

PERCEPTIONS OF THE SHELTERED INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION PROTOCOL
MODEL IN THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

By

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ABSTRACT

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English language learners are among the fastest growing population in the United States. Due to the high numbers of ELs in public schools, many models and frameworks have been developed including the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). Over the past two decades, many studies have been conducted to demonstrate the validity and effectiveness of the SIOP model. These studies have had mixed results and many educators also share mixed reviews of the model. This qualitative research study seeks to investigate the perceptions of the SIOP model in the state of Michigan. The main research questions are: 1.) What are educators' perspectives of the SIOP model as the main framework for working with English learners in Michigan? 2.) What are the factors that contribute to educators' perceptions of the SIOP model? SIOP trainers throughout the state of Michigan provide insights through an online survey as well as individual interviews to learn more in depth about the perceptions of the model. The data collected provide timely feedback to education policy makers and state and local administrators to better advocate and support English language learners.

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Introduction

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, roughly 9.6% of K-12 students in the United States are English learners (ELs) (2019). The growing number of ELs over the past decade is reflected in the increase of more than 1 million students from the fall of 2000 to the fall of 2016 whose second language is English (NCES, 2019). These numbers are projected to grow with some estimates as high as one in four students will be English learners by the year 2025 (NYU Steinhardt, 2018). With the steady increase in EL students, these estimates have prompted many educators and EL advocates to reevaluate the resources and methods for meeting the specific needs of this rapidly growing population.

Although English support had been present for decades, support for ELs became federally mandated in the Supreme Court ruling of *Lau v. Nichols* in 1974. The ruling stated all public schools are required to provide supplemental English support to students who do not speak English or are in the process of learning English (Johnson et al., 2018). Prior to the ruling, EL support in public schools was minimal or nonexistent and special student populations such as students living in poverty relied on the generosity of churches or other charitable organizations (Mavrogordato, 2012). Unfortunately, a ‘sink or swim’ approach was often the default model for working with students learning English in the school setting (Johnson et al., 2018). Since the *Lau v Nichols* ruling in 1974, many approaches to help young English learners have emerged including transitional bilingual education, two-way immersion programs, newcomer programs, content-based instruction, comprehensible input, and sheltered instruction. These programs have evolved and developed over time as more research has been conducted and teachers have had more experiences working with ELs. The increase in English learners also highlights the importance of teacher preparation programs to support ELs in the classroom. Higher education

institutions are not only looking at the resources and materials being used in the classroom, but also how pre-service teachers are being prepared to work with English learners. Many institutions have recognized the need to adequately prepare classroom teachers for working with English learners in our public schools and have provided support for thorough course work and additional certifications. For example, in 1998 California passed the Senate Bill 2042 which required all teacher preparation programs to “prepare all teachers to work effectively with English learners” (Birch et al., 2004, p. 5). However, not all education programs are on the forefront of this movement. Menken and Antunez (2001) found that fewer than one sixth of teacher preparation programs addressed EL content in their curricula. As the number of English learners continues to rise, school districts, educators, and researchers continue to advocate for best practices for supporting EL students.

Over the past several decades, various approaches and methodologies have been developed to support ELs in the classroom. These methods often intertwine and build off of each other as each seeks to present the best methods possible for helping students acquire a second language. Often these approaches stem from the same theoretical framework but have adopted new variations as the research in the field continues to grow. One approach that began in the 1980’s and has emerged as a leader in EL interventions is sheltered instruction. Originally coined by Stephen Krashen in 1985, sheltered instruction is based on Krashen’s theoretical perspectives for content-based instruction and comprehensible input. The term *sheltered* was first used to describe English language classes where EL students were separated from mainstream classes. Today, however, the term *sheltered* has expanded beyond the idea of separate classrooms to refer to the practices and pedagogy where academic content has been modified and adjusted to help ELs learn content material in English (Freeman & Freeman, 1988). Sheltered instruction is built

upon content-based instruction (CBI) where English is taught through appropriate grade level content. By teaching English using the grade-level curriculum, the hope is to help bridge the achievement gap in the content EL students are learning while also providing meaningful and comprehensible language instruction. This literature review will be specifically looking at the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol model (SIOP) that was first published in 2003. Since its publication, the SIOP model has grown in popularity and has become one of the main frameworks for working with ELs. The purpose of this review is to understand the historical context that influenced the SIOP model as well as to consider research on the effectiveness and perceptions of the model.

History of SIOP

As the needs and numbers of ELs grew in the 1980s and 1990s, the U.S. government was focusing on outcome-based assessments as the need for school accountability grew across the nation (Echevarría, 2012). This accountability was formally implemented through the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001. The pressure placed on English learners now included demonstrating their language skills through English proficiency tests. NCLB propelled many initiatives forward to help school districts meet the needs and state requirements for English learners. The need for general education teachers to help EL students also rose with the new accountability requirements in terms of requirements around ELs demonstrating proficiency in academic content areas. All teachers were being called upon to help teach ELs, not just EL teachers.

Several frameworks and models were being developed prior to NCLB, but the new legislation gave momentum for new proposals to emerge. One of these frameworks was the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model which is defined as a teaching approach that combines content and language instruction for English learners (Short, 2000). In 2003, Jana Echevarría, MaryEllen Vogt and Deborah Short published the SIOP Model. With a high demand to provide effective instruction to EL students, the SIOP model began as a tool to help guide teachers through the various sheltered strategies in the 1990s (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2013). Throughout the seven years of development from 1996 to 2003, Echevarría et al. field tested the model through several rounds of research studies and refined the protocol to ultimately include both teacher implementation of the model and a tool for evaluating the fidelity to the model (2013). The model sought to blend content based and language instruction to unify sheltered classrooms. The model is composed of 30 instructional features that are grouped into

eight components: lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice and application, lesson delivery and review and assessment (Appendix A, Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2013). The framework helps guide teacher's lesson plans and delivery for EL students. Ideally, all eight components would be incorporated into each lesson using grade-level appropriate curriculum and presented in a comprehensible manner. A distinguishing feature of the SIOP model is having content and language objectives for each lesson (Echevarría, 2012). The strategies implemented in the model seek to improve the academic language of EL students and increase their receptive and productive English language skills.

Implementation

The initial work of the SIOP framework began as the authors recognized “there was no model for teachers to follow and few systematic and sustained forms of professional development” (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2013, p. 15). The SIOP model therefore built upon and unified existing models to provide the necessary structure for teachers to follow. The 30 features are divided into eight components for teachers to incorporate into their lesson delivery, however, this structure has also been criticized as simply being a checklist for teachers (Krashen, 2013). Similarly, Crawford and Reyes (2015) highlight the intentions of Krashen were never meant to be a one size fits all as the SIOP model is often boiled down to. Misinterpretations of the model have led to many misunderstandings that have skewed the main goals of supporting English learners in the classroom (Prabjandee, 2016). For example, Prabjandee (2016) echoes the checklist misconception of the model as well as highlights an interpretation of that model that requires teachers to present content and language objectives in every lesson. The authors of SIOP are aware of these challenges and state that the eight components are not a step-by-step

approach but rather, “a system for lesson planning and teaching that ensures critical features of instruction for English learners in research-supported combinations are present in every lesson” (Echevarría, 2010, p. 275). The goal for the SIOP authors was to unify the best practices in EL education and provide a framework for classroom teachers to follow.

Advantages

Research studies of SIOP have continued to investigate how the model impacts the academic success of English learners. Short, Fidelman, and Louguit (2012) found the overall scores of students receiving SIOP instruction had a positive impact on writing, oral language, and total English scores in comparison to classrooms with non-SIOP-trained instructors. The study analyzed groups of teachers from middle and high schools in New Jersey and compared the treatment district, who had received SIOP professional development, with the comparison district. The study also found that teachers who had received the SIOP professional development incorporated more sheltered instruction strategies in their lessons than the comparison teachers who had not received SIOP professional development. (Short, Fidelman, & Louguit, 2012). The study states that students who received more sheltered instruction strategies had a positive impact on their writing and oral language scores.

An additional study conducted by Short, Echevarría, and Richards-Tutor (2011), found similar effects of the SIOP model on students’ overall academic achievements. For this study, a SIOP writing assessment was conducted with 19 treatment teachers and four comparison teachers. The authors used the writing assessment from Illinois Measurement of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE) as the outcome to measure academic literacy. Using the SIOP rating scale, the authors scored lessons and teachers’ implementation of the SIOP model. After two years of professional development training in the SIOP model, 71% of teachers reached a high level of

implementation. The study also collected data and analyzed student achievement. This was done using the IPT oral language, reading, writing and English language proficiency scores from two districts from the 2005-2006 school year. The findings for total English proficiency revealed that the comparison district scores remained relatively the same whereas the treatment district scores increased over time. This study provides statistical results in favor of the implementation of the SIOP model (Short, Echevarría, & Richards-Tutor, 2011). The strengths of the SIOP model continue to propel the implementation of the model throughout the United States.

Concerns about the SIOP Model

Despite its popularity and widespread implementation, the SIOP model, like many methods and frameworks, has been critiqued and criticized. While the SIOP model has gained momentum as a leader in EL instruction over the past two decades, opinions and research investigating the model and wide-spread implementation span both ends of the spectrum as being highly impactful and dismally ineffective. In this section, counterpoints to the SIOP model's effectiveness will be addressed.

To begin, there has been a call to address the lack of research for other models and frameworks for working with ELs. Many researchers have noted the abundance of studies focusing on the effectiveness of the SIOP model as opposed to taking into consideration best practices across the board for working with EL students (Goldenberg, 2013). Goldenberg also questions the data suggesting the modifications of sheltered instruction directly support English learners and does not agree with the claims that these accommodations close the achievement gap between EL and non-EL students (2013). More specifically, in the 2015 book "The Trouble with SIOP" Crawford and Reyes also echo these concerns about limited data stating, "all of the studies done on SIOP so far have shown little to no effect" (Crawford, & Reyes, 2015).

Crawford and Reyes (2015) point out that four out of the five studies conducted on the SIOP model were carried out by the authors of the SIOP raising potential questions as to whether a biased analysis of that data took place. Taking a closer look, Krashen evaluated four studies using comparisons between classes with SIOP trained teachers and classes with non-SIOP trained teachers (2013). Again, Krashen notes that three of the four studies reviewed were conducted by the SIOP developers. Krashen analyzed the statistical data in each study and found that although the authors claim a positive correlation between higher test scores and instructors trained in the SIOP model, these conclusions are often based on modest effect sizes and are “not always statistically significant” (2013, p. 7). Critics also include Daniel and Conlin (2015), who pointed out that the model heavily relies on teacher actions noting “only three of the 30 features focus on what students do in the classroom” (p. 173). Appendix A lays out the 30 features of the SIOP model and many of the actions are directed at teachers (e.g., content and language objectives clearly defined, appropriate rate of speech, grouping configurations). Daniel and Conlin (2015) point out the three specific features that highlight student action including: ample opportunities for students to clarify key concepts in L1, students engaged approximately 90% - 100% of the time, and frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion between teacher/student and among students. Given the high ratio of teacher directives, Daniel and Conlin (2015) argue that some teachers may unintentionally implement teacher-centered instruction and create a transmission-based approach. The variety of interpretations of the model as well as common misconceptions have led some researchers to call for the replication of the author-based studies to provide stronger evidence for the validity of the SIOP model.

Another factor that is important to note is the language being used to describe support and intervention programs for English learners. The term ‘sheltered’ itself has garnered criticism

as labels and semantics are increasingly being evaluated through the lens of equality. The word ‘sheltered’ has begun to draw criticism as Chang-Bacon highlights the power dynamics that underlie the ideology of ‘sheltering’ (2018). Separating students from mainstream classrooms can idealize a single group in a term Chang-Bacon describes as ‘monolingual language ideologies’ (2018, p. 2). Over the past decade, a shift toward more asset-based terms for students is gaining support such as the term ‘emergent bilinguals’ to describe students who are fluent in their home language and are in the process of acquiring a second language (García, 2009). This framing of how sheltered instruction is perceived is an important aspect to take into consideration when evaluating the overall implementation of sheltered instruction. Researchers are also beginning to reevaluate the terms used to describe programs and interventions as Chang-Bacon points out. The words we choose to describe students and programs are powerful indicators of the underlying injustices and complex dynamics that directly affect the academic success and well-being of students.

Lastly, awareness of the branding of the SIOP model offers another layer and perspective to its implementation. SIOP is a registered trademark of the previously known K-12 Pearson publishing company. Some researchers have negatively alluded to SIOP’s connections to the behemoth educational publisher by referring to the model as a “Pearson product” (Crawford, & Reyes, 2015). Following the business side of the model, in early 2019, Pearson sold its K-12 courseware for \$250 million dollars to a private investment company called Nexus Capital Management (Millward, 2019). In spring 2020, SIOP made the rebranding transition with the investment company and is now a product of the Savvas Learning Company. These high-profile business transactions of educational materials raise many questions about the rate of implementation.

Perceptions of the SIOP Model

There are multiple factors that contribute to the overall perception of any model or instructional guide. To name a few, educators are at various stages in their teaching careers, work at various types of districts and schools, have different demographics in their classrooms, possess different skills and abilities, have acquired different pre-service training and professional development, and ultimately have different philosophies of teaching. These factors are just a sample of the influences on educators and their thoughts and ideas about best practices in the classroom. Naturally, this leads to various views and ideas on how best to support English learners as can be seen by the long-debated issues over the past several decades. As this literature review demonstrates, it is important to take time to reflect on research data and pay attention to the discussions that are taking place currently. Our thoughtful reflection, investigation, and discussion about critical issues as educators and advocates in EL education is necessary and imperative to support students in meaningful and productive ways.

Method

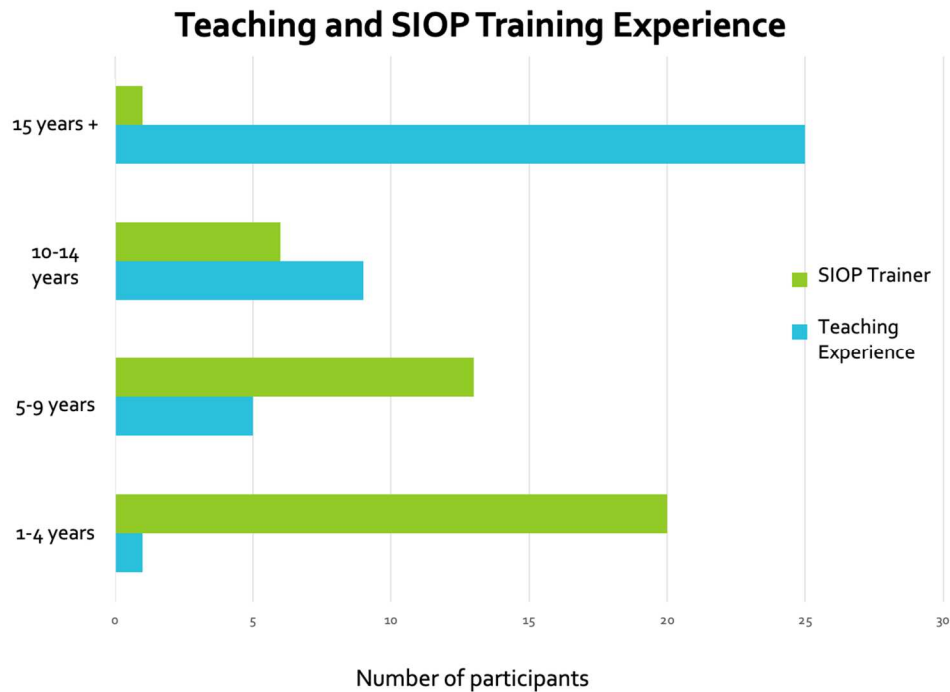
Data for this study were collected through an eleven-question survey (Appendix B) that was sent to the educators listed on the Michigan Department of Education SIOP Trainer of Trainers 2019-2020 Registry. The survey was piloted by four former and current teachers including an active SIOP trainer. With the helpful input from the reviewers, the survey was edited and streamlined to fit more in line with the overall goal of learning more about teacher's perceptions of the SIOP model. The survey was of original design and consisted of four demographic questions related to teaching and SIOP training experience, frequency of implementing the SIOP model, a five-point Likert scale analyzing seven statements about the SIOP model, and six open ended questions about the trainers' experiences and perceptions using the SIOP model. The open-ended questions focused on the following overarching themes: a) challenges of model implementation; b) successful model implementation; c) teacher responses to model training and classroom implementation; and d) overall opinions of the model. The survey was sent via email to the 117 registered SIOP trainers and participants were offered a \$5 e-gift card for completing the survey.

Participants

The Michigan Department of Education SIOP Trainer of Trainers 2019-2020 Registry listed a total of 117 SIOP trainers. Out of the 117 surveys distributed, four email messages were unable to be sent due to invalid email addresses. Of the 113 remaining surveys, 45 Michigan SIOP trainers participated in the study. Among the 45 surveys submitted, five were partially incomplete which left a total of 40 surveys in this study. It is interesting to note the distribution of teaching experience and experience being a SIOP trainer within this data set. The majority of the participants (25 trainers) have been teaching for 15+ years. Only one individual has been

teaching for less than five years. When looking at the SIOP trainer experience 20 participants reported being SIOP trainers for 1-4 years and only one individual reported being a trainer for 15+ years. Figure 1 highlights this variety in experiences more in depth.

Figure 1: Teaching and SIOP Training Experience



At the end of the survey, participants were given an optional opportunity to enlist in a participant pool for a more in-depth interview process that consisted of a 20-30 minute Zoom meeting with an incentive of a \$25 Amazon e-gift card. Individuals who opted out of the individual interview protocol were not included in the pool. Individual interviews were selected strategically based on number of years teaching experience, number of years being a trainer of the SIOP model as well as individuals' Likert scale responses. Three individuals whose Likert scale results indicated a strong agreement with the SIOP model as well as three individuals whose Likert scale results indicated they somewhat agreed with the SIOP model were selected for individual interviews. Participants in each category were strategically selected based on their

individual teaching experiences and SIOP training experience to provide a wide variety of teaching experience. Table 1 highlights the breakdown of the individual participants.

Table 1: Individual Interview Participant Demographics

| | Teaching Experience (years) | SIOP Trainer Experience (years) | Opinion of the SIOP model |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Participant A | 10-14 years | 5-9 years | somewhat agree |
| Participant B | 15 + years | 10-14 years | somewhat agree |
| Participant C | 15 + years | 1-4 years | somewhat agree |
| Participant D | 10 -14 years | 1-4 years | strongly agree |
| Participant E | 5-9 years | 5-9 years | strongly agree |
| Participant F | 15 + years | 15 + years | strongly agree |

Each individual interview session followed the individual SIOP protocol which can be found in Appendix C. Participants were asked to share their experiences using the SIOP model as well as their thoughts and perceptions about how the model is being received during their training sessions. Interviewees were asked to speak to their own training experience as well as the training experiences they facilitate. Each Zoom meeting was recorded with the consent of each participant for further analysis of the interview.

Results

The results from the SIOP survey were separated into three categories: demographic information, Likert scale questions, and open-ended questions. The demographic information questions consisted of the first four questions regarding years of teaching experience, years of experience as a SIOP trainer, frequency of the SIOP training, and implementation of the SIOP model training. This information was organized using Excel. The second category used the following Likert scale for the seven statements relating to the SIOP model. The statements varied in severity and vacillated portraying the model in a positive and negative light (e.g., *The SIOP Model is an effective model for supporting students' language development*, and *The SIOP model is outdated*). Participants were asked to choose from the following scale options: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, N = neutral, A = agree, SA = strongly agree) to evaluate the statements.

Table 2: SIOP Survey Statements

| |
|--|
| The SIOP Model is an effective model for supporting students' language development. |
| The SIOP Model is outdated. |
| More research is needed to determine the effectiveness of the SIOP Model. |
| The SIOP Model is not the best method available for working with English learners in Michigan. |
| The SIOP Model is effective in supporting students' progress beyond language development (i.e., sense of belonging, agency, high academic success) |
| It is realistic for a non-ESL trained teacher to enact the SIOP Model. |
| Michigan schools/districts can implement the SIOP Model among the majority of their teachers with fidelity. |

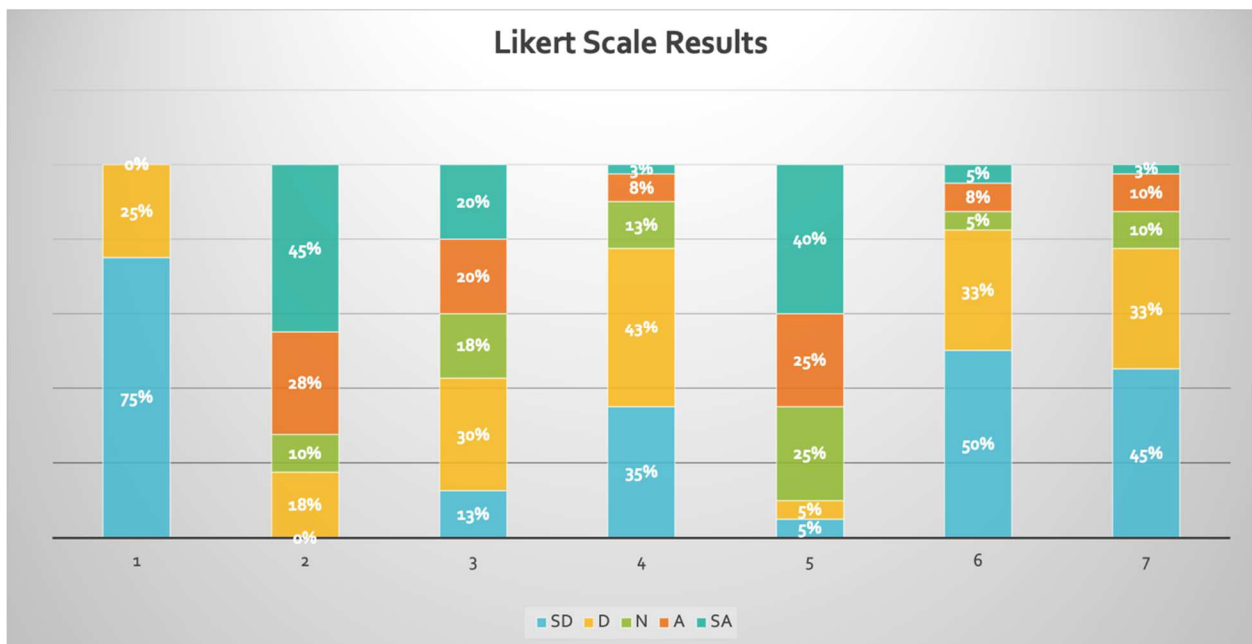
The seven statements for the Likert scale were organized using Excel and the mean and SD were calculated for each statement (See Table 2).

Table 3: Standard Deviation of SIOP Statements

| | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 |
|------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| Mean | 1.256 | 4 | 3.05 | 2 | 3.9 | 1.85 | 1.925 |
| SD | 0.442 | 1.132 | 1.357 | 1.0127 | 1.150 | 1.144 | 1.095 |

Looking at each statement visually, Figure 2 showcases the breakdown for the SIOP statements.

Figure 2: Likert Scale Results



The third category consisted of open-ended questions of the SIOP survey and were analyzed and coded based on the themes that emerged from the data. The main themes that emerged were best-practices and pedagogy, administration support, overall frustrations, and positive classroom and training experiences. Taking a closer look at each of these themes, to begin, many participants noted how the SIOP model articulated best-practices not only for EL students but also non-EL students. Several SIOP trainers reported that the principles and

guidelines outlined in the SIOP model provide solid pedagogical practices and structure for both mainstream and sheltered classrooms. Many educators throughout the survey commented on the benefits of the SIOP model for all students. The second theme that emerged was the impact of how different administrations approached the SIOP model. In one district the SIOP trainer commented that due to the SIOP training being optional in their district, it was hard to see the full extent of the impact of the SIOP model and get a clear picture if it was working well for her students. Another trainer suggested that all staff including administrators should be trained in the SIOP model to help provide the best support for their EL students. This comment hinted to a potential disconnect among administrators with their understanding of the SIOP model. The third theme highlighted the overall frustrations that SIOP trainers experienced. These frustrations included but were not limited to teachers feeling overwhelmed by the number of features in the SIOP model, difficulties in differentiating various levels and trainers' frustrations at getting teacher buy-in for implementing the model. The various frustrations showcase the difficulties SIOP trainers face when training a wide range of teachers in a variety of contexts. The fourth theme was the most robust out of all the themes and provided great insight into the positive experiences of the implementation of the SIOP model in the classroom. Many trainers noted how excited teachers were about the model during training. Adjectives such as *favorably*, *positively*, and *enthusiastic* indicated how teachers responded to the SIOP training. Although some trainers expressed some teachers having mixed feelings about the model, most of the responses were positive and praised the tools SIOP gave teachers and how these tools in turn helped ELs succeed in both content and language objectives.

In addition to the survey, the six individual interviews provided greater opportunities to learn more in depth about the perceptions of the SIOP model in Michigan and highlighted a

similar range of themes as the survey. These themes consisted of the versatile nature of the SIOP model; training and implementation observations; and lastly, a call for greater accountability for the support for ESL students and programs.

To begin, it is important to note that all six of the interviewees commented on the versatile nature of the SIOP model echoing one another that the model benefits all learners not just ESL students stating, “it's appropriate for all learners”, “it's not just something that applies to the ESL students”, “it is something that helps all learners”, “it's very adaptable”. The 8 main components of the SIOP model: lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice and application, lesson delivery, and review and assessment were often referred to throughout the interviews as something that helps provide teachers a framework to prepare and plan lessons for all learners. One interviewee took it a step further and astutely observed that many teachers are “type A” and desire to continue to better themselves in all aspects. The framework of the SIOP model helps teachers zero in on what they can do better for their ESL students and provides an informal self-assessment. The guided steps of the SIOP model help teachers better prepare their lessons when working with ESL students as well as help differentiate instruction for the wide variety of needs in their classroom. Differentiating instruction can be a difficult task that teachers face on a daily basis and interviews highlighted the helpful role the SIOP model plays in planning for differentiated learning. Throughout the interviews, many trainers noted the benefit of a laid-out plan to follow to ensure instruction was being executed in a way that met the needs of their students.

A second theme that emerged from the data revolved around the way the SIOP model was implemented. Reflecting on previous training experiences, one teacher stated, “the way the training was delivered changed teachers’ perceptions of the model.” This observation was

explained in more detail noting how the three-day training is organized and delivered has a direct impact on how well teachers felt prepared to implement the model in their respective classrooms. For example, given the many hours of professional developments teachers are required to attend in a given school year, many teachers approach the SIOP training professional development from an unmotivated or overwhelmed state. This ultimately trickles down into the classroom and is sometimes manifested in misconceptions of the model. Several interviewees raised concerns about how the training plays a role in the misinterpretations of the model. One misconception that emerged from the data was that many teachers are not fully aware of just how much of the SIOP model classroom teachers are already doing. Teachers unfortunately have become accustomed to sifting through many mandates, protocols, and curriculum changes each year. Initially it can feel overwhelming when the SIOP is presented if one's lens is that it is a completely new concept to learn and incorporate into one's classroom. However, SIOP components such as building background before the lesson, focusing on interactions with students and using assessment to review content are all components of lessons that many teachers are already doing in their classrooms. One trainer helped address this misconception by encouraging teachers to focus on one component at a time when beginning to implement the SIOP model into their classroom. They noticed that this step-by-step approach helped classroom teachers see the SIOP model in a more holistic and helpful way as opposed to just one more thing to cram into their curriculum and classroom routines.

The third theme that emerged from the individual interview data was a call for greater accountability for ESL support in the school system as a whole. Several of the trainers addressed the growing need for teachers to be trained in working with English learners. Many mainstream teachers unfortunately are not trained to work with English learners and their needs are often

overlooked. One specific observation that stood out during an interview was the observation of teachers assuming that the students' character is more reserved saying "oh, they're just quiet" when "actually they've only been in the country for three months, and they don't speak English." This particular scenario was reported as unfortunately a frequent occurrence in classrooms and schools that are not well trained in working with English learners. The call for greater accountability is therefore a pertinent current need and one that the SIOP model is trying to meet. The scenario mentioned above along with many interviewees stating that school districts do not always fully provide the adequate support for English learners led one trainer to state, "we actually have to follow the civil rights laws and make sure that the ESL kids are getting equal access to curriculum, equal access to textbooks and resources and all of that". This statement stood out as it addresses the overt gap in services provided for English learners. The data revealed first-hand accounts of inadequate EL support systems and at the same time support for how the SIOP model is trying to bridge this gap. However, when looking at a policy or model through the lens of a classroom teacher, it became clear throughout the interviews that there is a great deal of individual passion and energy that is added to any one particular model or protocol. Separating a policy or model without considering all the dynamics of a thriving classroom is not giving justice to the learning community the teacher has created. It is also important to note, as the quote below indicates, that models that are mandated or forced, automatically discredit aspects of a real classroom.

"The front line is the teacher. So the expertise, the knowledge and the heart that a teacher puts in a classroom is not to be compromised by any piece of paper that dictates or mandates or forces you to be careful with a word... once you bring in 'you have to do

this’ you are compromising on other elements and factors that are important as well, because you are dealing with human beings not with robots.”

This quote suggests that it may be challenging to balance bolstering EL support in classrooms and not imposing restrictive policies on teachers. A mandated directive may have unintended adverse effects on how the policy is implemented overall. This dilemma can cause a hiccup in the implementation process which could negatively impact the view of the effectiveness of the directive or model. When thinking about additional accountability for English learners, particularly utilizing the SIOP model as a support for EL students, this statement is a reminder of the importance of how the model is introduced and implemented.

Discussion

The SIOP model has been praised as a popular and helpful tool to help meet the growing needs of English learners in K-12 classrooms. The popularity of the model is often attributed to the streamlined framework that provides a thorough guide for teachers when preparing lessons for English learners. In addition to the guided framework, many teachers have pointed out that the components of the SIOP model are not isolated to just the model but that many teachers are already implementing components of the model through their style of teaching. For example, many teachers are already building background knowledge with students prior to introducing new content which is one of the main components of the SIOP model. This realization has led many teachers to recognize the benefit of the model for all students, not just English learners. As stated repeatedly throughout the survey and interviews, the SIOP model, when implemented intentionally, benefits all students in a classroom, not just English learners. These factors continue to fuel the strong advocacy for the SIOP model implementation as the main framework when working with English learners.

Given its popularity among teachers and administrators, it is important to address how the SIOP model is being implemented. As the survey and individual interviews highlighted, the manner in which the SIOP model is introduced and portrayed is an important aspect when training classroom teachers in the model. The framing of and the approachability towards the model depends largely on the trainer's individual approach to sharing the information. As reflected in the interviews, the reception and perception of the SIOP model can be directly linked to how the training was executed. This variability can cause confusion on how to assess the validity and effectiveness of the model. While many studies attribute positive student

achievement to the model as the research has indicated, the variabilities of the effectiveness of the structure of the model as well as individual training styles are still open issues.

The survey and individual interviews conducted in this study did support the SIOP model as a positive framework to use when working with English learners. For many teachers, the SIOP model provides much needed guidance when providing services for English learners that unfortunately are not as robust as the present need demands. The SIOP model has put together eight components that specifically address teaching English learners for teachers to easily implement in their classrooms. Components such as writing content and language objectives help teachers organize their objectives in a way that blends content and language together at the same time. This organization and intentionality for working with English learners has continued to encourage the widespread use of the model. As seen throughout this study, the model has been a positive addition for many teachers.

Conclusion

This study specifically sought to listen first-hand to teachers using the model in the classroom to learn more about how the model was being perceived. Given the continued debate surrounding the effectiveness of the model, this study was designed to learn more from teachers actively using the model to provide an additional first-hand perspective of the model. Data from this study as well as previous studies indicate that the perceptions of the model remain in relatively high regard overall. The SIOP model provides a tangible structure when working with English learners and has often been recognized as a beneficial framework to use with all students. However, despite these glowing reviews, more research is needed to evaluate the structure of the model (Polat & Cepik, 2016). Although many studies highlight the positive reception of the SIOP model including several studies authored by the creators of the SIOP model, there are still others such as Polat & Cepik (2016) who raise the question of the validity of the structure of the SIOP model through their exploratory factor analysis (EFA) study. In response to the continual wave of misinterpretations of the model since its inception, Polat & Cepik call for structural research on the model. This gap in the research of the SIOP model may be one of the origins for the divide in the perceptions of the model. Future studies for investigating the perceptions of the SIOP model include extending the survey and interviews to teachers who have worked with the model but have chosen not to use it. This perspective would give a more inclusive view of how the model is perceived from a greater variety of classroom teachers. The SIOP model has been a leader in supporting English learners over the past couple of decades and as the EL population continues to increase across the nation in K-12 public schools, it is important for researchers and educators to be intentional about the frameworks and models being used in the classroom to support English learners.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: 30 Features of the SIOP Model

Preparation

1. Content objectives clearly defined, displayed, and reviewed with students
2. Language objectives clearly defined, displayed, and reviewed with students
3. Content concepts appropriate for age and educational background level of students
4. Supplementary materials used to a high degree, making the lesson clear and meaningful
5. Adaptation of content to all levels of student proficiency
6. Meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts with language practice opportunities for reading, writing, listening and/or speaking

Building Background

7. Concepts explicitly linked to students' background experiences
8. Links explicitly made between past learning and new concepts
9. Key vocabulary emphasized

Comprehensible Input

10. Speech appropriate for students' proficiency level
11. Clear explanation of academic tasks
12. A variety of techniques used to make content concepts clear

Strategies

13. Ample opportunities provided for students to use learning strategies
14. Scaffolding techniques consistently used assisting and supporting student understanding
15. A variety of questions or tasks that promote higher order thinking skills

Interaction

16. Frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion between teacher/student and among students which encourage elaborated responses about lesson concepts
17. Grouping configurations support language and content objectives of the lesson
18. Sufficient wait time for student responses consistently provided
19. Ample opportunities for students to clarify key concepts in L1

Practice & Application

20. Hands-on materials and/or manipulatives provided for students to practice using new content knowledge
21. Activities provided for students to apply content and language knowledge in the classroom
22. Activities integrate all language skills

Lesson Delivery

23. Content objectives clearly supported by lesson delivery
24. Language objectives clearly supported by lesson delivery
25. Students engaged approximately 90% to 100% of the period
26. Pacing of the lesson appropriate to students' ability level

Review & Assessment

27. Comprehensive review of key vocabulary
28. Comprehensive review of key content concepts
29. Regular feedback provided to students on their output
30. Assessment of student comprehension and learning of all lesson objectives throughout the lesson

APPENDIX B: SIOP Survey

The following questions address your teaching experience and how the SIOP Model is implemented.

1. How many years have you been teaching?

1 – 4 years

5 – 9 years

10 – 14 years

15 + years

2. How many years have you been a SIOP trainer?

1 – 4 years

5 – 9 years

10 – 14 years

15 + years

3. How often do you provide SIOP training each year? (If you are not actively training, leave this question blank and move on to question 5.) (Not required question)

4. How is the SIOP Model implemented? (If you are not actively implementing the SIOP Model, please leave blank and move on to question 6.) (Not required question)

We do not regularly use the model.

Push-in support

Pull-out support

I'd like to explain in more detail: _____

5. The following questions address your personal opinions of the SIOP model using a scale of 1- 5 where 1 = *strongly agree* and 5 = *strongly disagree*.

1

2

3

4

5

Strongly agree /Somewhat agree /Neutral /Somewhat disagree /Strongly disagree

- The SIOP Model is an effective model for supporting students' language development.
- The SIOP Model is outdated.
- More research is needed to determine the effectiveness of the SIOP Model.
- The SIOP Model is not the best method available for working with English learners in Michigan.
- The SIOP Model is effective in supporting students' progress beyond language development (i.e., sense of belonging, agency, high academic success)

- It is realistic for a non-ESL trained teacher to enact the SIOP Model.
 - Michigan schools/districts can implement the SIOP Model among the majority of their teachers with fidelity.
-

The following open-ended questions seek to better understand your perception of the SIOP Model.

6. Describe a time you've faced challenges implementing the SIOP Model in your school setting.
7. Describe a time when you felt successful implementing the SIOP Model in your school setting.
8. How have teachers that you've trained responded to the SIOP training?
9. How have teachers responded to implementing the SIOP Model in their classrooms?
10. What is your opinion of the SIOP Model being enacted as the main instructional approach for working with English learners in Michigan?
11. Is there a different model you would like to see implemented instead of the SIOP Model? Or in your school setting? If so, describe this model/approach.

APPENDIX C: Individual SIOP Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today to discuss the SIOP model. I've been working in the public schools for the past six years and have been trained in this model myself, and I am curious what others are thinking at this time. I am passionate about supporting English language learners and would like to hear your thoughts on this subject today.

If it is ok with you, I'd like to record our conversation so I can more fully focus on our conversation and refer back to it at a later date. The information you provide will be used to better understand the perceptions of the SIOP model in the state of Michigan. The information you provide will be shared anonymously.

1. What have been your experiences working with English learners in education?
 - a. What are some of the challenges you faced when working with English learners?
 - b. Can you tell me a time of a successful moment when working with English learners?
2. What have been your experiences working with the SIOP model?
 - a. When was the SIOP model first implemented in Michigan?
 - b. Has the rate of adoption of the model increased, stayed the same or decreased over time?
3. In your opinion, what is working well with the SIOP model?
 - a. How does the SIOP model positively support English learners?
4. What are areas of concern with the model?
 - a. What do you think is not working well with the SIOP model?
 - b. Why do you think this is not working well?
5. What do you think are the overall perceptions of the model from a classroom teacher's perspective?
6. What do you think are the overall perceptions of the model at the state administration level?
7. What would you like to see in regard to the continuation of the SIOP model being implemented in classrooms?
8. Are there other models that schools/districts are using besides the SIOP model?
9. What are the state requirements for supporting English learners?
 - a. Are there specific requirements for adopting and implementing a curriculum or framework?

- b. Are there specific requirements for the types of EL workshops and professional developments available to teachers?
- 10. What does support for English learners look like moving forward for the state of Michigan?

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