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FOCUSING ON THE “LEARNING” FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER

A Dissertation Submitted  
to the Graduate College  
Arkansas Tech University

in partial fulfillment of requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in School Leadership

in the Center for Leadership and Learning  
of the College of Education

May 2018

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## Permission

Title: Focusing on the “Learning” for the English Language Learner

Program: School Leadership

Degree: Doctor of Education

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Date

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## Abstract

Educators are faced with the challenge of teaching an ever-changing student population. The classrooms are filled with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and cultures. English Language Learners account for 12% of our student population (Garcia, Jensen, & Scribner, 2009). Providing English Language Learners with effective instruction that integrates both content area knowledge and English language acquisition is necessary. English Language Learners are relying on educators to teach them what they need to know in order to be successful in all academic areas in schools. The purpose of this study was to examine the systemic approach of SIOP as it relates to maximizing content and developing language with all learners when implemented with fidelity in the classroom. The focus of this study was two classrooms within an urban school district in Western Arkansas. Both schools' demographics include 65% English Language Learners and more than 90% free and reduced lunch. Teachers in both classrooms have taught at least ten years in the district in a Title I school. The researcher used assessment data from the Development Reading and Spelling Analysis from the beginning and middle of the school year. In addition, the October and December ACT Aspire Interim assessment data from Reading and English was utilized. To ensure fidelity of the treatment and control group's educational setting, the researcher used the Sheltered Observation Instruction Protocol rubric on two different occasions in each classroom. Teachers of English Language Learners must be expected to implement instructional strategies proven to be effective based on students' individual language proficiency levels. Districts/schools need a systematic, comprehensive and practical approach to prepare and support teachers to work with English Language

Learners. The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol features provide the strategies and framework to strengthen academic language and literacy development in all students.

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## **Chapter I: Introduction**

### **Background**

Prior to the 1960s, the right to an equal education was interpreted to mean that all students, regardless of their English proficiency, were treated equally when they attended the same classrooms as their peers and when the instruction was delivered using the same books and curriculum. This practice was challenged during the Civil Rights movement when the country began to look more carefully at some of its discriminatory practices, including the education of its English Language Learners students (Reese, 2005). An English Language Learner (ELL) is defined as a student who has learned a language other than English during his or her primary years and is not able to do ordinary classroom work in English. The term ELL is used interchangeably with English Limited (EL), Limited English Proficient (LEP), and language minority student (Zacarian, 2011).

In 1964, the Civil Rights Act was enacted. It states that any institution that receives federal funding cannot deny access to anyone or any program or activity based on their race, color, or national origin (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Civil Rights, 2003). Then in 1968, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was amended to include the Bilingual Education Act. This was the first federal statute that addressed the particular learning needs of language minority students (Baker, 2006). Some believe that it was the result of a political movement intended to attract the Latino vote, while others claim it was a genuine attempt to remedy the high failure rates among the nation's ELL students (Crawford, 1996). Regardless, it marked the first time that the rights of ELL students were brought into focus. Unfortunately, it did not lead to many changes as it failed to include specific regulations other than the general notion that schools could use



innovative programming that allowed students to learn in their native language to teach English and led to what is now known as bilingual education.

Many federal regulations about ELL students are a result of lawsuits in local courts across the country and appealed all the way to the Supreme Court. In *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) the Supreme Court ruled that schools must provide programming to help students overcome barriers to learning English (Zacarian, 2011). The definition of ELL became commonly known as a student who is not able to perform ordinary class work in English. The Supreme Court ruled in *Castaneda v. Pickard* (1978) that districts must establish a three-pronged test for ensuring that their educational programs for ELL students are consistent with a student's right to a free and appropriate education (FAPE; Zacarian, 2011). It established that programming should be based on sound educational research, implemented with adequate commitment and resources, and evaluated for its effectiveness. Also, alternative research-based programming should be included if the educational program is found to be ineffective.

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) into law with the intent of improving student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The new law replaced the Elementary and Secondary Act, including the Bilingual Act, set new standards for the ways in which schools used federal funds and set achievement standards for schools and students.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law December 9, 2015, by President Obama. This act provides a stronger focus on closing the achievement gap between English Language Learners and other students. The law maintains accountability and builds on that requirement by elevating English Language Learners'

assessments and proficiency outcomes to be a key element of statewide accountability systems (McHugh, 2016).

Creating successful learning environments that support all learners is now a part of mission statements all across U.S. schools. As the population of English Language Learners continues to grow rapidly, an educator's practice must be reformed and our instructional framework must be research-based to reach all students (Echevarria, Short, & Vogt, 2007).

Many students are entering school without being proficient in the English language. There is an increasing number of ELL students in all schools. Between 1995 and 2005, the number of ELL students in public schools increased by 57%. ELL students account for 12% of the nation's population of K-12 students and represent more than 350 different language groups (Garcia, Jensen, & Scribner, 2009).

Students who are learning English as an additional language are the fastest growing segment of the school-age population in the United States. Most teachers are not well prepared and professionally developed to instruct these learners. The lack of professional development and instructional practice skills for this population have placed these students at risk (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). There is a gap in understanding and training of teachers in the practices of standard second language acquisition.

There are literally hundreds of ELL programming models, some effective, most not (Zacarian, 2011). Regardless, many ELL students still seem to be failing, being referred to Special Education programs, and dropping out of school. No matter how achievement is measured, the achievement gap between ELL students and the total student population is significant (Zehr, 2008).

According to the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results, 40% of non-Hispanic students in fourth grade were proficient compared to 21% of Hispanic students. In eighth-grade, 39% of non-Hispanic students are proficient compared to 21% of Hispanic students (Garcia et al., 2009). These outcomes speak to the need to think of more responsive ways to design and integrate curriculum in classrooms that promote success for all students.

ELL students face serious challenges in their academic careers, including the challenge of learning both social and academic English. Learning English as a second language is a difficult task and requires time. Usually, children who are at the beginning stages of the English language are supported in their learning by English Language Specialists, both certified and paraprofessionals (Zacarian, 2011). This support generally decreases after their English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) levels increase beyond the second level. ELL students spend the majority of their school day in the regular classroom where the classroom teacher has the dual responsibility of teaching language development and content area skills. Based on research findings, it takes up to seven years for most ELL students to gain enough mastery of academic English to be able to receive the full benefit of instruction in English (Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000).

ELL students have a right to an equitable education. Transforming schools for English Language Learners requires that educators understand the need, the regulations governing this population, and the skillset to prepare staff to design and deliver high-quality English language instruction. This recipe will build a school environment in which all, including English Language Learners, can flourish (Zacarian, 2011). Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) is a researched-based professional model proven

as an effective approach for teaching both academic language and content to the English Language Learner that can increase the learner's chance of optimal success at school (Echevarria et al., 2008). This study seeks to examine the effectiveness of SIOP as a solution that may provide a quality educational experience for ELL students.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Learning is one of the most important activities in which humans engage. Student learning is the focus of all that is done in classrooms and schools. It is at the very core of the educational system. Student learning is influenced by the curriculum, teaching methods used, and the student's ability to understand and conceptualize the two (Baker et al., 2014). The student's ability to understand and conceptualize begins with language. Language can be defined as a generic, creative phenomenon especially in relation to instruction (Bloome, 2016). Language is the foundation for learning in any discipline of study within the educational system.

Conversations are powerful teachers. They aid in building ideas, solving problems, and communicating our thoughts. Conversations also teach how other people see and experience life. Sometimes talk shapes identity, thoughts, beliefs, and emotions (Vygotsky, 1986). Students must learn to use conversations, rules, facts, and word meanings to understand and communicate whole ideas. Educators must retool to develop the skills of conversation in the classroom in order to maximize the potential of all students, especially the growing population of ELL students in public schools across America (Zacarian, 2011). Failure to do so will result in a disservice to approximately 12% of our population.

With increased rigor and high academic standards, educators need tools to integrate language and content instruction to make content comprehensible for the ELL student. There is a growing awareness that all students benefit from attention to the language demands of academic tasks, texts, and discussion. Creating a language-rich interactive classroom is a key approach for a supportive classroom environment for English Language Learners.

A group of teachers participated in a longitudinal study that led to what is known as SIOP. In that study, researchers from the Center of Applied Linguistics and the Center for Research on Equity and Diversity looked at teachers of ELL students for a five-year period and noted the elements for planning and delivering an effective lesson. From this research, they developed an observational protocol that highlighted the elements that the researchers believe are essential for students at the third, fourth, and final stage of English language learning. At the heart of this research is a strong belief in collaboration among teachers. The results of that study indicated that these teachers felt empowered to be leaders of learning in their classroom and school buildings (Echevarria et al., 2008). In order to close the achievement gap for this population, the SIOP model may provide a tool to improve instruction and learning for ELL students.

Seidlitz and Castillo (2010) observed hundreds of classrooms in California, where English Language Learners represent a staggering 28% of the population. Their goals were to examine instructional approaches, gather data, and review research on current trends to effectively support the ELL student to be successful in content mastery and continued language development. That study brought out several steps and/or approaches that were highly effective in every classroom observed. When these steps and/or

approaches were not used students were not as successful. The combined effort of the team used school data, observations, increased proficiency levels and formative assessments to determine effectiveness. When schools followed these approaches in a strategic way, along with a commitment to change, progress and effectiveness with English Language Learners were evident (Seidlitz & Castillo, 2010).

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Model (SIOP) provides the tools and framework to develop academic language through conversations. The focus is on ways to develop and advance English Language Learners' proficiency in English and academics (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2013). Used widely across the United States, the SIOP model has been shown to improve academic outcomes for English language learners. The model reflects best practices for English learners based on decades of research on second language acquisition and effective instruction, as well as on the SIOP model itself. It is a comprehensive approach to identifying students' areas of needs and using a variety of tools and techniques for improving ELL student's proficiency (Echevarria et al., 2013).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Educators are faced with the challenge of teaching an ever-changing student population. The classrooms are filled with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and cultures. English Language Learners account for 12% of our student population (Garcia et al., 2009). This population is entering schools as the fastest growing population in public schools all across America (Goldenberg, 2008). Providing English Language Learners (ELL) with effective instruction that integrates both content area knowledge and English language acquisition is necessary. English Language

Learners are relying on educators to teach them what they need to know in order to be successful in all academic areas in schools. This requires a skill-set many of our classroom teachers do not currently possess (Seidlitz & Castillo, 2010).

Sedlitz and Castillo (2010) realized from their research that teachers want more than technique, activities, and scripted programs. Teachers of ELL students are expected to implement instructional strategies proven to be effective based on a students' individual language proficiency levels. The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) provides the strategies and framework to strengthen academic language and literacy development in all students. O'Neal and Ringler (2010) refer to academic language as "the equalizer," suggesting all learners must be proficient in academic English to be successful in academic settings. Districts need a systematic, comprehensive and practical approach to prepare and support teachers to work with English Language Learners, yet many do not.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP) was developed to make the content material more comprehensible. It was designed specifically to advance English learners' knowledge and use of English in increasingly sophisticated ways. Therefore, the purpose of this research study was to examine the systemic approach of SIOP as it relates to maximizing content and developing language with all learners when implemented with fidelity in the classroom. It is believed that when language is the primary objective and content is secondary, students will engage successfully and increase their skills and knowledge.

## Research Questions

1. Does the SIOP model positively impact the academic success of ELL students?
2. Does the SIOP model positively impact the academic success of all students?

## Hypothesis

Teachers must accommodate the ELL student's varied educational and linguistic backgrounds; they must put into practice research-based instruction to deliver lessons that are meaningful and appropriate for all students. SIOP, when implemented with fidelity, will increase academic achievement for all students.

## Definition of Terms

1. *Bilingual Immersion Model*- A classroom model where the ability to learn to read, write, and do math is in a student's native language; usually emerged until ELPA level exceeds 2 (Zacarian, 2011).
2. *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)*- The level of language required for students to perform abstract and cognitively demanding classroom tasks without contextual supports such as gestures and the research of objects. Includes the language ability required for academic achievement (Zacarian, 2011).
3. *English as a Second Language (ESL)*- A program of techniques, methodology, and special curriculum designed to teach English learners English language skills including listening, speaking, reading, writing, study skills, content vocabulary, and cultural orientation. Instruction is usually in English with little use of the student's native language (Zacarian, 2011).



4. *English Language Learner*- A student who has learned a language other than English during his or her primary years and is not able to do ordinary classroom work in English. The term ELL is used interchangeably with English Limited (EL) and Limited English Proficient (LEP), and language minority student (Zacarian, 2011).
5. *ESL pull-out*- A model of instruction whereby ESL is taught in a separate setting from general education class (Zacarian, 2011).
6. *ESL push-in*- A model of instruction whereby the ESL teacher co-plans instruction with the general teacher and co-delivers instructions in the general classroom using small groups and theme-based instruction (Zacarian, 2011).
7. *Sheltered Instruction*- Instruction that is delivered in English with, but not always, clarification in a student's primary language that is meaningful and comprehensible. Often physical activities, visuals, manipulatives, and an environment, in which students are provided with many context clues to make learning assessable (Zacarian, 2011).
8. *Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol*- A model of lesson planning and delivery for teaching content and language to English learners (Zacarian, 2011).

### **Limitations**

The English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) measures a child's proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, listening to, and understanding English. ELPA21 defines "proficiency" as the ability to use the English language to communicate ideas, knowledge, and information. This assessment is based

on the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards, which are designed to address the language abilities that students need to be successful in school. These ELPA levels would be a factor in a child's ability to learn in the classroom environment. The 10 ELP Standards define what English language skills students should have at specific grade levels. These standards are used by both English as a Second Language (ESL) and content-area teachers to help prepare the child for success in English language arts, mathematics, and science. Within each of the four domains, there are five performance levels (1-5). These performance levels offer information about a child's performance within each domain, as follows:

- Level 5 Advanced: Exhibits superior grade-level English language skills as measured by ELPA21.
- Level 4 Early Advanced: Demonstrates grade-level English language skills required for engagement with academic content instruction at a level comparable to non-ELs.
- Level 3 Intermediate: Applies some grade-level English language skills and will benefit from English Language Program support.
- Level 2 Early Intermediate: Presents evidence of developing grade-level English language skills and will benefit from English Language Program support.
- Level 1 Beginning: Displays few grade-level English language skills and will benefit from English Language Program support (ELPA21, 2017).

With the given information, the first limitation was that many of the students in the sample have only been in the United States a few years and are currently a level 1 and

2 according to the ELPA 21. Students show minimal or no English language acquisition and still require significant support from English Language Program support.

The second limitation was the fact that the sample size was relatively small. There are currently over 1,400 students ranging from kindergarten through 12th grade within this district; this study sample size was 50 students, all on the elementary level. This small sample size may limit the ability to give an accurate depiction of the district because of the measurements and/or ability to generalize to other districts.

The third limitation was the students are sometimes unwilling to participate fully in the ELPA 21 testing, ELA interventions, instructional practice, daily, and homework. It can appear that the students are not always engaged in their educational process.

### **Delimitations**

The researcher chose to include only one district in the study. Therefore, the results may not be generalizable to other districts. The study involved two third grade classrooms on the Northside of the district with high ELL populations within one urban school district. The reason for choosing this particular urban setting involved the accuracy of the data presented. Currently, there are many teaching models and educators with varied training within the classrooms of this district. In the classrooms used for this research, one teacher was trained in the SIOP model and the other was awaiting training.

### **Assumptions**

The researcher assumes that the Developmental Reading and Spelling Assessment and the American College Testing (ACT) Aspire Interim assessments were administered with absolute fidelity, that is, the teacher and support staff appropriately assessed students as prescribed. Additionally, the researcher assumes the ACT Aspire Interim English and

Reading assessment measures third grade standards according to the rigor of the 2016 Arkansas Frameworks. Furthermore, the researcher assumes the teachers in both classrooms are teaching the third grade standards according to the 2016 Arkansas Frameworks with fidelity.

### **Chapter Summary**

Students come from diverse backgrounds and have diverse needs and goals. With English language learners, factors such as peer pressure, the presence of role models, and the levels of home support can strongly affect the desire and ability to learn a second language. Effective program models and instructional practices are needed for English learners so they can have the same opportunities as their peers.

It is important that educational policies and programs on the district and state level reflect the growing body of research on best instructional practices for all learners including English Language Learners. The larger social and cultural contexts of second language development have a tremendous impact on second language learning (Echevarria et al., 2007). The SIOP model has a dual purpose: it systematically and consistently provides a framework to teach both content and language in every lesson (Echevarria et al., 2007). In most schools, the mission and/or vision is based on student achievement. It is believed that when SIOP is practiced with fidelity it will increase student achievement for all students.

## **Chapter II: Review of Related Literature**

The review of literature for this study began by utilizing the online database systems through the Arkansas Tech University Library; the databases produced a variety of journal, newspaper, and book articles. The keywords and phrases the researcher used on the online database were: SIOP, closing the gap for English Language Learners, best practices for English Language Learners, and why do English Language Learners struggle academically. The researcher also used Google and Google Scholar to find journal articles and books. Keywords and phrases during this search included the effectiveness of SIOP, SIOP, Sheltered Instruction, struggling English Language Learners. The researcher also utilized several books from their private collection and from a variety of colleagues.

### **Creating Successful Learning Environments that Support ELL Students**

Learning is one of the most important activities in which humans engage. Student learning is the focus of all that is done in classrooms and schools and is at the core of the educational system. Student learning is influenced by the curriculum, teaching methods used, and the student's ability to understand and conceptualize the two (Baker et al., 2014). The student's ability to understand and conceptualize begins with language.

Language can be defined as a generic, creative phenomenon especially in relation to instruction (Bloome, 2016). Language is the foundation of learning in any discipline of study within the educational system. However, there is an increasing number of students who enter school without being proficient in the English language. Between 1995 and 2005, the number of ELL students in public schools increased by 57%. ELL students account for 12% of the nation's population of K-12 students and represent more

than 350 different language groups (Garcia et al., 2009). There is a gap in understanding and training of teachers in practices of standard second language acquisition. There are literally hundreds of ELL programming models, some effective, most not (Zacarian, 2011). As a result, many of these students seem to be failing and are being referred to Special Education programs and/or dropping out of school. Whether we measure achievement by the tests that each state administers to its students, as required by federal regulations, or by the national report card, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the achievement gap between ELL students and the total student population is significant (Zehr, 2008).

According to the 2015 NAEP results, 40% of non-Hispanic students in fourth grade were proficient compared to 21% of Hispanic students. In eighth grade, 39% of non-Hispanic students are proficient compared to 21% of Hispanic students (Garcia et al., 2009). These outcomes speak to the need to think of more responsive ways to design and integrate curriculum in classrooms that promote success for all students.

ELL students face serious challenges in their academic careers, including the challenge of learning both social and academic English. Learning English as a second language is a difficult task and requires time. Usually, children who are at the beginning stages of the English language are supported in their learning by English Language Specialists, certified and paraprofessionals. This support generally decreases after their English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) levels increase beyond the second level. ELL students spend the majority of their school day in the regular classroom where the classroom teacher has the dual responsibility of teaching language development and content area skills. Based on research findings, it takes five to seven

years for most ELL students to gain sufficient mastery of academic English to join English speaking peers in taking full advantage of instruction in English (Hakuta et al., 2000).

Since the dawn of language, conversations have been powerful teachers. They engage, motivate, and challenge. Conversation aids in building ideas, solving problems and communicating our thoughts. Conversations also teach how other people see and do life. Sometimes, talk shapes identity, thoughts, beliefs, and emotions (Vygotsky, 1986). Students must learn to use conversations, rules, facts, and word meanings to understand and communicate whole ideas. Educators must retool to develop the skills of conversations in the classroom to maximize the potential of all students, especially the growing population of ELL students in public schools across America. Failure to do so will result in a disservice to approximately 12% of our population.

With increased rigor and high academic standards, educators need tools to integrate language and content instruction to make content comprehensible for the ELL. There is a growing awareness that all students benefit from attention to the language demands of academic tasks, texts, and discussion. Creating a language-rich interactive classroom is a key approach for a supportive classroom environment for English Language Learners.

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Model (SIOP) provides the tools and framework to develop academic language through conversations. The focus is on ways to develop and advance English language learners proficiency in English and academics (Echevarria et al., 2013). Used widely across the United States, the SIOP model has been shown to improve academic outcomes for English language learners. The model reflects

best practices for English learners based on decades of research on second language acquisition and effective instruction, as well as on the SIOP model itself. It is a comprehensive approach to identifying students' areas of needs and using a variety of tools and techniques for improving ELL students' proficiencies (Echevarria et al., 2013).

### **Historical Events for ELL Regulations within the Public Schools**

Prior to the 1960s, the right to an equal education was interpreted to mean that all students, regardless of their English proficiency, were treated equally when they attended the same classrooms as their peers, or classrooms like their peers and when the instruction was delivered using the same books and curriculum. This practice was challenged during the Civil Rights movement when the country began to look more carefully at some of its discriminatory practices, including the education of its ELL students (Reese, 2005).

In 1964, the Civil Rights Act was enacted. It states that any institution that receives federal funding cannot deny access to anyone or any program or activity based on their race, color, or national origin (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Civil Rights, 2003). Then in 1968, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was amended to include the Bilingual Education Act. This was the first federal statute that addressed the particular learning needs of language minority students (Baker, 2006). Some believe that it was the result of a political movement intended to attract the Latino vote, while others claim it was a genuine attempt to remedy the high failure rates among the nation's ELL students (Crawford, 1996). Regardless, it marked the first time that the rights of ELL students were brought into focus. Unfortunately, it did not lead to many changes as it failed to include specific regulations other than the general notion that schools could use



innovative programming that allowed students to learn in their native language to teach English and led to what is now known as bilingual education.

According to the National Association of Bilingual Education (2009), the term bilingual education refers to “approaches in the classroom that use the native languages of ELL for instruction” (para.2). Further, it cites seven primary goals for bilingual education:

- Teaching English
- Fostering academic achievement
- Enculturing immigrants to a new society
- Preserving a minority’s group’s linguistic and cultural heritage
- Enabling English speakers to learn a second language
- Developing national language resources
- Or any combination of the above (National Association of Bilingual Education, 2009)

Many federal regulations about ELLs are a result of lawsuits in local courts across the country and appealed all the way to the Supreme Court. In *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), the Supreme Court ruled that schools must provide programming to help students overcome barriers to learning English (Zacarian, 2011). The definition of ELL became commonly known as a student who is not able to perform ordinary class work in English. In 1978, the Supreme Court ruled in *Castaneda v. Pickard* (1978), that districts must establish a three-pronged test for ensuring that their educational program for ELLs are consistent with a student’s right to an education (Zacarian, 2011). It established that programming should be based on sound educational research, implemented with adequate commitment

and resources, and evaluated for its effectiveness and that alternative research-based programming is sought if found to not be effective (Zacarian, 2011).

In 2002, President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) into law with the intent of improving student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The new law replaced the Elementary and Secondary Act, including the Bilingual Act, set new standards for the ways in which schools used federal funds and set achievement standards for schools and students. It included four principles:

1. Stronger accountability for results (required annual assessments of students in English language arts and reading)
2. Greater flexibility among the nation's states, school districts, and schools in the use of federal funds
3. More choices for parents from disadvantaged backgrounds
4. An emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work (U.S. Department of Education, 2002)

New standards were also set to improve the achievement gaps between ELL students and fluent speakers of English because “a congressionally mandated study found that these [ELL] receive lower grades, are judged by their teachers to have lower academic abilities, and score below their classmates on standardized tests of reading and math” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 91). Under NCLB, federally funded schools with ELLs were to focus on using what had been found to be successful practice for teaching ELLs. To do this, it required:

- Teachers to be certified as English language proficient and proficient in the languages in which a program model is taught

- Using curriculum that is scientifically based and proven to be effective
- State flexibility in choosing the teaching method for teaching ELLs, and that 95% of the Title III funds used at the local level be used to teach ELLs.

The Every Student Succeeds Act was signed into law December 9, 2015, by President Obama. This Act provides a stronger focus on closing the achievement gap between English Language Learners and other students. The law maintains accountability and builds on that requirement by elevating English Language Learners assessments and proficiency outcomes to be a key element of statewide accountability systems (McHugh, 2016).

ELL students have a right to an equitable education. Transforming schools for English Language Learners requires that educators understand the need, the regulations governing this population, and a skillset to prepare staff to design and deliver high-quality English language instruction. This recipe will build a school environment in which all, including English Language Learners, can flourish.

### **U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights**

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) is responsible for enforcing Title VI of the Civil Rights of 1964. Title VI is the focal point and center to all interpretations of any legal challenges regarding the provision of equal opportunity to all groups that are in a protected class. Title VI is the receipt of financial assistance from the Federal government. Nearly all public schools in the United States receive some federal funds. Because it is all-inclusive, it is sometimes considered the catalyst for many ELL programs (Arkansas Department of Education [ADE], 2018b). Title VI prohibits the

denial of equal access to education because of a language barrier or limited mastery of English.

*Lau vs Nichols* (1974) affirmed the Department of Education memorandum of May 25, 1970 that directed school districts to take steps to help ELL students overcome language barriers and ensure that population is able to participate meaningfully in the district's educational program (Goldenberg, 2010). According to the ruling, "There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum for students that do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education" (Goldenberg, 2010, p. 11). This was a foundational ELL ruling, the Supreme Court decided that the "usual" teacher training, methods, and curriculum are not sufficient for ELL students and designated the Office of Civil Rights as the authority to establish regulations to ensure limited proficiency English students would receive an equitable education (Goldenberg, 2010).

*Castaneda v. Pickard* (1978) is the second most important Supreme Court case regarding students with English as their second language (OCR, 2018). The Supreme Court established a three-part test to examine an ELL program chosen by a district. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) resolved that the standards set by the court were appropriate in determining if a said program for ELL students meet the requirements of Title VI. The three-pronged approach is as follows:

1. Whether the school system is utilizing a research-based educational model
2. Whether the program has sufficient resources and personnel to implement the research-based educational model

3. Evaluating the program and making adaptations to ensure students are succeeding (OCR, 2018).

The December 1985 memorandum listed two areas to be examined in determining whether a recipient was in compliance with Title VI: (1) the need for an alternative language program for LEP students; and (2) the adequacy of the program chosen by the recipient. Issues related to the adequacy of the program chosen by the recipient will be discussed first, as they arise more often in Lau investigations (OCR, 2018).

The United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights and the United States Department of Justice have combined to guide state agencies and school districts of their legal responsibility to educate the English Language Learner and their parents (OCR, 2018). Jointly, they are ensuring ELL students can participate meaningfully and equally in the educational process of any given United States public school. This is a direct result of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

The No Child Left Behind Act, proposed by President George W. Bush and co-authored by George Miller, John Boehner, Ted Kennedy and Judy Gragg became the bill for the Office of Civil Rights to ensure that American children had equal access to education and promote education enforcement. (OCR, 2018). At that point, perimeters were set for school districts. Achieving English language proficiency and acquiring content knowledge should be the goal of every ELL program. School districts must have procedures in place to accurately and timely identify potential ELL students.

Most school districts provide a home language survey when students enroll to gather background language and pinpoint potential home languages other than English. School districts should have a reliable valid test that evaluates English language

proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Parents have the right to not participate in the district's ELL program. If the parents opt out, the district is responsible to follow-up on the student and provide assistance if the student is struggling. Parents have the right to have meaningful interaction in a language they can understand, such as through translated materials or/and a language interpreter.

School districts are responsible for providing language assistance services to master English and be able to fully participate in the educational process within a reasonable amount of time (OCR, 2018). Districts can choose a research-based educational model that exceeds regular training as a program for English Language Learners. The ELL program of choice should have sufficient staffing and resources to meet the needs of the limited language learner. This includes, but is not limited to, highly qualified teachers, support staff, supplemental training, and instructional materials. ELL students are entitled to receive an effective grade level education and access to all programs within a given school district.

ELL students should be evaluated based on the students' needs and language skills before they are identified for special education (OCR, 2018). Monitoring the progress of all ELL students is the responsibility of the school district and its designee. Achieving English language proficiency and acquiring content knowledge should be the goal of every ELL program. Exiting criteria should include proficiency in a reliable and valid assessment that assesses reading, writing, speaking, and listening. In addition, students should show proficiency in the district's educational program and state assessment. Lastly, the designee should follow-up on the students that exit for two years (OCR, 2018).

## **Arkansas Department of Education as it Relates to ELL Programs**

School districts in Arkansas are governed by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). School districts in Arkansas must be dedicated to providing a rigorous and relevant education in which all students gain the academic and personal skills needed for lifelong learning and success. School-aged ELL students, kindergarten through 12th grade, shall be provided language acquisition support. Arkansas is an “English-Only” speaking state; since 1987, the state of Arkansas has legally obliged all school districts to teach only in English. This “English-Only” mandate was part of a larger movement in the 1980s that saw Mississippi, North Dakota, and North and South Carolina enact their own English laws that same year. Today, schools throughout Arkansas struggle with incoming students who do not speak English as their primary language (ADE, 2018a).

The state uses a combination of English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Structured English Immersion (SEI) to assure that students develop and acquire language but also participate in the core content areas in a meaningful way (ADE, 2018a). The Arkansas Department of Education (2018a) states the following:

It is the ESOL program’s overall vision to serve and support our ELL students so that they are able to reach fluent English proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing. It is also the goal that with these areas of proficiency, ELL students will gain the skills needed to be college and career ready. (p. 8)

The Arkansas Department of Education ESOL program believes that an: (1) Effective education of every ELL is the responsibility of all educational personnel; (2) Effective education requires that excellent English Language Development and supplemental services are rendered to ELL students; and (3) Effective programs for ELL

students respect and celebrate all students' native language in the contexts of both school and community (ADE, 2018a).

The Arkansas Department of Education (2018a) has established 10 English Language Proficiency Standards that are aligned with ADE content curriculum frameworks, stating the following:

The 10 English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards are organized according to a schema that represents each standard's importance to ELLs' participation in the practices called for by college- and-career-ready ELA & Literacy, mathematics, and science standards. In the complete ELP Standards documents, the ten standards are linked to K-12 Practices in math, science, and English Language Arts, as well as to the Arkansas Frameworks and Common Core State Standards. (pp. 14-17)

These 10 English Language Proficiency Standards are as follows:

1. Construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through grade-appropriate listening, reading, and viewing.
2. Participate in grade-appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, responding to peer, audience, or reader comments and questions.
4. Speak and write about grade-appropriate complex literary and informational texts and topics.
5. Construct grade-appropriate oral and written claims and support them with reasoning and evidence.



6. Conduct research, evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems.
7. Analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing.
8. Adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing.
9. Determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text.
10. Create clear and coherent grade-appropriate speech and text.

### **Second Language Acquisition**

To communicate effectively in social situations, Cummins and Swain (1986) contend that we have to have the basic interactive communications skills to be able to interact with others. Using language in social situations with peers is quite different than using language in academic contexts. Social situations are often supported by a context and physical cues such as facial gestures, the tone of voice, and body movements in the environment. ELL students often mimic the movements and conversation without understanding the theme or game being played on the playground.

Academic language is more implicit and abstract, more complex and less reliant on context and interpersonal cues. While there are some visuals, there is also a lot of reading and writing necessary to show mastery (Cummins & Swain, 1986). Students are required to use complex and specific academic vocabulary and language structures to listen, speak, read, and write. Cummins and Swain (1986) referred to academic language development as cognitive academic language proficiency. Academic success requires the

development of basic interactive communication skills with content knowledge and higher order thinking skills to master content area standards in educational settings.

Research shows that developing this cognitive academic language proficiency takes time-intensive instruction, and it is a developmental process (Goldenberg, 2010). Students must develop oral language skills, and educational success depends on mastery of academic language within the content areas. All ELL students must be given sufficient time to establish language acquisition; it is very individualized depending on the student and the many variables in both the social and academic setting; their programming must be designed with that premise in mind (Goldenberg, 2010).

Two government-funded reviews of research provided findings on language acquisition of language minority students. These studies found that it takes one to three years to become conversationally fluent and four to six years to become or achieve a level 4 proficiency (Goldenberg, 2010). It was also found that such progress may not be directly related to how fluent a student is in social conversational situations. Developing academic proficiency in English is a long process, and each stage is not the same in terms of the length of time that it takes to move from one to another.

Drawing from the two government-funded research reviews about second language learning, Goldenberg (2010) found that “progress was slower between level 3 and advanced levels 4 and 5” (p. 4). One of the most important factors regarding the length of time it takes for proficiency is whether a student is from an environmental setting immersed literacy or a non-literacy oriented forum (Zacarian, 2011). Language is said to be learned through receiving input that is meaningful. By the time young children enter school, they have already had three to five years of language experiences, literate or

non-literate. While all students have some form of cultural, linguistic, and cognitive skills, many struggle fundamentally if they are not literate in those areas. Krashen (1982) concludes the inability to be literate in those three areas is an important distinction because, fundamentally, it has been found that literacy skills obtained in one language transfer to a second language.

### **Developing English as a Second Language (ESL)**

All ELL students fit in the continuum of levels of English as a Second Language (ESL) provided by the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. ESL describes the instruction for learning English. In order to understand the progression of English as a Second Language and have the knowledge of what students are capable of doing, it is essential to have knowledge of the levels of English Proficiency levels and learning needs of students.

Many panels of researchers have created four to six levels of the progress in English as a Second Language. The model the state of Arkansas uses is taken from The Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages created a five-level set of ESL standards for kindergarten through 12th grade (ADE, 2018a).

***Stage one: Starting.*** This is often referred to as a preproduction stage. Students are not yet able to speak English with more than one- or two-word responses as they are just beginning to listen in English. Visuals, body language, peer translations, and activities that build social vocabulary are a necessary part of the day. Instructional attention should be focused on building students' listening comprehension through body language, demonstrations, modeling, and visuals (Haynes & Zacarian, 2010).

**Stage two: Emerging.** This stage usually occurs when students have learned English for six months to a year and are beginning to speak in English, especially in social situations. English is learned through visual support and demonstrated by responding to yes/no questions, naming or categorizing information, and writing very simple sentences to go with pictures. Graphic organizers, charts, drawings, demonstrations, and other visuals are essentials for learning to occur (Haynes & Zacarian, 2010).

**Stage three: Developing.** Students at this stage are beginning to communicate more in English and attempting to use longer and more descriptive sentences. In one to two years, students generally have conversational skills that can be used in social and academic settings. Students understand more than they can communicate in academic settings. They cannot yet communicate in higher order thinking and academic language, though this is starting to develop. Students can usually follow one- through three-step directions, have discussions, and complete tasks in a controlled teacher-scaffolded environment. Students at Stage three require content materials to be modified so that they can be easily accessed through visuals, graphic organizers, and other materials by which students can make meaning (Haynes & Zacarian, 2010).

**Stage four: Expanding.** Students are becoming more proficient in English at this stage. Frequently, they can grasp key information in text, use graphic organizers independently, and skim and scan literature for specific information. This population can readily use critical thinking skills to analyze, create, debate, predict and hypothesize in English (Haynes & Zacarian, 2010).

***Stage five: Bridging.*** At this level, students are able to perform all tasks in English. Very little direct assistance is needed. Teacher support is needed to fine-tune grammar and develop higher order thinking skills (Haynes & Zacarian, 2010).

### **English Language Learner Educators**

White middle-class females are predominant in teacher preparation programs and classrooms across America. According to Hollins and Guzman (2005), “White middle-class females from suburbs and small towns and have limited experience with people and cultures other than their own and are most comfortable working students and parents from experiences similar to their own” (p. 400). Courses in key areas that are needed for teaching ELL like Bilingual Education, Second Language Acquisition, and Multicultural Education were more likely to be optional electives in the teacher degree programs. Most of the nation’s teachers have no training or experience working with the growing population of ELL students. They are not sure how to address these students’ limited English needs or how to adapt instruction so this population can learn. Unfortunately, federal law does not require teachers to be highly qualified to teach ELL. The poor performance of ELL seems to parallel the lack of preparation among their teachers who teach them (Honawar, 2009). These factors pose a challenge for the current educational system all across America.

Without special preparation, even good teachers may find it difficult to meet the needs of English Language Learners. Some schools do have good general education teachers who are trained to teach the ELL student population. Many are members of the same language minority group as their student, others not, and have a solid understanding of their students’ language, culture, and prior schooling. They have been trained in

theories and practices and understand the developmental process of learning a new language. Some trained teachers feel marginalized while others feel empowered.

A group of teachers participated in a longitudinal study that led to what is known as SIOP. In that study, researchers from the Center of Applied Linguistics and the Center for Research on Equity and Diversity looked at teachers of ELL students for a five-year period and noted the elements for planning and delivering an effective lesson. From this research, they developed an observational protocol that highlighted the elements that the researchers believe are essential for students at the third, fourth, and final stages of English language learning. At the heart of this research is a strong belief in collaboration among teachers. The results of that study indicated that these teachers felt empowered to be leaders of learning in their classroom and school buildings (Echevarria et al., 2008). In order to close the achievement gap for this population, educational leaders must provide additional training and time for collaboration with teachers.

### **Using a Four-Pronged Approach**

One approach for improving student performance is to look at the types of learning environments that are likely to yield the best results and testing that can capture ELL's language and academic development. Language learning is not purely learning the language, and content learning is not merely learning content. A helpful means for understanding the process of language and content learning to look closely at four interdependent components that Zacarian (2008) calls the Four-Pronged Approach:

1. Learning is a sociocultural process
2. Learning is a developmental process
3. Learning is an academic process

#### 4. Learning is a cognitive

**Learning is a sociocultural process.** Learning is personal. It is dependent on our ability to connect what is learned with our personal, social, cultural, and world knowledge (Zacarian, 2008). Our capacity to learn is directly related to our ability to connect what is to be learned with our familiarity with the context in which it is situated. In a great sense, ELLs are dependent on their teachers to make the context relevant and meaningful. In addition, learning is a social process that involves a high level of interaction (Zacarian, 2008).

Pair and group work are important methods to use and are successful when the explicit instruction is given in this type of work. Quality learning and school community environments and experiences must take into account the sociocultural process. In a great sense, ELL students are dependent on their teachers to make the context relevant and meaningful. In addition, learning is a social process that involves a high level of interaction. Pair and group work are important methods to use and are only successful when the explicit instruction is given for implementing in this kind of work (Zacarian, 2008).

Without this connection-making, the learning processes and parents are disconnected from the child's day to day learning, which ultimately creates the child's learning experiences and environments. Social and cultural contexts are needed when making decisions about the curriculum, lesson planning, delivery, and other stakeholders involved in the learning experience. A guaranteed viable curriculum must take into account the sociocultural process (Zacarian, 2008).

**Learning is a developmental process.** Language learning is a developmental process, and it consists of four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Echevarria & Graves, 2006). In order to communicate with language, one must be able to comprehend and produce language fluidly, use a wide range of vocabulary, pronounce words so that they are easily understood, and use grammar appropriately consistently. English as a second language is not an overnight process. Rather, it is a developmental process that involves a high-level of mastery of these comprehension and production elements (Zacarian, 2008).

In the beginning, it is common for ELL students to utter one word or simple phrases to signal meaning; while advanced learners know to use more complex sentences that may or may not have grammatical errors that do not interfere with meaning. Making data-driven decisions about ELLs must take into account that learning language is a developmental process, and all aspects of learning must reflect this concept. In practice, it means that educators and administrators must understand the English language level standards established and match them to the daily instructional practice of the classroom (Zacarian, 2008).

**Learning is an academic process.** Academic learning is one of the main reasons our students enter tens of thousands of buildings every day. Academic learning should span across all content areas. All content areas should be expanded and extended as students move from grade to grade in the continuum of education. As students move within the continuum, their vocabulary, linguistic, sociocultural, and cognitive academic abilities should increase (Zacarian, 2008). What is learned in one language can be transferred to a second language, and that is why, fundamentally, it is believed to be the



most efficient and effective means for learning a new language is to do so while continuing to develop academically (Goldenberg, 2008). While some might believe that it is better to delay the learning of content in favor of allocating time for learning English, the opposite is true. Students learn best when they can continue to develop socioculturally, linguistically, academically, and cognitively simultaneously (Zacarian, 2008).

### **Creating a Language-Rich Interactive Classroom**

Seidlitz and Castillo (2010) observed hundreds of classrooms in California, where English Language Learners represent a staggering 28% of the population. Their goals were to examine instructional approaches, gather data, and review research on current trends to effectively support the ELL student to be successful in content mastery and continued language development. That study brought out several steps and/approaches that were highly effective in every classroom observed. When these steps and/or approaches were not used, students were not as successful. The combined effort of the team used school data, observations, increased proficiency levels and formative assessments to determine effectiveness. When schools followed these approaches in a strategic way along with a commitment to change, progress, and effectiveness with English Language Learners is evident (Seidlitz & Castillo, 2010).

### **Developing Content and Language Objectives**

Planning activities that align with both content and language objectives are no easy task. The integration of content and language instruction provides a basis for language learning and is acquired most effectively when learned in meaningful and significant context. Through the integration of content and language instruction, second

language learners develop the ability to generate thoughtful spoken and written tracts. This facilitates their proficiency in understanding and producing discussion tied to specific content areas (Seidlitz & Castillo, 2010).

### **Teaching Students What to Say When They Do Not Know What to Say**

Teaching students what to say when they do not know what to say is a metacognitive strategy; students deliberately monitor their own thinking to determine whether or not they understand and make thoughtful choices to access help and support for their learning. The use of metacognitive strategies has an impact on student learning and teacher teaching (Seidlitz & Castillo, 2010). English language learners benefit from learning when they use metacognitive strategies while monitoring and evaluating their own thinking. The use of appropriate learning strategies allows students to take responsibility for their learning by enhancing autonomy, independence, and self-direction (Seidlitz & Castillo, 2010).

### **Have Students Speak in Complete Sentences**

Developing high levels of English oral language proficiency should be the priority for teachers of English learners. Academic success in the United States, in general, requires proficiency in oral English (Seidlitz & Castillo, 2010). Students must go beyond developing vocabulary terms and learn how to form and structure academic and social language. They need to understand forms and meaning in written language and how to express complex meanings orally even if they are limited in English language proficiency (Seidlitz & Castillo, 2010). Teachers must remember that students cannot write in ways they do not speak. The expectation and preparation of students to respond in complete sentences allow them to participate in learning in a formal way. Having students share

and respond to both the teacher and other students using complete sentences with specific grammatical structures is a successful approach to teaching ELL students. It also provides teachers to assess both language and literacy development (Seidlitz & Castillo, 2010).

### **Randomize and Rotate Who You Call On**

Student engagement is highly correlated with student success. Engaging English Language Learners is a challenge because teachers have to accommodate the different proficiency levels and differentiate according to content, process, and conduct. Randomizing and rotating student responses is an important strategy to maintain a structure of accountability. This practice supports all students by providing students wait time for thinking. Students are not sure who is being called upon, and are therefore more likely to engage in the thinking process in order to ask questions (Seidlitz & Castillo, 2010). Students need to find their own voices and verbally express their understanding of content through discussions. Educators foster these opportunities through discussion, reflective notebooks, and thoughtful questioning. This can also be accomplished through structured conversations (Seidlitz & Castillo, 2010).

The population of English Language Learners is rapidly changing and growing. In order to meet the needs of this population, it is necessary to look at the training of teachers and the effectiveness of the model in place that contends to align content knowledge and language acquisition. Other ideas to explore would include language development as it relates to second language acquisition and the components of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol.

## **Sheltered Instruction**

Content-area instruction instructed in a way that allows English Language Learners to comprehend while acquisitioning language is referred to as Sheltered Instruction (SI; Hansen-Thomas, 2008). The goal is higher academic achievement while they are reaching English fluency. Sheltered Instruction uses a variety of instructional practices including Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development. It combines instructional strategies that are said to be considered just good teaching with teaching techniques that meet the language and content needs of ELL students (Hansen-Thomas, 2008). Hansen-Thomas (2008) suggests that good teachers use features of SI in their regular instruction without realizing that is what they are using because it is just good teaching practice. Instead of watering down curriculum, teachers use scaffolds to "shelter" the students from the linguistic demands of reading and writing, which may include discussion, sentence frames, and fill in the blanks. Sheltered Instruction is utilized in many models across the United States as a method of teaching English Language Learners (Hansen-Thomas, 2008). Components of SI have also been incorporated into SIOP.

## **Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol Model**

Originally, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol was developed by Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2004) in the 1990s as an instrument used to evaluate teacher implementation of Sheltered Instruction; the basis of the SIOP model is grounded in SI. Over the years, SIOP progressed into more of an instructional model because the creators wanted to make content more comprehensible to English Language Learners. The originators of the SIOP model explain SIOP as a multi-purpose tool for educators and

administrators with several functions (Echeverria et al., 2004) It is widely used as a professional development device for training content area teachers to implement SI effectively. SIOP is also used as an instrument of measurement to rate the use of SI by teachers. Another use is a structure for teachers to implement content area instruction while integrating academic language development.

SIOP consists of eight major components and 30 features (Echevarria et al., 2004). The first component is Lesson Preparation. Lesson Preparation is creating guidance for helping students achieve their learning outcomes using materials, resources, and research that are developmentally appropriate. The goal is producing lessons that enable students to make their own connections using background knowledge with the new information being presented. When necessary, teachers must also prepare by adapting their lessons to accommodate all students' proficiency levels. Lessons should include both content and language objectives that identify specific content and language concepts that the learners will know or be able to do as a result of the lesson.

Building Background is the second component of the SIOP model. Building Background is essential information known or made known to understanding or learning new concepts. Concepts should be directly linked to the student's background (personal, cultural, or academic). Dr. Robert Marzano is a nationally recognized education researcher that has written many books and articles on the topic of Building Background and other essentials for student learning. In his article, "Becoming the Reflective Teacher," he states:

What students know about the content is one of the strongest indicators of how well they learn new information relative to the content is one of the strongest indicators of how well they learn new information relative to the content. (p. 89)

This component requires teachers to emphasize important vocabulary terms and to make explicit connections between the concept being learned and the students' background experiences outside of the classroom as well as their past learning experiences within their educational experiences.

The third component of the SIOP model, Comprehensible Input, is taken from the input hypothesis of Krashen's (1982) Monitor Model. Krashen (1982) concluded that:

(1) Teenagers, young adults, and adults can really benefit from actually learning strategies and explicit grammar instruction. Writing is one of the four skills that benefit most from grammar instruction in older students, so make it part of the curriculum. (2) Too much monitoring will impede fluency at the benefit of being accurate. A balance should always be central to being too far on either end of the spectrum is not good for communication. (3) Students not only need input, but they need input that is easy to understand. Teaching language or teaching materials that are too high for the students do little to progress their language ability or understanding. Teaching through comprehensible input requires that educators use various techniques such as clear speech, visuals, pictures, gestures, body languages, and modeling to make sure academic concepts and tasks are clear to ELL students. Educators should also explain academic tasks in a sequential manner and give students time to explain instructions to each other, remembering to paraphrase or repeat when necessary (Echevarria et al., 2004).

Components three and four are closely connected. The fourth component of the SIOP model is Strategies. Strategies include techniques, methods, and mental processes that enhance comprehension for learning and retaining information. Teachers should consistently use scaffolding and higher order thinking skills.

The fifth component is Interaction. The key is providing interactive activities that allow interaction with varied student groupings to maximize discussion. Lessons should also include multiple opportunities to practice the content and use their language knowledge in their learning, thus the sixth component, Practice and Application.

The seventh component, Lesson Delivery, includes the distribution of information using the content and language objectives as your goal. It is the actual implementation of the lesson planned. It is about the opportunities students have to engage in the concepts and interactive activities available for the students' learning.

The final component of the SIOP model is Review and Assessment. This includes the formative and summative assessment of both the language and content concepts (Echevarria et al., 2004).

Embedded within the SIOP components are a total of 30 observable features which, according to Echevarria et al. (2004), represent what they formalize as effective sheltered instruction practices. The authors suggest that the SIOP model determines teacher effectiveness based on quality and level of implementation of sheltered instruction as observed and measured by a 30-item observation rubric where each SIOP element is rated on a scale of 0 to 4 with the option of n/a for a number of the features. The rubric is generally used by administrators and/or teachers as they are involved in SIOP training and professional development (Echevarria et al., 2004).

## **Poverty as it Relates to School**

According to Payne (2013), teachers are the single biggest difference in student achievement. The best teacher-preparation programs emphasize subject-matter mastery and provide many opportunities for student teachers to spend time in real classrooms under the supervision of an experienced mentor. The lack of staff training can result in the deficit model appearing in the attitude of the educator as it relates to the whole child in terms of any population of students being served. Educators, especially those that teach economically disadvantaged, must understand all learning is double-coded emotionally and cognitively. Relationships constitute the primary motivation for almost all learning. Payne (2013) believes that these relationships occur within a context of mutual respect, which involves three things: high expectations, insistence, and support. Mutual respect is not taught, it is earned, it is reciprocated, and it is insisted upon by the teacher. However, students will not automatically respect a teacher just because he/she insists on respect. It also must be earned.

Students from families with little formal education often learn rules about how to speak, behave, and acquire knowledge that conflict with how learning happens in school. They also often come to school with less background knowledge and fewer family supports. Formal schooling, therefore, may present challenges to students living in poverty. Teachers need to recognize these challenges and help students overcome them. Payne (2013) believes that there are nine interventions particularly helpful in raising achievement for low-income students because they meet the needs of the whole child. These are the interventions that educators should consider to focus on during our focused grade level meetings.



Strategies that will help raise the achievement of students living in poverty are:

(1) Build relationships of respect; (2) Make beginning learning relational; (3) Teach students to speak in formal register; (4) Assess each student's resources; (5) Teach the hidden rules of school; (6) Monitor progress and plan interventions; (7) Translate the concrete into the abstract; (8) Teach students how to ask questions; and (9) Forge relationships with parents (Payne, 2013).

Many federal regulations about ELL students are a result of lawsuits in local courts across the country, and many appealed to the United States Supreme Court. Since the Supreme Court's 1974 *Lau v. Nichols* decision affirming that English Language Learners must be guaranteed a "meaningful education," such research and policy have taken place that has evolved educating ELL students (Zacarian, 2011, p. 17). ELL students represent a large and growing population in our nation's schools (Zacarian, 2011).

Many ELL students enter school with a strong literacy background with strong parents. Many more come from less-educated non-literate parentage; 66% of ELL students live in poverty (Zacarian, 2011). Most of the nation's teachers have no training or experience working with the growing population of ELL students (Hollins & Guzman, 2005). The population of English Language Learners is rapidly changing and growing. In order to meet the needs of this population, it is necessary to look at the training of teachers and the effectiveness of the model in place that contends to align content knowledge and language acquisition.

Other ideas to explore would include language development as it relates to second language acquisition and the components of the Sheltered Instruction Observation

Protocol. Originally, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) was developed by Echevarria et al. (2004) in the 1990s as an instrument used to evaluate teacher implementation of Sheltered Instruction. SIOP has many uses; one use is a structure for teachers to implement content area instruction while integrating academic language development. If the features of SIOP are implemented with fidelity, all students including ELL students will improve in content areas and increase language acquisition.

### **Chapter III: Research Design and Methodology**

Educators are faced with the challenge of teaching an ever-changing student population. More and more students learning English as a new language are enrolled in our schools. As a result, classrooms are filled with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and cultures. English Language Learners account for 12% of our student population (Garcia et al., 2009).

Providing English Language Learners with the effective instruction that integrates both content area knowledge and English language acquisition is necessary. Academic achievement within the ELL population has been below the average performance level of native English speakers (Echevarria et al., 2008). Not all English learners are alike. Individual characteristics such as literacy in the first language and educational background affect how quickly ELL will acquire academic English and be successful in school. English Language Learners are relying on educators to teach them what they need to know in order to be successful in all academic areas. Many teachers in America's schools do not have the skillset to appropriately instruct this population of learners (Echevarria et al., 2008).

Teachers of ELL students must be equipped with a skillset to effectively implement instructional strategies proven to be effective based on students' individual language proficiency levels. This includes targeted instruction for content and language development. Districts/schools need a systematic, comprehensive, and practical approach to prepare and support teachers to work with English Language Learners. English Language Learners deserve the opportunity to excel and advance in educational settings. The SIOP is a research-based program proven over the last 15 years to provide a

systematic approach to the integration of listening, speaking, reading, and writing for English Language Learners. The integration of these skills enhances language acquisition in classrooms. SIOP is an effective approach for teaching both academic content and language development. There are many models available for ELL instruction, SIOP is the only empirically validated instructional approach (Echevarria et al., 2008).

### **Problem and Purpose Overview**

ELL students face serious challenges in their academic careers; including the challenge of learning both social and academic English. Learning English as a second language is a difficult task and requires time. Usually, children who are at the beginning stages of the English language are supported in their learning by English Language Specialists, certified and paraprofessionals. This support generally decreases after their English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) levels increase beyond the second level.

ELL students spend the majority of their school day in the regular classroom where the classroom teacher has the dual responsibility of teaching language development and content area skills. Based on research findings, it takes five to seven years for most ELL students to gain sufficient mastery of academic English to join English speaking peers in taking full advantage of instruction in English (Hakuta et al., 2000). If schools are to provide a quality education for all children, teachers must be equipped to implement best instructional practices in the classroom. To date, the SIOP Model is the only approach to teaching language and content to English learners that has

been validated by empirical research that measured student achievement outcomes (Echevarria et al., 2008).

### **Research Questions**

This study was guided by two research questions:

1. Does the SIOP model positively impact the academic success of ELL students?
2. Does the SIOP model positively impact the academic success of all students?

### **Hypothesis**

Teachers must accommodate the ELL student's varied educational and linguistic backgrounds; they must put into practice research-based instruction to deliver lessons that are meaningful and appropriate for all students. SIOP, when implemented with fidelity, will increase academic achievement for *all* students.

### **Research Design**

For the purpose of this study, a quasi-experimental method known as a nonequivalent comparison-group design was used. The primary difference between an experimental design and a quasi-experimental design lies in the inability to utilize random selection or assignment in establishing the comparison-groups for a quasi-experimental design (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Without randomization of grouping, this study was not able to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the treatment and the dependent variable.

The purpose of this study was to determine if the SIOP model was effective in improving the ELL student's language acquisition while improving reading and writing skills in literary content. The operational definition for language acquisition was the

scores on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Developmental Spelling Analysis (DSA), and ACT Aspire tests. This particular study established two nonequivalent classrooms in one school district located in Western Arkansas. Class A was assigned to the treatment group and received instruction using the SIOP model. The other classroom (Class B) was assigned to the control group and received regular instruction without the use of the SIOP model. The teacher in the treatment group was trained in SIOP five years ago and attended the three-day institute within the district presented by a certified trainer from Pearson, the publisher of SIOP. In a pretest-posttest design, all students in both classrooms were administered the tests prior to the treatment beginning. Then for a period of time, the treatment group received instruction using the SIOP model. At the end of the treatment period, both classrooms were administered the identified tests, and the results were analyzed to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the scores between the treatment and control groups.

### **Population and Sample**

The population sample for this quasi-experimental study consisted of 50 third grade students from two different elementary schools within the same district in Western Arkansas. There are 19 elementary schools within this urban school district. One elementary classroom within this district was assigned to the control group and a second elementary classroom was assigned as the treatment group. All students in these two classrooms who provided parental consent to participate became participants in the study and their assessment data were utilized. In the state of Arkansas, third grade classrooms can have up to 25 students in one classroom; both classes are maxed. Demographically, both schools are about 65% English Language Learners and above 95% free and reduced

Lunch (Jimenez-Castellanos & Garcia, 2017). Both the control and treatment groups consisted of students between the ages of eight and nine. The teachers in both classrooms have taught more than 10 years in Title I schools. Some students from each group have been exposed to some level of the SIOP model while in previous classrooms, which may have been a mitigating or confounding variable.

### **Description of the Setting**

Both schools that participated in this study are designated Title I schools. Other similarities include: at least 90% free and reduced lunch, 65% English Language Learners, and both teachers have taught more than 10 years in low socioeconomic schools. There are few differences between the two groups, which helps to isolate the treatment as having a possible effect on student scores. The treatment group has had the same principal for the last 12 years while the control group has had three administrators in the last 12 years. The treatment group had a total of 650 students in their building, while the control group had 350 students in their building. Students in the treatment group have had a choice of five different teachers in previous grade levels while the control group has had two teachers per grade level. Many of the students in the control group have been in the same classroom and knew how to work together. The treatment group has been part of a 1-1 Dell Chromebook initiative since kindergarten while the treatment group has been part of a traditional classroom until third grade. The students within the control group now participate in the 1-1 District initiative, since it begins in third grade.

Another difference between the two groups was students in the control group have a 35% mobility rate, which means one-third of the students that begin in the classroom

will transfer to another school within the school year and others will come that may not have been exposed to SIOP. The treatment group's mobility rate is about 10%. The researcher monitored the migration of students to determine if their inclusion in the final data analysis skewed the results in any way.

### **Instrumentation**

The SIOP integrative approach focused on four domains; reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Three district assessments were used in this study; Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) for reading, Developmental Spelling Analysis (DSA) for writing, and ACT Aspire Interim Testing for all four domains. In addition, the researcher observed the two classrooms to measure speaking and listening.

**Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA).** The DRA is given three times per year with running records being taken every two weeks to assess progress. It is a standardized assessment for reading that is used to determine a student's instructional level in reading. The levels vary from A to Z and/or one to 80 (Beaver, 2009). The DRA is given to all students at a variety of times as determined by the school or district. In this district, the DRA is given three times per year: the beginning of the year, before holiday break, and within the last two weeks of the school year. In this district, it is administered by teachers, interventionists, and/or instructional facilitators that have been trained to use this tool in Effective Literacy, required literacy training in this school district.

Students begin by taking the Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR) at the beginning of the year to help determine a starting point for the DRA; some teachers use the levels from the end of the previous year. Students read a portion of the determined reading level for one minute to determine the difficulty of the book. If the



students are able to read with 95% accuracy and retell the story for comprehension, the teacher advances the student to the next level up to level 24. After reaching level 24, the student must read as stated.

In addition, there is a writing component. The writing component has a rubric, and it is the teacher's responsibility to score according to the rubric. Students continue to advance until they are below 95%, which is considered their instructional level. This is the level the student will receive teacher-directed learning. According to the Developmental Reading Continuum, on grade level, students should come to third grade reading on a level 30 and work up to level 40 to 44 by the end of the year (Beaver, 2009).

**Developmental Spelling Analysis (DSA).** The DSA is mandated twice per year but for this study, it was administered three times. It was administered at the beginning of the year, before holiday break, and again in May.

In *Word Journeys*, Ganske (1999) informs educators:

The Developmental Spelling Analysis (DSA) is based on developmental spelling theory and includes two components: a Screening Inventory for determining a child's stage of spelling development, and parallel Feature Inventories for highlighting strengths and weaknesses in the knowledge of specific orthographic features. (p. 111)

The screening inventory given at the beginning of the year is comprised of a variety of features that students need to be able to have control over in order to read and write at grade level. The inventory consists of 25 words per category and is read by the teacher. Instructions are included; there is no training necessary to give this assessment. There are two versions of every assessment per category. According to the directions,

teachers are to read the word twice, read the given sentence and say the word two more times. The students write the word on paper. Later the test is graded by features. For example, the first category is Letter Name, beginning sounds are worth one point, medial sounds are worth one, and ending sounds are also worth one point. Other categories include Within Word, Syllable Juncture, and Derivational Constancy. Student tests are graded using the rubric.

As the features increase in difficulty, the rubric changes. Feature inventories also increase a student's vocabulary. There will be many new words within each feature. We know that teaching vocabulary can improve reading and writing for native English and non-English speaking students. Teachers must instruct students in word learning, decoding, and word awareness strategies. The feature inventories help them develop knowledge of words in patterns and how they work or not so that students understand and develop strong comprehension and writing skills.

**ACT Aspire.** The ACT Aspire Interim is given in October, December, and March. ACT Interim testing is a new initiative in this district this year. In the past four years, there have been three different state assessments. The districts adopted this Interim test because it is supposed to align with the ACT Aspire high stakes state testing in the spring of each year. The ACT Interim assessments were launched and made available to school districts beginning in 2014; the assessments available test English, reading, writing, science, and math. The Interim assessments are standards-based by standards set forth by the state of Arkansas beginning July 2016. This district uses curriculum maps created by teacher task forces for each quarter and grade level; the standards are linked by units. The ACT uses any or all of the standards by grade level.

The expectation of the assessment is to increase individual scores each time. The reasoning is more skills should be mastered as students go forward in the school year.

The assessment is given online and has multiple question types: constructed response, multiple choice, short answer, and technology enhanced. Typically, students take one to two sections each day; each section usually lasts approximately an hour. This district has established a testing window so all schools in the district are testing within two weeks of each other.

**Observational data.** Standards-based instruction is based largely on the understanding of conversational and academic language development. In addition, opportunities for learning and acquiring this development takes place in the classroom. The classroom provides the ideal setting for promoting opportunities to listen and speak. In both classrooms, the researcher will observe the activities and interactions that promote the listening and speaking components throughout the research project. There is a rubric provided by SIOP to determine whether activities are conducive to meeting the criteria of the speaking and listening domains to promote language development. The researcher will observe the entire literacy block.

### **Data Collection**

The data collected included testing data from the three assessments identified in the previous section. All data were collected and entered into SPSS23, a statistical software package for analysis and comparison. The test scores that are available before the treatment began were used as the pretest scores. The test scores received after the treatment was completed were considered the posttest scores for both groups.

In addition, the observational data collected by the researcher was quantified for both groups and compared to group differences. Although it is qualitative data, for this study, the results were quantified and analyzed using nonparametric statistical analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were used to summarize and describe the data collected from the assessment instruments. Residual scores between the pretest and posttest results for each group were calculated. Then, independent sample *t*-tests were run on the residual mean scores to determine if there were any statistically significant differences between the control and treatment groups that might imply some effect of the SIOP model.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

Permission to use the two classrooms in this study was secured from the appropriate administrative agent in the district before data collection begins. In addition, an application was made to the Arkansas Tech University Institutional Review Board (IRB), and approval was received (Appendix A). As part of that IRB approval, a parental consent form was developed and presented to each student's parent or guardian. Only those students who provided a signed parental consent form were allowed to participate in the study. Students were not required to participate and any student was permitted to withdraw after consenting to participate at any time without penalty.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, the researcher discussed how this quasi-experimental study in an urban school district in Arkansas was implemented and how the data were disaggregated. The study sought to determine if SIOP, when implemented with fidelity, improved

language acquisition and content areas within the literacy block. The setting was two third grade classrooms within a designated Title I urban school district. Both schools' populations are more than 65% ELL. Teachers from both classrooms have been teaching 13-15 years. The treatment group's teacher has attended the SIOP 3 day institute and has implemented the model for the past five years. The researcher observed in both classrooms two times using the SIOP template rubric; the researcher analyzed and compared pre and post data from the DRA, DSA, and ACT Interim Assessments. The quantitative results were entered in SPSS23 and analyzed for both groups and compared to group differences.

## **Chapter IV: Results**

As the number of English Language Learners continues to grow in the United States, school administrators and staff all across America strive to attain best educational practices for educating this diverse group of students. On the secondary level, 89% of Hispanic students do not read on grade level. Only 24% of eighth graders scored at the proficient or advanced level on the reading portion (Echevarria et al., 2008). According to the NAEP (2016), 31% of English Language Learners do not complete high school. With these staggering numbers, there appears to be increasingly more pressure from federal and state educational policies to improve academic achievement among ELL students.

Whether or not ELL students find academic achievement in school depends on several variables, some of which include the adequacy of teacher preparation, professional development for teachers, the effectiveness of the model being used, and the level of teacher effectiveness in implementing appropriate instructional practices (Echevarria et al., 2008). Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol is a research-based and validated instructional model that has proven effective in addressing ELL students throughout the United States. SIOP is an approach for teaching content to English Language Learners in strategic ways that make the subject matter concepts comprehensible while promoting the language development (Echevarria et al., 2008).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol was developed to make the content material more comprehensible. SIOP is designed specifically to advance English learners' knowledge and use of English in increasingly sophisticated ways. Therefore,

the purpose of this research study is to examine the systemic approach of SIOP as it relates to maximizing content and developing language with all learners when implemented with fidelity in the classroom. It is believed that when language is the primary objective and content is secondary, students will engage successfully and increase their skills and knowledge.

The study's purpose will be to determine if the SIOP model is effective in improving the ELL student's language acquisition while improving reading and writing skills in literary content. The operational definition for language acquisition will be the scores on the DRA, DSA, and ACT Aspire tests.

### **Research Questions**

1. Does the SIOP model positively impact the academic success of ELL students?
2. Does the SIOP model positively impact the academic success of all students?

### **Sample Description**

The population sample for this quasi-experimental study consisted of 50 third grade students from two different elementary schools within the same district in Western Arkansas. There are 19 elementary schools within this urban school district. One elementary classroom within this district will be assigned to the control group and a second elementary classroom was assigned as the treatment group. All students in these two classrooms who provided parental consent to participate did become participants in the study and their assessment data was utilized. In the state of Arkansas, third grade classrooms can have up to 25 students in one classroom; both classes are maxed. Demographically, both schools are about 65% English Language Learners and above

95% free and reduced lunch (Jimenez-Castellanos & Garcia, 2017). Both the control and treatments group were made up of students between the ages of eight and nine. The teachers in both classrooms have taught between 13 and 15 years. Some students from each group have been exposed to some level of the SIOP model while in previous classrooms.

Both schools represented for this study are designated Title I schools. Other similarities include: at least 90% free and reduced lunch, 65% English Language Learners, and both teachers have taught 10-15 years in low socioeconomic schools. There are also few differences between the two groups. The treatment group has had the same principal for the last 12 years while the control group has had three administrators in the last 12 years. The treatment group had a total of 650 students in their building, while the control group had 350 students in their building. Students in the treatment group have had a choice of five different teachers in previous grade levels while the control group has had two teachers per grade level. Many of the students in the control group have been in the same classroom and knew how to work together. The treatment group has been part of a 1-1 Dell Chromebook initiative since kindergarten while the treatment group has been part of a traditional classroom until third grade. The students within the control group now participate in the 1-1 District initiative, since it begins in third grade.

Another difference between the two groups is students in the control group have a 35% mobility rate, which means one-third of the students that began in the classroom will transfer to another school within the school year and others that came throughout the year may not have been exposed to SIOP. The treatment group's mobility rate is about 10%.



## **Data Collection**

The data collection for this study began on January 3, 2017, two weeks after the IRB application was submitted and approved. The qualitative data collection consisted of the researcher observing both classrooms using the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol to determine if the treatment classroom teacher was implementing the 30 features of SIOP. In addition, the researcher was observing to determine if the control group was utilizing some, if any, of the components within SIOP.

The quantitative data consisted of DRA, DSA, and ACT Aspire Interim assessments for the 2017-18 school year. For the purposes of this study, the teachers from both classrooms agreed to do a mid-year assessment of both the DRA and DSA assessment. The ACT Interim is given in October, December, and March per district policy, but for this study, only the data for October and December was used. There are 25 students in each classroom. The researcher compared the DRA, DSA, and ACT Aspire Interim Assessment for the 25 students individually and collectively in each classroom. This was done to determine if the treatment positively impacted the students' academic performances within the classroom setting. One teacher used Fountas and Pinnell levels to report DRA scores. Fountas and Pinnell use letters to determine the reading level for each student. To use the *t*-test analysis, the letters had to be converted to a numeric value. The researcher used Instructional Grade-Level Equivalents as shown in Table 1.

Table 1  
*Instructional Grade-Level Equivalents*

Fountas and Pinnell	DRA
A	1
B	2
C	3
D	4
E	8
F	10
G	12
H	14
I	16
J	18
K	20
L	24
M	28
N	30
O	34
P	38
Q	38
R	38
S	40
T	40
V	50

The researcher also compared the DSA data between the beginning and middle of the school year administrations of the assessment. DSA data is presented in categorical areas. Thus, the values had to be converted to a numerical value for analysis. Letter Name, Early was given the value one; Letter Name, Mid was given the number two. Letter Name, Late was given the value three; Within Word, Early was given the value four; Within Word, Mid was given the value five; Within Word, Late was given the value six. A few students were considered above grade level for DSA, exceeding those levels those students were given a numerical value of seven.

Typically, the ACT Interim is given in the district to assess growth for the individual students as it relates to correlating Benchmark scores of the summative ACT Aspire given in the spring of each year. The Interim assessments are given without relation to the district's units and are instead based on the state's standards. The expectation is that students will increase their score as they are being exposed to more of the curriculum each quarter. For the purpose of this research, the ACT Interim was utilized collectively to determine if the students' scores increased as the semester progressed in terms of value-added and not according to the prescribed Benchmarks.

### **ELPA Levels**

The goal of the ELPA is to measure the language acquisition or ability to comprehend and understand English according to leveled expectations. Students at Levels 1 and 2 show minimal language acquisition and need significant support. Class A, the treatment group, had 24 students; one recently moved. Four students were not classified as ELL. Of the remaining 20 English Language Learners, 16 of the students were Level 2 students. Two of the students were Level 3 and two had exited the program

or were being monitored and will exit next year because they satisfactorily met the requirement of passing the district assessment and maintaining a better than C grade average in the district. Of the ELL students in Class A, 80% were considered in need of significant support in language acquisition.

Class B, the control group, had 25 students in the classroom. Twelve of the students in that classroom were at Level 2 on the ELPA. Eight students were on Level 3. Five were not ELL or had exited or were being monitored to exit the program. Class B had 52% of their students as a Level 2 English Level Learner.

### **Qualitative Data Findings**

The qualitative data collection consisted of the researcher observing both classrooms using the SIOP rubric to determine if the treatment classroom teacher was implementing the 30 features of SIOP. In addition, the researcher was observing to determine if the control group was utilizing some, if any, of the components within SIOP. Each of the classroom teachers consented to be observed on two different occasions in the month of January and/or February. Classroom A was observed on January 8 and February 8, 2018. Classroom B was observed January 11 and February 5, 2018. The researcher was in each classroom from 8:10 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. so that the researcher could observe both the reading and writing workshop. The analysis of the qualitative portion of this study is presented below.

There are eight components of the SIOP rubric. The researcher observed on January 8, 2018 and rated the Classroom A teacher highly evident in four of the six components of Lesson Preparation. The teacher clearly defined content and language objectives to the students during the reading and writing lesson. In addition, she provided

graphic organizers, many books, and Brain-pop videos as evidence for Meaningful Activities and Content Concepts to ensure student understanding of the concepts being taught.

The teacher received somewhat evident on Supplementary Materials and Adaptation of Content because she had these materials for either reading or writing, but not both. Concepts explicitly linked, links explicitly made, and key vocabulary were all rated highly evident. Those three features all fall under the component of Building Background. Comprehensible Input entails Speech, Clear Explanation, and A Variety of Techniques; the teacher was rated highly evident in those components.

Strategies are the fourth component of the SIOP rubric. Components rated highly evident included Learning Strategies and Scaffolding Techniques. Higher Order Thinking Skills was rated somewhat evident because during writing instruction the students were creating sentences that included subordinating conjunctions. Creating is a verb that is considered higher order thinking. During reading, however, they were retelling the facts from a story about Martin Luther King and placing them on a timeline. Retelling is the knowledge level of Bloom's Taxonomy, and considered lower level. All four features of the Component Interaction were judged to be highly evident: Interaction, Grouping Configurations, Wait Time, and Clarifying Key Concepts. Practice and Application is the sixth component of the SIOP rubric. The researcher considered all features within this component highly evident: Hands-on Materials, Apply Content and Language knowledge, and Language skills. Lesson delivery encompasses the following features: Content and Language Objectives, Students Engaged and Pacing. All were rated highly evident

The final component observed in Classroom A on January 8, 2018 was Review and Assessment. The researcher rated highly evident in a comprehensive review of key vocabulary and content concepts. In addition, the teacher in Classroom A was assigned highly evident for the component of Regular Feedback but rated somewhat evident on Assessment of Student Comprehension and Learning because there was an assessment provided for writing but not for reading. Overall, the classroom received highly evident in 26 of the 30 components. The results for this observation are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*Sheltered Observation Protocol Rubric Class A, January 8, 2018*

Component	Feature	Highly Evident Somewhat Evident Not Evident	Evidence
Lesson Preparation	Content Objectives	Highly evident	content objectives are on yellow paper and read to students and repeated
Lesson Preparation	Language Objectives	Highly evident	Language objectives on blue paper, read to students, students asked what does that mean
Lesson Preparation	Content Concepts	Highly Evident	Reading-sentence frames and list of conjunctions; writing-graphic organizer
Lesson Preparation	Supplementary materials	Somewhat evident	Writing-Brain Pop video
Lesson Preparation	Adaptation of content	Somewhat evident	Reading-none Writing-none Reading-read aloud to the whole class; differentiated reading groups
Lesson Preparation	Meaningful activities	Highly Evident	Writing-creating sentences in a

Component	Feature	Highly Evident Somewhat Evident Not Evident	Evidence
Building background	Concepts explicitly linked	Highly evident	group given a sentence frame Reading-response to reading for each group Reading and writing- talked about what they did yesterday; talked about their everyday lives using the objectives
Building Background	Key Vocabulary	Highly evident	Writing-Anchor chart with subordinating conjunctions Reading- showed pictures of objects in the story using iPad
Comprehensible Input	Speech	Highly evident	Spoke in complete sentences using mainly simple sentences, using a slower rate
Comprehensible Input	Clear Explanations	Highly evident	She stated directions sequentially; students seem to know the process; she asked questions, the students asked questions, and the students turned to talk during the lesson
Comprehensible Input	Variety of techniques	Highly Evident	She used models, sentence frames, read aloud, thinks aloud, anchor charts, peer discussion, wait

Component	Feature	Highly Evident Somewhat Evident Not Evident	Evidence
			time for questions, and individual assessment according to the rubric
Strategies	Learning Strategies	Highly evident	See a variety of techniques
Strategies	Scaffolding techniques	Highly evident	Teachers used gradual release for a few groups/individuals most groups could complete on their own
Strategies	Higher Order Thinking Skills	Somewhat evident	Writing-creating sentences; thinking about why their favorite animal is their favorite
Interaction	Interactions	Highly evident	Reading-none The students constantly interacted with the teacher and with each other with and without teacher supervision
Interaction	Grouping configurations	Highly evident	Students were in Kagan groups (high, low, and 2 in between) during writing time and were in their alike group during the reading time
Interaction	Wait time	Highly evident	As the teacher asked questions she held up her fingers when she got to three she would call on a student to answer during whole group time



Component	Feature	Highly Evident	Evidence
		Somewhat Evident Not Evident	
Interaction	Clarify Key Concept	Highly evident	During the closure of reading and writing, they reviewed the objective and key vocabulary
Interaction	Language Skills	Highly evident	teacher and students read, wrote, listened, and spoke during the block
Practice and Application	Manipulatives	Highly evident	Sentence frames Facts from MLK story to sequence
Practice and Application	Apply content and language knowledge	Highly evident	See meaningful activities
Practice and Application	Language skills	Highly evident	Students wrote, read, spoke, and listened throughout reading and writing
Lesson Delivery	Content Objectives	Highly evident	All materials supported lesson
Lesson Delivery	Language Objectives	Highly evident	Provided structure for carrying out the lesson
Lesson Delivery	Student Engagement	Highly evident	The student appears to be working and learning. When they were not the teacher redirected
Lesson Delivery	Lesson Pacing	Highly evident	The teacher used a timer for all activities. There were a few times when the students were not finished and the teacher said she would give them time before specials
Review and Assessment	Review of Key Vocabulary	Highly evident	Closure of both reading (retelling

Component	Feature	Highly Evident Somewhat Evident Not Evident	Evidence
			story using a timeline) and writing lesson (creating subordinating conjunctions)
Review and Assessment	Review of key concepts	Highly evident	See review of key vocabulary
Review and Assessment	Regular feedback	Highly evident	The teacher worked the room talking to students about their work
Review and Assessment	Assessment of student learning	Somewhat evident	Writing-see some in their writing; reading: none

On February 8, 2018, the researcher again observed in Class A using the SIOP (see Table 3), to determine if the SIOP components were being utilized with fidelity in the classroom. Lesson Preparation is the first component. The researcher assigned highly evident to four of the six features. This was the same number as before but rated differently among the features; though the adaptation of content was somewhat evident in both observations. Adaptation of content was rated somewhat evident because the books for reading were differentiated on the individual's level, but the same assignment and information was provided for all students in the same way. Meaningful activities were also considered somewhat evident; there was no modeling and mostly a time for the students to write independently in reading and writing.

For the next component, Building Background, the teacher was rated highly evident in Links Explicitly made, Concepts Explicitly Linked and Key Vocabulary. The teacher used a Brain-Pop video that encompassed all three features. Comprehensible

Input entails three components; the teacher was given a score of highly evident for Speech and Clear Explanation. A Variety of Techniques was scored somewhat evident because modeling has to be present to receive highly evident. Strategies in the fourth component; the teacher was given a score of highly evident in Learning Strategies, Scaffolding Techniques, and Higher Order Thinking Skills.

Interaction is the next component. For this component, two were highly evident and two were somewhat evident. Wait time and Clarifying Key Concepts were rated highly evident. While Interaction and Grouping Configurations were given a score of somewhat evident. The researcher did not observe that independent time for reading and writing supported language and content objectives nor did it provide much time for student interaction. Practice and application is the sixth component of the rubric. Hands-on manipulatives were not evident. Manipulatives for this lesson included anchor charts that were on the walls in the classroom. Nor did this lesson have an activity for students to integrate all four language skills. However, this lesson did have an activity which had students apply content and language knowledge. As a result, this component received one not evident (Hands-on Materials), one somewhat evident because students did have an opportunity to write for Language skills, and highly evident for Apply Content and Language Knowledge.

The seventh component is Lesson Delivery. The rating for Content and Language Objectives and Pacing was highly evident. Somewhat evident was assigned to student engagement because the teacher had to redirect many students throughout the literacy block. Review and Assessment is the final component in the SIOP rubric. The teacher received highly evident in Review of Key Vocabulary, Review of Key Content Concepts,

and Regular Feedback. Assessment of Student Comprehension and Learning was considered somewhat evident because there was not a reading assessment but there was a writing one. She told the student she would be looking for the complex sentences in their writing. During this observation, the teacher was given a score of 21 highly evident, eight somewhat evident, and one not evident.

Table 3

*Sheltered Observation Protocol Rubric Class A, February 8, 2018*

Component	Feature	Highly Evident Somewhat Evident Not Evident	Evidence
Lesson Preparation	Content Objectives	Highly evident	typed on yellow paper-I will write using cursive letters; I will reread simple sentences and make them more complex the teacher explained students would be working on their own Analyze parts of stories
Lesson Preparation	Language Objectives	Highly evident	see content objectives
Lesson Preparation	Content Concepts	Highly evident	students are using their own writing and handwriting books as a guide; reading books are on their level
Lesson Preparation	Supplementary materials	Highly evident	see content concepts
Lesson Preparation	Adaptation of content	Somewhat evident	reading books are on their level
Lesson Preparation	Meaningful activities	Somewhat evident	the students were in their own seats

Component	Feature	Highly Evident	Evidence
		Somewhat Evident Not Evident	
Building background	Concepts explicitly linked	Somewhat evident	working because they were editing the teacher referred to anchor charts in the room; students have read the book in their bags the teacher referred to anchor charts and reminded the student of the ways that had learned to create complex sentences
Building Background	Key Vocabulary	Highly evident	
Comprehensible Input	Speech	Highly evident	slow speech, enunciated, used higher tone for key vocabulary
Comprehensible Input	Clear Explanations	Highly evident	sequential directions
Comprehensible Input	Variety of techniques	Somewhat evident	sentence strips, anchor charts
Strategies	Learning Strategies	Highly evident	anchor charts sentence strips books they have read
Strategies	Scaffolding techniques	Highly evident	
Strategies	Higher Order Thinking Skills	Highly evident	Analyze parts of a story; create complex sentences
Interaction	Interactions	Somewhat evident	the students were working on an independent activity in writing reading they did get to discuss
Interaction	Grouping configurations	Somewhat evident	see interactions
Interaction	Wait time	Highly evident	when in whole group teacher asks a question, holds up 1,2,3 fingers then students answer

Component	Feature	Highly Evident	Evidence
		Somewhat Evident Not Evident	
Interaction	Clarify Key Concept	Highly evident	during the closure, the teacher asked clarifying questions
Practice and Application	Manipulatives	Not evident	
Practice and Application	Apply content and language knowledge	Highly evident	the students had the stories in their writing notebooks to create complex sentences; during reading, they discussed the story with their teacher
Practice and Application	Language skills	Highly evident	students had an opportunity to read, write, listen, and speak
Lesson Delivery	Content Objectives	Highly evident	materials supported lesson
Lesson Delivery	Language Objectives	Highly evident	students had the opportunity to read, write, listen, and speak
Lesson Delivery	Student Engagement	Somewhat evident	The teacher had to constantly redirect while the students were working on their writing assignment
Lesson Delivery	Lesson Pacing	Highly evident	the teacher uses a timer and gives opportunities to finish before specials
Review and Assessment	Review of Key Vocabulary	Highly evident	in closure, teacher-reviewed anchor charts for complex sentences; a few students read their analysis of their reading book
Review and Assessment	Review of key concepts	Highly evident	see a review of key vocabulary

Component	Feature	Highly Evident Somewhat Evident Not Evident	Evidence
Review and Assessment	Regular feedback	Highly evident	the teacher worked the room and provided 1-1 conferences during writing workshop
Review and Assessment	Assessment of student learning	Somewhat evident	The teacher is assessing revising of simple to complex but did not talk about reading the assessment

The researcher first observed Class B on January 10, 2018, beginning at 8:10 in the morning. The SIOP rubric has eight components and 30 features. Lesson Preparation is the first component; the researcher assigned a score of highly evident in five of the six features: Content, Content Concepts, Supplementary Materials, Adaptation of Content, and Meaningful Activities. Because there was a language objective for writing but not for reading, Language Objectives was considered somewhat evident. The researcher scored all features in Building Background, Comprehensible Input, and Strategies highly evident. During the observation, there was conversation between the teacher and only one student or a small group of students where the teacher directed all conversation. Because of this, all components of Interaction were rated somewhat evident.

There were no opportunities that enabled the students to engage in discussion directly with each other, without the mediation of the teacher. All components of Practice and Application were also considered somewhat evident. The students did have an anchor chart on the board and past personal narratives in their notebook. There were no other hands-on materials for the students to utilize for writing or reading. There was

only one activity for Applying Content and Language knowledge in the classroom for writing. Many students were struggling with that activity so the teacher called them together in small groups to help them get started. During reading, the students had the option to listen to a story on the computer. Many were on iStation, and there is a component to read or repeat directions, as needed. There were many opportunities to read, write, and listen but very few opportunities to talk about and discuss the content.

While observing Lesson Delivery, the researcher assigned two components as highly evident: Student Engagement and Content Objectives. Language Objectives and Pacing were considered somewhat evident. As stated earlier, there was no language objective for reading and many students grumbled at the end of the time that they did not have time to finish. While the teacher was teaching the mini-lesson during writing, the timer went off several times and she continued to teach. Because the teacher thought additional teaching time was necessary, many students did not have time to finish. All components of Review and Assessment were identified as highly evident. The teacher used her closure during reading and mini-lesson during writing to provide Feedback and discuss Key Vocabulary and Key Concepts. She reminded the students of the rubric for writing and expectations during reading time. The teacher in Class B, who has not yet received SIOP training, received 20 highly evident and 10 somewhat evident on the SIOP rubric.

The researcher observed Class B a second time on February 5, 2018, using the SIOP rubric. The researcher observed every feature in Lesson Preparation as highly evident with the exception of Language Objectives. Language Objectives was not



Table 4

*Sheltered Observation Protocol Rubric Class B, January 10, 2018*

Component	Feature	Highly Evident	Evidence
		Somewhat Evident Not Evident	
Lesson Preparation	Content Objectives	Highly evident	We will analyze prompts and write independently reflective narrative-written on board; they discussed objective as a class; Reading objective: what is the central message of the story and what did the character learn
Lesson Preparation	Language Objectives	Somewhat evident	it was a part of the content objective for writing; none provided for reading
Lesson Preparation	Content Concepts	Highly evident	they broke apart the prompt before sending the students to their seats; tell about a time you made someone happy
Lesson Preparation	Supplementary materials	Highly evident	Anchor chart, teacher reminds students to look back at other reflective narratives in their notebooks
Lesson Preparation	Adaptation of content	Highly evident	used highlighters to determine parts of the model text that made it reflective
Lesson Preparation	Meaningful activities	Highly evident	anchor text, personal reflective narratives
Building background	Concepts explicitly linked	Highly evident	the prompt was asking for a

Component	Feature	Highly Evident Somewhat Evident Not Evident	Evidence
Building Background	Key Vocabulary	Highly evident	personal reflective narrative teacher emphasized what made a reflective personal narrative and gave synonyms for learning for what did the character learn? Discussed the other ways they may see that same question
Comprehensible Input	Speech	Highly evident	slow repeated often, tone, enunciated words
Comprehensible Input	Clear Explanations	Highly evident	used slides for each activity for students
Comprehensible Input	Variety of techniques	Highly evident	passages as anchor texts, modeling, conferencing,
Strategies	Learning Strategies	Highly evident	the teacher used centers, anchor charts, meta-cognitive thinking
Strategies	Scaffolding techniques	Highly evident	think aloud
Strategies	Higher Order Thinking Skills	Highly evident	analyze prompt, provide evidence from the text
Interaction	Interactions	Somewhat evident	students only talked when in small group or 1-1 with the teacher
Interaction	Grouping configurations	Somewhat evident	see Interactions
Interaction	Wait time	Somewhat evident	teacher asks a question and calls on a student; did say a couple of times "I will give you time to think about it"

Component	Feature	Highly Evident	Evidence
		Somewhat Evident Not Evident	
Interaction	Clarify Key Concept	Somewhat evident	students only communicate with the teacher
Practice and Application	Manipulatives	Somewhat evident	task cards reflective narratives
Practice and Application	Apply content and language knowledge	Somewhat evident	provided time for application of reading and writing not listening and speaking
Practice and Application	Language skills	Somewhat evident	Activities integrate reading and writing
Lesson Delivery	Content Objectives	Highly evident	All materials supported the lessons
Lesson Delivery	Language Objectives	Somewhat evident	For the most part, students either read or written; didn't have much time to talk or listen
Lesson Delivery	Student Engagement	Highly evident	All students were working; redirected a few times
Lesson Delivery	Lesson Pacing	Somewhat evident	Teacher paced mini-lesson with timer; students were about to switch classes many grumbled they didn't have time to finish
Review and Assessment	Review of Key Vocabulary	Highly evident	Closure of each lesson
Review and Assessment	Review of key concepts	Highly evident	Closure of each lesson
Review and Assessment	Regular feedback	Highly evident	Worker the room small group and 1-1 conferencing during reading and writing time
Review and Assessment	Assessment of student learning	Highly evident	Rubric for writing Anecdotal notes during reading

observed because there was no language objective posted in the classroom or discussed during the literacy block. Once again, features within Building Background, Comprehensible Input, and Strategies were all highly evident. All features within Interaction were rated somewhat evident because the interaction was mainly between the teacher and the student. During small group, there was some interaction peer to peer. However, when students would talk at their tables, she would remind them to get busy working.

The sixth component is Practice and Application. Applying Content Knowledge and Language Skills were evaluated as somewhat evident because there was time for reading and writing but very little to no time for discussion and listening. There were many opportunities for the students to use the Hands-On materials. The teacher had a variety of books, fluency phrases, sight words, and sorts for students to practice using content knowledge during small group. Lesson delivery is the seventh component. All features were highly evident with the exception of delivering language objectives. As stated earlier, there was not a language objective posted. Finally, Review and Assessment. All features within this domain were highly evident. Overall Class B received 21 highly evident, seven somewhat evident, and one not evident.

Table 5

*Sheltered Observation Protocol Rubric Class B, February 5, 2018*

Component	Feature	Highly Evident	Evidence
		Somewhat Evident	
		Not Evident	
Lesson Preparation	Content Objectives	Highly evident	Read on grade level text
Lesson Preparation	Language Objectives	Not evident	

Component	Feature	Highly Evident	Evidence
		Somewhat Evident Not Evident	
Lesson Preparation	Content Concepts	Highly evident	read on grade level with comprehension; grade level standard books, fluency phrases, sticky notes, word sort, games
Lesson Preparation	Supplementary materials	Highly evident	teacher meet with groups on their level
Lesson Preparation	Adaptation of content	Highly evident	books, fluency phrases, sticky notes, word sort, games
Lesson Preparation	Meaningful activities	Highly evident	“When we learned” “We worked on...”
Building background	Concepts explicitly linked	Highly evident	sight words, words from books in different groups
Building Background	Key Vocabulary	Highly evident	slow rate, enunciation, simple sentence structure, saying most things twice
Comprehensible Input	Speech	Highly evident	sequential, station is on pp slides
Comprehensible Input	Clear Explanations	Highly evident	books, fluency phrases, sticky notes, word sort, games
Comprehensible Input	Variety of techniques	Highly evident	each station is 15 minutes and the students rotate
Strategies	Learning Strategies	Highly evident	students are on their reading level
Strategies	Scaffolding techniques	Highly evident	reading text for each station
Strategies	Higher Order Thinking Skills	Highly evident	Lots of why and explain questions
Interaction	Interactions	Somewhat evident	lots of teacher to student; she spent time with every

Component	Feature	Highly Evident Somewhat Evident Not Evident	Evidence
Interaction	Grouping configurations	Somewhat evident	student there either 1-1 or small group; very little interaction student to student students are in a small group during teacher station, otherwise, students are working independently
Interaction	Wait time	Somewhat evident	teacher asks questions, calls on a student to answer. If the student does not answer she will ask if they need more time, then she will come back to the student.
Interaction	Clarify Key Concept	Somewhat evident	most interaction is between teacher and student
Practice and Application	Manipulatives	Highly evident	books, fluency phrases, sticky notes, word sort, games
Practice and Application	Apply content and language knowledge	Somewhat evident	students have many opportunities to apply content knowledge
Practice and Application	Language skills	Somewhat evident	All activities don't integrate reading, writing, listening, and speaking
Lesson Delivery	Content Objectives	Highly evident	all activities and conversations support content objectives
Lesson Delivery	Language Objectives	Somewhat evident	There were no language objectives. Many of

Component	Feature	Highly Evident	Evidence
		Somewhat Evident Not Evident	
Lesson Delivery	Student Engagement	Highly evident	the students are reading and writing All students appear to be working; only redirected a few times
Lesson Delivery	Lesson Pacing	Highly evident	Music changes every 15 minutes as students should be finished with that station
Review and Assessment	Review of Key Vocabulary	Highly evident	Closure of lesson
Review and Assessment	Review of key concepts	Highly evident	Closure of lesson
Review and Assessment	Regular feedback	Highly evident	worked the room; met with every student concerning reading
Review and Assessment	Assessment of student learning	Highly evident	

### Quantitative Data Results

A paired samples *t*-test was conducted to determine if there was a significant gain in the pre-assessment data of the DRA, DSA and ACT Aspire taken at the beginning of the year and post-assessments taken before or right after holiday break for the 2017-2018 academic school year. Class A, the treatment group, had 24 students; Class B, the control group had 25 students. A total of 49 student assessment scores were analyzed via SPSS. In addition, an independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare DRA, DSA, ACT English, and ACT Reading mean differences between Class A, the treatment group that received SIOP, and Class B, the control group that did not receive SIOP instruction.

A paired samples *t*-test was conducted on Class A to compare the growth of Development Reading Analysis assessments. These results are presented in Table 6. There was a statistically significant difference in the growth of scores between the August 2017 DRA scores ( $M = 19.1, SD = 14.64$ ) and the December 2017 DRA scores ( $M = 21.48, SD = 13.79$ );  $t(22) = 3.37, p = .003$ .

The same paired samples *t*-test was run for the ACT Interim assessment given by the district in October and December. There was a statistically significant difference in growth of the scores from the October 2017 ACT Reading assessment scores ( $M = 154.86, SD = 2.92$ ) and the December 2017 ACT Reading assessment scores ( $M = 156.27, SD = 2.47$ );  $t(21) = 2.62, p = .016$ .

A third paired sample *t*-test was run on Class A to determine if there was growth in the ability to write the English language in a variety of situations via the ACT English assessment. The difference was not statistically significant between the October 2017 ACT English assessment scores ( $M = 155.96, SD = 3.08$ ) and the December 2017 ACT English assessment scores ( $M = 156.13, SD = 3.00$ );  $t(21) = -.251, p = .805$ . There was a small drop in the mean in the post-test compared to the pre-test.

The fourth and final paired sample *t*-test was conducted on Class A to compare the growth of the Developmental Spelling Analysis. There was a statistically significant difference in the growth of students from the August 2017 DSA scores ( $M = 3.04, SD = 3.07$ ) and the December 2017 DSA scores ( $M = 3.56, SD = 3.07$ );  $t(22) = 3.43, p = .002$ . According to the results of the data analysis, there was significant growth in the areas of the DRA, DSA, and ACT Reading assessment. However, there was no statistically significant growth in the ACT English assessment (Table 6).



Table 6

*Paired Samples t-Test Results for Class A*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i> (2 tail)
August DRA December DRA	2.30	3.28	3.37	22	.003*
ACT Reading 1 ACT Reading 2	1.41	2.52	2.62	21	.016*
ACT English 1 ACT English 2	0.18	3.40	.25	21	.805
August DSA December DSA	0.52	0.73	3.43	22	.002*

*Note.* \* represents significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

A paired samples *t*-test was run on Class B to compare the growth of Development Reading Analysis assessments. There was a statistically significant difference in the growth of scores from the August 2017 DRA ( $M = 25.30$ ,  $SD = 12.13$ ) and the December 2017 DRA scores ( $M = 29.93$ ,  $SD = 11.13$ );  $t(11) = 2.25$ ,  $p = .046$ .

The same paired samples *t*-test was run for the ACT Interim Assessment given by the district in October and December. There was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test for the ACT Reading assessment ( $M = 158.61$ ,  $SD = 2.62$ ) and the second test scores taken in December 2017 ( $M = 156.27$ ,  $SD = 2.47$ );  $t(10) = 1.73$ ,  $p = .015$ . According to the data, there was a significant drop in the post-test from December compared to the pre-test taken in September.

A third paired sample *t*-test was run on Class B to determine if there was growth in the ability to write the English language in a variety of situations via the ACT English

assessment. The difference was not significant from the October 2017 ACT English assessment ( $M = 158$ ,  $SD = 2.69$ ) and the December 2017 scores from the same assessment ( $M = 158$ ,  $SD = 2.69$ );  $t(10) = -0.09$ ,  $p = .933$ .

The fourth and final paired sample  $t$ -test was run on Class B to compare the growth of the Developmental Spelling Analysis. There was a statistically significant difference in the growth of students from the August 2017 DSA scores ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.36$ ) and the December 2017 DSA scores ( $M = 4.8$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ) conditions;  $t(11) = 2.55$ ,

Table 7

*Paired Samples t-Test Result for Class B*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i> (2 tail)
August DRA December DRA	2.00	3.07	2.25	11	.046*
ACT Reading 1 ACT Reading 2	1.36	2.62	1.73	10	.015*
ACT English 1 ACT English 2	-0.09	3.51	-0.09	10	.933
August DSA December DSA	0.58	0.79	2.55	11	.027*

*Note.* \* represents significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

$p = .027$ . According to the data for Class B, there was a statistically significant growth in the areas of the DRA and DSA; however, there was no statistically significant growth in the ACT Aspire English or Reading assessment (Table 7).

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare DRA mean differences between Class A, the treatment group that received the SIOP instruction, and Class B, the control group that did not receive SIOP instruction (see Table 8 below). There was a statistically significant difference in the scores between the control group ( $M = 4.63$ ,  $SD = 2.3$ ) and the treatment group ( $M = 2.3$ ,  $SD = 3.28$ );  $t(67) = -2.59$ ,  $p = .012$ . These results suggest that Class B, the control group, actually did better than the treatment group in the growth on the DRA assessment.

A second independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare ACT Reading mean differences from between Class A, the treatment group that received the SIOP instruction, and Class B, the control group that did not receive SIOP instruction. There was a statistically significant difference in the scores between the control group ( $M = -1.52$ ,  $SD = 2.12$ ) and the treatment group ( $M = 1.41$ ,  $SD = 2.51$ );  $t(66) = -0.54$ ,  $p = .000$ . According to these results, Class A, the treatment group, outperformed Class B, the control group, on the ACT Reading assessment.

The next independent samples *t*-test conducted compared the ACT English assessments. There was no statistically significant difference for the ACT English assessment scores between Class B, the control group ( $M = 0.00$ ,  $SD = 2.54$ ) and Class A, the treatment group ( $M = 0.18$ ,  $SD = 3.40$ ) conditions;  $t(66) = 0.25$ ,  $p = 0.806$ .

Lastly, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare DSA mean difference between Class A and Class B. There was a significant difference in the scores for the treatment group, Class A ( $M = 0.52$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ) and the control group, Class B ( $M = 1.07$ ,  $SD = 0.33$ );  $t(67) = -4.28$ ,  $p = .000$ . According to these results, the control group did better on the Developmental Spelling Analysis.

Overall, Class A, the treatment group, made more progress on the Reading ACT Assessment. Class B, the control group, scored higher on the Developmental Reading and Spelling analyses. There was no difference between the groups on the ACT English assessment.

Table 8

*Independent Samples t-Test Results between Class A and Class B*

	<i>M</i>	<i>Std Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2 tail)</i>
Class A DRA Class B DRA	-2.33	0.90	-2.59	67	.012
Class A ACT Reading Class B ACT Reading	2.56	0.58	-0.54	66	.000
Class A ACT English Class B ACT English	0.18	0.74	0.25	66	.806
Class A DSA Class B DSA	-0.54	0.74	-4.28	67	.000

*Note:* \* represents significant at the  $p < .05$  level

**Answers to the Research Questions**

Based on the DRA, DSA, ACT Reading and ACT English assessments given in two third grade classrooms within an urban school district in Western Arkansas, does the SIOP model positively impact the academic success of ELL students? All students?

Based on the evidence provided, there is evidence of academic growth in the DRA, DSA, and ACT Reading assessment within each class. However, there was a drop in the English ACT Assessment; when Class A, the treatment group, was compared to Class B,

the control group, the treatment group performed better only in the ACT Reading assessment while the control group scored better on both the DRA and DSA assessments. There was no difference between the groups for the ACT English assessment.

The qualitative data presented suggested that the teacher trained in SIOP was highly evident in most areas, but had a few areas of somewhat evident or not evident according to the SIOP rubric. The control group's classroom teacher also used many of the features of the SIOP model without having yet been trained.

## **Chapter V: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

Schools in the United States face the ever-present challenge of providing effective instruction for a growing population of diverse learners. As the numbers grow in the United States, school administrators and teachers strive to find the best practices for educating this diverse group of students. There is increasingly more and more pressure from federal and state educational policies (Zacarian, 2011). The regulations governing the education of these different language groups are an outcome of major historical events. Some of the judicial decisions were made by the U.S. Supreme Court, state lawsuits and others were formed in public opinion. Important safeguards have been put in place to ensure all students receive a quality education.

Arkansas is an English only speaking state. The state uses a combination of English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Structured English Immersion (SEI) to assure that students develop and acquire language but also participate in the core content areas in a meaningful way (ADE, 2018b). One of the approved models for acquiring language in Arkansas is the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol.

SIOP consists of eight major components and 30 features (Echevarria et al., 2004). The first component is Lesson Preparation; Lesson Preparation, commonly referred to as lesson planning, is creating guidance for helping students achieve their learning outcomes using materials, resources, and research that developmentally appropriate. The goal is producing lessons that enable students to make their own connections using background knowledge with the new information being presented. When necessary, teachers must also prepare by adapting their lessons to accommodate all

students' proficiency levels. Lessons should include both content and language objectives that identify specific content and language concepts that the learners will know or be able to do because of the lesson. Building background is the second component of the SIOP model. Building background is essential information known or made known to understanding or learning new concepts. Concepts should be directly linked to the student's background (personal, cultural, or academic). This component requires teachers to emphasize important vocabulary terms and to make explicit connections between the concept being learned and the students' background experiences outside of the classroom as well as their past learning experiences within their educational experiences.

The third component of the SIOP model is comprehensible input. Teaching language or teaching materials that are too high for the students do little to progress their language ability or understanding. Teaching through comprehensible input requires that educators use various techniques such as clear speech, visuals, pictures, gestures, body languages, and modeling to make sure academic concepts and tasks are clear to ELL students. Educators should also explain academic tasks in a sequential manner and give students time to explain instructions to each other, remembering to paraphrase or repeat when necessary (Echevarria et al., 2004). Components three and four are closely connected. The fourth component of the SIOP model is strategies. Strategies include techniques, methods, and mental processes that enhance comprehension for learning and retaining information. Teachers should consistently use scaffolding and higher order thinking skills.

The fifth component is interaction. The key is providing interactive activities that allow interaction with varied student groupings to maximize discussion. Lessons should also include multiple opportunities to practice the content and use their language knowledge in their learning, thus the sixth component, Practice and Application. The seventh component, Lesson Delivery, includes the distribution of information using the content and language objectives as your goal. It is the actual implementation of the lesson planned. It is about the opportunities students have to engage in the concepts and interactive activities available for the students learning. The final component of the SIOP model is Review and Assessment. This includes the formative and summative assessment of both the language and content concepts (Echevarria et al., 2004). SIOP is an empirically validated researched-based framework for well prepared and well-delivered lessons to help English Language Learners learn. Through the study of content, students interact in English with meaningful activities that underpin language acquisition.

The purpose of this study was to examine the systemic approach of SIOP as it relates to maximizing content and developing language with all learners when implemented with fidelity in the classroom. The focus of this study was two classrooms, comprised of 25 students in each classroom, within an urban school district in Western Arkansas. Both schools' demographics include 65% English Language Learners and more than 90% free and reduced lunch. Teachers in the classroom have both taught at least 10 years in the district; one has attended the SIOP Institute and several follow-up trainings pertaining to the model. The other teacher plans to attend SIOP training when offered by the district. The researcher used assessment data from the Developmental Reading and Spelling Analysis from the beginning and middle of the school year. The



Developmental Reading Analysis is an individually administered assessment of a child's reading capabilities. It is a tool educators use to identify a student's reading level, accuracy, fluency, and comprehension (Beaver, 2009). The Spelling Analysis determines the direct growth of a child as a speller, relating their stage of word knowledge to their reading and writing (Ganske, 1999). In addition, the October and December ACT Aspire Interim Assessment data from Reading and English was utilized. ACT Aspire assessments are mandated in this district three times a year. ACT Aspire periodically assesses a student's individual ability to master the standards as set forth by the state of Arkansas. To ensure fidelity of the treatment and control group's educational setting, the researcher also used the Sheltered Observation Instruction Protocol rubric on two different occasions in each classroom.

### **Summary of Findings**

According to the analysis that was conducted on the DRA, DSA, ACT Reading and English assessment scores for these two classrooms, it was found there is a statistically significant difference in scores for the pre- and post-test assessments, with the exception of the English ACT Interim Assessment. The quantitative data analysis revealed that both teachers used many of the features of the SIOP model effectively with a few exceptions, even though the teacher in the control group class had not been trained in the SIOP model.

The DRA assesses a child's reading abilities. There are many factors and variables that impact a child's ability to read. A comprehensive reading program encompasses five essential components: Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension (ADE, 2018b). In Class A, 45% of the students' reading

levels did not change within the semester, 16% grew one reading level, 21% grew two levels, 8% grew four levels, and 5% were not there for the entire semester to compare. In Class B, 20% did not change within the semester, 36% increased one level, 24% increased two levels, 12% increased three levels, and 8% were not present for the entire semester to compare.

Grade level students enter third grade on a DRA level 24. This entails many skills already mastered. According to the data, Class A had 37% of their students enter on grade level compared to 58% of Class B's students. The researcher can infer from these data that Class A has a greater number of students not reading on grade level, suggesting that many of the students in Class B have a greater skillset in reading than Class A. The average reading level in the treatment group's post-assessment is DRA level 20 while the control's average is DRA level 28. This further suggests many of the students within the treatment group required a higher level of scaffolding for grade level work that requires reading.

The DSA measures a child's ability to spell. A child's ability to spell impacts their ability to read and write. The data revealed that within the treatment group, 58% of the students remained on the same DSA level, 25% grew one level, 13% grew two levels, and 4% were not there the entire semester to compare. Within the control group, 4% did not change, 76% grew one level, 12% grew two levels, and 4% were not there the entire semester to compare. Class A began the semester with 21% of the students spelling on grade level and ended with 25%. While Class B began with 28% spelling within grade level and ended with 85% spelling on grade level. The researcher can reason that the increased levels of spelling were a major contributor to the increase in reading.

The ACT Aspire Reading Interim assessment is given three times a year in this district. The researcher analyzed the data for the October and December Interims. It assesses the student's ability to master grade level standards. The data revealed 63% of the students showed growth, 13% remained the same, and 24% decreased in their Interim scores within the treatment group. In the control group, 36% of the students showed growth, 16% remained the same, and 56% decreased in their scores.

The ACT Aspire English Interim assessment is also given three times a year in this district. Findings from the October and December Interims include no significant difference in the assessment data.

Looking at the qualitative data from the SIOP rubric, the teacher that had been trained in SIOP displayed highly evident at 78%, somewhat evident at 19%, and 3% not evident. While the teacher that has not been trained in SIOP scored 68% highly evident, 30% somewhat evident, and 3% not evident. It is not exactly clear how or why the non-SIOP trained teacher's classroom had more growth in two areas. Could it be the non-SIOP trained teacher uses best instructional practices and many of those practices overlap with the SIOP features?

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The control group's, Class B's, performance was unexpected in many ways. One would think the teacher trained using the SIOP model would outperform in all areas analyzed considering the amount of validated research that demonstrated a positive effect from utilizing the SIOP model with English Language Learners. Surprisingly, the control group outperformed in two of the four areas analyzed: DRA and DSA. The treatment group performed better on the ACT Reading assessment and there was no significant

difference in the ACT English assessment. Could the key to maximizing content while learning English be just good teaching practices? There are so many variables in a classroom, but in the end, the quality of the teacher matters the most. Teacher knowledge and skills to deliver a lesson make a significant difference in student achievement.

Charlotte Danielson, the internationally-recognized expert in the area of teacher effectiveness, recognizes the complexity of teaching and the difference the teacher makes in the classroom. She developed the Framework for Teaching, which Arkansas adopted in 2011 as the state teacher performance assessment (ADE, 2018c). Teacher Excellence Support System (TESS) provides a transparent and consistent teacher evaluation system for public school districts in Arkansas. TESS has four domains and 22 components and is considered the roadmap to effective practice. Each of the domains of TESS describes an important part of the teaching process. They include Domain 1: Planning and Preparation, Domain 2: The Classroom Environment, Domain 3: Instruction, and Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities.

Upon further review, there is an overlap of the four domains of TESS and the eight components of SIOP.

1. Lesson Planning - Domain 1
2. Building Background Knowledge - Domain 1
3. Comprehensible Input-Domain Domain 3
4. Strategies- Domains 1 and 3
5. Interaction - Domains 2 and 3
6. Practice and Application 1 Domains 1 and 3
7. Lesson Delivery - Domain 3

## 8. Review and Assessment - Domains 3 and 4

There are numerous teaching strategies that could be considered good teaching or good practices. However, there are a few specific strategies which have shown up in the existing literature for best practices by many educators (Danielson, 2007). Danielson (2007) contends that teaching is complex, and her work was created to provide a reflection of where teachers are and a map to follow toward good teaching. The instrument clearly aligns with the components of SIOP. According to Danielson (2007), “the effects of well-prepared teachers on student achievement can be stronger than the influence of student background factors, such as poverty, language-background, and minority status” (p. 1).

Lesson planning is a critical foundation in both the SIOP and TESS model. Both researchers believe thoughtful planning leads to effective teaching. In the present study, both teachers had lesson plans that met the criteria for both TESS and SIOP. The control group’s lesson plans were completed through a Microsoft Word document, and the treatment group’s were done using a program. Both lesson plans included demonstrating knowledge of the students, setting instructional outcomes that were suitable for diverse learners, and activities that aligned with the delivery of the lessons.

The researcher did find the control group’s teacher had fewer small group opportunities while the treatment group taught whole group with the exception of reading groups and a Kagan-structured activity throughout the lesson plans. Zacarian (2011) believes that learning is a sociocultural experience; therefore, pair and small group work are important methods to use and are successful when the teacher implements it through meaningful activities and structures. Danielson (2007) contends no arrangement is

superior to the others and both models can promote high-quality learning, but there must be a balance. Class B planned many one-to-one and small group interaction and whole group opportunities to contextualize learning while Class A had more whole group and fewer opportunities planned for small group. Being in small groups allow for many more opportunities to read, listen, and speak, which is the core of English Language proficiency.

One of the important steps of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol model (SIOP) of teaching content to ELLs is to build students' background knowledge before teaching content by linking concepts to students' personal, cultural, or academic experience. ELL students' home languages and cultures are regarded as assets and should be used by the teacher in bridging prior knowledge to new knowledge, and in making content comprehensible (Zacarian, 2011). This would also be true of the TESS model within Domain 1. Explicit instruction to connect and relate content is of great importance to maximize content. Learning is a sociocultural process.

In a great sense, ELL students are dependent on their teachers to make the context relevant and meaningful (Zacarian, 2008). Both teachers scored highly evident and somewhat evident overall in these categories. Based on the given information, both teachers may not maximize this crucial component/feature. Marzano (2009) agrees that in order for students to engage with the content, teachers must actively link new information with their prior knowledge of the topic. Without an ability to relate to the new information, it is harder to conceptualize and internalize. One could infer this limits the understanding of many academic topics and prohibits the learner from being able to read, write, or talk about the new material efficiently in both classrooms from time to

time. Taking a few minutes to jump-start students' schema and past learning, to explicitly find out what they know about a topic, and then explicitly linking their knowledge to the new material ensures better understanding of the students (Zacarian, 2011).

Components 3 and 4 of SIOP mirror components within Domain 1 and 3. Components 3 is Comprehensible Input and Strategies; Domain 1 feature is 1e is Designing Coherent Instruction and 3c is Engaging students in the learning. Both teachers used a variety of techniques including modeling, body language, and manipulatives to ensure the students were learning the new content. Both teachers also provided explanations of academic tasks in ways that made the learning expectations clear to accomplish their objectives. Interaction is component 5 in the SIOP model and Interaction is a component of Domain 1 and 3 in Danielson's work. Class B worked in small group throughout the reading and writing block under the supervision of the teacher. She engaged the students with sight word games, diagraphing blend activities, vocabulary work, and interventions based on their needs via computer programs. Class A worked whole group and all students participated in the same activities, but did always use a graphic organizer of some sort. While observing in both classrooms twice, Class B did appear to have more engaged learners. The teacher had differentiated materials and activities to ensure the learning for all students.

Both Danielson (2007) and Echeverria et al. (2007) research agree that teacher-student interaction is a major key to maximizing content and developing content acquisition. Learning is a social process that involves high levels of interaction (Zacarian, 2008). Learning is also a developmental process, and it consists of four

domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Echevarria & Graves, 2006). Both teachers in Class A and Class B provided feedback consistently to let their students know how they were performing on the tasks and ways they could improve. Class A had many more opportunities to interact in the whole group setting and in at their seats without the mediation of the teacher, while Class B interacted with their small group and one-on-one with the mediation of the teacher. There were very few opportunities for the students to speak English in Class B during both observations. It was overwhelmingly the teacher doing most of the talking and the students responded or worked quietly while she worked with other students. In order for ELL students to excel in English, they need ample opportunities to practice. Educators should establish grouping configurations that facilitate speaking English in ways that support the lesson's objectives. The researcher deduced this was a challenge for Class B to balance the interchange between themselves and their students. Enhancing interaction is taught explicitly in the SIOP model, one could challenge perhaps because the teacher in Class B has not yet experienced SIOP, and this is not a tool within the teacher's skillset.

Practice and Application is the sixth component of SIOP. In this component, the teacher gives the student multiple opportunities to practice with the new material with careful teacher oversight. This gives the teacher an opportunity to see how well the student has learned it. This component aligns with Danielson's Domain 1 and 3. During the observation, both teachers provided different materials. In Class A, the teacher provided graphic organizers for the students to read and write and sentence structures for them to practice speaking while the teacher in Class B provided a variety of manipulatives to include word sorts, sight word games, and graphic organizers. Both



teachers provided differentiated books for reading. Both teachers scored highly evident in this area but used very different materials. Both structures call for materials that make the learning effective and engaging, and both teachers did that in the lessons observed. Student engagement is highly correlated with student success (Seiditz & Castillo, 2010). As stated earlier, Class B did appear more engaged most often during the two observations.

Lesson delivery is the seventh component of the SIOP model and the Domain 3 within the TESS Framework; Danielson (2007) names Domain 3 the heart of the framework of teaching. It describes the critical delivery of the lesson by bringing it all to life. This was a strength for both teachers in the study with the exception of the teacher of Class B not providing Language Objectives but did provide activities for the student to read, write, listen and, speak. Both teachers were able to use all of the structures presented to support the content objectives. Both teachers clearly communicated the information and provided feedback to maximize their learning and language acquisition. In addition, their work was improved because of their ability to ask questions and discussions pertaining to the subject matter. Danielson (2007) names this the heart of the frame work; the researcher can rationale this is one reason for both classrooms experiencing a positive correlation between the pre and post data, with the exception of the English assessment.

Throughout the lesson, it is essential to ensure students have mastered the skill being taught. It is important for teachers to integrate review and assessment into their daily lesson to determine if students need additional support or if they are ready to move to the next skill. Review and Assessment rounds out the SIOP model at number 8;

Review and Assessment of the SIOP model aligns with Domain 1 and 3 of the Danielson rubric. Teachers must effectively involve review concepts, provide feedback and clarification, and assess concepts being taught. The teachers in Class A and Class B were able to master this component. Both teachers reviewed key vocabulary, reviewed the concepts throughout, and has an assessment to determine student learning. The researcher scored both teachers highly evident.

Throughout this study, the researcher continued to connect the growth of the students to the features and components of SIOP and TESS being implemented with quality and fidelity. Being an effective teacher starts on the inside with one's most basic beliefs and assumptions (Hattie, 2003). There must be a belief that all students can learn. According to Hattie (2003), students account for 50% of student achievement, teachers account for 30%, home accounts for 5-10%, peer effects account for 5-10% and schools and principals account for 5-10% of the achievement variance. According to Hattie's (2003) research, teachers are the most powerful influence on student achievement. Teachers have the power to do damage, maintain status quo, or excel students every day when they close their doors. Hattie's (2003) research tells of five major dimensions of excellent teachers. Expert teachers can identify essential representation of their subject, can guide learning through their interactions, can monitor learning and provide feedback, can attend to affective attributes, and can influence student outcomes. These dimensions also align with the SIOP components and the TESS frameworks. This study demonstrates the progress effective teachers can make despite the many challenges of many of the students. This study also encourages administrators to focus on encouraging excellent teachers to continue to seek out best practice and provide professional

development to teachers that lack the appropriate skillset to teach all students regardless of their challenge. Educators and administrators must have the challenge and commitment to effective teachers with a skillset; teachers that are using these structures on a daily basis.

Honawar (2009) concludes the poor performance of ELL students seems to parallel the lack of preparation among the teachers who teach them. All teachers are not equal. From the qualitative studies, it is reasoned the teachers in both classrooms do have an understanding and application of many of the great researched strategies. As a result there was a positive correlation between pre and post assessment of all quantitative data, with the exception of the English assessment in which there was no change.

The teacher does make the difference! Yet there are other factors considered when maximizing the content and developing content with all learners, especially ELL.

Seidlitz and Castillo (2010) observed hundreds of classrooms in California, where English language learners represent 28% of the population. Their goals were to examine instructional approaches, gather data, and review research on current trends to effectively support the ELL student to be successful in maximizing content and language acquisition. The study revealed many approaches that were highly effective. One of the approaches was the combined effort of teams meeting that used school data, formal observations, and formative assessments to determine effectiveness. The schools had a strategic way along with a commitment to change, progress, and effectiveness with English Language Learners learning was more evident. This approach sounds like a Professional Learning Community.

## **Limitations**

The researcher chose to include only one district in the study. Therefore, the results may not be generalizable to other districts. The study involved two third grade classrooms on the Northside of town in Western Arkansas with high ELL populations within one urban school district. The reason for choosing this particular urban setting involved the accuracy of the data presented. The researcher was able to get to both classrooms and observe in an efficient manner. In addition, the researcher had access to data and administrators, if needed.

Currently, there are many teaching models and educators with varying training within the classrooms within the district. In the classrooms used for this research, one teacher is trained in the SIOP model and the other is awaiting training. The researcher chose these classrooms based on the relative closeness of the schools, the demographic data, and the poverty levels. Upon closer look, the teachers had similar teaching styles, and the true difference was that the teacher in Class B did not use as many interactions and did not present a language objective but did integrate into the lesson. Another difference is teacher in Class A has been SIOP trained and generally used whole grouping. Because both teachers possessed the ability to facilitate learning by using most of the features of the SIOP model, it was harder to identify if the treatment worked.

The confounding variable of the teacher in Class A was SIOP trained more than five years ago could have a complex relationship on the results of the data as they presented. The teacher in Class A scored highly evident 78% of the time. What characterizes a SIOP classroom is the systematic, concurrent, and consistent teaching focused on both academic concepts and learning the English language. Perhaps because

she is five years removed from training could be a determining factor in the fidelity of SIOP on a daily basis.

Another limitation was there were very few students that were not ELL so the researcher could not deduce if SIOP was good for all students. Between both classrooms, this would be applicable to six students, and one of them was not there for the entire year to compare.

The last limitation was that the teachers were only observed two times so the researcher could not ensure SIOP was implemented with fidelity for the school year.

### **Implications and Recommendations for Practice**

Based on the data presented, the researcher could not deduce the utilization of a Sheltered Instruction model has been beneficial. The researcher can deduce using the features of the Sheltered Observation Protocol and the critical attributes of TESS impact students' learning in a meaningful and positive way. A variety of instructional models and techniques based on second language acquisition theories have been developed and implemented in the United States in an attempt to address the academic and language needs of English Language Learners. Initially, the researcher thought school districts should ensure teachers are using the features within the SIOP when working with ELL students. Embedded in SIOP are many research based practices that educators are using on a daily basis.

The researcher understood ELL students' success in school depends on several variables, the main one being the adequacy of teacher preparation and the level of teacher implementation of instructional practices (Echevarria et al., 2004). Many teachers lack practical, research-based information, resources, and strategies needed to teach ELL

students. SIOP is proven beneficial according to this study. However, training educators for SIOP is costly. Many school districts in Arkansas do not have additional funds for a three day institute with a Pearson consultant, and three more days consulting and following up throughout the year. In addition, teachers are pulled from their classrooms and guest teachers have to be paid.

After taking a closer look within this study, the researcher realized TESS and SIOP have correlations; there is a great deal of overlap. Administrators within the state of Arkansas could utilize the TESS domains to enable ELL students to maximize content while building language acquisition. The state department has hired a leadership coach for the teacher framework TESS and the administrator evaluation, Leader Excellence and Development Systems, known as LEADS. She provides professional development for the TESS evaluation system at no cost. In addition, she provides professional development for TESS to administrators all over the state through the local cooperative. Teacher effectiveness relies on sufficient and successful training and professional development. This would enable teachers all over the state to improve their professional practice while maximizing content and language acquisition for all students.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

The first recommendation for future research would be to compare schools that are using the 30 features of the SIOP protocol to Bilingual immersion programs. Bilingual immersion programs are beginning to surface over many schools across the country with large populations. Bilingual immersion models are normally introduced to students in kindergarten through second grade (Zacarian, 2011). Zacarian's (2011) research indicates that in full immersion programs, children develop initial literacy in the

immersion language, and then develop a complete understanding of the foreign language. Zacarain (2011) contends many cognitive process that underlie the ability to read a foreign language, such as understanding the relationship between spoken language and the written word, transfer from one language to another. In essence, her research shows that a full immersion program not only teaches students a foreign language, it strengthens their understanding of their native language as well. Learning is a sociocultural process. Currently, Arkansas is an English only speaking state and this would require a state level policy change.

The second recommendation for future research is to look at schools that use the push-in versus pull-out for language acquisition of Level 1 and 2 students according to the ELPA. Level 1 and 2 students are already limited in their ability to make meaning of many of the academic events happening in the classroom. ELL students miss instruction that takes place in the general education classroom during that time. Some students are pulled out of general classes to learn English with a specialist. Typically, these students spend a scheduled amount of time receiving ELL instruction in isolation. A push-in model involves an ELL specialist pushing into the classroom to deliver, support the delivery of, or co-deliver instruction. In Class A, there were students being pulled out all morning for a variety of scenarios. Could this variable have been a factor in Class B outperforming Class A in two areas? The researcher did not observe any pull-outs of Class B. The teacher should be providing many opportunities to practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening within their ELP level.

Taking a closer look at the growth of ELPA levels 1 and 2 students as they would relate to SIOP instruction implemented with fidelity would be the third recommendation.

ELPA level 1 and 2 students have a very limited set of strategies to identify a few key words and phrases from read-aloud, simple text, and oral presentations. In addition, they are not yet able to participate in discussions and written exchanges about a variety of topics. Lastly, they are neither able to analyze and critique the arguments of others orally or in writing nor are they able to determine the meaning of words and phrases unknown in the text (ADE, 2018b). These are all essential tasks to sustain growth in assessments such as DRA, the reading and English assessment. Instruction that is rigorous and aligned with the Arkansas standards for third graders require students to possess and extend a broad repertoire of strategies to construct meaning from academic conversations and grade level text. Researchers could look at the amount of growth made by the subpopulation of ELPA Level 1 and 2 students when submerged in the SIOP model.

The fourth recommendation would be to look at the impact of parental involvement as it relates to closing the achievement gap for ELL students. The importance of family-school engagement is well documented. When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more (NAEP, 2016). Establishing relationships with parents and extended families should be an important objective of school districts everywhere. Many teachers and administrators are not familiar with the various cultural norms of this diverse group. Many of our ELL families do not know our way of thinking, being, and acting in regards to school norms (Zacarian, 2011). Establishing strong relationships with students and their parents creates a mainstream for academic growth and achievement.



## Conclusions

There is a push to improve the performance of many subpopulations of students across the nation; there is now a push to get to the root of the academic underperformance. Educational outcomes for our ELL students are becoming more crucial every day as this population becomes the fastest growing.

When schools consistently underperform, it can have a negative effect on the school's climate, culture, student confidence, and teacher morale. Underperforming combined with lack of teacher preparation adds to the cycle of disaster. Teacher effectiveness relies on successful training and professional development in teacher preparation programs and within the school district. According to Echevarria et al. (2008), 42% of teachers report having ELL students in their classrooms, yet only 12.5% have received more than eight hours of training geared toward educating ELL. This diverse population represents the fastest growing subgroup enrolled in U.S. schools; they over-represent in the subgroup for students struggling academically.

The teacher in the control group has not yet had SIOP training, but her students out-performed the treatment group in two areas. The researcher can deduce the teacher uses many of the strategies within the features of SIOP. The effectiveness of SIOP is a benefit to educators, and it is necessary to ensure continued improvement of educational practices for the success of ELL students. The features of SIOP covertly overlap and align with the Arkansas TESS evaluation system. There appears to be a positive correlation between using good teaching strategies and maximizing content while achieving language acquisition for many of English Language Learners.

Qualitative studies using classroom walkthroughs and observations on the SIOP model and TESS components and features will allow administrators to look at specific data. It would be beneficial to look at patterns and trends; this data would provide the administrator and educator a pool of knowledge about individual, school-wide or district-wide implications for change. This information may also facilitate collaboration for academic conversations and professional development. When teachers and administrators collaborate using data, they develop a cohesiveness partnership to change, which benefits all students.

Though this study has been informational and interesting, major implications and findings from this study suggest more research is needed to find out if the SIOP model, when used with fidelity, maximizes content and learning acquisition in ELL students and all students. Teaching is a complex activity that is challenging intellectually and emotionally. It requires a very diverse skillset for a very diverse population in today's schools. Teachers *really* do make the difference!

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## Appendices



## Appendix A: IRB Approval



ARKANSAS TECH  
UNIVERSITY

*Office of Sponsored Programs  
and University Initiatives*  
Administration Building, Room 707  
1500 North Boulder Avenue  
Russellville, Arkansas 72861

Office: 479-860-4327  
[www.atsu.edu](http://www.atsu.edu)

12/19/17

To Whom It May Concern:

Taneka Tate's IRB application "Focusing on the LLARNING of the English Language Learner" is approved through December 19, 2020. The approval code is Tate\_121917.

Thank you,



Jeff Aulgur, Ed.D.  
IRB Chair

## Appendix B: Approval from School District

Dr. Gordon Floyd  
East Smith Public Schools  
Port Smith, AR

Dear Dr. Floyd,

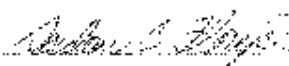
I am a research student at Arkansas Tech University in the Educational Leadership Program; I have been focusing on the learning of the English Language Learner. The purpose of this research study is to examine the systemic approach of SIOP as it relates to maximizing content and developing language with all learners when implemented with fidelity in the classroom. It is believed that when language is the primary objective and content is secondary, students will engage successfully and increase their skills and knowledge.

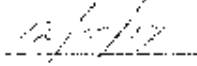
I will use DRA, DSA, and ACT Interim data from two third grade classrooms in our district that have agreed to work with me. In addition, I will observe in each classroom two times next semester using the SIOP template. The names of participating school systems, teachers, and students will be coded to protect their identity. Identifying information on individual students will not be collected.

It is predicted that English Language Learners will be the majority within many school districts in America by 2025. I am confident that you will find the information gathered from this study to be beneficial to your school system.

Sincerely,  
Taweka L. Tate

Permission is granted to Taweka Tate to analyze DRA, DSA, and ACT interim data from the 2017-2018 school year.

  
Signature

  
Date

## **Appendix C: Parental Consent in English**

### **Parental Permission for Participation of a Child in a Research Study Arkansas Tech University**

#### **Focusing on the LEARNING of the English Language Learner**

##### **Description of the research and your child's participation**

Your student is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Taneka Tate in partial fulfillment requirements for the Educational Leadership Doctoral program. The purpose of this research is to examine when language is the primary objective and content is secondary. It is believed students will then engage successfully and increase their skills and knowledge. Your child's participation will involve participating in classroom observations and reviewing the data from his/her DRA, DSA, and ACT interim results. The amount of time required for your child's participation will be only within the regular school day.

##### **Risks and discomforts**

There are no known risks associated with this research.

##### **Potential benefits**

There are no known benefits to the child that would result from the child's participation in this research.

##### **Protection of confidentiality**

We will do everything we can to protect your child's privacy. Your child's identity will not be revealed in any publication resulting from this study.

##### **Voluntary participation**

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You may refuse to allow your child to participate or withdraw your child from the study at any time. Your child will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to allow your child to participate or to withdraw your child from this study.

##### **Contact information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Taneka Tate at Carnall Elementary, (479) 646-3612.

##### **Consent**

**I have read this parental permission form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my permission for my child to participate in this study.**

Parent Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name:\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix D: Parental Consent in Spanish**

### **Permiso de los Padres para la Participación de un Niño en un Estudio de Investigación Arkansas Tech University**

#### **Enfocado en el APRENDIZAJE del Estudiante del Idioma Inglés**

##### **Descripción de la investigación y la participación de su hijo(a)**

Su hijo(a) está invitado(a) a participar en un estudio de investigación realizado por Taneka Tate como requisito de cumplimiento parcial del programa de Doctorado de Liderazgo Educativo. El propósito de esta investigación es examinar cuando es el lenguaje el principal objetivo y el contenido secundario. Se cree que los estudiantes se involucrarán exitosamente y aumentarán sus destrezas y conocimientos. La participación de su hijo(a) implicará participar en observaciones en el salón de clase y revisión de datos de los resultados provisionales del DRA, DSA y ACT. El tiempo requerido para la participación de su hijo(a) será solamente dentro del día escolar regular.

##### **Riesgos e incomodidades**

No existen riesgos conocidos asociados con esta investigación.

##### **Beneficios potenciales**

No se conocen beneficios para el niño como resultado de su participación en esta investigación.

##### **Protección de confidencialidad**

Haremos todo lo posible para proteger la privacidad de su hijo(a). La identidad de su hijo(a) no será revelada en ninguna publicación resultante de este estudio.

##### **Participación voluntaria**

La participación en este estudio de investigación es voluntaria. Usted puede negarse a que su hijo(a) participe o retirarlo del estudio en cualquier momento. Su hijo(a) no será penalizado de ninguna manera si usted decide que no participe o lo retira de este estudio.

##### **Información de contacto**

Si tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud sobre este estudio, comuníquese con Taneka Tate en la escuela Primaria Carnall, (479) 646-3612.

##### **Consentimiento**

**He leído este formulario de permiso de los padres y se me ha dado la oportunidad de hacer preguntas. Doy mi permiso para que mi hijo(a) participe en este estudio.**

Firma de los Padres \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre del Niño: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E: SIOP Observation Rubric

### The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000; 2004; 2008)

Observer:

Teacher:

Date:

School:

Grade:

Class/Topic:

ESL Level:

Lesson: (check one) ☐ Multiday ☐ Single-day

Directions: Check the box that best reflects what you observe in a sheltered lesson. You may give a score from 0-4 (or NA on selected items). Cite under *Comments* specific examples of the behaviors observed.

	Highly Evident	3	Somewhat Evident	2	1	Not Evident	0	NA
<b>Lesson Preparation</b>								
1. Content objectives clearly defined, displayed, and reviewed with students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2. Language objectives clearly defined, displayed, and reviewed with students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3. Content concepts appropriate for age and educational background level of students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
4. Supplementary materials used to a high degree, making the lesson clear and meaningful (e.g., computer programs, graphs, models, visuals)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
5. Adaptation of content (e.g., text, assignment) to all levels of student proficiency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts (e.g., surveys, letter writing, simulations, constructing models) with language practice opportunities for reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<i>Comments:</i>								
<b>Building Background</b>								
7. Concepts explicitly linked to students' background experiences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Links explicitly made between past learning and new concepts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
9. Key vocabulary emphasized (e.g., introduced, written, repeated, and highlighted for students to see)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<i>Comments:</i>								
<b>Comprehensible Input</b>								
10. Speech appropriate for students' proficiency level (e.g., slower rate, enunciation, and simple sentence structure for beginners)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
11. Clear explanation of academic tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
12. A variety of techniques used to make content concepts clear (e.g., modeling, visuals, hands-on activities, demonstrations, gestures, body language)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<i>Comments:</i>								
<b>Strategies</b>								
13. Ample opportunities provided for students to use learning strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
14. Scaffolding techniques consistently used assisting and supporting student understanding (e.g., think-alouds)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

