Research-Based Best Practices for Closing the Achievement Gap between English Language Learners and Non-English Language Learners in Southeastern School District

Carrie Jones, Traci Sloss, Janet Wallace

Lipscomb University

October 15, 2014

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

This Capstone Project, directed and approved by a Juried Review Committee, has been accepted by the Doctor of Education Program of Lipscomb University's College of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Research-Based Best Practices for Closing the Achievement Gap between English Language Learners and Non-English Language Learners in Southeastern School District

By

Carrie Jones

Traci Sloss

Janet Wallace

for the degree of

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

Juried Review Committee

Tracey S. Hebert, Ph.D.
Director, Doctor of Education

Misty Vetter, Ed.D.
Ed.D. Capstone Faculty Advisor

Tammy Shutt, Ed.D.
Ed.D. Capstone Faculty Advisor

Acknowledgements

Carrie Jones would like to thank the professors of Lipscomb University for believing in her, supporting her, and teaching her so much. Getting my doctorate was the best experience to get me through a major hurdle in my life and to propel me into the best time of my life. I would also like to thank the cohort members who I had the privilege to work with and learn from. Every person taught me a life lesson. I would like to deeply thank my doctorate team, Traci and Janet. I could not have done this without you. I would like to thank my dad, John. He was my personal editor, and his patience and help is invaluable. I would like to thank my mom, Penny. She is my biggest cheerleader and friend. My parents' support and love mean the world to me. I would like to thank my son, Parker. Being his mom is the biggest blessing in my life and getting this degree is also a model to him that hard work and dedication can take you far. Most importantly, I thank God. He is leading me and I pray that He continues to use my life for His glory.

Traci Sloss first gives honor and thanks to God who has allowed her to persevere throughout this process. I also would like to thank my mom, Pearl Sawyers, who has always believed in me more than I ever believed in myself. Mom, you are truly a woman of God, you are my hero and my idol, and I love you so much. To my dad James E. Sawyers, Jr. your faith has been an inspiration to me. To my sons, DeRay and De'Ante', thanks for your support and know that anything is possible with prayer, commitment, and dedication. To Dr. Hebert and all of our professors who offered support and encouragement, much appreciation and gratitude. A special thanks to all of our cohort members. And to my capstone team, Carrie, you are a worker like no one else. Thanks for your patience and for being the driver on the team. Janet, you are so strong and your

encouragement kept us sane through many frustrating days. May God continue to bless you. A special thanks to my Aunt Jerri who passed away during this process. You always insisted that I completed the highest attainable degree. I know you now smile with the angels. I love and miss you. Finally, to my husband, Samuel, you are my rock, my heart, and my love. I love you so much and I thank you for your love and support.

Janet Wallace would like to thank family and colleagues for their help and support. I would like to thank my husband, Bill, who has steadfastly encouraged me towards this goal. Thank you, Bill. Thank you to my capstone team, Carrie Jones and Traci Sloss, who patiently assisted me during some tough times last year and never wavered in their support. Thank you to my cohort who I have enjoyed working with throughout our two years of intense learning, and finally, thank you to our professors at the Lipscomb Doctoral Program who have helped guide and teach us through this process.

Abstract

The English Language Learners (ELL) student population continues to increase in American schools. Schools have the obligation and privilege to serve this population, but challenges exist to help ELLs become proficient in all subjects. The need for educators to use research-based best practices is critical to help best serve ELLs and to increase academic achievement. The researchers conducted a mixed-methods study in order to identify the research-based practices proven to increase the academic achievement of ELLs. The researchers found that Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) was a research-based framework proven to help ELLs academically. ELL Directors of middle Tennessee districts having statistically significant gains with ELLs believed that the top best practices to use with ELLs were activating prior knowledge and building background, comprehensible input, academic vocabulary, explicit instruction and differentiated instruction. Teachers within Southeastern School District (SSD) believed the top five practices to use with ELLs were activating prior knowledge and building background, differentiated instruction, scaffolding instruction, teaching academic vocabulary, and continual review of vocabulary and content. The study also found the instructional models that work best with the varying levels of ELLs. The instructional model best used with newcomers was pullout, and for active ELLs, either pullout or push-in. Push-in or Structured English Immersion was most effective with Transitional 1 and Structured English Immersion for Transitional 2 ELL students. Educational stakeholders can use the findings of this study in order to promote the academic achievement of ELLs.

Keywords: *ELL, SIOP, research-based best practices, instructional models*

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Topic, History, and Background

English Language Learners (ELLs) will comprise 40% of school-aged students in the American school system by the year 2030 (Washington, 2009). Of the 400 non-English languages used by students in American classrooms, the Spanish language dominates with approximately 70%, making this the most common language next to English (Atchley, 2009; Moughamian, Rivera & Francis, 2009). With the ever-increasing population of students speaking primary languages other than English, the need to incorporate research-based, successful bilingual teaching practices is essential to ensure quality education for all students.

ELLs face multiple obstacles in the American educational system. These students not only need to learn grade-level curricula, but they also face this task in an unfamiliar language. This is an undertaking that is confusing and daunting, especially to young students who are burdened with the task of learning reading, writing, and English speaking skills all while simultaneously acquiring other content knowledge at the same pace as non-ELL peers (Mamantov, 2013; Otterby, 2009).

The continuous and rapid growth of the bilingual population triggered awareness in recent studies of achievement gaps that existed between students proficient in English and students considered ELLs. ELLs consistently scored approximately 30% lower on state mandated assessments across the country (Logan-Terry, 2011). Washington (2009) noted the important role of the educational system as it related to the growing concern of educating ELLs and stated that the teaching community needed to gain further understanding of methods that promoted high academic achievement among ELLs.

Southeastern School District (SSD), the target school district of this study, served a population of 3,864 pre-K through eighth grade students (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). The growth of ELLs in SSD reflected the growth that was occurring nationally. Nationally, in 2010, 24% of students in grades K-8 were Hispanic with an expected increase to 27% by 2014 and still a further increase to 29% in 2022, which created a need to focus on the academic achievement and growth with the ELL population (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

The vision and mission of SSD embraced the beliefs of helping all students to develop academically, socially, emotionally, physically, and creatively. In 2012, SSD met the majority of both achievement and gap closure targets (Tennessee Department of Education, n.d.). In SSD, all subgroups were calculated in the district's results for academic achievement and gap closure. The subgroups included Students with Disabilities (SWD), Ethnicity (Black, Hispanic, and Native American), Economically Disadvantaged (ED), and Limited English Proficient (LEP), also known as ELL. SSD was not making the desired growth or closing the achievement gap with the ELL population, as they were able to do with the other subgroups. Since SSD strove to be successful with all students, SSD sought to identify the research-based best practices that would more effectively close the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL students.

Problem Statement

Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), Part A – English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act, identified nine purposes, two of which were specifically related to this study. These were identified as the following: to ensure LEP students gained English proficiency and high levels of

academic English in the same way as non-ELL students, and to provide state educational agencies with the ability to identify research-based instructional practices to teach ELL students (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Research-based best practices must be identified and implemented in order to raise academic achievement and growth of the ELL population.

With federal, state, and local mandates requiring schools to meet achievement goals and close gaps between various subgroups, the need to narrow gaps between all subgroups was extremely important. SSD had been successful in meeting achievement goals and gap closures in various subgroups. However, the instructional practices at SSD were not producing the desired results of closing the achievement gap and increasing growth in the ELL subgroups in the same way that they were able to do with the other subgroups (Tennessee Department of Education, n.d.).

SSD's ELL subgroup showed growth in math and reading and language arts from the 2010-2011 school year to the 2011-2012 school year on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP). In math grades 3-8, 31% of ELL students were proficient or advanced in 2010, which grew to 38.9% in 2012. In reading and language arts grades 3-8, 29% of ELL students were proficient or advanced in 2010, which grew to 31.8% in 2012 (Tennessee Department of Education, n.d.).

SSD's achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL students decreased from the 2010-2011 school year to the 2011-2012 school year on TCAP. In regard to closing the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL in reading and language arts, the gap size was 49.3% in 2011, which was reduced to 42.1% in 2012. In math, the gap size was 35.9% in 2011, which was reduced to 32.8% in 2012 (Tennessee Department of

Education, n.d.). In both math and reading and language arts, SSD met the goals. However, SSD sought to further decrease the gap between ELL and non-ELL students.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to determine research-based best practices and models of instruction that would increase the academic achievement and growth of the English Language Learner (ELL) population and decrease the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL students. Research-based best practices that increased academic achievement and growth of ELL students were determined through analyzing available national, regional, and local research.

The secondary purpose of this study was to compare the best practices identified in the primary purpose with ELL practices that were in place in SSD. This would allow SSD to compare the best practices and models being utilized within SSD to other best practices and models having the most academic success and growth with the ELL population.

Conceptual Framework

Following the implementation of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, the four subsequent reauthorizations of the Act, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, there was considerable research and discussion to determine research-based best practices to instruct ELLs. Further examples of studies of methodologies and best practice research were included in the literature review. For the purpose of this study, the conceptual framework used to identify current, research-based best practices for effective instruction for ELLs was built on Cummins' three fundamental pillars of activating prior knowledge and building background, accessing content, and extending language (Cummins,

2010). Figure 1 shows a model of Cummins' three pillars of successful instruction for ELLs.

Figure 1. The Three Pillars of Successful Instruction for ELLs

According to Cummins (2010), one fundamental pillar involved activating prior knowledge and building background; each student's prior experiences set the foundation for understanding new information. Meaning was constructed by applying prior knowledge of language and the world to the new content being presented. Schema, or knowledge base, was expanded by gaining more knowledge about a topic. Teachers also had the responsibility of making complex academic English accessible to ELLs, which was defined as accessing content. Extending language referred to helping ELLs develop a curiosity about language and understanding of how words work, which required an exploration of language. Understanding rules and conventions about words also supported vocabulary development, which involved focusing on meaning, form, and the use of words.

This conceptual framework and these three pillars, activating prior knowledge, accessing content, and extending language, guided the research team as they answered the research questions. In chapter two, the researchers investigated various models and other best practices currently used in education intended to improve the overall success of ELL students. Many of the practices currently used in education today directly or indirectly incorporate some or all of these pillars.

Research Questions

The research team developed five questions related to this study:

1. What research-based best practices reduced the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL students in grades K-8?
2. What models of instruction and best practices were most effective for the varying levels of ELL students, including newcomers, active participants, Transition one

(T1), and Transition two (T2) students in SSD and in surrounding school districts?

3. In SSD, did teacher perceptions of best practices align with implemented instructional practices with ELLs?
4. Which of the surrounding school districts were having significant academic growth with the ELL population?
5. What were the best practices being implemented in the school districts in the surrounding districts to attain significant academic growth with the ELL population?

Scope and Bounds

The scope of this research was focused upon a small school district in the southeastern part of the United States. This study focused on identifying the research-based best practices that were proven to increase the achievement and growth of ELLs and the research data were focused upon certain grade levels, depending on the type of assessment. This research focused on identifying the best practices through literature, the study of SSD, and the study of school districts in the surrounding school districts that showed significant growth with the ELL population. This study was focusing on ELL teachers and ELL Directors.

Due to the district size of SSD, only 13 ELL teachers were available to participate, and no general educators or special educators were included in this study. The data collected included the 2010-2011 through 2012-2013 school years.

Significance of the Study

Nationwide, the population of ELLs continues to increase at a steady rate. Therefore, closing the gap with the ELL population poses a challenge in the public education system. Roberts (2008) noted the necessity of identifying and implementing best practices as related to ELL students and closing the achievement gap. The results of this research project offered research-based best practices for addressing the ELL population. These results also added to previous research and provided stakeholders practices for closing achievement gaps between ELLs and non-ELLs. The stakeholders included ELL directors, administrators, policymakers, students, and teachers.

Definitions

Academic language - words, grammar, and strategies used to describe complex ideas, abstract concepts, and higher-order thinking skills (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2013).

Achievement gap - a group of students performs better than another group of students and the difference in average scores is significantly different than the margin of error (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014).

Best practice - what works in a certain situation or environment. When data support the achievement of a practice, it is referred to as a research-based practice (The State Education Resource Center, n.d.).

Conversational language - everyday language used for basic communication (Rea & Mercuri, 2006).

Co-Teaching - a general education teacher and a special education service provider planning and working together in the same classroom to instruct both students with and

without disabilities (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, n.d.). Co-teaching is used within this study interchangeably with push-in.

English Language Learners (ELLs) - national origin minority students who are Limited English Proficient. This term is often preferred instead of Limited English Proficient (LEP) because it enhances the accomplishments rather than deficiencies (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). ELL and LEP can be used interchangeably.

Inclusion - incorporating students who are not native English speakers or students with disabilities in the general education class setting (Mamantov, 2013).

Limited English Proficient (LEP) - this is the federal term used for ELL (Tennessee Department of Education, n.d.). LEP and ELL can be used interchangeably.

Newcomers - "students entering the American education system with less than two years of experience in an English speaking school" (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006, p. 4).

Pullout - removing English language learners from regular education classes to learn English language skills and receive additional academic support from a certified ELL instructor (Washington, 2009).

Push-in - English language learners receive additional educational supports within the classroom setting without being removed (Washington, 2009).

Scaffold - a method of helping students learn new information through modeling a concept to help develop a foundation of learning. A supportive structure that is used for a period of time, which helps students to accomplish a task they could not otherwise accomplish or accomplish well without the use of the scaffold (McKenzie, 2011).

Second Language Acquisition - acquiring a second language after a first language has been established (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d.).

Transitional LEP Students (T1, T2) - students who do not speak English as a primary language and who have taken the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) and scored advanced on at least two assessed domains (Tennessee Department of Education, 2006a).

WIDA - World-class Instructional Design and Assessment; a consortium of states dedicated to the design and implementation of high standards and equitable educational opportunities for English language learners (WIDA, 2014).

Summary of the Study

ELLs are increasing in numbers in the American educational system and particularly in SSD. ELLs must learn grade-level curricula while simultaneously learning a new language. Logan-Terry (2011) indicated that an awareness of the achievement gaps between ELL and non-ELL students became apparent. Washington (2009) noted that the teaching community needed to gain further teaching methods in order to promote academic achievement with ELLs. Title III of NCLB identified that ELLs must make gains in the same way as non-ELLs and those research-based best practices must first be identified in order to be implemented with ELLs (U. S. Department of Education, 2010).

Though SSD continued to show academic growth with ELLs, SSD sought to identify research-based best practices that would close the achievement gap and grow the academic success even further for the ELL population. The researchers built the study on the conceptual framework of Cummins (2010), which stated that effective instruction

should be built upon the three fundamental pillars of activating prior knowledge and building background, accessing content, and extending language. The researchers studied literature for research-based best practices that effectively impacted ELLs, the perceptions of best practices of SSD's ELL teachers, SSD's ELL teachers' lesson plans for implementation of best practices, and the best practices being implemented in the school districts surrounding SSD that showed significant academic growth.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

In preparing the review of literature and to assist the reader, six topic areas were identified that were believed to be pertinent to the study. These are: the history of the development of ELL education; research-based instructional best practices for teaching ELLs, including the Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP) and the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) Model; the best practices of exemplary rated schools regarding ELL compared to acceptable rated schools regarding ELL; the instructional models for teaching ELLs; the role of professional development; and the explanation of perceptions.

The History of the Development of ELL

ELLs have faced multiple obstacles in the American educational system due to the task of not only attempting to learn curricula, but also learning a new language. This task was often confusing as well as daunting, especially to young students (Otterby, 2009). According to Sox (2011), this problem was compounded by the fact that ELL teachers were often underprepared. Teachers lacked the professional development necessary to adequately address the needs of ELLs.

Students with limited English proficiency achieved better results in education due to reforms that addressed better learning for all students, such as staff professional development, curriculum improvement, and school reorganization (Rance-Roney, 2009). When properly addressed and implemented, these reforms improved overall achievement for both ELLs and non-ELLs.

Multiple terms have existed that refer to students who do not use English as their primary language. Mamantov (2013) argued that some terms offered negative

connotations and, therefore, should be used with caution or not used at all. The term Limited English Proficient (LEP) had a potentially negative impact because the word "limited" insinuated students were deficient. Furthermore, English as a Second Language (ESL) implied students had no formal training in the English language. The term ELL was found to have no known negative connotations (Mamantov 2013).

Students with cultural and linguistic differences became the norm rather than the exception in mainstream classrooms. Since 1998, the number of students not fluent in English almost doubled, while the student population as a whole remained essentially the same (Rea & Mercuri, 2006, p. xi). This meant that mainstream classrooms were comprised of ELLs and native speakers of English. Some students began an American education with sufficient schooling in their primary languages, so those students usually became proficient academically. Others had limited or no schooling in their primary languages. Therefore, those students struggled academically and were below grade level in all areas.

History of bilingual education policy making. The researchers of this study investigated the legal aspect of why and when the education of English language learners was required in schools. The research revealed the importance of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the subsequent legal action, and the multiple adoptions of the No Child Left Behind Act that have continued to develop the legal requirement for school districts, including the requirement for districts to seek out best practices for ELL instruction. The development of identifying race and ethnicity were also investigated. The research then led to the study of the growth of non-native English speakers and ELLs in the state in which SSD is located.

The Civil Rights Act (1964), as it pertained to education, prohibited discrimination in schools and colleges. The Act was the landmark legislation for discrimination in many areas including public education in elementary, secondary schools, and colleges. There were three sections of the Civil Rights Act related to education. They were Title IV, which prohibits discrimination in schools, Title VI, which prohibits discrimination by districts receiving Federal funding, and Title IX, which permits the United States to intervene in suits of discrimination. In addition to the Civil Rights Act, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 also prohibited segregation based on race, color, and nationality (Types of Educational Opportunities Discrimination, n.d.).

According to Stewner-Manzanares (1988), the first federal recognition of the needs of students with limited English was the Bilingual Education Act of 1968. This Act had experienced multiple reauthorizations and amendments to reflect growing needs and population changes. Initially, students were described with "limited English speaking ability" (LESA), a term amended to "limited English proficient" (LEP) in the later reauthorizations of 1974, 1978, 1984, and 1988 (p. 1).

The 1968 Act was the first federal attempt to provide assistance to LESA students. Stewner-Manzanares (1988) stated the bill that was introduced by Senator Ralph Yarborough of Texas established programs for Spanish speaking students. This led to combining other bills into the Bilingual Education Act. This was the first federal recognition that LEP students had special needs and was implemented because of what was viewed as civil rights violations based on racial discrimination. Participation in the Act was voluntary and it was not until the 1974 amendments by Congress, influenced by

the *Lau v. Nichols* decision and the Equal Opportunity Act of 1974, that programs began to change.

According to the landmark decision of the class suit of *Lau v. Nichols* in 1973, a ruling followed the petition for certiorari (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974) to the Supreme Court. The San Francisco Unified School District was unequally providing Chinese students with education in their own language. Over 1,000 students were receiving assistance, but an additional 1,800 Chinese students were not receiving any assistance.

Justice Douglas, who delivered the opinion of the Supreme Court, declared that section 8573 of the Education Code required that students must achieve proficiency in English to graduate (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974). The Court of Appeals of the Ninth Circuit Court confirmed that the San Francisco Unified School District was discriminating against these students. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, section 601, "bans discrimination on the ground of race, color, or national origin" in "any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" (Civil Rights Act, 1964). The San Francisco Unified School District received considerable Federal funds (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974).

Justice Douglas quoted Senator Humphrey who spoke during the debates on the Civil Rights Act of 1964 saying, "Simple justice requires that public funds, to which all taxpayers of all races contribute, may not be spent in any fashion which encourages, entrenches, subsidizes, or results in racial discrimination" (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974).

According to Stewner-Manzanares (1988), the Equal Education Act of 1974 specifically required all school districts, regardless of whether or not they received Federal funding, to provide programs for LESA students. Amendments included the requirement of bilingual programs to help students progress through the education

system. Bilingual education was defined, programs were required to have goals, and regional support training centers were established (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988).

In 1975, guidelines were prepared for school districts to assist with the implementation of the Lau decision. These were known as the Lau Remedies and were prepared by the HEW Office for Civil Rights. They were designed to assist both school districts and courts in complying with the Lau decision to determine whether the school district was in compliance, and helped provide guidance with regard to adequate educational plans to correct civil rights violations (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988).

According to the Office for Civil Rights Compliance (1990), these guidelines were eventually determined to be too restrictive. The new Department of Education, formed in 1980, redesigned the de facto Lau guidelines to be less restrictive on a case-by-case design. Districts were required to provide educational services to language minority students using any methods that had been seen to be successful, and districts were expected to comply with this requirement (Office for Civil Rights Compliance, 1990).

Stewner-Manzanares (1988) acknowledged that the Bilingual Education Act recognized and allowed school districts to implement different types of programs for LEP students. School districts could apply for federal grants for different programs such as transitional bilingual programs, programs where full time instruction was given in two languages including English, or immersion programs where instruction was only given in English. The federal grants allocation was decreasing from previous years and emphasized that school districts were to begin to build capacity within state budgets to support these programs (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988). Grooms (2011) affirmed that the Bilingual Education Act became the English Language Acquisition Act in 2002, which

incorporated funding and federal requirements under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Act/NCLB. The new legislation established renewed education focusing on subgroups such as ELLs, thereby eradicating the term "bilingual education" (Grooms, 2011).

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 set high standards that all students would increase academic achievement, particularly in reading and math, including the subgroup of ELL (Francis et al., 2006). Schools, districts, and states were held accountable for increased levels of achievement for ELLs. This included the requirement of teaching English and content knowledge. ELLs must concurrently develop English proficiency, learn academic skills, and meet grade level standards (Francis et al., 2006).

As reported by the Department of Education (n.d.), NCLB emphasized testing students and had a punitive style of accountability for states and districts not meeting standards. Under Title III of the NCLB Act, Part A – English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act (NCLBA), funds were appropriated for language instruction for LEP and immigrant students. Briefly, the nine purposes of section 3102 were:

- To assist LEP students in obtaining high levels of other core academic subjects.
- To develop quality education programs teaching LEP students.
- To assist state and local agencies in developing high quality instruction to prepare LEP students to exit LEP programs.
- To help educational organizations build capacity for LEP students.

- To integrate parental and community involvement in English language instruction of LEP students.
- To align LEP programs to develop proficiency in English and at the same time meet state academic content and academic standards.
- State educational agencies must have been accountable for the increases in English proficiency and core academic knowledge that demonstrated improvement in LEP students each year and made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).
- To provide State educational agencies with the ability to identify research-based instruction that was the most effective for teaching English to LEP students (U.S. Department of Education, n.d., para. 1-9).

The latest reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, called the Blueprint for Reform, added four additional areas. They were improving teacher and principal effectiveness, providing information to parents about their schools, and implementing college and career readiness. These identified America's lowest performing schools and put supports in place to help (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

The administration of President Obama was committed to strengthening the federal reaffirmation to serve all students and provided competitive grants to support ELLs, homeless students, Native Americans, and neglected, delinquent, and migrant students (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Within this reauthorization, school districts were able to apply for grants for a wider, more flexible range of programs that improved the education of ELLs. Examples included dual-language programs,

transitional, bilingual education, sheltered English immersion, newcomer, or other programs. Professional development must also be provided for all teachers of ELLs and teachers of academic content areas. All programs and training must have been evaluated and a system created to establish the effectiveness of programs (U. S. Department of Education, 2010).

Changes in Tennessee populations. The following section examined the population changes and population nomenclature changes identified in the U.S. Census as non-native Americans from census information from 1980 to 2010. This information was significant to this study as it documented the changes in populations and helped identify trends with regard to the ages and ethnicity of those populations. In addition to examining the census data, other data were examined from the Tennessee schools' report cards to gather information regarding the growth in population of Hispanic and LEP students.

U.S. Census Bureau data collection information. The population census is collected every 10 years. The nomenclature of ethnicity and race changed in the information recorded in the four censuses 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010. In 1980, the non-native Spanish populations were identified with the terminology of "Spanish" (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011), which were further sub-divided into Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and other Spanish. The population categories of race were identified as Black, White, American Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and "other" (U.S. Department of Commerce Census, 1980).

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce (1990), the number of races identified increased. In addition to those included in the 1980 census, Eskimo, Aleut,

Asian Indian, Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Bangladeshi, Burmese, Indonesian, Malayan, Okinawan, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Hawaiian, Samoan, Guamanian, Tongan, Tahitian, Northern Mariana Islander, Palauan, and Fijian were included as races. A change was made in identifying ethnicity from Spanish to Hispanic (U.S. Department of Commerce Census, 1990).

The U.S. Department of Commerce (2000) reported that the census language used to identify ethnicity made several changes: from "Hispanic" to “Hispanic or Latino" and added "African American" for "Black" to read "Black or African American" with regard to race (U.S. Department of Commerce Census, 2000).

Humes, Jones, and Ramirez (2010) specified that the 2010 census further changed the wording of ethnicity to Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin and provided examples of six groups: Argentinean, Columbian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadorian, and Spanish. Respondents were asked to print their origination. In addition to including examples of ethnicities, examples of races were included. This was the first instance in the census collection that included examples of race and ethnicity. The definition of race for the census was a social definition as opposed to a biological or genetic distinction. In 2010, the Hispanic population was 50.5 million or 16% of the total population growing from 35.3 million or 13% of the population in 2000. The Hispanic population grew by 15.2 million over the 10-year period 2000-2010, which represented more than the total growth in populations for the United States (Humes, et al., 2010).

According to the U.S. Office of Management and Budgets (OMB), for the purpose of census, the U.S. Census Bureau collected race and Hispanic origin information within the guidelines of the OMB and used the 1997 revisions of standards

for the classification of Federal Data and Race Ethnicity. The OMB mandated that race and ethnicity were separate and distinct concepts when self-identified and must remain separate (Office of Management and Budget, 1997).

Growth of Hispanic population in Tennessee. The changes in population from 1980 to 2010, as reported in the Bureau of Census, were reported in this section for Tennessee, SSD, and the county SSD is located within. SSD is a special district within the bounds of another county, which will be called Charleston County.

In 1980, the Hispanic population of Tennessee was 34,077, which was .07% (Tennessee Department of Health, 2004, p. 1) of the total population of 4,591,120, which had increased from the 1970 census by 17% (U.S. Department of Commerce Census, 1980). The population of Charleston County was 28,646 (Forstall, 1995). The Hispanic population of Charleston County was not reported in the 1990 census, as it was less than 400 persons. The 1980 population of SSD was 12,407 with a population of 111 Hispanic (U.S. Department of Commerce Census , 1980, p. 104).

The population of Tennessee increased to 4,877,185 (U.S. Department of Commerce Census, 1990) and the Hispanic population had decreased to 32,741 (TN. Dept. Health, 2004, p. 1), which remained at .07% of the population. The Charleston County population had increased to 81,021 with 522 identified as Hispanic. SSD's population was 20,098 with 204 people identified as "other," which included those of Hispanic ethnicity (U.S. Department of Commerce Census, 1990).

The population of Tennessee was 5,689,283 in 2000, with a Hispanic population of 123,838, representing 2.2% of the state population (U.S. Census Bureau Census, 2000a, p. 59). The Charleston County population was 126,638 with a Hispanic

population of 3,197 or 2.5% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a, p. 89). In SSD, the population was 41,842 with a Hispanic population of 3,197 or 4.8% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau Census, 2000b, p. 91).

The population of Tennessee was 6,346,105 in 2010 with a Hispanic population of 290,059 representing 4.8% of the state population (U.S. Department of Commerce Census, 2010, p. 1). The Charleston County population was 183,182 with a Hispanic population of 8166 or 4.7% of the population (U.S. Department of Commerce Census, 2010). In SSD, the population was 62,487 with a Hispanic population of 4,759 persons or 7.6% of the population (U.S. Department of Commerce Census, 2010).

The student population of Tennessee, Charleston County, and SSD. The data were examined for the years available from the Tennessee report card on the state website and the researchers were able to access this beginning in 2000. The data were included for the years correlating with the census data for 2000 and 2010; prior years' data were not available.

The Tennessee Report Card (2000) reported that there were 894,397 students in Tennessee school systems and 13,298 were Hispanic students, representing 2.13% of the student population. In the Charleston County School System, there were 19,056 students and 288 were Hispanic students, representing 1.51% of the population (Tennessee Report Card, 2000). There were 3,807 students enrolled in SSD of which 181 were Hispanic students, representing 4.75% of the school population (Tennessee Report Card, 2000).

The 2010 Tennessee Report Card included additional data that provided information regarding the limited English proficiency (LEP) student population. In Tennessee, there were 933,703 students and 53,912 were Hispanic, representing 5.5% of

the population, and the number of students with LEP was 36,480, which represented 3.8% of the student population (Tennessee Report Card, 2010). In Charleston County School System, there were 30,228 students with 969 Hispanic students, representing 3.2% of the population. There were 612 students identified as LEP, representing 2.0% of the population (Tennessee Report Card, 2010). There were 3,655 students enrolled in SSD of which 653 were Hispanic students, representing 17.7% of the school district population with 329 identified as LEP, representing 8.9% of the student population (Tennessee Report Card, 2010).

Research-Based Instructional Best Practices

Fountas and Pinnell (2006) declared, "If you are working with English language learners, you are fortunate. You are teaching the future of North America-probably the world. We have much to teach these children, but they also have much to teach us" (p. 514). In addition, Fountas and Pinnell continued:

> In teaching English language learners effectively, you are stretching yourself as a professional; you are creating flexibility in your teaching to accommodate a wide range of learners. Many children, even if they are not English language learners, need this kind of flexibility and explicit instruction. The skills you employ in teaching these students will extend to all learners. (p. 514)

In terms of using strategies that would help to increase the academic achievement of ELLs, Rea and Mercuri (2006) stated that traditional teaching--rows of desks and isolated students completing worksheets and answering textbook questions--are no longer adequate. Students arrive with varying backgrounds, experiences, values, and knowledge that are unique to their cultural ethnicities. Classrooms are occupied by students with

varying stages of English language acquisition, which require instructional shifts to achieve academic success with ELLs (Rea & Mercuri, 2006).

Goldenberg (2013) said that even though there are more than five million ELLs in our nation's schools, there is a lack of adequate research for the instructional strategies that are most effective for ELLs. However, there was a research-based instructional framework comprised of the instructional practices that were proven to increase the academic achievement of ELLs. The framework was the Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model. SIOP was founded upon a model called the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE). Since CREDE was the foundation of SIOP, both instructional models were described.

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). The SIOP Model was comprised of 30 features that were grouped into eight components (Echevarria et al., 2013). The components were Lesson Preparation, Building Background, Comprehensible Input, Strategies, Interaction, Practice and Application, Lesson Delivery, and Review and Assessment.

- The features under Lesson Preparation initiate the lesson planning process, so teachers include content and language objectives, use supplementary materials, and create meaningful activities.
- Building Background focuses on making connections with students' background experiences, prior learning, and developing their academic vocabulary.
- Comprehensible Input considers how teachers should adjust their speech, model academic tasks, and use multimodal techniques to enhance comprehension.

- The Strategies component emphasizes teaching learning strategies to students, scaffolding instruction, and promoting higher-order thinking skills.
- Interaction prompts teachers to encourage students to elaborate their speech and to group students appropriately for language and content development.
- Practice and Application provides activities to practice and extend language and content learning.
- Lesson Delivery ensures that teachers present a lesson that meets the planned objectives and promotes student engagement.
- The Review and Assessment component reminds teachers to review the key language and content concepts, assess student learning, and provide specific academic feedback to students on their output (Echevarria et al., 2013, pp. 16-17).

Echevarria et al. (2013) wrote that the SIOP Model had been developed, researched, and refined over a 15-year period. The first version was developed in the early 1990s and then evolved into a 7-year, quasi-experimental study, which began in 1996. The purpose was to develop an explicit model for sheltered instruction, train teachers in the model, and collect data to evaluate the effects on ELLs' English language development and growth in content knowledge. Researchers worked with middle school teachers in four large metropolitan districts on the East and West Coast and reviewed related professional literature. Techniques were found in areas such as bilingual education, second language acquisition, and ESL. The researchers combined the techniques to build the SIOP Model.

In 2000, the 30 features of instruction were finalized and grouped into eight components that were essential in making content comprehensible for ELLs. Echevarria

et al. (2013) declared, "These components emphasize the instructional practices that are crucial for second language learners as well as high-quality practices that benefit all students" (Echevarria et al., 2013, p. 304). A five-point scale for each feature was also created to measure the level of implementation (Echevarria et al., 2013).

In 2006, a study was conducted to analyze the effect of SIOP on writing assessments. Echevarria, Short, and Powers (2006) stated that pre- and post-tests of the Illinois Measurement of Annual Growth in English writing assessment were given to two similar cohorts of ELLs in the same district; the groups were mixed in proficiency levels. The treatment group was taught by a SIOP trained teacher and the control group was taught by a teacher who was not SIOP trained. The students in the class taught by the SIOP trained teacher had statistically significant improvements in their writing skills when ANCOVAs were utilized. The researchers stated, "Comparisons between intervention and comparison groups on the total scores (i.e., aggregated across the five scales) indicated that the participants whose teachers were trained in the SIOP model made significantly better gains in writing than did the comparison group, $F(1, 312) = 10.79$, $p < .05$" (Echevarria et al., 2006, p. 205).

According to Short, Fidelman, and Louguit (2012), the SIOP research was replicated and continued in a quasi-experimental study by the researchers at the Center for Applied Linguistics in two New Jersey school districts from 2004-2007. At the treatment site, there were 60 teachers who were SIOP trained. Teachers represented subjects including math, science, social studies, language arts, ESL, and technology. Results of observations indicated that approximately 70% of teachers had implemented SIOP with fidelity. At the comparison site, 17% of teachers not trained in SIOP were

implementing some of the features from SIOP, but not with fidelity. Based on the IDEA Proficiency Test for ELLs in grades 6 through 12, students who were taught by SIOP-trained teachers had "made statistically significant gains in their average mean scores for oral language, writing, and total proficiency on the state assessment of English language proficiency, compared to the comparison group of English learners" (Short et al., 2012, p. 306).

According to Echevarria et al. (2013), in 2005-2011, further experimental research studies were conducted. A pilot study focused on the SIOP implementation in middle school 7th grade science classrooms. Eight middle schools were studied for one semester with some teachers receiving SIOP training while other teachers were not SIOP trained. The results continued to show that students receiving SIOP instruction outperformed control groups in content knowledge and academic English for ELLs and native English speakers. These studies were not conducted solely in ELL classes, but were expanded to research the effects of SIOP in content classes and varying grade levels, such as seventh grade science. It was concluded that the SIOP model benefited all students in the SIOP classes, including ELLs. The focus on academic literacy and scaffolded instruction helped all students make gains in academic English and content knowledge. It was also concluded that, "The higher the level of SIOP implementation, the better the students performed on assessments" (Echevarria et al., 2013, p. 306). As maintained by the Center for Applied Linguistics, "The SIOP Model is a research-based and validated model of sheltered instruction. Professional development in the SIOP Model helps teachers plan and deliver lessons that allow English learners to acquire

academic knowledge as they develop English language proficiency" (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2013, para. 2).

A case study was conducted to analyze three high school English teachers' experiences with the SIOP model (Bertram, 2011). The findings indicated that there were increases in academic achievement among the Hispanic ELL students who participated. The students of the teacher with the highest level of SIOP implementation made the highest academic gains. The students of the teacher with the second highest level of SIOP implementation made the second highest academic gains. The students who had the teacher with the least amount of SIOP implementation made the least amount of academic gains. Therefore, it was concluded that SIOP was an effective model of instruction for ELLs and that the consistency of implementation directly correlated with the academic results of the students (Bertram, 2011).

Read (2008) researched the SIOP Model with the purpose of determining whether instructional practices of teachers changed due to SIOP training, what the impact of SIOP strategies on achievement of ELLs was, and to determine how teachers perceived the value of SIOP. The design of the study used a quasi-experimental design, a static-group comparison, and a cross-section design. The participants included 26 teachers who had been SIOP trained in 4 elementary schools and 85 ELLs in grades 3 through 5. There were 35 ELLs in the experimental group, who were taught by SIOP-trained teachers and 50 ELLs in the control group, who were not taught by SIOP-trained teachers. The teachers were given pre- and post-surveys, as well as being observed throughout the course of the 2007-2008 school year. The results showed that the majority of the SIOP strategies were implemented more after the teachers were trained in SIOP than before the

training. The results also indicated that the teachers believed the model worked and benefited the students and the teachers. In regard to student achievement, the control group scored higher than the experimental group in terms of scores on the Delaware Student Testing Program in the area of reading on the 2008 assessment compared to the 2007 assessment. The achievement gap was narrowed in 2008 by 6.45 points or 43.5%. The mean scale score of the control group increased 26.10 while the experimental group's increase was 32.55. The experimental group increased more than the control group by over 6 points. The conclusion was that the SIOP strategies were appropriate for all levels, closed the achievement gap, and were effective with elementary students. Read concluded, "SIOP may be a promising approach to change instructional practices and improve the achievement level of English Language Learners" (Read, 2008, p. 160).

Echevarria and Short (n.d.) maintained that SIOP was a crucial component in multiple program designs, such as ESL, bilingual programs, two-way bilingual immersion, or newcomer programs. SIOP was found to be a bridge for ELLs into mainstream classes and the implementation of SIOP should increase the closer a student gets to transitioning out of ESL programs. SIOP was implemented in ELL-only classes, classes with a mix of native and nonnative English speakers, bilingual classes, ESL classes, and content-only classes. SIOP was designed for a wide range of learners: students with limited schooling or students with strong academic backgrounds, new arrivals or students who had several years of school experience in the US, and students with beginning to advanced levels of English proficiency. SIOP did not require teachers to discard existing teaching strategies nor add irrelevant strategies to the classroom.

Instead, SIOP was a framework of organized strategies that were used to teach to ELLs the standards in any classroom (Echevarria & Short, n.d.).

Ideally, it was recommended that all teachers should be trained in SIOP and in second language acquisition and ESL methodology (Echevarria & Short, n.d.). Echevarria and Short (n.d.) declared that pre-service teachers needed SIOP as a foundation, practicing teachers needed SIOP to strengthen lesson planning and delivery and to provide instruction that was consistent, and supervisors needed SIOP in order to train and evaluate teachers.

Welsh and Newman (2010) wrote a narrative after creating a SIOP science class with eighth grade students. Welsh, an eighth grade teacher who became trained and coached by Newman in second language acquisition theories and SIOP, described the impact that the training had on her as a teacher as well as on her ELL students. Welsh's description included strategies such as using supplementary materials, using manipulatives, having students summarize, and activating prior knowledge. Welsh believed she could explain to stakeholders why she was implementing the strategies and asking her students to do certain tasks. Welsh believed she was able to prepare her students before the students read a text in order to be able to handle the vocabulary and demonstrate comprehension. After Welsh's training in second language acquisition and SIOP, she considered herself a content-ESL teacher. Her trainer and coach, Newman, stated, "Teachers in professional development programs need to learn concrete strategies that have immediate application to their classroom and that build on what they already know and do" (Welsh & Newman, 2010, p. 143).

In contrast, Krashen (2013) analyzed the research of the SIOP Model and found concerns about the structure of the model, as well as to the validity of the research claims. Krashen explained that the SIOP Model structure used two hypotheses of language acquisition. Krashen affirmed that the SIOP Model used the Skill Building Hypothesis and the Comprehension Hypothesis. According to Krashen, using both hypotheses was a dilemma due to the fact that the hypotheses were fundamentally different. SIOP considered the two hypotheses equal partners in developing language, while Krashen stated that they were not complementary, but were rival hypotheses. In the SIOP Model, five items out of 30 were derived from the Comprehension Hypotheses and six were derived from the Skill Building Hypotheses (Krashen, 2013).

Krashen (2013) questioned the validity of SIOP due to the low number of researchers, observations, teacher participants, and sample sizes. Krashen claimed that the results did not have statistically significant differences, effect sizes were small, and information about the comparison groups was missing (Krashen, 2013).

SIOP instructional framework. The SIOP Model's eight components along with the features of each component were described. Studies, findings, and literature were presented throughout the framework to demonstrate that the SIOP framework was supported by research on best practices.

SIOP component one: lesson preparation. According to Echevarria et al. (2013), lesson preparation was critical to academic success. Mindful planning allowed for meaningful and relevant learning, increased student motivation, and fostered real-life application of the content. Lesson preparation included six features that were on the topics of content objectives, language objectives, appropriate content concepts,

supplementary materials, adaptation of concepts, and meaningful activities (Echevarria et al., 2013).

Content objectives identified the standards being learned while language objectives supported students' academic language development by including reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Language objectives were the means of conveying the content objectives. Since acquiring a second language is a process, scaffolding language objectives was essential. Goldenberg (2008) said that all students benefited from clear goals and learning objectives.

When preparing a lesson, SIOP teachers focused on making content concepts appropriate for age and educational background level of students and using supplementary materials to a high degree to help make the lesson clear and meaningful (Echevarria et al., 2013). Adapting content to all levels of student proficiency and planning for meaningful activities were the final features of lesson preparation. ELLs may have had difficulty reading the textbooks, but expectations of learning the content were not lowered. Instead, varying instructional strategies were implemented to make the content accessible. ELLs need to make connections to content, which is accomplished by providing meaningful experiences to make the learning situated instead of abstract.

SIOP component two: building background knowledge. Building connections between new information explicitly linked to students' background knowledge and experiences provided students the opportunity to learn grade-level concepts. Component two had three features that were on the topics of building background, making connections, and key vocabulary (Echevarria et al., 2013).

A feature of building background knowledge was concepts being explicitly linked to students' background experiences. Activating prior knowledge differed from building background knowledge. The understanding of the students' knowledge or lack of knowledge helped decide which approach was used. Activating prior knowledge was tapping into the students' already known experiences or understanding. Building background knowledge was teaching students information not previously known, but connected to what they already knew. A student's schema or knowledge of the world was found to be the foundation for understanding and learning information found in texts. For ELLs, their schemata may not match the culture of the written text. Therefore, building background knowledge provided context and references for ELLs (Echevarria et al., 2013).

Marzano (2004) stated,

> Although it is true that the extent to which students will learn this new content is dependent on factors such as the skill of the teacher, the interest of the student, and the complexity of the content, the research literature supports one compelling fact: what students *already know* about the content is one of the strongest indicators of how well they will learn new information relative to the content. (p. 1)

What students already know about the content is commonly called prior knowledge. It is important to continue activating background knowledge.

Marzano (2004) reviewed eight studies on building background knowledge, which "reported average correlation between a person's background knowledge of a given topic and the extent to which that person learns new information on that topic is

.66" (p. 2). Marzano explained what this correlation would mean. If a student was "at the 50th percentile in terms of both her background knowledge and her academic achievement" (p. 2), and "we increase her background knowledge by one standard deviation (that is, move her from the 50th to the 84th percentile), her academic achievement would be expected to increase from the 50th to the 75th percentile" (p. 2). Marzano explained that the contrast would be to decrease the student's "academic background knowledge by one standard deviation (that is, move her from the 50th to the 16th percentile), her academic achievement would be expected to drop to the 25th percentile" (pp. 2-3). Marzano asserted that academic background knowledge makes a dramatic impact on success in school. According to Marzano, "Students who have a great deal of background knowledge in a given subject area are likely to learn new information readily and quite well. The converse is also true" (p. 3).

Making links between past learning and new concepts was a feature of building background knowledge that stressed the importance of making explicit connections between the new content and previously studied content. ELLs may not make connections automatically or benefit from the teacher explaining how past learning related to the new learning (Echevarria et al., 2013).

A study conducted by Schleppegrell, Achugar, and Oteixa (2004) supported the need to make links between past learning and new concepts and to build background knowledge. This study highlighted the challenges faced by ELLs when learning academic language, particularly with regard to history texts. The grade level history text content was found to contain examples where prior knowledge was assumed and students needed to build background knowledge to make the texts meaningful. The researchers

conducted a case study over a 3-year period with 79 California middle and secondary schools' history teachers who had ELLs in their classes. The study researched and developed strategies that would assist ELLs and low-proficiency learners to gain access to grade-level information and develop academic language through history texts and classes (Schleppegrell et al., 2004).

Schleppegrell et al. (2004) found the language of the textbooks was a challenge for ELLs, in addition to the history content being abstract to the ELLs. History texts were generalized, arranged, and interpreted by historians using specific language choices different from the language that students used to discuss events in everyday life. History texts were also found by the researchers to have incorporated implicit and explicit relationships to historical events and assumed student prior knowledge of technical terms. The researchers suggested using focused questions to assist the students' ability to make connections and relationships that activated prior knowledge, while also building background knowledge when applicable.

Another feature of building background knowledge emphasized key vocabulary being introduced, written, repeated, and highlighted (Echevarria et al., 2013). According to Linan-Thompson and Vaughn (2007), vocabulary was the most important element of literacy instruction for ELLs, because it was necessary for reading comprehension and developing oral language skills. It was impossible to teach ELLs all the vocabulary needed, so teaching strategies in order to learn new vocabulary was crucial. Linan-Thompson and Vaughn maintained that English-speaking students must learn about 3,000 new words per year. ELLs must learn specific vocabulary as well as build oral vocabulary. ELLs must not only learn vocabulary orally, but must learn to read

vocabulary, which is essential for comprehension. Linan-Thompson and Vaughn affirmed that vocabulary knowledge, which is an understanding of words' use and meanings, contributes to comprehension. It was found that teachers needed to provide opportunities to learn new words through text, provide repeated exposure to words, and explicitly teach word meanings (Linan-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007).

Linan-Thompson and Vaughn (2007) defined types of vocabulary including reading vocabulary, written vocabulary, and oral vocabulary, which entailed listening and speaking. Students needed help to build all types of vocabulary knowledge, including both receptive and expressive vocabulary, in reading, writing, and orally expressing themselves. Teaching vocabulary included teaching context and definitions of words, encouraging deep processing, and providing multiple exposures to words. Linan-Thompson and Vaughn said that effective vocabulary instruction includes such methods as explicit instruction, implicit instruction, multimedia methods, active engagement of students, using illustration and realia, and reciprocal teaching (Linan-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007).

Francis et al. (2006) declared that while factors such as motivation and persistence were important to the learning process, "mastery of academic language is arguably the single most important determinant of academic success for individual students" (p. 5). Academic language skills could determine a student's success in regard to academic content. ELLs often lacked the academic language needed for school success, which affected the ability to comprehend and analyze complex texts, limited writing abilities, limited the ability to express themselves, and hindered the ability to learn content in all academic areas (Francis et al., 2006).

According to Francis et al. (2006), many ELLs had well-developed conversational skills, but lacked the academic language. Academic language included vocabulary knowledge, the ability to understand word complexity and word length, an understanding of complex sentence structures and syntax, the organization of text such as expository paragraphs, and the function of transition words and phrases. Academic vocabulary played a central role in the success of upper elementary and middle school students, due to the need to read to learn in all content-area classrooms. Many words that ELLs encountered in school were not part of conversational language, yet were often the key to comprehension and learning (Francis et al., 2006).

According to Linan-Thompson and Vaughn (2007), in order to scaffold ELLs' acquisition of new concepts and English language skills, teachers need to adjust the level of English and vocabulary. Adjusting vocabulary means that teachers use clear, explicit language when speaking of new concepts, lessen the amount of words used, and give clear steps that use transitions such as first and finally. Using hand signals with transition words as visuals are even more beneficial, such as holding up fingers. Consistent language was also found to be effective because it allows ELLs to focus on the task instead of trying to understand the vocabulary being used (Linan-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007).

According to Rea and Mercuri (2006), students encountered general and content-specific vocabulary, which had to be explicitly taught. Content-specific vocabulary was the vocabulary associated with each discipline. General academic vocabulary terms would be encountered across disciplines (Rea & Mercuri, 2006).

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) identified three tiers of words. All three tiers were important and were not written in hierarchical order. However, CCSS specified that ELLs need more deliberate concentration with tier 2 and tier 3 words. Tier 1 words are words of everyday speech and have been found to be commonly used words. While native speakers were not identified as challenged in tier 1 ELLs had to attend more carefully to these words (Appendix A, n.d.). Echevarria et al. (2013) added that newcomers and emergent speakers in particular need more explicit instruction and practice with tier 1 words. Tier 2 words appear more in written text and are described as general academic words. Tier 2 words are generalizable and found across many types of texts (Appendix A, n.d.). It was found that tier 2 words need to be taught explicitly to ELLs because these words are not usually used conversationally (Echevarria et al., 2013). Tier 3 words are domain-specific words. Tier 3 words were found to be more common in informational texts than literature. Tier 3 words were found to be more challenging for students so they were recommended to be explicitly defined, repeatedly used, and scaffolded (Appendix A, n.d.). Tier 3 words are uncommon. Therefore, it was recommended that teachers not spend too much time on these words due to the words being rarely repeated (Echevarria et al., 2013).

Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2013) suggested that a student's vocabulary should increase by 2,000-3,000 words a year. In addition, about 400 of those words should be taught directly. Beck et al. (2013) wrote that vocabulary is essential for reading comprehension and should be taught both indirectly and directly. Beck et al. categorized vocabulary into three tiers, like CCSS. Tier 1 was basic well-known words that were found to be used. Tier 2 words were high frequency words that were used by mature

language users across several content areas. Tier 3 words were low-frequency words that were often limited to specific content areas. Beck et al. specified that robust vocabulary instruction included the selection of tier two words because they were not included in students' everyday conversation or writing. The introduction of a set of five to seven tier 2 words should be taught each week with student-friendly definitions. Daily analytic activities that engage and support student thinking should be used. Studies that have been conducted on the implementation of vocabulary intervention focused on the implementation of tier 2 words (Carlo et al., 2004; Kelley, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Faller, 2010; Townsend & Collins, 2009), as well as tier 3 words (O'Hara & Pritchard, 2008; Taboada & Rutherford, 2011). The research showed gains in vocabulary and meaning while focusing on either tier 2 or tier 3 words (Carlo, et al., 2004; Kelley et al., 2010; O'Hara & Pritchard, 2008; Taboada & Rutherford, 2011; Townsend & Collins, 2009).

SIOP identified varied types of academic vocabulary that should be the focus for ELLs, including content vocabulary-subject specific, general academic vocabulary-cross curricular terms, and word parts-roots and affixes (Echevarria et al., 2013). CCSS quantified that in grades K-5, students should have acquired and accurately used grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific vocabulary. In grades 6-12, students should have acquired and used accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific vocabulary to support reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Grades 6-12 also needed to show independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge and be able to consider the importance of vocabulary in regards to comprehension or expression (Echevarria et al., 2013).

Gersten et al. (2007) reviewed three ELL studies and found strong evidence supporting the recommendation of providing extensive and varied vocabulary instruction. Daily explicit vocabulary instruction in all subjects was found to be beneficial including teaching essential content words in depth and addressing the meaning of new common words, phrases, and expressions. The researchers recommended the adoption of an evidence based approach to teaching vocabulary, that districts develop a list of essential vocabulary words, and that the acquisition of everyday words be focused on with ELLs (Gersten et al., 2007).

Another aspect of vocabulary is fluency of conversational vocabulary compared to the knowledge of academic vocabulary. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) were identified by Cummins (Frankfort International School, n.d.). Cummins specified that BICS are the surface skills of listening and speaking that were acquired quickly by ELL students. CALP is the ability for a student to deal with the academic demands of the various subjects. Cummins said that BICS were developed within two years of immersion in the language being learned, while it takes about five to seven years for academic language to be learned. Cummins stated that while a child may have had a high degree of fluency in a language, it cannot be assumed that academic language is proficient. This was especially important for students who had exited an ELL program (Frankfort International School, n.d.).

SIOP component three: comprehensible input. Comprehensible input was defined as making a lesson understandable through a variety of methods (Echevarria et al., 2013). Echevarria et al. (2013) commented, "Students learning rigorous content

material to meet high academic standards in a language they do not speak or comprehend completely require specialized teaching techniques to make the message understandable" (p. 97). Comprehensible input took a conscious effort to make content understandable by using appropriate speech, using clear explanations, and varying instructional techniques.

Echevarria et al. (2013) claimed that a SIOP teacher used conscious modifications to allow verbal communication to be more understandable and that "humans don't pick up language solely from exposure" (p. 96). However, Krashen (1985) reported a second language acquisition theory, The Input Hypothesis, which stated that "humans acquire language in only one way – by understanding messages, or by receiving "comprehensible input" (p. 2). Krashen believed that humans progressed along a natural order by understanding input that was a little beyond one's current level of understanding, which is the formula i + 1. Krashen claimed that speech emerged on its own due to comprehensible input instead of speech being directly taught. Krashen wrote, "The language teacher need not attempt deliberately to teach the next structure along the natural order – it will be provided in just the right quantities and automatically reviewed if the student receives a sufficient amount of comprehensible input" (p. 2). Krashen declared, "People acquire second languages only if they obtain comprehensible input and if their affective filters are low enough to allow the input in" (p. 4). For Krashen, comprehensible input was the main component for second language acquisition; "All other factors thought to encourage or cause second-language acquisition work only when they contribute to comprehensible input and/or a low affective filter" (Krashen, 1985, p. 4). While SIOP and Krashen were both based on comprehensible input, the method of delivery was contrasted.

Additional components of comprehensible input included using speech appropriate for students' proficiency levels, which referred to rate, enunciation, and complexity of the speech used, and using clear explanations of academic tasks (Echevarria et al., 2013). Beginning level ELLs benefited from teachers slowing down the rate of speech, using pauses, and clearly enunciating, while advanced and transitional students needed teachers who used normal rates of speech. To explain academic tasks, it was recommended that finished products be shown to ELLs at the beginning of the work as models, that oral directions should be accompanied by written directions as references for ELLs throughout the work, and that the oral and written instructions should be clear and straightforward.

The final aspect of comprehensible input was using a variety of techniques to make content concepts clear. It was found that the teaching techniques a teacher used had greater impact on academic achievement than did simply using illustrations. Strategies included providing a model, using gestures, implementing hands-on activities, using multimedia, planning for repeated exposure, using graphic organizers, using audiotape texts, and using demonstrations (Echevarria et al., 2013).

Gestures. Shein (2012) conducted a revelatory case study in a K-5 California school where 95% of students were Latino or Hispanic, 89.2% of students received free or reduced lunch, and 79% of students were ELLs. A fifth grade teacher was chosen for the study because she used “multiple pedagogical strategies to engage ELLs in classroom discourse” (p. 193). The teacher taught 25 ELLs and the researcher focused on six of the 25 students during math. The study described three qualitatively varying ways in which gestures were used by the teacher to (a) lead mathematical discussions, (b) re-voice

student strategies, and (c) discuss the meaning of geometric features. The researcher stated that the findings included: 1) "the teacher capitalized on the use of gestures as tools and resources in grounding and providing specificity for her questions" (p. 215) and 2) "the teacher's return gesture is an essential mode of revoicing" (p. 216).

Shein (2012) revealed that to accomplish the first of these, the teacher used representational gestures, which were "actions or movements that depict concrete and abstract ideas, entities, or events that are conveyed in words," such as using a hand to represent a slanted line (p. 186); writing gestures that were "any writing or drawing that occurs with speech" (p. 188); and gestural grounding, which was done through pointing.

Accomplishing the second meant that, "When the ELLs demonstrated their strategy verbally and nonverbally; the teacher often revoiced both the speech and the action that the students used in conveying meanings" (p. 216). "Through revoicing both words and actions, the teacher was able to construct meanings of and assign ownership to a student-invented and student-adopted strategy" (p. 216). Shein (2012) stated that,

> When gestures are considered as a legitimate communicative modality within a community of practice, students who rely on gesture, especially the ELLs whose proficiency in the English language is underdeveloped, have opportunities to negotiate mathematical meanings with others and foster a positive identity with the subject area in the academic community. (p. 216)

Macedonia and Knosche (2011) researched gesturing and learning, focusing on implementing the practice with foreign language students. There were 20 participants who had a mean age of 21 and were German speaking. The researchers wrote 32 sentences in Vimmi, which was an "artificial corpus" (p. 199), so prior knowledge could

not have been a factor. Every part to the 32 sentences was translated in Vimmi, written in Vimmi, translated into German, and a video of an actress speaking the word, which was accompanied by a gesture, was created. The face of the actress stayed neutral so facial expression was not a variable. For example, the actress turned her head and made a gesture with her hand for the word ignore. The participants were assigned to one of two groups. One group, the audiovisual training group, saw the written word in Vimmi, heard the word translated in Vimmi, heard the word translated in German, and saw a still frame of the video. The other group, the enactment group, saw the written word in Vimmi, heard the word translated in Vimmi, heard the word translated in German, and watched the video of the actress using a gesture with the word (Macedonia & Knosche, 2011).

According to Macedonia and Knosche (2011), participants were tested with varying assessments throughout the training process. The results showed that learning through enactment enhanced the memory of the participants. The researchers declared, "If adding a gesture to a word in a foreign language is a key to better storage and slower decay, teaching and learning should take this into account" (p. 209). For example, teachers used gestures when presenting new words; students could invent and use actions to vocabulary words instead of making traditional vocabulary lists. The study proved that enactment enhanced memory for concrete and abstract words, as well as enhanced language production. The researchers concluded that, "Enactment can be considered as a tool empowering foreign language instruction and learning" (Macedonia & Knosche., 2011, p. 209).

Multimedia. Silverman and Hines (2009) conducted research to analyze the effects of multimedia on the vocabulary of ELLs and non-ELLs. The study took place in

a semi-urban, northeast public school. The participants were from two pre-kindergarten classes, two first grade classes, and one second grade class. Eight teachers and 85 students were participants. The range of ages of the students was four and a half to eight and half. Of the student participants, 68% were non-ELL and 32% were considered ELL due to English not being the primary language. For 12 weeks, teachers implemented a scripted vocabulary and science intervention three days of the week for 45-minute sessions each day. Two intervention groups existed: multimedia and non-multimedia. Both groups received intervention that used the same books, focused on the same tier 2 vocabulary words, and used the same scripts. In addition, the multimedia group was shown short video clips that accompanied the learning of some of the vocabulary words throughout the intervention (Silverman & Hines, 2009).

According to Silverman and Hines (2009), pre- and post-tests were used to analyze vocabulary and science content knowledge and ANCOVA tests were run to collect the findings. Silverman and Hines (2009) found that the ELLs in the multimedia group gained about 17 points while the ELLs in the non-multimedia group gained about 11 points in regard to knowledge of targeted words. ELLs in the multimedia group gained about 23 points while the ELLs in the non-multimedia group gained about 11 points in regards to general vocabulary knowledge. ELLs in the multimedia group gained about nine points while the ELLs in the non-multimedia group gained about six points in regards to science content. In this study, the findings showed that the multimedia intervention did not affect the non-ELLs; however, there was an effect on the ELLs. In addition, for the students who received the multimedia intervention, the achievement gap closed between ELLs and non-ELLs in regard to targeted words, while the gap was

narrowed in regards to knowledge of general vocabulary. Silverman and Hines acknowledged that no negative effect was found for any students, and "therefore, the multimedia-enhanced intervention was as effective as the intervention that did not include multimedia enhancements for non-ELLs, and it was more effective for promoting the vocabulary knowledge of ELLs" (pp. 311-312).

Abraham (2007) conducted research with 102 college students who were enrolled in an intermediate Spanish course. All participants were non-native Spanish speakers. The researchers had the participants read a Spanish text through a multimedia format. A medium was available for 85 words found in the text through a multimedia format called glosses, which had a picture of the word or phrase, the definition in English and Spanish, and an audio button that would speak the word. In addition, some of the vocabulary had a short video clip about the word or phrase. Students were randomly assigned to three groups. The control group was able to only read the text in the multimedia format, but was not allowed to use the glosses. The choice group was able to decide when and if they were to look up any verbal or visual information. The forced lookup group was required to look up every available piece of information for all vocabulary words. All participants took a pre- and post-test for the 85 vocabulary words. Students also wrote a summary of the text in English. The researchers ran MANCOVA tests to produce the findings between the pre- and post-tests. The participants in the choice and forced lookup groups performed significantly better on the post-tests for vocabulary and summary than the control group. There was no statistical significant difference between the choice and forced lookup groups (Abraham, 2007).

Zheng, Young, Wagner, and Brewer (2009) conducted research that utilized the virtual world of a game known as "Quest Atlantis" to provide learning and new language acquisition across two cultures, English and Mandarin Chinese. Students participated in an interactive environment in activities known as Quests. Zheng et al. (2009) examined whether the game helped language acquisition and what the students achieved inter-culturally when students from two countries played the game. Samples of language acquisition were obtained from the four students' game communication tools, which included chat, bulletin boards, and email. In addition, the researchers conducted interviews and observations for evidence of language acquisition and cultural learning. Zheng et al. (2009) concluded that participation in the Quests allowed for practice in conversing in English and provided opportunities to actively use the language and converse and receive feedback.

Graphic organizers. Hyerle and Yeager (2007) designed Thinking Maps and stated, "The Thinking Maps language for learning is effective as shown in three general areas of research: cognitive science, effective instructional practice, and brain research" (p. vi). Hyerle and Yeager "synthesized the research on cognitive skills development by identifying eight fundamental thinking skills" (p. vi). Those eight thinking skills were linked to a visual representation, which were called Thinking Maps, and were created to be "used individually and in combination across every grade level and curriculum area as an integrated set of tools for life-long learning" (p. 2). Thinking processes and the thinking map tools were taught to educators and students. Once a task was presented, the educator and/or students determined the thinking process that was being asked and, therefore, chose the thinking map tool that would accomplish the task most appropriately.

The following affirmed the thinking process and then the thinking map tool to be used: defining in context used a circle map, describing qualities used bubble map, comparing and contrasting used double bubble map, classifying used tree map, part-whole used brace map, sequencing used flow map, cause and effect used multi-flow map, and seeing analogies used bridge map. Hyerle and Yeager (2007) stated that

> By having a rich language of visual maps based on thinking processes, learners are no longer confused by poorly organized brainstorming webs or an endless array of static graphic organizers. They are enabled to move from concrete to abstract concepts, think with depth, and directly apply their thinking to complex tasks. (p. vi)

Holzman (2004) was the principal of an elementary school in California. The demographics of the inner city school included 99% ethnically diverse, 100% free and reduced lunch, and 85% ELLs. However, Holzman described that the school was classified as a "California Distinguished School." He continued, "Some of our success can be attributed to Thinking Maps" (p. 3), which Holzman started within the school four years prior. Holzman provided a descriptive analysis of the implementation of Thinking Maps, adding, "It's a very good strategy for English Language Learners because it takes away the necessity to speak and write English" (p. 3). Holzman also pointed out that thinking maps help with differentiation, especially with ELLs, the maps are used school-wide beginning in kindergarten, can be used as assessments, are "owned" by the students once taught, and can be used in any content area or grade level (Holzman, 2004).

SIOP component four: strategies. Echevarria et al. (2013) reviewed studies that showed that information was retained and connected through pathways in the brain,

which were linked to a person's schema. New information was found to be easier to retain if schema for a topic was well developed and personally meaningful. Mental processes included the activation to enhance comprehension and learning, which was connected to cognitive theory. ELLs benefited from higher levels of thinking, but mindful scaffolding was necessary in order to provide additional, appropriate support. Component four had three features that were on the topics of providing ample opportunities for practice, scaffolding, and using higher order thinking questions (Echevarria et al., 2013).

While higher order thinking skills are critical, a SIOP teacher was able to use the appropriate level of thinking skills for the varying levels of ELLs (Echevarria et al., 2013). As the teacher progressed through the thinking levels, the ELLs gained confidence and mastery, proving they were ready to move to the next level; this required scaffolding techniques by the SIOP teacher.

Hill and Flynn (2006) described the five stages of second language acquisition with the types of questions that should have been asked at each stage. Having an awareness of these stages and the typical language skills demonstrated at each stage allows teachers to appropriately scaffold. The five stages are labeled preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency. According to Hill and Flynn, the preproduction stage lasts about zero to six months. The student in this stage has minimal comprehension, does not verbalize, nods to answer, draws, and points. The early production stage lasts about six months to one year. The student in this stage has limited comprehension, produces one or two word responses, uses key words and phrases, and uses present-tense verbs. The speech emergence stage lasts about one to

three years. The student in this stage has good comprehension, produces simple sentences, makes grammar and pronunciation errors, and misunderstands jokes. The intermediate fluency stage lasts about three to five years. The student in this stage has excellent comprehension and makes few grammatical errors. The advanced fluency stage lasts about five to seven years. The student in this stage has a near-narrative level of speech (Hill & Flynn, 2006).

Hill and Flynn (2006) declared a teacher must bridge the gap between what a student could do on his or her own and what the student could do with guided help. This was based upon Vygotsky's research of a student's zone of proximal development. Knowing the stage of language acquisition for each student could help a teacher to guide students within his or her instructional level to achieve academic growth. One method of achieving this was to tailor the questions being asked by the teacher to the student according to the level of language acquisition. In preproduction stage, the teacher asked questions such as show me, where is the, who has, and circle the. In the early production stage, the teacher asked yes or no questions or either or questions. The answers required students to use a phrase or short sentence. In the speech emergence stage, teachers should move past answers that use pointing and one-word responses. Instead, the questions should solicit short-sentence responses or even multiple sentence responses in some instances. In the Intermediate and Advanced stages, the teacher's questions should solicit students to use a lot of verbal output. Minimal verbal output at these stages is inappropriate (Hill & Flynn, 2006).

However, Hill and Flynn (2006) warned that preproduction students should not stay at the low-level end of questioning and only the advanced stage students were asked

the high-level end of questioning. If that occurred, students were more likely to get complacent in thoughts. Therefore, Hill and Flynn outlined a matrix that aligned the stages of second language acquisition to Bloom's Taxonomy. Hill and Flynn confirmed that ELLs must be asked questions from all levels of Bloom's regardless of the stage of second language acquisition in order to continually challenge ELLs' thinking and speaking abilities (Hill & Flynn, 2006).

To further the support of scaffolding, a SIOP teacher focused on an area of instruction in which a student could have achieved with teacher assistance, which was associated with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and the gradual release model, or gradual release of responsibility (GRR) (Echevarria et al., 2013). According to SIOP, types of scaffolding included verbal, procedural, and instructional scaffolds.

McKenzie (2011) defined scaffolding as a method of helping students learn new information through modeling a concept in order to develop a foundation of learning. Scaffolding was described as a supportive structure that was used for a period of time, which helped students accomplish a task that might not otherwise be accomplished or accomplished well without the use of the scaffold (McKenzie, 2011). Walqui (2006) defined scaffolding as the learner being assisted by others in order to achieve more than he or she would be able to achieve if he or she were working alone.

McKenzie (2011) researched the use of scaffolding during reading instruction for 105 ELLs in 15 elementary classrooms. The ELLs were in first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grade classes taught by mainstream teachers; some of the teachers were ELL certified and some were not. The ELLs were given a pre-test, and then after three months of using scaffolded instruction, the students were given a post-test. The results showed

that 11 out of the 15 classes' post-test results were higher after the implementation of scaffolding instruction. McKenzie observed that the most significant differences of scores were with the classes who had a teacher who consistently implemented scaffolded instruction (McKenzie, 2011).

Rea and Mercuri (2006) maintained that scaffolds had many benefits, including clarifying the purpose of a lesson for ELL students, allowing for sufficient use of time, creating a flow of a lesson due to clarity of directions, and resulting in fewer interruptions. Scaffolds helped ELLs learn new vocabulary, concepts, and skills.

According to Walqui (2006) and van Lier (2004), scaffolding occurred during one of three pedagogical scales, which were: 1) a planned curriculum progression that took place over time, 2) the procedures used in an activity, and 3) a collaborative process. During each of these scales, six features existed. These included contextual support, which was the exploration in a safe environment, and access to meeting goals supported in a variety of ways. Another feature was inter-subjectivity, meaning the engagement of all in a nonthreatening, shared environment. Contingency, another feature, involved the task procedures being adjusted by the participants based on needs and actions. A combination of features, handover and takeover, meant that the teacher closely watched as the learner's role increased along with confidence. Flow, skills and challenges being in sync allowed participants to focus on the task and each other (van Lier, 2004; Walqui, 2006). According to van Lier (2004), instruction could not have been called scaffolding unless the crucial component of handover/takeover occurred.

Scaffolding was providing a means of access to the activity or text that has been unaltered (van Lier, 2004). Van Lier described the example of an English language

learner who needed to take challenging classes in their second language in order to graduate from high school and go to college. Van Lier said that, "It would be counterproductive to simplify the content and the language in which it is couched. Rather, the challenge in such classes is to improve access and to stimulate engagement while keeping the content constant" (p. 150). Complex activities "are not altered for the benefit of the developing child, but rather, they are allowed access in an incremental, guided and monitored way" (p. 150). Several types of instructional scaffolding have been identified to be important: modeling, contextualizing, building schema, developing metacognition, and bridging/reframing information (Rea & Mercuri, 2006; Walqui, 2006). Walqui (2006) indicated that students needed clear examples of expectations by providing a model for students to mimic; students need to be able to hear and see what the product must look like that the ELLs were being asked to produce. In addition, modeling of appropriate language was important. Rea and Mercuri (2006) defined modeling as the teacher showing students a desired behavior, skill, or process. The scaffold was important because it modeled for students what and how to verbalize his or her thinking before being asked to use it or write about it.

Contextualizing was defined as a teacher organizing visual and physical information in such a way that enabled all students to understand (Rea & Mercuri, 2006). This meant using visuals, manipulatives, media, realia, movement, verbal clues such as analogies, and collaborative grouping while learning. This scaffold was important because it built language skills and background knowledge, used kinesthetic learning, promoted social discussion through group work, made difficult content and text

accessible, and helped with retention of knowledge (Rea & Mercuri, 2006; Walqui, 2006).

According to Walqui (2006), schema was defined as a way to organize knowledge by understanding how information was interconnected. Gaining understanding involved taking the new knowledge and connecting it to knowledge that already existed. Building schemata for ELLs involved helping students to see the connections between what was being learned and what was already known (Walqui, 2006). Metacognition was focusing on thinking about thinking, or managing thinking. Walqui indicated that metacognition had four aspects: 1) consciously using learned strategies during an activity, 2) knowing the strategic options available and choosing the strategy most effective for a task, 3) monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting actions during an activity, and 4) making future decisions based on past decisions and performances. Building schemata and applying metacognition were important because the scaffolds filled in gaps of learning, promoted the students to be conscious of his or her role in the learning, and helped students to think about the connectedness of the knowledge that was being gained and already known (Rea & Mercui, 2006; Walqui, 2006).

Rea and Mercuri (2006) stated that reframing information meant that the teacher presented information in a creative manner. This scaffold improved students' comprehension and confidence, provided authentic reasons to speak English, and helped with retention of concepts. According to Walqui (2006), comprehension and learning new concepts or languages only occurred if the information was built on previous understandings or knowledge, which was defined as bridging. Bridging strategies

included activating prior knowledge and showing students how the new information connected or was relevant to the student's life.

According to Walqui (2006), scaffolding is the means to provide academically challenging instruction to ELLs, by providing high levels of support. Scaffolds help ELLs to become aware of their progress and tools available to use, and they build confidence. Scaffolds allow teachers to be able to still provide rich, stimulating, and interactive curriculum to ELLs. Scaffolding is beneficial to all learners, yet ELLs must have this strategy provided more extensively and continuously.

SIOP component five: interaction. According to Echevarria et al. (2013), for ELLs "to become fluent in academic English, they need to be provided with structured opportunities in all subject areas to practice using the language" (p. 144). "The integration of language development across the curriculum is vital" (p. 144). Echevarria et al. (2013) said that if language was not practiced, then it was lost. Discussion allowed for the practice of language and offered benefits to ELLs including deeper understanding of text, oral language development, brain stimulation, increased motivation, processing time, and increased attention. The opportunities to practice language must include academic language, not just social language. Component five had four features including the topics of frequent interaction, grouping configurations, sufficient wait time, and opportunities for clarification.

Frequent interaction and discussion included interaction between teacher to student and student to student, which promoted elaborated responses about the concepts of the lesson and oral language (Echevarria et al., 2013). Students' prior knowledge was also activated during interactions. For effective interaction, grouping configurations

needed to be purposeful based on what was known about the students and included individual work, partner work, triads, groups of four or five, cooperative learning groups, and whole class.

Consistently giving sufficient wait time for student response allowed ELLs to process ideas (Echevarria et al., 2013). Wait time was defined as the amount of time between the teacher asking the question and soliciting a response from students. ELLs especially need wait time, because ELLs "need extra time to process questions in English, think of an answer in their second language, and then formulate their responses in English" (p. 156). Echevarria et al. further stated, "Although teachers may be tempted to fill the silence, ELLs benefit from a patient approach to classroom participation, in which teachers wait for students to complete their verbal contributions" (p. 156). For the last feature of the component of interaction, Echevarria et al. (2013) stated, "Best practice indicates that English learners benefit from opportunities to clarify concepts in their first language" (p. 157). Academic skills taught in the first language were found to transfer to the second language.

SIOP component six: practice and application. Practice and application allowed students the opportunity to practice and apply the new material while the teacher closely monitored to determine mastery of the skills (Echevarria et al., 2013). This component was critical for ELLs due to the need for ELLs to learn language and academics through the use of language in the classroom. Second language acquisition research showed repeatedly that comprehensible input and targeted output such as oral and written practice must occur to develop a high level of proficiency in a new language. Practice and application were also necessary in order to differentiate instruction, due to the possibility

of varying levels of language proficiency in one classroom. Component six had three features on the topics of using hands-on materials and/or manipulatives, opportunities to apply content and language knowledge, and integrating all language skills (Echevarria et al., 2013).

Using hands-on materials and/or manipulatives to practice new content was beneficial for all students, yet ELLs made more rapid progress in mastering content when provided with repeated opportunities to practice with hands-on materials and/or manipulatives (Echevarria et al., 2013). Manipulatives helped ELLs connect abstract concepts to more concrete experiences.

The last two features of practice and application included teachers providing activities where students applied content and language knowledge and using activities that integrated all language skills (Echevarria et al., 2013). ELLs benefited from hands-on activities to help learn the new content and language, but a SIOP teacher must be mindful of appropriate scaffolds with those activities. Language skills included reading, writing, listening, and speaking and were found to be mutually supportive; when one increased, another language skill was also enhanced.

SIOP component seven: lesson delivery. Lesson delivery included the pacing of the lesson, student engagement, and the delivery of content and language objectives. Effective lesson delivery could be traced back to the preparation of that lesson. Component seven had three features that included the topics of the content and language objectives guiding the lesson, student engagement, and pacing of the lesson (Echevarria et al., 2013).

Content and language objectives were planned in the preparation component of SIOP and implemented during the lesson delivery component. Objectives guided the direction of the lesson and required explicit instruction and practice. Objectives should be observable, measurable, and assessed (Echevarria et al., 2013).

According to SIOP, students needed to be engaged approximately 90% to 100% of the period, which included students paying attention and being on task (Echevarria et al., 2013). Engagement occurred when teachers provided clear explanations, scaffolding instruction, made connections between the students' lives and the content, used challenging tasks, implemented strong classroom management, and efficiently used class time (Echevarria et al., 2013).

Pacing of the lesson was the rate at which an activity was presented, which included the time of an activity. Time was categorized into allocated time, engaged time, and academic learning time (Echevarria et al., 2013). Allocated time was the amount of time a teacher decided to spend on a topic. Engaged time was the time students actively participated. The more actively students participated, the more they achieved, which included ELLs talking about lesson concepts and using hands-on activities. Academic learning time focused on students participating in meaningful activities that were related to the content and language objectives. The pacing of the lesson must be appropriate to the students' ability levels and based upon the content itself and the background knowledge of the students.

SIOP component eight: review and assessment. Echevarria et al. (2013) claimed:

> For those students who struggle, there could be a mismatch between the classroom context and the students' academic and language needs. With data-driven instruction, guided by periodic review and assessment, students are more likely to achieve an instructional match in your classroom. (p. 212)

Echevarria et al. (2013) made a distinction between assessment and evaluation. They defined assessment as the "gathering and synthesizing of information concerning students' learning, while evaluation is defined as making judgments about students' learning" (p. 213). According to Echevarria et al. (2013), the purpose of formative assessments was to achieve a baseline of learning, while summative assessments determined students' progress over time. Component eight had four features that were on the topics of reviewing key vocabulary, reviewing key concepts, providing regular feedback, and assessment.

One feature of review and assessment was the comprehensive review of key vocabulary (Echevarria et al., 2013). ELLs receive a high volume of new language within a class, so teachers must review the key vocabulary and concepts. Students also need repeated exposure to vocabulary terms by using the terms in a variety of ways. SIOP offered many suggestions on reviewing key vocabulary such as using synonyms and antonyms, focusing on multiple meanings or how words were used in various contexts, and using analogies. SIOP detailed the crucial understanding that word lists and definitions did not improve vocabulary, but rather multiple exposures with meaningful tasks through multiple mediums (Echevarria et al., 2013).

Key content concepts must be reviewed throughout a lesson. Teachers must stop and summarize key concepts or have students summarize the key concepts (Echevarria et

al., 2013). Key concepts should be connected back to the content and language objectives. Teachers of SIOP offered regular and specific feedback that was focused on content and language objectives. Assessment of student comprehension and learning of all lesson objectives throughout the lesson was then performed.

Chappuis, Stiggins, Chappuis, and Arter (2012) quantified that formative assessments were assessments for learning, or to support learning, while summative assessments were assessments of learning, or to verify learning. Keys to quality classroom assessments were comprised of five components: key one was clear purpose, key two was clear targets, key three was sound design, key four was effective communication, and key five was student involvement. In regard to formative assessments, they stated, "Used with skill, assessment can motivate the reluctant, revive the discouraged, and thereby increase, not simply measure, achievement" (p. 1). They reviewed a comprehensive review study conducted by two British researchers. The findings of the review of studies on formative assessment had a positive effect. The researchers found, "In some studies they reviewed, certain formative assessment practices increased the achievement of low-performing students to the point of approaching that of high-achieving students" (p. 22). They also found,

> To put the standard deviation numbers into perspective, a 0.4 to 0.7 achievement gain translates to 15 to 25 percentile points on commonly used standardized test score scales. For example, a student scoring at the 45th percentile on a standardized test such as the ITBS, who then attained a 0.7 standard deviation gain, would score at the 70th percentile. (p. 22)

According to Chappuis et al. (2012), formative assessments should allow for opportunities for students to express their understanding, should promote dialogue between students and between students and teachers, specific feedback should be given, and students need to be trained in self-assessment. The student should be the ultimate user of the information provided by the formative assessments.

Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) model. Another model, which according to McIntyre, Kyle, Chen, Kraemer, and Parr (2009) was effective in educating ELLs, is entitled the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) model. Research for this model began in Hawaii in the 1970s and was committed to research-based best practices for educating diverse students (CREDE, 2013). The CREDE model approached teaching ELLs differently than did other models. In addition to addressing the needs of ELL students, CREDE also addressed the educational needs of students in all grades, backgrounds, cognitive capabilities, and languages (CREDE, 2013). The CREDE model focused on literacy and competency in the English language across the curriculum (McIntyre et al., 2009). CREDE was the foundation of the SIOP Model. They stated,

> The SIOP Model was developed in a national research project sponsored by the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE), a national research center funded by the U.S. Department of Education from 1996 through 2003 to assist the nation's population of diverse students, including those at risk of educational failure, to achieve academic excellence. (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2013)

The CREDE model had five standards by which all trained personnel must have operated. Each standard was accompanied by multiple indicators that were considered necessary in order for teachers to accomplish full implementation of the standard. The five standards which will be expounded upon were: 1) Joint Productive Activity, 2) Language Development, 3) Contextualization, 4) Challenging Activities, and 5) Instructional Conversation.

Joint productive activity. The primary focus of this standard was collaboration between the teacher and the students. CREDE suggested that "providing assistance" was the major objective of education and that joint productive activity (JPA) increased teaching and learning by using the teacher as a mentor for the student (CREDE, 2013). McIntyre et al. (2009) explained JPA was instrumental in shaping and driving a well-planned lesson. Furthermore, JPA allowed students to work in pairs or small groups while the teacher facilitated assigned projects (2009). CREDE researchers argued that every level of learning took place with a mentor type program in which the teacher and the student engaged in real world exercises to make learning practical and understandable. Examples of this included parents teaching small children, on the job training, and adult education. Practically every aspect of learning uses this concept with the exception of K-12 education (CREDE, 2013). The JPA standard had eight indicators for all teachers. They suggest the teacher implement the following practices: First, provide instructional activities in which students collaborate to create a common product. Second, provide time management of the activities. Third, provide preferential seating accommodating students based on individual needs. Fourth, actively participate with students throughout the activity. Fifth, group students heterogeneously and

homogeneously. Sixth, manage students moving from one group to the next. Seventh, monitor them and teach them appropriate clean up and dismissal protocols. Eighth, positively support all collaboration (CREDE, 2013).

Language development. McIntyre et al. (2009) advised that proficiency across the curriculum was vital for academic and life success of all students. The focus of language development was to improve reading, writing, and speaking in English across the curriculum. It was preferable to improve these qualities in the students' native language as well (2009). To invest appropriately in language development, it was necessary for the teacher and students to engage in intentional and deliberate conversations. Past customs of drills and repetitious context were outdated and no longer recommended (CREDE, 2013).

To achieve language development, the teacher should have accessed a variety of tools to include problem solving techniques, informal conversations, and academic development. Additionally, student activities should have been designed to foster language, as well as literacy development (CREDE, 2013).

Indicators associated with implementation of the literacy development standard required that the teacher implement the following practices: Encourage and listen to students discuss their home, community and other familiar subjects. Next, respond to the students by making "in flight" corrections related to active student conversations. Thirdly, assist language development for the students through modeling, clarifying, questioning and deliberate conversations both verbal and written. Fourth, use eye contact, wait time, and similar tools to positively interact with students while respecting cultural differences. Fifth, use reading, listening, writing and speaking skills to connect

literacy and content knowledge to students' home language. Sixth, provide multiple opportunities for students to interact with other students throughout instructional activities and encourage students to demonstrate comprehension of vocabulary through conversation. Finally, encourage students to use their home language as well as the second language during class activities (CREDE, 2013).

Contextualization. According to McIntyre et al. (2009), the contextualization standard used the connection between the students' native languages and personal life experiences which included home, school, and other activities that may have been relevant in the students' lives. Making this connection was found beneficial for all students, but it was particularly important for students in American classrooms who did not speak English as their primary language as it gave students a practical approach to new lesson material (McIntyre et al., 2009).

Traditional education used strategies such as rules, lecture, and abstractions (CREDE, 2013). Using the contextualized approach allowed the use of "understanding" as a means of making connections to everyday life, which strengthened the students when they acquired new material. McIntyre et al. (2009) also noted that instruction provided attention to assuring consideration to the backgrounds of various students and their interests was imperative to moving forward. Additionally, the teacher should have collaborated with parents as well as other community partners in efforts to provide ultimate success for students (CREDE, 2013). McIntyre et al. (2009) advised that there were eight indicators identified with regard to context.

The first indicator was to start activities based on what students know, building on background knowledge. Also, create instructional activities that were relevant to

students' daily lives. Next, connect with family, friends and others community members for purposes of obtaining customs and norms. This was done by reading documents and other material important to the students' everyday lives. Next, work with students to apply what was learned to home and daily activities. Then, work with students to plan, design, and implement community-based educational activities, followed by inviting families to participate in school and class academic activities. Finally, there should be multiple cooperative individual and group activities based on student preference as well as multiple variations of conversation that include cultural preferences (McIntyre et al., 2009).

Complex thinking. According to McIntyre et al (2009), this standard focused on teaching students to think critically even when using a rigorous curriculum (McIntyre et al, 2009). This standard required teachers to create lessons and activities that required students to explore education using strategies for complex thinking (University of Hawaii, 2010-2013). Using the complex thinking standard, also known as rigorous curriculum standard, ELLs were challenged with high expectations for learning all relevant content (McIntyre et al., 2009). Teachers using this approach were encouraged not to assume that ELLs were unable to complete tasks or comprehend assignments. Rather, teachers were encouraged to provide rigorous curricula using appropriate learning materials that were adapted and accessible for ELLs. Additionally, accommodations, such as additional time and explanations, should have been provided as needed (McIntyre et al., 2009).

When working to educate ELLs through complex thinking, McIntyre et al. (2009) advised that it was important not to focus on what the students could not do. Teachers

should have had clear objectives and learning targets for these students. They must have also provided engaging activities and multiple planned assessments throughout units to assess student progress (McIntyre et al., 2009). The following indicators for the complex thinking standard required that the teacher implement five standards. First, provide whole picture experiences for each instructional subject. This provides a basis for students to understand various parts of the topic. Second, present students with rigorous performance standards. Third, design academic assignments so that students experience more complex levels. Fourth, help students achieve by building on prior success. The fifth and final indicator was to give clear and specific feedback regarding student performance as it related to rigorous standards (McIntyre et al., 2009).

Instructional conversation. The basic focus of instructional conversation is "teaching through conversation" (CREDE, 2013). This standard required that the teacher used far more than the traditional method of instruction, which entailed basic question and answer sessions in class by which students responded to questions that the teacher asked in a single word or short phrase answer. Instead, teachers took a more personal approach by encouraging student participation in dialogue. Students should have been encouraged to use personal experiences when answering questions while justifying and keeping in line with the topic or objectives. Teachers should have attempted to determine meaning of what students were trying to say and refrain from constant corrections when students confused words or answered incorrectly. When necessary, teachers should have modeled for students in order to provide clarity in subject matter. The goal was to provide opportunities for students to speak out so that they became familiar and comfortable with speaking the English language (CREDE, 2013).

The use of small groups was also recommended when implementing instructional conversation, as it allowed students to further develop speaking skills while relating to other students as they shared experiences and developed deeper content cognition (McIntyre, 2009). In order to implement the instructional conversation standard fully, the following indicators were applied. The teacher should meet these indicators: have an organized the classroom to effectively facilitate frequent conversation between the teacher and small groups; incorporate clear academic objectives that drive student conversation; assure student conversations occur at higher rates and that of the teacher; provided guided discussions which include student opinions, judgments and justifications using textual evidence; make efforts to assure that all students are involved in discussions based on individual preferences; listened attentively to determine levels of students' comprehension; and consistently assisted students through questioning, praising, affirming, and restating and guide students to complete a product based on academic conversation (McIntyre, 2009).

Best practices comparison of exemplary and acceptable rated schools. Roberts (2008) researched instructional practices conducive to the high achievement of Hispanic LEP students on the Texas assessment of knowledge and skills. The study resulted from varying problems, including: 1) Hispanic students consistently scored below White students in all grades in math and reading, 2) Hispanic students who completed high school tested at the level of White thirteen year old students in reading and writing, 3) In reading, 14% of Hispanic fourth grade students were proficient or advanced, 57% did not meet the basic rating, and only 29% met the basic rating, 4) In eighth grade, less than 10% met proficient or advanced in math, 60% were below basic,

and 30% were basic, and 5) only 6% of college graduates were Hispanic. The purpose of the study was to identify the instructional practices of high-performing schools that eliminated the achievement gap for Hispanic economically disadvantaged and ELLs. The study compared two schools rated exemplary on the Texas assessment to two schools rated acceptable on the Texas assessment. The best practices were categorized: curriculum and academic goals; bilingual and ESL teacher capacity building; instructional programs, practices, and arrangements; monitoring, compilation, analysis, and the use of data; and recognition, intervention, and adjustment (2008).

According to the findings, the exemplary campuses created a culture of structure and uniformed direct teaching and learning for beginning ELLs (2008). Once ELLs showed success, the model transformed into constructivist instruction, which helped the ELLs to become risk-takers. This was using a mixed method instructional approach to meet student needs, particularly Hispanic ELLs. The acceptable campuses created a culture of constructivist learning, which was not consistent across campuses. Students were dependent on adult explanations and confirmation of success. Therefore, constructivist learning was not met with high levels of participation and achievement from students. There was no evidence at the acceptable campuses that consistent and systematic use of best practices was important or used, even though pockets of implementation were evident. The consistent best practices implemented at the exemplary schools were cooperative learning, technology-enriched instruction, student monitoring, use of manipulates, cultural relevance to instruction, guided instruction, flexible grouping, content specific objectives, and research-based programs for intervention. Commitment, consistency, and collaboration were evident at the exemplary

campuses. The exemplary schools shared ideas, materials, and strategies freely; teachers observed others instructing frequently, evidence showed a shared collective responsibility, team meetings were focused on curricular and instructional issues, and student work was analyzed together (Roberts, 2008).

At the exemplary campuses, almost all teachers were of the same ethnicity as the students, which made better connections to students' home life, background, and culture (2008). The focus was then entirely on instruction. Computer programs were consistently implemented among the exemplary campuses to enrich student curriculum. Research-based programs were used for reading and oral language development. Administrators monitored the implementation of the programs. The exemplary campuses valued the students' home, language, and culture. At the acceptable campuses, many teachers supported initiatives, but some were hesitant due to the cycle of change (Roberts, 2008).

Instructional Models

Models describing different methods of instructional delivery were considered impactful. Bilingual, English only, push-in, and pullout were examples of the methods included in this review. A review of instructional models and the perspective of English-only as well as bilingual advocates were included.

According to Norwood (2012), the sudden and consistent influx of ELLs over the past several years resulted in the necessity to develop and implement learning strategies to increase academic success. As a result, there have been several instructional models designed for the purpose of addressing the needs of this student population. Fralick (2007) noted that effective instructional application of a second language should

incorporate the same basic concepts as the first language. That meant delivery of an instructional message by the teacher that was received and understood by the student and applicable to the students' life experiences. Moughamian et al. (2009) identified two primary instructional models, which were the English-only model and the Bilingual model.

English-only models. Originally, the English-only model included total English submersion. This meant non-English speaking students were placed into the classroom with no academic supports in the native language (McGee, 2012). Fralick contended that this model left students to "sink or swim" since appropriate supports were not offered (2007). There were only two noted positive aspects of this model with multiple negative aspects. The first positive aspect was that the submersion model was cost effective for schools. The second was that students were provided multiple models of the English language.

According, to Fortune (2014), there were several negative implications of total English submersion. First, there was a lack of teacher knowledge of the students' home or native language. Second, inadequate resources for student support, assessment, and academic interventions geared around ELL students. Third, there is a great need for qualified, well prepared teachers. Fourth, submersion students to not achieve the same grammatical accuracy as students who speak English as a primary language. Lastly, there was that not enough of the student's first language was spoken, during class (Fortune, 2014).

Following the Bilingual Act of 1968, and the *Lau vs. Nichols* Supreme Court decision of 1974, English learners were granted the right to a curriculum equivalent to

that of all other students (Gandara, 2012). After that time, the term submersion was seldom used and the English-only model consisted of instruction given primarily in the English language. There was still very little or no speaking of the students' native languages. However, it was then allowed for ELL aides or classroom teachers who assisted students to give directions in students' native languages (Moughamian et al., 2009). Secondary models associated with the English-only model included structured English immersion and sheltered instruction.

Structured English Immersion. According to Moughamian et al. (2009), Structured English Immersion (SEI) originated as the Canadian model and was designed to accelerate fluency in English for ELLs by teaching content courses in English only. In this model, students received a gradual decrease of supports in their native languages as they developed proficiency in English skills. This accelerated model was intended to expedite the process of language acquisition for ELLs (Moughamian et al., 2009).

The SEI program greatly relied on the ability of the teacher to deliver effective comprehensible instruction to the student (Coletti, 2012). Coletti further contended that instructors of SEI were highly qualified individuals who provided nearly all instruction in English. All reading and writing materials were in English, and with very little exception, English was the only language spoken in these classrooms (Guerrero, 2009). Furthermore, Coletti (2012) contended that SEI instruction followed NCLB guidelines and was provided in all subjects. Marlow (2008) noted that the structured immersion approach was more effective when teachers were well trained and the program was implemented with consistency.

Multiple positive attributes of the SEI model were identified. Fortune (2014) noted ELL students placed in SEI settings achieved functional academic proficiency at levels equal to or greater than students who were not in immersion settings. Additionally, these students fared better in literacy skills and bilingual skills than students not in this model. Krashen (n.d.) mentioned that language acquisition and content knowledge received focus during lessons. Krashen further noted that this practice allowed students to be mainstreamed into the regular classroom setting gradually. This approach provided opportunities for a higher success rate as students move to higher levels of education. Finally, Tedick, Christian, and Fortune (2011) noted that this model is not only beneficial to ELL students, but also to students who were intellectually or socioeconomically disadvantaged as well.

There were also several criticisms of the SEI model. First, there was a constant struggle with teachers being adequately prepared to meet the needs of students. Teachers lacked pedagogical skills as well as appropriate amounts of professional development in the area of ELL support. Second, recruitment and retention of teachers who were highly qualified was also a constant challenge. Third, there are inconsistencies between elementary and secondary educational levels. Irregularities in policies often impede seamless student transition from one level to the next. Fourth, lack of fidelity with implementation of the model caused mixed results in student performance and outcomes (Tedick et.al., 2011).

Sheltered instruction. Norwood (2012) identified sheltered instruction as a researched-based best practice that had produced academic success for struggling ELLs. Norwood further contended that the term sheltered referred to the alternate setting

provided for ELLs placed in class settings away from the mainstream classroom. This alternative placement allowed students to progress without having to compete with students who were already fluent in the English language. Further, sheltered instruction referred to the methods used to deliver instruction to students. However, due to NCLB stipulations, these students still had to meet the same testing mandates as all other students (Norwood, 2012).

Negron (2012) advised that the main objective of sheltered instruction was to provide teacher support via grade level planning and instruction around core content standards. This model incorporated limited amounts of students' native languages, intended only to supplement the English curriculum. With sheltered instruction, students received core content in conjunction with language objectives all integrated into the same lesson (2012). Here, the teacher related words, phrases, or events to the students' background or life experiences to allow students to relate and retain information. Sheltered teachers incorporated an array of instructional tools that included visual aids and graphic organizers, social interactions, manipulatives, vocabulary, and cooperative learning (Mamanatov, 2009; Negron, 2012). Incorporating multiple instructional tools made learning the English language more comprehensible for ELLs (McGee, 2012). Students participating in sheltered programs must have been proficient in English and were able to respond cognitively to both their native languages and English. For these reasons, sheltered instruction was mostly recommended for high school students who were already proficient in the English language (Fralick, 2007).

Bilingual models. The Bilingual model allowed students to receive instruction in English, as well as their native languages. The concentration and length of this model

varied greatly from state to state and district to district. According to Fralick (2007), all bilingual programs in the United States have had at the core at least one central focus, which was to make all ELL students proficient in English. Moughamian et al. (2009) identified two overarching variations of the bilingual model; the dual language programs and the transitional programs.

Dual language programs. Moughamian et al. (2009) identified the dual language program, also referred to as the two-way program, which allowed students to receive academic instruction in two languages, usually in equal proportions. The design of this program was to bolster the native language of the student while nurturing the development of the English language. The original intent, according to Moughamian et al. (2009), was to teach English speaking kindergarten and first grade students a second language via immersion into a minority language setting. However, the objective became for students to become fluent in two languages and to achieve academic proficiency in English assessments. The dual language program was designed to accommodate multiple languages including Spanish, French, Korean, and Chinese (Moughamian et al., 2009).

Williams (2011) validated the dual language program and contended that this method of instruction had closed achievement gaps between ELLs and non-ELLs. According to Williams' research, this program was proven to move students from below grade level in reading to above grade level. Fralick (2007) contended the dual language approach offered increased self-esteem for students, as well as improved social skills, because students formed relationships with their peers. Additionally, Washington (2009) noted that the dual language program offered benefits of cultural acceptance and appreciation, in addition to a pathway to academic excellence.

Throughout the United States, there were multiple variations of the dual language title. Depending on the area or district, dual language was also known as bilingual immersion, dual immersion, two-way bilingual or two-way immersion (Washington, 2009).

While the dual language program offered many positive aspects, it did not come without some concerns. Fralick (2007) found that when ELL students had high mobility rates, this program could be less than successful. Additionally, when students in upper elementary grades or students transitioning from newcomer programs were involved in the dual language program and did not have the supports or English proficiency that was needed, academic problems emerged (Fralick, 2007).

***Transitional programs*.** The second bilingual model, as identified by Moughamian et al. (2009), was the transitional bilingual program. This was a more popular program and it built on the English skills and strengths of the student and used instruction in the native language to help enhance English abilities. Fralick (2007) noted that transitional programs were primarily remedial and were typically popular in school districts where there was a high concentration of ELLs. As ELLs became more adept in the English language, instruction in the native language was reduced and English instruction was increased. With this model, students may have received instruction for two to six years based on language and academic proficiency. Students exited the program based on English proficiency. Early exit occurred when a student proved proficiency in two years. Late exit occurred when a student proved proficiency in six years. The supports provided for this model included a mix of native to English language instruction. For example 50/50 would be equal dispersion of instruction provided to the

student. The scale was decreased 60/40 then 70/30 until the student was proficient in English only. The conditions of this program varied depending on the state or school district (Moughamian et al., 2009).

Other instructional models were assessed for their effectiveness as related to the educational success of students with diverse backgrounds, family histories, and cognitive abilities (Mamantov, 2013). Common models of instruction used for ELLs included the Push-in and Pullout Models.

Push-in model. As reported by Washington (2009), the push-in model, developed in the 1980s, allowed ELLs to receive academic assistance while being mainstreamed in the classroom setting. This instructional model incorporated certified ELL teachers or certified ELL instructional assistants to provide additional services for ELLs along with the general education classroom teacher (2009). Typically, the ELL teacher was in the classroom to give the students assistance in vocabulary, as well as in literacy. This method was beneficial not only for ELLs, but other students in the classroom also reaped the benefits of an additional instructor (Mamantov, 2013).

According to Mamantov (2013), other benefits to the Push-in model also existed. One such benefit was two teachers in the classroom, reducing the teacher-pupil ratio. This reduction afforded students more personalized attention. All students benefited from this approach, not just ELLs. Differentiation was another benefit of the push-in model. With two teachers in the classroom working as a team, multiple assessments could be developed to assess student comprehension. A third benefit was that collaborative teaching benefited not only ELLs, but it also benefited students with special needs. This was because many of the learning issues that students with special

needs faced were often the same problems that ELLs encountered. Lastly, Mamantov (2013) noted that research showed there was better acquisition of language skills when students intermingled with peers. Therefore, if students were in the same classroom, it expedited the process of language proficiency. This model worked best when the teachers collaborated and planned lessons together for the benefit of all students (Mamantov, 2013).

While the push-in model had many positive aspects, there were some criticisms of this instructional model. Mamantov (2013) revealed that an issue with this model was that ELL teachers lacked input regarding their schedules, teaming, instructional planning, and collaboration. It was imperative that equal input was achieved during the lesson planning for the benefit of student progress. In addition, this model lacked fluency when the ELL teachers were not experts in specific subjects and when the teachers were not in the classroom each time the subject was taught (Mamantov, 2013).

Pullout model. In contrast to the push-in model, the pullout model involved removing the student from mainstream classes during a portion of the day. The pullout usually lasted between 30-45 minutes per day and was implemented five days a week (Mamantov, 2013). During the time away from the mainstream class, the students received additional help in the English language. These sessions included small group sessions with other students needing English support. The pullout model was primarily used in elementary school settings (Washington, 2009).

The pullout model offered multiple advantages for ELLs. Mamantov (2013) described three positive aspects of the pullout model. First, students with common languages and cultural backgrounds could be grouped together, which may have offered a

feeling of security and comfort for students. As a result, the potential existed for ELLs to have more academic success, because they were willing to take more risks and did not have the pressure of feeling different. Secondly, this method allowed ELL teachers to better personalize instruction for students with varying reading abilities, and modify instruction to suit the individual learner based on the student's background and learning level. There may also have been more appropriate literacy building activities, because the teacher could have offered more real world reading experiences for the students. Lastly, ELL teachers were trained with multiple strategies geared specifically for working with ELLs. The skills acquired by the teacher directly influenced the ELLs' attainment of proficiency in the English language (Mamantov, 2013).

According to Mamantov, the pullout model also had several negative concerns. One apprehension was that classroom disruption occurred each time students were pulled from the general education classroom. Additionally, there was loss of instructional time during the transition from one location to the other. Furthermore, lessons taught in the ELL classroom often did not correlate with the instructional material covered in the mainstream classroom. Finally, ELL teachers were often not bilingual. This may have impeded the ability of the teacher to effectively follow up on student needs and progress (Mamantov, 2013).

Instructional model reviews. According to Goldenberg (2013), there was much debate over what instructional model was best for ELL students, English-only or bilingual. This debate was at the core of bilingual education. Furthermore, McGee (2012) argued the debate over how to educate ELL students was highly political. When addressing this topic, Goldenberg (2013) offered two facets of focus: "teaching academic

content and skills, and using the home language as support in an otherwise all-English instructional environment" (p. 8).

English-only proponents argued the benefits of English immersion and declared that the bilingual approach was a waste of time. Conversely, bilingual supporters maintained that teaching students in dual languages offered a support of the home language and increased the bi- or multilingual base for students. Those on both sides of this highly controversial topic believed that his or her stance was best for all students and achievement was better when academic approaches incorporated his or her particular approach (Goldenberg, 2013).

English-only advocates. McGee (2012) identified multiple advocates for English-only instruction. Two major and very active groups were the U.S. English Foundation and U.S. English, Inc., which was the oldest and largest citizens' activist group in the country. U. S. English, Inc., stood to protect the English language and in doing so advocated for all ELL students to be educated using an English-only approach. This group was instrumental in the passage of using English as the official language in 31 states, including Tennessee, and continues to work to pass laws for English-only in all states (U.S. English, 2013). The premise on which U.S. English stood was to protect the English language. The argument was that to attempt to educate using native languages posed a liability to the American education system (McGee, 2012).

According to Fralick (2007), many studies indicated that bilingual programs were no more successful than English-only programs. Conversely, bilingual programs have been identified as having inadequate or flawed methodologies. One such issue was that the bilingual model focused primarily on Spanish speaking students. Therefore, students

speaking other languages were not addressed appropriately and lacked adequate accommodations. Another weakness was the possibility of students becoming dependent on their native language. If this occurs, it could lead to lack of effort and the students may not give effort to learning the English language (Fralick, 2007).

Bilingual advocates. A major criticism of the English-only model was that it assumed English to be a superior language and undermined all other languages. Thus, students who spoke any language other than English must have abandoned their native vernacular for the purposes of becoming proficient in English (Fralick, 2007).

Following the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 and the *Lau vs. Nichols* Supreme Court decision of 1974, many believed that bilingual education would become the norm in the United States. However, several groups were established to counter the productivity of those outcomes, which caused the debate to continue (Gandara, 2012).

Although many groups in the United States promoted the English-only approach, Goldenburg (2013) argued that after multiple meta-analyses over the past 25 years regarding the effectiveness of bilingual versus English only, one fact had repeatedly been evidenced as true: bilingual education was superior to English immersion (Goldenburg 2013).

Stevenson (2011) noted the importance of the students' home language as an "intellectual resource," which provided students with cultural as well as solid learning opportunities (p. 29). Stevenson further argued that this provided an opportunity for the educator to observe the comprehension levels of the learner. Additionally, Sousa (2005) recorded that research indicated that providing instruction for reading and basic literacy skills in the home language offered a positive contribution to student success in both

languages. Sousa further argued that to thrust non-English speaking students into reading and literacy programs without consideration of the appropriate prerequisites could prove to be counterproductive (Sousa 2005).

Professional Development

According to Mizell (2010), professional development can be a formal process such as a conference, seminar, or workshop, or it can be an informal process such as discussions, independent reading, observations, or learning from a peer. Professional development affected student achievement; skills educators needed were acquired through professional development, which increased student achievement and learning. Rationale for the necessity of professional development included the constant state of change in the teaching profession, the complexity of teaching, and the fact that college does not provide all aspects of education for future teachers. Student learning suffered if teachers did not receive professional development to continually increase skills.

Mizell (2010) indicated that professional development was considered most effective when it occurred within a teacher's daily work experience. All educators must be engaged in growth, not just the teachers who volunteered. School-based professional development was found to help teachers to analyze student achievement data, immediately identify problems, develop solutions, and apply the solutions to address student needs. Professional development can occur before, during, and after the change. Professional development can also occur district wide or on-line. However, it was recommended that school-based professional development was the most effective.

Mizell (2010) suggested one professional development option was forming learning teams, which included teachers and school leaders collaboratively using data to

identify weaknesses and instructional gaps, and determining what needed to be known to close the gaps. The learning teams then worked with a support person such as a central office person, an expert on the needed topic, or someone from another school to lead professional development. The team engaged in an ongoing cycle of improvement as long as the team had a mutual learning goal.

Mizell (2010) stated professional development yielded three levels of results, which were: 1) educators learned new knowledge and skills; 2) educators used the new learning to improve teaching and leadership, and 3) student learning and achievement increased due to the implementation of what was learned through the professional development by the educators. School boards supported professional development by establishing policies that described the philosophy of professional development, the purpose, and the guidelines.

Sox (2011) researched the preparation of teachers for instructing middle school ELLs. Out of 89 participants, over half had general diversity training in college. However, participants felt the course did not prepare the teachers for working effectively with ELLs. The majority of participants did not have ELL coursework at the undergraduate or graduate level. In addition, the participants also reported that the professional development in the North Carolina school district also focused on general diversity training. There were five participants who were trained in SIOP and those teachers felt more prepared to work with ELLs. The majority of participants felt disappointed with the college programs and professional development sessions due to the lack of focus on teaching ELLs. Therefore, most participants reported feeling unprepared to effectively work with ELLs. The participants who reported feeling the most prepared

to work with ELLs participated in SIOP training and worked with an ESL coach or SIOP trainer. Sox's study found that colleges and districts should mandate preparation specific to ELLs in order for teachers to have the knowledge needed to work effectively with ELLs (Sox, 2011).

Review of Methods

Multiple research methods have been used based on the researchers' needs. According to Yin (2007), research methodology can have multiple components, including instrumentation, procedures, research design, data analysis, reliability, and validity. The methodology used in any research project was found to be essential to accurately shape the findings and results of the study.

Yin (2007), in a study on pullout and inclusion, conducted a mixed methods approach in which a causal-comparative design was utilized. This method was necessary in order to ascertain the differences in student scores as related to the study. In addition, Yin used Rigby Leveled Readers as an instrument for assessing the reading levels of students tested. To analyze data collected, Yin performed an ANCOVA statistical analysis in order to determine if the Rigby was effective statistically (2007).

Washington (2009) used a quantitative approach to the study on instructional models for ELL students. One method focused on "Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners" (p. 42). This form of instrumentation allowed Washington to assess scores in multiple forms, which included Raw and Scale scores. This method of instrumentation, according to Washington, proved to be both valid and reliable by accredited sources.

Atchley (2009) used a qualitative approach to the research on mainstreaming ELL students. Atchley's study included a "student profile, survey, informal conversations, interviews, historical background data, and information obtained through school records, such as test scores and demographics" (p. 49). Although the study was considered qualitative, there was a quantitative component using SPSS for statistical purposes. This component was used to analyze the relationship between two variables (Atchley, 2009).

Roberts (2008) based the research on instructional practices that were conducive to the high achievement of Hispanic Limited English Proficient Students on the Best Practice and Benchmarking Concept. This study used a qualitative methodology to examine the practices of four Texas schools. Two schools were rated exemplary and two were rated acceptable on the Texas state assessment. The participants were the bilingual and ESL teachers from the four campuses. The participants were given a 50-question survey based on the Best Practice and Benchmarking Concept. The survey consisted of yes or no questions. Interviews were conducted, both individually and in focus groups. Observations were conducted in the participants' classrooms. School documents were evaluated. Survey and interview responses were coded for themes (2008). The collected data were analyzed to compare and contrast the best practices that had occurred in the exemplary schools and acceptable schools. The Chi-square was computed, along with the significance level. A Chi-square statistic with a p-value less than 0.5 indicated that the differences of best practices and school performance were statistically significant.

Summary

ELLs continue to increase in the United States and specifically in Tennessee and the states' school districts. Due to the increase of ELLs within United States' schools,

educational laws were created to ensure equal rights occurred in the school systems for ELLs (Grooms, 2011*; Lau v. Nichols*, 1973; Office for Civil Rights Compliance, 1990; Stewner-Manzanares, 1988; Types of Educational Opportunities Discrimination, n.d,). While it is challenging to teach students with non-English backgrounds and varied levels of background knowledge (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006), schools are expected to have high standards for ELLs and increase academic achievement, particularly in math and reading (Francis et al., 2006; U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

In order to accomplish the task of schools guiding ELLs to become proficient in the standards and on academic assessments, research-based instructional best practices have been combined into a framework that has been proven to increase the academic achievement of ELLs, which is SIOP (Bertram, 2011; Center for Applied Linguistics, 2013; Echevarria & Short, n.d; Echevarria, et al., 2006; Echevarria et al., 2013; Read, 2008; Short, et al., 2012; Welsh & Newman, 2010). The SIOP Model is a framework that contains 30 features that are grouped into eight components. The components included Lesson Preparation, Building Background, Comprehensible Input, Strategies, Interaction, Practice and Application, Lesson Delivery, and Review and Assessment. Supporting literature described that the eight components in SIOP were research-based instructional best practices that increase the academic achievement of ELLs (Abraham, 2007; Beck et al., 2013; Chappuis et al., 2012; Francis et al., 2006; Gersten et al., 2007; Hill & Flynn, 2006; Holzman, 2004; Hyerle & Yeager, 2007; Linan-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007; Macedonia & Knosche, 2011; Marzano, 2004; McKenzie, 2011; Rea & Mercuri, 2006; Schleppegrell et al., 2004; Shein, 2012; Silverman & Hines, 2009; van Lier, 2004; Walqui, 2006; Zheng et al., 2009). SIOP was founded upon the CREDE

Model, which was derived to address the needs of students in all grades, backgrounds, cognitive capabilities, and languages (University of Hawaii, 2010-2013). The CREDE Model had five standards including Joint Productive Activity, Language Development, Contextualization, Challenging Activities, and Instructional Conversation.

While schools address the academic needs of ELLs, schools must also choose the instructional models that best support the needs of the varying levels of ELLs. Moughamian et al. (2009) identified two models, which were the English-only model and the Bilingual model. Secondary models associated with the English-only model included Structured English Immersion and Sheltered Instruction. There were also two secondary models associated with the bilingual models, which were Dual Language Programs and Transitional Programs. Mamantov (2013) discussed two other instructional models that have been effective with educational success of students with diverse backgrounds, family histories, and cognitive abilities, which were the push-in model and the pullout Model. The literature presented the benefits and negative concerns of each model.

Finally, in order for educators to fully understand the history of ELL, the research-based best practices, and the instructional models for varying levels of ELLs, professional development must be implemented. The literature described the varying processes for professional development and the purposes for those processes (Mizell, 2010). Whichever process is implemented, schools must continue to provide professional development to teachers because teachers do not fully attain all of the knowledge needed to meet the varying needs of students within college (Sox, 2011).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to determine research-based best practices and models of instruction that would increase the academic achievement and growth of the English Language Learner (ELL) population and decrease the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL students. Research-based best practices that increased academic achievement and growth of ELL students were determined through analyzing available national, regional, and local research.

The secondary purpose of this study was to compare the best practices identified in the primary purpose with ELL practices that were in place in SSD. This would allow SSD to compare the best practices and models being utilized within SSD to other best practices and models having the most academic success and growth with the ELL population.

Research Questions

The research team developed five questions related to this study:

1. What research-based best practices reduced the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL students in grades K-8?
2. What models of instruction and best practices were most effective for the varying levels of ELL students, including newcomers, active participants, transition one (T1), and transition two (T2) students in SSD and in surrounding school districts?
3. In SSD, did teacher perceptions of best practices align with implemented instructional practices with ELLs?

4. Which of the surrounding school districts were having significant academic growth with the ELL population?
5. What were the best practices being implemented in the school districts in the surrounding districts to attain significant academic growth with the ELL population?

Null Hypothesis

$H_0^{1:}$ There is no statistically significant difference in the growth of ELLs in SSD and surrounding districts.

Research Design

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach. Descriptive ex post facto quantitative methods allowed researchers to gather data and run analyses to test the null hypothesis of this study. A qualitative case study was used to triangulate SSD teacher perceptions, teacher lesson plans, and the SSD ELL director perceptions. An additional case study component was conducted in order to determine best practices implemented in thirteen surrounding counties that had significant gains in ELL student growth and achievement. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) stated that there was a "growing consensus among researchers that qualitative and quantitative research can complement each other" (p. 32). A review of quantitative and qualitative studies about the same phenomenon can "provide richer insights and raise more interesting questions for future research than if only one set of studies is considered" (p. 32).

Data were collected from the 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 school years. These years of data were identified as using the same standards because the state's curricular standards changed in the 2010-2011 school year. In order to compare data

from assessments measuring the same standards, data were not collected prior to the 2010-2011 school year.

The researchers employed quantitative methods by using the Tennessee State Report Card from 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 school years to identify the percentage of ELLs in SSD and surrounding school districts. The Tennessee Report Cards from 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 school years were used to identify the percentage of ELLs who were proficient or advanced in math and reading and language arts on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) in SSD and surrounding school districts. The data of the surrounding school districts, including the percentage of ELLs and TCAP scores of proficient and advanced students on the math and reading/language arts with the ELL subgroups, were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software system. The researchers conducted a statistical analysis by running a paired sample *t*-test for each school year and each subject. The critical *t*-value for reading/language arts was 1.62. The critical *t*-value for math was 2.32 (Witte & Witte, 1997). The *t*-value of the districts that were beyond the critical *t* at the .05 level in either math or reading/language arts showed the counties who had statistically significant increase in achievement.

The analysis of these data allowed the researchers to identify the school districts that made significant growth in achievement on the TCAP assessments in math and/or reading and language arts. The school districts that showed significant growth in the ELL subgroup were further analyzed to identify the best practices that were implemented to obtain such growth through qualitative methods. The ELL Directors of the school districts that showed significant growth were asked to complete a questionnaire that

focused on identifying the best practices being implemented within the districts, the professional development that had occurred in the districts in regards to teaching ELLs, and the instructional models that were used with the varying ELL levels (Appendix E).

In SSD, further data were analyzed from the district to examine the association of high academic achievement and growth by ELLs, with the best practices of the ELL teachers. The data collected included TCAP, The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR), and English Language Development Assessment (ELDA).

TCAP, a norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, was used throughout Tennessee and mandated by Tennessee's state legislature with the 1992 Education Improvement Act (Tennessee Department of Education, 2006b). This was an assessment given in Tennessee schools to measure students' skills and progress. TCAP, a timed, multiple-choice assessment, measured skills in Reading and Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and Math. Tennessee is an English-only state, and therefore TCAP is not offered in languages other than English (Tennessee Department of Education, 2014).

DIBELS assesses the acquisition of early literacy skills for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. DIBELS is comprised of seven measures to assess phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. DIBELS has been validated through many studies implemented by organizations such as the Institute for Research and Learning Disabilities at the University of Minnesota and at the University of Oregon (Dynamic Measurement Group, n.d.).

STAR includes assessments to determine levels of proficiency for early literacy, math, and reading (The National Center on Student Progress Monitoring, n.d.). They analyzed the STAR assessments to determine the reliability and validity of the assessments as a tool for progress monitoring. The National Center on Student Progress Monitoring analyzed the assessments in five categories, which were reliability of performance level score, reliability of the slope, validity of the performance level score, predictive validity of the slope of improvement, and disaggregated reliability and validity data. STAR was shown to have "convincing evidence" with the STAR assessment in early literacy, math and reading in all categories (National Center on Student Progress Monitoring, n.d.).

Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), states were required to assess the proficiency of all ELLs. According to Title III under NCLB, states were to measure the annual growth of an ELL's English development in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. ELDA is an untimed assessment given in K-12. ELDA is scored on a scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest proficiency and 5 being the highest). Students who had a composite score of 4 or 5 became a Transitional student (T1). No accommodations were allowed because it tests proficiency (Tennessee Department of Education, 2007).

This study employed qualitative methods to describe the perceptions of educators working closely with ELLs in SSD regarding the best practices that they believed had the most positive impact on ELLs' academic achievement and growth. The 13 ELL teachers in SSD from grades K-8 were asked to complete a questionnaire (Appendix D). The questionnaire included ranking research-based best practices identified through literature

in order from the most effective to the least effective for the success of ELLs. The questionnaire also identified the professional development offered by the district that had benefited the teachers and was believed to increase achievement and growth of ELLs, the professional development the teachers believed was needed, and the instructional models that were used with the varying ELL levels.

Lesson plans from August 2013 to November 2013 were requested from the 13 ELL teachers and analyzed for emergent themes of best practices that were being implemented with ELLs in the teachers' classrooms. The results from the questionnaire were compared to the themes from the lesson plans to compare the perceptions of the teachers in regards to best practices to the reality of the implementation of best practices within the ELL teachers' classes.

The ELL Director of SSD was interviewed in order to gain insight into best practices that were implemented, the professional development that had occurred with the 13 ELL teachers, and the instructional models that were used with the varying ELL levels from the perspective of the district (Appendix F). The researchers requested that the answers to the questions focus on the events that occurred during the 2010-2013 school years in order to correlate with the testing data that were collected. The Curriculum and Professional Development Specialist for SSD provided the professional development transcripts of the 13 ELL teachers from 2010-2013.

The researchers designed this study in a manner that allowed for triangulation. Gall et al. (2007) indicated that triangulation enhanced the validity of research studies. By varying the methods of collecting data, the researchers were able to generate findings and determine if the findings were corroborated across the varying methods. The

methods of triangulation were giving questionnaires to the ELL teachers of SSD for the perceptions of best practices for ELLs, collecting the lesson plans for evidence of best practice implementation in the SSD's ELL teachers' classrooms, and the comparison of those findings to the data of the ELLs in SSD. The data from SSD were also compared to the data of districts in Middle Tennessee that showed statistically significant growth with ELLs on TCAP in math and/or reading language arts.

Participants

The population of this study included the 13 ELL teachers of the eight schools in SSD, ELL Directors of school districts surrounding SSD, and the ELL Director of SSD. According to the 2012 Report Card, SSD served 3,601 students in grades K-8 with 443 students receiving ELL services. The demographics of the population served included 61.1% White students, 21.2% Hispanic students, 13.3% African-American students, 4.2% Asian/Pacific Islander students, and 3% Native American students. The ratio of male and female students was almost equal with 51% and 49% respectively. SSD's population included 13.7% of Students with Disabilities, 41.5% of students who were Economically Disadvantaged, and 11.8% of students in the ELL subgroup. There were no students exempt from the 2012 reading assessment, which meant that all of the ELL students resided in America for more than 365 days (Tennessee Department of Education, n.d.).

The researchers sought to have a purposive sampling in order to provide the most data of the best practices that influenced the positive success and growth of ELLs. However, due to the small size of SSD, with only eight schools and 13 ELL teachers, the researchers chose to study all 13 teachers instead of a sample. SSD is a

unique district due to the small population that it serves and the limited number of schools within the district. Out of the 13 ELL teachers, six participated in the study. Five of the participants identified themselves as white females. One teacher had a year and a half of experience with teaching ELL, one teacher had three years of experience, one teacher had four years of experience, one teacher had five years of experience, and one teacher had 20-25 years of experience. Concerning total years of experience with teaching, the years ranged from three years of experience to over 30 years of experience. Two of the participants' highest degree was a bachelor's degree; three of the participants' highest degree was a master's degree. Only two participants disclosed the college majors obtained, which were interdisciplinary studies, education and psychology. One participant did not provide any demographic information on the questionnaire.

The participants also included the ELL Directors of school districts surrounding SSD that were showing significant growth on TCAP with the ELL population and the ELL Director of SSD.

There were 13 surrounding counties identified through statistical analysis that had exceeded the average growth in math and/or language arts/reading. The researchers requested information to identify the best practices that the directors of those counties believed were important by emailing a questionnaire with four questions to the directors of the ELL programs in those counties and requesting demographic information regarding each director. The researchers received six responses. To maintain the confidentiality of the directors and counties, each of the responses were identified with the pseudonyms of Director One, Two, Three, Four, Five, and Six.

Director One, female, White, had 34 years of teaching experience with twelve years as an ELL teacher. The highest level of degree is Ed.D. and the college majors were Leadership and Professional practices.

Director Two, male and a Pacific Islander, had 12 years of teaching experience with 11 years as an ELL teacher. Director Two's highest level of degree attained is a master's degree, and the college majors attained were Spanish, English and ESL.

Director Three, female, White, had 22 years as a teacher and no years teaching ELLs. The highest level of degree is Ed. S and no college majors were provided.

Director Four, female, White, had 19 years of teaching experience with 15 years teaching ELLs. Director Four's highest degree attained was an Ed.S. and the college majors attained were BS Early Childhood and Elementary, M.Ed. in ESL and Ed.S. in Administration.

Director Five, female, White, had 14 years of teaching experience with six teaching ELLs. Director Five's highest degree attained was an Ed.D. and college majors attained were Elementary Education K-8, Curriculum and Instruction and Instructional Leadership.

Director Six, female, Non-Hispanic White, had 43 years of teaching experience with 28 years teaching ELLs. Director Six' highest level of degree attained was an MA and college majors attained were a BA in Secondary Science and Elementary Education, and a Masters in Administration.

The ELL Director of SSD, White male, had zero years of experience teaching ELLs, but had served as a school administrator for 18 years and had been assigned Student Support Services, which meant he worked with ELL professional learning

communities for one year. He had a total of six years of experience as a high school teacher. The highest degree attained was M.Ed. plus 30 with a BA in History, with minors in Political Science and Business. During this study, the Director was working on attaining his Ed.D. K-12 in Administration and Supervision.

Data Collection Procedures

The researchers were granted approval to collect data and proceed with the study by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and by their dissertation committee. Additionally, approval was granted by the ELL Director of SSD to pursue data collection and data information from the teachers of SSD. The researchers focused their study on the surrounding counties of SSD. That included 13 counties within Middle Tennessee to study. The researchers analyzed the public data from the Tennessee State Report Cards from the 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 school years to identify the percentage of ELLs in SSD and Middle Tennessee school districts. The researchers analyzed the public data from the Tennessee State Report Cards from 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 school years to identify the percentage of ELLs who were proficient or advanced in math and reading and language arts on TCAP in SSD and Middle Tennessee school districts. The school districts that showed significant growth in the ELL subgroup were further analyzed by giving the ELL Directors of those school districts a questionnaire that focused on identifying the best practices being implemented within the district and the professional development that had occurred in the district in regards to teaching ELLs (Appendix E). The ELL Directors were sent the questionnaire by e-mail and a phone call was also made to request participation.

The researchers e-mailed the informed consent forms to the ELL Director of SSD who in turn asked the 13 ELL teachers to complete the form in an ELL district meeting (Appendix A). The research team received the informed consents from the ELL Director. The researchers e-mailed the questionnaire for the 13 ELL teachers to the ELL Director of SSD (Appendix D). The ELL Director gave the questionnaire to the 13 ELL teachers to complete during a district ELL meeting. The six teachers who participated in the study e-mailed the completed questionnaires back to the ELL Director, who in turn delivered the questionnaires to the research team. The ELL Director requested that the 13 ELL teachers deliver lesson plans from August 2013 to November 2013 to the ELL Director's office in a provided envelope or on a provided jump drive if the teachers preferred to copy the lesson plans electronically. The researchers obtained the lesson plans from the ELL Director of the six participating ELL teachers. The researchers contacted the data specialist in SSD who provided the researchers district data, which included TCAP, DIBELS, STAR, and ELDA. The ELL Director was interviewed to collect information about the professional development that ELL teachers had received, best practice implementation, and the models of instruction being used with the varying levels of ELLs (Appendix F). The Curriculum and Professional Development Specialist for SSD provided the professional development records of the 13 ELL teachers from 2010-2013.

At the client's request, all information was kept anonymous and was analyzed at a district level instead of a school level or individual teacher level.

Instrumentation

The researchers gave the 13 ELL teachers a questionnaire of four questions. The purpose of the questionnaire was to identify the best practices that participants believed

helped ELLs with academic achievement, the best models of instruction they believed helped the varying levels of ELLs, and the professional development that influenced ELLs to achieve positive academic growth. Fifteen research-based best practices found from literature were listed in alphabetic order to reduce any leading of the participants. Participants were asked to rank the best practices from most important to least important (One being the most important to 15 being the least important) (Appendix D). The questionnaire also focused on identifying the professional development activities that teachers had received that they believed benefited the teachers in teaching ELLs, the professional development they believed was still needed, and were then asked to justify responses. The questionnaire listed the varying proficiency levels of ELLs and asked participants to choose the model of instruction that they believed helped that level of ELLs the best. A list of instructional models was provided and participants could also choose others if the model of instruction they believed best helped that level of ELL was not listed. All responses required justification.

The researchers gave a questionnaire to the ELL Directors of the school districts that showed significant growth of the ELL population on TCAP, that listed research-based best practices found in literature and asked the participants to rank the best practices from most important to least important (One being the most important to 15 being the least important) (Appendix E). The best practices were listed alphabetically to reduce any leading of the participants. The questionnaire also focused on identifying the professional development activities that the district had provided teachers that the director believed benefited the teachers in teaching ELLs and asked them to justify responses. The questionnaire listed the varying levels of ELLs and asked participants to

choose the model of instruction that they believed helped each level of ELLs the best. A list of instructional models was provided and participants could also choose others if the model of instruction they believed best helped that level of ELL was not listed. All responses required justification.

The ELL Director of SSD was interviewed with questions that were created based on literature (Appendix F). The focus of the questions was the best practices that were occurring within the SSD schools by ELL teachers, the professional development given within the district to help grow the achievement of ELLs, and the instructional models being used with the varying levels of ELLs.

The instruments were piloted by an ELL Director, an ELL academic coach, and five ELL teachers.

Pilot testing. The instruments used in this research study were created by the research team based on the previous research covered in the literature review. Three instruments were created, which were the questionnaire for ELL teachers, the questionnaire for ELL Directors, and the interview questions for the ELL Director of SSD (Appendices D, E, and F). The instruments were piloted by an ELL Director, an ELL Academic Coach, and five ELL teachers from the same Middle Tennessee school district that had a population that included 14.7% ELLs. The district that piloted the instruments was a Middle Tennessee district other than SSD.

The pilot participants included six females and one male. The participants included six White adults and one adult who self-identified as Caucasian/Asian pacific. The years of experience in education of the pilot group ranged: one participant had two years of experience, one participant had 10 years of experience, one participant had 17

years of experience, and four participants had more than 25 years of experience. The participants' years of teaching ELL included two participants who taught ELL less than ten years, three participants who taught ELL between 10-15 years, and two participants who taught ELL more than 15 years. In terms of highest degree, one participant received a bachelor's degree, two received a master's +30 Degree, four received a master's degree, and one received an Ed.S. The majors included: ESL; Family and Consumer Economics, elementary education, and ELL; Spanish and History, Curriculum and Instruction with concentration in NELBs; Curriculum and Instruction and ELL; English Education; ESL endorsement; Interdisciplinary Studies, elementary education, ESL, and instructional leadership; the ELL Director did not include the majors in the demographics of the pilot study questionnaire.

The instruments were e-mailed to one of the Middle Tennessee school district's ELL Directors with an explanation of the purpose of the study and request of participation to pilot the research instruments. The ELL Director contacted one of the researchers by telephone to offer feedback on the instruments. The ELL Director said that the instruments did not need to be changed and that the instruments would gather sufficient information for the purpose of this study. The ELL Director further stated that the best practices identified in the ELL teacher questionnaire were the best practices that the ELL Director would have recommended for use.

An ELL Academic Coach of a Middle Tennessee school district was contacted by phone by one of the researchers. The purpose of the study and the request of participation with the piloting of the instruments were discussed. Once the coach agreed to pilot the instruments, the instruments were e-mailed to the ELL Academic Coach. The

ELL Academic Coach responded with feedback to one of the researchers by e-mail. The ELL Academic Coach indicated that the instruments would gather the information needed in order to achieve the purpose of this study.

The researchers sent an e-mail to 10 ELL teachers in a Middle Tennessee school district that explained the purpose of the study and requested the participation of the teacher with piloting the instruments. Six teachers responded. One teacher declined participation with piloting the instruments. There were five teachers who provided feedback for the instruments. The responses about the ELL teacher questionnaire from the participants who piloted allowed the researchers to determine that the questions were thorough and provided detailed information that would help the researchers answer the research questions of this study. There were no suggestions offered by the five teachers who piloted the instruments, except one participant who indicated that she could not rank the best practices in order from 1-15 because all of them were important.

Variables

Tests of comparison were run to compare a school's TCAP score from the year 2010-2011 through 2012-2013. The dependent variables were the TCAP scores of the number of ELLs who were proficient or advanced in math and/or reading and language arts.

Analysis of Data

The TCAP data were collected from the Tennessee Report Cards from SSD and Middle Tennessee school districts to identify the percentage of proficient or advanced ELLs in math and reading language arts. The collected data were entered into a data software program called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Tests of

comparison were run through dependent *t*-tests to analyze if significant statistical growth occurred from 2011-2013 for the ELL population. The questionnaire responses from the ELL Directors of the school districts who had significant statistical growth were analyzed and coded for emergent themes. The questionnaire responses from the participating ELL teachers were analyzed and coded for emergent themes. The ELL Teachers from SSD and directors from the surrounding counties returned questionnaires responding to four questions. Each question was coded in order to identify the responses that continually emerged to determine the major themes.

In Question 1, the researchers identified 15 best practices through the literature. The teachers and directors were asked to rank these from most to least important (1-15). The researchers analyzed the results to determine which emerged as the top five best practices by adding together the scores for each best practice. The best practices that received the lowest scores were determined to be the top best practices.

Question 2 offered an opportunity for the ELL teachers and directors to provide additional best practices other than those included in question 1. The data that was provided was analyzed to identify any commonalities between the responses.

Question 3 asked the ELL teachers and the directors to identify the most appropriate instructional model with varying ELL levels. The levels were newcomer, active, Transitional 1 and Transitional 2 which were identified from literature. The instructional models were structured English immersion, sheltered instruction, bilingual, push-in, and pull-out. Additionally, the participants were able to describe other instructional models. The data that was provided was analyzed to identify any commonalities between the responses.

Question 4 was asked differently for the ELL teachers and directors. The ELL teachers were asked to identify what professional development they had received and what professional development they believed was needed. For the directors, Question 4 asked what professional development had been provided and why they believed these professional developments were useful. The data that was provided was analyzed to identify any commonalities between the responses.

Once teacher responses from the questionnaire were examined and themes of best practices were determined, lesson plans of the ELL teachers were also analyzed. Each lesson plan was examined to identify evidence of the prevalent 15 research-based best practices identified through literature. The themes from the teachers' questionnaires and the evidence from the teachers' lesson plans were compared to determine if the best practices that teachers stated were most important were being implemented.

The interview responses from the ELL Director of SSD were analyzed and compared to the ELL teachers' responses to the questionnaire to identify the comparisons, contrasts, professional development needs, and recommendations.

Disposition of the Data

Any information obtained in connection with this research study that could have identified any participant was kept confidential. In any written reports or publications, no one was identified or identifiable and only group data were presented. The research data provided by the ELL Directors, ELL teachers, and Data Specialist with SSD remained in a locked file cabinet and in a password protected electronic data storage system. The researchers will destroy all data in July 2016.

Chapter 4: Findings

Organization of Findings

The findings from the teachers of SSD and the Director of SSD are presented first, followed by the findings from the ELL Directors of surrounding counties. The sections detailed the findings regarding research-based best practices, instructional models for varying levels of ELLs, and professional development. Finally, the testing data analyses within SSD are described.

Research-Based Best Practices SSD

Top five ranked best practices identified by SSD teachers.

Activating prior knowledge and building background knowledge. The top best practice as identified by the teachers of SSD was activating prior knowledge and building background knowledge. All six teachers ranked this practice within their top three choices. Teachers said that this practice is important because it builds on what is already known. They further indicated that it sets the foundation in language and writing. Teacher B stated, "It is important for students to connect to what they already know and be able to build on that, especially with a language barrier."

There were 42 lesson plans analyzed and activating prior knowledge was included in 34 plans. Evidence was identified in these plans where teachers directly or indirectly referred to this practice.

Comprehensible input--students learning English through listening and reading/teacher using appropriate techniques to make concepts clear. The second best practice identified by teachers of SSD was comprehensible input-students learning English through listening and reading/teachers using appropriate techniques to make

concepts clear. Four of the six teachers ranked this practice in their top five practices. The remaining two teachers ranked it within their top ten. Explanations for this practice included the connections to student learning styles, the importance for the beginning English learner, and the need for this practice in the daily learning process.

Within their lesson plans, teachers referenced comprehensible input, students learning English through listening and reading, and teachers using appropriate techniques to make concepts clear. There were many ways this practice was referenced. These included learning targets, whole group, activities, and reading.

Academic vocabulary. The third top practice identified by the teachers of SSD was teaching academic vocabulary. All teachers related this choice in their top six with the exception of teacher F who was an outlier and ranked it 13th. Teacher F did not offer any explanation for this choice; however, other teachers stated the importance of student understanding of text and context clues. They further agreed that academic vocabulary was necessary in order for students to become successful when taking tests and understanding expectations.

Out of 42 lesson plans, 40 explicitly addressed teaching academic vocabulary. This practice was referenced using learning targets, writing, modeling, whole group, and other activities.

Explicit instruction. The fourth ranked best practice identified by the teachers of SSD was explicit instruction. All teachers placed this practice within their top ten choices. Teachers cited the need for clear, direct, and focused instruction as an essential requirement for ELL students.

Eighteen lesson plans referenced explicit instruction. All references to this indicator were examples where teachers were instructing the whole group.

Differentiated instruction. The final best practice identified in the SSD top five by teachers was differentiated instruction. For this practice, four of the six respondents ranked differentiated instruction in their top five. However, Teacher B ranked it 12th and Teacher C ranked it 11th. Teachers' explanations accompanying this choice were the need for teachers to know the abilities and needs of students. Additionally, teachers stated that this method allows teachers to meet students where they are and the possibility of meeting the needs of all learners. Teacher C, who ranked this practice 11th, stated, "The only con is the work and coordination it requires." There were 21 lesson plans that identified the practice of differentiated instruction either directly or indirectly.

Teachers were also provided with an opportunity to include additional practices. Two teachers mentioned the used of graphic organizers as a useful best practice.

Best practices implemented in SSD from SSD's ELL Director's perspective. In regards to best practices, the ELL Director of SSD was asked: What are the best practices that the teachers in your district implement? The Director of SSD stated, "These best instructional practices for ELL students are best practices for all students, including special education students so I do believe that quality teaching is quality teaching and students of all backgrounds will respond to that quality teaching." The Director stated that "ELL teachers implement modeling, guided practice, building background knowledge or activating prior knowledge, the use of positive peer role models, thematic instruction, cooperative instruction, vocabulary development, the use of technology within the classroom, and nonlinguistic representations." In regard to

nonlinguistic representations, the Director said, "I think that is really important; obviously if you have a student that's in English, it is all about English language acquisition for them and in some cases the nonlinguistic representations are going to be important for that child."

The Director detailed that " …I believe something moving forward that is going to be important" was "focusing instruction on the area of ELA deficit" and "focusing on specific deficits." Other best practices were "fiction and nonfiction writing, writing across the curriculum, writing in ELL," in which the Director said, "which is so important." The Director stated, "Core content instructional support, common core, WIDA standards, and identifying similarities and differences," which "is very important to our English Language Learners." The Director said that, "I've watched a lot of the teachers being fluent in Spanish and was answering a lot of questions and vocabulary by stating what was being discussed in English and then what that meant in Spanish, which was vocabulary development using both languages. "It would be great to get to dual language immersion but we're certainly not there."

The ELL Director of SSD was also asked: What best practices do you believe ELL teachers should be using with ELL students to have positive academic achievement and growth with ELLs? The director of SSD listed the practices that ELL teachers should be using, which included "cooperative instruction, focusing instruction on the area of deficit, fiction and nonfiction writing, core content instructional supports, and effective implementation of instructional technology that's going to engage students at higher and higher levels." The issue with using technology was that it requires funding. The director stated that schools were raising money for technology, "but it has to impact the

ELL teacher's life also." Building background knowledge was also added. "Something that will always be a sound instructional practice is modeling and guided practice, and the use of those positive peer role models."

The director of SSD said the interest in what this research identifies is to add instructional practices to this list. "It's just an excited time for me to be working in the area of ELL. I feel like the state is giving us strong support and will continue to give us strong support. We are going to need that strong support, especially with the adoption on WIDA standards, but I think they did their homework when they have the connection of the WIDA standards and the common core." The director also said that, "We will be dependent on the state to provide that training, that professional learning, but we will go about our business of providing quality, professional learning and learning from those around us and learning from institutions of higher learning." "This collaboration right here is nothing but welcomed and can only improve outcomes and instruction for ELLs."

"The readiness levels of low SES and English Language Learners is if we want to talk about a gap, we need to start looking at it at age 3, 4, and 5 if not all the way back to birth." The Director also stated, "Those school readiness levels are so out of proportion when we start talking about low socioeconomic families and English language learners." "There's got to be a lot of partnerships going on. That of course involves a lot of public policy also and where we're going to spend our money."

The researchers found that teacher lesson plans supported teacher perceptions of best practices of ELL students in all five best practices. Lesson plans confirmed that teachers are practicing what they identified as important for ELL student growth. They believed that activating prior knowledge was the most important best practice for

improving ELL student performance and the ELL director identified this practice as an important factor for ELL students.

ELL Levels and Instructional Models SSD

SSD teachers were asked to indicate which instructional model works best for the varying ELL levels and to explain. The ELL levels are Newcomer, Active, Transition 1 (T1) and Transition 2 (T2). The responses given were listed by instructional model and then by the most frequently selected. The models used for each level were structured English immersion, bilingual, push-in, pullout, and other.

Newcomer. The model identified by the majority of responding teachers as the most effective for newcomer students was pullout. Teachers indicated that this was important because it provides a safe class setting for ELL students to take risks. Further, it is essential for helping students with basic vocabulary. Finally, it provides opportunities for one-on-one instruction and interaction between the student and teacher.

Active. The most effective model for active ELL students as acknowledged by respondents in SSD was also the pullout model. Teachers stated that pullout works best for teaching reading and writing skills. It is also beneficial for students in all grade levels. This model can be very effective when there is collaboration between the ELL teacher and the classroom teacher. Finally, teachers identified this model as vital for success in testing.

Transition 1 (T1). The model identified by teachers of SSD to be most effective for T1 students was the push-in model. Teachers indicated that this model may be best when used with limited modifications in a general education setting. Additionally, they

believed that this model is best for challenging students. Another reason for the push-in with T1 students was the need for students to remain in the classroom during this stage.

Transition 2 (T2). For the T2 level, teachers of SSD identified Structured English Immersion as the best model to incorporate with students. Teacher rationale regarding this choice was that T1 ELL students should be mainstreamed, but monitored and supported during this process. Additionally, one teacher believed that this was a best practice for challenging students. The final reason given for this model was that students could work independently but still need to be monitored.

The ELL Director of SSD was asked questions to determine the levels of ELLs within the district, the models of instruction that were used for the levels within the district, and the process for determining which model is used for the varying levels.

The Director of SSD described the varying levels of ELL students in the district. The director listed the students receiving direct services, which were Ls, T1s, T2s, and Ns, and Ws. Ls are students receiving direct services; T1s are students who are in the first year of transition out of receiving ELL services; T2s are students who are in the second year of transition out of receiving ELL services; Ns are students who are non-English speaking background ELLs. Ws are those who waive services, and SSD "does not have many of those." ELL students can transition beyond T2; students would then be considered former ELL students. Some ELLs receive an hour of services per day, some 30 minutes per day, and some receive consultation. The scores qualify ELLs for which service they receive based on their ELDA scores. "The greatest number is in K, first, and second grade and then students begin to transition in 3rd and 4th and then you are serving fewer in middle school."

The director of SSD was asked to describe the different models of instruction that are implemented with ELL students in the district. The director stated that one model of instruction implemented with ELLs in SSD is inclusion. The director gave the example of a 4th, 5th, or 6th grade student receiving support in their core classes from an ELL teacher or paraprofessional. "As the students get older, they cannot be taken and should not be taken out of their core classes so we have to find ways to creatively support them in the gen ed. setting." The director continued to explain that "the really young students, kindergarten students, first grade students that need an hour of service, so that's basically five hours a week" usually have a split between pullout and inclusion. The director discussed future models of implementation due to the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) model by claiming, "Under that Tier 1 instruction, it doesn't matter if you're non-ELL or an ELL student, you should be receiving your Tier 1 instruction in that gen ed setting with your classroom teacher, and basically what that tells me is that you're not pulling students during that Tier 1 time." The director stated that during Tier 1, push-in may occur, but there is definitely no pulling out for the Tier 1 math and language arts instruction. "It is going to lead to some creative scheduling" due to limiting the amount of time that students can be pulled. In regards to those ELLs who need the extensive services, the director said that, "We will be creative in the way that we serve them for pullout and inclusion."

Finally, the director of SSD was asked to describe how the varying levels of ELL students are placed into the different models of instruction. The director confirmed that this is a current topic that principals are discussing with the district. The principals "want to have further conversations with us, the district administrators, with regard to clustering

students and the composition of the class." The director gave the example of a third grade class. He concurred that the class will not be 100% ELL, but that the class might be 50% ELL. The director stated that the general educator needed to know that he or she will be supported by the ELL teacher and/or the paraprofessionals. Due to the lack of personnel, the director said that, "Clustering students together is really the only way you can do it to adequately serve them because the personnel just is not there." He commented that this is current practice, but that it has to be refined. The director confirmed that within the district, the academic support team, ELL teachers, instructional coaches, school psychologists, counselors, and assistant principals help to decide the levels of support that ELLs need and make informed decisions about placement. The director commented that it has become a team decision, but that the final decision is the responsibility of the principal. Due to the fact that decisions have to be made to place ELL, non-ELL, and special education students, the director stated that, "Those groupings are very important."

In comparing the responses of the teacher questionnaires with the director of ELL in the SSD district, there are themes identified regarding the models of instruction for different levels of ELLs. The teachers commonly identified the pullout model for newcomer and active students and push-in and mainstreaming with support or structured English immersion for the more advanced ELLs students. The Director's responses echoed the teacher responses. The newcomer and active students received pullout and inclusion at the lower levels and push-in and mainstreaming with support for the more advanced ELLs students.

Professional Development SSD

The research team asked teachers of SSD to provide professional development (PD) opportunities in which they had been involved. Teachers responded with eight different professional development engagements. Textbook review offered an opportunity for teachers to view alternate resources for special learners. Vocabulary lessons gave teachers an opportunity to learn how to explicitly teach academic vocabulary. There was also PD on building literacy that communicated methods that could improve the use of word walls and the teaching of transitional words. In reference to the building literacy PD, Teacher C commented, "I was able to rethink my use of word walls to make them more interactive." There was also a book study entitled, Wonders Reading Series. Teacher C stated, "This book really looked at asking questions and giving different strategies for doing that. It was very insightful and helped me to refocus on my questioning approaches."

There were four PD opportunities in the form of meetings or conferences. Dr. Virginia Rojas, independent consultant, discussed ELL strategies to use in class and teachers gained insights to ELL practices. Additionally, there was a meeting with Jan Lanier, the State of Tennessee ELL Coordinator, who discussed methods that can be implemented to support the growing EL population. Teacher F said in reference to Ms. Lanier that she "provided us with basic information on best practices and ways we can be most supportive to our EL population." Furthermore, there were ELL PLC meetings that highlighted the importance of meaningful conversations among ELL teachers. To this teacher F said, "I have gained a wealth of knowledge by simply engaging in meaningful

conversations with the team of EL teachers." Finally, there was the TNTESOL conference, which provided insight on how EL students feel in the school setting.

The researchers also analyzed the professional development records of the 13 ELL teachers of SSD from 2010-2013 to determine trends of commonly attended trainings. The records were provided by the district of SSD. The records were analyzed to determine if teachers were SIOP trained. The research team found that of the professional development offerings attended by SSD teachers, 13 were common to two or more teachers. Of those 13, eight were specific to ELL teaching and learning. Of the eight professional development offerings: systematic support for ELL success was attended by 11 teachers, state CCSS ELA reading was attended by two teachers, the TESOL conference was attended by two teachers, reaching ELL students through content standards was attended by four teachers, SETESOL conference was attended by three teachers, and supporting ELL students in the regular classroom was attended by two teachers. After carefully analyzing the professional development transcripts of the 13 SSD teachers, there was no evidence that SIOP training was completed via professional development opportunities.

The ELL Director of SSD was asked a question in regard to professional development: Please identify the professional development (PD) offered to ELL teachers 2010-2013. How were these PD opportunities selected and why? The ELL Director of SSD specified , "I guess I should begin by saying just this past July, July 2013, is when I moved into this position, but I had previously been a principal in the district so I have previous background as to what types of professional development offerings we were making." "I think probably most significant is the common core training that our ELL

teachers have been able to participate in right along with the general ed teacher; I think that's huge." SSD has found best practices from neighboring districts "with administrators in schools that have shown great gains in their value added scores with their ELL subgroup." An elementary principal in a neighboring elementary school came the 2013-2104 school year and spoke about "five intentional strategies," which were intentional master schedule, extended school day, push-in support for key grades, focused collaboration, and targeted ELL transitional students, but personnel dedicated to ELL in that district "was quite impressive." The push-in support for key grades was focused on evaluating the numbers in grades and deciding where to use personnel. In regard to focused collaboration, what "I think we are really building on, which I feel is a strength, is our ELL teachers serving on grade level PLCs." In terms of transitional students, "I know that our principals are going to look really closely at targeting those transitional students" by "defining resources," in the district, especially human resources.

The director stated that, "A major focus in our district has been differentiated instruction." The ELL teachers of SSD attended Tennessee Teachers to Speakers of Other Languages (TNTESOL) conference, which is the state conference. The teachers attended sessions on SIOP from a neighboring district. "That is not a major push in regards to professional development, but I found it very interesting and so did our teachers." Another focus at the conferences was RtII and how it will impact ELL. "That is still unfolding, but it will help shape what our ELL offerings and ELL instruction will look like in our schools based on the RtII model."

The Director of SSD agreed that professional developments were selected "based on individual, school, and district needs assessments." "For instance, at the individual

level it could be tied to that teacher's TEAM evaluations and that could be as specific to the instruction as questioning, what they need the most assistance on." The director stated that, "It is individually driven, but there is more emphasis on the school and district needs assessment. In other words, where are our students functioning with regards to the achievement and what best practices are going to come in and our teachers are going to be able to carry out with success."

The ELL Director of SSD was also asked: How is the implementation of the PDs monitored? The Director of SSD responded, "It is monitored by school and district administrators through the team evaluation model, so really formal and informal observations, walkthroughs, follow-up discussions and studies in our ELL professional learning community; that is very nonthreatening."

Because of the "newness in this position," he spoke to the future and professional growth that was occurring on the ELL team. The ELL teachers "are very supportive of each other and work really well on other teams and I think that will really lead to significant growth of our students, because they will jump in there" and be a part of the team and a department.

The research team was informed that the ELL Director of SSD led monthly meetings with the ELL teachers. The research team included the following question to determine if professional development was given during those meetings: Please explain the activities that occur during your district ELL meetings. The ELL Director of SSD confirmed that the ELL teachers and the Director meet monthly. ELL teachers can send agenda items that they want to discuss at the meetings. "They have a lot of input as to what that meeting will look like because that definitely is something that I don't want to

dictate." The director may have something specific to focus on, however, such as "something from the state level or a resource. I want it to be an agenda that is created by the members of that team; I think that is very important. I value their professionalism and level of expertise and so I am looking for them to contribute to that agenda." It is not "heavy top down; it is very much a collaborative approach." Topics are chosen based on "what is coming up," "what is happening that month," or "it would also be connected with what is going on in their schools," such as ELDA testing. "To sum that up, really, getting that feedback and input from that team is critically important for it to be successful and for it to be what they need it to be."

Finally, the director of SSD was asked: What professional development do you believe is needed to support the ELL teachers in your district? Explain why. The director agreed that more common core training and WIDA training are needed due to the adoption of the new WIDA standards. The state board of education adopted the WIDA standards, which stands for World Class Instructional Design and Assessment. The director said that the training was about to occur at the state level. "The WIDA standards are content based and are closely aligned with the common core, which is why the state adopted the WIDA standards because of their tight content connection." The director stated that ELL and non-ELL teachers needed to be trained in common core state standards and in the WIDA standards. The ELL teachers will get trained first in WIDA, but general educators would need to be supported in knowing those as well. The director identified that those two areas were immediate professional development needs.

Professional development requested. Teachers provided the following as opportunities for professional development that they would like to receive and the

rationale for it. Co-teaching for ELL and elementary teachers would be beneficial in improving the co-teaching model on the elementary level. Teacher F advised, "Research shows that push-in is a more effective model, with the exception of newcomers with very limited English, when a combination of push-in and pull out is needed. When EL teachers push-in, it is beneficial for all students." Teacher B suggested co-teaching for ELL and elementary teachers. The rationale for this topic was: "This is the direction the district will be going in the next few years. Limiting times that support teachers can pull students out of their main classroom." Teacher B further recognized that there is an abundance of training for middle and high school levels, but not for the elementary level.

Technology training would better assist teachers for implementation of practices in the classroom. Teacher C noted, "ELL students that I serve are from families with limited access to computers and therefore need to learn it in school. Therefore it is important for me to be well trained and have use of technology in my classroom also." Another recommendation was writing with ELLs, which would separate advanced ELL students from native English speakers. Additionally, a Spanish/English Dual Immersion Program was suggested by teacher D. Teacher D suggested, "I would love to see the district start a dual immersion bilingual program. We have the time, research, personnel, and student population that could make it successful." Finally, there was a suggestion for Team Teaching ELLs in the classroom with regular education teachers. The intention behind this plan was to allow all regular education teachers to have a better understanding of ELL students and their needs.

The teachers' suggestions for requests for professional development included co-teaching, which was an area of professional development need also identified by the

Director of SSD who recognized a need for ELL and non-ELL teachers to receive training in CCSS. Four ELL teachers had attended professional development regarding reaching ELL students through content standards.

Research-Based Best Practices ELL Directors

Top five best practices according to ELL Directors in surrounding districts that were making statistically significant gains with their ELL population.

Activating prior knowledge and building background knowledge. This best practice was ranked as the most important. Director Three identified this as the most important best practice, Directors Four and Five as the second most important, and Directors One and Two as fifth most important.

Director One commented that this best practice was "extremely helpful in connecting the two languages." Director Three said that, "Without this, it is difficult to gain understanding at all." Director Four stated, "New learning must be related to existing knowledge," and Director Five stated, "…retention increases … new information is easier to access."

Differentiated instruction. Three out of five Directors, Two, Four and Five, ranked this as the number one best practice with Director Three ranking this as fourth and Director One ranking this tenth. Director Two said, "Essential," Director Four stated, "Comprehensible input is identified by differentiated instruction; it is based on students' instructional levels," and Director Five emphasized with, "ESPECIALLY for classroom instruction…multi-level ELLs for sure need differentiation." Director One commented, "This is a must for the classroom teacher but for the beginner it is almost impossible without academic vocabulary."

Scaffolding instruction. Director Four ranked this as the number one best practice. Directors Three and Five ranked this second and third and Directors One and Two ranked this eleventh and sixth. Director Four stated that, "Comprehensible input is identified by scaffolding instruction." Director Two stated that scaffolding instruction "was done effectively about half the time…often necessitates the use of separate materials…often means forcing inappropriate materials on students." Director Five said, "Much like differentiated instruction, it is important for all students, but crucial for ESL. Builds confidence."

Academic vocabulary. Director One ranked the best practice of teaching academic vocabulary as the number one best practice. Director Four ranked this as the fourth best practice with Directors Three, Five, and Two ranking this best practice as the fourth, fifth and sixth best practice respectively. As said previously, Director Six did not rank the best practices but made comments for this best practice, "more especially in upper grades." Director One acknowledged "Top of the list. Students must understand this to read and write." Director Four stated, "Key indicator of reading comprehension and academic achievement" and Director Five affirmed, "A child cannot answer a question if he/she does not understand what you are asking. Academic vocabulary is essential."

Continual review of vocabulary and content. Director One ranked continual review of vocabulary and content as second, Director Five ranked this as fourth, Directors Two and Four ranked this fifth and Director Three ranked this seventh. Director One stated, "Students must develop the academic vocabulary in order to score high on standardized tests. Social vocabulary must be learned independently." Director

Five added that, "Information should be reviewed on a regular basis," and Directors Two and Four declared that this was "important" and "Multiple exposure and practice with vocabulary and content cements the learning." Director Three made no comment for this best practice.

Other best practices. Question two of the survey to the county ELL directors asked for a list of other best practices that the Directors believed were important and why they were considered important. The following are the responses. All six respondents provided one or more best practices other than those from question one.

Director One listed writing as another best practice stating, "Students must incorporate writing in all lessons. A must for testing as well." Director Two listed five other best practices. They were persistence, patience, TEAM Rubric, SMART goals per school, and Common Benchmarks. There were no comments given for why persistence and patience were important but for the TEAM rubric, Director Two stated, "This genius document has all teachers pulling in the same direction." For the best practice of SMART Goals for the school, Director Two commented, "We have clearly defined targets to hit. Administrators can allow teachers educational freedom to get it done with as little interference as possible, while we monitor common benchmarks to see where we can best use our efforts." For Common Benchmarks, Director Two said, "We have to keep a close eye on student progress at a district level."

Director Three added the practices of PD for regular education teachers stating, "Our district has very few classroom teachers who are ESL certified. PD is essential to help support and guide their practices" and extended opportunities for Ls (tutoring, camp)

and stated, “This gives the L [learner] extra time and attention with the ESL teacher and also allows a more personal relationship with him/her.”

Director Four added the best practice of data analysis stating, “Constant monitoring of student progress.”

Director Five added the best practice of push-in stating, “If student scored a 3 on ELDA, our ESL teachers “push in” that class to support the students. We still practice pullout for those scoring a 1 or 2.”

Director Six added the best practice of use of technology stating, “Students ENJOY working with technology and it makes some of the more basic voc. development not so juvenile for older students. Easy to individualize, adjust, and monitor.”

In comparing the responses from SSD ELL teachers and those from the director of SSD and directors of the surrounding counties, themes of common practice emerge. Of the top five best practices, three out of the five were identified by both groups. Activating prior knowledge was the top choice for both groups. Academic vocabulary and differentiated instruction were also selected. A further theme emerged when the two groups were asked to identify other best practices when they identified the use of graphic organizers (SSD teachers) and the importance of writing as a best practice (directors from surrounding counties).

ELL Levels and Instructional Models ELL Directors

The ELL Directors were asked to indicate the instructional model that was best used with the varying ELL levels and to explain. The ELL levels are Newcomer, Active, Transition 1 (T1) and Transition 2 (T2). The responses given are listed by instructional

model and then by the most frequently selected. The models used for each level were: structured English immersion, bilingual, push-in, pullout and other.

Newcomer. The instructional model identified as working best for this level was pullout with all six directors selecting this. Other models selected were sheltered instruction, reading and newcomer center.

For the pullout model of instruction, Directors Three, Five and Six said "Newcomers need one-on-one and small group instruction as they learn the basics of English," and "Pullout services allow for a more student-specific approach. Newcomers will benefit and transition during this time," and "Pullout – Basic voc. [vocabulary] and lang. [language] structure needs; as well as social and cultural guidance."

Directors Two and Six identified other instructional models and acknowledged, "You have to have a small reading group. Reading is the key," and "Newcomer center IF numbers justify it – great if numbers were large enough. Even a class."

Director Six, for the instructional model of bilingual said, "Tennessee is an English-only state so I have never participated in a bilingual program. If a teacher is trained in this particular method and is truly bilingual it may be a strong method but most bilingual programs in other states seem to have trouble staffing with qualified teachers."

Active. There were two instructional models identified as best instructional models: push-in and pullout. Directors Four and Five identified push-in as the best instructional model for this level of ELL and stated, "Collaborative teaching is our push-in model," and "Depending on what the student scores on ELDA: 1 or 2 – Pull out, score 3 push-in with support." For the pullout model of instruction, Directors Four and Six

stated, “Pullout can target student’s language level,” and “rated this first out of three instructional models for beginning levels.”

For the sheltered instructional model, Directors Three, Four and Six stated, “Depending on the level of proficiency, push-in and pullout work nicely, often with a combination of these,” “Content instruction,” and “For more advanced if numbers can justify these classes.”

Director Three added structured English immersion as an instructional model for this level of ELL and stated, “At the high school level, sheltered instruction has shown results for us.”

Other models of instruction were consultation, collaborative teaching, and teaching through contents. Directors Two, Four and Six confirmed respectively, “Consultation – is a student is doing well, GREAT! If not, figure out the extent to which you must intervene. Focus on reading,” “Collaborative teaching,” and “Teaching ESL through contents intermediate or advanced.”

Transition one (T1). The push-in model of instruction was selected by Directors Three, Five and Six for the Transition I level of ELL. Directors Five and Six stated, “So the student can still receive support if needed,” and “I think we exit too early and if we could would prefer to have Structured English Immersion for T1s but numbers to justify those classes are not there for smaller rural systems.”

Structured English Immersion was identified as an instructional model for this level of ELL by Director Four and sheltered instruction was identified by Directors One and Four. No comments were made. Director Two included the instructional model of consultation for this level of ELL.

Transition two (T2). The two instructional models favored by directors as best for the transition two (T2) level of ELLs were structured English immersion and push-in. Director Five said, "So the student can still receive support if needed" for the explanation of push-in model. Director Two selected consultation as another instructional model. Director Four selected sheltered instruction and made no comment.

In comparing the responses of the directors in the surrounding counties, the teacher questionnaires, and the director of ELL in the SSD district, there are themes identified regarding the models of instruction for different levels of ELLs. The teachers, Director of SSD and the directors of the surrounding counties commonly identified the pullout model for newcomer and active students and push-in and mainstreaming with support or structured English immersion for the more advanced ELL students. The Director of SSD's responses echoed the teacher responses and stated that the elementary students received pullout and inclusion at the lower levels and push-in and mainstreaming with support for the more advanced ELLs. The directors of the surrounding counties agreed, including the structured English immersion model and added sheltered instruction for T2.

Professional Development ELL Directors

The directors were asked to list the top five professional development sessions that their districts provided ELL teachers to help close the academic achievement gap and increase academic growth with ELLs and note the reason for the usefulness.

Five out of the six directors identified teaching reading and common core standards as useful for ELLs. Other professional development sessions included the SIOP model, WIDA and TNTESOL, and presentations by outside trainers.

In comparing the professional development information from the Director of SSD and the teachers, it would appear that teachers had attended various professional developments outside the district. The common themes of teaching reading and CCSS again emerge in the surrounding counties' ELL directors.

Data Analysis within SSD

The research team analyzed assessment data within the district. The team retrieved assessment data from the data coordinator within SSD.

TCAP. The following data are in regards to the ELL subgroup on TCAP for grades three through eighth combined. In 2010-2011 for math, 21.2% were below basic, 51.5% were basic, 24.9% were proficient, and 2.4% were advanced. In 2011-2012 for math, 14% were below basic, 47.1% were basic, 27.4% were proficient, and 11.5% were advanced. In 2012-2013 for math, 15% were below basic, 38.8% were basic, 36.9% were proficient, and 9.3% were advanced.

In 2010-2011 for RLA, 27.2% were below basic, 51.5% were basic, 19.5% were proficient, and 1.8% was advanced. In 2011-2012 for RLA, 14.4% were below basic, 53.5% were basic, 28.4% were proficient, and 3.4% were advanced. In 2012-2013 for RLA, 12.7% were below basic, 55.4% were basic, 30% were proficient, and 1.9% was advanced.

DIBELS. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) consists of six indicators of the essential skills that students must understand to be a

proficient reader. It is a short measurement that takes less than a minute to test and when used regularly can help monitor student understanding of literacy and development of early reading skills. DIBELS was designed for students facing challenges with the acquisition of literacy and is designed to prevent later reading difficulties (DIBELS next, 2012). SSD administers the tests in grades K-4 and the researchers were given results for three years: 2010- 2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-13.

In 2010-2011, the DIBELS Next was administered to 58 of the 234 ELL students and 41 of the tested students indicated growth scores. In 2011-2012, 257 out of 285 ELL students were tested and 162 students indicated growth. In 2012-2103, 313 out of 335 ELLs were tested and 173 indicated growth.

For 2011-2012 and 2012- 2013, the two years of DIBELS Next data where nearly all students were tested, the data indicates that 90 students showed growth in 2011-2012 in grades 1 – 3 and for the equivalent student body the following year 2012-2013 in grades 2 – 4 there were 69 students showing growth. The largest decline in growth was from students in grades three and four.

STAR. The data for STARS was only available for the 2012-2013 school year. Therefore, that data could not be obtained as originally requested due to the assessment not being consistently given to all ELLs in 2010-2013.

ELDA. The state of Tennessee adopted the English Language Development Test (ELDA) in 2007 to satisfy a federal requirement to align testing with the Tennessee State ESL. There are four grade levels (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12) of ELDA and five identifying levels from pre-functional to fully English Proficient. The composite score is obtained from four domain scores: reading, writing, speaking and listening. These scores are

weighted differently with the more academic skills of reading and writing weighted higher. Students who score a composite score of a four or a five (the highest scores) are exited from the ELL system standards (Tennessee Department of Education, 2007).

The researchers analyzed the results of the ELDA scores from SSD from the years 2011, 2012 and 2013. The large majority of students' first language was Spanish. The results were grouped in three grade levels (K-2, 3-5, 6-8) and the researchers analyzed the grade levels by examining the progress made by students during the course of the three years.

For students in the grades K-2 between the years 2011 – 2013, there were 105 students. In the testing year of 2011, there were 46 students with reported scores of a 1 or 2. The students indicated progress by 2013 when 55 students had exited the program with composite scores of a 4 or a 5. By 2013, there remained nine students of this cohort with a score of a 1 or 2.

For students in the grades 3-5 between the years 2011-2013, there were 45 students. In the testing year of 2011, there were 16 students with reported scores of a 1 or 2. The students indicated progress by 2013 when 31 students exited the program with composite scores of a 4 or 5. By 2013, there remained three students of this cohort with a score of a 1 or 2.

For students in the grades 6-8 between the years 2011-2013, there were 13 students. In the testing year of 2011, there were nine students with reported scores of a 1 or 2. The students indicated progress by 2013 when 11 students exited the program with composite scores of a 4 or 5. By 2013, there remained two students of this cohort with a score of a 1 or 2.

The researchers used the data available for the three years of the study. However, there could be anomalies within this data that were not revealed within the tables and charts provided. For example, when students enter SSD, the levels of the students in this study prior to testing were not known in addition to not knowing degree of the mobility rate of the students.

The ELDA testing for SSD during the three years of testing available to the researchers showed growth at every grade level. From the kindergarten class of 2011 where 55 out of 105 exited the ELL program by second grade to the remaining 2 eighth graders in the ELL program by 2013, SSD exited all but two students.

The research team interviewed the ELL Director of SSD and asked the director to describe the data of the ELL students within the district and to identify what the director had noticed from the 2010 school year to the 2013 school year. The director replied, "It's been really flat." The Director studied the percentages of proficient and advanced students in the "LEP" subgroup. The Director explained that in reading language arts for grades 3-8 in 2011, the LEP subgroup had 19.6% of students proficient and advanced; in 2012 in reading language arts for grades 3-8, 22.5% of students were proficient or advanced. In math for 2011 in grades 3-8, 35.7% were proficient or advanced; in 2012 in math for grades 3-8, 40% were proficient or advanced. "I guess when I say flat, really, I may not be giving ourselves enough credit, because in looking at that data we see student gains, so I guess I want to see more significant gains." "We are meeting those annual measurable projections, which is very important the way the state is viewing our district."

The Director's concern was "the LEP/non-LEP gap; unfortunately from 2011 to 2012," the gap "widened." The Director explained that in 2011 in reading language arts,

the gap was 28.90% and the gap in 2012 was 31.40%. In 2011 for math, there was a 16.9% gap and then in 2012 there was a 19.4% gap. "Work to do with regards to reducing that gap between our LEP and non-LEP groups." The Director continued by stating, "There are so many sources of data to look at, but I can say this, too: our teachers are using all of the benchmarks and formative assessment data, the progress monitoring tools that are in the schools. Our teachers are using those same data points." An example was given of all teachers using a universal screener, "but our ELL teachers are plugged into how the ELL students are performing on benchmarks and, for instance, quarterly assessments."

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Discussions

Summary

With the increasing number of ELLs and the high expectations for all students to be academically proficient, the need exists for educators to use research-based best practices that will increase the academic achievement of the ELL population. The purpose of this study was to determine research-based best practices and models of instruction that would increase the academic achievement and growth of the ELL population and decrease the gap in achievement between ELL and non-ELL students. This was accomplished through a mixed-methods case study analyzing data obtained from SSD and surrounding school districts that showed statistically significant gains with ELLs. Determining the best practices that improved the academic achievement and decreased the learning gaps of ELLs will benefit other school districts both regionally and nationally.

Interpretation and Conclusions

To accomplish the purpose of this study, the research was guided by five research questions. The questions were answered based upon the data collected in the study and implications of those findings were presented.

Research-based best practices.

Research Question 1: What research-based best practices reduced the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL students in grades K-8? Fifteen best practices were ranked into three categories: the top five, middle five, and lowest five. The researchers focused on comparing the top five best practices stated by the teachers of SSD and the ELL Directors of surrounding counties.

The top five best practices identified by the directors were activating prior knowledge and building background knowledge, comprehensible input (students learning English through listening and reading and teacher using appropriate techniques to make concept clear), academic vocabulary, explicit instruction, and differentiated instruction. The top five practices identified by the teachers were activating prior knowledge and building background knowledge, differentiated instruction, scaffolding instruction, teaching academic vocabulary, and continual review of vocabulary and content. SSD teachers and ELL Directors agreed that activating prior knowledge and building background knowledge, academic vocabulary, and differentiated instruction were the most effective best practices for increasing the academic achievement of ELLs. ELL Directors believed that scaffolding instruction and continual review of vocabulary and content were top ranked best practices, while SSD teachers ranked both practices as middle-ranked best practices. SSD teachers believed comprehensible input and explicit instruction were in the top five ranked for being most effective; however, ELL Directors ranked comprehensible input in the lowest ranked best practices and explicit instruction in the middle ranked best practices.

ELL Directors and SSD teachers agreed on three of the top five best practices. This suggests that implementing activating prior knowledge and building background knowledge, academic vocabulary, and differentiated instruction are research-based best practices will effectively increase the academic achievement of ELLs.

The teachers and directors were offered the opportunity to add additional best practices that were not included in the questionnaire. Through analysis of those findings, the researchers observed the variety and lack of consistency between participants'

responses. While the additional best practices ranged from SIOP strategies such as graphic organizers to broader strategies such as data analysis and writing, the variety of responses further supports the need to develop a consistent understanding of research-based best practices that support ELLs. The SSD director identified the following five best practices: modeling, guided practice, activating prior knowledge and building background knowledge, peer modeling, and thematic instruction.

Instructional Models.

Research question 2: What models of instruction and best practices were most effective for the varying levels of ELL students, including newcomers, active participants, transition one (T1), and transition two (T2) students in SSD and in surrounding school districts? The best instructional model determined by SSD teachers for newcomers was pullout. Teachers indicated that pullout provides ELL newcomer students a safe educational setting where they are free to take risks. Additionally, this model allows teachers more one-on-one instruction and extensive vocabulary assistance.

The instructional model identified by the ELL Directors as working best for this level was also pullout; all six directors selected this model. For the pullout model of instruction, Directors Three, Five and Six stated, "Newcomers need one-on-one and small group instruction as they learn the basics of English," "Pull out services allow for a more student-specific approach. Newcomers will benefit and transition during this time," and "Pullout – Basic voc. [vocabulary] and lang. [language] structure needs; as well as social and cultural guidance."

For active learners, teachers selected the pullout model as well. Pullout works best for teaching reading and writing skills. Teachers also established that pullout is vital

for success in testing with ELLs. There were two instructional models identified as best instructional models by ELL Directors for active learners, which were push-in and pullout. Directors Four and Five identified push-in as the best instructional model for this level of ELL and stated, " Collaborative teaching is our push-in model," and "Depending on what the student scores on ELDA: 1 or 2 – Pullout, 3 - push-in with support." For the pullout model of instruction, Directors Four and Six affirmed, "Pullout can target student's language level," and "…rated this first out of three instructional models for beginning levels."

Teachers identified the push-in model as the most effective for Transition 1 (T1) students. Rationale for this choice was that the push-in model was best for challenging students academically. Further, teachers noted the need for T1 students to remain in the classroom and receive instruction with limited modifications. Three of the ELL directors also selected the push-in model of instruction for the T1 students. Directors Five and Six affirmed, "So the student can still receive support if needed," and "I think we exit too early and if we could would prefer to have Structured English Immersion for T1s but numbers to justify those classes are not there for smaller rural systems."

The best practice as determined by SSD teachers for T2 students was the Structured English Immersion (SEI) model. Teachers highlighted the fact that by this juncture, EL students should be able to work independently while mainstreamed, but the students should also be monitored and supported. The two instructional models favored by directors as best for the T2 level of ELLs were structured English immersion and push-in. Director Five stated, "So the student can still receive support if needed" for the

explanation of push-in model. Director Two selected consultation as another instructional model. Director Four selected sheltered instruction and made no comment.

The implication is that certain models work more effectively with varying levels of ELLs. Pullout is the most effective model to use with newcomer ELLs. The most effective instructional models for active learners are pullout or push-in. The push-in model is most effective for T1s and the Structured English Immersion model or push-in model works best for T2s.

Alignment of Teacher Perceptions.

Research Question 3: In SSD, did teacher perceptions of best practices align with implemented instructional practices with ELLs? Teachers in SSD selected the top best practice as activating prior knowledge and building background knowledge. Out of 42 lesson plans, evidence of activating prior knowledge existed in 34 plans. The second best practice selected by teachers was comprehensible input. Comprehensible input was referenced in multiple lesson plans in the categories of learning targets, whole group instruction, activities, and reading. The third ranked best practice by SSD teachers was teaching academic vocabulary. Forty out of 42 lesson plans explicitly addressed teaching academic vocabulary through learning targets, writing, modeling, whole group instruction, and activities. The fourth ranked best practice was explicit instruction. Of the 42 lesson plans submitted, 18 referenced this practice. The fifth best practice as ranked by SSD teachers was differentiated instruction. Twenty-one respondents listed this either in lesson planning or for whole group instruction.

Findings of the research team support that teachers in SSD did align their perceptions of best practices with their implementation of best practices according to

submitted lesson plans as it related to their top five best practices for ELL students. Evidence of academic vocabulary, activating prior knowledge and building background, and comprehensible input strongly aligned with the teachers' perceptions. There was a lack of consistency among teacher lesson plans to prove that SSD teachers implement the best practices of differentiated instruction and explicit instruction.

Academic success of surrounding districts.

Research question 4: Which of the surrounding school districts were having significant academic growth with the ELL population? The researchers' null hypothesis was that there was no statistically significant difference in the growth of ELLs in school districts in Middle Tennessee. The researchers rejected the null, as there were thirteen districts identified as achieving statistically significant growth. The researchers conducted a statistical analysis by running a paired sample *t*-test for each school year and each subject. The critical *t*-value for reading/language arts was 1.62. The critical *t*-value for math was 2.32 (Witte & Witte, 2007). Based on the 2011-2013 TCAP ELL data, there were 13 districts that had the *t*-value beyond the critical *t* at the .05 level in either math or reading/language arts. Thirteen districts indicated a statistically significant growth in math, three districts indicated statistically significant growth in reading, and three districts showed statistically significant growth in both math and reading.

Research question 5: What were the best practices being implemented in the school districts in the surrounding districts to attain significant academic growth with the ELL population? The directors identified activating prior knowledge and building background, differentiated instruction, scaffolding instruction, teaching academic vocabulary, and continual review of vocabulary and content as the top five best practices.

All directors ranked activating prior knowledge and building background as one of their top five best practices. Director One said that this best practice was "extremely helpful in connecting the two languages." Director Three affirmed, "Without this, it is difficult to gain understanding at all." Director Four stated, "New learning must be related to existing knowledge," and Director Five concurred, "…retention increases filing new information is easier to access."

Three out of five directors, Two, Four, and Five, ranked differentiated instruction as the number one best practice with Director Three ranking this as fourth and Director One ranking this tenth. Director Two stated, "essential." Director Four agreed, "Comprehensible input is identified by differentiated instruction; it is based on students' instructional levels." In regard to scaffolding, Director Five stated, "Much like differentiated instruction, it is important for all students, but crucial for ESL. Builds confidence."

The directors identified continual review of vocabulary and content as one of their top five best practices. In emphasizing the distinction between the differing vocabulary needs, Director One said, "Students must develop the academic vocabulary in order to score high on standardized tests. Social vocabulary must be learned independently."

The directors were asked to add additional best practices that they believed were important. Director One listed "writing" as another best practice stating, "Students must incorporate writing in all lessons. A must for testing as well." Director Two highlighted the importance of the TEAM rubric and stated, "This genius document has all teachers pulling in the same direction." The TEAM rubric clearly states explicit rubrics for planning, environment, and instruction with frequent observations with constructive

feedback. Director Six added the best practice of "use of technology" stating, "Students ENJOY working with technology…"

Based on the responses from the ELL Directors of the districts that are proven to increase academic achievement of ELLs, the implications are there is consistency among the directors in the beliefs of what consists of the best practices to use with ELLs. While the directors varied in demographics and experience, and while no collaboration existed while completing the questionnaire, it was apparent that activating prior knowledge and building background, comprehensible input (students learning English through listening and reading and teacher using appropriate techniques to make concept clear), academic vocabulary, explicit instruction, and differentiated instruction were considered critical best practices that teachers need to implement in order to achieve academic success with ELLs.

Other Conclusions.

Professional development. Through the process of collecting data, the researchers obtained the professional development trainings and requests of professional development of SSD teachers, professional development records, and the interview with the ELL Director of SSD. The professional development opportunities included textbook review, vocabulary lessons, building literacy, ELL strategies, methods to support the growing ELL population, common core standards, WIDA standards, differentiated instruction, "five intentional strategies" that helped ELLs (intentional master schedule, extended school day, push-in support for key grades, focused collaboration, and targeted ELL transitional students), focused collaboration, and RtII. Thirteen PD trainings were found to be common among two or more teachers. Of those 13, eight were specific to

ELL teaching and learning. Eleven teachers attended eight professional development offerings: systematic support for ELL success was attended by all 11 teachers, state CCSS ELA reading was attended by two teachers, the TESOL conference was attended by two teachers, reaching ELL students through content standards was attended by four teachers, SETESOL conference was attended by three teachers, and supporting ELL students in the regular classroom was attended by two teachers. SIOP training was evidenced when the SSD ELL Director stated that a few sessions at the TNTESOL conference focused on SIOP.

Professional developments were selected by the ELL Director "based on individual, school, and district needs assessments." The ELL Director of SSD stated that implementation of professional development was monitored by school and district administrators through the team evaluation model, formal and informal observations, walkthroughs, follow-up discussions and studies in their ELL professional learning community.

The ELL Director of SSD stated that future PD would include common core training and WIDA training. Teachers provided examples of professional development that they believed would assist them in teaching ELLs, which included co-teaching model, technology training, and Spanish/English Dual Immersion.

The directors of surrounding counties were asked to list the top five professional development sessions and note the reason for the usefulness that their districts provided for ELL teachers to help close the academic achievement gap and increase academic growth with ELLs. Five out of the six directors identified teaching reading and common core standards as useful for ELLs. Other

professional development sessions included the SIOP model, WIDA and TNTESOL, and presentations by outside trainers.

In examining the professional development information from the Director of SSD and the teachers, it would appear that teachers attended various professional developments. The common professional development of teaching reading and CCSS existed among SSD teachers and in the surrounding counties. SIOP was mentioned by the ELL Director of SSD and by an ELL Director of a surrounding county, but little evidence existed that SIOP was a consistent, major focus of professional development.

Apart from the recurring theme of Common Core State Standards, as mentioned by all three groups, there seems to be little continuity with professional development obtained and requested. There is evidence of professional development that aligns with some of the best practices and instructional models, such as differentiated instruction and push-in. There appeared to be little evidence that directors had a strategic plan to implement consistent professional development with ELL teachers.

Testing data. The research team analyzed assessment data within the district provided by the SSD data coordinator. On TCAP, the findings indicated that SSD continued to make academic achievement gains with ELLS in both math and reading and language arts when comparing 2011-2013 data. In 2010-2011 for math, 27.3% were proficient or advanced. In 2011-2012 for math, 38.9% were proficient or advanced. In 2012-2013 for math, 46.2% were proficient or advanced. In 2010-2011 for TCAP Reading/Language Arts (RLA), 21.3% were proficient, or advanced. In 2011-2012 for

RLA, 31.8% were proficient or advanced. In 2012-2013 for RLA, 31.9% were proficient or advanced.

In regards to DIBELS in grades K-4, the initial data of growth from the assessments may seem to show a decline, but deeper analysis showed that the percentage of growth scores were based on an increase of ELLs each year. The researchers concluded that the growth of achievement on DIBELS data showed an increase of achievement, especially with the increase of the ELL student percentage each year. In 2010-2011, the DIBELS Next was administered to 25% of the ELL student body and 71% of those students indicated growth scores. In 2011-2012, almost all students were tested (90%) and 63% of students indicated growth. In 2012-2103, 93% of ELLs were tested and 55% indicated growth. For 2011-2012 and 2012- 2013, the two years of DIBELS Next data where nearly all students were tested, the data indicates that 61% of students in grades 1 - 3 showed growth in 2011-2012 and the equivalent student body in 2012-2013 in grades 2 – 4 was 47%. The largest percentage decline in growth was from students in grades 3and 4.

The researchers analyzed the results of the ELDA scores from SSD from the years 2011, 2012 and 2013. The ELDA testing for SSD during the three years of testing available to the researchers showed growth at every grade level. From the kindergarten class of 2011 where 55 out of 105 exited the ELL program by second grade to the remaining two eighth graders in the ELL program by 2013, SSD exited all but two students.

The Director of SSD stated that achievement of ELLs in the district has “been really flat.” The director stated the TCAP proficiency and then stated, “I guess when I

say flat, really, I may not be giving ourselves enough credit, because in looking at that data we see student gains, so I guess I want to see more significant gains." "We are meeting those annual measurable projections, which is very important the way the state is viewing our district."

The Director's concern was "the LEP/non-LEP gap; unfortunately from 2011 to 2012," the gap "widened." The Director explained that in 2011 in reading language arts, the gap was 28.90% and the gap in 2012 was 31.40%. In 2011 for math, there was a 16.9% gap and then in 2012 there was a 19.4% gap. "Work to do with regards to reducing that gap between our LEP and non-LEP groups." The Director continued by stating, "There are so many sources of data to look at, but I can say this, too: our teachers are using all of the benchmarks and formative assessment data, the progress monitoring tools that are in the schools. Our teachers are using those same data points." An example was given of all teachers using a universal screener, "but our ELL teachers are plugged into how the ELL students are performing on benchmarks and, for instance, quarterly assessments."

The researchers concurred with the opinion of the director of SSD based on the data. While SSD desires a greater increase of academic achievement among the ELL subgroup, SSD is still increasing achievement according to TCAP, DIBELS, and ELDA.

Relationship of Conclusions to Other Research

Research-based best practices. The results of this study identified the best practices as building background knowledge and activating prior knowledge, differentiating instruction, scaffolding, and building academic vocabulary. These results are supported by previous findings (Cummins, 2010; Echevarria et al., 2013; Marzano,

2004) and questionnaire results from ELL teachers and directors which support the claim by the teachers of SSD and the ELL Directors that building background knowledge is not only beneficial for ELLs, but it has been proven to increase the academic achievement of students. The SSD teachers ranked explicit instruction as a top ranked best practice. SSD teachers' reasons for explicit instruction being a top ranked best practice included the need for clear, direct, and focused instruction, which was an essential requirement for ELLs.

Cummins (2010) stated that activating prior knowledge and building background was one of the three pillars of successful instruction for ELLs. Building background knowledge was component two of SIOP; which was found to be the foundation for understanding and learning information (Cummins, 2010; Echevarria et al., 2013). Marzano (2004) stated, "What students *already know* about the content is one of the strongest indicators of how well they will learn new information relative to the content" (p. 1).

The study identified academic vocabulary as important to literary instruction. This is similar to previous findings by Linan-Thompson and Vaughn (2007) who stated that vocabulary was the most important element of literacy instruction for ELLs. Teachers needed to provide opportunities for students to learn. Teaching vocabulary to ELLs includes reading, writing, and oral vocabulary (Linan-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007).

Francis et al. (2006) declared, "Mastery of academic language is arguably the single most important determinant of academic success for individual students" (p. 5). Academic vocabulary plays a central role in the success of upper elementary and middle

school students due to the need to read to learn in all content-area classrooms (Francis et al., 2006).

SIOP identified varied types of academic vocabulary that should be the focus for ELLs, including content vocabulary-subject specific, general academic vocabulary-cross curricular terms, and word parts-roots and affixes. Beck, et al. (2013) suggested that a student's vocabulary should increase by 2,000-3,000 words a year, with about 400 of those words being directly taught. Tier 2 non-conversational and general academic words must be taught explicitly to ELLs (Echevarria et al., 2013). Cummins said that basic communication skills take about two years of immersion to be learned, while it takes about five to seven years for academic language to be learned (Frankfort International School, n.d.).

Research supported the findings of this study with regard to vocabulary instruction. Gersten et al. (2007) found that extensive and varied vocabulary instruction was needed for ELLs through daily explicit vocabulary instruction. ELL students must show an understanding of the vocabulary being used, which requires the support of building background knowledge or activating prior knowledge, differentiating instruction, and scaffolding.

Throughout the academic vocabulary literature, scaffolding instruction was repeatedly discussed. Linan-Thompson and Vaughn (2007) stated that in order to scaffold ELLs' acquisition of new concepts and English language skills, teachers need to adjust the level of English and vocabulary. SIOP included scaffolding instruction in feature 14, which was associated with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development

(Echevarria et al., 2013). Differentiated instruction can also be associated with scaffolding, which both SSD teachers and ELL Directors ranked in the top best practices.

According to Rea and Mercuri (2006), scaffolds helped ELLs learn new vocabulary, concepts, and skills. Scaffolding allows teachers to not have to alter complex activities, but to alter them in a "guided and monitored way" (van Lier, 2004, p. 150). Scaffolding falls under one of Cummins three pillars of successful instruction for ELLs, which is accessing content. According to Cummins (2010), teachers have the responsibility of making complex academic English accessible to ELLs. According to Walqui (2006), scaffolding is the means of providing academically challenging instruction to ELLs; scaffolding is beneficial to all learners, and ELLs must have this strategy provided more extensively and continuously.

Even though explicit instruction is not a SIOP component, it is found throughout the SIOP framework. A teacher must be explicit in helping ELLs understand that there are varying levels of questions and thinking skills; explicit instruction is also found within the review and assessment component when a teacher is required to review the key language and content concepts, assess student learning, and provide specific academic feedback to students on their output.

Instructional models. The results of this study identified the push-in, pullout and SEI instructional models in varying levels of ELLs. This is similar to previous findings by Mamantov (2013) who confirmed perceptions for newcomers and noted that the pullout model allows students to take risks. He contended that pullout allows for more personalized instruction and advised that when students who speak similar languages were grouped together, it allowed for more collaboration and success Mamantov (2013).

In addition, Mamantov (2013) identifies the push-in model as effective for ELLs because this format expedites language proficiency. Washington (2009) identified the push-in model as a benefit to students as they receive additional educational supports without removing them from the classroom.

Krashen (n.d.) noted Structured English Immersion allows students to receive content knowledge during instruction benefiting the ELL learner. Moreover, Coletti noted that the SEI model offers instruction in all subject areas, which is a benefit to the learner Coletti, (2012).

Limitations of the Study

This study focused on one school district in Southeastern Tennessee. Expanding this research to more districts similar to the district studied may yield broader results. Another limitation of this study was that it focused on grades kindergarten through eighth grade. Expanding the results to more grade levels may offer a different perspective on perceptions and implementations of best practices. The third limitation was the time frame of the study. If the study were longer, the research team would have conducted observations in the ELL classrooms. This study reviewed TCAP data for 3 years; collecting quantitative data over a longer span of time may produce more dependable results. The researchers used the data available for the three years of the study. However, there could be anomalies within this data that were not revealed within the tables and charts provided. For example, when students enter SSD, the levels of the students in this study prior to testing were not known in addition to not knowing degree of the mobility rate of the students. The final limitation to this research project was the

number of responding teachers and directors. Six out of 13 teachers responded to the research team's requests for participation.

Recommendations

The testing data analyzed by the researchers indicated that SSD is having academic achievement and academic growth with ELLs in math and reading and language arts. After analyzing the responses from the SSD teachers and the SSD ELL Director, there are consistent understandings of best practices. However, inconsistencies also exist. Since SSD was looking to implement research-based best practices to further increase the academic achievement and growth of ELLs, the researchers established the following recommendations.

SSD. Previous research utilized within this dissertation illustrates the value of selecting SIOP as the model for SSD to adopt district-wide. One of the challenges of the implementation of the SIOP model is that the model is extensive due to the amount of components and features. Therefore, the researchers recommend beginning implementation of SIOP by concentrating on the top five best practices identified within this study by the directors of districts and SSD teachers. Echeverria et al. (2013) stated to begin implementation of SIOP "with one component at a time, gradually adding the others over time" (p. 282). As one component attains proficiency, continue adding the other SIOP components. Echevarria et al. (2013) stated that there was no hierarchy or order of the components. It is recommended that the district develop a lesson plan template to be used district-wide that will include the five top SIOP best practices identified by the directors and teachers in this study (Appendix G).

In order to adopt SIOP district-wide, it is recommended that the district offer professional development for all teachers, school-based administrators, and the district leadership team in the SIOP model. It is further recommended that during SIOP professional development, the literature review of this study be used to show how literature supports the SIOP model. It is further recommended that the ELL Director of SSD write a strategic plan of professional development in order to implement a continuous model of improvement for ELLs that will be consistently implemented across the district.

A suggestion for beginning the strategic plan for implementing SIOP strategies includes gathering information to assess the current knowledge of teachers and administrators in regards to SIOP best practices. In addition, it is suggested to provide SIOP professional development for administrators, district leaders, and selected teachers in order to form a group of district people who could serve as leaders once the district moves toward full implementation of SIOP professional development. It is recommended that the initial selected teachers be the ELL teachers of the district and content teachers that the ELL teachers will co-plan and co-teach with.

With support from district leaders and administrators, the selected teachers who will be trained initially with SIOP would then implement a pilot program to assess the value of the SIOP strategies and employ a standard lesson plan template (Appendix G). Following the pilot, the strategic plan would then include training all teachers and creating a monitoring system to evaluate the implementation of SIOP and the effectiveness of SIOP. The lesson plan template (Appendix G) would then be

implemented for all teachers. The strategic plan would need to be monitored periodically and adjusted as needed.

In addition, Cummins' (2010) three pillars of success provide a visual explanation of SIOP best practices. While learning SIOP, participants can continue to discuss which pillar the SIOP component or feature coincides.

The ELL Director of SSD currently creates agendas of meetings based on teachers' needs. However, based upon the professional development attended and requested by the teachers of SSD, there is evidence of inconsistency. Therefore, it is recommended that the district's monthly meetings of ELL teachers are conducted using a formal agenda including data analysis and the continuing development and use of the SIOP best practices and professional development, while also continuing with the implementation of CCSS and WIDA training for all ELL teachers and content area teachers. Once SIOP professional development is implemented, it is also recommended that the district consistently evaluate the fidelity of the implementation of SIOP.

Examination of the ELL teachers' lesson plans revealed evidence of the research-based best practices. It is recommended that ELL teachers and content area teachers co-plan and co-teach in order for ELLs to be supported by all teachers.

It is recommended that the district purposefully match the varying levels of ELLs to the recommended instructional models based upon the findings of this study.

Recommendations for further research. This study focused on reading and math and further studies should include all content areas. In addition, this study focused on research related to the SIOP model, and further research should include a broad spectrum of research related to ELLs other than the SIOP model.

Further research regarding the implementation of the SIOP model particularly in the lower elementary grades would increase the understanding of the differences of language assimilation between elementary ELLs and middle school ELLs.

Further research is recommended to study the students who have exited ELL services by achieving a 4 or 5 on the ELDA assessment to determine if they are being successful on TCAP achievement without ELL support.

It would be beneficial for a further study to compare the perceptions of best practices from districts not making statistically significant gains with ELLs to districts making statistically significant gains.

Finally, a study that examines the benefits for ELLs between SIOP trained teachers who co-plan and co-teach with content area teachers, and SIOP trained teachers who do not co-plan and co-teach with content area teachers.

Personal Reflection of Researchers

The researchers have learned the importance of learning how to best help ELLs due to the significant increase of the ELL population. They further understand that growth in this area will depend on consistent monitoring and implementation of all factors that affect student achievement, such as professional development, best practices, and instructional models.

In regard to ELL, the researchers determined that there is not one solution to increase the achievement of ELLs and to reduce the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELLs. Rather, multiple best practices will add up to make a difference in the success of ELLs. The researchers found that SIOP is a framework that includes those multiple best practices into one model. The researchers strongly believe that SIOP is a research-

based best practice model that will increase the achievement of ELLs if implemented with fidelity. Through this process, the researchers more deeply understand how research can benefit the academic success of students. Knowing the research-based best practices that consistently benefit students is valuable for educators to know, and therefore, implement.

The researchers deepened their persistence and collaboration skills through this study. This study required the researchers to stay organized, purposeful, and to manage responsibilities through the collaborative process and meeting deadlines throughout the study. The researchers not only strengthened these skills by working as a cohort in finishing this study, but also because the researchers worked closely with the client of this study. The researchers gained a deeper understanding of the importance of listening to the client's requests in order to produce the best findings and recommendations that would benefit our district of study.

Throughout this journey, in addition to the aforementioned benefits, the researchers learned the importance of collaboration and developed an appreciation for one another. This included relying on strengths as well as developing a true bond which aided in persistence when obstacles did arise.

As it relates to the SSD district, the researchers believe that the desire of the district to further explore research-based best practices to address the ELL achievement gap although they were already experiencing growth amplifies the fact that they truly care about the entire community they serve.

References

Abraham, L. B. (2007). Second-Language reading comprehension and vocabulary learning with multimedia. *Hispania*, *90*(1), 98-108. Retrieved from http://assets00.grou.ps/0F2E3C/wysiwyg_files/FilesModule/catestudygroupvocab/20101206214335-tfbmcnegudluablcc/Abraham2007.pdf

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). Definition of Second Language Acquisition. Retrieved from http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/second.htm

Appendix A. (n.d.). Common core state standards for English language arts literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf

Atchley, D. (2009). *Interventions, perceptions of accommodations, and motivating factors impacting the achievement and successful mainstreaming transition of English language learners* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3390645)

Beck, I.L., McKeown, M.G., & Kucan, L. (2013). *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Bertram, R. L. (2011). *Sheltered instruction: A case study of three high school English teachers' experiences with the SIOP model* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3486471)

Carlo, M. S., August, D., McLaughlin, B., Snow, C. E., Dressler, C., Lippman, D. N., … White, C. E. (2004). Closing the gap: Addressing the vocabulary needs for

English language learners in bilingual and mainstream classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *39*, 188-215.

Center for Applied Linguistics. (2013). SIOP. Retrieved from http://www.cal.org/siop/

Chappuis, J., Stiggins, R., Chappuis, S., & Arter, J. (2012). *Classroom assessment for student learning: Doing it right-using it well* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Civil Rights Act of 1964, S601 42 U.S.C.§ 2000d

Coletti, S. L. (2012). *The effects of transitional bilingual education versus structured English immersion instructional models on English language development as measured by the California English language development test* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3553718)

CREDE five standards for effective pedagogy and learning (2013). Retrieved from http://www.credeberkley.edu.crede.standards.html

Cummins, J. (2010). The three pillars of English language learning. Retrieved from http://www.ritell.org/Resources/Documents/General%20Education%20Resources/the%20three%20pillars%20of%20english%20language%20learning%20(1).pdf

Dynamic Measurement Group. (n.d.). DIBELS. Retrieved from https://dibels.org

Echevarria, J., & Short, D. J. (n.d.). The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). Retrieved from http://www.siopinstitute.net/media/pdfs/sioppaper.pdf

Echevarria, J., Short, D., & Powers, K. (2006). School reform and standards-based education: An instructional model for English language learners. *Journal of Educational Research, 99*(4), 195-211.

Echevarria, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. J. (2013). *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Curriculum Standards. (2007, November 2). Retrieved June 14, 2014, from http://state.tn.us/sbe/Nov07/VE_ESL_Currstds.pdf

Ennis, S. R., Rios-Vargas, M., & Albert, N. G. (2011). *The Hispanic population: 2010.* (C2010BR-104pp. 1-16). Retrieved from 2010 Census Brief website http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf

Forstall, R. (1995).*Population of counties by decentennial status 1900-1990*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Fortune, T. W. (2014). *What research says about immersion*. Retrieved from http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/documents/immersionresearch_TaraFortune.html

Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2006). *Teaching for comprehending and fluency: Thinking, talking, and writing about reading, K-8*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Fralick, R. P. (2007). *A comparative study of fourth-grade English-language learners who participated in a transitional bilingual model, a dual bilingual model, or English-only instruction in a selected South Texas school district* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3263287)

Francis, D. J., Rivera, M., Lesaux, N., Kieffer, M., & Rivera, H. (2006). *Practical guidelines for the education of English language learners: Research-based recommendations for serving adolescent newcomers.* Retrieved from Center on

Instruction website: http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/ell_newcomers.pdf

Frankfort International School. (n.d.). BICS and CALP. Retrieved from http://esl.fis.edu/index.htm

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2007). *Educational research* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Gandara, P. (2012). The impact of English-only instructional policies on English learners. Retrieved from http://colorincolorado.org

Gersten, R., Baker, S., Shanahan, T., Linan-Thompson, S., Collins, P., & Scarcella, R. (2007). *Effective literacy and English language instruction for English language learners in the elementary grades* (NCEE 2007-4011 U.S. Department of Education). Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED497258.pdf

Goldenberg, C. (2008). Teaching English language learners: What research does-and does not-say. *American Educator*, *32*(2), 8-23, 42-44. Retrieved from http://www.aft.org/pdfs/americaneducator/summer2008/ae_summer08.pdf

Goldenberg, C. (2013). Unlocking the research on English learners: What we know-and don't yet know-about effective instruction. *American Educator*, p. 4-11. Retrieved from http://www.aft.org/pdfs/americaneducator/summer2013/Goldenberg.pdf

Grooms, A. M. (2011). *Bilingual education in the United States: An analysis of the convergence of policy, theory, and research* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3501398)

Guerrero, A. J. (2009). *How is Arizona revised statute: 15.756.01: structured English immersion for English language learners being implemented within and across*

classrooms? (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3361838)

Hill, J. D., & Flynn, K. M. (2006). *Classroom instruction works with English language learners*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Holzman, S. (2004, April). Thinking maps: Strategy-based learning for English Language Learners (and others!). Paper presented at the meeting of the 13th Annual Administrator Conference "Closing the Achievement Gap for EL Students," Sonoma County Office of Education. Retrieved from http://www.thinkingfoundation.org/research/journal_articles/pdf/AH-sonoma-06.pdf

Humes, K. R., Jones, N. A., & Ramirez, R. R. (2010).*Overview of race and Hispanic origin:2010* (C2010BR-02). Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Hyerle, D., & Yeager, C. (2007). Thinking maps: A language for learning. *Thinking Maps, Inc.*

Kelley, J., Lesaux, N., Kieffer, M., & Faller, S. (2010). Effective academic vocabulary instruction in the urban middle school. *The Reading Teacher, 64*(1), p. 5-14. Retrieved from https://crmsliteracy.wikispaces.com/file/view/Effective+Academic+Vocabulary+Instruction+in+the+Urban+Middle+School.pdf

Krashen, S. (n.d.). *Bilingual education, the acquisition of English and the retention and loss of Spanish*. Retrieved from www.languagepolicy.net/archives/Krashen7htm

Krashen, S. (2004). *The power of reading: Insights from the research*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Krashen, S. (2013). Does SIOP research support SIOP claims? *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, *8*(1). Retrieved from http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/articles/siop_research_support_claims.pdf

Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and implications*. London and New York: Longman.

Lau v. Nichols, 72-6520 US 414 U.S. 563 (1974).

Linan-Thompson, S., & Vaughn, S. (2007). *Research-based methods of reading instruction for English language learners: Grades K-4*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Logan-Terry, A. E. (2011). *Achievement, assessment, and learning: A study of emergent bilingual students in mainstream content classrooms* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3505383)

Macedonia, M. & Knösche, T. R. (2011), Body in Mind: How Gestures Empower Foreign Language Learning. *Mind, Brain, and Education, 5*: 196–211. doi: 10.1111/j.1751-228X.2011.01129.x

Mamantov, T. J. (2013). *An investigation of English as a second language models (Pullout, Co-Teaching, and Inclusion) on the Texas English language proficiency assessment system* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3562533)

Marlow, K (2008). *Closing the achievement gap for English language learners: A comparison of language arts/ ESOL and one way developmental bilingual programs* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://proquest.com

Marzano, R. J. (2004). *Building background knowledge for academic achievement*. Alexandria, Virginia: ASCD.

McGee, E. A. (2012). *Sheltered English immersion vs two way bilingual education: A case study comparison of parental attitudes of Hispanic students' perceived self-efficacy* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3542631)

McIntyre, E, Kyle, D. W., Chen, C. T., Kraemer, J. and Parr, J. (2009). *6 Principles for teaching English language learners in all classrooms*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

McKenzie, L. (2011). *Scaffolding English language learners' reading performance* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3482138)

Mizell, H. (2010). *Why professional development matters*. Retrieved from Learning Forward: http://learningforward.org/docs/pdf/why_pd_matters_web.pdf?sfvrsn=0

Moughamian, A. C., Rivera, M. O., & Francis, D. J. (2009). *Instructional models and strategies for teaching English language learner*s (Research report). Retrieved from Center on Instruction website: http://www.centeroninstruction.org/

National Center for Education Statistics. (2014). Definition of achievement gap. Retrieved from http://www.nces.ed.gov

National Center on Student Progress Monitoring. (n.d.). Information on STAR. Retrieved from http://www.studentprogress.org/

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities. (n.d.). Definition of Co-teaching. Retrieved from http://nichcy.org/

Negron, M. (2012). *A study of teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation, effectiveness and implications of sheltered instruction in an urban school district* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3529446)

Norwood, S. D. (2012). *The effects of sheltered instruction on struggling readers* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3505398)

Office for Civil Rights Title VI Language Minority Compliance Procedures. (1990). Treatment of National Origin Minority Students. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/lau1990_and_1985.html

Office of Management and Budget. (1997). Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity, 15 Office of Management and Budget a-e. Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg_1997standards

O'Hara, S., & Pritchard, R. (2008). Hypermedia authoring as a vehicle for vocabulary development in middle school English as a second language classrooms. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas 82*,(2) p. 60-65. Retrieved from https://cset.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/files/documents/publications/O'Hara-

HypermediaVocabularyDevelopmentMiddleSchoolEnglishSecondLanguage_1.pdf

Otterby, D. L. (2009). *Instructional strategies to enhance English language learners' vocabulary acquisition* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3353761)

Pickens, J. (2005). Attitudes and perceptions. In N. Borkowski, Editor, *Organizational behavior, theory, and design in health care* (pp. 43-76). Retrieved from http://healthadmin.jbpub.com/Borkowski/chapter3.pdf

Rance-Roney, J. (2009). Best practices for adolescent ELLs. *Educational Leadership*, *66*(7). Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/

Rea, D. M., & Mercuri, S. P. (2006). *Research-based strategies for English language learners: How to reach goals and meet standards, K-8*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Read, F. D. (2008). *The impact of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) on the instructional practices of elementary school teachers and on the reading achievement of English Language Learners* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3342830)

Roberts, M. B. (2008). *Instructional practices conducive to the high achievement of Hispanic limited English proficient students on the Texas assessment of knowledge and skills* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3341987)

Schleppegrell, M., Achugar, M. & Oteiza, T. (2004). The grammar of history: Enhancing content-based instruction through a functional focus on language. *TESOL Quarterly, 38*(1), 67-93.

Shein, P. P. (2012). Seeing with two eyes: A teacher's use of gestures in questioning and revoicing to engage English Language Learners in the repair of mathematical errors. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, *43*(2), 182-222.

Short, D., Fidelman, C., & Louguit, M. (2012). Developing academic language in English language learners through sheltered instruction. *TESOL Quarterly, 46* ,334-361.

Silverman, R., & Hines, S. (2009). The effects of multimedia-enhanced instruction on the vocabulary of English-Language Learners and Non-English Language Learners in pre-kindergarten through second grade. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *101*, 305-314. Retrieved from https://virtualtour.wlu.ca/documents/40526/SilvermanHinesVocab.pdf

Sousa, D. A. (2005). *How the brain learns to read*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Sox, A. K. (2011). *Teacher preparation for instructing middle school ELL students: A North Carolina Piedmont perspective* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3481176)

The State Education Resource Center, (n.d.). Definition of Best Practices. Retrieved from http://ctserc.org/s/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&id=8&Itemid=28&2fa6f942252db2ec6c621fe255459617=58f7e6d14b74d9075465503c87ce49a8

Stevenson, A. R. (2011). *How Latino/a bilingual students use their language in a fifth grade classroom and in the science laboratory during science instruction*

(Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3534128)

Stewner-Manzanares, G. (1988). The Bilingual Education Act: twenty years later. *New Focus*, *6*, 2 - 9 Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED337031.pdf

Taboada, A., Rutherford, V. (2011). Developing reading comprehension and academic vocabulary for English Language Learners through science content: A formative experiment. *Reading Psychology, 32*, 113-117. doi:10.1080/02702711003604468

Tedick, D. J., Christian, D. and Fortune, T. W. (2011). *Immersion education: Practices, Policies, Possibilities.* Salisbury, UK: Short Run Press.

Tennessee Department of Education. (n.d.) Definition of LEP. Retrieved from http://www.tn.gov/education/legal/doc/EL_Legal_Obligations_and_Best_Practices.pdf

Tennessee Department of Education. (2006a). Transitional LEP students. Retrieved from http://www.state.tn.us/sbe/Aug06/IVD_Perf_Levels_Cut_Scores_CELLA.pdf

Tennessee Department of Education. (2006b). TCAP. Retrieved from http://www.tn.gov/education/legal/doc/EL_Legal_Obligations_and_Best_Practices.pdf

Tennessee Department of Education. (2007). ELDA. Retrieved from http://state.tn.us/sbe/Nov07/VE_ESL_CurrStds.pdf

Tennessee Department of Education. (2014). Achievement Test. Retrieved from http://www.tennessee.gov/education/assessment/grades_3-8.shtml

Tennessee Department of Health. (2004).*The Hispanic population in Tennessee*. Retrieved from https://health.state.tn.us/statistics/PdfFiles/TNHispanic00.pdf

Tennessee State Report Card. (2000). Achievement Data. Retrieved from http://www.k-12.state.tn.us/rptcrd00/state.htm

Townsend, D., Collins, P. (2009). Academic vocabulary and middle school English learners: an intervention study. *Reading and Writing 22,* 993-1019. doi: 10.1007/s11145-008-9141-y

United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. (n.d.) *Types of educational opportunities discrimination*. Retrieved from http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/edu/types.php

U.S. Census Bureau. (2000a).*Profile of demographic characteristics: 2000* (DP-1). Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2000b).*Tennessee:2000 Summary population and housing characteristics*. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/phc-1-44.pdf

U.S. Department of Commerce. (1980).*1980 Census of population: General population characteristics Tennessee* (PC80-1-B44). Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Commerce. (1990).*1990 Census of population: General population characteristics Tennessee* (1990 CP 1-44). Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Commerce. (2010).*State and county quick facts*. Retrieved from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/47000.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2010). Blueprint for Reform. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/blueprint.pdf

U.S. Department of Education website. (n.d.). www.ed.gov

Van Lier, L. (2004). *The ecology and semiotics of language learning: A sociocultural perspective*. Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Walqui, A. (2006). Scaffolding instruction for English language learners: A conceptual framework. *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *9*, 159-180. Retrieved from http://www.educacion.gob.es/exterior/centros/losangeles/es/series/201003-Scaffolding-Walqui.pdf

Washington, C. W. (2009). *An evaluation of two models for instructing English language learners* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3396385)

Welsh, L. C., Newman, K. L. (2010). Becoming a content-ESL teacher: A dialogic journey of a science teacher and teacher educator. *Theory Into Practice*, *49*, 137-144. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/40650727

WIDA (2014). World class instruction design and assessment. Standards for English language learners. Retrieved from http://wida.us/standards/WIDA_brochure_parent%20webinar.pdf

Williams, J. L. (2011). *A difference in ELL instructions: A study of 50/50 dual immersion bilingual literacy program for second grade English language learners* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3487109)

Witte, R. S., & Witte, J. S. (1997). Appendices Tables.*Statistics*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Yin, L. (2007). *Pullout and inclusion Programs for ESL students: A study of reading achievement* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3256017)

Zheng, D., Wagner, M. M., Young, M. F., & Brewer, R. A. (2009). English Language learning in game-based virtual worlds. *The Modern Language Journal*, *93* , 489-511. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/25612228

Appendix A

Raising Scores and Closing the Achievement Gap of ELL students in Southeastern School District (SSD)-ELL Teachers

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Introduction:

You are invited to participate in a research study investigating research-based best practices recommended to raise the achievement of English Language Learners (ELL) and close the achievement gap between non-ELL and ELL students in Southeastern School District (SSD). This study is being conducted by Carrie Jones, Traci Sloss, and Janet Wallace, graduate students in the College of Education at Lipscomb University under the supervision of Dr. Tammy Shutt, a faculty member in the Department of Education. You were selected as a possible participant in this research because of your position as an ELL teacher in Southeastern School District. Please read this form and ask questions before you agree to be in the study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to determine research-based best practices that will increase the academic achievement and growth of the Limited English Proficient (LEP) population and decrease the gap between LEP and non-LEP students. Research-based best practices that increase academic achievement and growth of LEP students will be determined through analyzing available national, regional, and local research. The researchers will also identify the successful practices currently in place in Southeastern School District that are having the most academic success and growth with the LEP population. In addition, the researchers will determine the districts in Middle Tennessee that are having significant growth with the LEP population and identify the best practices being implemented to attain such growth. Approximately 30 people are expected to participate in this research. This includes the teachers and the ELL director from SSD and ELL directors from districts that have shown improvement in gap closure for the LEP subgroup.

Procedures:

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire to help the researchers identify the best practices that you believe effectively increase the academic achievement and growth of ELL students. The questionnaire will take about 10 minutes to complete. You will also be asked to submit copies of your lesson plans from August 2013 to November 2013. The purpose is to identify the best practices that you use with your ELL students. This will take about 30 minutes in order to make the copies, place them in a provided envelope, and deliver the envelope to the ELL Director of SSD's office. The other option would be to electronically copy the lesson plans to a provided flash drive and deliver the flash drive to the ELL Director of SSD's office. This study will take approximately nine months to complete, with the ELL teacher participants giving about 40 minutes of his or her time over two sessions. The first being the questionnaire which will take about 10 minutes and the second interval is the turning in of lesson plans which will take about 30 minutes to complete.

Risks and Benefits of being in the study:

The study has minimal risks. First, it is very unlikely that the participants may feel discomfort due to the time that it will take to complete the questionnaire. Second, it is unlikely but possible that the participants may feel discomfort in turning in lesson plans for analysis. The researchers will terminate the study if the participants believe that the time taken to provide the information outweighs the benefits of identifying the best practices that will increase the academic achievement and growth of ELL students in SSD.

The benefits to participate are that the researchers will identify best practices currently being implemented that achieve high academic success with ELL students. The researchers will also provide recommendations of the researched-based best practices that could be implemented that will gain higher academic achievement and growth of ELL students.

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained in this study will not be linked back to you in any way; your results will be kept confidential. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable and only group data will be presented. The research data provided by the teachers will remain in a locked file cabinet and in a password protected electronic data storage in the researchers' home and only Carrie Jones, Traci Sloss, Janet Wallace, and our advisor will have access to the records while we work on this project. We will finish analyzing the data by July 2014. The data will remain locked up and, after two years, we will then destroy all data.

Voluntary nature of the study:

Participation in this research study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relations with Southeastern School District or Lipscomb University in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free to stop at any time without affecting these relationships.

New Information:

If, during the course of this research study we learn about new findings that might influence your willingness to continue participating in the study, we will inform you of these findings.

Contacts and questions:

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of the researchers, Carrie Jones at XXX-XXX-XXXX or Traci Sloss at XXX-XXX-XXXX or Janet Wallace at XXX-XXX-XXXX. You may ask questions now, or if you have any additional questions later, the faculty advisor, Dr. Tammy Shutt at XXX-XXX-XXXX, will be happy to answer them. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may also contact Dr. Roger Wiemers, Chair of the Lipscomb University Institutional Review Board, roger.wiemers@lipscomb.edu.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read this information and your questions have been answered. Even after signing this form, please know that you may withdraw from the study at any time.

_____

I consent to participate in the study.

_____

Signature of Participant/ Date

_____

Signature of Researcher/ Date

Appendix B

Raising Scores and Closing the Achievement Gap of ELL-ELL Directors

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Introduction:

You are invited to participate in a research study investigating research-based best practices recommended to raise the achievement of English Language Learners (ELL) and close the achievement gap between non-ELL and ELL students. This study is being conducted by Carrie Jones, Traci Sloss, and Janet Wallace, graduate students in the College of Education at Lipscomb University under the supervision of Dr. Tammy Shutt, a faculty member in the Department of Education. You were selected as a possible participant in this research because of your position as an ELL Director and because your school district has shown that your ELL population has made significant growth on TCAP from 2010-2013. Please read this form and ask questions before you agree to be in the study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to determine research-based best practices that will increase the academic achievement and growth of the Limited English Proficient (LEP) population and decrease the gap between LEP and non-LEP students. Research-based best practices that increase academic achievement and growth of LEP students will be determined through analyzing available national, regional, and local research. The researchers will also identify the successful practices currently in place in a southeastern school district, that will be called SSD, that are having the most academic success and growth with the LEP population. In addition, the researchers will determine the districts in Middle Tennessee that are having significant growth with the LEP population and identify the best practices being implemented to attain such growth. Approximately 30 people are expected to participate in this research including ELL directors and ELL teachers.

Procedures:

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire to help the researchers identify the best practices that you believe effectively increase the academic achievement and growth of ELL students within your district. The questionnaire will take about 10 minutes to complete. This study will take approximately nine months to complete, with the ELL Director participants giving about 10 minutes of his or her time in a one-time questionnaire.

Risks and Benefits of being in the study:

The study has minimal risks. First, it is unlikely but possible that the participants may feel discomfort due to the time that it will take to complete the questionnaire. The researchers will terminate the study if the participants believe that the time taken to provide the information outweighs the benefits of identifying the best practices that will increase the academic achievement and growth of ELL students.

The benefits to participate are that the researchers will identify best practices currently being implemented that achieve high academic success with ELL students. The researchers will also provide recommendations of the researched-based best practices that

could be implemented that will gain higher academic achievement and growth of ELL students.

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained in connection with this research study that can be identified with you will be disclosed only with your permission; your results will be kept confidential. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable and only group data will be presented. The research data provided by the ELL Directors will remain in a locked file cabinet and in a password protected electronic data storage in the researchers' home and only Carrie Jones, Traci Sloss, Janet Wallace, and our advisor will have access to the records while we work on this project. We will finish analyzing the data by July 2014. The data will remain locked up and, after two years, we will then destroy all original reports and identifying information that can be linked back to you.

Voluntary nature of the study:

Participation in this research study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relations with Lipscomb University in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free to stop at any time without affecting these relationships.

New Information:

If, during the course of this research study we learn about new findings that might influence your willingness to continue participating in the study, we will inform you of these findings.

Contacts and questions:

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of the researchers, Carrie Jones at XXX-XXX-XXXX or Traci Sloss at XXX-XXX-XXXX or Janet Wallace at XXX-XXX-XXXX. You may ask questions now, or if you have any additional questions later, the faculty advisor, Dr. Tammy Shutt at XXX-XXX-XXXX, will be happy to answer them. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may also contact Dr. Roger Wiemers, Chair of the Lipscomb University Institutional Review Board, roger.wiemers@lipscomb.edu. You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read this information and your questions have been answered. Even after signing this form, please know that you may withdraw from the study at any time.

_____

I consent to participate in the study.

_____

Signature of Participant/ Date

_____

Signature of Researcher/ Date

Appendix C

Raising Scores and Closing the Achievement Gap of ELL-ELL Director of Southeastern School District (SSD)

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Introduction:
You are invited to participate in a research study investigating research-based best practices recommended to raise the achievement of English Language Learners (ELL) and close the achievement gap between non-ELL and ELL students in Southeastern School District (SSD). This study is being conducted by Carrie Jones, Traci Sloss, and Janet Wallace, graduate students in the College of Education at Lipscomb University under the supervision of Dr. Tammy Shutt, a faculty member in the Department of Education. You were selected as a possible participant in this research because of your position as the ELL Director in Southeastern School District. Please read this form and ask questions before you agree to participate in the study.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to determine research-based best practices that will increase the academic achievement and growth of the Limited English Proficient (LEP) population and decrease the gap between LEP and non-LEP students. Research-based best practices that increase academic achievement and growth of LEP students will be determined through analyzing available national, regional, and local research. The researchers will also identify the successful practices currently in place in Southeastern School District that are having the most academic success and growth with the LEP population. In addition, the researchers will determine the school districts in Middle Tennessee that are having significant growth with the LEP population and identify the best practices being implemented to attain such growth. Approximately 30 people are expected to participate in this research. This includes the teachers and the ELL director from SSD and ELL directors from districts that have shown improvement in gap closure for the LEP subgroup.

Procedures:
If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in an interview to help the researchers identify the best practices that you believe effectively increase the academic achievement and growth of ELL students and the implementations of strategies and professional developments that have occurred in SSD. The interview will take about 30 minutes to complete. This study will take approximately nine months to complete, with the ELL Director of SSD giving about 30 minutes of his time in one session.

Risks and Benefits of being in the study:
The study has minimal risks. First, it is very unlikely that the participant may feel discomfort due to the time that it will take to complete the interview. Second, it is unlikely but possible that the participants may feel discomfort in answering the questions during the interview. The researchers will terminate the study if the participant believes that the time taken to provide the information outweighs the benefits of identifying the best practices that will increase the academic achievement and growth of ELL students in SSD.

The benefits to participate are that the researchers will identify best practices currently being implemented that achieve high academic success with ELL students. The researchers will also provide recommendations of the researched-based best practices that could be implemented that will gain higher academic achievement and growth of ELL students.

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained in connection with this research study that can be identified with you will be disclosed only with your permission; your results will be kept confidential. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable and only group data will be presented. The research data provided by the teachers will remain in a locked file cabinet and in a password protected electronic data storage in the researchers' home and only Carrie Jones, Traci Sloss, Janet Wallace, and our advisor will have access to the records while we work on this project. We will finish analyzing the data by July 2014. The data will remain locked up and, after two years, we will then destroy all original reports and identifying information that can be linked back to you.

Voluntary nature of the study:

Participation in this research study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relations with Southeastern School District or Lipscomb University in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free to stop at any time without affecting these relationships.

New Information:

If, during the course of this research study we learn about new findings that might influence your willingness to continue participating in the study, we will inform you of these findings.

Contacts and questions:

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of the researchers, Carrie Jones at XXX-XXX-XXXX or Traci Sloss at XXX-XXX-XXXX or Janet Wallace at XXX-XXX-XXXX. You may ask questions now, or if you have any additional questions later, the faculty advisor, Dr. Tammy Shutt at XXX-XXX-XXXX, will be happy to answer them. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may also contact Dr. Roger Wiemers, Chair of the Lipscomb University Institutional Review Board, roger.wiemers@lipscomb.edu.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read this information and your questions have been answered. Even after signing this form, please know that you may withdraw from the study at any time.

_____

I consent to participate in the study.

_____

Signature of Participant/ Date

_____

Signature of Researcher/ Date

Appendix D

ELL Teacher Questionnaire

1. Ranking Best Practices

In the first column, fifteen best practices are listed. In the second column, please rank those best practices in order based on which ones you believe are most effective in reducing the academic achievement gap and increasing the academic growth of ELL students. Please rank them from 1 to 15. (1 being the most effective to 15 being the least effective) In the third column, please justify your rankings. Please explain the pros and cons about each best practice related to ELL instruction.

Best Practice	Ranking 1-15	Explanation
Activating prior knowledge and building background knowledge		
Comprehensible input-students learning English through listening and reading/teachers using appropriate techniques to make concepts clear		
Content objectives posted and drive instruction		
Continual review of vocabulary and content		
Cooperative learning/student interaction		

Differentiated instruction		
Explicit instruction		
Formative assessments		
Language objectives-reading, writing, listening, and speaking-being utilized with content objectives		
Repeated opportunities for practice		
Scaffolding instruction		
Teaching academic vocabulary		
Teaching conversational vocabulary		
Teaching the five essential elements of reading		

Using manipulatives/hands-on materials		

2. **Other Best Practices**
   Please list best practices (other than those listed in question one) that you implement that you believe contributes to closing the academic achievement gap and increases the academic growth of your ELL students. Please explain why you consider these important.

Other Best Practices	Why It is Important

3. **ELL Levels and Instructional Models**
   In column one, the different levels of ELLs are listed. In column two, the different instructional models that could be used are listed. Please circle the instructional model that you believe works best for each level of ELL. If an instructional model that you believe is a best practice is not listed, please write the model in beside "other." Finally, in column three, please explain why you believe that instructional model is best for that level of ELL.

ELL Level	Instructional Model	Explanation
Newcomer	Structured English Immersion Sheltered Instruction Bilingual Push-in Pullout Other:	
Active	Structured English Immersion Sheltered Instruction Bilingual Push-in Pullout Other:	
Transition 1 (T1)	Structured English Immersion Sheltered Instruction Bilingual Push-in Pullout Other:	
Transition 2 (T2)	Structured English Immersion Sheltered Instruction Bilingual Push-in Pullout Other:	

4. **Professional Development in Your District**
   Please list the top five professional development sessions that you have attended in your district that have helped you to close the academic achievement gap and increase academic growth with your ELLs. Please explain how the professional development was useful.

Professional Development	Reason It was Useful

5. **Professional Development that You Believe is Needed**
   Please list professional development sessions that you believe the district should provide teachers to help close the academic achievement gap and increase academic growth of ELLs. Please explain why the professional development is needed.

Professional Development	Reason It is Needed

Demographics

Finally, please complete the following demographic information. All information is confidential.

Gender:

Ethnicity:

Number of years as an ELL teacher:

Total number of years as a teacher:

Highest level degree attained:

College major(s) attained:

Appendix E

ELL Director Questionnaire

1. **Ranking Best Practices**
   In the first column, fifteen best practices are listed. In the second column, please rank the following best practices in order based on which ones you believe are most effective in reducing the academic achievement gap and increasing the academic growth of ELL students. Please rank them from 1 to 15. (1 being the most effective to 15 being the least effective) In the third column, please justify your rankings. Please explain the pros and cons about each best practice related to ELL instruction.

Best Practice	Ranking 1-15	Explanation
Activating prior knowledge and building background knowledge		
Comprehensible input-students learning English through listening and reading/teachers using appropriate techniques to make concepts clear		
Content objectives posted and drive instruction		
Continual review of vocabulary and content		

Cooperative learning/student interaction		
Differentiated instruction		
Explicit instruction		
Formative assessments		
Language objectives-reading, writing, listening, and speaking-being utilized with content objectives		
Repeated opportunities for practice		
Scaffolding instruction		
Teaching academic vocabulary		
Teaching conversational vocabulary		

Teaching the five essential elements of reading		
Using manipulatives/hands-on materials		

2. **Best Practices – Other**
   Please list best practices (other than those listed in question one) that are implemented in your district that you believe contribute to the closing the academic achievement gap and increase the academic growth of your ELL students. Please explain why you consider these important.

Other Best Practices	Why It is Important

3. **ELL Levels and Instructional Models**
   In column one, the different levels of ELLs are listed. In column two, the different instructional models that could be used are listed. Please circle the instructional model that you believe works best for each level of ELL. If an instructional model that you believe is a best practice and is not listed, please write the name of the model beside "other." Finally, in column three, please explain why you believe the instructional model circled is best for that level of ELL.

ELL Level	Instructional Model	Explanation
Newcomer	Structured English Immersion Sheltered Instruction Bilingual Push-in Pullout Other:	
Active	Structured English Immersion Sheltered Instruction Bilingual Push-in Pullout Other:	
Transition 1 (T1)	Structured English Immersion Sheltered Instruction Bilingual Push-in Pullout Other:	
Transition 2 (T2)	Structured English Immersion Sheltered Instruction Bilingual Push-in Pullout Other:	

4. **Professional Development Provided**
   Please list the top five professional development sessions <u>that the district has provided</u> ELL teachers to help to close the academic achievement gap

and increase academic growth with ELLs. Please explain why you believe the professional development was useful to teachers.

Professional Development	Reason It was Useful

Demographics

Finally, please complete the following demographic information. All information is confidential.

Gender:

Ethnicity:

Number of years as an ELL teacher:

Total number of years as a teacher:

Highest level degree attained:

College major(s) attained:

Appendix F

Interview Questions for Southeastern School District's ELL Director

1. Please identify the professional development (PD) offered to ELL teachers 2010-2013. How were these PD opportunities selected and why?

2. How is the implementation of the PDs monitored?

3. Please explain the activities that occur during your district ELL meetings.

4. What are the best practices that the teachers in your district implement?

5. Describe the data of the ELL students. What have you noticed from the 2010 school year to the 2013 school year?

6. Describe the varying levels of ELL students in your district.

7. Describe the different models of instruction that are implemented with ELL students in your district.

8. Describe how the varying levels of ELL students are placed into the different models of instruction?

9. What professional development do you believe is needed to support the ELL teachers in your district? Explain why.

10. What best practices do you believe ELL teachers should be using with ELL students to have positive academic achievement and growth with ELLs?

Appendix G

SSD Lesson Plan Template Teacher: Date: Title of Lesson:	Academic Vocabulary:
How will I activate prior knowledge or build background knowledge?	Essential Question/Driving Questions:
Students will engage in: ☐ independent activities ☐ pairing ☐ centers ☐ cooperative learning ☐ hands-on ☐ lecture ☐ peer tutoring ☐ whole group instruction ☐ visuals ☐ technology integration ☐ simulations ☐ project based learning ☐ Inquiry based ☐ Data Driven Instruction ☐ Other:	Standard(s):
Differentiated Plan: How will you differentiate for the varying levels of learners?	SIOP: What SIOP best practices will be implemented within this lesson?
Literary Focus:	Writing Focus:
Enrichment:	Homework/Continual Review of Vocabulary and Content:
Collaboration: Who did you co-plan this lesson with?	Cross-Curricular Connections:
REFLECTION (be detailed and provide specific information): A. What happened during my lesson? B. How effective was my lesson design and teaching and how do you know? C. What evidence can I show about my students' learning?	

D. How effective was my assessment plan for getting information about my student's learning? E. How did I do meeting my desired results for this lesson? F. What are my next steps to improve student learning? G. What professional development do you need to support your lesson implementation? H. Did the SIOP strategies increase the achievement of ELs within this lesson? What is my evidence?	

Appendix H:

NIH Certificates of Completion

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Carrie Jones** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 09/02/2013

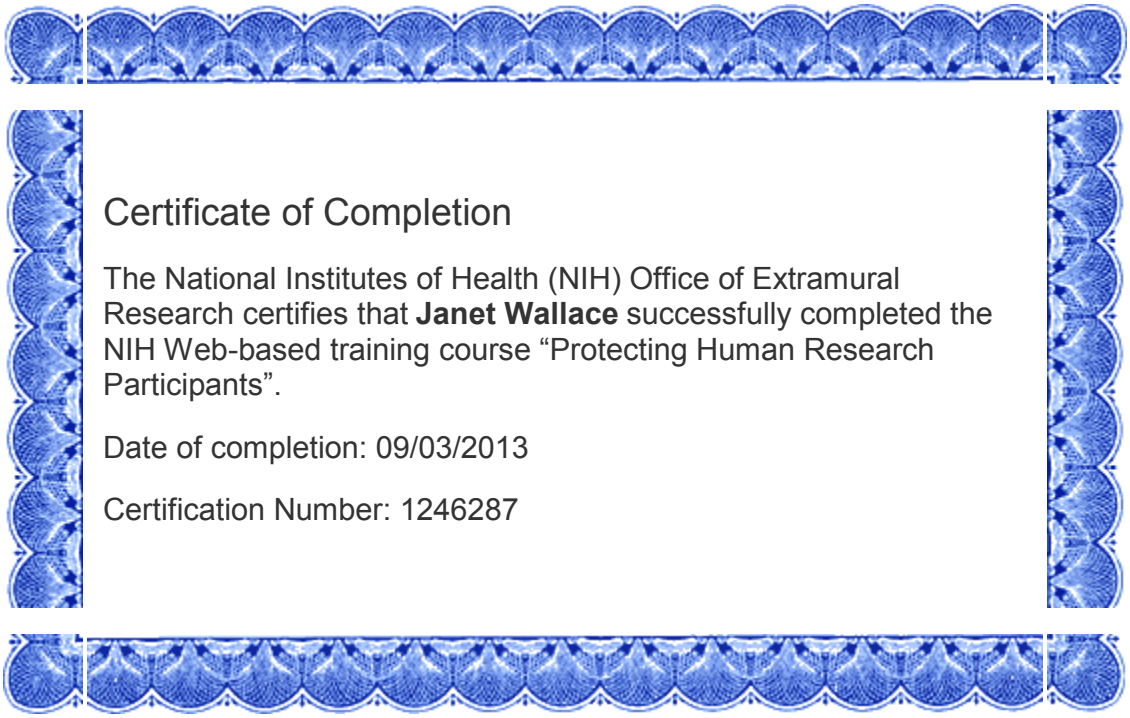
Certification Number: 1243355

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Traci Sloss** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 09/28/2013

Certification Number: 1284553



Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Janet Wallace** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course “Protecting Human Research Participants”.

Date of completion: 09/03/2013

Certification Number: 1246287

Appendix I

IRB Status Letter

LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board

Status of Research Review

Date: 11/20/13

Title of Project: *Research-Based Best Practices for Closing the Achievement Gap between English Language Learners and Non-English Language Learners in _____ District*

Principal Investigator(s) and Co-Investigator(s): Carrie Jones, Traci Sloss, Janet Wallace

☐ X Research approved.

☐ Conditional approval. (*See attachment.*)

☐ Committee requests further information before a decision can be made.

☐ This proposal has been denied.

The IRB has met and reviewed your project proposal, and its decision is marked above. Please review the appropriate text below for the decision that was rendered regarding your proposal:

Research approved: If your protocol has been approved, please note that your project has IRB approval from today for a period of one year and you are free to proceed with data collection. If this study continues unchanged for longer than one year, you will need to submit a ***Request for Project Continuation*** form. If this study continues for more than one year and there are changes to the research design or data that is collected, you will need to submit a ***Request for Amendment to Approved Research*** form. The IRB reserves the right to observe, review and evaluate this study and its procedures during the course of the study.

Conditional approval: If conditional approval is granted, you are allowed to proceed with data collection provided that the required modifications (see attached) are in place. You will need to submit *a* ***Request for Amendment to Approved Research*** form within 30 days. If this study continues unchanged from that amended protocol for more than one year, you will need to submit a *Request for* ***Project Continuation*** form. If this study continues for more than one year and there are changes to the research design or data that is collected, you will need to submit a ***Request for Amendment to Approved***

Research form.

Committee requests further information: Please see the attached document and use it to guide required modifications, then re-submit your request.

This proposal has been denied: See the attached document for an explanation of why your proposal has been denied.

_____Roger W. Wiemers_____

Roger Wiemers, Ed.D

Chair, Lipscomb University Institutional Review Board

Comments: Based on a review by Tom Seals