaluation.

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