

# The Results of Implementing an ESL Orientation Class

SJSU Action Research Project by  
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Meeting of the Minds II  
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Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education



# “Persistence is...

adults staying in programs for as long as they can, engaging in self-directed study when they must drop out of their programs, and returning to their program as soon as the demands of their lives allow. Persistence is a continuing learning process that lasts until an adult student meets his or her educational goal.”

(Comings, 1999)

# Introduction

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## Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education

- 31 sites
- 130 staff members
- 11,000 students annually
- 99 % Hispanic/Latino
- 1 % Other
- 5,000 students attend ESL classes

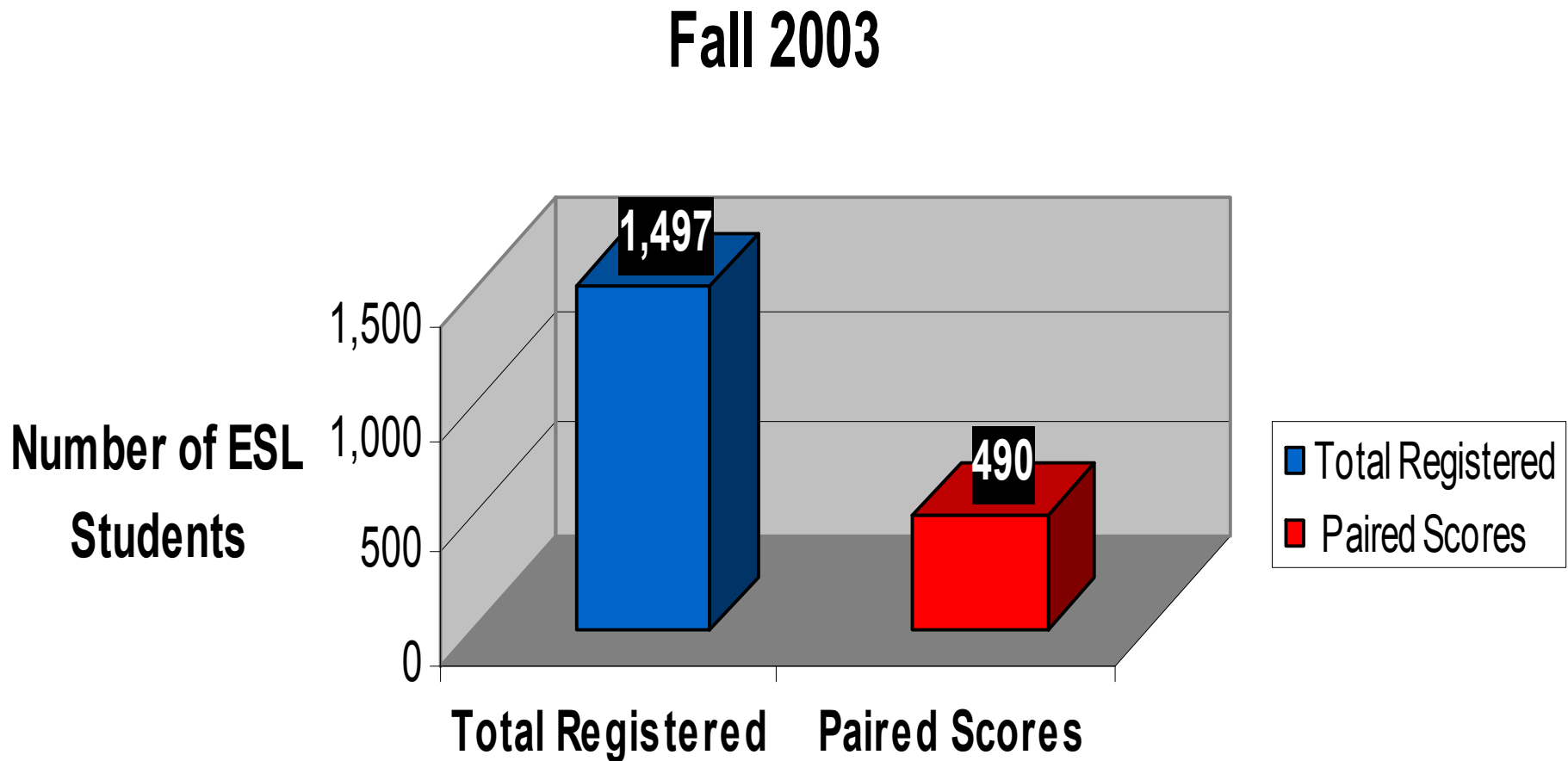
# Problem Statement

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## Fall 2003 and 2004

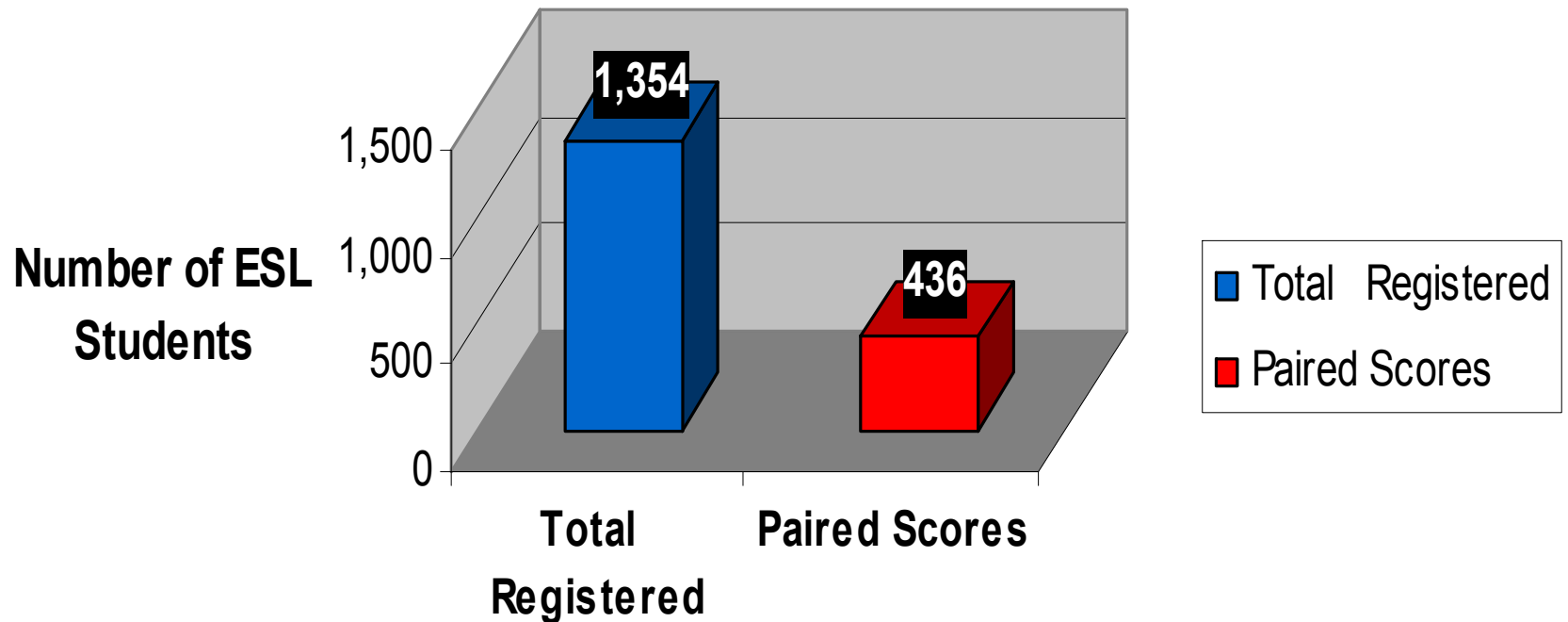
- Only one-third of registered ESL students completed pre and post CASAS exams or paired scores.
- ESL students did not persist long enough at WAAE to obtain paired CASAS scores.

Out of **1,497** ESL students **490** students - **33%**, completed both pre and post CASAS exams.



Out of **1,354** ESL students only **436** students, **32%**, completed both pre and post CASAS exams.

**Fall 2004**



# Research

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The research identified four principles within the theme of student persistence:

- student orientation
- data including assessment
- student support
- content standards

# Research

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“...at least one third of incoming students are at risk of dropping out in the first three weeks of instruction”

(Comings, J.P., Parrella, A., & Soricone, L., 1999)

# Research

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One of the most effective interventions was a “small-group approach” or orientation that included valuable tools and strategies to produce the greatest persistence.

(Comings et al, 1999)

# Research

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Quigley suggests that the intake and orientation processes of the first three weeks are critical to improving persistence.

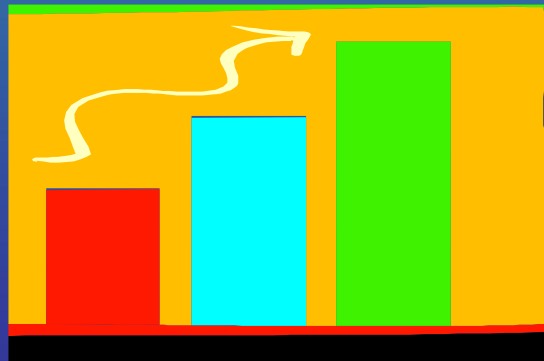
(Quigley, 1998)

# Purpose Statement

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The purpose of this action research project was to create an ESL Orientation class that would potentially...

- Increase hours of attendance
- Increase CASAS paired scores
- Increase the number of returning students



# Curriculum Content

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- **Goal Setting**
- **Force Field Analysis**
- **Student Success Stories**
- **Importance of CASAS Exams**
- **Stop Out Forms**
- **School Tour and Staff Introductions**
- **Program Offerings**



# Stopping School Form ESL Orientation Curriculum

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Your Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

First and Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Apt# \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_ Street \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone Number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

### I am "stopping out" of school because:

*Estoy dejando la escuela porque:*

1. \_\_\_\_ I have a job. I will return to school on \_\_\_\_\_.  
Month

Day Year

\_\_\_\_ **Tengo un nuevo trabajo. Regresé a la escuela** \_\_\_\_\_  
mes

día año

2. \_\_\_\_ I am moving to \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_ **Estoy mudando a** \_\_\_\_\_.

3. \_\_\_\_ I am going on vacation. I will be back to school on \_\_\_\_\_.

Month Day Year

\_\_\_\_ **Voy de vacaciones. Regresé a la escuela** \_\_\_\_\_  
mes

día año

4. \_\_\_\_ I have family problems and need to be home until \_\_\_\_\_.

Month Day Year

\_\_\_\_ **Tengo problemas en mi familia. Necesito quedar en casa hasta** \_\_\_\_\_  
mes día año

5. Other/**Otra razón** \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want your teacher to contact you at home? \_\_\_\_\_

**Usted quiere que su maestro/a te llame en su casa?** Yes- Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want an advisor to contact you at home?

**Usted quiere que un asesor/a te llame en su casa?** Yes- Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_



# ESL Orientation Curriculum

## CASAS Exam – How to Bubble



**Norma** and **Marco** are brother and sister. Norma is nineteen years old. Marco is 18 years old. They study English at Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education. They are going to take the CASAS exam.

### Practice Exam

#### CASAS Exam

**1. Maria Garcia needs to buy chicken, strawberries and milk.**

What does Maria need to buy?

- A. chicken
- B. fish
- C. eggs
- D. Tuna

**2. Luz Martinez works in a store Monday to Saturday.**

Which days does Luz work?

- A. Saturday and Sunday
- B. Monday to Saturday
- C. Sundays only
- D. Monday through Friday

#### Answer Sheet CASAS Exam

1.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	A	B	C	D
2.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	A	B	C	D

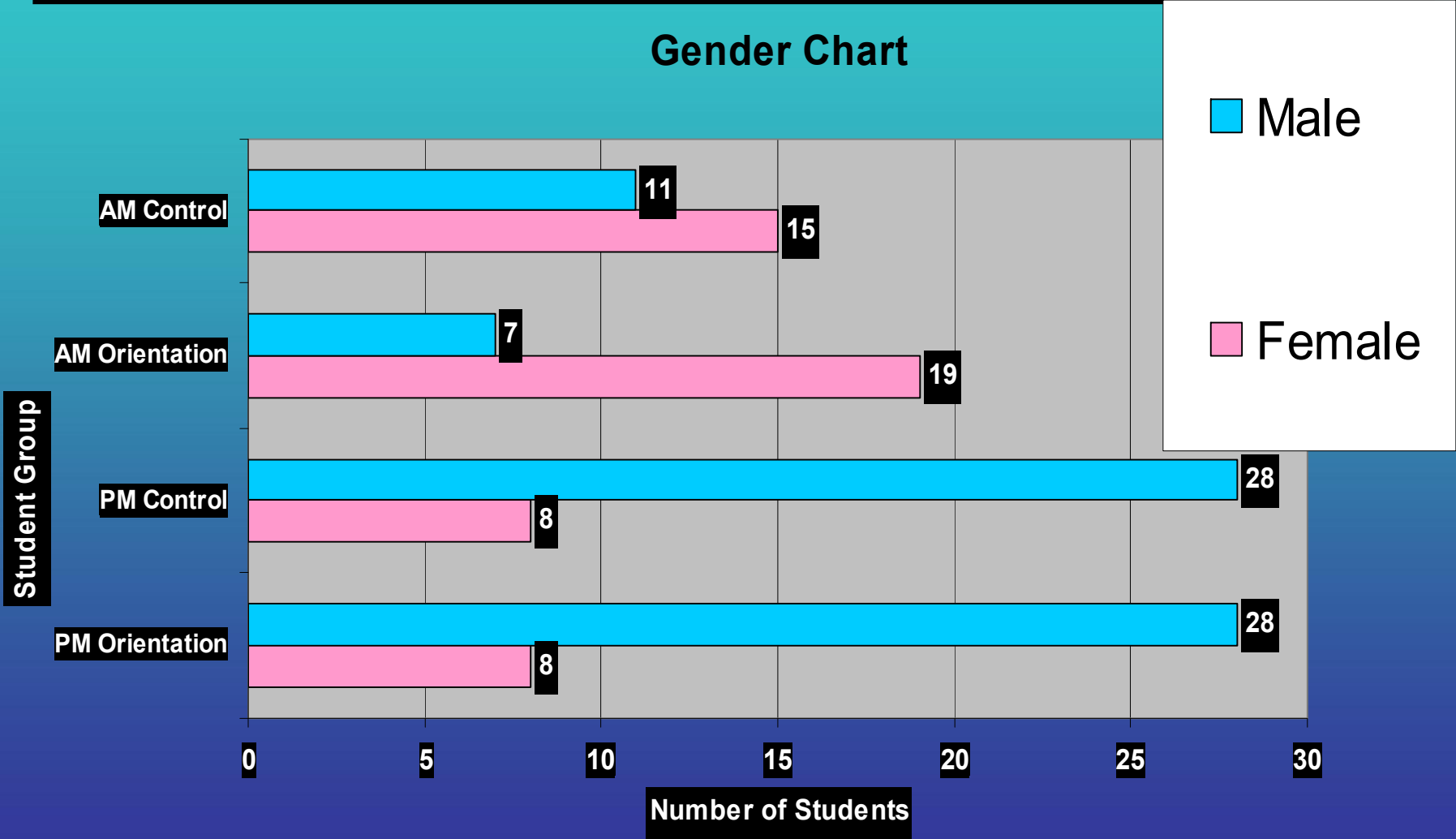
# Intervention Groups

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- Sixty-two students participated in the morning and evening ESL Orientation classes over a three-week period at the beginning of the fall 2005 academic year.
- The control group consisted of the same number of students with similar demographics during the same three week period.

# RESULTS

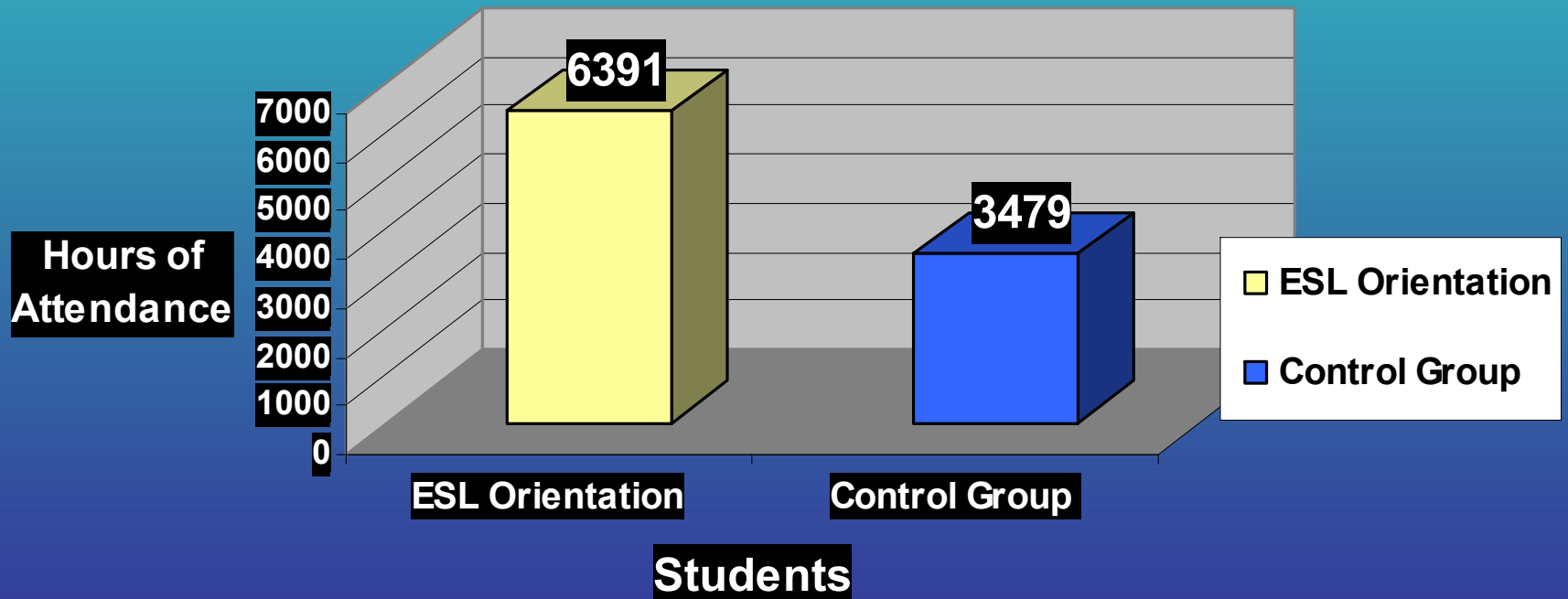
## Gender Chart



# RESULTS

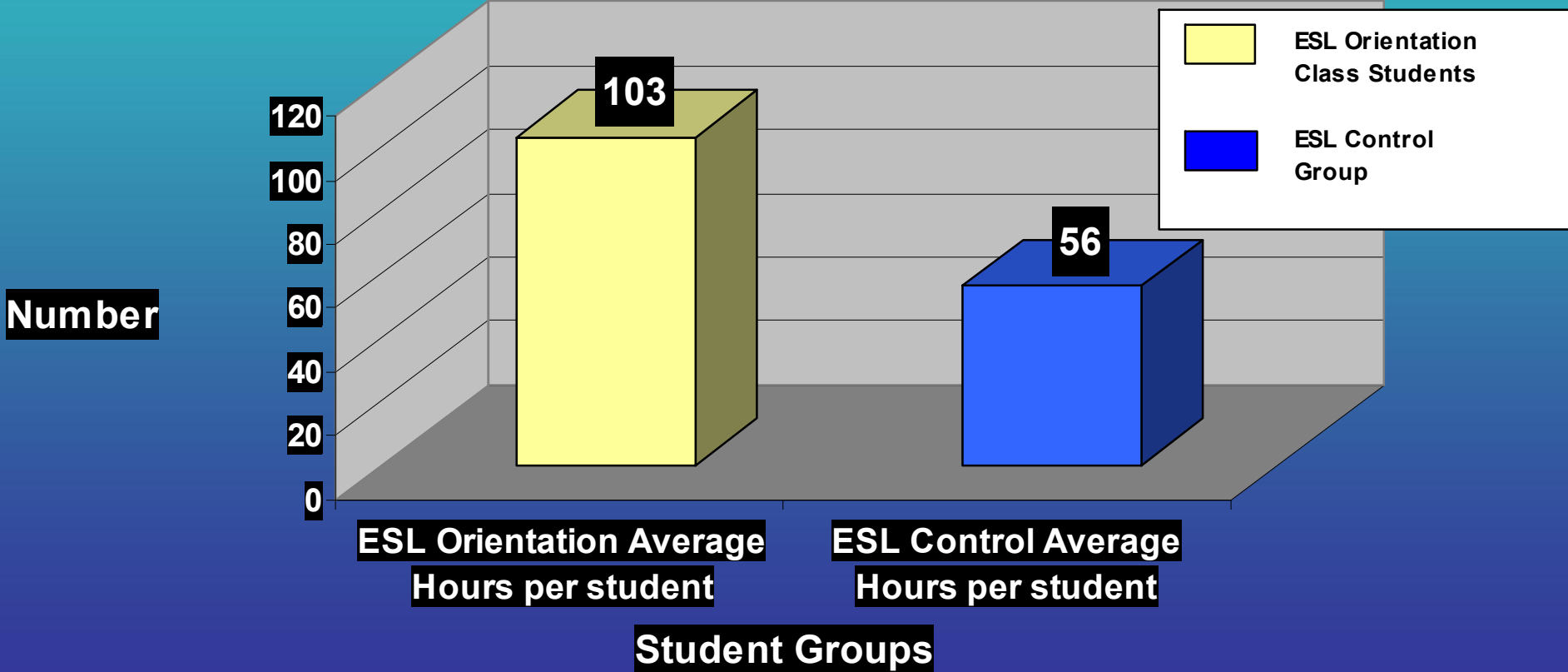
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**ESL Orientation Class & Control Group  
Comparison Total Attendance Hours for all students**



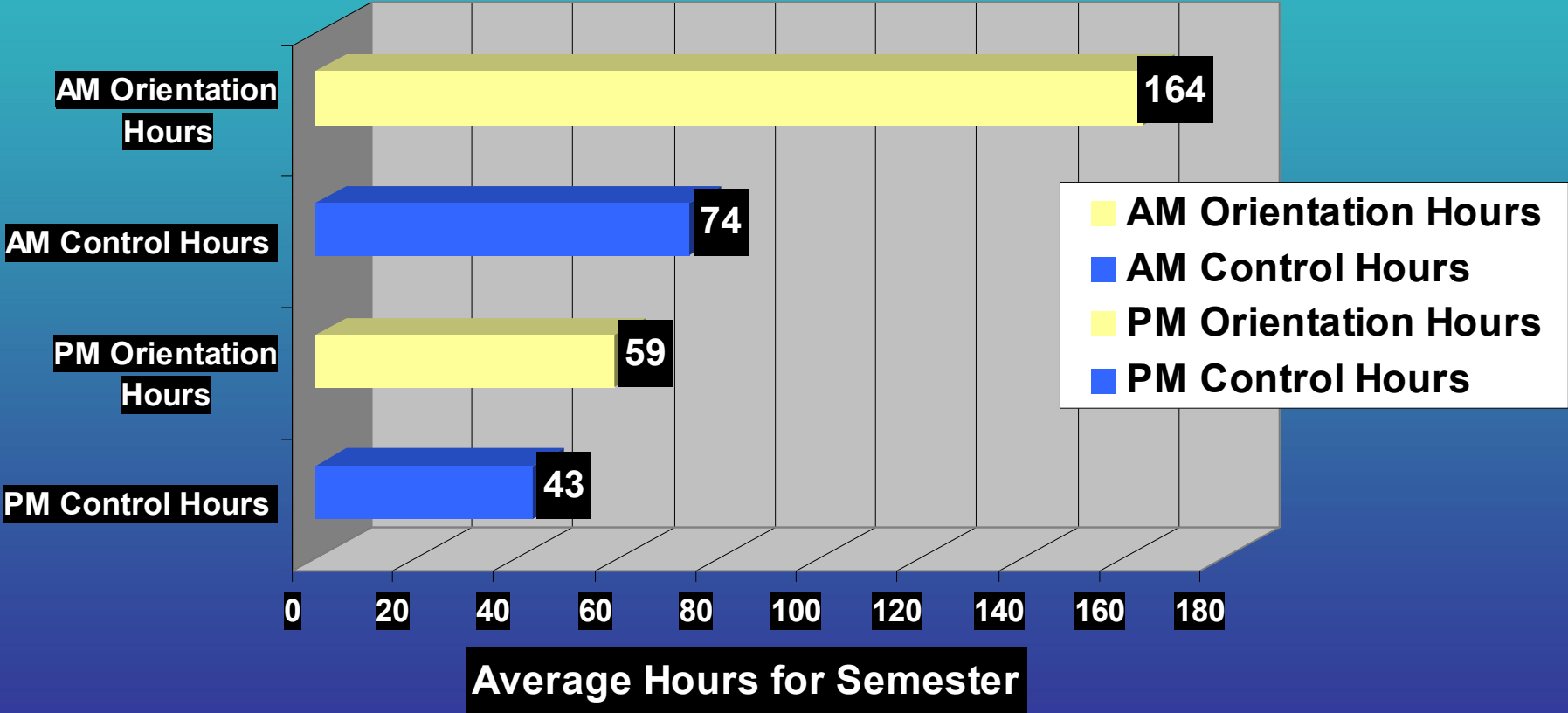
# RESULTS

Comparison of Average Hours per student for  
ESL Orientation & Control Group



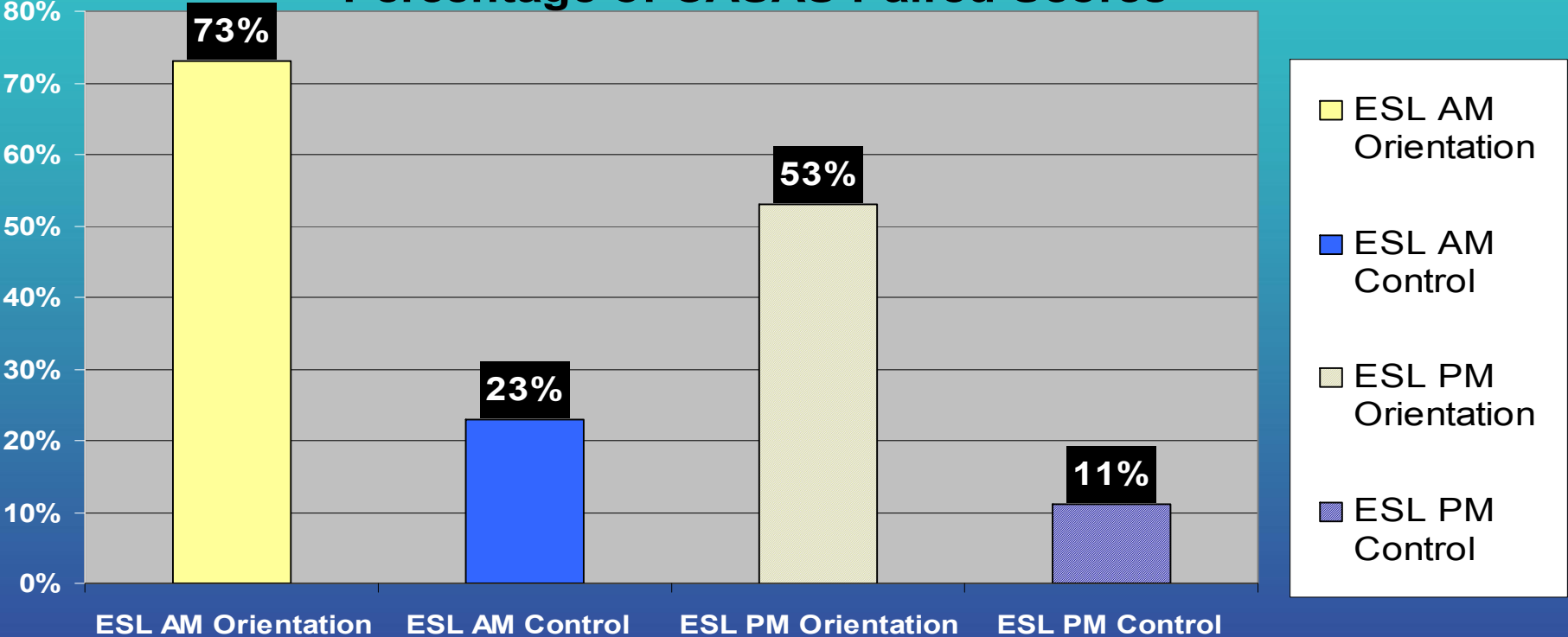
# RESULTS

Average Attendance Hours for Fall 2005 Semester



# RESULTS

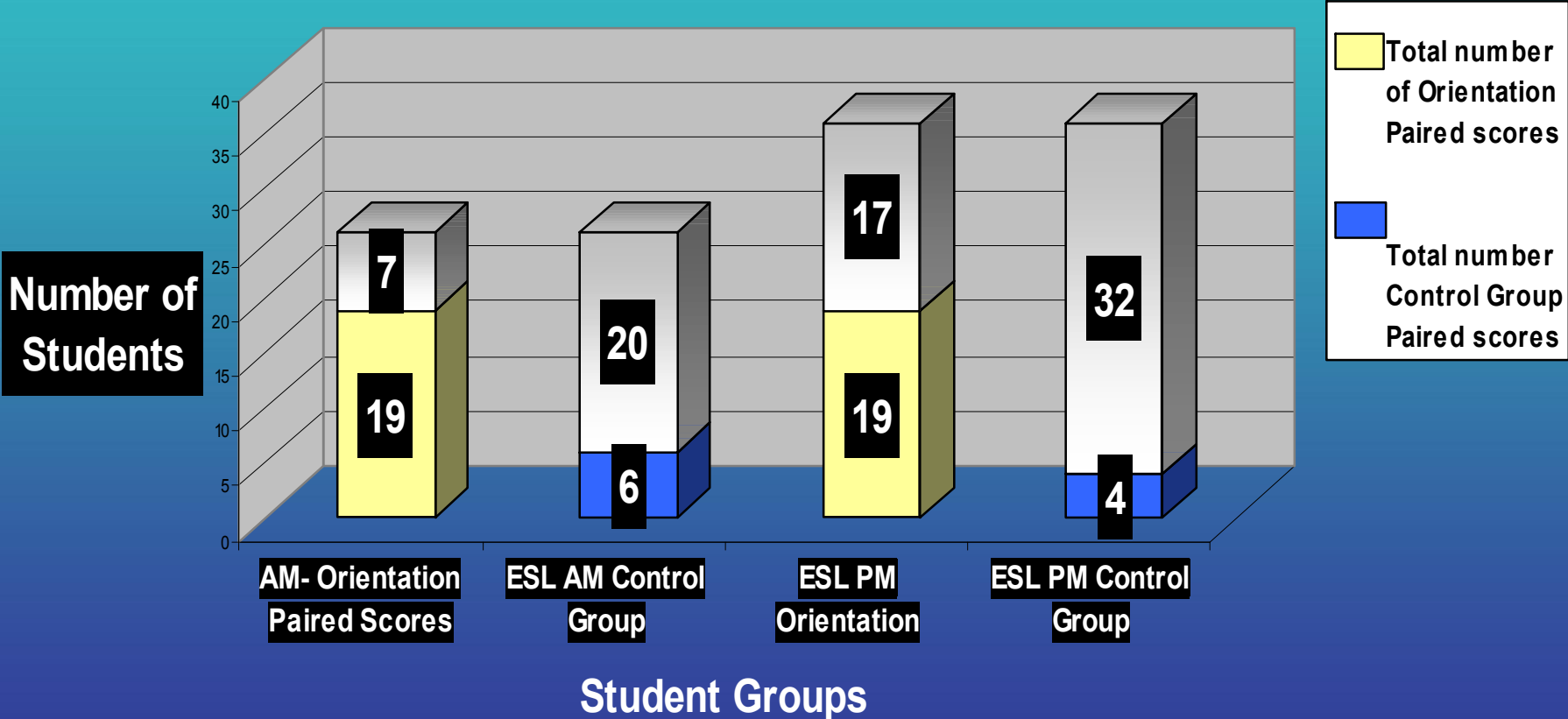
Percentage of CASAS Paired Scores



Student Groups

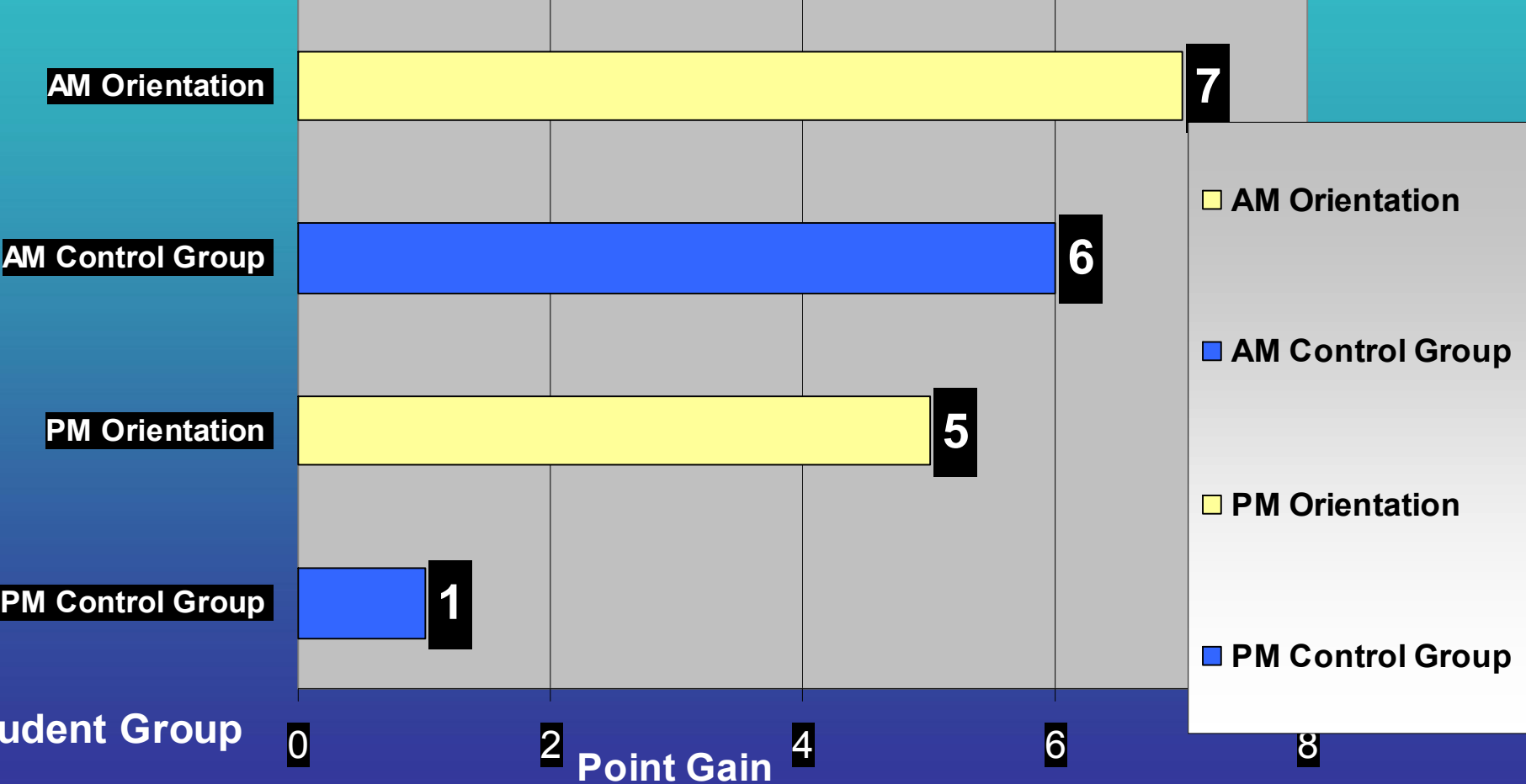
# RESULTS

Students Completing Paired CASAS Scores



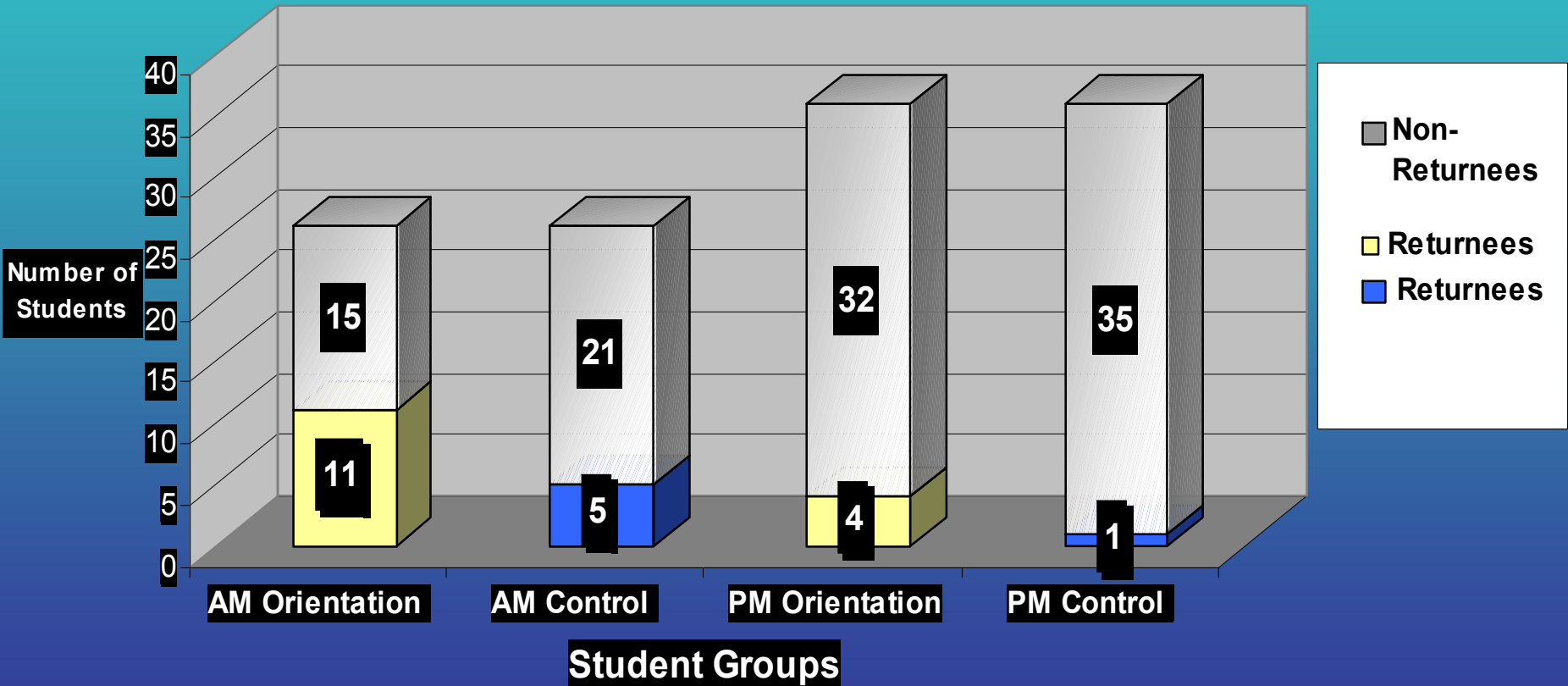
# RESULTS

**CASAS Point Gain Difference between  
ESL Orientation Class & Control Group**



# RESULTS

## Spring 2006 Student Returnees



# Teacher Surveys

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Four common themes emerged from teacher discussions and surveys:

- an orientation class would benefit students
- the hours for an orientation varied
- administration of CASAS exams varied
- hours of attendance as related to persistence

# Teacher Focus Groups

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“Students could benefit from such a class because they could get acquainted with school language, objectives, information, schedules, organization, and classroom procedures.”



# Teacher Focus Groups

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“The orientation class was a positive new beginning for WAAE. It established a baseline for instruction and was good for students to adjust to a new system.”

“Students were more organized and they seemed to know what to do and how to do it.”

# Teacher Focus Groups

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“I never thought about it before, but now that I see it all together, I see the impact; I think there is a sense of community among orientation students. They are the ones who have the best attendance.”

# Student Focus Groups

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“...the orientation will make students feel more secure and confident.”

“The orientation helped me feel more secure in order to enter school. I like English; I like the security that I have when I am in the class.”

# Student Focus Groups

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The students reported that they felt more prepared, oriented and confident for their regular English class.

The orientation made their transition into their regular classes easier and they didn't feel lost.

# Recommendations as of May 2006

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- Present results to WAAE committees and staff
- For the fall of 2006 all new and twelve hour or less returning ESL students attend a nine-hour Orientation class prior to entering ESL classes.
- All entering students complete a pre-CASAS exam at time of registration.
- Familiarize the staff to the orientation curriculum

# Implementations as of November 2006...

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- Cohort presented to various committees at WAAE ( Leadership, ESL, Administration)
- Modified model of ESL orientation implemented
- Cohort presented results and curriculum best practices at various conferences and schools

**Thanks to all of those who contributed to this project and supported the research team.**

**A special thanks to  
Dr. Marty Krovitz and Bob Harper.**



# Action Research Project Condensed

