

# CREATING AN IMPROVEMENT NETWORK TO ENHANCE THE RESULTS OBTAINED BY AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING PROGRAM IN A RURAL COMMUNITY

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## Background



 Global citizenship is particularly relevant for rural communities, where the isolation of the areas may cause lower exposure to cultural diversity than in urban communities.



We Learn is a program whose aim is to broaden the opportunities in early childhood of learning English as a foreign language in public schools from rural communities. It was created in 2006 and it currently gives assistance to 14 schools from 2 school districts in Chile.

## The We Learn improvement network



Schools in rural communities tend to work in isolation from one another, which is why the creation of an improvement network was an innovation worth testing to encourage students' progress within the intervened schools.

The rationale was that building local capabilities, motivating professionals to learn from each other in peer collaboration and having different types of expertise working together towards a shared goal would improve the program's system and translate into higher progress in English language learning in students.

## Framing improvement opportunities


**OUR GOAL**

During 1 academic school year, 60% of 1st and 2nd grade students from 14 participating schools will achieve an advanced level of English competency, with NO students scoring in the beginner level by the end of 2018.

**PRIMARY DRIVERS**

- Maximizing Instructional Time and learning opportunities
- Improving interactions in the EFL classroom
- Developing improvement leaders at schools
- Increasing english exposure outside the classroom

This was the network's goal and the primary drivers to work on. The theory was that by working on improving the four drivers, we would achieve the goal on the left. The network decided on relevant metrics to measure improvement on each aspect, as well as instruments to collect the necessary data.



## Ideas and data based decision making

The network tested ideas to establish the four drivers throughout 2017 and 2018. Innovations at classroom, school and network level were developed and improved over time, finally obtaining better results and building a culture of data-based decision making in the network. Throughout year two, the ideas tested by principals, academic coordinators and teachers increased in the robustness of the design and metrics to understand whether they were improvements.



Principals and academic coordinators tested ideas such as leading improvement teams in their schools, involving families with awareness meetings, organizing cultural events, among others.

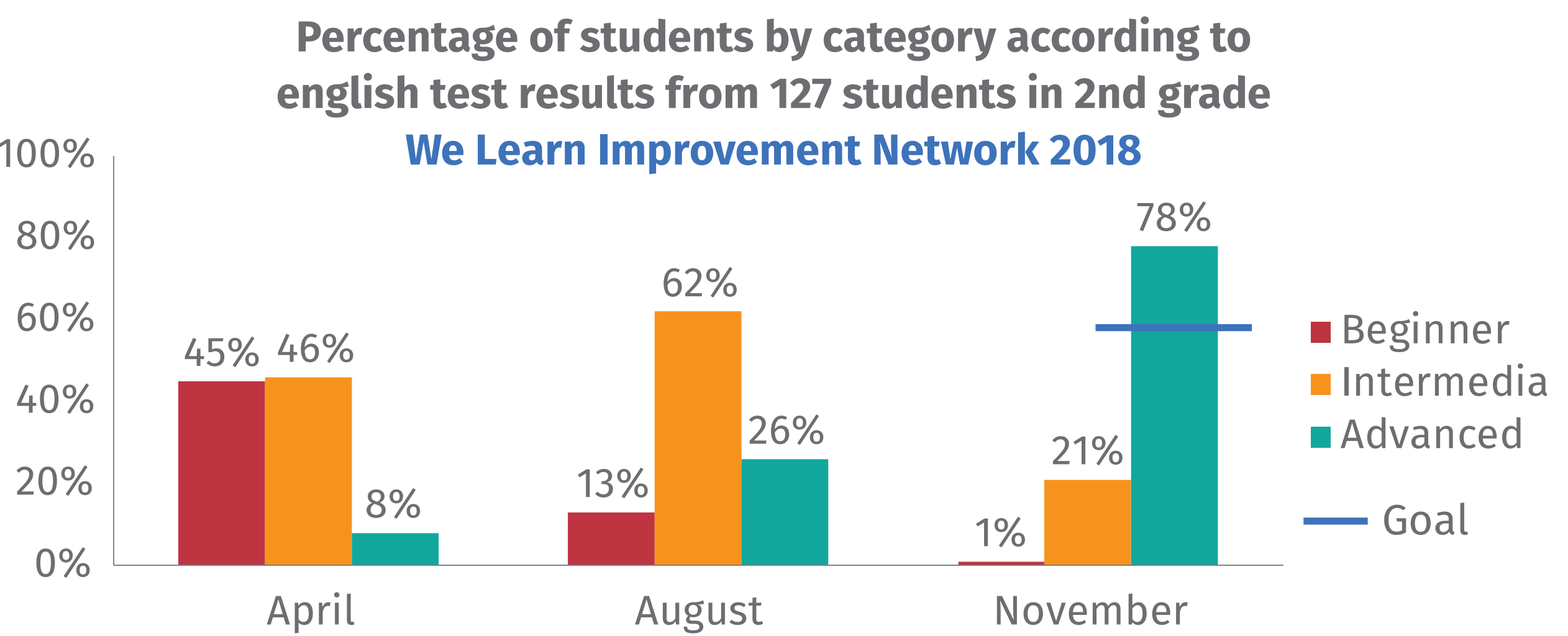
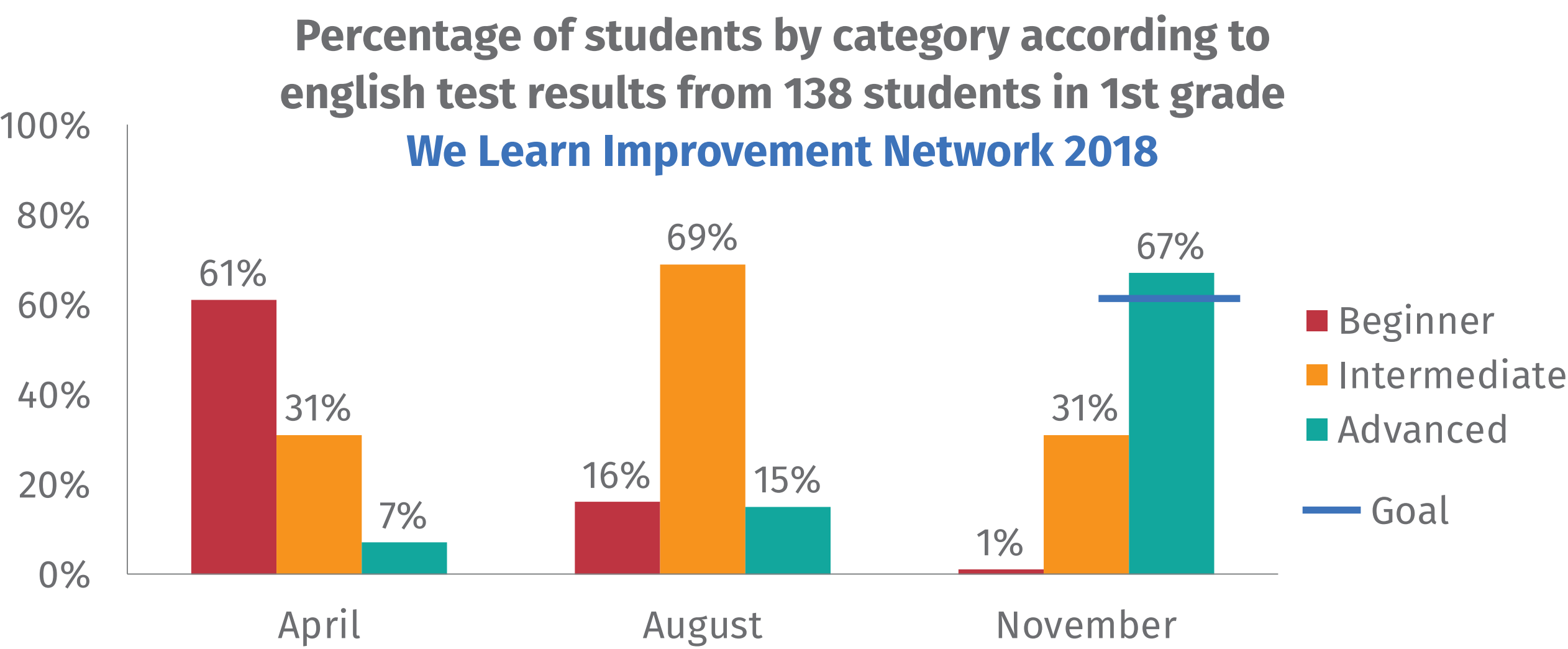


Teachers tested ideas such as using brain breaks like yoga in the lessons, involving students in measuring the success of strategies, designing activities students could do independently at the beginning of the lesson, among others.



At the network level, ideas such as having peer classroom observations between teachers from different schools were tested in order to maximize the opportunities for sharing ideas among members of the network.





## Results and findings



The goal was surpassed in both 1st and 2nd grade in the advanced category. In the beginner category, only 2 students in 1st grade and 1 in 2nd grade remained in the beginner category by the end of year two.

The larger proportion of students achieving "advanced" English levels at the end of 2nd grade likely reflects a greater dosage. These students experienced English classrooms engaged in improvement work for two full years, in contrast to first graders who only received one year of such exposure.

## Lessons learned

-  Collaborative work using the model for continuous improvement has lead to the acceleration of children's learning processes in the language.
-  Framing opportunities for improvement in various aspects inside and outside the classroom allowed for more actors to be involved and contribute with their expertise to the process.
-  A school that implemented an internal improvement team since the first year obtained better results than the others, achieving the goals in all four aspects proposed in the work plan plus the goal of student performance.
-  Having a common goal to lead this two-year experience provided thrust to innovation among the network members.