TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE SHELTERED INSTRUCTION
OBSERVATION PROTOCOL (SIOP) MODEL IN AN ONLINE SCHOOL

by

Frances I. Suazo
A Dissertation
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of
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Dedication

This is dedicated to my loving and generous husband, Greg. Thank you for your unwavering support and encouragement. I could not have done it without you.
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Abstract

TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE SHELTERED INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION PROTOCOL (SIOP) MODEL IN AN ONLINE SCHOOL

Frances I. Suazo, Ph.D.

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Dissertation Director: Dr. Kevin Clark

In this study, the researcher examined the perceptions of 21 online teachers and an assistant principal from a charter school in the southwestern region of the United States regarding the implementation of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model in their online classrooms. The effectiveness of the online SIOP training was investigated, specifically focusing on the teachers’ reactions to the training and their application of the new knowledge and skills upon completion of the training. A semi-structured online interview using a cloud-based conferencing tool was conducted with each participant.

The findings of this study indicate that although the SIOP model was perceived to be effective in supporting the needs of their English language learners (ELLs), adaptions could benefit online learning environments. An alternative recommendation suggested for schools to increase the hours of “real-time” instruction.
Although several online teachers are effectively applying new knowledge and skills acquired during the online SIOP training, some participants also conveyed the need for the development of instructional resources by the education management organization (EMO). Some of the online difficulties were identified that included the inability to easily distinguish ELLs in online classrooms, administrative load, class sizes, and technical problems.

Further research could increase the literature concerning online teachers’ perceptions of their professional development experiences as it relates to the needs of ELLs, specifically on sheltered instruction. This will help administrators and teachers to better understand the current practices in online classrooms with different school models so that EMOs and school support systems can devise ways to improve them.
Chapter One: Introduction

A growing number of parents and students are now choosing online schools—“schools that deliver all curriculum and instruction via the Internet and electronic communication, usually with students at home and teachers at a remote location, and usually with everyone participating at different times” (Molnar, et al., 2013, p. 22). Despite representing one of the fastest-growing alternatives to publicly provided education or school choice, online schools “still account for a relatively small portion of the overall school choice options in the United States” (Molnar, et al., 2013, p. 25).

According to the National Educational Policy Center (NEPC), there are 311 full-time online schools enrolling an estimated 200,000 students. Of these students, “67% were enrolled in charters operated by Education Management Organizations (EMOs)” (Molnar, et al., 2013, p. 25). Miron defines an EMO as "a private organization or company that manages public schools--either district schools or charter schools" (Ladd & Fiske, 2008, p. 477). K12, Inc., a Herndon, Va-based EMO and the largest in the United States, enrolled 77,000 in 2011-12 (Molnar, et al., 2013, p. 25).

Despite the expansion of online education, English language learners (ELLs) currently represent one of the smallest populations of enrollment in online schools. According to Molnar (2013, p. 28), “only 0.1% of full-time online school students are classified as ELLs, a strikingly large difference from the 9.6% national average.”
Molnar (2013) argues that the absence of ELL in online schools can be attributed to the prevalence of English as the language of instruction in online education.

Additionally, instructors may lack the time to properly support ELL students in online classrooms.

However, these numbers should be expected to increase. Public schools across the United States are undergoing a rapid increase of limited English proficient (LEP) students. According to the No Child Left Behind legislation (NCLB), LEP students are those ranging from:

- ages 3 to 21, enrolled in elementary or secondary education, often born outside the United States or speaking a language other than English in their homes, and

Although the United States continues to display more cultural and linguistic diversity, researchers argue that most mainstream teachers remain unprepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students (Cummins, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Institute for Second Language Achievement, 2006; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Tasan, 2001).

The projected growth of online education “is driving the need to incorporate new pedagogical content knowledge” in pre-service and in-service teacher education to facilitate learning in special populations, including ELLs.

Many students bring characteristics to the teaching and learning process that are exceptional, characteristics that can inhibit access to information presented via the Web and prevent success in courses provided over the internet. Students with disabilities (including those with cognitive, physical, or sensory limitations), English language learners (ELL), and gifted learners can all benefit from online learning environments. Their individual differences, however, influence the extent to which these environments are effective vehicles for learning” (Keeler, C.G., et al., 2007, p. 125).

In order to make online learning environments “effective vehicles for learning,” we need to better understand how online teachers can help ELLs learn. There is a plethora of information on strategies to help students learn online, with very little focus
on differentiating instruction for ELLs. There is also significant literature on strategies to help ELLs learn in a face-to-face classroom, but very little focus on differentiating instruction for ELLs in an online classroom. Studies of instruction of ELLs in brick-and-mortar classrooms do not apply to online instruction. Many strategies for online teaching involve gestures, realia, body language, etc. which are hard to transpose to the online environment.

The online SIOP training is a program in need of evaluation to gauge online teachers’ perceptions of a validated approach to teaching ELLs, in this case, SIOP, and online teachers’ perceptions of its effectiveness in enhancing their skills to meet the needs of ELLs. Additionally, an evaluation of the factors that might affect the implementation of the SIOP model at an online school can help identify the components that are useful in an online environment and inform an adaption of the SIOP model for use in online classrooms.

Since the SIOP model is being implemented in many school districts throughout the country, it is important to evaluate online teachers’ perceptions of the model and of the factors that might affect its implementation in online classrooms. Only then will the model’s feasibility for use in online learning environments be established or a determination can be made as to whether the model needs to be adapted in a way that truly captures the features of the online classroom.

**Background of the Problem**

According to the American Institutes for Research, the enrollment of ELLs in prekindergarten through 12th grade (PK-12) increased by more than 51% between 1998–
99 and 2008–09. Total student enrollment increased by just over 7% (August, Estrada, & Boyle, 2012).

“The 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) fostered greater inclusion of English language learners (ELLs) in standards-based instruction, assessment, and accountability by requiring districts and schools to disaggregate and report out data by ELL status and take action if ELLs were not meeting state standards” (August et al., 2012). In 2011, states were offered flexibility to create plans to improve outcomes for all students, closing achievement gaps, and improving the overall quality of instruction. “To get flexibility from NCLB, states must adopt and have a strong plan to implement college-and career-ready standards. States must also create comprehensive systems of teacher and principal development, evaluation and support that include factors beyond test scores, such as principal observation, peer review, student work, or parent and student feedback. States receiving waivers must set new performance targets to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps” (Duncan, 2013).

President Obama recently signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) into law to replace NCLB. The ESSA provides a stronger focus on closing the achievement gap between ELLs and other students. Per the ESSA, a key element of the statewide accountability systems is English proficiency outcomes, since the law moves many critical accountability decisions from the federal to the state level. Consequently, new strategies and efforts will be needed to ensure quality education services for students in need of differentiated instruction. “The creation of state plans and accountability measures to implement the new law’s provisions will provide immigrant groups and other
English learner stakeholders with numerous opportunities to safeguard English learners’ rights to an equitable education and ensure they can excel along with other students” (McHugh & Pompa, 2016). ESSA also strengthens accountability provisions in addition to authorizing substantial increases in funding targeted at ELLs:

No Child Left Behind took a major step forward for English-language learners by disaggregating achievement data and holding schools accountable for improving English-language learners' reading and math achievement and graduation rates under Title I, the largest federal K-12 education program. But the law treated English language acquisition for English-language learners differently, creating a completely separate accountability system that only applied to districts and states. This division created confusion and sent the message that helping these students learn English was a secondary concern. In fact, many English-language learners that start in U.S. schools in the early grades struggle to make progress in English, and between one-quarter and one-half become long-term English-language learners.

Now, under the Every Student Succeeds Act, all schools have to demonstrate that they are improving the English language proficiency of their English-language learners. Improving English language proficiency is a required indicator in every state's school accountability system, which will help make sure that the schools where these students are struggling get the right kind of support. Importantly, these changes signal to states that helping English-language learners
gain the skills they need to be successful in academic classes must be a priority.

(Sargrad, 2016)

Although the number of ELLs continues to increase, when compared to their English-proficient peers, ELL achievement continues to be poor. Eighth grade reading data from the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011a) shows that 78% “of non-ELLs nationwide performed at or above basic levels (with 35% of those at or above proficient)” [while] “only 29% of ELLs performed at or above basic levels, with only 3% of those at or above proficient.” There are similar gaps in 4th and 12 grades, and in mathematics and science (Aud, S. et al 2011).

Overall results from the Pew Hispanic Center's Report (Velasco & Docketerman, 2010) confirm that ELLs are among the groups least likely to meet state proficiency standards. The findings state that “in the five states with large ELL student populations, the proportion of ELL students scoring at or above the proficient level on the state mathematics test is often below the proportion of Black students scoring at or above the proficient level. [In addition,] in both elementary grades and middle school grades in these states, ELL students are much less likely than White students to score at or above the proficient level in mathematics” (Fry, 2008, p. iii).

Furthermore, “ELLs are twice as likely to drop out of high school, especially in the last two years of high school,” compared to non-ELLs: 10.2% and 5.8%, respectively (Rumberger, 2006).
According to Negron, “under the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), these trends pose an enormous challenge for teachers who must ensure that LEP students attain English proficiency; develop high levels of academic attainment in English; and meet the same standards as native English-speaking students” (Negron, 2012). ELLs enter schools with different levels of language proficiency and content knowledge in addition to differences in socioeconomic status, schooling, and personal experiences (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2012). However, most mainstream classroom teachers are not sufficiently prepared to provide content instruction to ELLs in addition to facilitating the development of English proficiency, since the majority of teachers have had little or no professional development for teaching ELLs (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2002). Cartiera (2006) asserts that “many teachers are not equipped with adequate knowledge about ELLs or about what constitutes effective instruction for this population” (p.2). The pressures of accountability are spurring schools to closely examine ELL performance both in language development and achievement in content areas.

Bouchard (2005) states—“since every teacher is ultimately a teacher of language—whether it is the language of biology, history, math, or art—the content classroom provides numerous opportunities for teachers to expand the language skills of all learners, including ELLs” (p. 4). Many school districts and educators around the United States have received flexibility from NCLB by agreeing to create programs of teacher and principal development, setting new performance targets, and endeavoring to close achievement gaps. These requirements present major implications for teachers across the country since ELLs are almost certain to be part of their classrooms. Given that
"less than one sixth of colleges offering pre-service teacher preparation include training on working with ELLs” (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008), districts will need to consider providing high quality professional development to support their teachers.

Additionally, the NCLB Act requires teachers to be highly qualified in the areas they teach. The NCLB act defines a highly qualified teacher as one who has at least a college degree, with demonstrated knowledge in the content area taught, and is certified by the state in which they teach. NCLB’s Title III - Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students Part A — English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act ensures that LEP and immigrant students “achieve at high levels in the core academic subjects” (Part A, Sec. 3102 [2]) and develop and reach English language proficiency; attain high levels of academic achievement in core content areas; and meet the same academic content and achievement standards that other students are expected to meet. (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2001).

One methodology for making content comprehensible to ELLs during English language development is known as sheltered instruction (Herrera & Murry, 2010). Sheltered instruction offers teachers “a model for lesson planning” and instruction that provides ELLs “with access to grade-level content standards” (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2012).

In a sheltered lesson, language and content objectives are integrated (Herrera & Murry, 2010). “The full scope and sequence of curriculum is used to target academic language proficiency and a deeper conceptual understanding of the content material” (Herrera & Murry, 2005, p. 252).
The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) is a model of sheltered instruction that has shown promise in assisting teachers with meeting the needs of ELLs over the last decade (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2012). Teachers can scaffold instruction in order to provide comprehensible language input by implementing the lesson planning and delivery strategies of the SIOP model.

Many school districts are implementing sheltered instruction in an effort to better support ELLs. Sheltered instruction was first introduced by Stephen Krashen in the 1980s and was empirically validated as a method of instruction by Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2012) through the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, or SIOP model (Echevarria & Graves, 2010). Identified as a best practice model of professional development by the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) and the Institute for Second Language Achievement (ISLA) (2006), the SIOP model was created through the National Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE) in 1996 (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2012). The SIOP model (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2012) was developed to provide teachers with an explicit, practical model of sheltered instruction. The SIOP model is currently used in most of the 50 states and in hundreds of schools across the United States, as well as in several other countries.

The SIOP model (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2012) is a lesson planning and delivery methodology comprised of 30 strategies grouped into eight components: Preparation, Building Background, Comprehensible Input, Strategies, Interaction, Practice and Application, Lesson Delivery, and Review and Assessment. In order to promote literacy in ELLs, content teachers are urged to develop meaningful lessons that
reinforce students’ prior knowledge and background experiences. During SIOP professional development, the teacher is taught how to use the SIOP model to scaffold instruction for ELLs by providing specific instructional supports, and to provide comprehensible input in all content areas. The training itself is often conducted face-to-face in a multi-day format. However, many districts also offer SIOP training online and/or in a hybrid format, with modules completed using self-paced learning online and collaborative sessions held face-to-face to provide an opportunity to modify lesson plans according to the model.

Although many online teachers might use the model as expected by their district, some of the SIOP components do not lend themselves to an online environment or need extensive adaptations to ensure the same level of success in online environments as it has shown in face-to-face environments. Since the SIOP model was created for traditional (face-to-face) classrooms and all of the research conducted on SIOP has been in face-to-face classrooms as well, it is important to evaluate online teachers’ perceptions of an online SIOP training in order to understand their perceptions of its effectiveness in enhancing their skills to meet the needs of ELLs and on its applicability to an online classroom. That way, the model can be adapted and tested in an online environment, ensuring that ELLs in online schools can have access to comprehensible input and meet content and language proficiency standards.

**Statement of the Problem**

“Compared to many countries, the United States is behind in preparing K-12 teachers to teach online. Very few teacher education programs in the United States offer a
curriculum for online teaching, leaving it up to districts, states, and online schools to train online teachers…Although several states have adopted online teaching standards and created new areas of endorsement in response to the demand, there is a need for a wide-scale call to integrate online teaching requirements into teacher development across all levels, and to explore new models of collaborative teacher [professional development]” (Patrick & Dawley, 2009, p. 1-2).

The 2011-2012 Schools and Staffing Survey (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013) indicated that only 26% of public school teachers participated in professional development focused on ELLs in the last twelve months. Therefore, a number of ELLs receive instruction from teachers who have not been appropriately trained to address their language development needs or to make content instruction comprehensible (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). The role of ESL teachers is complex because these teachers are responsible not only for their students’ English language acquisition but also for content area subject matter. The professional development of teachers is important for their sustained growth as practitioners (Guskey, 2000). In 2004, the National Center for Educational Statistics reported increased opportunities for professional development as one factor related to teachers deciding to transfer to other schools and seeking better employment opportunities and working conditions.

Several organizations offer online teaching-competency checklists to help teachers and administrators identify professional development needs. These include the Standards for Quality Online Teaching published by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) (2006), iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Teaching (2010)
and the NEA Guide to Teaching Online High School Courses (n.d.). However, “most existing teacher assessment tools for online educators are limited to the evaluation of technical abilities, skills, and self-efficacy” (Natale, 2011, p. 27). Due to the lack of research into best practices in K–12 online schools in addition to practices that make teachers effective in online teaching and learning environments, the field lacks a strong body of knowledge that identifies the elements of pedagogy and practice used successfully by online educators (DiPietro et. al (2008). There are, however, a few statewide, national or international endorsements for K–12 educators. But until there is a strong research foundation in best practices in online education, these endorsements will lack significance (Ferdig et al. 2009).

Online teachers are also challenged due to limited opportunities to communicate with students and assess comprehension. Assessing proficiency remotely and providing informal assessments to check progress can be challenging. At the school selected for this study, Southwestern Academy for Online Learning (SAOL) (pseudonym), many of the classes have optional attendance for synchronous sessions, leaving most of the curriculum to be learned using self-paced study, often with the assistance of a parent or guardian, who in grades K-8 facilitates progress through daily lessons, and in high school, provides support to enable the student to stay on task.

Synchronous sessions are used for standards-based lessons, but these real-time sessions tend to be very large, often with over 100 students in attendance, preventing most students from fully participating in these hour-long weekly or bi-weekly sessions.
Online teachers are also burdened with responsibilities, similar to those in a face-to-face classroom. These responsibilities include collaboration with expert teachers for special populations, including: the ESL teacher; differentiating instruction for students with special needs; creating and monitoring Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for all students; issuing report cards at the end of each nine-week grading period; documenting all conference notes and/or pertinent communication with students and learning coaches; tracking academic progress and attendance; beginning action plans for non-compliant students; contacting new students and parents within 24 hours of placement; and conducting scheduled conferences and class meetings (synchronous sessions), among others (Southwestern Academy for Online Learning: 3rd-8th Teacher Handbook, 2014-2015).

It is vital for teachers to appreciate differences due to culture, intellectual development, family experiences, and approaches to learning in order to connect with students (Darling-Hammond, 1997, 1998; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). Teachers must also understand how language is acquired in order to build language skills and create accessible learning experiences. Teachers must also know their subject areas deeply to create experiences that actually work to facilitate learning (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006).

**The SIOP model in an online classroom.** The SIOP Model includes the following eight components:

1. Lesson Preparation
2. Building Background
3. Comprehensible Input

4. Strategies

5. Interaction

6. Practice and Application

7. Lesson Delivery

8. Review and Assessment (Echavarria et al., 2012)

Although it is used extensively in school districts around the country, the SIOP Model was designed to be utilized in face-to-face classrooms. Consequently, some of the requirements of the components prove difficult to fulfill in an online classroom. For example, the Lesson Preparation and Building Background components require teachers to make connections between students’ knowledge and experiences and the new information imparted. In order for teachers to make these connections, it is important to become familiar with students’ cultural, academic and personal background. Homeroom teachers at SAOL, tasked with taking attendance and communicating general information, can have over 100 students in their homerooms. These teachers do not necessarily interact with students outside of the homeroom. As a result, homeroom teachers at SAOL might never become thoroughly familiar with students’ personal histories.

Furthermore, for SIOP model fidelity, it is critical that teachers be familiar with the students’ English language proficiency level in order implement the Comprehensible Input component. This component requires teachers to use slow speech, clear enunciation, frequent repetition, and speech adjustment as needed. The teacher must
avoid jargon and idioms and use body language, gestures, and pictures to accompany spoken words. In an online classroom, assessing comprehension through observation and using body language and gestures is unfeasible since students would need to have access to a webcam, which is not supported by SAOL.

Oral language skills are an essential part of an ELL’s language and literacy development. The Interaction component of the SIOP Model is the perfect opportunity to practice oral language skills through for meaningful interaction where students make ask and answer question to make themselves understood, negotiate meaning, and clarify ideas. The teacher can use grouping to promote interaction, implement strategies, increase wait time for responses, and provide opportunities for clarification in the student’s native language whenever possible. However, since the only opportunity for interaction with peers at SAOL is during a synchronous class session, teachers must attempt to gauge engagement and provide opportunities for sharing and purposeful discussions with a large group of students in under one hour—the average duration of a synchronous session. This interaction is usually hampered due to the perceived inconsistency of microphone use among students. Instead, the online collaboration tool’s chat box is often used for discussions during synchronous sessions.

The final component of the SIOP model also poses a problem in the online classroom. The Review and Assessment component recommends that throughout the lesson, and particularly at the end, teachers assess students’ understanding and their retention of key vocabulary and concepts. It is during this component that a determination should be made as to whether to progress to the next learning module or offer additional
instructional support. In an online environment with a large number of students, the teacher often resorts to polling to assess whether students are following along and rarely has the opportunity to dig deeper and ask pointed questions. Students are then forced to complete graded assessments without the reinforcement that they needed in order to meet the unit or lesson outcomes.

These are some of the reasons why the online SIOP training needs to be evaluated using online teachers’ perceptions of the model in an online classroom and of its effectiveness in enhancing their skills to meet the needs of ELLs. In addition, an evaluation of the factors that might affect the implementation of the SIOP model at an online school can help in the adaptation of the SIOP model for use in online classrooms.

This study seeks to better understand how online teachers can help ELLs in their online classrooms learn. Since there is a dearth of information on strategies to differentiate instruction in an online classroom for ELLs, it is important to ascertain how online teachers perceive the training that they receive, in this case, of the SIOP model. The online SIOP training is a program in need of evaluation to evaluate perceptions of its effectiveness in enhancing their skills to meet the needs of ELLs. Additionally, an evaluation of the factors that might affect the implementation of the SIOP model at an online school can help identify the components of the model that are useful in an online environment in order to adapt the SIOP model for use in online classrooms.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine online teachers’ perceptions regarding the implementation, effectiveness, and implications of the SIOP model at the
Southwestern Academy for Online Learning or SAOL. In addition, this study will seek to determine the effectiveness of online SIOP training using the Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation (Guskey, 2000), focusing on participants’ reactions, participants’ learning, and participant’s use of new knowledge and skills. The research focuses on how the SIOP model was implemented upon completion of an online training, and teachers’ perceptions of the training and the model’s effectiveness in meeting the needs of ELLs. This research is designed to assist other online schools which are trying to meet the needs of their ELL students. SAOL faces the same challenges as many districts across the United States in meeting the needs of an increasing population of ELL students. To address the anticipated rise of ELL students, SAOL has implemented the SIOP model to ensure that ELL students attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic achievement in English, and meet the same challenging state and federal standards as native English speaking students in their district.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to (a) provide a detailed account of the process used to implement the SIOP model at the school, (b) examine teachers’ perceptions in their ability to meet the needs of ELL students, and (c) identify factors that might have affected the implementation of the SIOP model.

**Research Questions**

The primary research questions in this study were:

1. What are online teachers’ perceptions of the online SIOP training?

2. How do online teachers perceive the effectiveness of SIOP in enhancing their skills to meet the needs of ELLs?
3. What factors might affect the implementation of the SIOP model at an online school?

**Significance of the Study**

Although providing teachers with high-quality professional development in a validated model for teaching English and core content will not by itself close the achievement gap between English speakers and non-English speakers, it is one of many factors that can help minimize the disparity. The information collected in this study will supplement the current body of knowledge on implementing the SIOP model in K-12 online education. Additionally, the insights derived from this study are intended to provide specific information for districts with online schools with a high concentration of ELLs about implementing the SIOP model district-wide. Specifically, it may contribute to the development of guidelines for the implementation of the SIOP model in other online schools.

**Design of the Study**

In this study, a qualitative research design was used to examine online teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation, effectiveness, and implications of the SIOP model in helping them meet the needs of their ELL students. A multi-case study approach was employed to best understand these experiences. A case study is an in-depth exploration of a particular subject based on extensive data collection (Creswell, 2008). Using a case study approach allowed valuable insight into how and why the online teachers being studied perceived their experiences the way they did. The study used single individual interviews to gain knowledge about the teachers’ perspectives on the
online SIOP training and its implementation, effectiveness, and implications. The use of interviews allowed the subjects to speak directly about what they believe is going on in the situation (Yin, 2009). In addition, relevant documentation was collected to provide a better understanding of the teachers’ experiences teaching linguistically diverse students, as well as online classroom observations of synchronous sessions, information about general teaching experience, and educational background.

**Definition of Terms**

1. **Asynchronous learning** – is learning that is not constrained by time and place allowing the student to learn on their own schedule. “Examples are email, online discussion forums, message boards, blogs, podcasts, etc.” (Wicks, 2010, p. 48).

2. **Blended learning** – is learning that occurs partially at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home in addition to through online delivery. The student has some control over time, place, path, and/or pace. This term is often used synonymously with hybrid learning. (Staker & Horn, 2012)

3. **Brick and mortar schools** – Refers to a traditional school or a traditional school building, as contrasted with an online school. It is often used synonymously with face-to-face learning.

4. **English as a Second Language (ESL)** – English as a Second language (ESL) is the study of English by speakers with different native languages.

5. **English language learner (ELL)** – English language learner, or ELL, is a student who is non-native English speaking whose proficiency in English is below that of a peer with an English language background. This term is also used interchangeably with English
learner or EL.

6. English language learner (ELL) Coordinator – a member of the school, usually a teacher, who coordinates services for ELLs and ensures that both general education and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers are trained to accommodate a culturally and linguistically diverse population.

7. Limited English Proficient (LEP) – LEP refers to a student with limited English proficiency, specifically defined as a student with difficulties speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English. These difficulties may deny the student the opportunity to learn successfully in a classroom where the language of instruction is English.

8. Mainstream Classroom – For the purpose of this study, mainstream classrooms are those classrooms where the majority of students are monolingual English speakers.

9. Mainstream Teachers – For the purpose of this study, mainstream classroom teachers are those teachers who teach in the elementary, middle school, or high school classrooms where the majority of students are monolingual English speakers.

10. Online education (or online learning) – education without restrictions in space or time, that is delivered, usually via information technology networks. It is often used synonymously with online learning or distance learning.

11. Online school (or cyber school) – A school that provides full-time instruction primarily over the Internet.

12. Online teacher (or cyber teacher) – A teacher responsible for providing instruction in an online classroom.

13. Perception – An understanding or awareness.
14. **Professional development** – the process of obtaining skills, qualifications, and experience that allow for career progress. For the purposes of this study, teacher development with goals aligned to those of the school and/or district.


16. **Synchronous learning** – Also known as “real-time” learning, it is learning in which the learners interact at the same time and in the same space. It is often referred to as “real-time” learning.

17. **Online training** – the delivery of training content over the internet or intranet using all forms of multimedia. May be conducted synchronous or asynchronously.

**Assumptions and Limitations**

For this study, the perceptions regarding the implementation, effectiveness and implications of the SIOP model in an online school were studied. It is assumed that with the support of the ELL Coordinator/ESL Teacher, the teachers are making an effort to implement the model in the online classroom based on the recommendations made in the
online SIOP training. It is also assumed that the participants are truthful in their interview responses to the best of their knowledge. The data collected were from the online teachers used in this study. The findings of the study cannot be generalized to all online teachers. Further research will be needed on online teachers with different online learning models, SIOP model fidelity evaluation protocol, SIOP training provider, and so forth, from those examined in this study.

**Organization of the Study**

Chapter Two is a literature review in which relevant literature pertaining to sheltered instruction, specifically the SIOP model, online teachers’ perceptions and experience with SIOP, contextual research, and an evaluation of relevant study designs are all summarized. Chapter Three is the methods section in which a description of the research design, the participants and setting, data collection and analysis procedures, validity issues, and limitations of the study are detailed. Chapter Four contains the data analysis and results from each individual participant interview as well as an analysis of themes relevant across cases. Chapter Five is the conclusion of the research and recommendations for future studies.
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study is to explore online teachers’ perceptions regarding the implementation, effectiveness, and implications of the SIOP model in an online classroom. In addition, this study will seek to determine the effectiveness of online SIOP training using the Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation (Guskey, 2000), focusing on participants’ reactions, participants’ learning, and participant’s use of new knowledge and skills.

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature on the changing demographics in the United States and the implications for mainstream teachers, professional development for teachers of ELLs, sheltered instruction models, the state of K-12 distance education, and Guskey’s Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation (2000). This chapter also includes a summary of findings as well as a specific argument for the need to conduct additional research in this area.

Changing Demographics in the United States: Implications for Classroom Teachers

School populations will continue to become increasingly diverse in the coming years. By 2040, a majority of school-age children in the United States will be members of “minority” groups (Olson, 2000). According to the Pew Research Center, Hispanics, already the largest minority group, will more than double their share of the population to 29% by 2050 (Passel & Cohn, 2008). “The Hispanic school-age population is predicted
to increase about 60% in the next 20 years, and by 2025, nearly one in four school-age youngsters will be Hispanic” (Olson, 2000). “From an educational standpoint, many states are not prepared for this influx of new students, not just in sheer numbers, but also in the special needs that they bring to the classroom” (Olson, 2000).

Kena et al. (2014) asserted that the percentage of public school students in the United States who were ELLs was 9.1% in 2011–2012 compared to 8.7% in 2002–2003, with the highest percentages of ELL students in the public schools being in the West:

In eight states, Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, and Texas, 10.0 percent or more of public school students were English language learners, with ELL students constituting 23.2 percent of public school enrollment in California. Fourteen states and the District of Columbia had percentages of ELL public school enrollment between 6.0 and 9.9 percent. In addition to the District of Columbia, these states were Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Washington. The percentage of ELL students in public schools was between 3.0 and 5.9 percent in 15 states and was less than 3.0 percent in 13 states, with West Virginia having the lowest percentage (0.7 percent). (p. 72)

The 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) through the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) called for annual testing of reading, mathematics, and science achievement for all students in grades 3-8, and once
again in high school. ELLs were included in these assessment measures and forced to undergo additional testing of their English language development. The rapidly increasing population of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students may have played a significant role in the difficulty of meeting NCLB (Abedi, 2008). However, in 2011, states were offered waivers to create plans to improve learning outcomes for all students, to close achievement gaps, and improve the overall quality of instruction. In order to obtain “flexibility from NCLB, states must adopt a plan to implement college-and-career-ready standards” [in addition to] create comprehensive systems of teacher and principal development, and evaluation and support that include factors beyond test scores.”

Additionally, states receiving waivers must set new performance targets to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps (Duncan, 2013). As of December 2014, the U.S. Department of Education has approved the flexibility plans of 43 states (including the District of Columbia).

While the goals of NCLB and the flexibility plans offer advantages for all students, including increased academic rigor and a push for academic literacy, there are some distinct disadvantages for ELLs. ELLs at the early stages of language acquisition are expected to learn content in a language that they are unable to speak, read, or write proficiently. These high-stakes tests are therefore more often a test of language acquisition than of academic content knowledge (Menken, 2006). In addition, as standardized tests dominate curriculum and instruction, first language promotion is discouraged or undervalued (Cummins & Davidson, 2007).

The average scores for ELLs on standardized math tests have steadily declined...
over time (Bielenberg & Fillmore, 2005). In Texas, only 59% of ELLs were successful on high school reading exit exams, compared to 91% of white, English-speaking students (Adam, 2005). Similar figures for math were found, with only 42% of ELLs successfully passing the exit exam compared to 92% of white, English-speaking students.

Collier and Thomas (1989) have consistently determined that conversational fluency in a new language develops in one to three years, inside and outside of the classroom. However, the language that is vital for student success in the school environment develops more slowly and systematically (Cummins, 2000; Cummins & Davison, 2007; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Academic English was distinguished from basic interpersonal communication skills by Cummins, who noted that proficiency in language development involves layers of skills and knowledge (Bielenberg & Fillmore, 2005; Cummins, 2000). Academic English is the English that students need to excel in school, since it is used in textbooks and high-stakes tests. This language is not learned independently or through immersion in an English-only classroom. In order to master academic English, teachers need to create instructional activities that keenly promotes language development in the context of learning content that is intellectually challenging (Bielenberg & Fillmore, 2005; Cummins, 2000, 2007).

The development of cognitive academic language proficiency in English takes five to eight years (Thomas & Collier, 2002; Lake & Pappamihiel, 2003). Learning English well makes the difference in the academic success of language minority children (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2003). ELLs are more likely to finish high school if they speak English well. Spanish-speaking students who do not speak
English well are more likely to repeat grades or drop out altogether. For these students, only 6% sign up for college, while 31% who speak English very well register for college (Black, 2005).

Thomas and Collier (2002) conducted a five-year study through the National Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE), examining the academic achievement of 200,000 Spanish-speaking students in kindergarten through grade 12. Their research revealed four years was the minimum required to raise ELLs to grade-level performance. ELLs must gain three to four more NCE (normal curve equivalent) points each year than native speakers gain. In other words, in order for a second language learner to catch up to grade norms within six years, the student must make 15 months’ gain in every 10-month academic school year (Cummins, 2007). The only way to accomplish that, according to Thomas and Collier’s study, is to provide well-implemented, cognitively challenging, sustained programs. In addition, their research demonstrated that students in English-only immersion classes showed large decreases in reading and math achievement by grade 5, and were more likely to drop out of school altogether. Inversely, ELLs who prior to immersion in English received ESL content classes for two or three years improved their academic performance.

Since the population of ELLs in schools has increased nearly 100% over the past decade, experts call for specific preparation for teachers working with this population (Cummins, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Institute for Second Language Achievement [ISLA], 2006; Karabenick & Clemens, 2004; Short & Echevarria, 2005; Tasan, 2001). Teachers need to know who the students are and what their prior
educational experiences were like (Short & Echevarria, 2005). Additionally, these teachers need to know how to deliver sheltered instruction, a methodology introduced by Stephen Krashen in the 1980 to teach content to ELLs in deliberate ways that make the concepts understandable while promoting the students’ academic English language development (Echevarria, Short, & Vogt, 2008; Short & Echevarria, 2005).

According to Molnar et al. (2014) in their second annual report in a series on the full-time online education sector, Virtual Schools in the U.S. 2014: Politics, Performance, Policy, and Research Evidence, ELLs “represent a growing proportion of students in the nation’s schools, especially in the states served by virtual schools. However, only 0.1% of full-time virtual school students are classified as ELLs. This is a strikingly large difference from the 9.6% national average. None of the virtual schools had higher proportions of ELLs than the national average, and the ELL student enrollment of most virtual schools with data available was less than 1%. There are no clear explanations for the absence of students classified as English language learners in virtual schools. One possible explanation could be that the packaged curriculum is only available in English; another possible explanation might be that instructors have insufficient time to support these students” (2014, p. 65).

**Professional Development for Teachers of ELLs**

The 2011-2012 Schools and Staffing Survey (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013) indicated that only 26% of public school teachers participated in professional development focused on ELLs in the last twelve months. Therefore, a number of ELLs receive instruction from teachers who have not had completed
appropriate professional development to address their language development needs or to make content instruction comprehensible (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008).

Molle (2013) examined the practices of a professional development facilitator for teachers of ELLs using three perspectives: participation, ideology, and content, observing that the professional development facilitator fostered a generated learning environment by (a) navigating tension to encourage collegial and respectful relations among participants; (b) disrupting negative discourse about ELLs; (c) allowing for political discussions about policies related to educational services for ELLs. Molle found that by the professional development facilitator disqualifying the need for consensus and welcoming opposing views among teachers, the purpose of interrogating ideas becomes clear. These forms of interaction have been identified as being an important feature of high-quality professional development (Crabbe, 2003; Little, 1993 as cited in Molle, 2013). Furthermore, disrupting negative talk about student shortcomings to focus instead on the responsibilities of educators to support said students facilitates a constructive shift “for teacher learning because it encourages educators to think about their schools and classrooms as spaces in which changes in practice can lead to improvements in student academic success” (Molle, 2013). It also allows for teachers to appreciate and bolster the resources that ELLs bring into the classroom (August, Goldenberg, Saunders, & Dressler, 2010 as cited in Molle, 2013). Finally, the professional development facilitator’s tolerance for political discussions allowed teachers to learn how to become advocates for their ELLs (Trueba & Bartolome, 2000).

Karabenick and Clemens (2004) studied the effects of professional development
of teachers on their beliefs and attitudes towards ELLs. The study was predicated on the assumption that teachers’ attitudes toward ELLs are important because they affect teachers’ motivation to connect with their students, which can then increase student motivation and performance. In addition, teachers’ attitudes towards ELLs can also affect teachers’ openness to professional development efforts designed to dissipate superfluous beliefs about language and cognition which could hamper the attempt of new instructional practices that are more beneficial to the success of ELLs. The researchers determined that teachers thought that they were significantly less able to teach ELLs than to teach mainstream students. Although the majority of teachers in their study expressed an interest in serving ELLs in the mainstream classroom, the teachers’ responses demonstrated a need for professional development and training to provide them with the content knowledge and instructional skills to ensure quality instructional practices, and to enhance their levels of confidence teaching ELLs.

Batt (2010) conducted a study in which 15 teacher leaders were trained in the SIOP model to work with ELLs. Eighty percent of the teacher leaders indicated they were committed to implementation of the model after the training, but only 53% followed through and implemented the model. When the teacher leaders received cognitive coaching, a process during which teachers explore the thinking behind their practices to support implementation of the SIOP model, 100% of the teachers fully implemented SIOP. The predominant theme that emerged from the study centered on the time allocated to the coaching process, which was critical to achieve maximum implementation (Batt, 2010).
Pawan (2008) conducted a study of 33 subject teachers while they completed a 32-week professional development program at a university. Findings indicated that 38.5% of the subject teachers believed that collaboration with the ESL teacher was indispensable in content-based language instruction since they did not feel equipped to take on English language instruction. Therefore, they depend on ESL teachers to provide support to ELLs.

Kibler and Roman (2013) examined the impact of teacher learning during and after an online professional development program for English-speaking teachers in a multilingual classroom. After the program, one teacher viewed bilingualism as an asset while the other teacher had an increased acceptance of native language used in her classroom.

Karabenick and Clemens (2004) indicated that training that focused on developing skills and improving teachers’ sense of efficacy and confidence would increase teachers’ motivation to work with ELLs. Since there are evident gaps in teacher knowledge of second language acquisition and learning, as well as the pedagogy and instructional techniques in ESL, they emphasized the need to consider these factors during the development of comprehensive training offerings.

Byrnes, Kiger, and Manning (1997) explored the training of teachers of ELLs and determined that formal training is linked with positive language attitudes. Apparently, professional development provides teachers with skills and knowledge to work effectively with ELLs. According to the researchers, the most obvious avenue for effectively preparing teachers to work with ELLs is through formal professional
development offerings including carefully planned presentations and field experiences that focus on the attitudes and skills necessary to understand and appreciate language development and cultural diversity.

Darling-Hammond (1998) established that study, reflection and collaboration were the most effective ways for teachers to learn. In addition, teachers learn by carefully observing their students and evaluating their work, and by sharing what they see. Darling-Hammond also stated that good learning environments for teachers provide sufficient opportunities for research and inquiry and for sharing and evaluating the results of teaching and learning.

According to Darling-Hammond (1998), effective professional development focuses on the activities of teaching and learning such as lesson planning, student work evaluation, and curriculum development. Additionally, she contended that effective professional development stems from investigations of practice through analysis, case studies, and questions and is built on professional discourse that promotes communication. Darling-Hammond validated professional development strategies that succeed in improving teaching, including strategies that are collaborative and that connect and result from teachers’ work. She further indicated that successful professional development is continuous, rigorous, reinforced through modeling, coaching, and problem-solving around specific problems of practice. "These approaches shift from old models of 'teacher training' or 'in-servicing' to a model in which teachers confront research and theory directly, are greatly engaged in evaluating their practice, and use their colleagues for mutual assistance" (Darling-Hammond, 1998, p. 6).
The role of ESL teachers is complex because these teachers are responsible not only for their students’ English language acquisition but also for content area subject matter. The professional development of teachers is important for their sustained growth as practitioners (Guskey, 2000). In 2004, the National Center for Educational Statistics reported increased opportunities for professional development as one factor related to teachers requesting transfers to other schools and seeking better employment opportunities and working conditions.

Kohl’s (2005) quantitative study investigated the professional development needs, experiences, and interests of K to 12 ESL and foreign language teachers. One third of the respondents indicated a high need for content-specific professional development and a higher need for working with students with special needs and the use of technology. The teachers in Kohl’s study also identified the need for collaboration as an area for professional development. A noted disadvantage to Kohl’s work was combining the ESL teachers and foreign language teachers into one sample. She suggested dividing the participants in future studies to readily identify similar or different needs.

Layzer’s (2000) research on teacher attitudes and bilingual learners noted that the teachers’ inclusion of ESL students and the provision of academic success played a role in student achievement. The more proactive teachers made learning more accessible for their ESL students. Layzer stated, “Much will depend on the degree to which the teacher becomes involved in including English language learners, in providing them access to academic success” (p. 8).

Teachers who are familiar with their student population will be more prepared to
address their learning needs. Karlskin (2001) reported similar results in an independent study on teachers’ attitudes. Their findings showed a positive correlation between teacher training and the effectiveness of inclusive models for ESL instruction. Their recommendations included further training for specific resources and training programs for ESL inclusion teachers. McCandless, Rossi, and Daugherty (1997) noted the need for research “on the quality and extent of ELL-related training teachers receive” (p. 2). They also stated:

Two useful steps in the evaluation of ELL-related training of public school teachers would be (1) to examine the nature of the training that teachers receive in terms of its breadth, depth, and overall quality, and (2) to examine whether teachers feel they are well-prepared to deal with students who lack English proficiency. (p. 2)

**Sheltered Instruction Models**

There are multiple models of sheltered instruction; however, all share the common goal of integrating linguistic and academic content to meet the needs of ELLs. The goals of sheltered instruction are supported by four general domains: academic, linguistic, social, and pedagogical factors (Short, 1994).

The literature often classifies sheltered instruction models under “English as a second language” (ESL). In the early 1980s one of the first references to what is now referred to as sheltered instruction was developed by Stephen Krashen (1982) under “subject matter content.” The goal was to provide specialized classes in which ELLs
could learn content and English simultaneously, without the presence of native speakers, which could pose potential academic problems (Krashen, 1985).

In a review of literature, Faltis (1993) argues that sheltered instruction classrooms share the following features: comprehensible input, focus on academic content, and segregation. The first feature, comprehensible input, is a major theoretical component of sheltered instruction, drawn from Krashen’s (1991) “i+1” hypothesis, a suggested component of second language acquisition. The second feature, academic content, emphasizes pedagogy and instruction, with less focus on language itself. Faltis (1993) argues that the third feature, segregation, results from schools’ practices of socially and academically isolating ELLs by enrolling them in sheltered instruction classes. However, contrary to the position of Faltis (1993), not all sheltered environments result in ELL segregation due to scheduling considerations or low ELL enrollments within a school (Genesee, 1999). Faltis’ warning about potential segregation addresses the socio-cultural aspect of sheltered instruction.

Another theoretical foundation of sheltered instruction is cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 1979). Cummins’ framework suggests that ELLs may require four to six years to develop academic language proficiency. Therefore sheltered instruction can provide an environment in which this time frame of language acquisition can be supported appropriately. Many authors propose that ELLs are given the best access to CALP in the sheltered classroom (Chamot & O’Malley, 1989; Northcutt & Watson, 1986; Sasser & Winningham, 1994), which may be better suited to support simultaneous English language acquisition and academic language learning.
Krashen’s (1991) construction of the “i+1” model was influenced by the concept of zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) and the multiple intelligences model (Gardner, 1983). These hypotheses contributed to the understanding of language learning processes and the development of instructional models in the field of second language acquisition. Among the instructional models was sheltered instruction, from which many variations and interpretations have been explored. Building on the theories of Krashen (1982) and Cummins (1979), Crandall (1987) proposed that content-based instruction was an effective method to teach both English and subject matter to ELLs through the use of comprehensible input and opportunities for language production. Content-based ESL courses may also support the incremental nature of language learning, particularly academic language (Crandall, 1987). ELLs can obtain academic and linguistic support through content-based instruction.

A sheltered instruction model known as the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) was developed by Chamot and O’Malley (1987). This approach was founded on Anderson’s (1981) cognitive learning theory regarding declarative and procedural knowledge. Declarative knowledge is built upon concepts already mentally organized, whereas procedural knowledge is developed with the meaningful application of knowledge. The social-cognitive theory of motivation forms another theoretical foundation of CALLA; Chamot and O’Malley (1994) state that ELLs may well find content instruction a valuable method for academic success. CALLA, as a learner-centered approach, provides many opportunities for meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, and interaction. Explicit learning strategy instruction and the
integration of language and content through high-impact topics create the core of the CALLA approach (Chamot & O’Malley, 1994). The intention was to provide intermediate or advanced ELLs a bridge between English as a second language or immersion programs and mainstream academic classes; therefore teaching academic language across disciplines using the CALLA approach could aid in the transition to mainstream classes. Even though Chamot and O’Malley (1987) do not identify CALLA as a “sheltered” approach, it still provides specialized instruction to ELLs through the teaching of language and content and inclusion of socio-linguistic opportunities.

Another variation known as sustained-content language teaching (SCLT) emerged in the field of language teaching in 2001. The two main elements of SCLT are a focus on a specific content area and an emphasis on learning and teaching the second language (Murphy & Stoller, 2001). SCLT researchers propose a rigorous curriculum, linguistic and academic peer resources, academic language development, and trained teachers (Murphy & Stoller, 2001). A branch of content-based instruction, SCLT is similar to sheltered instruction in that a content area is sustained throughout a course and opportunities for language development are present.

The state of California has implemented another branch of content-based English instruction called Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE). This model promotes rigorous grade-level content instruction, and language and socio-cultural awareness for ELLs that have intermediate English proficiency and possess cognitive abilities in their first language (Sobul, 1995). SDAIE can be taught by subject teachers who provide English language support to ELLs (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002). In this model
like other sheltered instruction models, the integration of content and language is emphasized.

Other widely used models of sheltered instruction include GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design, Brechtel, 2001), and ExC-ELL (Expediting Comprehension to English Language Learners, Caldéron, 2007). Deussen, Autio, Miller, Lockwood and Stewart (2008) indicate that the models overlap the following ways:

- Explicit, direct teaching of vocabulary
- Explicit modeling by the teacher (including “think alouds” in which teachers demonstrate exactly how they think through a problem or task)
- High levels of student social interaction, with each other and with the teacher
- Explicit instruction in learning strategies (metacognition) and opportunities to practice using those strategies
- Linkages to students’ background and prior experience
- The use of a variety of assessments, both formal and informal, to measure student learning in both content and language (p. 19).

Although teachers may already know and use these instructional features, they “do need comprehensive training in how to apply these skills in a thoughtful manner consistent with ELLs’ language acquisition needs” (Deussen, Autio, Miller, Lockwood & Stewart, 2008, p. 19).

WestEd developed the Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) model—“a non-scripted intervention tailored to the needs of particular schools, teachers, and students [with] five fundamental principles that guide all activities.”
• Sustain academic rigor
• Hold high expectations
• Engage in quality interactions
• Sustain a language focus
• Develop a quality curriculum (Bos, Sanchez, Tseng, Rayyes, Ortiz, & Sinicrope, 2012).

QTEL was developed to improve the instruction of ELLs at the secondary level. By improving mainstream teachers’ ability to work with ELLs, the model also seeks to increase the quality of instruction for all other students in the mainstream classroom.

**The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model.** Sheltering techniques in schools across the nation have been used inconsistently (Echevarria, Short, & Vogt, 2008). The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model, created by Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2008) “mitigates this variability and provides guidance as to what constitutes the best practices” for sheltered instruction.

The SIOP model is considered to be the most researched, developed and explained of the sheltered instruction variations (Herrera & Murry, 2005). The model was originally designed as a tool for observation and rating for the researchers to use while observing teachers in the classroom (Short & Echevarria, 1999) in order to determine if the observed teachers were incorporating crucial sheltered techniques consistently in their classrooms (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). In 1996, Echevarria, Vogt, and Short designed a study on sheltered instruction for the research program being developed by the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE). This research
project had three goals:

(1) to develop an explicit model of sheltered instruction;

(2) to use that model to train teachers in effective sheltered strategies; and

(3) to conduct field experiments and collect data to evaluate teacher change and the effects of sheltered instruction on Limited English Proficient (LEP) students’ English language development and content knowledge (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008).

Today, the SIOP model is being used for various purposes: for professional development for pre-service and in-service teachers, as a lesson planner for sheltered content lessons, as a training resource for teachers, as an observation measure for administrators, for supervisors of student teachers, as well as for researchers who rate lessons (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2008).

“The theoretical foundation of the SIOP model is that language acquisition is enhanced through meaningful use and interaction” (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2008, p. 16). The SIOP protocol is a tool originally developed for researchers to evaluate teacher implementation of sheltered instruction. Subsequent research conducted by the National Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) in 1996 validated the SIOP model as part of a training process and as an observation instrument, providing teachers with a lesson planning and delivery approach to provide sheltered instruction. The examples of the features of sheltered instruction provided in the protocol can facilitate the enhancement and expansion of teachers’ instructional practice.

The SIOP model includes features of high quality instruction for all students,
along with language objectives in every lesson that specifically address the needs of the ELL (Echevarria et al., 2008). Composed of 30 features in eight components, SIOP allows teachers to accommodate the unique second language development needs of ELLs. By compiling many of the instructional practices that teachers already use and adding targeted instruction for content and language development, SIOP enhances learning for ELL students. The eight components of the model are:

- Preparation
- Building Background
- Comprehensible Input
- Strategies
- Interaction
- Practice/Application
- Lesson Delivery
- Review/Assessment

Each of the eight components has indicators that the teacher can refer to when creating instruction to make the content comprehensible for ELLs. Each component has a rubric that is used by teachers and administrators to measure how well the lesson adheres to the certain component. As explained by (Echevarria et al., 2008), SIOP has two purposes--first, as a model, which functions as the lesson planning and delivery system; second, as the protocol, which is employed for the observation, rating, and feedback of lessons.

Subsequently, the project evolved into a research venture. The researchers
inquired into the effects of the model on middle school ELL achievement. They tested ELLs taught with the SIOP model and ELLs not exposed to the SIOP model on narrative writing in 1997-1998 and expository writing in 1998-1999 (Echevarria & Short, 1999, p. 217; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). The results confirmed that middle school ELLs receiving instruction with the SIOP model outperformed middle school ELLs who were not exposed to this instructional model. Not only did the SIOP model improve these students’ achievement, but it also proved that teachers can adapt their instructional practices to benefit ELLs after undergoing intensive professional development as well as continued colleague observation and coaching (Echevarría & Short, 1999). According to Faltis (1993) sheltered instruction was then recognized as an appropriate resource for teaching ELLs in middle school and high school.

However, researchers wondered about the reliability of the tool in measuring the implementation of sheltered instruction. Therefore, Guarino et al. (2001) decided to study the observation protocol evaluation in detail to confirm its consistency as a measuring tool. According to Echevarría & Short (1999a, p. 215), Echavarría, Vogt, and Short (2008), Guarino et al. (2001), the protocol tool is a valuable tool for assessing the levels of implementation of the SIOP model.

The SIOP model has been recognized throughout the United States and other countries as an effective way to teach ELLs (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). While many of the features of the SIOP model reflect good instruction for all students, several of them take on a different level of complexity when teaching ELLs. For example, scaffolding is multifaceted when teachers support a student’s learning of English because
the teacher must consider the student’s previous learning and find a way to make the lesson understandable in English. In order to understand the model and implement it well, effective teachers must have a deep understanding of the protocol, and be provided with ongoing support and professional development.

The principles and standards of effective professional development, as described by National Staff Development Council in 2001 (now known as Learning Forward) are present in well-developed SIOP model professional development programs. Learning Forward recommends that the context of professional development be considered. Specifically, the purpose of the program must be well-articulated to all participants, and the participants know what they are expected to do with the information being presented. Additionally, the professional development program should generally take place in the setting or context where the teachers work so that they can deal with the actual challenges faced when implementing the SIOP model. The SIOP model recommends observation of live or videotaped SIOP lessons to provide teachers the opportunity to discuss specific aspects of the features and their implementation (Echevarria, Short, & Vogt, 2008).

In addition to context, the process used for professional development is important (Learning Forward, 2001). Teachers are far more likely to implement new instructional approaches when they have theoretical knowledge, modeling and practice, feedback, and independent application and analysis. The SIOP model is research-based and scientifically tested, and student data drive the focus of SIOP lesson planning and the learning cycle (Echevarria, Short, & Vogt, 2008). Coaching, discussion, and team lesson planning are all encouraged to improve implementation of SIOP lessons (Echevarria,
The SIOP model has been criticized most recently by Crawford and Reyes (2015), who have questioned whether the model provides any benefits to ELLs. In *The Trouble with SIOP*, the authors provide a critical viewpoint on the effectiveness of the SIOP model. Crawford and Reyes (2015) are critical of its prescriptive nature instead of inquiry-based and believe that the research that validates the SIOP model is flawed. The authors also question how one model could be so effective in so many learning environments and with a variety of students.

Krashen (2013) also raises doubts about the validity of the SIOP model:

1. The SIOP rubric supports opposing views of how language is acquired and how literacy is developed. Five SIOP items out of 30 are consistent with the Comprehension Hypothesis. Another six are consistent with the Skill-Building Hypothesis. These two hypotheses are not complementary; they are rival hypotheses.

2. The measure of SIOP validity is based only on the judgments of four experts who observed six lessons, three considered to be consistent with items on the SIOP rubric and three inconsistent.

3. The claim for SIOP predictive validity is based on data from only 12 teachers. The strength of the prediction is modest and did not reach statistical significance, $r^2 = .22$, which means that knowing SIOP scores provides 22% of what is needed to predict student progress. Also, the sample size is too small for confidence in the conclusions.
4. Studies comparing SIOP-trained teachers with non-SIOP trained teachers provide only marginal evidence for SIOP’s superiority. Effect sizes are generally small, there are only four studies (three done by SIOP creators), and in two of the four studies, the differences are not statistically significant. In addition, important information about comparison groups and the students taught is often missing, and it appears that SIOP teachers were specially selected in several studies. (2013, p. 13)

**Subsequent research on SIOP.** Coaching was the original form of professional development employed to put the SIOP model into practice. Subsequent research on SIOP considered other ways of implementing the model.

McBride (2007) conducted a 4-month study with the purpose of providing teachers with ongoing professional development to see how it helped with the implementation of the SIOP model. Ongoing professional development was provided through team meetings that were referred to as Teacher Directed Ongoing Collaboration (TDOC). A SIOP coach led the sessions after the teachers received training in the SIOP model. The study inquired if the TDOC professional development increased the level of implementation of the SIOP model in the classroom and if teachers’ thinking and beliefs affected its implementation. The case study included 4 teachers and covered the challenges encountered during the implementation, the changes in teacher instructional practices, teachers’ perceptions of effectiveness, and personal reflections through the TDOC model. The study data were collected using the observation protocol, a self-rating concerns questionnaire, teacher interviews, and team meeting documentation.
The results revealed that there was an increase in the levels of use (McBride, 2007). TDOC increased teacher motivation and levels of collaboration. Coaching and feedback provided better understanding of the content and how to motivate ELLs. Teachers changed their thinking and beliefs from an individual organizational focus to a collaborative one. McBride (2007) stated that the increase in the SIOP implementation cannot solely be attributed to the use of TDOC as a professional development strategy. SIOP implementation was observed during formal observations, but was not present in daily instruction. The study concluded that the TDOC model of collaboration did have a positive impact on teachers’ instructional practices. This study did not address the impact on student outcomes as a result of the implementation.

There were two studies found related to the implementation of SIOP at the elementary level. Read (2008) studied the impact of the SIOP model on the instructional practices of elementary school teachers. The participants of the study included a group of 26 teachers who received continuous professional development at the district level and individual SIOP coaching.

Teachers in the treatment schools were observed to determine degree of implementation and changes in instructional practices. The teachers in the control group were not observed, nor did they fill out a survey regarding teachers’ perceptions of the SIOP model.

Read (2008) collected data with the use of the SIOP protocol tool and a teacher survey. The results showed that teachers changed their instructional practices after SIOP professional development and coaching. Teachers improved in the areas of explicitly
sharing the language and content objectives with students during content lessons, teaching standard base curriculum, using supplementary materials, providing meaningful activities, connecting their lessons to past learning and some comprehensible input features. However, teachers did not show significant improvement in adapting the content to ELLs’ language proficiency levels, key content vocabulary teaching, building student background, task explanation, and variety of techniques. The study concluded that continuous professional development and coaching helps teachers change instructional practices and helps implement the SIOP model to some extent.

Miner (2006) conducted a case study to explore the impact of the SIOP instructional model and systems-level conditions on both teacher efficacy and student language dependent behaviors of Latino ELLs in the classroom and student achievement in reading and mathematics on the Oregon State Assessments. The participants of the study were 4 principals, 41 elementary teachers of Grades 3, 4, and 5, six ESL specialists who served as SIOP coaches, and 89 Hispanic elementary students in Grades 3, 4, and 5. Miner (2006) used an efficacy pre- and post-survey to gather data on the teachers related to their efficacy in teaching.

The results of the study indicated that although the treatment and control group of teachers did not differ significantly on the efficacy pre-survey, the treatment group significantly outscored the control group in the efficacy post-survey in areas such as confidence in how to help ELL students, knowledge of effective strategies to help ELLs improve their achievement in reading and/or mathematics, and efficacy on a variety of ELL-specific strategies.
Qualitative data were gathered through minutes of meetings, e-mails, and interviews of ESL specialists of the treatment and comparison schools. Results about the levels of implementation of SIOP in terms of system-level efforts and classroom-level information regarding teacher/student interactions revealed that there were system-level factors that had negative effects on the implementation of SIOP. These factors were lack of time for peer/teacher collaboration regarding planning, school administrative support, accountability, data that generated motivation, quality professional development, assistance from knowledgeable staff, and multi-cultural awareness. Regarding the effects of SIOP at the classroom level, the findings revealed limitations in planning time, understanding the SIOP model, avoidance, steps towards implementation, professional growth and excitement, accepting responsibility, class size, and lack of materials.

Miner (2006) revealed that for successful implementation of any instructional endeavor, the following system-level factors are essential: school wide organizational support, accountability structures, peer collaborative structures, parent communication, and provision of appropriate grade-level and adapted content materials.

Miner (2006) reported that both treatment schools using SIOP did not reveal any statistically significant difference regarding the implementation of SIOP when using the SIOP protocol as a self-rating tool. Regarding the impact of the SIOP model and/or systems-level conditions’ influence on students’ performance, the study revealed no significant difference between treatment and control groups in the areas of reading and mathematics in grades 3, 4, and 5.

The Center of Applied Linguistics (CAL) studied the relationship between
professional development and the SIOP model and the academic achievement of secondary school ELLs. Two secondary schools with were compared--400 ELLs with some sheltered instruction course work and 200 in the comparison site (Echevarría et al., 2008). The treatment site received ongoing training in the SIOP model through workshops, coaching, and online chats. The comparison site did not receive any SIOP model training. The researchers collected data using the SIOP protocol tool at both sites during fall and spring for a total of two observations per year. The researchers also collected SIOP lesson plans to study the components on lesson preparation. Preliminary findings have shown that the teachers exposed to the sustained professional development demonstrated an increase in the level of implementation during one year. According to Short and Bauder (2006), the teachers showed almost 20% of growth versus those who did not have any training at all. The teachers also showed growth of 12% per SIOP component. The inclusion of SIOP features in teacher lesson plans proved to increase more than 50% (Echevarría et al., 2008; Short & Bauder, 2006). This study has not shown the effects of the implementation of the SIOP model in students’ academic achievement. The final results of this study have not yet been published.

**The State of K-12 Distance Education**

The need to provide equal educational opportunities in rural areas has driven the use of distance education in grades K-12 (Haughey & Muirhead, 1999). “Distance education is now often defined as institution-based formal education where the learning group is separated, and where interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect learners, resources, and instructors” (Schlosser & Simonson, 2009, p. 1). In 1905,
the Calvert School in Baltimore entered the homeschooling market as the first distance education provider using a correspondence model (Moore & Kearsley, 1996).

The distance education model has since evolved to include instructional radio and television and audiographic conferencing (Clark, 2007). The predominant system of K-12 distance education is now web-based or online delivery with online learning programs being organized into online or cyber schools (Barbour, 2009).

**Online schools.** “Online full-time K-12 schools, also known as cyber schools or online schools, are schools that deliver all curriculum and instruction via the Internet and electronic communication, usually with students at home and teachers at a remote location, and usually with everyone participating at different times” (Miron, Horvitz, & Gulosino, 2013). The National Education Policy Center identified 311 full-time [online] schools operating during the 2011-2012 academic year, enrolling nearly 200,000 students (Miron, Horvitz, & Gulosino, 2013). These schools are often organized as charter schools and operated by private Education Management Organizations (EMOs). “Although this is the case for only 41% of full-time online schools, they account for 67% of all enrolled students. Among the schools [identified in the study], 64% are charter schools and 36% are operated by districts or—in a few instances—by state agencies. While the International Association for K-12 Online Learning suggests that as many as 250,000 are enrolled in full-time virtual schools in 2011-12, [the NEPC] indicates that total enrollment [during those years was] still below 200,000” (Molnar et al., 2013, p. 25).

Although online schools still account for a relatively small portion of the overall school choice options in the U.S., they now
constitute one of the fastest-growing forms of school choice. It is important to note that online schools, as a category of school choice, overlap with both homeschooling and charter schools. Most online schools are organized as charter schools, although an increasing number of district and state education agencies are now starting full-time online schools (p. 25).

The online school expansion can be mostly attributed to private for-profit EMOs, which operated 95 schools on behalf of charter school and district school boards. K12, Inc. is the largest private for-profit EMO. “In 2011-12, K12 Inc. alone operated 58 full-time online schools enrolling close to 77,000 students. Connections Academies is the second largest for-profit operator, with 21 schools and more than 27,000 students in 2010-11” (Molnar et al., 2013). The NEPC report includes only “managed schools” which are those “where the provider has full control and responsibility for the school,” its curriculum and operations. The role of many large for-profit EMOs tends to be larger than shown in the table below, since many districts contract with these EMOs for the provision of online curriculum or other support services (Molnar, et al., 2014, p. 63).
As the data in Table 1 indicate, the online schools operated by the for-profit EMOs have an average enrollment of about 1,400 students. Full-time online schools operated by nonprofit EMOs and non-EMO online schools enroll on average 240 and 311 students, respectively (Molnar et al., 2013, p. 26).

**Demographics.** The proportion of Black and Hispanic students served by online schools is markedly lower than the national average. "An even greater discrepancy is found among Hispanic students, who comprise only 11% of the online school students but 23.7% of all public school students” (Molnar et al., 2013). The NEPC highlights the incongruity between the large presence of online schools “in states with large Hispanic populations, such as Arizona, California, and Florida” and the low enrollment among Hispanic students (Molnar et al., 2013, p. 27).

“[ELLs] represent a growing proportion of students in the nation’s schools, especially in the states served by [online] schools. However, only 0.1% of full-time
[online] school students are classified as ELLs. This is a strikingly large difference from the 9.6% national average. None of the [online] schools had higher proportions of ELLs than the national average, and the ELL student enrollment of most online schools with data available was less than 1% (Molnar et al., 2013, p. 28).

In terms of grade levels, “charter online schools and EMO-operated [online] schools tend to serve more students at elementary and middle school grades, while district operated [online schools] focus more on the high school grades” (Molnar et al., 2013, p. 29). This tendency may be due to charter schools to catering more to homeschooled students “while districts that develop virtual school programs design them for older students, who may require supplemental or alternative programs” (Molnar et al., 2013, p. 29).

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).** Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is one of the sources of controversy surrounding George W. Bush administration’s reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). It is a measurement defined by the United States federal No Child Left Behind Act that allows the U.S. Department of Education to determine how every public school and school district in the country is performing academically according to results on standardized tests (Molnar et al., 2013). It intends to “demonstrate whether or not a public school meets its respective state standards. AYP covers academic as well as non-academic measures, such as school attendance and the percentage of students taking a state exam. In the 2010-2011 school year, there was a 28 percentage point difference between feull-time online schools
meeting AYP and traditional brick-and-mortar district and charter schools that did: 23.6% compared with 52%, respectively” (Molnar et al., 2013, p. 31).

**The role of the online teacher.** In online education, while the role of the teacher as important as it has ever been, the online learning environment moves the approach from teacher-centered to student-centered (Grubbs, Pate, & Leech, 2009). “While teachers remain the central part of learning in the online online classroom, experienced online teachers—and indeed anyone familiar with technology in the 21st century—recognize that the role of the teacher is changing. The teacher and school system (including education materials such as textbooks) can no longer be the only conduit of information to students—there is simply too much good information available” (Watson, 2007, p. 11). The online teacher serves as a facilitator, supporting students in the online program. As a facilitator, the online teacher interacts with students online or may even facilitate at the physical site where students go to access their online courses (Ferdig, Cavanaugh, Dipietro, Black & Dawson, 2009, p. 211).

In February 2008, responding to the changing role of online teachers and the new skillset required for online education, iNACOL released standards for online quality teaching (Pape & Wicks, 2009). These standards provide states, districts, and online programs with a set of guidelines for online teaching and learning. The standards were revised in 2011 (Appendix K) to include indicators dividing what the online teachers should know and understand and what they should be able to do for the purpose of evaluation (iNACOL, n.d.).
Davis and Niederhauser (2007) uncovered that communication and classroom organization skills were commonalities between face-to-face and online teachers. However, they found that communication in online classrooms is quite different since it is enable through the use of tools. “One of the main roles of the teacher in a student-centered learning environment is to be available consistently to provide guidance around the course material” (Watson, 2007, p. 12). This is why online learning programs require teachers to login often and to respond to student communication in a timely basis. “Some programs also require and/or facilitate communication by telephone or online synchronous methods, such as online office hours” (Watson, 2007, p. 12).

Watson (2007) indicates that one of the communication advantages in an online classroom is the ability to retain a record of classroom communication. Additionally, online classroom discussions might minimize anxiety for some students. Conversely, online teachers are unable, “to use non-verbal cues to determine a student’s level of understanding of course topics” (Watson, 2007, p. 12).

**Professional Development for Online Teachers**

According to Easton (2003), online instruction can be successful if teachers acquire a new pedagogy, new methods of communication and a different approach to pacing. In addition, online teachers need to be able to utilize new technologies and obtain a new understanding of instructional time and space. “Online schools and other organizations that offer online courses to K-12 students are eagerly seeking to recruit new staff to match the demand for high quality online schooling in many U.S. states” (Davis & Rose, 2007). Comprehensive and ongoing professional development is a crucial factor
in the success of online programs (Ash, 2010). However, the lack of training among online teachers presents a challenge. According to Cavanaugh (2008) state certification programs do not equip teachers with the pedagogical skills needed for online teaching. Sturgeon (2007) found that highly qualified teachers do not always transform into effective online teachers, indicating that the challenge is to get teachers to modify their way of thinking. Rice, Dawley, Gasell, and Flores (2008) indicated out compared to 48% of traditional teachers, at least 56% of online teachers in the United States have advanced degrees. However, traditional teacher degree programs do not prepare teachers for online school environments. These statistics also apply for professional development, which usually focuses on instructional strategies for traditional classrooms (Cavanaugh, 2009; National Education Association, 2006). Similarly, Mupinga (2005) asserted that teaching in traditional classrooms is quite different from teaching in an online classroom. Roblyer and MacKenzie (2000) found similar to a traditional classroom, an online classroom environment benefits from a teacher with good communication and organizational skills.

iNACOL released new standards for online quality teaching in 2008, with a revision in 2011. These standards provide states, districts, and online programs with guidelines for online teaching and instructional design. They include technology skills along with leadership, assessment, and collaboration skills for facilitating courses in an online environment.

Blomeyer (2002) acknowledged that the transition from an effective traditional teacher to an effective online teacher can take place when presented with quality professional development opportunities. These opportunities should support technology
skills in addition to effective online pedagogy. Professional development offerings should teach online teachers “how to motivate individual learners, enhance student interaction and understanding without visual cues, tailor instruction to particular learning styles, and develop or modify interactive lessons to meet student needs” (Watson, 2007, p. 13).

To ensure that teachers are prepared to teach online, professional development programs must be designed to address online teaching skills. iNACOL (2008) defined the qualifications of quality online teachers and the standards needed for academic preparation, content knowledge, online skills, and delivery. Some examples include (a) meeting the state’s professional teaching standards/certification, (b) demonstrating understanding in technology to stay abreast with emerging trends, (c) building and maintaining a community of learners, (d) modeling effective communication skills, (e) establishing standards for online student behavior, and (f) implementing online assessment measures and materials.

Online professional development enables online teachers to “gain valuable experience as online learners prior to having their own online students” (Treacy, 2007, p. 1).

Rice, Dawley, Gasell, and Florez (2008) found in a study of 884 K-12 online teachers that most preferred method of professional development was solely online, ongoing training, which is consistent with standards for best practice in K–12 online teaching. Guidelines developed by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB, 2009) recommended that most professional development for online teachers should transpire online, with face-to-face components added if appropriate. The National Education
Association (2006) stated that at least some of the professional development for online teachers should occur in the online environment so they can experience the methods they will be expected to deliver. Berge and Clark (2005) also stated that the online school environment should include interaction between online students with each other as well as the online teacher with students.

Davis and Rose (2007) stated it is a common theme that the delivery of quality professional development affects student achievement. However, the North American Council for Online Learning (2009) declared that many online school administrators today do not have a clear understanding of the needs of their staff. Duncan and Barnett (2009) maintain that there are some misconceptions among online school administrators that new teachers can easily adjust to and facilitate an online classroom environment. Huett, Moller, Foshay and Coleman (2008) assert that traditional classroom teacher training focuses on the design for a face-to-face classroom. Despite being highly qualified in their subject area or perhaps lack the online pedagogy and course development skills needed to be successful in an online school environment (Ferdig, Cavanaugh, Dipietro, Black & Dawson, 2009).

iNACOL’s National Primer on K-12 online learning reveals five myths related to professional development. The five myths include the following:

(a) [online] schools and brick and mortar school counselors can handle the few participating students without leadership;

(b) any classroom teacher is qualified to teach online;
(c) any highly qualified classroom teacher can teach a previously purchased quality online course, and those who teach really don’t teach at all;

(d) [online schooling] will fit regular school routines and practices, therefore the technology coordinator and counselor will provide professional development; and

(e) newly qualified teachers who learn about [online] schooling during pre-service programs are prepared to teach online when they graduate (Fisher, 2015, p. 114).

Foundational training in pedagogy, technology, and content should be included in a professional development program for online teachers (Russell, 2004; Savery, 2005). The notion of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) was introduced by Lee Shulman in 1986. (Archambault & Crippen, 2009). An extension of Shulman’s PCK was conducted by Koehler and Mishra (2005) to include technology knowledge or TPACK, defined as “connections and interactions between these three types of knowledge” (p. 132).

Technology knowledge is teacher’s knowledge of technology including computer software and hardware, internet browsers, email and the internet (Mishra & Koehler, 2008).

Pedagogical knowledge refers to knowledge about teaching and learning including lesson planning and assessments.

Content knowledge refers to the teacher’s knowledge of the content in a subject area, including facts, concepts, and theories within their field (Mishra & Koehler, 2008).

Technology content knowledge represents the knowledge of matching technology to their content and to the ability to examine how their content establishes the technology employed (Mishra & Koehler, 2008).
“Several organizations have made efforts to combine the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework into K-12 professional development standards and guidelines for online learning including:


The numerous roles of teachers, lack of research of best practices, and the inconsistent application of TPACK have been identified as concerns regarding these standards and guidelines (Ferdig, Cavanaugh, Dipietro, Black & Dawson, 2009). Sturgeon (2007) emphasized online school professional development training must include roles and responsibilities for online teachers. Feliciano (2006) indicated that professional development should include a “demonstration of successful methods of facilitating student-to-student and student-to-teacher interaction in an online environment” (p. 10).

**Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation**

Guskey's (2000) professional development evaluation model provides an in-depth five-level evaluation rubric for professional development in education. The literature
shows that this model has been successfully used in the evaluation of training in K-12 environments.

The purposes of evaluation are generally classified into three broad categories including planning, formative, and summative evaluation (Guskey, 2000).

*Planning evaluation* occurs before a training program begins. Some aspects of this evaluation may be recurring. This evaluation is intended to provide an understanding of what will be accomplished, including procedures and how success will be determined. Planning evaluation provides the underpinning for all other evaluation activities. This form of evaluation involves judgment (Guskey, 2000). Scriven (1991) referred to planning evaluation as "preformative evaluation." This evaluation helps identify possible difficulties which might hinder future evaluation efforts. It also enables other evaluation purposes in an efficient and timely manner (Guskey, 2000).

*Formative evaluation* occurs during the training program. Its purpose is to provide ongoing information about the training to confirm that it is going as planned in addition to confirmation the expected progress is being made. If the expected progress is not being made, the information gathered from a formative evaluation can be used to steer enhancements (Scriven, 1967).

Most formative evaluations focus on conditions for success including: What are the conditions necessary for success? Have they been met? Can they be improved? Often, formative evaluation is recurring and takes place at multiple times throughout the lifecycle of the training. Many training developers are regularly involved in the process of formative evaluation, gathering evidence at each step of development and
implementation to make modifications or revisions (Worthen & Sanders, 1989).

According to Scriven (1991, formative evaluations can be used as "early warning" evaluations, in essence, an initial version of the final, overall evaluation. Using intermediate benchmarks of success, formative evaluations can be used to assess what is working as expected and what are some of the difficulties to transcend. This allows for the identification of flaws and limitations on a timely basis to allow for adaptations to ensure success.

*Summative evaluation* occurs at the conclusion of a training program. It is designed to provide training developers with conclusions about the overall merit or worth of the program. This type of evaluation describes what was accomplished, the positive and negative consequences, the final intended and unintended results, and an explanation about whether the benefits justified the costs (Guskey, 2000).

Summative evaluations provide stakeholders with information to make vital decisions about the lifecycle of a training program including: Should it be continued? Should it be continued with modifications? Should it be expanded? Should it be discontinued? Ultimately, its focus is "the bottom line" (Guskey, 2000).

During the evaluation of professional development, there are five critical levels of information that must be taken into consideration. These levels were adapted from an evaluation model developed by Kirkpatrick (1959) which was used to assess the value of supervisory training programs in business and industry.

The five levels in the model are arranged hierarchically from simple to complex (Guskey, 2000). With each subsequent level, the gathering of information is likely to
require more time and resources. Each level builds on the ones that came before establishing success at one level is essential for success at the levels that follow (Guskey, 2000).

**Level 1: Participants' Reactions**

The first level of Guskey’s professional development evaluation is the most common, the simplest, and the level at which most have the most experience (Guskey, 2000). Information at this level is the easiest to gather and analyze. The questions addressed at Level 1 focus on enjoyment of the training. Participants' reactions are generally gathered through questionnaires provided at the end of the training, which may include a combination of rating scale items and open-ended response questions for more detailed, individualized responses.

“Measures of participants’ reactions are sometimes referred to as "happiness quotients" by those who insist they measure only the entertainment value of an activity, not its quality or worth” (Guskey, 2000). However, data at Level 1 can help inform design and delivery improvement of the training program and is a prerequisite to higher-level evaluation results.

**Level 2: Participants' Learning**

Level 2 centers on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained from the training program. Information can be gathered for this level through assessments, oral or written personal reflections, or a portfolio examination (Guskey, 2000).

Level 2 data can rarely be gathered with a standardized form. The learning goals specified for the training program will determine the measures, meaning that “specific
criteria and indicators of successful learning must be outlined prior to the beginning” of the training. The evaluator should be open to possible "unintended learnings," either positive or negative. It might be necessary to create a pre- and post- assessment in case the participants already have the necessary knowledge and skills. Analysis of this data provides a foundation “for improving the content, format, and organization of the training program” (Guskey, 2000).

**Level 3: Organization Support and Change**

In Level 3, there is a shift from the participants to the organization, specifically, to data on organization support and change. The success of a training program is often dependent on the organization since they also can impede success, even when the aspects at the participant level were correctly performed (Sparks, 1996).

Negative results at this level are not due to poor training. Instead, these are due to policies established by the organization that are contradictory with the implementation efforts. Problems at Level 3 can cancel the improvements made at Levels 1 and 2 (Sparks & Hirsh, 1997). That is why it is crucial to gather information on at this level.

The questions at Level 3 focus on the characteristics of the organization in addition to and features necessary for success. It is generally more complicated to gather information on organization support and change (Guskey, 2000). The goals of the training program will often drive the use of procedures at this level. Procedures may include analyses of district or school records, or examination of the minutes from follow-up meetings. The organization’s support, facilitation and recognition of change efforts can often be captured through the use of questionnaires. “Structured interviews with
participants and district or school administrators can also be helpful. This information is used not only to document and improve organizational support, but also to inform future change initiatives” (Guskey, 2000).

**Level 4: Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills**

According to Guskey (2000), the essential question at Level 4 is, "Did what participants' learn make a difference in their professional practice?" The key to gathering data at this level is to carefully define measures that reveal both the degree and quality of implementation. In other words, how can you tell if what participants learned is being used and being used well?

The goals of the program will determine how data is gathered at this level, but it may involve questionnaires or structured interviews with participants and supervisors. In addition, oral or written personal reflections or an examination of journals or portfolios can be taken into account. The most accurate information may be obtained from direct observations, either through the use of observers or through the review of video or audio files. It is crucial, however, “to keep observations as unobtrusive as possible” (Hall & Hord, 1987).

Unlike Levels 1 and 2, data at Level 4 cannot be gathered at the completion of a training program. It is crucial for sufficient time to pass in order to allow participants to adjust the new ideas and practices to their setting. Since implementation is often gradual and unbalanced, measures may be also necessary at several different time intervals. This is especially true if there is interest in continuing or ongoing use. Analysis of this data provides evidence on current levels of use of new knowledge and skills and can facilitate
the design and development of future programs to enable better and more consistent implementation.

**Level 5: Student Learning Outcomes**

Level 5 is involved with the impact on participants, specifically if the training program benefits participants in any way. The goals of the training program will determine the outcomes. In addition to the stated goals, certain "unintended" outcomes may be of relevance as well. Therefore, at Level 5, multiple indicators of learning are critical (Joyce, 1993).

Measures of student learning usually include indicators of student performance and achievement such as: assessment results, portfolio evaluations, grades, and scores from standardized tests. In addition to these cognitive indicators, affective (attitudes and dispositions) and psychomotor outcomes (skills and behaviors) may also be taken into consideration, including assessments of self-concepts, study habits, school attendance, homework completion rates, or classroom behaviors. In addition, school-wide indicators might also be taken into consideration such as memberships in honor societies, enrollment in advanced placement classes, disciplinary actions, participation in school-related activities, and dropout or retention rates.

The major sources of data at this level are school records and students. However, responses from questionnaires and interviews with parents, teachers, administrators and students might be included. The summative purpose of data at this level is to document a training program’s overall impact. In formative terms, it can be used to inform improvements in all aspects of professional development including design,
implementation, and follow-up. Occasionally, data on student learning outcomes is used to estimate the cost effectiveness of a professional development program, known as "return on investment," or "ROI evaluation" (Todnem & Warner, 1993).

**Summary**

Due to the relative novelty of online education, particularly in K-12, there is a dearth of research in the implementation of the SIOP model and protocol in online classrooms. SIOP studies are focused exclusively on face-to-face classrooms.

The literature reviewed in this chapter was divided into four sections. The first section identified current issues in educating ELLs, from demographic changes and student characteristics to best practices and teacher preparation. The second section reviewed expectations for high quality professional development, especially for teachers of ELLs. The third section included the origins of SIOP (Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, 2008), and current research on the model and protocol. The last section focuses on characteristics of distance education and homeschooled students.

The lack of a shared language between the teacher and student makes teaching the ELLs much more challenging. These students are often taught by classroom teachers who are monolingual. Without shared linguistic referents, communication is broken, making instruction difficult if not impossible (Cummins, 2000). The lack of shared referents and broken communication creates an environment of frustration, affecting teachers’ perceptions of their own effectiveness and ultimately student achievement. (Cummins, 2000).

Teachers who specialize in ESL learning and teaching need specific training
about current teaching and assessment practices. Those who neglect to participate in ongoing professional development are ignoring the changing needs of ELLs. By giving ESL teachers access to high-quality and relevant professional development opportunities, the importance of their teaching in the field would be confirmed. Teachers would have options to further their knowledge in a specific area related to ESL learning and teaching while receiving support from and recognition by their employers. Highly qualified and experienced teachers also would be the best candidates to provide training and support to mainstream teachers and administrators. Partnerships must be built among ESL teachers, mainstream teachers, administrators, students, and their families in an effort to include everyone in learning communities. Professional development specifically related to ESL and teaching may result in the retention of a larger number of highly qualified teachers within the field.

Professional development may be the best way to provide good classroom teachers with the skills needed to successfully teach online. As K–12 online learning continues to increase, experts strongly believe that district administrators need to understand that “not all teachers are qualified to teach online” (Dessoff, 2009, p. 26). “In the absence of robust professional development, administrative support, access to technologies, and clear guidelines for their evaluation, teachers will be both reluctant and unprepared to face the challenge of online education” (National Education Association, 2006, p. 9). In order to effectively prepare teachers, appropriate professional development and support will be required to develop their understanding of online learning (Carr-Chellman, 2007; Maeroff, 2003).
Ferdig, Cavanaugh, Dipietro, Black, and Dawson (2009) proposed seven pedagogy best practices for inclusion in professional development for online teachers, including: (a) develops critical thinking skills; (b) accommodates student differences; (c) fosters participation and collaboration; (d) provides engaging course content; (e) fosters a sense of community; (f) has content and pedagogy knowledge; and (g) can team teach (pp. 213-214). Online schools today acknowledge the importance of providing training programs that involve learning the technology in addition to effective online pedagogy (Watson, 2007).

In order to promote the literacy of ELLs, content area teachers are encouraged to develop meaningful and relevant lessons that strengthen students’ prior knowledge and background experiences. Sheltered instruction is a generic term used to describe scaffolding instruction for ELLs and providing comprehensible input in content subjects (ISLA, 2006). The preparation of an effective sheltered instruction lesson requires attention to seven aspects of pedagogical content knowledge development: psycho/social development of children; language development in listening, speaking, reading, and writing; language proficiency assessment; content knowledge; curriculum organization; instructional delivery; and alternative assessment (ISLA, 2006). Explicit focus on these elements should be considered in developing an integrated, interdisciplinary thematic lesson so that students see connections as they develop concepts (Short & Echevarria, 2005).

Although there is a plethora of research on effective teaching strategies for ELLs, the field has lacked a model that combines these strategies into a cohesive program for
teachers of ELLs who have been placed in a mainstream classroom, with native English
speakers. SIOP is an example of a set of strategies that can be used for ELLs to promote
both language acquisition and content knowledge simultaneously in a mainstreamed
classroom. The goal of using the SIOP model would be to provide professional
development to teachers working with ELLs and who can, in turn, utilize these strategies
during classroom instruction, which is likely to result in higher student achievement.

This emphasizes the rationale for establishing a framework for implementing
effective sheltered instruction in mainstream online classrooms. Studies have indicated
that the use of sheltered instruction and other forms of culturally-responsive teaching is
instrumental in helping teachers make content comprehensible for ELLs (Echevarria,

Teachers trained in SIOP are able to use a repertory of instructional strategies,
techniques, and activities designed to create an environment which stimulates language
development (Bouchard, 2005; Echevarria & Graves, 2007; Echevarria et al., 2008;
Freeman & Freeman, 2007; Herrell & Jordan, 2008). Teachers with knowledge in
sheltered instruction are also able to make modifications to content and assignments to
meet the unique needs of ELLs. Some of these modifications include by are not limited
to: “using simplified objectives, having students draw maps or pictorial representations,
using oral discussions in pairs or small groups, and reducing the length and complexity of
assignments” (Echevarria & Graves (2007), p. 139).

Several studies have shown that sheltered instruction plays a role in helping
school districts meet the challenges of educating ELLs and of teachers’ perception of its
implementation in regular mainstream classrooms. However, studies in online education are limited. Therefore, it is not known how online teachers perceive the effectiveness of sheltered instruction in their online classrooms and how it impacts the perceptions of their own instructional practices, as well as how they view the adequacy of professional development in sheltered instruction. Exploring online teachers’ perceptions of sheltered instruction will provide insight into the topic, which may in turn help improve the quality of professional development for teachers and the quality of the implementation of such a program in online classrooms.
Chapter Three: Methods

Research Design

The goal of this study is to explore online teachers’ perceptions regarding the implementation, effectiveness, and implications of the SIOP model in an online classroom. In addition, this study will determine the effectiveness of online SIOP training using the Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation (Guskey, 2000), focusing on participants’ reactions, participants’ learning, and participant’s use of new knowledge and skills.

To gain insight into these experiences, the study used a qualitative research design of 22 individual participant case studies of online teachers of grades 3-12. This approach enabled an in-depth assessment of each participant based on extensive data collection (Creswell, 2008). Conducting multiple case studies allowed for the participants to be described individually and compared with each other to provide deeper insight into their perceptions of the SIOP model in an online classroom and of the online SIOP training (Creswell, 2008). The study data came from one in-depth individual interview with each online teacher to gain knowledge about the teachers’ perceptions of the SIOP model and the online SIOP training. Through interviews, research subjects are able to speak directly about what they believe is going on in a variety of situations (Yin, 2009).

Qualitative methodology were used in this research study because it offers the
best option for addressing the research questions. Maxwell (2005) states that qualitative methodology is a more effective approach than quantitative for process research questions, or questions that "focus on how things happen" (p. 74). Additionally, Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that qualitative research is particularly useful for exploring "intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods" (p. 11).

Data collection methods used in this study were interviews and observation notes. One semi-structured individual interview was conducted with each participant. An interview guide (see Appendix I) was designed to help better understand the participants’ perceptions of the implementation, effectiveness and implications of the SIOP model and the online SIOP training. Interview questions were piloted on various occasions in the spring and summer of 2014 with two SAOL teachers who were attempting to implement SIOP in their online classrooms and had completed the online SIOP training. The purpose of this pilot was to try to anticipate the types of responses that the study participants would give and to ensure that the questions were logical and appropriate (Maxwell, 2005). The purpose of using teachers who were already familiar with SIOP and implementing it to the best of their ability in their classrooms was to try to ascertain if there were factors about their teaching experiences that had not been included or anticipated as being prevalent. The pilot interviews were conducted to evaluate the strength of the interview questions and to capture the initial responses of the participants. UberConference was used to conduct the pilot. The interview guide was revised after the
pilot interviews to contain fewer questions that were too broad in scope.

Online SIOP training was made available to all teachers at the SAOL through the teacher training portal supported by the education management company. Newly-hired teachers and those who were not ESL-certified were automatically pre-enrolled in the online SIOP training. The training appeared under the “required courses” section in the teachers’ individual learning plans.

The online SIOP training consisted of ten self-paced modules and was based on *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The SIOP Model* (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2012). However, the training included recommendations for implementation in the online classroom since the SIOP model was originally developed for a face-to-face environment. The ten modules were uploaded into the learning management system for the education management company. The modules can be viewed online or exported as PDFs, in order to allow for printing. For a description of the individual modules in the training and a list of objectives, see Appendix E.

**Participants and Setting**

**Setting.** An online school in the southwestern region of the United States was chosen for this study. This single site was chosen because the ELL coordinator expressed an interest in receiving assistance to update the existing SIOP training which at the time consisted of a three-hour synchronous session using an online collaboration tool. Additionally, access to the online schools requires permission from the education management company/curriculum provider and the head of school. I was only able to obtain permission to study one specific school, which was in the process of overhauling
their online SIOP training. Therefore, only the participants from one particular school could be studied. The school chosen for this study, Southwestern Academy for Online Learning or SAOL (pseudonym) met the two requirements that were vital to the purpose of the study. The first stipulation was that the school needed to be a full-time online school. Identifying and using a school that provided courses entirely online was critical for this study, since the study sought to evaluate the implementation, effectiveness, and implications of SIOP in an online classroom. The second stipulation was that the school needed to belong to a district that was making an effort to implement the SIOP model district-wide. Since the SIOP model has been used as a framework for organizing instruction, it was necessary for the online school to already be making a substantial effort to use the model to plan and deliver high-quality instruction for all students. “Many districts have made SIOP professional development and implementation a district priority or district initiative” (Echavarria, Short, & Vogt, 2007). In the age of high accountability, numerous districts are employing a variety of programs to address surging ELL enrollment (Pascopella, 2011). Selecting teachers who were already involved in an effort to implement sheltered instruction in the online classroom would make their perceptions more meaningful.

Permission to conduct this study at the SAOL was approved by the George Mason University Office of Research Integrity and Assurance in October 2013, with modifications approved in December 2013 and January 2014. Permission to conduct research at SAOL was then granted by the executive vice president of the education management company in December 2013 followed by the following: legal department of
the education management company, executive vice president for product development, vice president of content, director of special programs and the head of school. Once initial contact was made with the head of school and the director of special programs, all data collection needs were arranged through the school’s ELL Coordinator.

The interview setting. All participant contact was conducted using UberConference—a cloud-based conferencing system. Call participants will notice an avatar of other participants on their browser. Although video conferencing is available when used with Google Hangouts, to reduce stress and avoid distractions, video conferencing was not used for this study, allowing the participant to be fully engaged during the interview. Although Skype was considered as tool to conduct the interviews, it was not used due to the lack of a native recording ability.

Participants. This study contains findings from 22 individual female participant interviews; eight of the participants had obtained ESL certification, and all participants were online teachers for grades 3-12. To best capture the perceptions of the implementation, effectiveness and implications of the SIOP model and the online SIOP training, it was required that all participants complete the self-paced online SIOP training. The online SIOP training was launched by the education management company a few months before the interviewing process allowing the participants to accurately recall their reactions to the training and recall the knowledge and skills acquired through said training.
The Selection Process: Expert review

This first phase of the online SIOP training evaluation process is the expert review. Once the training program was developed, three experts were identified for the review process and contacted with the E-mail to Expert Reviewers Requesting Participation (Appendix F). The experts were identified by the head of school and the director of special programs. The purpose of the expert review was to evaluate the online SIOP training, to ensure that the training met the standards of other professional development programs provided by the education management company and the school itself, and that it met the established objectives and goals.

The three experts can be described in the following manner: a subject-matter expert, a learning specialist and a teacher expert. The subject-matter expert is trained on SIOP and is currently responsible for training teachers on SIOP at SAOL. The learning specialist is in charge of developing and overseeing training of new teachers for ESL. The teacher expert possesses vast knowledge and experience in program evaluation. The expert reviewers evaluated the training program focusing on content, implementation, technical quality, and design.

Once the experts agreed to participate, they received an Informed Consent Form (Appendix D) and the Expert Review Evaluation Questionnaire (Appendix H). The reviewers were then given four weeks to complete a review of the training program and provide written feedback on how closely the lessons and materials were aligned with the high quality professional development standards established by the academic services group and the degree to which the training reflects a sound approach to the instruction of
ELLs. The expert reviewers also judged the overall coverage of appropriate content in regards to defined objectives, feasibility of implementation, technical requirements and instructional design.

Upon receipt of feedback, the proposed changes were carefully evaluated and all necessary alterations to the activities and resources were made. An additional two weeks were used to make revisions to the program and prepare for the next phase of the research study: Initial Contact about Research Study and Upcoming Online SIOP training (see Appendix B).

Since the intention of the study was to better understand teachers’ perceptions of the SIOP model in online classrooms, it was necessary to identify teachers who worked at a fully online school and where an effort was being made to implement the SIOP model. Purposeful selection “is a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can’t be gotten as well from other choices” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 88). SAOL teachers were narrowed down using criteria in order to get to a smaller sample from which the 22 study participants were ultimately selected. The criteria were employed to omit teachers who may not be suitable for this study. The following criteria were used:

- Teacher was employed at a full-time online school where all classes take place remotely, and where the administration is making an effort to implement SIOP to improve ELL outcomes.
- Teacher had completed 10 modules of the online SIOP training.

Additionally, since the online SIOP training program was being evaluated using
Guskey’s Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation (Guskey, 2000), it was crucial that teachers participating in the study provide reactions to the training, in addition to respond to questions about their learning and how they are applying their new knowledge and skills. A school representative, the ELL coordinator, identified approximately 108 teachers who met the criteria above.

The next level of selection identifies a sample that would maximize range. According to Weiss (1994), maximizing range is done by purposively selecting participants to "obtain all the important dissimilar forms present in the larger population" (p. 36.) Accordingly, with the assistance of the school’s ESL coordinator, participants were selected who contrasted in experience teaching ELLs, grade levels, and previous experience with the SIOP model. [(The ELL coordinator identified these participants and the exemplary teachers mentioned below and encouraged them to contact me regarding the study. This was done in addition to the initial recruitment email.)]

Finally, the SAOL teachers selected for the study were also exemplary teachers identified by the ESL coordinator, and eager to learn how to access ELLs in the online classroom. These teachers demonstrated an interest in learning how to explicitly combine content and language instruction to help ELLs meet learning outcomes. Consequently, this study focuses on successful individuals and practices in the online classroom.

The online SIOP training was placed on the professional development calendar for SAOL teachers for SY2013-14. The training was required for SAOL teachers who were not ESL-certified. It was optional for ESL-certified teachers. Teachers received professional development credits for completing the online SIOP training.
The ELL coordinator at SAOL sent an email (Appendix C) to all teachers required to participate in the training and reminded the teachers of the need to complete the training during check-in meetings. However, the email explained that participation in the research study for all teachers was voluntary.

Once the teachers consented to participate in the study, they were screened by the researcher and their agreement to participate in the study was confirmed. Ultimately, 22 teachers agreed to be interviewed. However, only 19 agreed to be audio taped. Of those 19, 18 were successfully audio taped while one had difficulties with audio recording; there notes had to be taken instead. All participants submitted an online consent form and were interviewed for the study.

**Data Collection**

Data collection methods used in this study were interviews and observation notes. One semi-structured individual interview was conducted with each participant. An interview guide (see Appendix I) was designed to help better understand the participants’ perceptions of the implementation, effectiveness and implications of the SIOP model and the online SIOP training.

**The interviews.** A semi-structured interview format was used. The interviews were extensive, used open-ended questions, and teachers were asked about their educational background, experience with sheltered instruction models in the past or in their current classroom, their reaction to the online SIOP training, perception of their newly acquired skills and plans for implementation of the SIOP model. The interviews ranged from 35 to 60 minutes in length with a mean of 47 minutes. The purpose of the
interviews was to gather specific feedback on the participants’ perceptions of what was positive and negative about the SIOP model in an online classroom, how the online SIOP training might help with the implementation, and how the teachers believe the online SIOP training might affect student outcomes. In order to improve program design and delivery; program content, format, and organization; and to document and improve the implementation of program content, the interview questions addressed the initial satisfaction with the training (Level 1), acquired knowledge and skills (Level 2), and implementation of new knowledge and skills (Level 4) according to Guskey (2000).

The observation notes. Using a field journal, observation notes were collected during seven synchronous lessons. Observations notes were also gathered during the viewing of three recordings of synchronous lessons. Because permission was not properly obtained from the head of school and legal department at the EMO in order to attend synchronous lessons and/or cite my experiences during the sessions, the observation notes in this study were excluded from data analysis. This also protects the confidentiality of the teachers who allowed me to observe their online classrooms. Furthermore, including observation notes would have required additional reviews to the approved protocol by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at George Mason University.

Since “observation is often used to describe settings, behaviors, and events,” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 102) I took notes during the observations to obtain important contextual data and inform my understanding of the synchronous lessons and the challenges that teachers often described during the interviews. Observing synchronous lessons also served as a check to the interview data. Finally, observing how an online
teacher manages a synchronous lesson may provide a better understanding of the role of online teachers during real-time instruction than what the teacher says during the interview (Maxwell, 2013).

**Data Analysis**

Hatch (2002) describes data analysis as “a systematic search for meaning” (p. 148). During this search for meaning the researcher organizes the data, searches for patterns, identifies typologies, discovers relationships between and across the data, develops generalizations, makes interpretations, and shares descriptive findings (Creswell, 1998; Hatch 2002; Merriam, 2002). Data analysis begins as soon as data is collected. Hatch (2002) affirms that “beginning formal data analysis early will improve the quality of the research” (p. 149). Data analysis begins by reading of all collected data to get a holistic picture. Then, the data is divided into categories, many of which were inductively developed during data analysis making use of typological analysis. This way the data will be separated from the whole and is easier to seek common patterns between and across the typologies (Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 2002). After that, the patterns are disclosed through coding.

This study contains 22 interviews, three of which involved the expert validators of the training. The interviews were recorded and transcribed; using pseudonyms were used to protect all parties involved. Memos were written after listening to the recorded interviews and used to capture initial feelings and overall impressions that might not have been captured in the transcriptions.
Next, the transcripts were read and meaningful phrases were highlighted and coded using ATLAS.ti to make note of each relevant thought. The data were then entered into a matrix to allow me to visualize the information and create suitable categories. The purpose of coding was to be able to break out the relevant "data and rearrange them into categories that facilitate comparison between things in the same category and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts" (Maxwell, 2005, p.96.)

I created categories intuitively, keeping in mind the study’s purpose, my background and knowledge of online learning systems and professional development, and the meanings brought forth by the participants. The coded data were then placed in organizational, substantive and theoretical categories as appropriate. Some of the organizational categories were developed prior to conducting the study and reflected the various levels of the Guskey framework for evaluating professional development, which was investigated in the interviews. The substantive categories were developed implicitly while thinking about my study and signified participants' interpretations of events and their perceptions of the online SIOP study and tacitly, the ability to implement the SIOP model in an online environment.

The teachers’ demographic information such as prior SIOP training, prior training related to English language learners, ESL certification, years teaching online, educational background, among others were used to add further description to each participant and to provide data for developing themes across cases.

In addition to the initial coding per Guskey’s levels and SIOP, I inductively developed categories from the interviews themselves (open coding). Open coding,
“coding as you go along” as suggested by experts in the qualitative research field and described as one that provides rich and fresh results regarding data, was used beginning with the identification from the themes emerging from the raw data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Straus & Corbin, 1990; Tesch, 1990).

During open coding, I identified and named the conceptual categories into which the phenomena observed was grouped. My goal was to form a preliminary framework for analysis by creating descriptive, multi-dimensional categories. When similarities were observed in words, phrases or events, these were grouped into the same category. These categories were gradually modified or replaced during the subsequent stages of analysis.

**Validity**

Several strategies to increase the validity of the conclusions of the study were used. First, rich data were gathered by conducting intensive interviews to tap into the participants’ perceptions of the SIOP model and the online SIOP training. Participants were asked to discuss their efforts at the implementation of the SIOP model and their experiences with ELLs in the online classroom. Additionally, participants were asked to describe how the online SIOP training might impact their instructional planning and delivery.

A possible threat to validity in this study is researcher bias. As a former ESL student and teacher, I have a personal interest in the subject. In order to avoid data collector bias, I made sure to avoid phrasing my questions differently from what my committee approved and avoided leading questions. In addition, I attempted to put participants at ease by asking demographic questions first. I was also vigilant to make
assumptions about what was being said. I was continually mindful of my prior knowledge of the subject matter so as to approach the interview sessions in an unbiased manner. To specifically address this, participants were asked to explain all efforts currently being made to implement SIOP in the online classroom and their evaluation of the online SIOP training. In addition, no participant was made aware of my involvement in the development of the training until after the interviews were completed to ensure that they also did not make assumptions about biases about the training. However, I was unable to omit that I was employed by the EMO that provides the curriculum to the SAOL and employs the teachers, since I had to secure approval from the legal department, the executive vice president for product development, my supervisor (vice president of content), the director of special programs and the head of school. I reassured participants that the informed consent ensures confidentiality. I also communicated the purpose of the study, my role as a researcher and the steps that I plan to take to ensure that the data is safe at all times.

A “member check” was incorporated into this study in order to maximize authenticity. Member check is a method to ensure that a researcher has properly captured the participants’ views, beliefs, and thoughts. It helps to ensure that the “emic perspective” (Gall et al., 2003, p. 464) of the participant is conveyed correctly through the data analysis. According to Merriam (1998), member checks involve "taking data and interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking if the results are plausible” (p.169). The purpose of member check is to allow the participant an opportunity to review the consolidated data and confirm that the information extracted
from the interview has been properly recorded. It affirms that the researcher has correctly understood and interpreted the beliefs, meanings, and thoughts of the participant. If a factual error is determined, there is opportunity for the researcher to “reconcile discrepancies” (p. 464). Revisiting the information allows the participant an opportunity to offer clarity or even elaborate to the topic. In addition, a member check “decreases the potential of introducing investigator bias” (DePoy & Gitlin, 1998, p. 284).

To conduct this, I compiled the data and provided each participant with a summary of the main points via email. Each participant had the opportunity to corroborate the information obtained from the interview and to offer additional comments. This process was completed in a timely manner, in relation to the initial interview, to maximize the participants’ ability to recall the process and the nature of the interview.

Limitations

It is assumed that the participants were truthful in their interview responses to the best of their knowledge. The interview findings of the study cannot be generalized to all online teachers in the southwestern region of the United States. Further research will need to be conducted on online teachers with a different educational background, training, organizational support, and so forth, from those examined in this study.
Chapter Four: Findings

The following research questions guided this study:

(Q1) What are online teachers’ perceptions of the online SIOP training?

(Q2) How do online teachers perceive the effectiveness of the SIOP model in enhancing their skills to meet the needs of online ELLs?

(Q3) What factors might affect the implementation of the SIOP model at an online school?

In Chapter Three the methods that were used to investigate these questions were addressed. In Chapter Four the relevant findings of this study are reported. Three sections are used in this chapter to (a) describe the Southwestern Academy for Online Learning (SAOL) (pseudonym); (b) detail individual case findings; (c) report relevant themes across the cases. The data collected in this study solely represent the perspective of online teachers, the assistant principal, and the ELL Coordinator at the SAOL and do not take into account the perspective of school administrators or the education management company.

Southwestern Academy for Online Learning (SAOL)

The Southwestern Academy for Online Learning (SAOL) is a public online charter school for grades 3 through 12, where learning takes place at home. Unlike homeschooling, online teachers and learning coaches conduct the instruction. The role of
the learning coach is typically performed by the parent. The learning coach helps the student with the completion of their daily tasks. The amount of assistance depends on the student's grade level and the student's ability to complete work independently.

At the SAOL, students observe the same state testing and attendance policies of traditional brick-and-mortar schools. The school’s learning management system (LMS), which is operated and supported by the education management company (EMO), delivers the collection of self-paced lessons that comprise the SAOL program. The LMS includes tools for planning and progress that allow parents and students to easily schedule or view lessons online, log attendance, and monitor progress. The LMS includes a progress dashboard displaying which lessons have been completed, and which ones are in progress. In addition, the LMS contains a file sharing tool, an internal messaging system, a to-do list, shortcuts to the lessons, daily and weekly plans, progress information, materials and advance preparation for the day’s lessons. Class announcements are also transmitted through the LMS. In addition, the LMS provides access to the synchronous lessons where teachers often lecture, share videos, conduct demonstrations or presentations, and hold discussions or meetings. These synchronous lessons are held in the LMS through an integration with BlackBoard Collaborate—“a comprehensive online learning and collaboration platform” with web conferencing, mobile collaboration, instant messaging and voice authoring capabilities (Blackboard, 2015). It provides teachers with an online learning environment to deliver direct instruction and collaborate with the students they support. These collaborative sessions often involve “breakout” sessions where students are placed in smaller groups by the teacher. For students who are
unable to attend the synchronous lessons, a recording is added to the synchronous section of the LMS for review at a later time. Teachers hold these sessions to provide review, remediation, and practice for students. During these sessions, teachers target the parts of the curriculum that traditionally require reinforcement. These sessions augment, expand, and examine topics to refresh key concepts (observation, February 24, 2015).

Teachers at the SAOL conduct synchronous lessons each week in the subject areas of math, language arts, science, social studies, art, music, and physical education according to grade level. Some grade levels will also have synchronous lessons for health, technology, and world languages. Some lessons may be taught with an interdisciplinary focus (i.e. using reading strategies for social studies material). Required synchronous lessons vary by grade level. Parents receive the synchronous lesson schedule for their child’s grade level via internal email. It is also posted in the weekly homeroom newsletter.

Synchronous lessons are one of the few opportunities to receive real-time instruction from a teacher at the SAOL, since the rest of the lessons are self-paced—completed independently by students. Students are encouraged to follow the daily plan as closely as possible in order to complete the course in a timely manner. The daily plan lists the self-paced and synchronous lessons that a student is supposed to complete on a given day.
All students in grades 9-12 are encouraged to attend synchronous lessons or watch the recording. However, the students’ attendance does not impact their course grades.

The SAOL contains nearly 5,999 students in grades 3-12. There are 118 ELLs at the SAOL—95 in grades 3-8 and 23 in high school. There are 141 online teachers at the SAOL: 28 elementary school teachers; 52 middle school teachers; and 61 high school teachers. Approximately 89% of the teachers are female and 17% are newly hired. The school district requires that a teacher be trained in the SIOP model if they have at least one ELL in their classroom. However, regardless of the number of ELLs in their classrooms, the SAOL ELL Coordinator required 32 teachers without ESL certification to complete the online SIOP training.

SAOL students in grades 3 through 5 have a “homeroom teacher” who is also the
students’ subject teacher for one subject. In grades 6 through 12, homeroom teachers may not necessarily be a subject teacher, though many are. All limited English proficient (LEP) students have one assigned ESL-certified teacher as a “teacher of record” in grades 3 through 12. The teacher of record is responsible for a student’s learning activities that are within a subject or course, and are aligned to performance measures, including assignment of the student’s final grade in a course (Center for Educational Leadership and Technology). The SAOL ESL program uses a pull-out model, where ELLs are removed from the mainstream classroom for a portion of the day.

The SAOL requires an average of 6 hours of instructional time per day. For a student to receive credit for a class, the state requires that a student be in attendance 90% of the scheduled school days. Homeroom teachers help students develop a weekly schedule to ensure that they meet this requirement. SAOL students may log instructional time anytime during the day and on any day of the week between the first day of school and the last day of school. Instructional time must directly relate to lesson objectives which are aligned to the standards set forth by the state education department. The homeroom teacher is responsible for confirming student attendance, curricular progress and educational growth. In addition, the homeroom teacher is also the first point of contact for the parents and students for all issues regarding the school. Resources provided by SAOL homeroom teachers include: instructional and curricular support, organizational assistance, tutoring, and encouragement. Parents and students are required to participate in conferences and class meetings with their SAOL homeroom teacher. Since email is the primary source of contact between the SAOL homeroom teacher and
parents and students, the SAOL encourages email checks at least twice a day and to promptly reply to any email received. All students are expected to participate in the meetings at the beginning of the week with their homeroom teachers. Each meeting lasts under one hour. Teachers use this time for school announcements, reminders, and homeroom activities. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce the relationship between the student and the teachers and for students to spend time with their peers. These meetings are recorded, so if a student is unable to attend synchronously, the parent and student are responsible for listening to the recording within 24 hours and following up with their teacher if they have any questions.

**General course structure.** A yearlong online course at the SAOL is typically comprised of two 18-week semesters of course content. Each semester is organized into multiple units. Each unit provides several lessons of multiple screens, activities, graded assignments, and assessments.

Lessons typically take 60 to 75 minutes of activity to complete. A 180-day yearlong course averages one lesson per day. Students are expected to spend at least an hour a day in each content area.

**Assessments.** At the SAOL, most lessons are paired with a short assessment. Students review these completed computer-scored quizzes to identify those areas that need further study.

Unit tests evaluate mastery of larger objectives, developed through the mastery of lesson objectives. Hands-on labs reinforce skills and provide exploration opportunities. Unit tests typically consist of both teacher-graded and computer-scored sections.
**The elementary school.** In elementary school, each grade includes four core subjects—language arts, math, science, and history. Music, art and world language options are frequently available beginning in third grade. Learning coaches and students are able to organize and individualize their schedules around teacher-led synchronous lessons.

Every online course in the LMS includes lesson plans for the week. The lesson plans update automatically as they are completed. Most courses are enhanced with the use of instructionally appropriate hands-on and printed materials.

Students are assigned to a single “homeroom” teacher with expertise in the younger grades. This certified teacher oversees all facets of the instruction for every subject, while the parent or learning coach works side-by-side with the student to facilitate progress through the daily lessons. The teacher will establish the individualized learning plan, and the LMS will deliver access to the lessons, with the active participation of the learning coach to ensure that the process is working as planned. On average, the learning coach can expect to spend 3 to 6 hours per day supporting their student’s education.

Teachers stay in close contact, communicating regularly via the internal email system, phone, and online meetings. The teacher remains constantly involved to monitor progress, ensure mastery, and deliver one-on-one or small group-targeted instruction if a student is struggling with a concept.
**The middle school program.** In middle school, each grade includes four core subjects—language arts, math, science, and social studies—along with music, art, and five world language options.

Parents and students are able to organize and individualize their schedule around teacher-led synchronous lessons.

As in the elementary school, the parent or learning coach continues to work closely with his or her student to facilitate progress through the daily lessons. Each online course provides the lesson plans for the week in the LMS. In grades 6–8, the learning coach’s role adjusts to approximately 2 to 4 hours per day, as the student transitions into more independent learning. Teachers help students with challenging topics by offering additional synchronous lessons.

**The high school program.** In the high school program, students work with a team of subject-specific teachers and school counselors who will create and continually monitor their individualized learning plans. The high school program includes math, English, science, and history courses in multiple levels—Core, Comprehensive, Honors, and college-level Advanced Placement (AP), plus Foundations and Credit Recovery.

Synchronous lessons are frequently used for direct instruction. In addition, students are regularly involved in teacher-monitored online discussions with each other. Although learning coaches are no longer expected to coach their students academically, they play an important supportive role to help the student stay on task and ensure follow-through on assignments. During a typical week, the learning coach might assist with some lessons, based on the student's independence; verify lesson completion to ensure the
student is on track; or attend a teacher conference. However, the learning coach must track progress to ensure that the student meets course completion deadlines. The average amount of time dedicated to supporting their student is 1-2 hours a day.

“In high school, students are held more accountable for their daily progress and time management. While coursework can be completed on students’ own time, classes need to move at a consistent pace” (SAOL, 2014, p. 68).

The Online SIOP Training

I contacted the director of special programs at the EMO, who oversees ESL training for all network schools, to propose assistance to overhaul the existing SIOP training, which was at the time being developed by individual schools and provided through online synchronous meetings using BlackBoard Collaborate. The director of special programs viewed the existing training as inefficient and was interested in tracking completion and creating a standardized SIOP training curriculum that met the requirements of the school district.

The director of special programs and her training support staff outlined the following requirements for development of the online SIOP training: (a) the online SIOP training must be comprehensive and equivalent to the training offered by Pearson, which currently owns the copyright to the SIOP name and methodology; (b) the online SIOP training must be entirely self-paced.; (c) the researcher must only communicate with SAOL staff (no other network schools) and through the SAOL ELL Coordinator; (d) the online SIOP training must not include any recordings of SAOL online classrooms and;
(e) the online SIOP training must incorporate strategies to adapt the SIOP model in an online environment.

The online SIOP training titled The SIOP® Model for Teaching English Language Learners (ELLs) was launched in the fall of 2014 on the EMO’s training platform for teachers. It is a fully online curriculum designed to helps online teachers learn about the SIOP model to teach both content knowledge and academic language skills in ways that are proven to be effective for ELLs in their online classrooms.

The online SIOP training consists of the following modules:

1. **Module 1: Introduction to Sheltered Instruction:** An overview of English language learner (ELL) demographics in the United States, second language acquisition, and sheltered instruction.

2. **Module 2: Introduction to the SIOP Model:** An overview of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model--a scientifically-based program that helps educators teach academic content to English learners while promoting their English language development.

3. **Module 3: Lesson Preparation:** In this module, teachers learn how to plan lessons carefully, paying particular attention to language and content objectives, appropriate content concepts, and the use of supplemental materials, adaptation of content, and meaningful activities.

4. **Module 4: Building Background:** In this module, teachers learn how to make explicit links to their students’ background experiences and knowledge and past learning. They also learn how to teach and emphasize key vocabulary.
5. **Module 5: Comprehensible Input:** In this module, teachers learn how to make the message understandable to ELLs so that they understand the instruction. Comprehensible input means that students should be able to understand the essence of what is being said or presented to them.

6. **Module 6: Strategies:** This module focuses on the cognitive and metacognitive strategies that learners use to make sense of new information and concepts.

7. **Module 7: Interaction:** In this component, teachers learn how to provide students with frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion, how to group students to support content and language objectives, how to provide sufficient wait-time for student responses, and how to appropriately clarify concepts in the student’s first language, if possible and necessary.

8. **Module 8: Practice/Application:** In this component, teachers learn how to provide hands-on materials and/or manipulatives, and include activities for students to apply their content and language knowledge through all language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking).

9. **Module 9: Lesson Delivery:** In this component, teachers implement lessons that clearly support content and language objectives with appropriate pacing, while students are engaged 90-100 percent of the instructional period.

10. **Module 10: Review and Assessment:** In this component, teachers provide a comprehensive review of key vocabulary and concepts, regularly give specific, academic feedback to students, and conduct assessment of student comprehension and learning throughout the lesson.
The online SIOP training also includes links to SIOP QuickCards for each component, which provide summaries of the strategies specific to the component/feature and a Strategy Gallery which includes activity ideas organized by SIOP component/feature. The activity ideas are exemplars for implementing the eight components of the SIOP model.

The online SIOP training requires participants to gather a Teacher Guide from their online classrooms in the LMS and incorporate modifications to make the lesson more accessible to ELLs based on the recommendations found in the component/feature of the training. Teacher Guides are available in the Lesson Materials section in the LMS and contain the main teaching material including background information on the important concepts in the lessons, a list of required materials, an activity-by-activity description of what students are learning, and the answers to questions in the lessons. The EMO’s department of curriculum development develops Teacher Guides with the purpose that it be used by online teachers as a guideline to provide or support instruction in network school classrooms. The EMO’s department of curriculum development consists of curriculum specialists and lesson developers who plan each lesson and make sure that the material is right for the age and skills of the student; instructional designers who build the activities, working with visual designers and media specialists to choose the best way to present concepts and information; and writers and editors who make sure that the content is accurate, engaging, and appropriate (SAOL, 2014, p. 42).
In the state where SAOL is located, each district with an enrollment of 20 or more students of limited English proficiency (LEP) in any language classification in the same grade level shall offer a bilingual education or special language program.

All LEP students for whom a district is not required to offer a bilingual education program shall be provided an English as a second language (ESL) program, regardless of the students’ grade levels and home languages, and regardless of the number of such students. An ESL program established by a school district shall be a program of intensive instruction in English from teachers training in recognizing and dealing with language differences. A program of bilingual education or of instruction in English as a second language shall be designed to consider the students’ learning experiences and shall incorporate the cultural aspects of the students’ backgrounds.

This requirement is fulfilled by providing the online SIOP training. The EMO assumes that online teachers at SAOL will make an effort to plan and deliver lessons that will help improve the language proficiency and grade-level content knowledge of their linguistically and culturally diverse students.

The following are the two program models of an English as a second language (ESL) program in the state where SAOL is located:

(1) ESL/content-based: an English program that serves students identified as students of limited English proficiency in English only by providing a full-time teacher to provide supplementary instruction for all content area instruction.

(2) ESL/pull-out: an English program that serves students identified as students of limited English proficiency in English only by providing a part-time teacher to provide English
language arts instruction exclusively, while the student remains in a mainstream instructional arrangement in the remaining content areas.

**The Study Participants**

Table 3 shows profiles of the 22 participants interviewed in this study in the order in which they will be reported.

Table 3

*Teacher/School Staff Profiles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Grade Level/Subject</th>
<th>ESL-Certified</th>
<th>Previously Trained on SIOP</th>
<th>Other Languages Spoken</th>
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<td>7 and 8 Math and Social Studies</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Calista</td>
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</table>

**Individual Case Findings**

Teachers were asked to reflect on their experiences with ELLs and the SIOP model and their perception of the online SIOP training. The same interview guide (see Appendix I) was used for each teacher. Relevant themes found within each individual participant interview are described in this section.
**Matilda.** Matilda is the Assistant Principal at SAOL. Although not required to complete the online SIOP training, she wanted to be become thoroughly familiarized with the training to better support her teachers. She is currently certified as a rater for the state’s English language proficiency system, designed to assess the progress that LEP students are making learning English. Matilda was a teacher when SAOL opened its doors in 2006. Throughout the years, she has served as teacher, master teacher, and interim principal.

Matilda has a bachelor’s degree in English and History. Prior to joining SAOL, she was a teacher at a brick-and-mortar school for grades 9-11 for three years. She is certified in early childhood education and grades 6 through 12 History and English. Matilda studied German in high school and college and is trying to relearn it now.

Prior to the development of the online SIOP training, Matilda completed the yearly training on the SIOP model provided by the ELL Coordinator at SAOL. She also completed SIOP training through Pearson. Matilda stated that the online SIOP training “contains many excellent resources that she was unable to get to due to time.” The module that she felt was most valuable was Module 8 (Practice/Application). Matilda suggested the introduction of open-ended responses viewable by training managers at the SAOL. “This would provide more tangible data which will facilitate a professional discussion about progress and completion.”

Matilda supports pacing the online SIOP training throughout a year, to make it easier on teachers. She also believes that it should be a training requirement during a
teachers’ second year teaching at the SAOL, since first year teachers tend to be overwhelmed by the training requirements and administrative load of online schooling.

Matilda also enjoyed the video section in Module 3 (Lesson Preparation) which provided an overview of what ELLs experience in the classroom. She also found the SIOP Quick Cards very useful. She said, “The videos are relevant to the components and valuable to the training.” Matilda considers the training very practical. She felt that the recommendations for online implementation were the main difference from other SIOP trainings, which focus exclusively on face-to-face classrooms.

Matilda considers the SIOP model “good teaching.” She thinks that the implementation of the SIOP model is necessary for all students, whether or not they are ELLs and that synchronous discussions between online teachers would enhance the online SIOP training. She feels that demonstrations of online teachers using the SIOP model through Blackboard Collaborate would be very beneficial for the training. For the next revision, Matilda recommends asking SAOL teachers to evaluate their synchronous lesson PowerPoint decks instead of making changes to the Teacher Guides from the LMS.

**Bethany.** Bethany is a fifth grade Social Studies teacher, who has been teaching online for over a year. She has a master’s degree in teaching and is certified to teach from early childhood to eighth grade. Bethany also has an ESL endorsement and speaks some Spanish. Out of 50 students, Bethany currently has five ELLs in her homeroom. Since Bethany had previously completed SIOP training in another state, she stated that the online SIOP training felt like a review.
Her overall evaluation of the online SIOP training is that "it feels like regular, normal teaching, common sense stuff. SIOP is just good teaching." Bethany particularly enjoyed the strategies section [Strategies Gallery], since it allows her to revisit to obtain tips as needed. “I loved the way the strategies are set up so you could pop in for different tips. I like that a lot.” However, Bethany felt that the recurring section expecting online teachers to adapt an existing Teacher Guide from the LMS using the relevant SIOP component was time-consuming. “I don't know that I'll get to doing that very often.” She stated that instead of completing that step in the online training, she is spending time on developing language and content objectives and placing them directly in the PowerPoint decks that she uses during the synchronous lessons. Bethany was unable to conceal her frustration at the limited hours of real-time instruction she is able to provide her students. She worries that students are not receiving the support that they need to attain learning outcomes. At the SAOL, synchronous lessons are one of the few opportunities that teachers have for direct, real-time instruction with students. Using Blackboard Collaborate, an online collaboration tool, SAOL teachers upload a PowerPoint presentation to guide the instruction. The rest of the instruction is self-paced, where students move from one lesson to the next at their own pace and on their own time, ensuring to keep deadlines established by the school or the teacher.

Since Bethany also enjoyed the Building Background module (Module 4) in the online SIOP training, she is now spending more time activating her students’ prior knowledge. Bethany believes that many ELLs may come to school with little or no background knowledge on a certain topic, or that they may possess inaccurate
background knowledge or misconceptions about a topic of study. As a result, she felt that it was important to determine the extent to which students have prior knowledge on a certain topic so that she can design instructional activities to build requisite background if needed. “[I’m now spending more time finding] “things that will get their interest, and make them want to learn more about the subject. [For example] I gave the kids a link from Scholastic on what life was like as a slave. It was all interactive, like you click around on the screen and some of it had audio, some of it had movement animation so things like that. Things that will get their interest, and make them want to learn more about the subject.”

Regarding her perception of the effectiveness of SIOP in enhancing her skills to meet the needs of ELLs in the online classroom, Bethany feels that the online SIOP training helped her refocus on ELLs. “I think I needed the refresher. It helped me refocus for this kind of learner. We have so few ELLs that they might be overlooked. Even if it was just a couple of students that I could have been helping and wasn’t, I would feel bad. I've got a student who is Hispanic and has been having a real hard time. And I was actually scheduled tomorrow to call him tomorrow to help him get on track and show him what he needs to do. And they sent me a message today to say that he was withdrawing. So for all I know, that might have been an issue for him and he wasn’t getting his needs met. Granted my one-hour a week optional Social Studies [synchronous] class probably isn’t going to be the one to keep him if he's having trouble in the core subjects.”

Bethany believes that implementing the SIOP model online is challenging. “In person, it's so much easier to teach ELLs. It's hard to know most of the time whether or
not they have any trouble with the language because we talk to [ELLs] directly so little.”

She also believes that the administrative load of online teacher is partially responsible for the limited interaction teachers have with students. The Building Background component of the SIOP model indicates that teachers should consider students’ backgrounds when developing lessons. Bethany believes that some of these recommendations are difficult to implement due to the size of online classes. “I know some teachers that have about 60 kids so it's really hard with that many families and all that we’re required to do for them to get the time to get to know the students themselves and be able to talk to them. Since mine is optional, I usually have like between 30 and 50 kids. Some of the required classes have more like 80 kids.”

Bethany expressed frustration at the limited interaction with students, since most of the conversations take place at the beginning of the year, when SAOL homeroom teachers call to welcome the students and their families and a few times a year during “data conferences,” which are similar to parent-teacher conferences. “That's about all we get to talk to the kids and half the time we don't even get to hear their voice because half the time they don’t have working microphones when they come online for their conferences. It’s so hit or miss. There are so many things that we have to deal with just to function online that it’s hard to go above and beyond.”

Classroom discussions which provide ELLs with opportunities to develop their oral language are also challenging, not only due to microphones malfunctioning, but also due to the limited synchronous lesson times. “It's so much more difficult to get real answers when you got like 50 kids in a classroom and you’re you got basically at most an
hour with them and you can have them answer multiple-choice you can have them say yes-no, you can have them put their answers in the chat box and sometimes on the microphone but most I'd say half the kids don't have working microphones.”

Bethany believes that the biggest challenge of the SIOP model is being able to implement it online. “I always got good results when I used it in a regular classroom. It's hard for me to have any idea what kind of impact it has online but I think the SIOP model itself is fantastic. It encompasses everything for every type of learner.”

Bethany believes that another factor that might affect the implementation of the SIOP model is time. “In the online classroom you have to take more time with the SIOP model. Now I teach Social Studies one hour a week [synchronously]. I feel like I barely skim the surface of the Social Studies curriculum much less trying to implement more things like this. I'm too busy trying to cram as much information in an hour week as I can. If you tell a kid that something's optional, you tend to only get the best and brightest joining you because they're the ones that are just there because they're enjoying it and not because they do not understand it or something.”

She says, “In a regular classroom, finding multiple ways to show the kids certain concepts is really hard to do. [In an online classroom], you have technical issues. For example, I enjoy using videos. I might find a video snippet to show during the synchronous lesson. But half the time the video is too long and it would just take up your whole teaching lesson so there is no point.”

Bethany believes that teachers’ administrative load is one of the biggest challenges of teaching and learning online. She resents not truly feeling like a teacher.
“When it's not a crazy month, I'll open up my classroom and tutor kids as they need it, just because I want to feel more like a teacher and not a paper pusher. We have data conferences like parent teacher conferences that will often take weeks to get through 50 families. And then the new quarter starts and you're supposed to look at starting your data conferences again for the next quarter and on top of all this you know, you have just constant questions. You regularly get new students and students withdrawing so there's like a constant cycle in, cycle out, and when you get new students there's like a dozen things that you have to do when you get a new student. It's mostly just busy, busy, busy and not really teaching.” When asked to compare with her experience teaching face-to-face, she acknowledges that the long hours are the same, since she would work 10-12 hours in the face-to-face classroom and then take assignments home for grading, which often involved another 3-4 hours in the evenings. “But it was doing what I loved. It was putting all these different types of lessons together that got the kids involved and engaged. And now it's 10 to 12 hour days just nothing but paperwork really.”

Bethany concludes by saying, “I've been disappointed with the difficulties of online teaching for sure. It's very frustrating.”

 Alexandra. Alexandra is the ESL Coordinator at the SAOL. Based on her expertise and her ESL certification, she served as an expert reviewer, validating the online SIOP training. She teaches ESL for grades 3-12. Although her bachelor’s degree is in marketing, she obtained her state-specific teaching certificate through alternative certification--a process by which a teacher is awarded a teaching license despite not completing a traditional teacher certification program.
According to Alexandra, most of the ELLs at the SAOL are at the expanding or bridging levels of proficiency. Alexandra states that although the number of ELLs at the SAOL is small, the school might be forced to provide bilingual instruction, to accommodate the growing number of Spanish-speaking ELLs.

Alexandra is thoroughly familiar with the SIOP model, having previously completed SIOP training through Pearson. In addition, prior to the implementation of the online SIOP training, Alexandra was responsible for the development and facilitation of the instructor-led SIOP training for the SAOL for over a year. In this earlier three-hour synchronous SIOP training, Alexandra employed a PowerPoint deck uploaded into Blackboard Collaborate.

Alexandra believes that the online SIOP training was “a little overwhelming. It was just information that they were supposed to understand versus something they were going to be able to utilize.” Nevertheless, she liked the interactive sections of the training, including the ones which asked the user to select true or false. “Those kinds of things keep [the learners] with you.” Alexandra expressed concern about the stated duration of the modules contrasted with how long the modules actually take to complete. She felt that it was important to give teachers “the heads up” since they are balancing so many other tasks. Alexandra emphasized the need to waive the first two introductory modules in the online SIOP training for teachers certified in ESL. That way, these teachers can focus exclusively on the online implementation of the SIOP model.

In terms of the effectiveness of the SIOP model enhancing teachers’ skills to meet the needs of ELLs, Alexandra believes that SIOP is “just good teaching, because it also
helps those that are struggling learners, not just ELLs. They’re just coming from a
different schooling background.” As the ESL Coordinator, Alexandra tries to motivate
teachers to learn SIOP, not only because the district requires completion of the training,
but because it can help their careers. “They’re not just doing it for our school, they’re
doing it for their career. Also for the credential, because you’re going to have to take it no
matter what district you’re in now pretty much.”

Alexandra feels that she is now able to integrate some of the SIOP components
online, due to the online SIOP training, and her own background with SIOP, but not all of
it. She feels that the comprehensive nature of the model prevents its full implementation,
since the model touches on every aspect of a lesson—from planning to assessment. She
recommends asking trainees to perhaps select five or more features that they can
integrate—“being able to focus on a few things that you can change right away in your
lessons to implement the SIOP model” versus having to look at all of the components.
“What can I change in my lessons right now online that I can do all the time now and
know that I’m meeting an ELL’s need?”

Additionally, Alexandra believes that online teachers will fail to implement the
SIOP model due to limited exemplars in the online environment and limited
implementation time. She believes that online teachers should be provided assistance by
the EMO to really adapt lessons to differentiate instruction for different populations like
ELLs. “Teachers are always looking for assistance especially with their different
populations, to support them. All we can do is ask and see who would be willing to help
work on some of those things as far as resources for all network schools.”
Clara. Clara is a 6th grade Language Arts and Math Special Education teacher, who has been teaching online for two years. She is working on her master’s degree in education. Clara has a bachelor’s degree in Sociology and Communications. She previously completed SIOP training while working at a brick-and-mortar school. At this time, Clara has about six ELLs in her classroom. Their native language is Spanish.

Clara felt that the online SIOP training was thorough, and that it was particularly good at encouraging teachers to use the resources that they already have. However, she felt that the training was very long. Since the videos in the online SIOP training show teachers using SIOP face-to-face, Clara recommended incorporating videos using SIOP in the online classroom.

She particularly enjoyed an activity in Module 3 (Lesson Preparation) which included a video about lesson planning and utilizing the “I can” statements. “Students are taking ownership of the objectives and are stating what they should be able to do at the end of that day’s lesson. I feel that this empowers the student. “I can” statements are all about power and showing students what their goals are for that day’s lesson.”

Clara deems the online SIOP training as more engaging than the face-to-face training that she completed a few years ago. "The online one was more engaging for me and it was applicable to me. The training itself is asking us to pull things and that kind of helps." She also considers herself an online learner, since it is more convenient. “You can step away and come back. That makes a difference.”

Clara stated that since the completion of the training, she is taking lesson preparation more seriously. "I feel like I'm taking a step back and saying: if I were a
student how would this impact me? It is helping me think more thoroughly about how I would plan a lesson and be a little more effective in my lesson planning.” She also believes that since the completion of the training, she has seen more participation during her synchronous lessons; her students are volunteering more, asking more questions and raising their hands in the chat box. She is also receiving more emails regarding the content that she is presenting during the synchronous lessons. She feels that “since she's taken a step back and has been more thorough in her lesson planning and it's relating to them more, that students are more likely to participate.” However, Clara has not spent time modifying materials for the ELLs in her classroom.

Regarding the factors which might impact the implementation of the SIOP model in the online classroom, Clara says, "I think that certain aspects of the SIOP model can be implemented, but it is impossible to do every single one. I think the Lesson Planning is pretty important but every single step--there is no way you can do that."

Since some of the materials do not relate directly to the online environment, Clara considers the training a 7 (on a scale of 1-10). “The length can be a little cumbersome and I find myself losing focus. Also, sometimes I can resume training without technical difficulties. Other times there has been a technical glitch and I’ve been forced to start all over again.”

Her recommendation for future iterations of the online SIOP training is to include videos of an online classroom, demonstrating strategies during a synchronous lesson. Clara feels that ELLs with higher levels of proficiency will most benefit from her
completion of the online SIOP training. "The lower level ELLs really do need a lot of support and I'm not certain that this is possible in an online environment."

Ellen. Ellen is a Math and Social Studies teacher for 7th and 8th grades. Although she is certified in ESL, she is not trained on SIOP and was not familiar with the model prior to completing the online SIOP training. She has a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s degree in business. A first-year online teacher, Ellen became a certified teacher through alternative certification. In addition to ESL, Ellen is certified to teach all grades. At this time, Ellen does not think that she has any ELLs in any of her classes. “[Since] I am not the homeroom teacher for all of my students, I do not even know if any of my students are ELLs.” As a result, she does not spend time modifying instructional materials for ELLs.

When asked for her overall evaluation of the SIOP training, Ellen stated, “I thought these lessons spent a lot of time telling me what I was going to be able to do after the training and not a lot of time showing me how to do it. I would have liked to see a lesson plan before modifications and after. I would have like to have seen short videos of a teacher teaching the modification you just explained (not a whole lesson--just a clip of one example of what you were currently talking about).”

Ellen enjoyed Module 4 (Building Background), particularly the video because “it was short and to the point. It helped me to understand how to help the student. I saw how to teach and assess the student.”

She also enjoyed the video in Module 5 (Comprehensible Input) because it helped her reflect on how she speaks during synchronous lessons. “Comprehensible input is
language input that can be understood by listeners despite them not understanding all the words and structures in it. It is described as one level above that of the learners if it can only just be understood” (“Comprehensible Input,” n.d.) The input should be easy enough that they can understand it, but just beyond their level of competence. Ellen says, “I have a bit of an accent and I need to make sure I am clear when I speak. I also need to make sure that I have lots of graphics to support what I am talking about to allow student to make connections.” Ellen feels that this module would be enhanced with examples of what to do and what not to do when communicating with ELLs.

When looking back on SIOP modules, and how they compare to other professional development sessions that she has completed, Ellen considers that in previous trainings related to ESL, a significant amount of time was spent developing lesson plans and putting into practice what they were learning. [In other trainings.] “We applied what we were learning. In this training I felt I was just reading facts and I felt that the facts were repetitive in each lesson. Also, it would not take me more than 20 minutes to read through the training; if there were videos then those would take me longer to watch.”

Ellen would have liked the training to include audio, since “being read to helps me focus.” Ellen also recommends including a video or lesson plan demonstrating scaffolding in Module 6 (Strategies), instead of just using documents. “All the words start to run together when it is something you do not use on a daily basis.” As a result, Ellen gives the training a 5 on a scale of 1 to 10, because she believes that she would have
benefited more from “seeing the material more in action.” She will not feel confident with the SIOP model until she starts using it on a daily basis “but that is just how I work.”

Also in Module 6 (Strategies), Ellen read about the effective use of wait time to support ELLs. “Wait time is not something that is always going to work in an online setting, so I would love to know more about how this would work in an online environment. I can’t have lag time. When they’re evaluating what I’m doing, lag time is a big negative. So we’re going to need to work with more of how we can take them into like breakout rooms and how we can do individual projects that we could do in small group settings.”

Regarding the administrative load of online teachers, Ellen states that on a typical day,

“You are a jack of all trades. I do the report cards. I answer all of their questions on a daily basis. You help them with any kind of questions that they could possibly come up with. You’re doing study hall…you’re doing trainings, you’re working with curriculum. You’re just, you know, you’re doing all kinds of things that you wouldn’t do in a brick- and-mortar school. You’re basically managing their case load. I was a social worker before I did this and so I feel like I do more social work on a daily basis than I do teaching. And so, I think my social work and my business background comes in to play on a daily basis more than my teaching does. I teach you know, an hour or two a day and I do more business and social work than I do anything. I’m on the phone with parents putting out fires more than I get to teach sometimes.”
Ellen feels that the materials provided by the EMO are not very helpful to SAOL teachers. Therefore, teachers are forced to create their own materials, particularly the PowerPoint decks used during the synchronous lessons. “We use our PowerPoint in every single lesson. Everything is based on the PowerPoint. That’s what we pull up on Blackboard [Collaborate].”

Ellen expresses frustration over the technical difficulties students experience in the online classroom and the discrepancies between computer systems. “Teachers have webcams, but we are not required to use them. No one uses them. I’m not sure if the students have webcams. I’m sure it varies. Then I have parents that they are still struggling to get on Blackboard [Collaborate], to get them in the classes because they do not have their own computer and they cannot figure out how to make their computer coordinate with Blackboard. Technical support will not support their private computer if they don’t have an EMO-provided laptop, so they can’t get their computer working. And it’s a major issue and I still can’t get them into their classes and their classes count as 20% of their grade and so these kids are failing.”

Ellen’s parting words regarding the SIOP model, “good technique is good technique. This is just good teaching. We call it best practices. This is best practices because it helps every child to learn. It’s good and I think when you show real examples and explain how correlating these things helps a child to learn better, then teachers are going to integrate it into their lessons.”

Francine. Francine is an English teacher for grade 8. Although certified in ESL, she has never been trained on SIOP. Francine, a fluent Spanish speaker, has a master’s
degree in cross cultural education. Although Francine was not familiar with the SIOP model prior to the online SIOP training, she is certified in CLAD--Crosscultural, Language, and Academic Development, a credential for all teachers specific to California. Francine is certified to teach in grades K-8 in and has experience teaching in bilingual classrooms where Spanish was the primary language of instruction. This is Francine’s second year at SAOL and she has yet to teach any ELLs.

Francine feels that the online SIOP training covered many concepts that she learned in her master’s program. “I think it was really good. It had all of the key terms and introduced me to some of the newer terms.”

Francine particularly enjoyed the videos in the training. She also enjoyed the list of resources provided at the end of each module. She feels that Module 4 (Building Background) provided excellent recommendations for teaching vocabulary, including an adaptation for the online classroom. On a scale of 1 to 10, Francine would give the online SIOP training a 10. “I was able to go through the lessons with ease; I was able to rewind with ease; and the information was good. I always made sure to view the lectures. Even though I knew some of the content, I was still engaged. It kept my attention.”

Francine felt that the duration of the training was overestimated. “I think it took less time, so I think they overestimated but I can see someone maybe who is a newer teacher rewinding, taking a little more time through it. I think it’s fair.”

Francine found the repetition of key terms less helpful. “I could see a new teacher needing to hear those terms and the terms being repeated to know their importance, so I understand why they were there, but for me, they were repetitive. I just skipped them.”
Francine believes that the EMO should create curriculum in Spanish, in order to help the ELLs who are at the early levels of proficiency. “If they are like at the beginning levels of English, they need to have the materials in their native language available so they could be read by the parents. I definitely see a lot of room to grow in that area, helping the parents to help their children with the learning.”

Francine feels that there are challenges to implementing the SIOP model online and to teaching ELLs online in general. When I talk to a parent, I tell them that I feel that their child is not going to make it if their English isn’t strong enough. I think they have to be at least at an intermediate level, otherwise I don’t know how this model can work for them. Also, it has always been my experience, and this is my 15th year of teaching, that parents need to be on the same page. Therefore, I would like to see more materials translated for the parents, starting with Spanish. Then maybe into some of the Asian languages, so that the parents at least get the highlights.”

Francine thinks that she was properly trained to integrate the SIOP model without limitations into her online classroom. However, she would recommend expanding the training with the use of a shared space, like a blog, “to hear what other teachers have to say, and maybe things that worked in their classroom.”

Francine feels that the training has increased her confidence in her ability to reach ELLs in the future. “I know those kids are out there, and I know that the numbers are going to grow. We are not reaching that population online. I am going to be one of the teachers who is prepared. I want to be one of those teachers who helps figure out how
ELLs are going to fit into our model. I know they are trying their best right now, but I see a lot of growth that can happen in that area.”

Francine recalls a time when she was working with an ELL and was not sure how to assist her. “I had a brand new student from Korea. I had a few Korean students in my class so I was able to pair her up with them and they were able to at least through the first few weeks of the class to help her. This is how I rectified the situation. She was amazing. By the end of the year, she was very proficient in English. I think that pairing her with the Korean students helped. It made her feel comfortable. I also modified the lessons to her level, to avoid overwhelming her. She became very successful because I was able to make modifications and I didn’t become frustrated with her because I knew she was a newcomer. She wasn’t getting everything during those first few weeks of school and that was okay. But I was able to make those accommodations for her. We have to keep in mind individual needs.”

Francine feels that one of the ways that she would help an online student in a similar situation is by using the breakout room feature in Blackboard Collaborate. “I can give create a breakout room and for different groups of students and provide them with a graphic organizer. They can work together and then share with the entire class. I think these peer interactions would be helpful for ELLs.”

Some of the obstacles of being an online teacher include the amount of time spent on the phone helping parents understand the online model. “I spend a lot of time on the phone helping parents understand what an online model looks like. Just getting used to the technology--that’s a big obstacle to overcome. Our class numbers are pretty high. So I
spend my time on the phone or I spend my time in a Blackboard Collaborate session getting them used to the tool, for example, how to use a whiteboard in an online classroom. I have them try the different features of the tools so that they can better participate during the synchronous lessons. I also walk them through our LMS and provide them with recommendations for note taking. I also have a study hall duty, where we help kids and they come in for help. I have to make sure that they understand all the parts of an online school.”

“We also create materials, mostly PowerPoint decks to pace students using Study Island.” Study Island is an online tool that helps students in grades K-12 master state-specific, grade-level academic standards. It “combines rigorous content that is highly customized to specific state standards in math, reading, writing, science, and social studies with interactive features and games that engage students and reinforce and reward learning achievement” (“Study Island, 2015). “That’s what I use for target teaching. I do my best to differentiate instruction for my students. For example, if I have a gifted and talented student, I might create supplemental materials since the courses provided by the EMO do not provide much differentiation. In the LMS course, mastery is 80% where below 80% is not passing, so they can’t move on in the lesson unless they reach. That can be a big struggle for some kids. And in some quizzes, they have 10 questions, so if they miss 3, they fail. So here is a student who doesn’t log in at all and doesn’t do anything and he gets an F. But here’s another student who is working every day and he still gets an F. I feel like there should be a different designation for that student.”
Marcelle. Marcelle is a grade 7 writing teacher, who has been teaching at the SAOL for under a year. She has been trained on SIOP in the past and is certified to teach English Language Arts in grades 6 through 12 and as a general education teacher for grades 4 through 8.

Marcelle believes that she only has one ELL in her classroom this year. She is unaware of this student’s first language, but thinks that he might be from Asia based on the student’s accent the few times she has spoken to him. Based on her limited interaction with this student, she is unaware of his level of proficiency in English. Furthermore, Marcelle is concerned about this student’s learning coach since she is not an English speaker. She explains that this is not one of her writing students—instead this is a grade 8 student in her homeroom. She goes on to explain that as a homeroom teacher, as opposed to a subject teacher, she is responsible for providing these students with data conferences every quarter. She also manages homeroom students individual learning plans.

Marcelle explains data conferences as “where you actually get together and with the learning coach and the student and you have slides that you go through. At the beginning of the year, when you have new students, you review what’s coming up, and then you kind of start looking at their progress to that point. For example, we are in the fourth quarter, you’ve only done 50% of your progress and you are supposed to be at 80%, so you are very far behind. This is what needs to be done; this is the way your grades are broken down. You try to get verbal confirmation from the parent or guardian so that they cannot say ‘I wasn’t told about testing.’"
“During the first quarter you have to have a data conference with everybody. During the rest of the quarter, you are only required have a data conference with the kids that are struggling.”

Marcelle explains that Study Island is partially used as a guide to see if a data conference is needed or not. “You have to really bounce back and forth between the LMS and Study Island. Student work samples are pulled from the LMS and they are 10% of the grade; Study Island is 10% since you can see the blue ribbons that are being earned and the accolades that they are receiving; synchronous lessons are 10% and then a lot of times we have a benchmark or some kind of assessment, that they have to take that it is also a percentage, 10%. Then their progress is the other 60%. So, we bounce back and forth.”

Marcelle considers the online SIOP training beneficial. However, she found it difficult to complete all ten modules in a short period of time. Instead, she would often go a couple of months without completing a module and felt that it was difficult to pick up where she left off. “There is so much other going on, but with it being spread out such a long period of time, sometimes I would think, “I don’t remember what I did in modules 1, 2 and 3.” Marcelle feels that it would be ideal to have a shorter training for those teachers who have previous training in SIOP. Marcelle also thinks that the training is beneficial because the strategies can be used in remediation for students who are native English speakers. “I think any teacher who is passionate about what they do can use these strategies.” However, Marcelle does not feel that the online SIOP training prepares teachers to fully address the needs of ELLs. “When I completed the face-to-face SIOP
training in the past, we completed hands-on activities together. I think that collaboration was very helpful. So I think that the SIOP training would be more beneficial face-to-face.”

Marcelle feels that the activity in the online SIOP training where teachers are instructed to select a Teacher Guide to work with and apply the SIOP components as they move along was not a very helpful exercise. “When you begin teaching online, there is so much training and there is so much that you have to be doing that I don’t think that it was very beneficial. If anything, I think that would be more something more beneficial towards the end of the course.”

Marcelle stated that SAOL teachers are given a sequence at the beginning of the year that details what they need to be teaching. Teachers often reuse PowerPoint decks for their synchronous lessons from previous years, habitually adapting them if necessary.

Marcelle says, “Our lessons are driven by the state standards, so the lessons that students are actually on according to the sequence given to us at the beginning of the year, which is based on state standards, could be on totally different lesson from what is in the LMS. So, it gets kind of confusing. From what I understand, the LMS is not geared towards the standardized tests in our state. Now, that is not to say that all of the lessons in the LMS don’t touch on the things that will be tested. However, our lessons are not LMS lessons. They are based on Study Island, so that kind of gets a little confusing for the new kids that come in.”

Marcelle continues, “I guess because we have so many kids, and we do so many different levels and they come in at different times; you could have one on unit 10 lesson
5, and another on unit 5 lesson 3, it’s hard to gear that towards the LMS. But then when you look at Study Island and they are aligned to the standards in your specific state, you can gear your lessons towards that since that’s what they are going to be tested on.”

Marcelle felt that Module 6 (Strategies) provided the most useful information for online teachers. However, she feels that implementing the SIOP model online is quite difficult. “Since we have to present things on a slide, I think implementing some of those strategies would be hard. Some of the components of the SIOP model require face-to-face interaction so it is not possible to incorporate all of the model into the online classroom. For example, the components about gestures and body language; those would only work with webcams and students don’t tend to have webcams. Most teachers don’t use theirs either.”

Marcelle continues, “The problem with teaching online is the randomness. Every quarter, we have to do data conferences for every student, which take about 30 minutes. So if you have 60 students in your homeroom, you multiply 60 times 30 minutes. And you still have your teaching and your co-teaching and your action plans for the kids who aren’t doing what they are supposed to be doing. Also, your meetings on Monday and your study hall, you know that can get overwhelming for about 3 or 4 weeks. But there are times also that may have two hours during the day to where you are not rushing around and always doing something. That would probably be the best time to set up a synchronous lesson with a student, like an ELL and address their areas of need.”

Marcelle rates the online SIOP training a 7 on a scale from 1 to 10. She added,” I find that a lot of the training through the SAOL is not that helpful to me, because it’s a
whole new learning curve. I think that the next time I go through the different types of training I will find them more beneficial, because I’ll have my feet on the ground and I know what I am doing by then.”

Marcelle does not feel properly trained to integrate the SIOP model online after completing the online SIOP training. “I think that I could do it, because I have had the other training and I’ve seen these strategies work in a regular classrooms, so I would figure out a way to make it work, but I think a new teacher coming in who has never dealt with ELLs, they might struggle integrating the model online. Online teachers are dealing with so much at once and the model works in a regular classroom, not online, I think. These kids are just sitting in an online classroom and getting absolutely nothing out of those classrooms. Sometimes they don’t even have microphones. So it’s one of those things that we make sure we say at the very beginning is, ‘when I call on you, if you want to read, raise your hand, but you got to make sure that you have a microphone, because if you don’t have one then obviously you are not going to be able to read to me, so don’t raise your hand if you don’t have a microphone.’ It’s confusing to me why everybody doesn’t have a mic. I don’t understand that.”

“Here is the problem identifying ELLs in the online classroom. I know when I have an ELL in my homeroom but when I teach a subject, I teach students from other homerooms. Since they are not my kids, I don’t know anything about their background. We don’t have the ability to be able to know who is an ELL. That’s why those strategies would need to implemented in every course, for all the kids.”
Zoe. Zoe is a fifth grade Social Studies teacher at the SAOL. She has an ESL certification but has never been trained on SIOP. Zoe is certified to teach grades Pre-K through 8. In addition, she is certified in special education for grades Pre-K through 12 and ESL for grades 4 through 8. Zoe speaks intermediate Spanish.

This school year, Zoe has four ELLs in her homeroom class. These students are all Spanish-speakers with a developing level of proficiency in English. This is Zoe’s first year as an online teacher. She also serves as a co-teacher for English Language Arts.

Since Zoe is not sure when ELL students attend her Social Studies synchronous lessons, she does not modify materials for ELLs. However, she makes sure to communicate clearly when she interacts with the ELLs in her homeroom or when she contacts their families. These interactions usually take place during the quarterly data conferences.

Zoe thinks that the online SIOP training contained very useful information. However, she found it overwhelming due to the amount of materials presented in the modules. She stated that since the training was divided into modules based on the SIOP components and she is a “big picture person” she would have preferred an overview or summary with the major points from the model and a list of keywords. She said “like 8 or 10 page summary that broke down what was going to happen at each time with a couple of keywords. I’m an older learner. I’m over 50 and so I’m more used to paper.” Overall, she found the modules quite lengthy, specifically Module 1 (Introduction to Sheltered Instruction).
Zoe stated that she was unable to adapt the Teacher Guide in the LMS as instructed in the online SIOP training because she is simply not that familiar with the curriculum in the LMS, provided by the EMO. Zoe says that the lessons in the LMS are supplemental to the lessons on Study Island. “The lessons in the learning management system are very deep, far deeper than the state would require for student mastering. So I think to take one of those lessons and try to supplement or modify for an ELL is too deep because there’s too much extra material there. Study island lessons are not as deep and it is material that we know for sure the students have to master. Those lessons are easier to use one-on-one in a tutoring situation with the student. For the lessons in the learning management system, you might need a book or it might come from various sources.”

Zoe explained that she is looking for the students to master the material. “They need to master the material at 80% which tells us they’re proficient in whatever that topic happens to be. The learning coach can immediately go into the test, determine what their student needs to master, and it would then be up to the learning coach to decide how much of those lessons the student needs to complete. If the student has a lot of prior background knowledge in a certain topic, it isn’t necessary for them to do every activity if they have mastered the material. It’s on an individual basis based on what the parent have determined the student already knows. If they show that they’ve master the material prior to doing any lessons, in our view that’s mastered. The learning coach then checks off the lesson as complete in the learning management system.”

“So for example, if a student comes into our school and they’ve been in a brick and mortar and there they mastered multiplication or division, then when they get to our
lesson that covers that topic, it’s perfectly fine for the learning coach to look at the test and if their kids know that material, they can take the test. If they score 80% or higher, that would mean that doing those lessons would be busy work and not necessary. They can instead move on to an area where they actually need instruction.”

Zoe felt that Module 6 (Strategies) was very helpful. “I think verbal scaffolding is one of the best ways to help the ELLs to feel more comfortable. When I was teaching third grade ESL, it was a pullout model with 90 minutes a day reading. I made them talk every day. So the verbal scaffolding I found was so effective in helping them academically because they felt more comfortable with the language. Module 6 reinforced that.”

Zoe also indicated that Module 9 (Lesson Delivery) was valuable because it described how to better pace a lesson for ELLs in the online classroom. She explained that she finds it advantageous to use breakout rooms during the synchronous lessons. “Since our classrooms have a teacher and a co-teacher, we can always pull a student into a breakout room to provide individual support. I also get to have a little talk with them, converse with them. It’s effective for me because it helps build our relationship. So there are times when I have pull them down into the breakout room to check for understanding. The teacher who co-teaches with me for Social Studies, I co-teach for English Language Arts.”

Zoe feels the online SIOP training presented content well and was very effective. However, she does not see the need for the separate modules and considers the duration of the training excessive. She did enjoy that the online SIOP training was self-paced. “I
like the fact that it could be done on your own time schedule because our schedules change so much depending on what’s going on. So to be able to do it at will was good.”

Zoe expressed that since she completed the training very recently, she has yet to make any modifications to her lessons to accommodate ELLs based on the SIOP model. But that she is now planning more time in the breakout rooms during breakout sessions based on what she learned about oral development in the online SIOP training. “I’m paying more attention to having those conversations that were once part of everyday teaching in the brick-and-mortar and we don’t get that as much here. The training reinforced the need to do this more often.”

Zoe continues to refer to the Strategy Gallery in the online SIOP training, to gather ideas for activities that help reinforce concepts when providing instruction to ELLs. On a scale of 1 to 10, Zoe would give the online SIOP training a 7. She recommends expanding the Strategy Gallery and providing online teachers with opportunities to share their own activities.

Zoe mentioned that the Lesson Preparation component of the SIOP model does not apply to teachers at the SAOL. The starting point for SAOL teachers are the state standards, Study Island, and the PowerPoint decks that are prepared by veteran teachers to guide the synchronous lessons. “The scope and sequence lays out what material is to be attended to in the lessons. For instance, a student in Math would just get two hours of Math live class instruction [synchronous lesson]. Those two hours are certainly not all the instruction a student needs for the week in Math. The rest of it is coming from the lessons that are in the learning management system and from their learning coach. Social studies,
for instance is one hour a week, so my one hour lesson will cover topics that have been determined essential based on the standards in state. Not every topic will be taught in a synchronous lesson. It’s definitely a different model. We are a totally different from schools that are providing seven hours a day of live instruction of some type.”

Zoe explained that one of the obstacles for students learning online is the reliance on learning coach support. “We rely greatly on the learning coach’s participation within our program. They assist the child, enter attendance, log work, and ensure that a student completes 3% of the curriculum a week. So we rely greatly on the parents assisting their child. When a parent has not assisted their child or is not interactive with them as far as their learning goes, the child suffers greatly whereas if you were in a brick-and-mortar [school], you are there, the stuff goes on in front of you. So that is the frustrating part. I believe those students who do not get support from the learning coach fall through the cracks. Definitely those students are not able to be successful.”

“I am the test site coordinator for the city I live in. I know the families there since I’ve been doing it for three years. I am responsible for calling the student when they don’t attend testing. This week, I received a call from the mother of a seventh grade student. She spoke no English at all. Now this isn’t one of my students, this is just a student who lives in my city that I had to check on due to her absence from testing. So she was withdrawn this week because she did not attend testing. I don’t think she really even understood the reasoning for it. The student herself was a very limited English speaker. So this is probably not the best model of school for her. It is very difficult for a parent
who does not speak English to understand the directions. I would think it would be very difficult to support this type of student within our school.”

**Meredith.** Meredith is a 10th grade Geometry teacher. She was previously trained on SIOP—a model that she believes works for all students, not just ELLs. She has a bachelor’s degree in math and a master’s degree in educational technology. She also holds certifications in advanced math. Meredith has four years of experience teaching in a brick-and-mortar public school.

Meredith has about five ELLs in her classroom, all of whom are Spanish-speakers. She believes that these students have an advanced proficiency level in English. Therefore, she does not feel the need to modify materials. Occasionally, she has to clarify terms but never adapt a full lesson.

Meredith indicated that in her opinion, the online SIOP training was not as in-depth and informative as she expected. In addition, she did not find the classroom examples very helpful. “The previous one that I attended we actually had to get up and had to show examples of how these students were struggling. Face-to-face training would have been much more beneficial, in my opinion. Since it is online and we all work remotely, that accommodates our job better but for real learning and understanding of SIOP, maybe a professional development meeting would’ve been the way to go.” Meredith also felt that the training was very wordy. She would have preferred a bulleted list and “straight to the point content.” However, Meredith felt that the duration of the training was appropriate. Meredith said that in the future, the training should be provided based on a teacher’s experience with ELLs and with the SIOP model itself instead of a
“one-size-fits-all” approach. She also feels that the training would have been enhanced by the use of audio, to “break things up.” On a scale from 1 through 10, Meredith gives the training a 4. Furthermore, she does not feel properly trained to implement the SIOP model in the online classroom.

**Allison.** Allison is a 7th grade English teacher, who has never been trained on the SIOP model. Having taught in a face-to-face classroom for six years, Alison admits that being an online teacher is challenging. “I’m still getting my feet wet--the whole different dynamic and the different modality of teaching to an imaginary person. It’s a little bit of an adjustment.” However, Allison enjoys the flexibility of teaching online. “I have flexibility. If I want to do things at 3 o’clock in the morning, I can as long as it gets done. But in some ways it takes the very best part of teaching which is interaction with your students and just amplifies the things you don’t like the paperwork and negative interactions with parents.” Allison explains that interactions with parents tend to be negative because generally, if an SAOL teacher is contacting a parent, it is inform them that something negative is going on.

Allison explains that cybertruancy is a problem at the SAOL. “If a student doesn’t ever show up to the synchronous lessons, you have to contact the parents about this, so it’s a negative interaction. This can be upsetting. In a traditional school, you’re kind of balanced by the fact that you may call a parent about something negative, but the students have had numerous positive interactions with you. In the traditional classroom, you have an more opportunities to balance the negative and the positive.”
Allison has a master’s degree in education administration and is certified to teach English Language Arts in grades 4 through 8. This is her first semester with an ELL in her homeroom. She explains that this student is currently transitioning from intermediate to advanced proficiency in English. Alison feels that the student does not have difficulties in classes related to language, however he has been classified as special education student. This student is a ninth grade student so Allison does not provide instruction in the subject areas to him. In 9th grade, students at the SAOL are not as dependent on the learning coach. Allison admits that she is not supposed to have special education students in her homeroom but “sometimes they get through.” Allison states that special education students at the SAOL follow a modified curriculum, with specifications listed on the student’s individual learning plan. “I offer him additional tutorial sessions and small group options. And he does meet weekly with a counselor who goes again into his lessons and helps him out with a broader review of all those lessons.” Allison explains that modified assignments and the modified assignment calendar is sent to the student’s learning coach. “But in this case, it may be that since he as an ELL student, he has to tell the parent what is going on [since the learning coach does not speak English]. The parent [learning coach] speaks to me through the student.”

Allison tries to spend time modifying the student’s instructional materials, including visual representations to make content accessible. “I’m having to modify it so much for the special education issue and that it kind of picks up where he happens to be language-wise.” She explains that some of the modifications include reduced workload since he is unable to complete the amount of reading required for an on-level student,
reading previews, shortened assignments, and oral testing as appropriate. She also records
the reading materials as often as she can since it is easier for him. Allison interacts
regularly with the student’s special education coach. The coach reviews the modified
assignments and makes additional modifications if necessary. Allison agrees that with the
exception of the reduced workload, most of the modifications that she enumerated are
aligned to the SIOP model. Therefore, these strategies are not unique for students
struggling with the language.

Allison admits that she was initially intimidated by the online SIOP training
because she has such limited ELL experience. “I wanted to learn more because I wasn’t
even sure I was doing everything right by this poor child. He was like my first little
guinea pig. But then as I was getting into it, I realized that it’s the ideal best teaching
practices that a person should be doing anyway, though I do recognize that implementing
some of the strategies in an online environment is more challenging than in a traditional
classroom. Using visuals are difficult. Also it can be a real challenge when you see the
grades in the assessment of several hundred students and realize that reteaching is
necessary. The online classes continue moving forward according to the calendar. Also,
we allow a one month kind of layaway program. Your assignment can be turned in up to
a month late without a penalty. So that can be a huge problem, because by the time you
realize that they don’t know what’s going on, and you need to reteach, not only are they
in the next unit, they’re three units down the road. So in terms of the reteaching, the
linear aspects of the online program work well in a traditional classroom but it really
makes it kind of difficult to do that online with a one month layaway program. It’s extraordinarily generous. And yet students still ask for an extra week.”

Allison enjoyed Module 6 (Strategies) in the online SIOP training. “I liked how it talked about instructional strategies versus learning strategies. I think as a teacher I have a tendency to focus on what I do on my classroom, the instructional strategies, as opposed to the strategies that my students need to learn. I should be focusing what the student is doing, because that way, I’m going to know what the student is learning.”

Allison explains how Module 3 (Building Background) is very difficult to implement in an online classroom. “The building background is a little harder just because in some cases, I’ll never see the student in the online classroom. Synchronous lessons are optional in high school. So trying to tie it in to their background or previous units is a little more difficult. I’m assuming that if our synchronous lessons were mandatory, then it would be less of an impediment. It also depends on your teaching load. I had a relatively small teaching load of 125 kids. I have friends who have 300. With 300 kids you’re not going to know a single thing about that child. You will know that student 457,321 is missing lesson7.02.”

Regarding the inability to see students since they don’t use a webcam, Allison says, “It’s really frustrating, because in the real world and you can look at someone’s face and kind of see what’s going on. You can show them things immediately through the camera. But in our environment you can’t, so I have no idea what’s going on with that kid. A lot of kids will just login to the synchronous lesson to get credit and they walk away to eat a sandwich, so I’m actually talking to nobody. And the only way I discover
this is if I say ‘could give me a smiley face if you understand?’ Then I realize that some kids haven’t given me a smiley face in like 30 minutes.”

Allison is also concerned about some of the students’ internet connections, since some students use dial-up internet access. “In some cases, they lag, since some students are still on dial-up. And they’re lagging so bad, that by the time they realize that, they don’t know what’s going on and they go on to ask a question, I’ve already moved on.”

Allison wondered aloud why ELLs would choose an online school. “This is definitely not the most favorable environment for learning English at all. One of my students came from Africa and speaks an African language that I can’t pronounce. And I’m trying to imagine how she does it. Her parents don’t speak English and so I don’t even know how she ended up here. I don’t even know how they discovered that this type of program even exists. I will try to accommodate ELLs’ needs, but it’s definitely challenging.”

Allison found the online SIOP training pretty easy to navigate and thorough. She felt that it was logically organized. “I did like the fact that you didn’t have to wait so long between slides. I’ve been to training where you have to sit so long at slides, which is insanely annoying.”

Allison explained that in the online roster, ELLs were marked as “special education.” “So for longest time I was just modifying for special education. But then when I discovered, that this student was ELL, that was a bit of shock to me.”

Allison has tried to implement some of the strategies from the online SIOP training into her online classroom. “I did take into consideration the idea of using more
visuals so I would send him graphic organizers and pictures and things like that as an preview. I also sent him visuals of vocabulary words, infrequent vocabulary words and things like that that I didn’t think he knew. I’ve been trying to do ELL instruction basically in a vacuum until now, because I had no idea what I was supposed to be doing. So I’m glad that I did the training.”

“In terms of implementing all these different things, you could be modifying materials for the student you can’t see who may never show up. It’s a really nice theory and I do think that these are practices that teachers should be taking into consideration for instructing any student. We should be thoughtful proactive teachers. But the implementation of some of these is kind of difficult. To hold a teacher accountable for doing these things would be a little unrealistic.”

“You have a bunch of different students here for a bunch of different reasons with a bunch of different baggage and you got to make sure that you’re working towards helping them. In terms of the SIOP model, these are things that would be good for any teacher. But if you have 300 kids in your junior class, you’re not going to be able to reteach, assess, and reteach for everybody in a meaningful way.”

Allison rates the online SIOP training as a 7 or 8 on a scale from 1 through 10. “I liked it. It made sense. It was coherent. I like the fact that it was divided into different parts. I like the fact that you could click on videos that would explain things. I feel that I was properly trained to integrate it into a regular classroom. I feel like I’d have to break it down in an online classroom, especially just with the unique nature of my school not having cameras, some latency issues with technology, attendance and things like that.”
Allison recommends further adapting the SIOP model for an online environment, not necessarily focusing exclusively on ELLs—but making the model applicable to the larger student population. “These are good teaching practices that you should be doing for all students. So you’re not doing more work; you’re just doing what you should be doing calling it by a different name. That would make teachers less resistant to doing it since it would apply to everyone.”

Allison feels moderately confident that she can reach ELLs in the online classroom in the upcoming year. “The online classroom is much more dependent on the student than a traditional classroom. In the online classroom, I’m lucky if my student logs in and comes to my synchronous lessons. So I can have the most amazing, scaffolded lesson with visuals and graphic organizers if I can’t make the kid come, I can’t do anything with it.”

Allison expresses frustration about synchronous lessons being optional. She says, “I do record them and they have the option of watching them. But one of my favorite things to do is at the end of class is ask students to send me an email with just one word in it to receive 10 extra credit points. I then wait and see how many kids send it and it’s like none.”

Allison explains that there was a time when she was working with her ELL and she was not sure how to assist him. “It was with Romeo and Juliet, trying to explain the antiquated English. And I found it insanely frustrated to be a digital teacher, because if I was a real classroom teacher, I could just walk over to his desk and do something, anything. So I felt like an ineffective teacher and it was insanely frustrating. I did a one-
on-one session with him and I was going back and forth. So then I have to wait five days, send him like an email and he just said he was doing fine which of course he was going to say that. I have to wait five days to kind of get back in the classroom with him and see how it went. So I thought it was really frustrating and I thought it was really kind of impotent. It was not a good feeling.” Allison printed out all of the SIOP Quick Cards and plans to use them as reference in the future, to avoid frustrating situations like the one with the ELL and Romeo and Juliet.

Allison thinks that if she had a similar situation come up again, she would be able to handle it differently since completing the online SIOP training because she now knows more about frontloading a lesson and how make input comprehensible for students. “I think it definitely helps as far as planning in advance. And although I didn’t do this in advance, I plan to use my breakout rooms and allow the students to talk to each other and even if he doesn’t actively participate, at least he is hearing his peers discuss the material. The training explains how often in a traditional classroom it’s teacher-led and teacher-driven and the teacher talking. In an online environment that’s amplified. So I definitely need to use the breakout rooms more often so that the students interact and discuss the material without me standing over half of them and dictating.”

Pearl. Pearl is a technology teacher for grades 9 through 12. She is not ESL-certified, nor is she previously trained on SIOP. Having been raised in South Africa, Pearl speaks intermediate Afrikaans. She holds a master’s degree and certification in Career and Technology education. In addition, she is certified to teach Family and Consumer Sciences and Nutrition and Wellness. This is Pearl’s first semester as an
SAOL teacher. She does remember receiving training related to ELLs while she was a teacher in a brick-and-mortar school but she does not recall the name of the methodology. Pearl currently has 8 ELLs in her classes, all of whom are Spanish-speakers. Pearl often finds out that a student is an ELL through her communications with them. “I just realize if I call them for something and then I can figure out from there.” According to Pearl, most of her ELLs have intermediate proficiency. However, they are often more proficient in English than their parents.

Pearl does not spend a lot of time modifying instructional materials for her students. “A lot of times, I’ll just exempt them from certain assignments. So I really don’t spend a whole lot of time [modifying materials] every week. I would say less than 3 hours every week modifying actual course content.”

Pearl found the online SIOP training very informative and useful. “The language that teachers can use to prompt the students and the kinds of prompts that can be used so that the students think more deeply was very helpful” (Module 5: Comprehensible Input). However, she didn’t find the overview, particularly in Modules 1 and 2, very interesting. Pearl stated that the training held her attention very well and that it compares to similar training that she has complete in person. “The content was organized very well and I did enjoy the videos. The way that the course is organized and just that aesthetic appeal of the course was good in my opinion.”

Pearl admits that moving from a brick-and-mortar school to an online school is challenging. “It's kind of like learning how to teach all over again.”
Pearl has some specific success in her online classroom from implementing some strategies from the online SIOP training. “I have an ELL student who I’m now able to communicate very well with from some of the things that I was able to learn from the online SIOP training. When I get emails from her, they have absolutely no punctuation or anything like that and lots of misspelled words. I know she is doing the best she can with the course. So I was able to use some of the things that I learned in the course to kind of dig deeper with her. I'm not sure which module it was but just the way language can be changed to reach ELLs.” Pearl adds, “next year I will make sure to get more access to the students background so they can kind of have a little bit more support.”

Pearl thinks that although the videos in the online SIOP training mostly present a face-to-face classroom, that she is able to transpose those strategies to an online classroom easily. She believes that she was properly trained to integrate the SIOP model into an online classroom, and feels pretty confident that she can reach ELLs if she implements the strategies discussed in the training. She rates the training an 8 on a scale of 1 to 10. “I thought it was really good. What kept it from being a 10 is that I found that some of the concepts were repeated a lot. That’s kind of hard because if you need to reiterate something, you do need to repeat it a lot, but I would say some of the concepts were introduced a few different ways and I think maybe that could be improved on. “I'm always looking for new ways to support students and to make their lives easier and help them become more passionate about the subject that I'm presenting to them. When I was going through this training I said to myself--this is something that has been missing. This training is something that will help me support my students more and that is important to
me. So this is integral training, even though we have a small population, for us to know what we are doing, to help make those students feel more welcome in an online classroom. When I’m unable to help a student, it makes you feel helpless. It makes you feel like all these years, I went to college for six years to become an educator, it kind of makes you feel like it all got flushed down the toilet, because I’m missing this one tiny piece of the puzzle that can make it all come together. So I think that this kind of training is important for everybody, all teachers.”

**Janet.** Janet is a grade 9 Algebra I teacher. She has not received prior training in SIOP nor is she ESL-certified. Janet has a beginning proficiency level in French. Certified to teach grades 9 through 12 and gifted and talented, Janet has a bachelor’s degree in engineering and a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction. Prior to the online SIOP training, Janet completed professional development related to the needs of ELLs. She does not remember the name of the methodology but thoroughly enjoyed it. “The best thing I remember from that training is that the instructor told us that he was about to teach in German and that he could guarantee that we would get it. He literally taught us a lesson. It was like a two minute lesson on ordinal numbers in German. None of us knew German but because he was using those strategies and practices we were able to do the activity, which was putting presidents in order in German. That was like the first time I ever understood how ELLs might feel. It now helps me to be a better instructor” Janet feels that trainings related to the needs of ELLs, including SIOP “are just good instructional practice for all students.”
Janet believes that she has about three ELLs in her subject classroom but none in her homeroom. She assumes that they are Spanish-speakers. She does not know their level of proficiency in English. “Unfortunately, they are kind of absentees. They don’t want to come to the target teach sessions. Target teach sessions is when I go through an assignment with the students—for example, who can tell me what I need to do, let’s review this assignment step-by-step together. I publicize it like we are going to do the assignments together. If you’re coming to target teach, you get to do this assignment with me. Other times I create breakout rooms [in Blackboard Collaborate] and pair students up. Target teach is supposed to be for students who are below 70 percent. I even started recording these sessions and sending them out and tracking them using a Google survey. But my ELLs don’t show to the synchronous target teach or request the recording. I’ve tried to reach the parents, gone down the list of phone numbers and none of the numbers work.” Janet also admits that most students do not show up for the synchronous lessons. “I would say a third show up live.”

Janet found the online SIOP training very repetitive. She was unable to remember any of the specific modules. But she does not believe that any of the modules should be deleted, just simplified to avoid repetition. Although she can see the value in the activity in the training that required teachers to modify an existing Teacher Guide according to the SIOP model, she would have preferred more quizzes in the training for accountability. “The quiz is action or me. I think I learn better that way, so that I can go back and pay more attention if I fail.”
Janet also mentioned that in the activity that required the use of the Teacher Guide from the LMS she used her own lessons, specifically PowerPoint decks, since she does not use the lessons provided by the education management company. “My starting point for lesson planning is what the kids have historically messed up on. So it’s a constant hybrid of reviews and introducing new concepts. I look up the lesson in the LMS to see how they are presenting it and then I try to how I would present it and go from there. I look at state standards. The bottom line is that they are going to be tested, so I need to make sure to address the things that they are expected to do on the state test.”

“I’m new to the online environment; I’m only two years in. The first year I was like a basket case. I had been a teacher for 10 years. I was pretty darn good teacher and I felt like a total novice that first year. It’s a big difference.”

Janet claims that the online SIOP training forced her to “think in smaller chunks versus a whole big lump. “I’m going to call it chunking and chewing; breaking the lesson down to simpler easily digestible sections. So I now check for understanding way more regularly than I used to. I also changed the pace in the class so that everyone is engaged. One specific student that I’m thinking of--she was not doing very well in my class. Once we started being a little more engaging in class, she has really blossomed. She has even mentioned that to me.”

“For the next school year, I’m going to look into how to hook them first. And I’m working on how to vary the lesson for our learners. One of the things that we are doing is working on a guided note taking template because one of my learners developed little templates to takes the notes on. I found that they allowed me to have an exchange with
them. In other words, I’m looking at their notes and their questions on the notes so we can correspond or talk about this. I know that note taking is beneficial for everybody.”

Although Janet would rate the online SIOP training an 8 or 9 on a scale from 1 to 10 because the information was presented well, she feels that she did not learn anything new. She does feel, however, that anyone who takes the training can properly integrate the SIOP model online.

“I believe that I can work with any student, if they show up. If they don’t come, then there is nothing that I can do. I think that the training was quite sufficient for helping understand ELLs and learning strategies to help them. Now they just have to show up.”

**Trudie.** Trudie is a science teacher for grades 5 and 7. She had never been trained on SIOP, nor does she have an ESL-certification. Trudie has been teaching at the SAOL for three years. She has a bachelor’s in elementary education and is certified to teach grades 1 through 8. Trudie has one ELL in her homeroom, who is a native Spanish speaker. She admits that she does not interact often with the student and that this is her first ELL student ever.

On a scale of 1 to 10, Trudie gives the online SIOP training a 5. She claims that this is related to not having ELLs in her subject class and the way the SAOL online model works. “I don't have as much application for it." However, she adds, “all of the material was helpful. All of the information was pertinent in general for all students. The content of the training is generally good practice anyway.”
Trudie explained that the information presented in the training was basically “a reiteration of the stuff that I learned in college. I will definitely put it into practice.” Trudie feels that she was properly trained to integrate SIOP model online.

Trudie explains that the SIOP model emphasizes a focus on repetition, concept reinforcement and language development. However, she feels that it is difficult to have constant repetition in an online model compared to a face-to-face model. “Implementing the SIOP model online would be very challenging.”

Trudie wondered why ELLs and their parents would choose an online school. "I have heard of stories of learning coaches learning the language along with their students [using the online curriculum]. Because of learning along with their student, I heard that a parent felt compelled to go back to school. You have to know the family's story to find out why they're choosing an online school. It could be that as a learning coach, they get to hide behind the computer."

Marnie. Marnie is a reading and writing teacher for grade 6, who was previously trained on SIOP and has an ESL endorsement. She explained that the reading class is required for students but the writing class is not since they are not tested by the state at this level. Marnie has a bachelor’s degree in general education and a master’s degree in educational administration. She is certified to teach grades 4 through 8 English Language Arts. Her homeroom class includes six ELLs: two speak Mandarin, two speak Spanish and two speak German. Since these students are all sixth graders, she is also their reading and writing teacher. Marnie explained that only one of her students is not on level—he is about a fourth grade reading level. The rest of the ELLs are all on level. Marnie does not
have difficulties communicating with these students. Most of the parents, who also serve as learning coaches for their students, are very fluent in English.

Marnie found sections of the training very informative. For example, the Quick Cards were very helpful. “I saved them. I created a SIOP folder, and I saved those along with some of the common words and those types of things. I plan on going back and reviewing those before I start creating my lessons for next year.” But she found some of the content very repetitive. “It probably could have been scaled down some. Overall, I thought that it was a good training except for the fact that it will be very difficult to incorporate into an online setting.”

Marnie found Module 5 (Comprehensible Input) to be the most applicable to the online environment “because it was focused on how to communicate with the students when you're teaching.”

The online SIOP training “provided a good amount of resources and information. It was a little long, but overall it provided a good amount of information. It was actually more in-depth than any of the other online trainings that I've participated in. However, I wish it did have more audio. It's difficult to sit and read though things. Maybe some audio would have helped.”

Marnie is unable to attribute some of her successes teaching ELLs to the online SIOP training since she has been incorporating some of the strategies into her classroom from the beginning. “I do a whole lot of SIOP already in my classrooms, because I've been trained before in it. I use a lot of picture cues, and clarifications, and those kinds of things already.”
Marnie expressed some frustration at trying to meet the needs of ELLs in her online classroom. “The fact that I don't get to speak with them daily and help them build that academic language that they need is difficult. The other difficulty is getting those ELLs to participate online and to feel comfortable enough to be able to speak and to read out in the class. They're not required to. They're just required to attend. To get them to actually verbally participate can be difficult. I wish there was more of a tool to communicate with them online than just having them in a class once or twice a week, or actually just a time to be able to speak with them more often. I miss the daily communication with the students.”

On a scale of 1 to 10, Marnie would give the online SIOP training a 7. She feels that what would make it a 10 is “maybe scaling it down a little bit. I know it's important to repeat and review things though the training just to make sure it's being remembered but I think there were some things that probably could have been left out. Also adding audio would help.”

The most helpful module for Marnie was Module 5 (Comprehensible Input). “Helping students see certain things that you're talking about, not just saying them. That's something that can be easily done.” The least helpful sections were the videos, since they showed face-to-face classrooms, where Marnie admits it is easier to implement the SIOP model. She feels that the training is a good start for implementing the SIOP model but needs to be enhanced with online examples.

Marnie believes that the online SIOP training might increase teachers’ confidence “if they actually take the initiative to think about it and follow through with some of the
recommendations. It had good ideas. Honestly, there are parts of the SIOP training that are applicable to all students.”

**Tiffany.** Tiffany is the ESL lab teacher for grades 3-12. She has an ESL certification and was previously trained on SIOP. She is fluent in Spanish and served as an expert reviewer for the online SIOP training. “My homeroom is 3rd and 4th grades and I’m the ELL lab teacher. It’s a pull-out model for ESL services for ELLs. My main job duty is to provide instruction to limited English proficient (LEP) students. The students that are required to attend ESL labs are the ones that have not been exited; they are coded as LEP and they have to receive my lab instruction each week.”

“I also work with homeroom teachers to monitor students—it usually involves just giving a report or talking to the teacher and asking how an ELL is doing. Or the homeroom teacher sends a draft report card to me first to review and notice that for example, a student is failing English. So then I would intervene with the ESL lab classes. Monitoring meaning reviewing numbers and teacher comments and if there is any concerns, I’ll talk to the teacher, and email the student asking, for example, if he wishes to come play some spelling games with me to work on his vocabulary. It’s on a case-by-case basis. In summary, the process is to look at the grades and listen to the teachers’ comments and make decisions if and what intervention needs to happen for each these kids. The majority of ELLs that I work with are advanced and advanced high [in levels of proficiency]. In my state, they break it up into four categories—beginning is the lowest obviously and then intermediate, advanced and then advanced high. And it’s rated in all four areas of speaking, listening, writing and reading. Students have to be at the advanced
high proficiency level in all four [domains] as well as pass state testing before they can be exited and put on monitoring status.”

Tiffany believes that there are many reasons for parents of ELLs to select an online school versus a face-to-face school. “I think for our Urdu population or our different dialects of Arabic or Muslim population, they go to Quran School from about seven in the morning until two or something in the afternoon. So they go to a Mosque and learn the Quran for six to eight hours a day and then they have to come home and obviously a traditional school setting doesn’t work with that.”

Tiffany also believes that some parents believe that their children do not get enough attention in a brick-and-mortar school. The SAOL model allows parents to be more involved and aware of what their children are going through in school. “I think they want to be more involved. I think they feel like a teacher is there and structured for them, but it’s great that they’re there at a touch of a button.”

When asked how she deals with parents who do not speak English, Tiffany says, “If the parents don’t speak English at all, we come up with a plan that can help students be successful. We also introduce them to Google translate. There are times when we go in [to a Blackboard Collaborate session] and I use Google translate with them and show them how to copy and paste an assignment to translate it so that you know what it means. So they can actually read their child’s email using Google translate. So even if the grammar is not the best, they are still going to get the message.”
Tiffany currently has five teams of ESL lab sections--two elementary, two middle school, and one high school. The average lab class has been 90 and 100 students. This includes students officially coded as LEP and students who are being monitored.

“I teach like 45 minute live labs [synchronous lesson] that ELLs are supposed to attend and then a 15 minute follow-up blog assignment, so that we were interacting throughout the week and there they have to write, of course. I think that requiring the live attendance and also the written blog helps emphasize the writing part and it gives me more of an accurate example of what the teachers are probably receiving on their day to day work.”

Tiffany really enjoyed the online SIOP training. On a scale from 1 to 10, Tiffany gives the training a 9. “I really, really liked it. I think that it's the best online ESL training that I've ever participated in. It was very well organized and accurate. I was just really excited that someone finally put this together for us. I wasn't distracted at all. I was able to think carefully while going through it and if it was something that I already knew, I would just keep clicking through it. Definitely being able to go through my own pace was really beneficial for me because then I don't get frustrated.”

Tiffany believes that the SIOP model needs to be adapted for the online environment and training for online teachers needs to start with the online environment from the beginning, instead of beginning with the face-to-face environment and then providing ideas for online implementation. “Online teachers always come from a brick-and-mortar background so they often believe that they know how to do this. It’s because they are starting from a brick-and-mortar mentality. If training is specifically adjusted to
online ESL teachers, if we could say--forget everything you know from brick-and-mortar, this is how you are going to impact your students now, I think it would be much better. Everything has to be redefined when you are in this setting since it’s so different.”

Tiffany thinks that adding audio to the training would be beneficial as long as users have the option of turning it off. She also thinks that the training would benefit from more examples in an online setting. As a result, she doesn’t believe that a new teacher would be able to properly integrate SIOP into online lessons. They would need to see teachers using SIOP in the different subject areas in order to successfully implement the model. “I think that the training is awesome, but I think it's most beneficial if you already have some schema for online education using Blackboard Collaborate as well as a basic understanding of ESL.”

**Calista.** Calista is an English teacher for grades 9 and 10. Although this is her first year teaching online, she taught in a brick-and-mortar school for 7 years. Calista is certified to teach English Language Arts in grades 8 through 12. She does not have an ESL endorsement nor does she have any previous training on SIOP. Calista is conversational in Spanish and has a master’s degree in Education Administration. Prior to joining the SAOL this year, Calista does not believe that she ever taught ELLs. She now has two ELLs in her English classroom. They are native Spanish speakers with an advanced level of proficiency.

Calista has not spent too much time modifying instructional materials for these students. She says, “one of them has never showed up to my class, and the other one doesn’t come often.” She did however, meet for a one-on-one session with the second
student and reduced her workload and provided her with additional instructions for an assignment.

“They're not required to attend synchronous lessons so if I see that the student is failing and they've missed an assignment or something like that, then I always encourage them to attend the synchronous lesson or if we have something big coming up. I do an auto-dialer or send out a phone message saying, ‘Don't forget to turn to your synchronous lesson on this day or come to class coaching on this day.’ There always get a reminder.”

Calista believes that the online SIOP training “was good because I've never had anything like this before, so it was good introduction and overview. It would have been more helpful to me if it had specifically addressed more high school because all the little videos were either elementary or I think one of them might have been 6th or 7th grade, but there was nothing that really showed a high school environment. Also, I didn't see a lot of specific examples in the online environment so that would make it better.”

Calista particularly enjoyed Module 6 (Strategies), “because it talked about scaffolding, how to build on what they already know; how to make sure that you're relating back to what they've learned outside of class. I think the tips that they gave there were really good.”

Calista found the online SIOP training unnecessarily long. “It felt like it was stretched out for a long time, and it covered a lot of information. But maybe you didn't have to be put in some modules, and especially when the first four slides are the same in almost everyone. As a new teacher here, just the training amount that we have to do is
overwhelming and to even wrap my head around doing 10 modules on one thing is just ... it makes me crazy.”

Calista admits that she has not made any changes to her instructional practices since completing the online SIOP training. This is because she recently completed the training and because her two ELLs are in the advanced levels of proficiency. She added, “although this is specifically geared towards ELLs, it's helpful information in everyday subjects too because every student benefits from scaffolding and from those vocabulary strategies. It’s good teaching and helps everyone.” Calista states that she has some ideas for the implementation of the SIOP in the upcoming year.

Calista feels that she is mostly prepared to integrate the SIOP model in the online classroom due to this training. “It does give me a good background, a good basis to go off of. I would be able to do it in the classroom. I think I would need more practice. I would also need to talk to someone else who has done it successfully online. I think there are a lot of things that can be done because it's good teaching, but I think there are aspects that are made more difficult because I can't go to that kid's desk and talk to them for a few minutes and then continue walking around the room. I've got everyone for an hour and even when I do breakout rooms, it's still limited as to where I can be during that time.”

She also feels that she has a much better understanding of how ELLs can be supported as they continue to learn English.

**Cherie.** Cherie is a Technology teacher for grades 6 through 8. She does not have an ESL endorsement or prior training on SIOP. Certified to teach elementary certification from Pre-K through 6th grade and Information Processing for grades 6 through 8, she is a
homeroom teacher for grade 6. This is her second year as an online teacher at the SAOL. Cherie does not have any ELLs in her homeroom or subject classroom at this time.

Although she found it time-consuming, Cherie enjoyed the online SIOP training. “Overall, I thought it was great. What I really liked most were those quick reference cards. I saved all of those. I plan to print those off and have them in front of me and highlight the things that I know I could do now. I liked the parts of the modules where you indicate that this is going to look different in the online setting because some of those things we can't do online like we do in a brick-and-mortar. We're not set up that way. I mean it's just so much harder to do some of those things. So I really did like in the modules where you all said, ‘in an online setting it might look like this.’”

Cherie believes that the SIOP model applies to all students. “The information is good for any student you have. If you're a good teacher, you're already doing the majority of those things anyway, with all of your kids.”

Cherie said, “I have to be honest--it was pretty long. I mean it really was. But it was divided out over the whole year. But I thought it was pretty good as far as with the other type of professional development we've had to do online. Actually I liked it because some of the training that we do get through [the education management company], it's just a document. You open up the document and you just kind of read it and you kind of write a little reflection.”

Cherie is already thinking of how to incorporate the SIOP model in the upcoming school year. On a scale of 1 to 10, Cherie considers the online SIOP training an 8 or 9. “For a required training, the information was great. It’s just good teaching.” However,
she is not sure if she is properly trained to integrate the SIOP model online. “I think we should have a follow-up when we start the new school year. It is hard in the online world. It's a great thing that we have, but it's also a different challenge because we don't physically see those kids. We can't read their body language. We can't see in their eyes. Are they getting it? We only know by looking at their scores. I would like to see examples from someone who actually does teach online.” It would be great to find a model teacher, across the network of schools, with some exemplary examples of SIOP use in an online lesson. I think that would be something that would be great to add.”

Cherie did not feel that the activity in the online SIOP training that asked teachers to revise an existing Teacher Guide from the LMS was very helpful. “That part, for me, was not useful for me because there aren’t any Teacher Guides for my subject anyway. I create all materials. I didn't do any of those. I just kind of went on and just got the general information.” The only addition that Cherie recommended was some examples of online teachers using SIOP in an online classroom.

Cherie’s confidence teaching ELLs has increased as a result of the online SIOP training. “I know that I have the materials if I need it. And I also know that if I were really struggling with an ELL, I've got all those materials from the training. I also know that the training is still on the computer that if I need to go back. So, if nothing else, knowing that this information I could still get to it at any time, that also helps with my confidence. It's in my little basket of goodies over here. I've just got to go dig it back up and remind myself of some things.”
Brenda. Brenda is a Spanish teacher for grades 9 through 12. Previously trained on SIOP, she has a bachelor’s degree in English and is certified to teach Spanish and English Language Arts for grades 8 through 12. Brenda does not have any ELLs in her classroom right now. As a result, she does not spend any time modifying instructional materials.

On a scale from 1 to 10, Brenda would give the SIOP training a 7. Brenda believes that the online SIOP training was very straightforward and simple. She found Module 6 (Strategies) most useful. She particularly appreciated the organization of the training. Brenda feels properly trained to integrate the SIOP model online. “It's definitely everything that you need, all the information that we need as professionals is there and can be implemented. I think the training provided enough resources to implement into the online classroom.”

Brenda believes that the information in the online SIOP training applies to most students. Therefore, she plans to keep the Quick Cards handy and review the training again to make a note of more strategies before the school year begins. She added, “I think it would be helpful to add more examples in an online classroom. I also think that collaboration would be a good idea to just discuss a few of the modules and the techniques. So maybe some sort of community session; something you can talk to other teachers about or explain how you can use it in your classroom. That might be a really good addition to it.”
Brenda also feels that the introductory modules (1 and 2) could have been shorter. “I remember reading two paragraphs and then thinking, ‘Oh, we talked about this in the first couple of slides.’”

Brenda feels moderately confident to integrate SIOP online. “I would definitely want to strengthen my skills a little bit more before I jump in to it but I feel moderately confident.”

**Nola.** Nola is a 7th grade Math teacher at the SAOL. Previously trained on SIOP, she speaks beginning German. This is her second year teaching at the SAOL. Nola is certified to teach 4th through 8th grades. Nola does not believe that she has any ELLs currently in her classroom. She already incorporates many of the SIOP strategies since they tend to help all students. “I use a lot of visuals because math is so challenging for students, whether or not they’re ELL.”

Nola considers the online SIOP training useful. However, she feels that it needed to include more information relevant to an online setting. “I don’t feel that there was enough that could be aptly applied to an online school. I wish that there were a little bit more guidance and more examples for the online classroom. Also, some of the SIOP [components] don’t apply to the online world.”

Nola feels that the duration of each module in the online SIOP training was appropriate. “I guess if you’re verbose in your reflection journals, it could take you a bit longer. When I journal, I try to keep it efficient considering my time. I liked that it was at our own pace so that we could spend it in where we wanted to.”
Nola added that the activity in the online SIOP training asking teachers to adapt an existing Teacher Guide or lesson plan based on the strategies acquired from the training was not applicable to many teachers. “I don’t get a lesson plan or teacher guide in the LMS. I create PowerPoint decks for the synchronous lessons. So I got one of my PowerPoints that’s what I dissected to complete the activity. I went in and I made sure to have all the goals and lesson listed on the slide, so that they know this is what we’re doing today. So like I said, I added and flushed out that lesson a lot more and it made me be more cognizant of what my kids needed.”

Nola found the instructions for writing student-friendly learning goals were really helpful and appropriate. It makes the goal more relatable to the student. Nola also found the SIOP model to be appropriate for all students. Nola has a plan to integrate the SIOP model in the upcoming school year. She downloaded all of the Quick Cards and created a SIOP folder. “That’s one of the things that I was going to look at this summer because I’m going to be the math department chair. We’re going to make sure that everybody understands that I’m probably going to pick out three or four main things and they’re going to apply it to every student. I’m going to create a slide that everybody needs to put in their PowerPoint, and it needs to be included for every one of our synchronous lessons so that students have the instructions there to return to the synchronous lesson if they need to.”

Nola thinks that some online teachers might benefit from collaborative sessions to discuss the training and adapt lessons together. “It might be helpful to discuss how to apply the SIOP model as a team. It can be done by grade levels or by subjects. Just some
type of collaboration.” She also believes that additional examples from an online classroom in addition to audio might enhance the training.

On a scale from 1 through 10, Nola would rate the online SIOP training a 7.5. Nola has “confidence in her abilities” so she feels properly trained to integrate the SIOP model online. She credits her teaching experience for this but believes that the strategies presented in the training help build this confidence since she had “pretty much forgotten all about SIOP. Probably a 60-40 split, 60% is teacher experience, just knowing how to reach your students and then 40% these specific strategies. I just need to integrate them.”

**Desiree.** Desiree is a grade 6 Math teacher. She was previously trained on SIOP and does not have an ESL certification. She speaks intermediate Italian and has a master’s degree in educational leadership and is certified to teach all grades. At this time, she does not have any ELLs in her subject classroom.

Desiree enjoyed the online SIOP training, particularly the introduction (Module 1: Introduction to Sheltered Instruction) and Module 6 (Strategies). She feels that the Strategies module provided detailed information on how to work with students in the classroom.

Although Desiree believes that she has received enough information on how to work with online students, she is not sure how it will translate to the SAOL since she is not currently teaching ELLs. She is looking forward to seeing how it all works once she has ELLs in her classroom. Desiree deems the duration of the training as appropriate based on the amount of information that it covered.
Although Desiree does not have ELLs in her classroom at this time, she is already incorporating some of the strategies from the online SIOP training into her synchronous lessons. “I simplified my PowerPoint decks. I usually try to lump in at least four or five concepts. Now, I have broken it down to 2 to 3. That makes sense to me really for all students.” As a result, Desiree has noticed some successes in her classroom. “I basically do a spot check and I noticed that they didn't have a clue when they first started out a few weeks ago because I was trying to cover everything within the slides which was too much stuff. Since I've broken it down, they're getting it.”

For the upcoming school year, she is planning to continue “breaking down the concepts into smaller bites. I'd rather students get the basics rather than them flying through the higher level skills because there's no point in it if they don't have the basics.” Desiree believes that the SIOP strategies are a “kind of universal way to teach.” She believes that all teachers should go through the training.

Desiree downloaded the Quick Cards and saved some of the links from the Strategy Gallery for future use. On a scale from 1 to 10, she would give the online SIOP training a 9. However, Desiree admits that the content is often repetitive and onerous. “It repeats information trying to reinforce it. Sometimes, it's too much information at one time.” She believes that audio would improve the training.

Desiree feels confident that she will use the SIOP strategies to reach ELLs in her classroom during the next school year. “I’m very confident. Like I said, I can go back in and review. I think I’m going to be ready.”
Leslie. Leslie is a French teacher for grades 9 through 12. She was previously trained on SIOP. Leslie is certified to teach French from grades 7 through 12 and has a bachelor’s degree in French. She currently has five ELLs in her classroom. Three of her students speak Spanish as a native language and two of them speak Arabic. All of these ELLs are in the advanced level of proficiency in English. Leslie states that although she uses English frequently in her French classes, she does not spend time modifying instructional materials in her French classes.

Leslie feels that the online SIOP training was well done. She also feels that the content in the online SIOP training compares to training that she has completed face-to-face in the past. However, Leslie did find some modules too lengthy. She feels that most of the content she has been exposed to before so it did not feel new to her. “There were some ideas that I was like, ‘That would be good no matter what. That would be a good way of working with any of my students, whether they know English already, or they have very low proficiency in English.’”

Leslie stated that all of the modules were helpful. “I think all of them are helpful. It just depends on where you are in the process of learning how to adapt to English language learners. I was doing a lot of the SIOP stuff before I even knew what SIOP was. SIOP is just good practice in general.”

Leslie has yet to make changes to her instructional practices. “I completed the training late in the year. So at this point, we were in review for finals.”

On a scale of 1 to 10, Leslie considers the online SIOP training a 10. “I personally love online trainings versus face-to-face training.” She does not feel that the training
needs audio since she prefers to read. Leslie feels confident that she can integrate the SIOP model online upon completion of the online SIOP training.

“I think SIOP helps in a situation where you have kids that have limited English, but not no English. No English is a problem.”

Claudine. Claudine is a Chemistry teacher for grades 9 through 12. She does not have prior training in SIOP nor does she have an ESL certification. Claudine is fluent in Swedish. She has been teaching at the SAOL for three years. She has a degree in biology education and is certified to teach Chemistry and Biology. She is not sure if she has ELLs in her classroom.

Although Claudine enjoyed the online SIOP training, she feels that the information is not new. “I felt like a lot of the principles that the SIOP training taught about was really just good teaching. With Chemistry, you’re almost teaching a new language, so a lot of the principles there were just were largely about making sure they understand the new vocabulary that they’re going to be hearing.”

Claudine has not made any modifications to her lessons upon completion of the online SIOP training. She is however, making plans to integrate the model in the upcoming school year.

Claudine feels that the training would benefit from more demonstrations in an online classroom. “I think it could be valuable to show a short Blackboard lesson model where they are modeling the SIOP principles in an online classroom. Because I can see how it works it in a brick-and-mortar classroom, and it’s great. It works great. It’s something that I could work on, improve on, and implement or whatever in a brick-and-
Claudine particularly enjoyed Module 6 (Strategies) and the way it demonstrated vocabulary instruction. “They talked about using the context or the principle in multiple facets within one lesson. They talked about the meanings of the words, they put them in context, and then they asked them to draw it out.”

Claudine found the activity where teachers were asked to select a Teacher Guide from the LMS and adapt based on the specific strategies covered in the module very valuable. “In terms of interaction with other teachers, it was a little lacking compared to other professional developments that I’ve participated in. I think the training would be better if we could share lessons and discuss the strategies at some point. But, for the most part, I thought it was good. I thought it was high quality. It was to-the-point. But it also helped you find ways to implement it right then in your teaching.”

“I completed a lot of it near the end of the semester, so I wasn’t able to implement as much. But, I think, having gone through the SIOP training, it just made me realize how important it is to really bring out the vocabulary words and spend time to make sure that they’re familiar with them. They’re not going to understand it the first time I explain it, but just to have more repetition with the vocabulary words is a valuable thing. So, I think, near the end, I consciously tried to focus a lot on those vocabulary words rather than just breezing over them thinking it was kind of a waste of time.”
Upon completion of the online SIOP training, Claudine feels that her lessons improved. She also believes that she became more aware of differentiating instruction for her students.

Claudine is planning to properly integrate the SIOP model during the next school year. “I definitely have a plan for doing that. I saved the Quick Cards so I can refer to them. I also created a SIOP folder with resources to use throughout the year. On a scale of 1 to 10, Claudine considers the online SIOP training an 8. “I thought it was a good training, well worth my time.” However, Claudine does not necessarily feel properly trained to integrate the SIOP model online. “I need more practice.” Claudine feels that the deadlines for the modules should be adjusted by the SAOL. “I think it could even be instead of having a deadline for the entire training, having a deadline for each month. That way, it kind of forces them to do it that month and hopefully helps us implement it and get practice before we start the next [module].”

“I procrastinate. I will admit it. But you have so many other things going on with school, and teaching the kids, and just trying to reach out to the kids that it’s kind of on the back burner. But if I have a deadline each month, then it’s in the forefront of my mind, and I’m thinking about it, and I’m implementing that particular module. I think having practice on each particular module, one at a time, is a lot better than throwing them all at me.”

Claudine feels confident that she can reach ELLs in her online classroom upon completion of the online SIOP training. “If they came to class, I do feel like I could reach them. It might mean that we set up a little bit of extra time so that I can assess them a
little bit more on in smaller groups. I feel like when there’s a whole crowd in the class, not everybody’s really participating and answering. But, if they’re participating, and I can assess them, then yes, I feel like I can reach them.”

“But before doing the SIOP training, I knew we had an ELL coordinator and so forth, but didn’t necessarily know how to use that or those resources. So I would probably still need to go back and review some of the modules, review some of the concepts or strategies, and even bounce ideas off of our ELL coordinator. But knowing that I have those resources on-hand, I think I would not feel quite as helpless in working with an ELL student.”

**Cross-Case Themes**

For this study, 22 online teachers at the SAOL were interviewed about their perceptions regarding the implementation, effectiveness, and implications of the SIOP model in an online classroom. In addition, the Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation (Guskey, 2000), were used to determine the effectiveness of the online SIOP training focusing on these teachers’ reactions, learning, and use of new knowledge and skills.

Although each teacher had her own unique recollections, numerous commonalities were found among the cases. Specifically, seven major themes related to the challenges of teaching online, the online SIOP training, and the implementation of the SIOP model online emerged that were common with multiple teachers. Those themes were:

**Challenges of Teaching Online**
• **Theme 1:** Teaching online is challenging.

• **Theme 2:** SAOL teachers mostly create their own lessons and do not utilize the EMO-provided lessons as expected.

**The Online SIOP Training**

• **Theme 3:** The online SIOP training is mostly effective.

• **Theme 4:** The online SIOP training would be enhanced by the addition of audio and of exemplars from online classrooms and collaboration with other teachers.

**The Implementation of the SIOP Model Online**

• **Theme 5:** “SIOP is just good teaching.”

• **Theme 6:** The SIOP model does not work as prescribed online.

An analysis of each theme follows.

**Challenges of Teaching Online**

**Theme 1: Teaching online is challenging.** Most of the online teachers who participated in this study have many years of experience teaching in brick-and-mortar schools. However, the transition to an online classroom presents some challenges. Allison shared the difficulties of “teaching to an imaginary person,” while Pearl admitted that “it’s kind of like learning how to teach all over again. Janet stated, “The first year I was like a basket case. I had been a teacher for 10 years. I was a pretty darn good teacher and I felt like a total novice that first year. It’s a big difference.”

Several other teachers communicated some of the challenges of teaching online as it relates to the instruction of ELLs. The following sub-themes are grouped under Theme 1:
a) **Identification of ELLs in online classrooms:** Homeroom teachers are responsible for confirming attendance, tracking curricular progress and ensuring educational growth. The homeroom teacher is also the first point of contact for the parents and students for all issues regarding the school. Students in grades 3 through 5 have a “homeroom teacher” who is also the students’ subject teacher for one subject. In grades 6 through 12, homeroom teachers may not necessarily be a subject teacher, though many are.

Eight SAOL teachers revealed uncertainty about the presence of ELLs in their classrooms. This can be attributed to the homeroom teacher managing the class roster with ELL designations and the content teacher simply “receiving” students during synchronous lessons. Marcelle conveyed, “I know when I have an ELL in my homeroom but when I teach a subject, I teach students from other homerooms. Since they are not my kids, I don’t know anything about their background. We don’t have the ability to be able to know who is an ELL.” Ellen said, “I am not the homeroom teacher for all of my students, I do not even know if any of my students are ELLs.”

Synchronous lessons tend to be “open sessions” available to all students who must receive live instruction on a subject. Since these teachers are unaware of a student’s ELL status, they are also unaware of their level of proficiency in English and their cultural/linguistic background. This makes the implementation of the SIOP model difficult, since the SIOP component Building Background delineates that teachers should become familiar with the background and prior knowledge of ELLs to engage them in meaningful activities that connect with their backgrounds, thereby building on this
knowledge.

Marcelle and Pearl determined that one of their student’s might be an ELL based on their accents and communication patterns during phone calls. And like many content teachers at the SAOL, Zoe does not know when ELLs show up to her synchronous lessons. Allison explained that ELLs in her online roster were marked as special education, “so for longest time I was just modifying for special education.” Claudine and Nola shared that they simply were unaware if they had any ELLs in their classrooms.

b) **Online Teacher Administrative Load:** SAOL teachers seem to spend many hours managing student-related paperwork. Several teachers specifically mentioned the amount of paperwork required from them, which cuts down on the time they might spend modifying instructional materials for differentiation in their classrooms.

Bethany was honest about her resentment about not truly feeling like a teacher. She said, “when it's not a crazy month, I'll open up my classroom and tutor kids as they need it, just because I want to feel more like a teacher and not a paper pusher.” Additionally, the admission of a new student entails “like a dozen things that you have to do. It's mostly just busy, busy, busy and not really teaching. It's 10 to 12 hour days of just nothing but paperwork really.”

Ellen views her teaching job through the lens of a former social worker—“you’re basically managing their case load. I teach an hour or two a day and I do more business and social work than I do anything. I’m on the phone with parents putting out fires more than I get to teach sometimes.”
When discussing their administrative load at SAOL, online teachers often alluded to the frequency and intense preparation required for data conferences, which are parent-teacher conferences at the SAOL.

Students at SAOL have individual learning plans, which are action plans that are reviewed and updated with students and learning coaches during data conferences. At-risk students meet with teachers quarterly for data conferences. Individual learning plans for on-track students are updated twice during the year (once during Semester 1 and once during Semester 2). As a result, data conferences require careful preparation.

The goal of an individualized learning plan is to work with parents in order to ensure that the student is successful and the SAOL remains compliant with state and local requirements. Teachers discuss with their lead teacher or supervisor about students they put on an action plan. When an action plan is written, the teacher will then meet weekly with the learning coach and student to review the goals that were set in the initial action plan. Students who remain non-compliant are referred to the SAOL Compliance Committee. All students and learning coaches agree to comply with all requirements at the time of enrollment. In the event that a student is non-compliant with school expectations, his/her continued enrollment is in danger and the homeroom teacher will implement an action plan as a last attempt to get the student on track and avoid withdrawal from the program.

The purpose of data conferences at SAOL is to build supportive relationships between students, learning coaches, and teachers. Furthermore, data conferences are used to set goals for each student by creating/updating, with the parent & student, an
individual learning plan. During data conferences, teachers also provide information, training and support to students and learning coaches related to specific subjects or the online learning environment. Teachers also use this opportunity to assess how well students are mastering state standards and to ensure that students uphold the state attendance requirements. Additionally, teachers confirm that learning coaches log attendance regularly and accurately. Finally, during data conferences, teachers share student progress and provide assistance where appropriate to ensure that students are meeting objectives. There are specific tasks the teacher needs to do before each data conference call. The teacher must use a survey or an online scheduling tool to schedule the conference with the learning coach. If a special education teacher is assigned to the student, he/she should also be invited to the conference. Teachers must also send an email to the parent and student listing the scheduled conference call time along with an agenda. Families will need to see that their teacher has important, specific things to discuss on the agenda.

In anticipation of the data conference, teachers need to compile the following information:

1. How many lessons did he/she complete since the last conference? Is he/she completing enough lessons to stay on track? (In order to stay on track for end of the year promotion, students must average 3% progress each week in each course.)

2. Is the student mastering his/her lessons?

3. Is there a lesson or unit that appears to be taking the student a long time?
4. Has the student re-taken a lesson assessment more than two times? If so, be prepared to offer advice.

5. When was the last time the student completed a lesson in each course on the LMS? Is he/she working in all of the courses consistently? Has it been two weeks since the last math lesson was logged? Find out why.

6. Is the family logging hours consistent to the progress and lessons that are marked complete on the OLS? If a student logged 50 hours in math but has only completed 10 lessons, there is a problem.

7. Is the student logging all of required hours for the week? (30 hrs./week)

8. How many blue ribbons have been earned in Study Island?

9. Check gradebook and individual learning plan.

10. Is student attending required Class Connect/tutoring sessions?

11. Is student completing an accelerated instruction plan(s) if assigned?

12. Review submitted work samples and note any that are late/missing

13. Read over conference notes from the last time. Is there anything that needs follow-up?

14. Log into Blackboard and download applicable conference power points.

15. The data conference must then be documented.

   Bethany mentioned that data conferences often take weeks to complete since it involves so many students and require advance preparation from the teacher.

   Marcelle explained, “Every quarter, we have to do data conferences for every student, which take about 30 minutes. So if you have 60 students in your homeroom, you
multiply 60 times 30 minutes. And you still have your teaching and your co-teaching and your action plans for the kids who aren’t doing what they are supposed to be doing.”

Another topic that surfaced often during the interviews related to teachers’ administrative load was cybertruancy. Since teachers at the SAOL are responsible for monitoring academic progress and attendance, they must contact families of truant students to ensure compliance on a regular basis. The SAOL uses progress-based attendance—attendance that is based on course completion and credits earned by the students. “What takes one student to complete in 1 hour may take another student 3 hours. However, the required number of assignments to be completed in a specific course remains constant for all students in that course. While the path students take to that completion will likely differ, the anticipated outcome is the same. Aligning student progress toward course completion with a number of days based on a predetermined expectation provides virtual schools a way to calculate attendance” (Archambault, Kennedy, & Bender, 2014).

Students at the SAOL are required to log 1,260 hours of attendance during a complete school year which equates to an average of 35 hours per week. While enrolled, students must be actively participating in instruction and completing course assignments in all courses in order to be considered in attendance. Students are expected to work an average of five days per week for an average of seven hours per day to successfully complete coursework and advance in the curriculum. Students who are identified as needing additional support in order to be successful in coursework or on state assessments will be required to attend teacher-led small group instruction [synchronous
lessons]. Students who do not actively participate in coursework will be reported as truant as required by the compulsory attendance laws for public schools in the state.

Several teachers reported that cybertruancy, specifically related to those students who are in need of extra support, is a problem at the SAOL. Required attendance to synchronous lessons varies per grade level. Therefore, it is inaccurate to label absenteeism from synchronous sessions alone as cybertruancy, unless the session is required to provide additional support to the student. Allison explains, “If a student doesn’t ever show up to a [required] synchronous lesson, I have to contact the parent. “In the online classroom, I’m lucky if my student logs in and comes to my synchronous lessons. Janet, one of the teachers who is not sure of how many ELLs she has in her subject classroom but believes that she has about three says, “Unfortunately, they are kind of absentees. They don’t want to come to the target teach sessions [required synchronous lessons]. My ELLs don’t show to the synchronous target teach or request the recording. I’ve tried to reach the parents, gone down the list of phone numbers and none of the numbers work.” Janet also admits that most students do not show up for the regular (optional) synchronous lessons. “I would say a third show up live.” Calista says, “one of them has never showed up to my class, and the other one doesn’t come often. They're not required to attend synchronous lessons so if I see that the student is failing and they've missed an assignment or something like that, then I always encourage them to attend the synchronous lesson or if we have something big coming up.”

c) **Learning coach burden:** The learning coach is the adult in the home who assists the student with completing their daily tasks. The amount of assistance depends on the
student's grade level and the student's ability to complete work independently. In grades 3-5, a strong oversight is required for students. The learning coach will be actively involved with the student spending an average of 3-6 hours each day. During a typical week, the learning coach will assist with lessons, monitor comprehension; modify the daily schedule if necessary; log attendance; and communicate with the teacher.

In grades 6-8, the type of assistance provided by the learning coach varies, based on the student's independence. The learning coach will spend an average of 2-4 hours a day assisting students. During a typical week, the learning coach will: assist with lessons, monitor comprehension; encourage independent learning; log attendance; and communicate with teachers.

In high school, the learning coach may spend less time assisting their student based on the student's ability to work independently. The average amount of time spent by the learning coach with a high school student is 1-2 hours a day. During a typical week, the learning coach will assist with some lessons, based on student's independence; verify lesson completion to ensure student is on track; support student independence; and attend teacher conferences.

Five teachers expressed concerns about the expectations for learning coaches, specifically with ELLs at home. Marcelle expressed concern about a grade 8 ELL in her homeroom with a learning coach who does not speak English. Although middle school students at SAOL are more independent at this stage and require less support from the learning coach than elementary students, it is crucial for the learning coach to still spend
about 2-4 hours a day assisting with some lessons and monitoring comprehension.

Zoe believes that this reliance on the learning coach is actually an obstacle for online students. “We rely greatly on the learning coach’s participation within our program. They assist the child, enter attendance, log work, and ensure that a student completes 3% of the curriculum a week. So we rely greatly on the parents assisting their child. When a parent has not assisted their child or is not interactive with them as far as their learning goes, the child suffers greatly whereas if you were in a brick-and-mortar [school], you are there. The stuff goes on in front of you. So that is the frustrating part. I believe those students who do not get support from the learning coach fall through the cracks. Definitely those students are not able to be successful.”

In Allison’s case, she has a 9th grade ELL with a learning coach who does not speak English. In high school, students are even more independent than middle school, and might need 1-2 hours of support a day. Allison says that the student has to tell the parent what is going on. “The parent speaks to me through the student.” Trudie said, “You have to know the family's story to find out why they're choosing an online school. It could be that as a learning coach, they get to hide behind the computer.” However, in Marnie’s case, most of the parents of her ELLs, who also serve as learning coaches, are very fluent in English. In Francine’s case, she expressed frustration at the “obstacle to overcome” that is “helping parents understand what an online model looks like.” “I spend my time on the phone or I spend my time in a Blackboard Collaborate session getting them used to the tool, for example, how to use a whiteboard in an online classroom. I have them try the different features of the tools so that they can better
participate during our synchronous meetings. I also walk them through our LMS and provide them with recommendations for note taking. I have to make sure that they understand all the parts of an online school.”

d) **Class size:** Four teachers, Bethany, Francine, Marcelle, and Allison communicated the challenges of class sizes at the SAOL. Francine said that “class numbers tend to be very high.” Class size for homeroom teachers refers to the number of students on their roster; for content teachers, it refers to the number of students who attend synchronous lessons.

Large classes create classroom management challenges and prevent teachers from engaging students through participatory activities and meaningful classroom discussions. Bethany explained that getting to know students, something that the SIOP model requires, “is really hard with that many families and all that we are required to do for them.” Marcelle expanded on the quarterly data conferences that a teacher might have based on the number of students in their homeroom: “If you have 60 students in your homeroom, you multiply 60 times 30 minutes.” Allison singled out a feature of the SIOP model where reteaching is necessary based on how students’ perform in an assessment: “it can be a real challenge when you see the grades in the assessment of several hundred students and realize that reteaching is necessary.”

e) **Technical difficulties:** Four teachers conveyed that technical difficulties often hinder the teaching and learning experience in their online classrooms. Bethany and Marcelle expressed frustration over lack of microphone use during synchronous lessons. Bethany’s frustration was related to students not having “working
microphones when they come online for their conferences.” Marcelle stated that some students do not have microphones at all when they attend synchronous sessions. Ellen explained that some of the technical difficulties that her students experience relate to “discrepancies between computer systems.” Seemingly, technical support will not assist parents who utilize their private computer to login to synchronous meetings. The teachers indicated that not all families receive an EMO-provided laptop. Ellen says, “I can’t get [students] into their classes and their classes count as 20% of the grade.” Allison’s frustration stemmed from having “no idea what’s going on with a kid” because she is unable to see them. “It’s really frustrating, because in the real world and you can look at someone’s face and kind of see what’s going on. You can show them things immediately through the camera. But in our environment you can’t.”

Allison also expressed concerned about internet connections, since some students use dial-up internet access. These students often fall behind during synchronous lessons due to lag time.

**Theme 2: SAOL teachers mostly create their own lessons and do not utilize the EMO-provided lessons.** Prior to the collection of data for this study, assumptions were made about EMO-managed schools and how online teachers approach instruction. One of these assumptions was the use of the LMS lessons, provided by the EMO, as the primary source of instruction. This is why the online SIOP training included implementing the SIOP model from beginning to end. Most SAOL teachers who completed the online SIOP training did not complete this step in the training. Although
other parts of the training were often praised, this activity was neglected because the SAOL teachers did not find it applicable. Evidently teachers create PowerPoint presentations for their few synchronous lessons and these presentations are driven by state standards. The tool that helps teachers the most with meeting state standards is not owned by the EMO. This tool called "Study Island" is a web-based program designed as a supplemental educational tool geared specifically to each individual state’s achievement tests. It is built to meet each state’s unique standards. Study Island is designed to help its users improve their state test scores. Study Island, a product of Edmentum, Inc., a provider of online learning programs, has over 30 content writers who research each state’s standards and create content to meet those standards. The content contained in Study Island is very specific. It provides assessment and skill practice in all major subject areas in both tested and untested grade levels.

After learning that Study Island was the primary tool of instruction for the SAOL, I had to find out the role that the EMO curriculum plays at the school in addition to how much control to implement SIOP teachers might have--what are some of the obstacles to implementing SIOP (which they are expected to do since their state education department establishes that each school district is required to offer a bilingual education or English as a second language (ESL) program). Many districts are requiring SIOP training in order to fulfill this requirement and to prepare teachers who lack a background in ESL.

Ellen feels that the materials provided by the EMO in the LMS are not very helpful to SAOL teachers. Therefore, teachers are forced to create their own materials, particularly the PowerPoint decks used during the synchronous lessons. “We use our
PowerPoint in every single lesson. Everything is based on the PowerPoint. That’s what we pull up on Blackboard [Collaborate].”

Francine believes that the EMO should create curriculum in Spanish, in order to help the ELLs who are at the early levels of proficiency. “If they are like at the beginning levels of English, they need to have the materials in their native language available so they could be read by the parents. I definitely see a lot of room to grow in that area, helping the parents to help their children with the learning. We also create materials, mostly PowerPoint decks to pace students using Study Island. That’s what I use for target teaching. I do my best to differentiate instruction for my students.”

Marcelle explains that Study Island is partially used as a guide to see if a data conference is needed or not. “You have to really bounce back and forth between the LMS and Study Island. Student work samples are pulled from the LMS and they are 10% of the grade; Study Island is 10% since you can see the blue ribbons that are being earned and the accolades that they are receiving; synchronous lessons are 10% and then a lot of times we have a benchmark or some kind of assessment, that they have to take that it is also a percentage, 10%. Then their progress is the other 60%. So, we bounce back and forth.”

Janet also mentioned that in the activity that required the use of the Teacher Guide from the LMS she used her own lessons, specifically PowerPoint decks, since she does not use the lessons provided by the EMO. “My starting point for lesson planning is what the kids have historically messed up on. So it’s a constant hybrid of reviews and introducing new concepts. I look up the lesson in the LMS to see how they are presenting
it and then I try to how I would present it and go from there. I look at state standards. The bottom line is that they are going to be tested, so I need to make sure to address the things that they are expected to do on the state test.”

Cherie did not feel that the activity in the online SIOP training that asked teachers to revise an existing Teacher Guide from the LMS was very helpful. “That part, for me, was not useful for me because there aren’t any Teacher Guides for my subject anyway. I create all materials.” Nola agreed that the activity in the online SIOP training asking teachers to adapt an existing Teacher Guide or lesson plan based on the strategies acquired from the training was not applicable to many teachers. “I don’t get a lesson plan or teacher guide in the LMS. I create PowerPoint decks for the synchronous lessons. So I got one of my PowerPoints that’s what I dissected to complete the activity.”

An exception is Claudine, who found the activity where teachers were asked to select a Teacher Guide from the LMS and adapt it based on the specific strategies covered in the module very valuable. She said, “it helped you find ways to implement it right then in your teaching.”

The Online SIOP Training

Theme 3: The online SIOP training is mostly effective. Out of the 22 participants, 18 provided the online SIOP training mostly positive feedback, while four imparted mostly negative feedback. Out of 22 participants, 17 were able to recall their favorite module. Out of these 17, six participants felt that Module 6 (Strategies) was the most useful at the SAOL. Three teachers preferred Module 4 (Building Background) while another three preferred Module 5 (Comprehensible Input). Module 3 (Lesson
Preparation) came up as a favorite twice while one teacher preferred Module 1
(Introduction to Sheltered Instruction) and Module 8 (Practice/Application) each.

Out of 22 participants, 18 teachers rated the online SIOP training using a scale of
1 to 10, which 1 being the lowest rating and 10 being the highest rating. Three teachers
rated the training 5 or under (one rated the training a 4 while two rated it a 5). Five
teachers rated the training a 7. Two teachers believed that it fell between a 7 and an 8.
Two teachers placed it at an 8, 8.5, 9 and 10 each.

Of the four teachers who provided negative feedback for the training, Alexandra
found the online SIOP training “a little overwhelming and “very repetitive.” While
providing negative feedback for the training, Ellen stated that teachers “would have
benefited more from seeing the material in action.” In addition, Meredith said that the
training was “not as in-depth and informative as she expected.” Finally, Trudie was in a
unique position when she stated that since she does not have any ELLs, she does not have
“as much application for it.”

Although the training received mostly positive feedback, Marcelle indicated “it
was difficult to complete all ten modules in a short period time.” Janet and Marnie found
the online SIOP training “very repetitive.” Calista said that it was unnecessarily long
while Cherie said that it was “time-consuming.”

Ten teachers responded explicitly to whether they were ready to integrate the
SIOP model online based on the completion of the online SIOP training. Of these ten
teachers, six felt prepared to integrate the model and four did not feel properly prepared
either due to the training or lack of opportunities for practice.
Theme 4: The online SIOP training would be enhanced by the addition of audio and of exemplars from online classrooms and collaboration with other teachers. Fourteen teachers provided recommendations to improve the online SIOP training. Six teachers recommended the inclusion of online exemplars. Matilda stated “that demonstrations of online teachers using the SIOP model through Blackboard Collaborate would be very beneficial for the training.” Claudine said “seeing it done in online could be very valuable since that’s what we’re teaching.” Alexandra said that in addition to limited implementation time, the lack of online exemplars would prevent online teachers from implementing the model. Clara also believes that future iterations of the online SIOP training should include videos of online classrooms demonstrating the strategies. Cherie would like to see examples from “someone who actually does teach online.” Nola said that the training did not have “enough that could be aptly applied to an online school” while Ellen was more specific when she said that the examples should “show what to do and what not to do when communicating with ELLs.”

Another six teachers recommended the addition of audio to enhance the online SIOP training. Ellen, Meredith, Marnie, Tiffany, Nola, and Desiree believe that audio would have made enhanced the training and/or made it easier for the user.

Marcelle and Zoe recommended the removal of the Teacher Guide activity from the online SIOP training. Marcelle said, “I don’t think that it was very beneficial.” Zoe revealed that the lessons in the LMS are supplemental to the lessons on Study Island and “are too deep.”
Brenda and Nola recommended collaboration in the online SIOP training. Brenda stated “some sort of community session [where] you can talk to other teachers about or explain how you can use it in your classroom.” Nola also stated that collaboration between teachers would be helpful. “It might be helpful to discuss how to apply the SIOP model as a team.”

Finally, Zoe recommended the expansion of the Strategy Gallery and providing online teachers with opportunities to share their own activities.

The Implementation of the SIOP Model

**Theme 5: “SIOP is just good teaching”**. When teachers begin evaluating their lessons using the SIOP model, they often find that many of the features are already present in their planning and teaching, although they may need to be better emphasized or made more systematic and consistent.

Eight teachers communicated that they feel that the SIOP model consists of effective strategies that work well for all students. Bethany, Ellen, and Janet referred to SIOP as “good teaching” and “good practice in general, and “good instructional practice for all students.” Alexandra stated that SIOP is “good teaching, because it also helps those that are struggling learners, not just ELLs.” Marcelle also thinks that “the strategies can be used in remediation for students who are native English speakers.” Allison has been using SIOP strategies to modify instructional materials for one of her special needs students, since she believes that these strategies are not unique for students struggling with the language.
According to the Center for Applied Linguistics, “the eight components of the SIOP model were designed to increase the academic achievement of ELLs by supporting their language development and making grade-level academic content comprehensible to them. The SIOP model is heavily informed by research on second language learning, but it also uses instructional practices recommended for mainstream students such as hands-on materials and cooperative learning. While successful implementation of the SIOP model may benefit all learners, using the SIOP model to design and deliver lessons helps to ensure that teachers have the tools to meet the unique educational needs of ELLs as they simultaneously acquire proficiency in English and in the content areas (SIOP - FAQs. (n.d.).

Theme 6: The SIOP model does not work as prescribed online. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), “the SIOP Model can be applied successfully in any context where English language learners are learning content and language simultaneously. It is most frequently implemented in content-based or thematic ESL classes, secondary content classes and elementary classes that serve a mix of ELLs and native English speakers, specifically designed sheltered content courses, and in bilingual education and two-way immersion contexts” (SIOP, n.d.).

The authors of Making Content Comprehensible for Elementary English Learners: The SIOP Model state that their “expectation is that the majority of the features should be present at some point during the lesson and the others included over the next couple days.” However, they “do not necessarily define a lesson as one class period.”
Instead, the expectation is that the objectives for a lesson may be extended over several class periods.

Half of the teachers interviewed for this study believe that the SIOP model does not work online. Nola said, “I don’t feel that there was enough that could be aptly applied to an online school.” Online classes tend to be larger and do not necessarily involve the use of video technology, which would facilitate many of the features of the model, like Comprehensible Input and Interaction. In addition, at the SAOL, teachers do not meet daily for direct instruction (synchronous lessons), since most of the lessons are self-paced. Marnie wishes she were able to communicate with her students more often than once or twice a week during a synchronous lesson, “just a time to be able to speak with them more often.”

The SIOP model is well documented for face-to-face classrooms, but at this time, there are no studies of the implementation of the SIOP model in online classrooms. Therefore, online teachers lack sample lesson plans using SIOP and videos documenting its use in online classrooms. As Marcelle stated, “some of the components of the SIOP model require face-to-face interaction.” Nola would have liked “more examples for the online classroom.” Tiffany believes that the SIOP model needs to be adapted for the online environment. “Everything has to be redefined when you are in this setting since it’s so different.” Trudie stated that the SIOP model emphasizes a focus on repetition, concept reinforcement and language development. However, she feels that it is difficult to have constant repetition in an online model compared to a face-to-face model.
Bethany and Allison expressed concerns about implementing the SIOP model and their limited time due to the number of students that they serve and the limited time they have providing direct instruction through synchronous lessons. Bethany explained that she “barely skim[s] the surface of the Social Studies curriculum much less trying to implement more things like this. I’m too busy to cram as much information in an hour a week as I can.” Referring to the Building Background component, Allison said “with 300 kids you’re not going to know a single thing about that child. You will know that student 457,321 is missing lesson7.02.”

Three teachers stated that implementing SIOP in a face-to-face classroom is easier. Bethany and Allison agreed that implementing the strategies can be challenging in an online classroom while Marcelle mentioned that some of the components of the SIOP model require face-to-face interaction.

Two teachers explained how the Lesson Preparation component is impossible at the SAOL. Clara stated that while it is a “pretty important” component, it is not realistic in their setting. Zora said that the component simply “does not apply to teachers at the SAOL.” She explained that the teachers at the SAOL start planning based on state standards and Study Island. Also, veteran teachers often develop the PowerPoint deck used in synchronous lessons. Since SAOL teachers do not control the content provided in LMS lessons, which are developed by the EMO, nor do they guide content in Study Island, which are tied to state standards, the only opportunity to develop a lesson from scratch is for the synchronous lessons, although they often adapt existing lessons.
provided by veteran teachers. She added “we are a totally different from schools that are providing seven hours a day of live instruction of some type.”

Alexandra believes that since the SIOP model touches on every aspect of a lesson from planning to assessment, it is very difficult to implement online. Allison said that reteaching, a feature of the Review and Assessment component of SIOP is challenging in an online classroom due to class sizes. “It can be a real challenge when you see the grades in the assessment of several hundred students and realize that reteaching is necessary. “

Marnie said that “to get them to actually verbally participate can be difficult. I wish there was more of a tool to communicate with them online than just having them in a class once or twice a week, or actually just a time to be able to speak with them more often. I miss the daily communication with the students.”

Tiffany believes that the SIOP model needs to be adapted for the online environment and training for online teachers needs to start with the online environment from the beginning, instead of beginning with the face-to-face environment and then providing ideas for online implementation. “Online teachers always come from a brick-and-mortar background so they often believe that they know how to do this. It’s because they are starting from a brick-and-mortar mentality. If training is specifically adjusted to online ESL teachers….I think it would be much better. Everything has to be redefined when you are in this setting since it’s so different.”
Summary

Participants described their perceptions regarding the implementation, effectiveness, and implications of the SIOP model in an online classroom, in addition to detailing their reactions, learning, and use of new knowledge and skills based on the completion of the online SIOP training. These perceptions yielded themes addressing the challenges of teaching online; their impressions of the SIOP model and the feasibility of the implementation of the SIOP model in an online environment; and reactions to the online SIOP training including the application of new knowledge of skills and recommendations for improvement. Most participants were generally pleased with the online SIOP training. However, the perceptions varied from some participants making recommendations to enhance the training to others finding it adequate as is. Another area of contention was the view that the SIOP model does not work as prescribed in an online classroom. Specifically, six major themes emerged that were common to multiple participants. Those themes were: (a) teaching online is challenging, (b) SAOL teachers mostly create their own lessons and do not utilize the EMO-provided lessons as expected, (c) the online SIOP training is mostly effective, (d) the online SIOP training would be enhanced by the addition of audio and of exemplars from online classrooms and collaboration with other teachers, (e) “SIOP is just good teaching,” and (f) the SIOP model does not work as prescribed online. The analysis serves to better understand how online teachers perceive the online training and communicate implicitly whether it would benefit from streamlining or further development. It also examines teachers’ opinions
regarding the implementation of the SIOP model. Further discussion follows in Chapter Five.
Chapter Five: Conclusions

This study examined the perceptions of 22 teachers regarding the implementation, effectiveness, and implications of the SIOP model in an online classroom. In addition, the Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation instrument (Guskey, 2000) was used to determine the effectiveness of the online SIOP training, focusing on these teachers’ reactions and use of new knowledge and skills. My analysis of the individual interviews yielded a number of themes that were important to each participant and six that were common amongst multiple participants. The following is a discussion of those findings. This includes understanding how this study fits in with the existing literature and how it expands the fields of research on online teachers’ perceptions of sheltered instruction training and the implementation and effectiveness of the SIOP model in online classrooms. Additionally, recommendations for practitioners are provided as well as suggestions for future studies.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law by President Barack Obama in December 2015, mandates a significant investment in professional development for educators, principals, and leaders. In addition, under ESSA, newly arrived ELLs have the option to not have their test scores included in the evaluation of schools until they have lived in the United States for one year, as is the case under NCLB. A second option involves a three year progression, rather than a two year jump.
ELLs would take both math and reading assessments and disclose their results publicly (at this time, ELLs are only required to take the math assessment in their first year). The second year, ELLs would take the assessments again and incorporate their scores to measure academic growth. Then, in the third year their scores would be treated as any other students.

“No, under the Every Student Succeeds Act, all schools have to demonstrate that they are improving the English language proficiency of their English-language learners. Improving English language proficiency is a required indicator in every state’s school accountability system, which will help make sure that the schools where these students are struggling get the right kind of support. Importantly, these changes signal to states that helping English-language learners gain the skills they need to be successful in academic classes must be a priority” (Sargrad, 2016).

With the added pressure that has been placed on schools and teachers to demonstrate that ELLs are improving their English language proficiency, professional development is critical to assist teachers in educating students. Furthermore, the perceptions of those who participate in the professional development sessions are of utmost importance in order to make modifications that would continue to enhance the training and ultimately impact student learning outcomes.

**General findings**

In this section each individual research question was addressed to ensure that the findings from the study were portrayed effectively.
Research Question #1

What are online teachers’ perceptions of the online SIOP training?

This research question is connected to Level 1 (Participants’ Reactions) of Guskey’s framework (Guskey, 2000). It seeks to gather participants' reactions, which is the first level of professional development evaluation (Guskey, 2000). The interview guide questions (Appendix I) addressed at this level aim to assess initial satisfaction with the training experience, including whether the teachers enjoyed the training; whether they believe that their time was well spent completing the training; did the material make sense; will the content of the training program be useful; and whether the developer was knowledgeable and helpful. The open-ended questions allowed the teachers to provide more individualized comments. The results gathered from participants’ reactions can help inform the design and delivery improvement of the online SIOP model. In addition, participants’ reactions are a prerequisite to higher-level evaluation results.

The online teachers perceived the online SIOP training as mostly effective.

Several questions on the interview guide (Appendix I) related to the teachers’ evaluation of the online SIOP training. These questions appear under Program Evaluation Questions (Appendix I).

Most of the teachers in this study responded positively to the online SIOP training. On a scale of 1 to 10, evaluations of the online SIOP training ranged from 4 to 10. Participants were asked to rate the online SIOP training on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the most desirable. The evaluations of the online SIOP training ranged from 4 to 10; 18 participants responded explicitly to this question, of which 15 rated the training seven or
higher. During the interview, many of the teachers provided specific examples from the training that they found beneficial, including recalling the module that they found most helpful with the higher positive response given to Module 6 (Strategies) than to Modules 2, 7, 9, 10 which were not mentioned by any of the participants, and some positive responses to Modules 4 (Building Background), 5 (Comprehensible Input), 3 (Lesson Preparation), 8 (Practice/Application), 1 (Introduction to Sheltered Instruction) (sequenced according to number of favorable responses).

Ten teachers responded explicitly to whether they were ready to integrate the SIOP model online based on the completion of the online SIOP training. Of these ten teachers, six felt prepared to integrate the model and four did not feel properly prepared either due to the training or lack of practice.

The negative responses during the interviews from participants who did not enjoy the online SIOP training were consistent—most of the participants found the training long and repetitive. Even those teachers who rated the training positively agreed with this feedback.

Fourteen teachers provided recommendations to improve the online SIOP training. Most of the recommendations were related to the lack of online exemplars—online demonstrations of SIOP strategies. The same number of teachers who recommended the inclusion of online demonstrations of SIOP strategies recommended the addition of audio since the training was often described as “text-heavy.” Additional recommendations provided during the interviews included the removal of the Teacher
Guide activity and the addition of collaboration with other teachers, in order to share knowledge and classroom experiences.

Research Question #2

How do online teachers perceive the effectiveness of the SIOP model in enhancing their skills to meet the needs of online ELLs?

This research question is connected to Level 4 (Participants’ Use of New Knowledge and Skills) of Guskey’s framework (Guskey, 2000). It examines whether what the participants learned made a difference in their professional practice (Guskey, 2000). It aims to measure the degree and quality of implementation of the knowledge attained and to document and improve the content of the program.

It is not possible to gather data at Level 4 upon completion of a professional development training session. Participants need to be provided with sufficient time after the professional development session in order to incorporate the new ideas and practices in their classrooms. Since implementation of new ideas and practices is often a gradual and unbalanced process, it might be necessary to establish measures at several different time intervals. Analysis of this data provides evidence on current levels of use of new ideas and practices and can help restructure future training programs to facilitate better and more consistent implementation.

Data to address Level 4--whether the learning transferred to the online classroom--was derived from the interviews, where teachers where able to reflect on the changes that they have made to their instructional practice since completing the online SIOP
training. Level 4 measures the degree and quality of implementation to document and improve the program content.

The open-ended questions to address Level 4 allowed the teachers to provide more individualized comments. The results gathered from participants’ use of knowledge and new skills can help inform the design and delivery improvement of the online SIOP training. In addition, participants’ use of knowledge and skills are a prerequisite to higher-level evaluation results. Data gathered is based on clear indicators that reveal the degree and quality of implementation resulting from the professional development. Although structured interviews with participants/supervisors/peers/subordinates, questionnaires, personal reflections, portfolios, and direct observations can be used to capture this data, I used semi-structured interviews.

Measurement occurs after the professional development and over several intervals since these measures show progression of learning and implementation.

Several online teachers are applying new knowledge and skills. Out of the 22 teachers, seven explicitly responded to whether they are currently implementing SIOP strategies in their online classrooms or have a plan to implement SIOP strategies in the near future. Five teachers acknowledged that they are already implementing SIOP strategies in their classrooms. Two teachers stated that they are planning to implement SIOP strategies during the upcoming year.

SAOL teachers are already implementing SIOP strategies or have a plan to implement SIOP strategies. Bethany, Clara, Allison, and Desiree, and Pearl are already implementing SIOP strategies in their classrooms. Bethany stated that she is trying harder
to gather “things that will get their interest.” Bethany is also spending time developing language and content objectives to share with her students during synchronous lessons. Clara indicated that she is taking Lesson Preparation more seriously upon completion of the training. She stated that is thinking more thoroughly about “how would I plan a lesson and be a little more effective in my lesson planning.” Allison is taking into consideration “the idea of using more visuals.” Desiree indicated that she is simplifying her PowerPoint decks for synchronous lessons. “Since I’ve broken it down, they’re getting it.” Pearl said, “I have an ELL student who I’m now able to communicate very well with from some of the things that I was able to learn from the online SIOP training.” Janet and Claudine are planning to implement SIOP strategies for the upcoming year. Janet will be focusing on “how to hook them first” and “how to vary the lesson.” Claudine specified that she is “definitely [has] a plan for doing that. I saved the Quick Cards so I can refer to them and created a SIOP folder with resources to use throughout the year.”

The participants encountered some challenges that prevent them from applying new knowledge and skills.

Successful implementation of the SIOP model may benefit all learners. When teachers begin evaluating their lessons using the SIOP model, they often find that many of the features are already present in their planning and teaching, although they may need to be better emphasized or made more systematic and consistent. Eight teachers communicated that they feel that the SIOP model consists of effective strategies that work well for all students. Three teachers referred to the SIOP model as “good teaching” and “good practice in general, and “good instructional practice for all students.” Two
teachers indicated that all struggling learners would benefit from the implementation of the SIOP model. Another teacher admitted that she has been implementing the strategies to modify instructional materials for her special needs student. The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) states that while successful implementation of the SIOP model may benefit all learners, using the model to design and deliver lessons helps to ensure that teachers have the tools to meet the unique instructional needs of ELLs as they simultaneously acquire proficiency in English and in the content areas (SIOP - FAQs. (n.d.).

**Online teachers need instructional resources developed by the EMO for synchronous lessons that are tied to state standards.** In order to lower the burden on SAOL teachers, there is a need for the EMO to develop synchronous lesson materials aligned to state standards and to incorporate additional synchronous lessons into the weekly schedule to accommodate the additional teaching requirements of implementing the SIOP model. Since the EMO has an expectation of SAOL teachers utilizing LMS-provided instructional materials, these need to be in alignment with teacher and student needs. The EMO needs to utilize the curriculum development team in a way that assists network schools instead of providing materials that are of little use to the teaching staff.

*Research Question #3*

*What factors might affect the implementation of the SIOP model at an online school?*

During the interviews, most of the online teachers referred to factors that hinder the implementation of the SIOP model in their online classrooms. An evaluation of the
factors that might affect the implementation of the SIOP model at an online school can help identify the components of the model that are useful in an online environment in order to adapt the SIOP model for use in online classrooms if necessary.

Implications

The SIOP model needs to be adapted for online learning environments or the SAOL model needs to be adapted to ensure more direct “real-time” instruction.

According to the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), “the SIOP Model can be applied successfully in any context where English language learners are learning content and language simultaneously. It is most frequently implemented in content-based or thematic ESL classes, secondary content classes and elementary classes that serve a mix of ELLs and native English speakers, specifically designed sheltered content courses, and in bilingual education and two-way immersion contexts” (CAL, n.d.).

The authors of Making Content Comprehensible for Elementary English Learners: The SIOP Model state that their “expectation is that the majority of the features should be present at some point during the lesson and the others included over the next couple days.” However, they “do not necessarily define a lesson as one class period.” Instead, the expectation is that the objectives for a lesson may be extended over several class periods.

However, half of the teachers interviewed believed that the SIOP model does not work online. Online classes are often larger than face-to-face classes and without the use of webcams, components like Comprehensible Input and Interaction cannot be easily implemented. Furthermore, most of the components of the SIOP model require live
interaction and at the SAOL and other EMO network schools, teachers do not meet daily for direct instruction (synchronous lessons). Instead, students complete most of the curriculum at their own pace. Online teachers are also in need of demonstrations of the SIOP model in an online learning environment. Components that do not require synchronous interaction would need to be updated in the LMS by the EMO. Therefore the support of the organization would be essential in order to observe the SIOP model throughout SAOL courses.

The components of the SIOP model and the ability to properly integrate the component into an online lesson at the SAOL are described below:

- **Lesson Preparation:** This component establishes that content and language objectives should be are well-defined, displayed, and reviewed with students. The objectives are connected to content area and the academic vocabulary that students need to meet learning outcomes. As they progress toward fluence in English, teachers help students gain important experience with essential grade-level content and skills. Despite the challenges for teachers to teach both language and content in a lesson, by the end of each lesson, students know what is expected from them (Lyster, 2007). Having a plan at the beginning of each lesson benefits students because they are able to focus on what is important and play an active part in their own learning. Since grade-level materials may be difficult for ELLs, in this component, teachers can provide access to supplementary materials (e.g., bilingual books, adapted books, visuals, multimedia, and study guides). Special texts, handouts, and audio-taped selections can provide adaptations of content.
Additionally, meaningful activities provide opportunities for students to apply content and language.

Online teachers at the SAOL should have the ability to implement the Lesson Preparation component in their classrooms, by introducing content and language objectives at the beginning of the synchronous lessons and having a discussion on these expectations with students. For self-paced lessons, teachers would need the support of the EMO since objectives are linked to online lessons at the LMS by the curriculum development team at the EMO.

The EMO can also support online teachers by providing access to supplementary materials whenever possible. Online teachers can further select materials during lesson planning for synchronous lessons.

- **Building Background:** This component establishes that teachers connect new concepts with students' personal experiences and prior knowledge in their lessons. Since many ELLs may have attended school in a foreign country, they may be unfamiliar with cultural references in their texts. Additionally, it may be necessary to activate prior knowledge in order to learn what they already know, to address any misinformation, or discover if it is necessary to fill content gaps. Since ELLs may have knowledge that is quite different from native English speakers, teachers can maximize on their experiences by using them as resources. During lesson planning, teachers can examine instructional materials for biases or idiomatic expressions to anticipate potential problems or to pre-teach potentially confusing concepts. Studies of vocabulary instruction indicate that explicit instruction supports the acquisition of new words in ELLs; words embedded in
meaningful contexts; numerous opportunities for repetition and the use of the words in all language domains (reading, writing, listening, and speaking); words displayed and reviewed often; and interaction with words in multiple texts and contexts (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Carlo, et.al, 2004).

Students become effective readers, writers, listeners and speakers through explicit vocabulary instruction. Although most reading or literature teachers explicitly teach key vocabulary and word structures, word families, and word relationships, all content teachers should teach these aspects of language learning. Additionally, “teachers might teach strategies such as using context clues, word parts (i.e., affixes), visual aids (e.g., illustrations), and cognates (a word related in meaning and form to a word in another language)” (Kareva & Echevarria, 2013, p. 231). Effective SIOP implementation requires providing students with numerous opportunities to utilize their new vocabulary orally and in writing. Moving words “from receptive knowledge to expressive use” demands reinforcement through different learning methods. (Kareva & Echevarria, 2013, p. 241)

SAOL teachers indicated the challenges of becoming familiarized with ELLs’ background and previous learning experiences due to limited access as a homeroom teacher vs. a content teacher, absenteeism, lack of parental involvement, and large class sizes. In order to successfully implement the Building Background component, teachers will need to be provided with rosters identifying ELLs in addition to providing specific student profiles including native language and educational background. Teachers will also need to emphasize vocabulary instruction as a whole during synchronous lessons or to groups of ELLs or other students in need of reinforcement during special synchronous
sessions, providing students with multiple opportunities to use new vocabulary orally and in writing. Support from the EMO might facilitate differentiating instruction with an emphasis on vocabulary development for the self-paced lessons.

- **Comprehensible Input:** In order for ELLs to learn the necessary content, it needs to be presented in a way that students can understand, avoiding explanations spoken too rapidly or reading selections that are far above reading levels without visuals or graphic organizers for assistance. If done thoughtfully, language complexity can be reduced. However, it is important to avoid the oversimplifying language since it limits ELLs exposure to a variety of sentences and language forms (Crossley, et.al., 2007).

  This component delineates the need to support ELLs with a variety of strategies to ensure that they understand the key concepts in a lesson. These strategies may include accommodations such as adjusting teacher talk to align with proficiency levels; paraphrasing, repetition, and written summaries of key points, in addition to previews and reviews of key concepts. Additionally, instead of solely language-based explanations, visual representations can provide students with additional support (Short, Fidelman & Longuit, 2012). Visual representations can include demonstrations, modeling, gestures, pantomime, and movement. In addition, opportunities for simulations, role-plays, and supplementary materials, such as real objects, photographs, drawing, charts, modified texts, audiotapes, CDs or online resources, perhaps in the student’s native language, if available; and hands-on, experiential, and discovery activities.

  In order to implement this component successfully in the online classroom, teachers will need to explain academic tasks clearly and in steps, both orally and in
writing. They will also need to talk through the procedures and use models and examples of exemplary assignments and appropriate participation, so that ELLs are made aware of the steps to follow and can visualize the desired result.

Implementing this component in an SAOL online classroom would be challenging due to discrepancies with the use of cameras, which would be needed to order to incorporate gestures and pantomime, unless previously recorded videos are used instead. This would require extensive support from the EMO since teachers are already burdened extensively with class sizes and excessive administrative tasks. Additionally, previously recorded videos would need to be standardized in order to ensure that all students are able to access them on their computers and that they can play in the various learning platforms.

- **Strategies:** This component focuses on learning strategies, scaffolding and higher-order thinking. Many ELLs would benefit from explicit instruction on learning strategies (Ardasheva & Tetter, 2012). That way, teachers equip students for learning inside and outside of the classroom. Teachers frequently provide support to ELLs so that they can be successful with academic tasks. As ELLs master a skill, teachers remove the instructional supports provided and add new ones for the next level. The goal is the gradual release of responsibility so that ELLs can achieve independence. Additional, teachers can engage ELLs using a variety of questions which require students to employ higher levels of thinking (Genesee, et.al, 2006). Open-ended questions which require students to elaborate can force students to think critically and apply their
language skills. Although answers may contain few words, they may represent complex thinking.

The implementation of this component in the online classroom might prove to be difficulty due to the high level of planning and involvement from the online teacher during the limited “real-time” interaction that they have with students during synchronous lessons. The integration of this component might be facilitated by the EMO during the development of the LMS lessons, which can provide teachers with instructional resources such as questions aligned to higher levels of thinking, and prompts to scaffold instruction along with suggested responses from students to further develop a lesson.

- **Interaction:** Oral language can be developed through student interaction with one another and with their teachers. It is crucial for ELLs to practice language in order to develop content knowledge and support their English speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. In small groups, ELLs can practice new language structures and vocabulary in addition to important language functions, such as asking for clarification, elaborating on ideas, confirming interpretations, citing evidence from the text, and evaluating opinions. These activities should combine beginning ELLs and more-proficient ELLs or native English speakers and involve carefully structured tasks to impact language learning outcomes (Saunders & Goldenberg, 2010). In order to avoid a teacher-dominated linguistic environment, teachers must make sure that there is a balance in the classroom discourse between teachers and students, and among students. Since oral language proficiency impacts all aspects of academic achievement, opportunities for oral
language practice are especially important (August & Shanahan, 2006; Brouillette, 2012; Lesaux & Giva, 2008).

This component can only be implemented in an SAOL classroom during synchronous lessons, specifically through the use of “breakout rooms” which allows the teacher to separate students online and have conversations with one another. It would require the use of additional synchronous lessons for more interaction opportunities and teachers would need to have a very good understanding of students’ background and proficiency levels in order to create productive groups. In addition, all students would need to have access to microphones in order to participate fully in these sessions.

- **Practice and Application:** Students need to be provided with opportunities for practice and application in order to be able to master a skill. (Jensen, 2005; Marzano, Pickering & Pollock, 2001). In this component, teachers include a variety of activities that encourage students to apply both content and language skills. For ELLs to learn English, it is critical that they practice and apply new content in all language domains (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in every lesson.

In order to implement this component in SAOL classrooms, teachers would once again need to be able to add additional synchronous lessons to their weekly schedules and be provided with instructional support from the EMO which may include lessons enhanced with a variety of activities and suggestions. Teachers will also need access to student background information in order to modify instruction. In addition, technical barriers related to microphone use will need to be eliminated.
• **Lesson Delivery:** This component requires that a lesson and all related activities and teaching support content and language objectives. Teachers should have clear routines to follow and must ensure that students are aware of content and language objectives. This is particularly important since ELLs need richer and more extensive teaching than native English speakers (Blachowicz, Fisher, Ogle, & Watts-Taffe, 2006). In addition, teachers should introduce and revisit meaningful activities that interest students; provide appropriate wait time so students can effectively process concepts; and deliver classroom instruction that promotes engagement. The teacher should monitor students carefully throughout each lesson and confirm comprehension of key concepts.

In order to implement this component in an online classroom, teachers will need to be provided with additional opportunities to conduct synchronous lessons. The sizes of synchronous lessons will need to be reduced to allow teachers to check comprehension throughout lesson delivery. In order to integrate wait times, teachers will need to devise a system online where the functionalities from the online collaboration tool are used to symbolize wait time (for example, students using a smiley face to request wait time or the teacher using an online timer visible to students to ensure consistent wait time).

• **Review and Assessment:** This component requires time for review and assessment throughout a lesson. Ideally, a lesson begins with a check of students’ knowledge. Teachers check comprehension frequently to assess whether reteaching is necessary. This ensures that students receive feedback when they need it, a practice shown to benefit ELLs (August & Shanahan, 2006). Key concepts and vocabulary should be reviewed throughout the lesson. Finally, lessons can be wrapped up by a review of the
content and language objectives. In order to implement this component in an online classroom, teachers will need to be provided with additional opportunities to conduct synchronous lessons. The sizes of synchronous lessons will need to be reduced to allow teachers to check comprehension throughout lesson delivery.

In order to successfully implement the SIOP model into SAOL classrooms, the model needs to be adapted to accommodate a mostly self-paced online school model. An alternative is the addition of more synchronous lessons and instructional support for teachers. A mostly self-paced learning model does not provide enough opportunities for interaction. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to verify fidelity to the SIOP model in SAOL classrooms. This emphasizes the need for ongoing teacher support, since it increases adherence to the practices being learned and implemented, and fidelity has been linked to improved outcomes in face-to-face classrooms (Allen, 2007; Echevarria, Short, & Vogt, 2008; Emshoff et al., 1987; Goldenberg, 2004; Holbach & Rich, 2004; Moran, 2007; Tomlinson, Brimijoin, & Narvaez, 2008).

**Teacher education programs need to incorporate coursework related to the needs of ELLs.** Regarding the implications for teacher education programs, “there is a need to provide pre-service and in-service teachers with the preparation necessary” to properly implement the SIOP model in all learning environments. “This is reflected in TESOL’s Position Statement on the Preparation of Pre-K-12 Educators for Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (2003) which holds that educators should receive specialized training and preparation in the skills necessary to effectively manage culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. In this statement, TESOL emphasizes that colleges and universities...
should include coursework designed for mainstream and content-area teachers specific to meeting the needs of ELL students in academic settings. TESOL further posits that such teacher preparation [programs] should ensure that all educators understand the roles that language and culture play in learning, the importance of native language support in achieving academic success, and the sociocultural issues ELLs face when dealing with the demands of mainstream education” (Karathanos, 2010, p. 62-63).

Since helping teachers develop the understanding and skills necessary to implement culturally responsive practices is of upmost importance as the population of the schools in the United States continue to change and enrollment of ELLs continues to grow, teacher education programs should consider adopting a policy of addressing culturally responsive teaching, including the proper use of sheltered instruction strategies or specifically the SIOP model, not only in specialized courses but throughout the entire program.

**Future Research**

The implementation effectiveness of the SIOP model in online schools should be investigated more. Further research should be conducted to gather more data on online teachers’ perceptions of their professional development experiences as it relates to the needs of ELLs, specifically on sheltered instruction. Not enough has been done to understand how online classrooms differentiate instruction for ELLs and how it can be improved. Very little guidance is given to online teachers on how to accommodate varying levels of proficiency and combine English language proficiency and content instruction. Therefore, more studies must be done to better comprehend the current
practices in online classrooms with different school models so that EMOs and school support systems can devise ways to improve them. Following, are five suggested studies that could help to accomplish these goals.

**Quantitative study.** Since this study was conducted in one online school using 22 participants, the study is not generalizable to the larger population of online teachers. Additional studies should be done. An approach that would be viable is to use the themes from this study to create a survey for a larger population. The themes could be adapted into categories from which more specific questions could be generated. The breadth of the proposed study would complement the depth of this current study to provide a fuller picture of how online teachers perceive their sheltered instruction training experiences in addition to online teaching and learning experiences in general.

**Replicated studies.** Another suggestion would be to replicate the methodology of this study for use in several different scenarios. There are several ways that this could be accomplished that would provide more data for online teaching. The proposed studies could be conducted using the same format and interview guide as this current study but using a different sample of online teachers. The study could be replicated using a different online school in a different region of the country. Since it is unclear whether some of the findings of this study are due to the online school profile, studies changing the online school would help determine that. Also, it was assumed that the findings from the participants in this study would yield results that were specific to them. However, interviewing online teachers in a different region might be meaningful to ascertain whether or not any of the findings of this study appear specific to the online teaching
population. Studies like these could help determine what factors appear to influence how online teachers perceive their sheltered instruction training experiences.

In addition, a study can be conducted after the recommendations from teachers from this study have been incorporated into the online classroom. Since SAOL teachers recommended the addition of audio and online exemplars, this study’s methodology can be replicated to obtain more data for online teaching. Adding more “real-time” instruction to the online classrooms might also influence teachers’ perceptions of the SIOP model in their classrooms and yield new findings in a replicated study.

**SIOP model fidelity studies in online classrooms.** Another way to better understand how the SIOP model can be implemented in an online classroom would be a fidelity study, using the SIOP protocol observation checklist (Appendix J) once online teachers have completed SIOP training. This study can address how teacher support might increase adherence to the practices being learned and eventually implemented, and whether fidelity to the SIOP model online can improve outcomes as studies show that it does in face-to-face classrooms.

**Online school administration perceptions study.** Another way to better understand how to assist online teachers with their professional development needs could be to examine the administration’s approaches to professional development. A qualitative study aimed toward understanding how school administrators’ think about their online teachers and work with their professional development could produce useful results. The study could help to better understand the type of information administrators use as they decide how to implement professional development curricula. Results from a study of
this nature could be used to assist administrators and school trainers in developing curricula that guides and supports online teachers in their practice.

**Online teacher and online ELL case study.** Another meaningful online education study could be conducted by taking a case study approach. This could be accomplished by making use of interviews, observations and relevant documents in the online classroom setting. Specifically, the case study could incorporate interviewing both teachers and ELLs to try to obtain a holistic view of the sheltered instruction dynamic. This study could yield valuable insight from the teachers’ and the students’ perspectives to better understand what takes place in the teaching and learning relationship and how it is interpreted. A study of this nature could help teachers and ELL advocates comprehend how instruction is provided and received in the online teacher/ELL relationship.

**Learning coach study.** Since parents appear to be instrumental in how online students complete their school requirements, understanding their perceptions of online teaching and learning could be valuable as well. It would be beneficial to learn what learning coaches believe the teacher’s role is in instruction and how learning coaches think the teacher should be working with students and how they should be working with students. The purpose of this study would be to comprehend how learning coaches think about online education, specifically those who coach ELLs. If this can be better understood, stakeholders could better determine how to disseminate useful coaching strategies to learning coaches, specifically those with language barriers, and how to coordinate instruction between online teachers and coaches. This in turn would help the ELLs meeting learning outcomes.
Summary

This study of online teachers’ perceptions of the online SIOP training, and the implementation, effectiveness, and the implications of the SIOP model for ELLs in an online school, was useful for exploring the experiences of online teachers to discover what is important to them in their professional development as it relates to the needs of ELLs. The analysis of 22 online teachers in grades 3-12 yielded seven themes that were common to multiple teachers. Those themes, along with the individual analysis findings, were helpful to better understand how to improve professional development programs for the benefit of both teachers and ELLs. Recommendations were given for online schools and EMOs to help the implementation of the SIOP model to better support ELLs. Additionally, suggestions for future studies were offered to help further research in this area. These studies were based on the findings in Chapter Four. They were suggested to address areas of online teacher professional development as it relates to ELLs that have not been previously studied but the findings would add to the small body of research that currently exists on online teachers and the implementation and effectiveness of a sheltered instruction model.
Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

Office of Research Integrity and Assurance
George Mason University

DATE: February 20, 2014
TO: Kevin Clark
FROM: George Mason University IRB
Project Title: [527130-4] Sheltered Instruction Training for Online Teachers of English Language Learners: A Professional Development Evaluation
Reference: 6681
ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: February 20, 2014
REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category #2

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The Office of Research Integrity & Assurance (ORIA) has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

Please remember that all research must be conducted as described in the submitted materials.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be submitted to the ORIA prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

If you have any questions, please contact Tess Dietlenbach at 703-993-1121 or edietlen@gmu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within George Mason University IRB’s records.
Appendix B

Initial Contact about Research Study and Upcoming Online SIOP training

February 17, 2013

Head of School for [Redacted]

[Redacted]

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear Ms. [Redacted]

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at the [Redacted]. I am currently enrolled in the PhD program in Education with an emphasis on Instructional Technology and Multicultural and Multilingual Studies at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA and am in the process of writing my dissertation. I am also an instructional designer for [Redacted] department.

The study is entitled Sheltered Instruction Training for Online Teachers of English Language Learners: A Professional Development Evaluation. With assistance
from the [redacted]. I am currently in the process of creating a sheltered instruction training course, specifically using the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model. As part of my study, I hope to explore online teachers’ perceptions of SIOP training. Specifically, this study will seek to determine the effectiveness of SIOP training using the Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation (Guskey, 2000). With this study, the SIOP model will serve as a vehicle to evaluate professional development which will facilitate the use of a repertory of teaching strategies designed for teaching English language learners and in turn, might result in improved student learning outcomes.

I hope that the school administration will allow me to recruit no less than 15 teachers from the school to anonymously participate in an interview. Interested teachers, who volunteer to participate, will be given a consent form to be signed and returned to me at the beginning of the interview process.

If approval is granted, teachers will be asked whether they wish to participate in the study prior to completing the online SIOP training program. They will be asked if they are willing to participate in a study when they enroll in the course in [redacted]. The interview process should take no more than 60 minutes. The individual results of this study will remain absolutely confidential and anonymous. Should this study be published, all documented results will remain anonymous. No costs will be incurred by either your school or the individual participants. Study findings can be made available upon request.
Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have. You may contact me at my email address at [REDACTED] or via telephone at [REDACTED].

If you agree, kindly submit a signed letter of permission on your institution’s letterhead acknowledging your consent and permission for me to conduct this study at [REDACTED].

Attached please find an approval letter from my supervisor. [REDACTED]. Please feel free to contact [REDACTED] if you need additional information about my role and this research study.

Warmest regards,

Frances
Appendix C

Recruitment Message from ELL Coordinator to Teachers

Dear Teachers,

As you know, we recently launched a training entitled The SIOP Model for Teaching English Language Learners (ELLs). Frances Suazo, an instructional designer for [redacted] and doctoral student at George Mason University, is conducting a research study with teachers who will complete or have recently completed this training.

If you are interested in participating in the research study, please read the invitation below and respond to Frances directly (fsuazo@gmu.edu).

Dear [redacted] teacher,

I am contacting you because I am conducting a research study with teachers at the [redacted] who will complete or have recently completed the SIOP® Model for Teaching English Language Learners (ELLs) training. Through this research I hope to explore online teachers’ perceptions of SIOP® training. Specifically, this study will seek to determine the effectiveness of SIOP® training using the Guskey professional development evaluation model. With this study, the SIOP® model will serve as a vehicle to evaluate professional development which will facilitate the use of a repertory of...
teaching strategies designed for teaching English language learners (ELLs) and in turn, might result in improved student learning outcomes.

I am an instructional designer for [redacted] and former English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher for the primary grades. I have an understanding of the challenges that teachers face when they attempt to deliver instruction to a student in the process of acquiring English. Your direct input in this research will help me articulate the impact of sheltered instruction training and hopefully help inform sound instructional practice for ELLs in the online classroom. This research will fulfill the dissertation requirements for a PhD in Education with a primary emphasis in Instructional Technology and a secondary emphasis in Multicultural/Multilingual Studies. My dissertation proposal has been approved by my doctoral committee and George Mason’s Institutional Review Board.

If you choose to participate, I will interview you using a conference line. In the interview, I will ask you questions related to your teaching experience and questions related to SIOP training. Since the interview involves open-ended questions that explore your experiences and opinions, rather than fixed-response, survey-type questions, it will last about 60 minutes and will be audio-recorded. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

I will transcribe the interview and return a summary of the main points to you to verify for accuracy. In the dissertation, you will be given a pseudonym. I will analyze the transcription for themes. I will keep the audio recordings for 3 years after the completion.
of the study in a password-protected computer. I will send you a copy of the research findings if you request.

If you are willing to be a participant in this study, please contact me at fsuazo@gmu.edu so that I may send you a link to the informed consent form and to set up a time for the interview. Please contact me if you have any questions.

I hope that you decide to become part of this initiative.

Sincerely,

Frances I. Suazo

fsuazo@gmu.edu

George Mason University Doctoral Candidate

Instructional Technology Program
Appendix D

Informed Consent Form

SHELTERED INSTRUCTION TRAINING FOR ONLINE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION

RESEARCH PROCEDURES
This qualitative research study is being conducted to explore online teachers’ perceptions of Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training. Specifically, this study will seek to determine the effectiveness of SIOP training using the Guskey professional development evaluation model. If you agree to participate, you will participate in an audio-recorded interview which will last approximately one hour. After the analysis of the interview, you will be provided with an opportunity to review the summary of the main points of the interview and make any suggestions for accuracy.

RISKS
There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

BENEFITS
There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in sheltered instruction training.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The data in this study will be kept confidential. You will be asked demographic questions prior to your interview and all measures to maintain your confidentiality will be applied. All data will be kept in a secure password-protected computer. The researcher will ask the participant to complete an online consent form to agree to participate in the study and to have the interview audiotaped. Once the interview is completed, the researcher will transcribe the recording and apply a pseudonym instead of your name to the transcript for identification purposes. To ensure confidentiality is maintained, only the researcher named will have the identification code. The transcriptions and audio files will remain with the researcher in a secure password-protected computer for three years after the
study is completed and then they will be destroyed. No one other than the researcher will have access to the audio files, transcripts or the identification code.

PARTICIPATION
Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from this study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party. As a token of our appreciation of your time, we will provide $25 Target electronic gift card to all research participants.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION
The only alternative to participation is not to participate. Participants in the study must have completed the sheltered instruction training. However, clock hour training credits will be granted to participants who successfully complete sheltered instruction training whether or not they participate in the research study.

CONTACT
This research is being conducted by Frances I. Suazo from the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. She may be reached at 703-424-8651 for questions or to report a research-related problem. You may also contact Dr. Kevin Clark at the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. He can be reached at 703-993-3669. You may contact the George Mason University Office of Research Integrity & Assurance at 703-993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

CONSENT
By including your name, phone number, email address, and date, and clicking “I wish to participate” you are indicating your consent and agreement to participate.

__________________________  
Full Name  

__________________________  
Email Address  

__________________________  
Telephone Number  

__________________________  
Date  

Research involving audio tape:
_____ I agree to audio taping.  

_____ I do not agree to audio taping.

Version date: 1/2013
Appendix E

The SIOP Model for Teaching English Language Learners (ELLs) Modules 1-10

This curriculum helps educators learn about the SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) Model to teach both content knowledge and academic language skills in ways that are proven to be effective for English language learners (ELLs). Teachers will gain practical skills to collaborate, share, and implement lesson plans that incorporate all eight components and thirty features of SIOP, in order to teach content while developing students' academic and social language.

Module 1: Introduction to Sheltered Instruction: An overview of English language learner (ELL) demographics in the United States, second language acquisition, and sheltered instruction. Upon completion of this module, participants will meet the following objectives:

**Content Objectives**

- Become familiar with sheltered instruction
- Explore factors to consider when planning instruction for English

**Language Objectives**

- Develop a lexicon related to sheltered instruction
• Read about issues in second language acquisition

**Module 2: Introduction to the SIOP Model:** An overview of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model--a scientifically-based program that helps educators teach academic content to English learners while promoting their English language development. Upon completion of this module, participants will meet the following objectives:

**Content Objectives**

- Become familiar with the SIOP Model.

**Language Objectives**

- Participants will begin to develop a SIOP-related lexicon.

**Module 3: Lesson Preparation:** In this module, teachers learn how to plan lessons carefully, paying particular attention to language and content objectives, appropriate content concepts, and the use of supplemental materials, adaptation of content, and meaningful activities. Upon completion of this module, participants will meet the following objectives:

**Content Objectives**

- Be able to identify and design objectives that are aligned to state standards.
• Be able to incorporate supplementary materials to meet the needs of ELLs and to select from a variety of techniques for adapting content to the student’s proficiency and cognitive levels.

Language Objectives

• Explain the importance of meaningful academic activities for ELLs.

• Write language and content objectives for your students.

• Explain how the Lesson Preparation component can be implemented in a virtual lesson.

Module 4: Building Background: In this module, teachers learn how to make explicit links to their students’ background experiences and knowledge and past learning. They also learn how to teach and emphasize key vocabulary. Upon completion of this module, participants will meet the following objectives:

Content Objectives

• Identify techniques for connecting students’ personal experiences and past learning to lesson concepts.

• Define the key elements of academic language (content words, process/function words, and words to teach English structure) and be able to explain their importance.

Language Objectives
• Review or rewrite a lesson and be able to incorporate activities that build background and provide explicit links to students’ backgrounds, experiences, and past learning

• Identify the academic language in a SIOP lesson and select key vocabulary words to emphasize

**Module 5: Comprehensible Input:** In this module, teachers learn how to make the message understandable to ELLs so that they understand the instruction. Comprehensible input means that students should be able to understand the essence of what is being said or presented to them. Upon completion of this module, participants will meet the following objectives:

**Content Objectives**

• Explore techniques for presenting content information in ways that students comprehend

• Review various ways to model and provide directions for academic tasks

**Language Objectives**

• Name and describe the three features of this component.

• Explain the modifications to teacher speech that can increase student comprehension

• Write the steps needed for students to perform an academic task
Module 6: Strategies: This module focuses on the cognitive and metacognitive strategies that learners use to make sense of new information and concepts. Upon completion of this module, participants will meet the following objectives:

**Content Objectives**

- Select learning strategies appropriate to a lesson’s objectives
- Incorporate explicit instruction and student practice of metacognitive and cognitive strategies in lesson plans
- Identify techniques for scaffolding verbal, procedural, and instructional understanding.

**Language Objectives**

- Identify language learning strategies to use with students
- Write about the importance of asking higher-order questions to students of all English proficiency levels
- Write a set of questions with increasing levels of difficulty on one topic

Module 7: Interaction: In this component, teachers learn how to provide students with frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion, how to group students to support content and language objectives, how to provide sufficient wait-time for student responses, and how to appropriately clarify concepts in the student’s first language, if
possible and necessary. Upon completion of this module, participants will meet the following objectives:

**Content Objectives**

- Select from a variety of activities that promote interaction and incorporate into a lesson plan
- Design grouping patterns that support lesson content and language objectives
- Identify techniques to increase wait time
- Identify resources to support student clarification in the native language

**Language Objectives**

- Explain in writing the purpose of student-student interaction for language development
- Describe techniques to reduce the amount of teacher talk in a lesson
- Practice asking questions that promote student elaboration of responses

**Module 8: Practice/Application:** In this component, teachers learn how to provide hands-on materials and/or manipulatives, and include activities for students to apply their content and language knowledge through all language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Upon completion of this module, participants will meet the following objectives:
**Content Objectives**

- Identify a variety of ways for students to enhance their learning through hands-on practice
- Create application activities that extend the learning in new ways and relate to language or content objectives

**Language Objectives**

- Design activities that integrate different language skills as students practice new content knowledge
- State the importance of linking practice and application activities to specific lesson objectives

**Module 9: Lesson Delivery:** In this component, teachers implement lessons that clearly support content and language objectives with appropriate pacing, while students are engaged 90-100 percent of the instructional period. Upon completion of this module, participants will meet the following objectives:

**Content Objectives**

- Review lessons to determine if the delivery is supporting the objectives
- List strategies for improving student time-on task throughout a lesson
- Explain how a focus on a lesson’s objectives can aid in pacing
- Generate activities to keep ELLs engaged

**Language Objectives**
• Evaluate a situation where a great lesson plan is not enacted successfully and explain what might have gone wrong and what could be improved

• Compare pacing considerations in classes that have only native English speakers with classes that have ELLs

• List the characteristics of effective SIOP lesson delivery

Module 10: Review and Assessment: In this component, teachers provide a comprehensive review of key vocabulary and concepts, regularly give specific, academic feedback to students, and conduct assessment of student comprehension and learning throughout the lesson. Upon completion of this module, participants will meet the following objectives:

**Content Objectives**

• Select techniques for reviewing key concepts

• Incorporate a variety of assessment techniques into lessons

• List the challenges in assessing the content learning of students with limited English proficiency

**Language Objectives**

• Adapt an existing lesson plan to include a review of key vocabulary

• Identify oral, written, and physical means to provide specific feedback to students on their performance
Appendix F

E-mail to Expert Reviewers Requesting Participation

As you know, I am working on a training entitled The SIOP Model for Teaching English Language Learners (ELLs) for virtual academies’ teachers. I am hoping to add this training program to the course catalog in the next month. Once it is vetted, the program will only be available initially to teachers.

My dissertation committee suggested that I use this review opportunity to obtain expert validation. Since my research involves the design, development, and implementation of a professional development training course, we decided to officially incorporate an "expert review" of the modules and related materials. In recognizing your work in high-quality professional development and ESL pedagogy, I realize how valuable your input could be to my research. I plan to revise the materials as soon as I receive your expert validation followed by a request for upload to, ensuring that for the time being only teachers have access to the materials.

The online SIOP training consists of 10 modules and will be largely based on Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The SIOP Model (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2012). This widely used publication presents the eight components and thirty features of the SIOP model and includes teaching scenarios that illustrate different
levels of implementation of each component. It includes lesson plans and instructional activities to help teachers implement the SIOP model effectively in K–12 classrooms. However, since the SIOP model was developed for a face-to-face environment, I have included recommendations to make the features work in the online classroom.

**Training Scope**

Module 1  Introduction to Sheltered Instruction  
Module 2  Introduction to the SIOP Model  
Module 3  Lesson Preparation  
Module 4  Building Background  
Module 5  Comprehensible Input  
Module 6  Strategies  
Module 7  Interaction  
Module 8  Practice and Application  
Module 9  Lesson Delivery  
Module 10  Review and Assessment

I am also seeking approval from the legal department to be able to conduct interviews with teachers once they have completed the training. Please note that I will properly seek consent for participation from the teachers when authorized by legal department, administrators, and George Mason University’s Institutional Review Board. However, the training will be available once I implement the expert recommendations whether or not I obtain approval for the interviews.
I hope that you are able to serve as one of the expert reviewers of this training program. I feel that your input would be very beneficial to ensure the quality of this professional development opportunity and would greatly value your opinions and suggestions. Please consider my request. If you are willing to validate the content, please review the information below to access the modules. I am also forwarding to you via Google Drive.

Please note that all modules are ready for review. I’ve included the links to access the modules in Dropbox, the links to the expert validation forms and the links within the module since these will only play in the LMS.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks!
Appendix G

Expert Validation by Module

Module X: Expert Validation

This expert review form is for Module X of The SIOP Model for Teaching English Language Learners (ELLs). The expert review is a method of evaluating the training, to ensure that the training meets the standards of other professional development programs provided by [ ] and that it meets the established objectives and goals.

Questions 1-13 are related to the instructional design of the module.

Questions 14-19 are related to the instructional development of the module.

Please indicate a response by selecting a rating value. Provide additional comments as necessary.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The lesson provides clear objectives.</td>
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<td>2. Proper instructions are provided for navigation.</td>
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<td>3. The look and feel aspects are designed consistently.</td>
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<td>4. Graphics and animations are relevant and appealing in order to enhance motivation.</td>
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<td>5. The navigation is consistent and logical.</td>
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<td>6. Proper methodologies are applied.</td>
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<td>7. Proper learning strategies are applied.</td>
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<td>8. The level and types of interactivity are relevant.</td>
<td>⬜️</td>
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<td>9. The cognitive capacity is relevant to the target audience and the intended objectives.</td>
<td>⬜️</td>
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<td>10. A proper user control is applied throughout.</td>
<td>⬜️</td>
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<td>11. Proper methods of learner assessments are applied.</td>
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<td>12. Quality of feedback on learner assessments is appropriate.</td>
<td>⬜️</td>
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<td>13. Mastery level of the lesson is relevant to the objectives.</td>
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<td>14. All intended navigation menus are functioning properly.</td>
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<td>15. Graphics, animations and other special effects are functioning as intended.</td>
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<td>16. The lesson functions properly for normal user actions.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>17. The lesson functions properly for unusual user actions by displaying appropriate information or warning messages.</td>
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<td><strong>18. The lesson functions properly on different computers and with different types of internet connections and browsers.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>19. The lesson complies with accessibility issues.</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comments/Recommendations:
Appendix H

Expert Review Evaluation Questionnaire (Final)

The expert review is a method of evaluating the online SIOP training, to ensure that the training meets the standards of other professional development programs provided by [ ] that it meets the established objectives and goals.

1. Describe your current role as an expert reviewer of this training. *
2. Does the training cover all aspects of planning and implementation of SIOP in the online classroom? *
   - Yes
   - No

If you answered No to the previous question, please explain or add any comment which might improve the planning and implementation of SIOP in the online classroom.

3. Is the training well designed for collaboration? If not, how could it be improved?
   - Yes
   - No

   Recommended improvements:

4. Is the training efficient? *
   - Yes
   - No

If you answered No to the previous question, please explain or add any comment which might improve the planning and implementation of SIOP in the online classroom.
5. Does each component in the training seem necessary for your purposes? If not, please explain. *

Comments:

7. The following objectives have been identified for this training program:

Participants in the online SIOP training will

• develop an understanding of the challenges that ELLs face in mainstream online classrooms. These understandings include the following:
  o Second language learning involves linguistic, social, cognitive, and affective development.
  o First and second language development are life-long processes that occur unevenly across various social and academic domains.
  o Second language learners often face social and affective (emotional) conflicts due to language use as it relates to their identity development.
  o Language development and cognitive development are interrelated.
• acquire basic knowledge of theories of second language development and how language development and cognitive development are related.
• be able to discuss second language pedagogy and methods.
• be able to apply their knowledge of second language development theory and of the relationship between language and learning to assess their own courses and their students, and in order to better scaffold their students’ conceptual and linguistic development.
• learn about and be able to apply strategies and resources for designing and modifying curriculum materials and instructional practices that meet the appropriate professional standards and support the conceptual and linguistic development of second language learners in the mainstream online classroom.

Are the objectives of the training appropriate given the following description which will appear in the course catalog in:

The SIOP Model for Teaching English Language Learners training is an online course to learn about the scientifically validated SIOP® (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) Model. It is a proven framework for teaching both academic content and language skills in ways that are more effective for English language learners, and helps teachers plan and deliver lessons with all students’ language needs in mind. *
8. Does the training program provide learners with a clear understanding of the objectives that they will be expected to accomplish during this course? *
   Yes  No
   
a. What suggestions do you have for improving the way the objectives of the course are communicated to teachers?

9. Are the instructional activities in the training appropriate for the objectives? *
   Yes  No
   
a. What suggestions do you have for improving the instructional activities in this course so that they increase the likelihood that teachers will accomplish the objectives of the training?

10. Is the instructional design of this training based on sound learning theory and principles? *
    Yes  No
    
a. What suggestions do you have for improving the instructional design of this training so that it is based on sound learning theory and principles?

11. Is the content of this training appropriate? *
    Yes  No
    
a. What suggestions do you have for improving the content of this training, e.g., by adding new content, eliminating some content, or extending the depth of the content?
Appendix I

Interview Guide

Demographic Questions

1. What grade(s) do you currently teach?

2. Do you have a teaching degree? What degree(s) do you have at this time?

3. What teaching license do you currently have? (e.g. elementary education, secondary education, ESL certification, other)

4. Are you licensed to teach in other states?

5. Do you speak any other language other than English?/How proficient are you in this language?

6. Prior to this training, had you ever complete SIOP training?/ Have you ever spent any time in coaching and support activities in the implementation of the SIOP model?

7. Have you ever completed any other training related to the needs of ELLs?

8. How many ELLs do you currently have in your classroom(s)?

9. How many hours per week do you spend modifying instructional materials for ELLs?
Program Evaluation Questions

1. What is your overall evaluation of the SIOP training?

2. Think about your three most favorable modules in the SIOP training. Think why these modules were so memorable to you. What made these modules so effective and memorable?

3. When looking back on SIOP modules, how do they compare to other professional development sessions that you’ve completed? (timing, location, content, compensation, etc.)

4. What changes, if any, have you made in your instructional practices since completing SIOP training? Please give an example of something you have tried or a strategy you were able to incorporate.

5. After completing SIOP training, what specific successes have you experienced in the classroom while implementing the SIOP model to meet the needs of your ELLs?

6. How do you intend to use the new information or strategies?/Have you referred to the resources?

7. After completing SIOP training, what specific difficulties have you experienced in the classroom while implementing the SIOP model to meet the needs of your ELLs?

8. On a scale of 1 to 10, how effective do you consider the SIOP model professional development?
9. Which component or feature of the SIOP training was most helpful to you?

10. Which component or feature of the SIOP training was least helpful to you?

11. Do you feel that you were properly trained to integrate the SIOP model features/components into an online classroom? Why/why not?

12. What changes or additions would you recommend to the SIOP training?

13. Now that you’ve completed this training, how confident are you that you have the ability to reach ELLs in the online classroom?

14. Think about a time when you were working with an ELL and you didn’t know how to assist him/her. How did you feel?

   a) Now that you’ve completed this training, how do you think you would handle it if it happened again?

   b) What are some of the resources that you learned about which would help you with a situation similar to this one?

   c) How certain are you now that you can handle a situation like this?
Appendix J

Lesson Plan Checklist for the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)

**Preparation**
- Write content objectives clearly for students.
- Write language objectives clearly for students.
- Choose content concepts appropriate for age and educational background level of students.
- Identify supplementary materials to use (graphs, models, visuals).
- Adapt content (e.g., text, assignment) to all levels of student proficiency.
- Plan meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts (e.g., surveys, letter writing, simulations) with language practice opportunities for the four skills.

**Building Background**
- Explicitly link concepts to students' backgrounds and experiences.
- Explicitly link past learning and new concepts.
- Emphasize key vocabulary (e.g., introduce, write, repeat, and highlight) for students

**Comprehensible Input**
- Use speech appropriate for students' proficiency level (e.g., slower rate, enunciation, simple sentence structure for beginners).
- Explain academic tasks clearly.
- Use a variety of techniques to make content concepts clear (e.g., modeling, visuals, hands-on activities, demonstrations, gestures, body language).

**Strategies**
- Provide ample opportunities for students to use strategies (e.g., problem solving, predicting, organizing, summarizing, categorizing, evaluating, self-monitoring).
- Use scaffolding techniques consistently (providing the right amount of support to move students from one level of understanding to a higher level) throughout lesson.
- Use a variety of question types including those that promote higher-order thinking skills throughout the lesson (e.g., literal, analytical, and interpretive questions).
**Interaction**
— Provide frequent opportunities for interactions and discussion between teacher/student and among students, and encourage elaborated responses.
— Use group configurations that support language and content objectives of the lesson. Provide sufficient wait time for student response consistently.
— Give ample opportunities for students to clarify key concepts in LI as needed with aide, peer, or LI text.

**Practice/Application**
— Provide hands-on materials and/or manipulatives for students to practice using new content knowledge.
— Provide activities for students to apply content and language knowledge in the classroom. Provide activities that integrate all language skills (i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking).

**Lesson Delivery**
— Support content objectives clearly.
— Support language objectives clearly.
— Engage students approximately 90-100% of the time (most students taking part/on task).
— Pace the lesson appropriately to the students' ability level.

**Review/Assessment**
— Give a comprehensive review of key vocabulary
— Give a comprehensive review of key content concepts.
— Provide feedback to students regularly on their output (e.g., language, content, work). Conduct assessments of student comprehension and leaning throughout lesson on all lesson objectives (e.g., spot checking, group response).

Appendix K

iNACOL Standards for Quality Online Teaching (2011)

Summary of iNACOL Teaching Standards:

- **Standard A:** The online teacher knows the primary concepts and structures of effective online instruction and is able to create learning experiences to enable student success.

- **Standard B:** The online teacher understands and is able to use a range of technologies, both existing and emerging, that effectively support student learning and engagement in the online environment.

- **Standard C:** The online teacher plans, designs, and incorporates strategies to encourage active learning, application, interaction, participation, and collaboration in the online environment.

- **Standard D:** The online teacher promotes student success through clear expectations, prompt responses, and regular feedback.

- **Standard E:** The online teacher promotes student success through clear expectations, prompt responses, and regular feedback.

- **Standard F:** The online teacher is cognizant of the diversity of student academic needs and incorporates accommodations into the online environment.
- **Standard G:** The online teacher demonstrates competencies in creating and implementing assessments in online learning environments in ways that ensure validity and reliability of the instruments and procedures.

- **Standard H:** The online teacher develops and delivers assessments, projects, and assignments that meet standards-based learning goals and assesses learning progress by measuring student achievement of the learning goals.

- **Standard I:** The online teacher demonstrates competency in using data from assessments and other data sources to modify content and to guide student learning.

- **Standard J:** The online teacher interacts in a professional, effective manner with colleagues, parents, and other members of the community to support students’ success.

- **Standard K:** The online teacher arranges media and content to help students and teachers transfer knowledge most effectively in the online environment.

**Summary of Standards of iNACOL Course Standards:**

- **Section A: Content Description:** The course provides online learners with multiple ways of engaging with learning experiences that promote their mastery of content and are aligned with state or national content standards.

- **Section B: Instructional Design Description:** The course uses learning activities that engage students in active learning; provides students with multiple learning paths to master; the content is based on student needs; and provides ample
opportunities for interaction and communication — student to student, student to instructor and instructor to student.

- **Section C: Student Assessment Description:** The course uses multiple strategies and activities to assess student readiness for and progress in course content and provides students with feedback on their progress.

- **Section D: Technology Description:** The course takes full advantage of a variety of technology tools, has a user-friendly interface and meets accessibility standards for interoperability and access for learners with special needs.

- **Section E: Course Evaluation and Support Description:** The course is evaluated regularly for effectiveness, using a variety of assessment strategies, and the findings are used as a basis for improvement. The course is kept up to date, both in content and in the application of new research on course design and technologies. Online instructors and their students are prepared to teach and learn in an online environment and are provided support during the course.
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Biography

Frances I. Suazo was born in New York City and raised in the Dominican Republic. She received her Bachelor of Science from Florida International University in 2000. She went on to receive her Master of Arts in Bilingual Education from New York University in 2003 and a Master of Education from the University of South Florida in 2006. She has 15 years of experience in the education field in a variety of roles including bilingual elementary teacher, adjunct professor for English for Academic Purposes, e-learning developer, instructional designer, and learning consultant.