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Reaching the Standard: An Action Research Study On Standards-Based Grading Practices and English Learners

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REACHING THE STANDARD: AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY ON
STANDARDS-BASED GRADING PRACTICES AND ENGLISH LEARNERS

By

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my extended family on Guam, for continuing to be my support system in times of need; to my parents Ron and Alice, for instilling in me the desire for learning; to my younger brothers Aaron and Trevor, for inspiring me to be better than my previous self; and to my students, for driving me to be a better teacher each and every day.

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ABSTRACT

With the advent of standards-based education and its focus on English proficiency, English learners are at-risk of falling further behind when compared to their English adept peers because educators find themselves ill-equipped to meet the rigorous demands of such a curricular shift. This study aimed to identify pedagogical practices that bolster a standards-based grading (SBG) curriculum for sheltered English learners. Qualitative data from teacher participants and students, such as interviews and observations, were used to create a novel curriculum for sheltered English learners, centered on standards-based grading practices, and examine that curriculum's effectiveness in helping teachers and their sheltered English learner students meet the challenges of a standards-based education.

Results show specific sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP) strategies became integral to an SBG curriculum. Additionally, the opportunity to collaborate increased perceived confidence among teachers, encouraging them to further collaborate on other standards. Despite time being an issue among students concerning advanced proficiency, students discussed benefits to their basic knowledge and understanding. Implications of these findings are discussed relative to assisting other sheltered EL teachers struggling to implement an SBG curriculum in their classrooms, and essential actions are discussed relative to a school or district's implementation success.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	9
Problem of Practice	10
Theoretical Framework	14
Research Questions	17
Researcher Positionality	19
Research Design	20
Significance of the Study.....	24
Limitations of the Study	26
Organization of the Dissertation.....	27
Glossary of Terms	27
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	29
Theoretical Framework	31
Historical Perspectives	34
Related Research	39
Summary.....	55

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	57
Research Design	58
Role of the Researcher.....	60
Research Setting	61
Data Collection Methods.....	63
Data Analysis.....	68
Summary.....	71
CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA	73
Intervention/Strategy	74
General Findings/Results.....	74
Analysis of Data	97
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	102
REFERENCES	111
APPENDIX A: OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL.....	120
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL	122
APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT JOURNAL PROMPTS	125
APPENDIX D: PARENT CONSENT FORMS.....	126
APPENDIX E: RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM	128
APPENDIX F: IRB APPROVAL	130
APPENDIX G: PROFICIENCY SCALE	132
APPENDIX H: COMMON SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT	136

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 <i>Study Implementation Schedule</i>	67
Table 4.1 <i>SIOP Strategies Observed During Teacher Discussions</i>	76
Table 4.2 <i>SIOP Strategies Identified by Participant</i>	81
Table 4.3 <i>SBG Unit Effectiveness as observed in the Participant Journals</i>	86
Table A.1 <i>Observational Protocol</i>	120
Table B.1 <i>Interview Protocol</i>	122
Table G.1 <i>Proficiency Scale</i>	132

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

I currently work as a public classroom teacher on the island of Guam, which is a U.S. island territory in the Western Pacific. With its close proximity to Asia and the Pacific basin, the island of Guam is home to 160,000 diverse people, who speak either English, Tagalog, CHamoru (the native language and culture), one of several East Asian languages, or one of several Micronesian languages. Thus, our public schools' English learner (EL) classrooms reflect the vast linguistic and cultural diversity of the island's population.

To illustrate the instructional challenge EL teachers face, I enter the EL sheltered classroom with eight multiage students: three Tagalog-speaking students, two Chuukese-speaking students, one Palauan-speaking student, one Korean-speaking student, and one Chinese-speaking student. Furthermore, the students have varying proficiencies in English: three are proficient in reading and writing; two are proficient in speaking and listening; two are at the preproduction stage and can read and write simple sentences; and one has no formal schooling. As the school year continues, new students with varying abilities and home languages continue to enter, growing the class count to 15 students in total, and currently, no adopted bilingual texts for these students and—at least at my school—no culture of collaboration among EL teachers exist. In addition, my school district is shifting to a greater focus on standards-based grading (SBG). According to Marzano and Heflebower (2011), SBG is defined as measuring a student's performance against defined topics or objectives. For this

reason, each content area would need to select standards for each quarter of the school year to become priority standards, which would guide quarterly instruction and assessment. Standards are selected from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). As an example, one of the district priority reading standards states that students would have to “[d]etermine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings [and] analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone” (CCSS Initiative, 2019). As a district priority standard, all English language arts teachers, including sheltered EL teachers, are expected to teach to the standard. How can a single teacher have ELs reach a demanding standard when most sheltered ELs do not understand a majority of the words in a grade-level text? Thus, my work involves teaching highly diverse ELs the rigorous priority standards, with little district guidance, a lack of curricular resources, and an absence of a formal collaborative structure among EL teachers.

Problem of Practice

My problem of practice centers on the implementation of SBG with a diverse, secondary, and sheltered EL population. Currently, at the district-level, there is an absence of a curricular framework to guide the effective implementation of SBG with sheltered ELs.

In my school district, students come from one of 21 ethnic groups with varying abilities in the English language, and the EL population has increased by 4,403 students to 18,690 students, or 63%, of total enrollment (Guam Department of Education [GDOE], 2019). At the school where I teach, more than half, or 53.6%, of the student population is under the EL program and receiving services (GDOE, 2019), and the number of students in Program 3 (sheltered instruction) has increased from 88 in the previous year to 111 (John F. Kennedy High School [JFKHS], 2019).

Currently, the local district does not track achievement data for ELs on standardized assessments. Nevertheless, available data show the EL population in the district and at schools comprises a majority. Furthermore, as the district continues with the implementation of SBG informed by CCSS, formal summative assessments of district priority standards will come into fruition, and the majority-holding EL population will be ill-prepared for such rigorous assessments due to the cognitive demands of the CCSS.

State frameworks on ELs and the CCSS are limited due to their generalized nature, and guidance that speaks to the state district's goal of equity and recognition of EL populations lacks specific interventions or strategies in place to further assist teachers in implementation. Although Fairburns and Jones-Vo's (2016) ENGAGE model of EL instruction provides specific guidance, the purely theoretical stance of their approach without a necessary tether to praxis should be taken lightly, as the authors note the framework as a starting point from which teachers can adapt to individual school circumstances. In this study's case, the circumstance is the needs of sheltered ELs, rather than the needs of mainstreamed ELs in the general education class, as the aforementioned model's focus appears to be. Nonetheless, Fairburns and Jones-Vo's model provides considerations for a collaborative process of EL teachers. Because SBG derives its standards from CCSS, a discussion of the relationship between CCSS and the EL population, necessary to further outline the problem of practice, follows.

The CCSS increased academic and language rigor for ELs. Despite having multiple language skills embedded in a single standard (Wolf et al., 2014), ELs are expected to perform like their grade-level peers (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). In addition,

the challenge for ELs is their multimodal role of learning academic content while developing their English skills simultaneously and utilizing higher-order language skills while executing complex language-based tasks (Wolf et al., 2014). For this reason, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers (2010a) commented that “the development of native like proficiency in English takes many years and will not be achieved by all ELLs [English Language Learners] especially if they start schooling in the US in the later grades” (p. 1). Thus, the question remains on how to meet the academic needs of ELs in an SBG classroom that utilizes CCSS?

With the revelation that ELs need many years to master the academic language, Manley and Hawkins (2012) additionally found that EL and bilingual classrooms were not addressing the rigor of the CCSS because teachers mentioned language deficits and curriculum demands as major obstacles. Samson and Collins (2012) commented, “the absence of increased teacher knowledge, skills, and support to address the needs of English language learners” will lead to a gap in standardized assessment data (p. 7). However, such a gap can be avoided through comprehensible coursework that prepares ELs for postsecondary education or the workplace “through specific pedagogical techniques and additional resources” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p. 2), yet federal government entities have yet to indicate effective techniques. Instead, the decision is left to the states. Consequently, teachers need in-service support and professional development to effectively implement CCSS regarding ELs (Avila & College, 2015; Duguay et al., 2013; Johnson & Wells, 2017; Wolf et al., 2014). Thus, if professional development is needed to implement CCSS, then

professional development is needed to implement SBG. What, then, is the best approach to professional development?

To implement effective professional development, collaboration among teachers is necessary at the school level. Johnson and Wells (2017) cited a need for “building [of] teacher social networks around best and promising practices for targeted language instruction and multicultural sensitivity” (p. 14). However, Avila and College (2015) noted the presence of an idealistic view of collaboration—a team of like-minded, agreeable people—as an obstacle to true collaboration. Contrarily, school-level facilitation of knowledge-sharing among teachers can avoid the idealistic view of collaboration. As Duguay et al. (2013) indicated, content teachers can share their knowledge of academic language and its features while language teachers can share their knowledge of language acquisition. Lee et al. (2013) additionally noted the success of ELs is dependent on the “shared responsibilities of teachers across subject areas” (p. 231). Furthermore, due to differing perceptions on the main objective, language skills, and wording of a standard, “professional support should include both regular discussions among teachers to foster consensus on the interpretation of specific standards and to support lesson planning” (Wolf et al., 2014, p. 50). Echoing the belief in the expertise of teachers, Duguay et al. (2013) noted, “many resources and recommendations emerging on best practices for instruction, assessment, and curriculum aligned with the CCSS; however, teachers will ultimately be the true experts on implementation” (p. 17). Therefore, collaboration among teachers at the school level is necessary to determine appropriate practices and techniques for the successful implementation of SBG with sheltered ELs.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study derives from two sources: Donald Schön's (1983) reflective practitioner theory and the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model advocated by Echevarria et al. (2006). I begin by reviewing the two theories and their theoretical propositions, followed by commentary of their connection to the study.

Reflective Practitioner Theory

Schön (1983) concluded that "skilled practitioners are reflective practitioners; they utilize their experience as a basis for assessing and revising existing theories of action to develop more effective action strategies" (as cited by Osterman, 1990, p. 133). To become reflective, when faced with "a problem, a discrepancy between the real and ideal, or between what occurred and what was expected, the practitioners step back and examine their actions and the reasons for their actions" (Osterman, 1990, p. 134). Thus, reflective practice has the capability to improve knowledge of professional practice and guide the study's participants to be more reflective in their collaborative actions. Osterman (1990) established the necessity of self-awareness in professional practice, "to discover those habits of belief or behavior which preserve the inadequacies of the current system and prevent the introduction of new and better approaches to education" (p. 137). Expanding on the concept of self-awareness, Ferry and Ross-Gordon (1998) commented that reflective practice develops from competencies we possess in using experience to help frame problems. Consequently, the effectiveness of the school system is predicated on the ability to be aware of inefficiencies and seek solutions, presently the absence of formal guidance in the implementation of SBG with the sheltered EL population.

However, reflective practice need not be isolated. Osterman (1990) noted that “dialogue establishes a basis for understanding, caring, and cooperation in the workplace,” leading to problem-oriented discussions that enrich understandings on professional practice (p. 139). Discussion is an aspect of reflective practice that can lead to professional development and growth. Connell (2014) espoused the idea of problem-oriented discussions by reframing reflective practice as a social activity. Because teaching occurs in complicated “perceptual fields,” Connell (2014) noted that teachers must be able to judge what matters in unfolding action (p. 20). Teachers must develop perceptual awareness “from conversational storytelling and in authentic questioning situated in these conversational stories told among teachers” (Connell, 2014, p. 20). The goal of conversational stories is “meaning making aimed at developing a professional vision, fostering subjectivity, and challenging the status quo” (Connell, 2014, p. 20). Summarily, Reflective Practitioner Theory is a means to professional growth and systematic change that has expanded capabilities when performed as a social activity among educators. Using the propositions of conversational storytelling, authentic questioning, and reflective practice, this study explored the theory’s capabilities in a collaborative atmosphere.

SIOP Model

The second part of the theoretical framework derives from the SIOP model by Echevarria et al. (2006), which developed from the need for a research-based and systematic guide for effective EL instruction. According to Echevarria et al. (2006), the “SIOP model offers a framework for teachers to present curricular content concepts to ELLs through strategies and techniques that make new information comprehensible to students” (p. 201).

Initially developed as an observation rubric, the model looks at eight components of instructional design: preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice/application, lesson delivery, and review/assessment. When planning a curriculum, any teacher can utilize the SIOP model as a reference for effective instruction, particularly because the model allows for “natural variation in classroom implementation” (Echevarria et al., 2006, p. 201). However, the researchers noted the model’s shortcomings and did not recommend it as “a panacea for the challenge of helping ELL students meet high academic standards” (Echevarria et al., 2006, p. 207). They further added, “[e]ducators need to examine the interaction between the SIOP model, teacher decision making, implementation procedures, settings, student populations, and other variables” (Echevarria et al., 2006, p. 207). Summarily, although the model is useful to guide teachers in content instruction, more research is needed to analyze the variables in the implementation of academic standards. One such variable not discussed by the researchers is the relationship between reflective teacher collaboration and the SIOP model, which was my study addressed, as I analyzed the participants’ decisions to enlighten the strategies that sheltered EL teachers utilize or find useful when planning curriculum.

Commentary on Theoretical Connections

The two sources of the framework guided the EL team’s discussion on the creation of a model for the effective design of an SBG curriculum for ELs. Moreover, the focus rests on the team product—the curricular plan and its subsequent implementation. The team product brings together the framework of SBG with the tenets of Reflective Practitioner Theory and SIOP, which both aid the teachers’ collaborative effort in the creation and development of the curricular plan (i.e., the

team product). In other words, instead of simply presenting the plan, I believe that a glimpse into the collaborative process that built the curricular plan is more beneficial for teachers seeking guidance in the implementation of SBG with sheltered ELs. To reiterate, the collaborative process is informed by the theoretical guidance of Reflective Practitioner Theory and SIOP.

Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to determine a collaborative process among sheltered EL practitioners to implement SBG with ELs. EL teachers collaboratively designed and implemented a curricular plan for a chosen standard, utilizing the SIOP model as a guide. At different stages, EL teachers evaluated the for its effectiveness, based on the tenets of Reflective Practitioner Theory and the SIOP model.

Afterwards, students evaluated the effectiveness of the plan in relation to their overall sense of success and confidence in working with the selected standard's skills.

Furthermore, the study yielded perceptions of confidence among ELs with academic tasks and among sheltered EL teachers with SBG implementation. Therefore, the following research questions were proposed:

RQ1 When designing a curriculum in collaboration, what SIOP strategies will sheltered EL teachers negotiate to effectively help diverse secondary ELs reach a selected district priority standard?

According to several researchers (Avila & College, 2015; Johnson & Wells, 2017; Lee et al., 2013; Wolf et al., 2014), collaboration is the key to aligning standards and instruction, and in collaboration, problem-oriented discussions (Connell, 2014; Schön, 1983) informed by the SIOP model can develop to inform professional development. Moreover, as previously mentioned, Echevarria et al. (2006) advocated for the

exploration of variables that interact with the SIOP model, such as teacher decision making and collaboration.

RQ2 How effective is the teacher collaborative process in SBG curricular planning designed to support ELs?

Consistent discussion and collaborative reflection are necessary pieces in the implementation of standards (Wolf et al., 2014). In tandem with RQ1, RQ2 continues the collaborative and reflective discussions as an afterthought to the curricular implementation. Further, according to Ma et al. (2018), dissertations are designed to strengthen and inform policy and foster colleagues' learning. Policy cannot be informed or challenged without incorporating reflection into practice (Osterman, 1990). As teachers, we need to know that an instructional practice is sound—that it affects student learning. The following subquestions also sought to better inform policy by seeking detailed descriptions, as advised by Belzer and Ryan (2013), as well as catalyzing problem-oriented discussions based on the work of Schön (1983) and Connell (2014).

RQ2a What are the EL team's perceptions on the effectiveness of the process in helping to bolster teachers' confidence in SBG implementation?

RQ2b What are the ELs' perceptions on the effectiveness of the process in helping to develop their confidence in academic and language skills?

Such a study was necessary when moving forward with my local school district's goal of full implementation of SBG. The priority standards were by grade level and content area; thus, the expectation was that students are proficient in the English language to reach grade level and content area standards, leaving those who lack English proficiency by the wayside. Without formal guidance for EL teachers on

SBG implementation with the marginalized EL population, the study was attempting to place the academic needs of ELs at the forefront, in an effort to inform policy and foster communication and collaboration among EL educators within the local school, and hopefully, provide a blueprint for EL teachers in the district.

Researcher Positionality

Positionality essentially asks action researchers to evaluate their relationship with a study's participants and setting, positioning themselves as an insider or an outsider (Herr & Anderson, 2015). The importance of positionality stems from the need for valid research and trustworthy results (Herr & Anderson, 2015). As an EL teacher at the school, I was an insider, like those working with other insiders to “reculture organizations into professional learning communities” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 46). My interest included instructing ELs in the best method possible, rendering the students stakeholders in the study. As Herr and Anderson (2015) noted, an action researcher needs to identify their background in relation to the study. I am an English-speaking Filipino son born and raised on Guam, so I do not have similar experiences with my students. However, due to my English-speaking ability and my role as a teacher, I believe I have a position of authority when compared to my students. Therefore, I had to assure my students about the absence of any rewards or punishments when participating or declining in the study.

Moreover, my fellow educators were collaborating in the study, so as to move from isolated EL teachers to a collaborative and reflective professional learning community (PLC, Herr & Anderson, 2015). Thus, I took part in discussions and provided input and guidance where needed, but other members of the EL team were also observed. In addition, I believe the idealistic view of collaboration as cited by Avila and College (2015) provides a barrier, in that I tended to collaborate with

teachers that are agreeable in my opinion—that is, colleagues with whom I have a working relationship with due to our common work ethic and values. Thus, working with unfamiliar teachers was a challenge. In addition, Herr and Anderson (2015) commented further that insider collaborative research requires determining the power relations present and acknowledging those who are excluded from collaboration. In this case, the senior teacher had the most authority in the eyes of the novice teachers, with only less than 6 years of teaching experience, so the potential for the senior teacher to “hijack” the conversation was relevant. To clarify, I considered myself to be a novice teacher with 6 years of teaching experience. However, the participating teacher had 1 year less of experience, so we were relative equals, yet I had to ensure that the participating teacher’s opinions were always considered in discussions. Lastly, to address the issue of exclusion, the study focused on sheltered EL teachers and sheltered instruction, so I excluded all other general education teachers.

Research Design

The study utilized an action research, case study approach to observe the collaborative process of sheltered EL teachers in implementing a curricular plan at one school. Efron and Ravid (2013) made note of the fact that a teacher can explore many options for action research that provides greater insight into the areas of practice, theory, and research in this case, the collaborative decision-making process of sheltered EL teachers. Furthermore, a case study design can provide an in-depth analysis of a case, or process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and thus give greater insight into the details of collaboration. I collected qualitative data through observations, individual interviews, focus group interviews, and participant journals. subsequently analyzed using emergent thematic coding (Creswell, 2006; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Design and Data Collection

As a research methodology, action research coincided with the intricacies of the teaching profession. Efron and Ravid (2013) commented that “[p]ractitioners investigate systematically, reflectively, and critically using strategies that are appropriate for their practice,” in order to improve their practice (p. 3). Action research has the researcher not only as an outside observer, but also a participant in creating new knowledge and understandings. Rust and Meyers (2003) advised action researchers to begin with questions about their classroom. Thus, the question or issue was the lack of clarity or formal guidance on the implementation of SBG in sheltered EL classrooms.

The study benefited from a case study approach because I sought to provide an in-depth understanding of the collaborative process among sheltered EL teachers at one school (Creswell, 2006). Thus, the unit of analysis and the limited, or bounded, nature of this study on sheltered EL teachers at one school justified the use of a case study research design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Furthermore, according to Creswell and Creswell (2018), such an in-depth understanding can derive from qualitative data instruments common to all qualitative research designs: interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials. However, a series of interviews and observations had more potential for this study.

Qualitative data sources included observations, individual and group interviews, and participant journals. Observations are advantageous because I had first-hand experience, recorded information as it occurred, and noticed unusual aspects; and interviews were advantageous because they provided data that is not easily observed or expressed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Semi-structured observations of the EL team's meetings and conversations addressed RQ1 by providing a glimpse into the collaborative decision-making process when teachers develop a sheltered curriculum. In addition, highly structured individual interviews with teachers conducted before and during instruction yielded data from the conversational storytelling and authentic questioning that occurred among the teachers, based on tenets from the reflective practitioner theory (Connell, 2018). In addition, participant journals were another source of data for RQ2 by presenting a glimpse into the curricular plan's effectiveness in classroom implementation. At the conclusion of the instruction, semistructured focus group interviews with the participating teachers and selected students on their perceptions on the efficacy of the collaborative process in relation to their confidence levels provided an additional reflective aspect to the study, addressing RQ2a and RQ2b.

Furthermore, teachers had eight meetings before instruction to select a CCSS standard and to develop the subsequent instructional plan. The teachers had five meetings during instruction to discuss, or tell stories about (Connell, 2018) student progress and any other salient points pertinent to implementation. During the meetings, teachers brought in instructional resources and their experiences to develop the plan. Moreover, the lack of defined expectations was not to disrupt the naturalistic settings of the observation because further prescribed interventions risk skewed results.

Context

The study took place on the island of Guam, which is a U.S. island territory in the Western Pacific. At the time of the study, Guam was home to 160,000 people, who spoke either English, Filipino, CHamoru (the native language and culture), one of the East Asian languages, or one of several Micronesian languages. Many were

migrants from various nations in Oceania and East Asia, who have entry-level jobs in tourism, dining, or construction.

The research site was located in central Guam and in a relatively urbanized area of the island. Migrant students had a range of experiences from formal schooling to limited schooling. Teachers of sheltered ELs did not meet systematically and only with content areas. Thus, there was no alignment among EL teachers with content and instruction.

Participants

The participants of the study included one sheltered EL teacher and me, as I also instructed sheltered ELs and positioned myself as an insider working with other insiders. Both teachers were Filipino and had less than 7 years of teaching experience in a sheltered EL classroom. The sheltered EL teacher-participant was bilingual, speaking Tagalog and English. In addition to the sheltered EL teacher-participant's class, the study involved my EL class, which was multiracial and multilingual—the prominent ethnicities being Chinese, Filipino, and Chuukese. Discussion on sampling is provided in Chapter 3.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using emergent thematic coding as an ongoing, simultaneous process during data collection. I focused on pertinent data to develop a small number of codes, which were then categorized into larger, overarching themes to address the research questions (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Analyzing the data in this way surfaced common themes and considerations when undertaking the curriculum development of SBG. As Echevarria et al. (2006) noted, a deductive analytic approach enabled exploration of the interaction between SIOP, teacher decision-making, and implementation. After collecting data through the

collaborative and reflective teacher discussions, I analyzed the coded data in relation to an existing model—SIOP. Further details are discussed in Chapter 3.

Significance of the Study

Adams and Bell (2016) discussed the goal of social justice as inclusivity of all social groups, underscored by a collaborative process to shape society to meet the needs of all social groups. One social group in schools that needs to be a part of the conversation was the EL population. Samson and Collins (2012) expressed the ill-preparedness of teachers when instructing this particular school population, which in turn caused the EL population to be left behind. Thus, this action research case study sought to bring about equity and access by aiding in the professional development and readiness of teachers for the EL population. Therefore, this study can benefit teachers of ELs, particularly those with a similar context, and hopefully they can lead discussions at their schools on how to bring the needs of ELs to the school's conscience.

In action research, teachers are knowledge creators and expanders. Such a notion makes systematic research attainable, instead of research as a concept left to university researchers and seminal theorists—something far-off in the distance. To add further, Efron and Ravid (2013) commented that “[p]ractitioners investigate systematically, reflectively, and critically using strategies that are appropriate for their practice,” in order to improve their practice (p. 3). Thus, action research appears to be a more manageable task for teachers, woven into practice.

With an emphasis on profession, action research gives the ability to apply and create knowledge back into the hands of educators. According to Herr and Anderson (2015), action research needs to share the knowledge locally and beyond the specific community. However, the knowledge from this local context is not intended to be

generalized; rather, the purpose is to spark conversation about similar problems and reorient solutions to the particular context. To address the local problem of implementing SBG with ELs, the study included collaboration with the JFKHS EL teachers to formally design a protocol for an SBG EL curriculum design. Such a study is beneficial for other district EL teachers struggling to incorporate SBG into their classes. In addition, the study's findings may benefit the conversation on the introduction of rigorous standards into the EL classroom, which is lacking due to barriers caused by language deficits and curriculum demands according to Manley and Hawkins (as cited in Johnson & Wells, 2017).

Furthermore, Herr and Anderson (2015) noted the double burden of action research, which, first, seeks to act on a practice either to improve or change the practice and, second, develop knowledge about the practice. For this reason, action research actively engages the researcher and the research participants in an ongoing qualitative conversation about how to improve or change the practice (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), inspired the study's conversation on the local school community of EL teachers. In addition, when a researcher is considering the direction of the research conversation, Habermas (as cited in Herr & Anderson, 2015) provided three clear directions: a technical interest concerned with empirical facts and generalizations, a practical interest concerned with gaining understanding through interpretation, and an emancipatory interest concerned with investigating ideology and power relations. Within such considerations, action research is an epistemological practice that seeks to create community-based knowledge through critical conversations about a social practice with research participants, to generalize knowledge, understand a phenomenon, or seek societal change—in this study's case, exploring the phenomenon of EL instruction and seeking change in the instruction of ELs.

The aforementioned definition provides a stark contrast to the methods of traditional research. In traditional research, one is concerned with looking from the outside in. Action research has the researcher not only as an outside observer, but also a participant in creating new knowledge and understandings. The action researcher is concerned with solving or understanding the issues found in a community, whether it is a school or neighborhood, instead of applying knowledge to a community as traditional research entails. Thus, the issue is the lack of clarity or formal instruction on the implementation of SBG in EL classrooms. The understanding of action research as a method used to solve local issues is predicated on the notion that every setting or situation is unique and needs a unique solution (Efron & Ravid, 2013). For this reason, local EL teachers must come together to develop solutions to the issue of how to best implement SBG with ELs, in the hopes of expanding understanding of the issue across the district.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study encompass three areas: time, study sample, and teacher commitment. First, the time of the study was not ideal to discover further nuances that might affect EL achievement. The condensed timeframe of 8 weeks for this action research study only allowed for the exploration of one standard, when in reality teachers must address a combination of interacting standards. Second, limitations were present with the size of the study sample. Two teachers participated in this study based on schedule availability, curricular alignment (i.e., English 9 and 10 cover relatively similar topics), and the study's need for a sheltered English teacher. A larger sample size could have yielded differing results from those outlined in this study. Moreover, the study sample of teachers and students was not considered representative of all teachers and ELs, as the sample included sheltered English

language teachers and sheltered English learners. There are present in the school ELs who are integrated in the regular English classes due to their high proficiency. English teachers need only to accommodate and modify as needed. Lastly, teacher commitment was limited for this study based on changes brought on by the COVID pandemic, as well as additional administrative demands. Commitment to engage in the process and implement a curricular plan also may vary, and this may impact overall results.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 of this Dissertation in Practice has introduced the reader to the Problem of Practice, relevant literature, the theoretical framework, an overview of the study's design, and the study's data collection and data analysis procedures. Chapter 2 discusses the implementation of SBG with a focus on the ELA CCSS, teacher professional development of SBG, and the definition of ELs' success. Chapter 3 outlines the methodological considerations of the study to include the data collection methods and the data analysis techniques. Chapter 4 of this Dissertation in Practice describes the results of the study and its relation to the Problem of Practice. Lastly, Chapter 5 summarizes the findings and provides further considerations for future research.

Glossary of Terms

Standards-based grading (SBG): a method by which teachers measure student performance against defined topics or objectives rather than behaviors (Marzano & Heflebower, 2011).

EL team: the study's working group composed of the participant-researcher and other school-level sheltered EL teachers

Sheltered EL teacher: an educator involved in the instruction of Program 3 ELs at the school

Program 3: high school identification of an EL who needs sheltered instruction and modifications

Program 4: high school identification of an EL who is able to be mainstreamed into a regular classroom and can reach grade-level standards with accommodations.

CHAPTER 2:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter outlines literature pertinent to my study on the implementation of SBG with a diverse, secondary, and sheltered EL population. Commenting on SBG, Heflebower et al. (2014) noted an omnibus grade does not necessarily reflect a student's capabilities and knowledge. Thus, a separation of academics and behavior is needed, emphasizing rigorous standards as the academic target. Because of ELs' difficulty with a novel language and simultaneously working with rigorous standards, the purpose of the study was to determine a collaborative process among practitioners to implement SBG with ELs.

In my school district, there are key causes to the problem of practice. The emphasis on CCSS and the core content-areas presents a problem for second language teachers. Although organizing the standards in this way is logical, for second language teachers, mainstream classes are given increased attention in district curricular trainings, school meetings, and instructional planning. With the increased preeminence of mainstream classes, the perception of a trickle-down effect to other non-mainstream core classes takes root.

The ability of the mainstream classes to supersede all others is notable in my school, where the PLCs center on grade level or content area (e.g., English 9 or American Literature) and paid time is set aside PLC discussions. Thus, EL teachers, as well as special education teachers, meet within these configurations, and there is no formal collaborative structure among sheltered EL teachers. Johnson and Wells

(2017) reiterated the importance of teacher social networks in which discussions on best practices can occur. Such networks are a part of effective professional development. Thus, sheltered EL teachers' lack of communication can lead to fragmented sheltered instruction whereby individual teachers instruct and assess differently. According to Samson and Collins (2012), the absence of teacher knowledge in how to properly instruct and assess ELs will lead to gaps in learning and standardized assessments. Summarily, the causes of the problem of practice are the focus on core content classes, the absence of a collaborative structure, and the lack of communication and professional development among sheltered EL teachers. The research questions to be explored include:

1. When designing a curriculum in collaboration, what SIOP strategies will sheltered EL teachers negotiate to effectively help diverse secondary ELs reach a selected district priority standard?
2. How effective is the teacher collaborative process in SBG curricular planning designed to support ELs?
 - a. What are the EL team's perceptions on the effectiveness of the process in helping to bolster teachers' confidence in SBG implementation?
 - b. What are the ELs' perceptions on the effectiveness of the process in helping to develop their confidence in academic and language skills?

In this chapter, I explore the underlying themes of these research questions. First, I discuss the theoretical framework of the study, followed by the study's historical perspectives, namely, second language acquisition and SBG. Next, I explore the relationship between ELs and SBG, with a focus on effective practice, ELs operating within SBG, and EL success. Lastly, I expand on strategies for success, namely professional development and collaboration.

To determine these themes, I began with a root cause analysis to identify collaboration and professional development as the areas of deficiency among sheltered EL teachers. Subsequently, I began a search of ERIC's EBSCO and ProQuest databases for the terms *second language acquisition*, *common core*, and *language learner*, eventually incorporating the search terms *standards-based grading* and *professional development*. After receiving a few general results, I then initiated a search for terms related to SBG, collaboration, and professional development on the University of South Carolina's general library search engine and simultaneously catalogued the results within an annotated bibliography.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework derives from Donald Schön's (1983) reflective practitioner theory and Echevarria et al.'s (2006) SIOP model, which work well together when studying the reflectivity of teachers working to implement SBG and CCSS.

Reflective Practitioner Theory

Schön (1983) discussed the power of a reflective practitioner to improve their work by using experiential knowledge to discover and implement actionable strategies or interventions (as cited in Osterman, 1990). Discussing Schön's work, Osterman (1990) noted the discrepancy between the real and ideal as the driving force for a reflective practitioner to build self-awareness, which is accomplished by pondering actions one can take to realize the ideal. Osterman (1990) further established the necessity of self-awareness in professional practice "to discover those habits of belief or behavior which preserve the inadequacies of the current system and prevent the introduction of new and better approaches to education" (p. 137). Expanding on the concept of self-awareness, Ferry and Ross-Gordon (1998)

commented that reflective practice develops from competencies we possess in using experience to help frame problems. Consequently, the effectiveness of the school system is predicated on the ability to be aware of its inefficiencies and seek solutions, presently the absence of formal guidance in the implementation of SBG with the sheltered EL population.

Building on Schön's work, Connell (2014) encouraged reflective practice among many—that is, problem-oriented discussions with colleagues that build perceptual awareness through conversational storytelling and authentic questioning. The goal of conversational stories is “meaning making aimed at developing a professional vision, fostering subjectivity, and challenging the status quo” (Connell, 2014, p. 20). Thus, reflective practice can be a collaborative social activity. In relation to this study, I believed the core tenet of reflective practice that examining and reexamining actions can improve practice could benefit implementation of SBG with ELs. Accordingly, participating teachers can work together to reflect on their actions to realize the ideal of EL success. However, the theory lacks a protocol to direct discussion, so the SIOP model filled this gap.

SIOP Model

Echevarria et al. (2006) put forward the SIOP model to fulfill the need for a scientifically based, effective model of instruction for ELs. The model looks at eight components of instructional design: preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice/application, lesson delivery, and review/assessment. Each component includes varying strategies that one can observe and implement (Echevarria, 2006). Preparation includes defining content objectives, language objectives, appropriate content concepts, supplementary materials, as well as a reflection on how to best adapt the content and provide for meaningful activities.

Building background includes explicit links between past learning and new concepts, as well as emphasizing key vocabulary. Comprehensible input includes speech that is appropriate for students' proficiency levels and a variety of techniques to make content concepts clear.

For the instructional aspect of SIOP, strategies include a variety of question types to promote higher-order thinking skills and consistent use of techniques to scaffold content, as well as students having ample opportunities to use the techniques. Interactions include frequent opportunities to cooperate with peers and the teacher, as well as varying grouping configurations, sufficient wait time, and clarification of concepts in the first language. Practice/application includes hands-on material, application of content and language knowledge, and activities to integrate all language modalities. Lesson delivery includes clear connections to content and language objectives, student engagement, and appropriate lesson pacing. Lastly, review/assessment includes a review of key vocabulary and content concepts, with teacher feedback and assessments.

Despite its relevance to the EL classroom, Echevarria et al. (2006) noted the limits of the model in addressing all the needs of ELs when confronted with high academic standards. They believed it to be a guide and encouraged more research on the effects of certain instructional variables, such as teacher decision-making and collaboration. This study explored both variables, monitoring the collaborative decisions of teachers and subsequent actions to enrich the discussion on the implementation of SIOP for SBG.

Historical Perspectives

The study's focus on sheltered ELs and their teachers necessitates an exposition on the principles and theories of second language acquisition. Similarly, the study's focus on SBG calls for a review of its historical viewpoints.

Second Language Acquisition

Aljumah (2020) noted the varying perspectives, or schools of thinking, in second language acquisition and the absence of one unified theory of second language acquisition. Currently, there are four predominant schools of thinking, each with its unique hypothesis on how a language is acquired. Firstly, followers of the behaviorist school of thinking identify psychologist B.F. Skinner as its founder and hypothesize that language acquisition is a form of operant conditioning whereby the student learns a targeted behavior—the language—through a series of rewards and punishments given by the teacher. Consequently, language activities that employ drills, call and responses, and the use of extrinsic rewards originate from this school of thinking (Aljumah, 2020).

Secondly, the structuralist school of thinking concerns itself with the form of a language, viewed as a unified concept of interconnected units. Structuralists view language teaching as instruction on the language's linguistic units, parts of speech, and the acceptable, yet meaningful, arrangement of these units. Thus, grammar is inferred as the content of instruction (Aljumah, 2020).

Thirdly, the mentalist school of thinking espouses the idea of universal grammar, advocated by Noam Chomsky. For mentalists, every language has some basic structure with fundamental rules that are acquired and used, thus promoting the idea of an active participant in language acquisition who seeks the language's basic, universal rules (Aljumah, 2020). Although Aljumah (2020) commented that the

myriad of theories confounds second language teachers, the last school of thinking finds general acceptance in second language pedagogy.

The fourth school derives from Krashen's (1982) work, including the input hypothesis. For an acquirer to move from Stage 4 (i) to Stage 5 ($i + 1$), they need to understand input that contains $i + 1$, where "understand" means that the acquirer is focused on the meaning and not the form of the message. Second language learners understand language that contains structure a little beyond where they are now. Krashen additionally emphasized the use of context, knowledge of the world, and extra-linguistic information in second language pedagogy. Thus, when communication is successful, when the input is understood and there is enough of it, $i + 1$ will be provided automatically, so the best way to teach a language is to provide comprehensible input. Further, early speech comes at different times and arrives when the speaker is ready, so a silent period should be respected. Natural communication is key and consciously programming structure is not needed—a rebuke to the earlier hypotheses of second language acquisition.

Krashen (1982) further added a focus on motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. The effective language teacher provides input and helps make it comprehensible in a low-anxiety environment—a concept called the affective filter. Language teaching helps when it is the main source of low-filter comprehensible input for beginners and foreign students who do not have a chance to get input outside of class. Consequently, English as a second language (ESL) classes and general classes just need low-filter comprehensible input to be successful with ELs, with a minimum of 5 years for second language acquisition. Finally, adults and older children proceed through early stages of second language acquisition faster, given time and exposure.

Therefore, Krashen's theoretical underpinnings can provide a starting point for teachers as they seek to implement rigorous standards within SBG. Providing comprehensible input is a concept to consider when planning for a standard, and with this concept comes the understanding that the teacher seeks data on students' past knowledge and current skills to afford students lessons just a bit above their current levels. Doing so realizes the affective filter as students see the possibility of accomplishing scaffolded tasks, which hopefully leads to achievement of the standard.

SBG

Although SBG is a relatively recent phenomenon, it traces its roots to the 1970s discussion of instructional objectives. Citing the lack of measurability and clarity in existing educational objectives, Popham (1972) advanced the idea of specific, measurable objectives that state what a learner will be able to do to show academic improvement. By the 1990s, states synthesized their specific, measurable objectives and transformed them into state standards, but the wide variety of individual state standards posed a problem (CCSS Initiative, 2020). Children became disadvantaged geographically depending on the rigor of the state standards, prompting a call for standardization in 2008, and the CCSS came into effect in 2010, with states still at varying stages of adoption (CCSS Initiative, 2020). Moreover, the advent of standards-based assessments in 2014 caused a CCSS implementation debate among educators and school districts, due to political issues and the negative effects that still linger from the days of rigorous standardized testing from the No Child Left Behind Act (McCardle, 2014). To alleviate concerns, some believe that an overhaul on instructional practices that focus on standards is needed. However, the focus came on grading practices and assessment because of a "begin with the end in mind"

mentality. The belief is that focusing on grading and assessment eventually leads to an evolution in instruction and curricular preparation. Thus, SBG came into fruition. According to Marzano and Heflebower (2011), SBG is defined as measuring a student's performance against defined topics or objectives, which in most states is the CCSS.

Heflebower et al. (2014) noted that SBG is assessing student competency against topics and standards within each content area and progressing the student only with evidence of mastery at lower levels. Often, letter grades are removed in favor of a 4-point proficiency scale, with an emphasis on the skills necessary to achieve a standard. Thus, a focus on grading and assessment can affect planning and instruction. Heflebower et al. (2014) commented that SBG came into fruition as a critique of current grading practices, which blur the lines between academics and behavior. With SBG, children have a more accurate picture of their specific skills and capabilities, so they can work to reach goals because they are challenged to deeply understand content and are motivated to increase their knowledge and skill (Heflebower et al., 2014). Children take ownership of their learning because teachers provide feedback and clear guidance on defined criteria for specific learning standards. With the basic makeup of SBG addressed, a look into its implementation is the next logical step.

Townsley and Buckmiller (2020) documented what works when K–12 schools implement SBG by reviewing literature to suggest areas for future considerations. Because research in SBG is novel and ever evolving, teachers and parents have had mixed reactions to its use and efficacy. Among teachers, experiences and beliefs still influence, rather prevent, the effective implementation of SBG, such as a generational gap in schools whereby younger teachers find more success with SBG. Thus, Townsley and Buckmiller (2020) suggested that building capacity is part of a

successful implementation plan. Moreover, school districts must address parent concerns, such as how SBG's unconventional grades affect children's entry into post-secondary education.

Parents' experiences with traditional grading are another point to address in a successful implementation plan because these experiences affect parents' perceptions on the viability of SBG in schools. To build collective capacity among parents and teachers, Townsley and Buckmiller (2020) suggested, first, reflecting on the purpose of grading before working out gradebooks and report cards. Once a vision is laid out, communication of this vision is next with consideration given to the audience. In communicating with teachers, the pace of implementation is key with feedback loops between early adopters and school leadership teams. Lastly, Townsley and Buckmiller advanced a few recommendations: professional learning because of the great variability between classes; longitudinal research to study the effects of SBG on student populations; and, agreement on the proper manifestation of high quality and accurate assessment.

Continuing to explore the current effects of SBG in schools, I turn toward its effects on teachers. In their phenomenological study, Knight and Cooper (2019) sought to illuminate the day-to-day experiences of high school teachers utilizing SBG in a variety of avenues and environments. Through teacher interviews, the researchers found that planning, instruction, and assessment become more purposeful because communication about learning is clear. Further, teachers found that SBG creates an environment conducive to learning by meeting students' needs through the unacceptance of failure and reassessment, the intellectual safety for making mistakes, a sense of belonging due to removal of prior judgment and peer comparison, the need

for choice in assessments, and a sense of enjoyment for most except parents and teacher-pleaser students.

Thus, students shift toward a growth mindset due to a refocus on learning and not failure and a focus on desirable behaviors. Because teachers cannot tie grades to behavior, they must find new ways to promote and enforce desirable behaviors, and students' accountability initially decreases, but given time, students take more ownership for their learning (Knight & Cooper, 2019). However, despite SBG's benefits, problems persist, warranting compromises between adopting recommended SBG practices and maintaining tradition. There are issues of how to properly convert grades for post-secondary education and inconsistencies between teachers who implement SBG and those with piecemeal implementation. Lastly, Knight and Cooper (2019) identified teacher difficulties with ELs who cannot be assessed the same as their native speaking peers. Therefore, I explore such an issue in the next section.

Related Research

As mentioned, this section of the literature review explores the uneasy relationship between ELs and SBG, as well as some strategies for success that are relevant to this study's intervention plan. The relationship between ELs and SBG is discussed in three areas: effective practices for school leaders, ELs operating within an SBG framework, and EL success. I end by discussing strategies for success related to the study, namely professional development and collaboration.

The Relationship between ELs and SBG

Determining the relationship between ELs and SBG is crucial to the population's success. Without teachers employing effective strategies, ELs can be left to the wayside in academic achievement, and not including them thoughtfully into

SBG is an injustice to their academic preparation and overall readiness for the future. Taking a general approach, I explore effective practices to achieve EL success.

School leaders must explore how they can effectively implement SBG. Any school district initiative to improve education begins with the leaders of an individual school, whether they be teacher leaders or the school's administration. Effective leadership is the crux in effective implementation, so I begin the discussion with a focus on the effective implementation of SBG among school leaders. Carter (2016) sought to provide a guide for school leaders as they lead a change toward SBG by mining the experience of the few secondary school principals who have led this initiative. Utilizing the Delphi method, Carter's qualitative study of 12 secondary school principals—seven from middle school and five from high school—attempted to determine the leadership actions when initiating the change and to build consensus around best practices. The study found the ability of leaders to build urgency as an important first step—that is, teachers must observe the pitfalls of traditional grading and seek change.

Working with teacher leaders to create and communicate a vision for buy-in follows. Strategies outlined include continued professional development that incorporates modules on the aspects of grading practice to be transformed, as well as establishing a feedback loop with teachers at the ground level to bolster communication. Leaders additionally need to empower broad based action that continually redefines and communicates the non-negotiable elements of implementation. However, as Carter (2016) noted, the small number of schools implementing SBG and thus the small number of participants in the study was a limitation. Now that school leaders have a blueprint for the effective transition to SBG for the general student population, I turn toward a specific population—ELs.

While generalities are good for teachers, the real work begins in addressing specific concerns and hammering out the details of successful EL implementation.

ELs Operating within an SBG Framework

With established practices for school leaders, I now move toward EL performance within an SBG framework. To begin, Bailey and Carroll (2015) point out the dual tasks teachers have—language and content. Their document analysis of language assessment policies and policy-derived practices within the United States examined the intersection of language assessment and content assessment in terms of their purposeful interpretation by educators. Bailey and Carroll found an EL's content knowledge cannot be accurately interpreted if the English language proficiency is low, a concept the researchers termed the construct irrelevant variance. Teachers make an unfair assessment if they judge whether an EL can communicate concepts in the target language. Language proficiency does not always determine content knowledge because an EL may know the content but be unable to communicate that knowledge into a language the teacher knows. Thus, language proficiency tests that combine content tasks can be a key.

In a similar manner, Mislevy and Duran (2014) conducted a qualitative examination of the intersection between the language domain and the content domain. Through document analysis, the researchers also reviewed district and national policies and policy-derived practices. Further, Mislevy and Duran corroborated Bailey and Carroll's (2015) conclusion, by advocating the use of situated language in an academic context. Functioning from a sociocultural perspective, Mislevy and Duran sought to build a relationship between formal, often disjointed, assessment and authentic social and cultural participation, advising teachers to use realistic situations that are familiar, can target new skills, and are individualized to a student's situation.

However, where Mislevy and Duran (2014) advocated for a marriage of language and content, Bailey and Carroll (2015) advocated for a deep reflection on the nature of a task and assessing the task as either a language or academic assessment. Nonetheless, the two pairs of researchers agree on the use of learning progressions in assessments that are developmentally appropriate to a student's language development. Conceptually speaking, learning progressions can be provided through accommodations like a bilingual assistant or translator, use of illustrations, lessons on vocabulary, readings at the instructional level, or other lessons of additional skills to attain the priority skill or standard, in addition to modifications like lowering the reading difficulty, shortening assignments, and using supplementary materials (Heflebower et al., 2014). Other than talks of assessment, discussion of some practices benefit for ELs in SBG classrooms is needed because the goal is to have ELs reach a 3.0—the targeted standard or skill—in an SBG proficiency scale, but according to Bailey and Carroll, professional development is necessary if teachers are to integrate successful accommodations and modifications into instruction and assessment. However, to reach that goal, one needs to grasp a conception of EL success.

EL Success

A clear vision for success is necessary for an educator working with ELs. As mentioned previously, difficulty with the second language has ramifications on the academic performance of ELs, thus teachers need benchmarks to measure EL success in line with the concept of learning progressions—that is, the benchmarks discussed here can provide a plan for progressive success among ELs operating within an SBG framework.

To begin, Wilcox et al. (2017) explored ways educators in odds-beating schools approached monitoring and using ELL's performance data. In the study's context, odds-beating means that ELs at the schools performed statistically higher on state standardized measurements when compared to similar schools in their district. In their qualitative study, the researchers examined documentary evidence, focus group interactions, interview data, and classrooms to determine the impetus for EL success. Wilcox et al. noted EL student success can be achieved by connecting instruction and interventions to real-time data based on multiple measures of student performance, including benchmark and formative assessments. In addition, having a system in place that communicates EL performance among teachers, administrators, and parents is beneficial. Collaborating on instruction and interventions ELs need is also a noted best practice, and collaboration is achieved through routines among teaching and support staff, as well as school leaders. Summarily, the advantage schools have in fostering success among ELs is their ability to create two vital organs for EL achievement, namely a system that reports student data to stakeholders and a collaborative structure to intervene, reevaluate practices, and recommend changes.

While Wilcox et al. provided a schoolwide analysis and overview of best practices for EL success, Cook (2019) addressed hidden assumptions about language teaching in the classroom setting that can improve instructional practice in individual classes. Areas for improvement include the dominance of passive language modalities, monolingualism, grammar, and the native speaker. First, Cook reconceptualized the classroom to embrace speaking and writing as active language productions. Traditionally, EL classes focus on the passive modalities of language, such as listening and reading, but the EL needs to actively engage with the language. Moreover, Cook argued that writing is an alternative representation of language with

its own rules, instead of simply speech written down, and thus needs to be taught in conjunction with speaking. In their mixed-methods action research, Marulanda Angel and Martinez Garcia (2019) corroborated the need for academic writing espousing a systematized assistance protocol, inclusive of error analysis, tutor training, and a more proactive tutoring system across an institution, to achieve EL competency in academic writing.

Second, Cook (2019) highlighted how the dominance of English is detrimental to second language development, preferring bilingualism. Within classrooms, Cook identified a strong need to compartmentalize languages and not have them interact, which is an outdated view. Denying the language learner access to their first language is not acknowledging their situation, their need to utilize their first language, and thus limits their capabilities, whereas having ELs compromise with their native and second language cultivates translingual skills. Qualitative research into translingual writing espouses the benefit of meaning-making in translingual practices, and observational research finds the ability of the teacher to be a learner of students' native language and to embrace the native language in the classroom as beneficial (Pacheco et al., 2019). In addition, grammar teaching can improve because of the constant comparative method found in translingual practice. Cook (2019) added grammar structures exist in the room, whether deliberately or not, but selecting the grammar structures to teach is meaningful, and the thoughtful selection of grammar can enhance the benefits of translingual practice.

Lastly, Cook (2019) cautioned against preconceived notions of the native speaker as model. Nineteenth century thought believes in the goal of native speaking, where ELs are prescriptively taught to align and adjust their speaking and writing toward a native speaker's, while also adapting their listening and reading toward a

standard English dialect. Holding a language learner to a native speaker's proficiency is rather prescriptive and consistently reminds them of what they cannot do, rather than the goal of successful second language use (Cook, 2019). Variance in accents and grammatical cues exists even among native speakers. Exploring non-native English pronunciation, Murphy's (2014) questionnaire research of 46 ESL/EFL specialists sought to determine the viability of non-native English pronunciation samples, such as those from a celebrity, in the EL classroom and found the use of intelligible, comprehensible non-native speech samples provides teachers and ELs with a realistic model. Despite negative views of accents as detrimental to a second language learner's progress, the correct use of a word in speech should be the goal, rather than the proper sounding of the word in the same speech pattern.

To further displace the model of the native speaker, Nam (2020) espoused a critical literacy approach toward EL teaching and learning. Utilizing the four-dimension model advanced by Lewison et al. (2002), Nam selected multiple texts per social issue and developed discussion questions that looked at feelings and thoughts, the relationship between author and reader, and ELs' feelings and thoughts from what they learned. Nam noted several classroom practices that can achieve a movement away from the native speaker as the goal. The study's participants used experiences, academics, speculation, and cooperation for disrupting the commonplace because students' social and cultural background knowledge can enhance their engagement.

Moreover, Nam (2020) promoted the use of intertextual resources and popular culture to answer questions related to academic or experiential knowledge, such as what students know and how a text would be received in their culture. The students also explored other possibilities for a text and compared these possibilities and the original texts to counter-narratives. Although Nam's study was conducted at the

college level, practices like counter-narratives and relatable, yet reflective, stories that allow ELs to bring in their cultural knowledge can yield success with younger ELs.

Summarily, success among ELs can be defined as a collaborative, data-driven approach among educators that seeks an active, bilingually proficient student, who is able to value their cultural knowledge alongside their second culture and language.

Having such a vision of success, I now move to strategies for success that are of most importance to this study, namely professional development and collaboration.

Strategies for Success

Continued professional development and learning, as well as collaboration (Johnson & Wells, 2017), are necessary tools with which sheltered EL teachers, and in turn, their EL students can succeed. SBG and its focus on content standards promotes an inclination to develop the curriculum in the core content areas before including EL classes, which is understandable given the emphasis on content in secondary schools. However, sheltered instructors need to communicate, collaborate, and learn not only with and from teachers of the core content areas (Wilcox et al, 2017), but also with and from each other if their students are to achieve state standards. They, especially, need collaboration centered on research-based strategies like SIOP.

Professional Development

Second language teachers need professional development. Exploring teacher implementation of college- and career-readiness standards, Edgerton and Desimone (2018) studied teachers, inclusive of EL teachers, across three states to discover the policy area of most value like specificity, authority, consistency, power, or stability. Edgerton and Desimone (2018) found that authority is the strongest predictor of lasting change in schools and districts, as it “reflects a policy’s legitimacy and status,

which can be achieved through rules or law, historical practice, or charismatic leaders” (p. 17). Thus, initial professional development must convince teachers that changing instructional habits benefits their students and provide evidence of a causal relationship through historical practice in other classes. There is a noted gain in this policy area of authority—that is, teacher views of legitimacy can be enhanced through evidence of success in classrooms, including EL classes that illustrate methods of efficacy centered on SIOP. Therefore, evidence of success in EL classes is essential for the implementation of district standards.

Evidence can come in the form of teacher-led discussions in a PLC, rather than a top-down approach from district presenters. Slack (2019) noted that an EL facilitator can affect content area teachers’ thinking about and implementation of differentiated instruction and assessments for ELs, as related to standards implementation. Conducting action research in one middle school with 55 Level 1-3 ELs, and enlisting four content teachers with no history of an effective PLC, Slack utilized field notes and pre- and post-intervention surveys to demonstrate that teacher beliefs in actionable change greatly improved, thanks, in part, to the professional development in teacher-led discussions around best practices garnered from teacher anecdotal evidence. Teacher practices became more diversified, oral, and visual because teachers gained confidence from actively participating in rich discussions facilitated toward improvement. Thus, Slack observed increased perceptual value in PLCs among teachers, and thus argued change is possible when teachers are willing. However, Slack cautioned that teachers need support systems that can make difficult tasks manageable. Such support systems can come in the form of PLCs, yet the substance of such PLC professional development is not outlined in detail.

In their analysis and synthesis of instructional practices for ELs, Ziegenfuss et al. (2014) advocated for discussions on research-based strategies within PLC professional development to improve EL instruction. One noted focus of PLC professional development is having the home language valued in the class, with a focus on essential skills and knowledge and culturally relevant material. Further, Ziegenfuss et al. advised professional development practices and discussions to focus on several areas, including teacher knowledge of language acquisition and manifestations of language at different stages, gradual progression of higher-order thinking and skills, the acceptance of student discussions in the home language, the effective use of multimodal learning, the effective use of weekly flexible grouping, and the effective use of graphic organizers to guide thinking in the second language. Moreover, in realizing the Next Generation Science Standards in classrooms, Buxton and Caswell (2020) espoused the need for collaborative professional development among practitioners. In their 4-year qualitative study using focus group interviews and teacher logs, Buxton and Caswell attempted to reimagine EL instruction through group processes that outline new guidelines for sheltered instruction, namely translanguaging processes to integrate language and content, shared experiences with natural phenomena, and a two-directional register shifting from academic to colloquial language.

Furthermore, Desjardins (2020) supported the effective implementation of sheltered instruction in a qualitative review of EL practices utilizing a comparative method between teacher practices and literature. Desjardins emphasized the need for teachers and administrators to understand sheltered instruction's purpose, language acquisition, and effective practices. While daily opportunities to engage with grade-level curriculum that simultaneously meets curricular outcomes and academic

language is beneficial, basic interpersonal communication skills should not be the sole focus of a sheltered class, and PLC discussion is needed to transition from simple survival language to complex academic language (Buxton & Caswell, 2020; Desjardins, 2020). Teacher training on this transition is a must, and strong administrative support structures are needed for this movement (Slack, 2019).

In addition, SIOP can lead to collaboration between the content teacher and the language teacher (Desjardins, 2020). Moreover, configurations centered on the collaborative efforts of sheltered EL teachers can benefit from a discussion of SIOP and its use. Desjardins (2020) made note of time, commitment, and training as necessary for SIOP's use. Echevarria et al. (2006) additionally noted that teacher implementation of SIOP can be a source of research, and such a goal is achieved through observations of teacher collaborative groups as one aspect of implementation. Summarily, continued professional development is beneficial for the implementation of standards, and such professional development can take the form of PLC discussions, with an emphasis on collaboration around best practices to achieve EL success.

Collaboration

The previous section touched on the need for collaboration not the intent of the original study, yet noted as an addendum to success (Desjardins, 2020; Heflebower et al., 2014; Knight & Cooper, 2019; Wilcox et al., 2017). Consequently, I explore this concept further here. Knight and Cooper (2019) noted a benefit of working in collaboration, which is allowing teachers to divide the arduous workload brought about by working with rigorous standards. In addition, collaboration is needed for implementation, along with commitment, reflection, and a reframing of long-held beliefs of grading (Heflebower et al., 2014). Following DuFour and

Marzano (2008), I highlight the district's role in ensuring collaboration, followed by the school administration's role.

DuFour and Marzano (2008) espoused the district's role in communication to support schools' efforts to become a working PLC. The clear communication of district initiatives, goals, and instructional practices is necessary to guide schools in their implementation of initiatives and goals. The superintendent expects building principals to accept responsibility for the success of their schools and provides principals with some flexibility, but principals are also expected to "lead within the boundaries established by the district's goals" (DuFour & Marzano, 2008, p. 30).

DuFour and Marzano reiterated effective district leaders will build shared knowledge throughout the organization as to why an improvement initiative is needed and will create guiding coalitions to help champion the initiative.

While qualitatively studying the role of the school district in building PLCs at Louisiana and Texas schools through observational research and interviews, Olivier and Huffman (2014) noted districts are responsible for direct and explicit goals that and a few critical conditions they expect to see in every school, because a culture of defined autonomy ultimately calls upon leaders to define it throughout the district. Schools have the autonomy to decide how they will organize staff members into teams, but they do not have the discretion to allow teachers to work in isolation (DuFour & Marzano, 2008). Districts build capacity among principals for shared expectations and do not rank them, while simplifying the objectives to a few, communicating priorities, and listening to feedback. Districts and schools need a clear understanding of concepts and terms like student learning, response to intervention, collaborative teams, and SIOP. In summary, districts clarify the direction and provide expectations, yet this direction is not evident in this action research study.

With the district's role clear, the school administration's role is to nurture the collaboration necessary for PLCs. DuFour and Marzano (2008) provided recommendations to accomplish this task. The administration must provide supportive structures that help groups become teams, clarifying commitments and setting goals that align with district or school targets (DuFour & Marzano, 2008). Once the expectations are set, administrators seek to organize staff into meaningful teams. The focus must shift from helping individuals become more effective in their isolated classrooms to creating a new collaborative culture based on interdependence, shared responsibility, and mutual accountability (DuFour & Marzano, 2008; Olivier & Huffman, 2014). Moreover, DuFour and Marzano commented that, in the absence of interdependence, one or more common goals, and mutual accountability, a group cannot be a team. Teams are usually grouped by grade-level or content-area, yet job-alike teams like sheltered EL teachers are also recommended.

After the staff is organized into meaningful teams, the work teams must accomplish is to be clarified: the work is having students learn at high levels and focus on issues dedicated to this work (DuFour & Marzano, 2008). Further, one recommendation an administrator can focus discussions is on best practices, such as SIOP. In their teams, teachers use a recurring cycle of collective inquiry: clarifying what students were to learn, jointly planning instruction to address that learning, implementing their plan as a team, tracking student progress through team-developed common assessments, using the evidence to identify problems in student learning, applying their collective expertise to address the problems, and reflecting on the effectiveness of their solution to determine next steps (DuFour & Marzano, 2008, p. 80). Thus, PLCs, like sheltered EL teachers, can lead a group action research study emphasizing data-driven inquiry, reflection, and action.

In their qualitative observations of PLCs, Olivier and Huffman (2014) sought to solidify the research process of a PLC and recommended district actions that streamline data collection and dissemination and facilitate demonstrations on the use of data and actionable responses. Further, Olivier and Huffman emphasized administrators monitoring the work of teams and providing direction and support as needed, such as periodic team products as an opportunity for dialogue between administrator and team instead of a mundane checklist to be completed and submitted to satiate the administrator's appetite for accountability.

Circling back to district initiatives that foster collaboration, Ralston et al. (2019) sought to define the training, coaching, and collaboration within a GLAD framework, a district initiative meant to achieve student success. While not relevant to my district's initiative of SBG, the study presented some parallels that districts can incorporate into the implementation of systemwide changes and from which this study on teacher collaboration around SIOP strategies within an SBG framework benefitted. Working with 24 teacher participants, Ralston et al. conducted two phases, beginning with summer practice sessions with structured observations and interviews of teacher practices within the GLAD model, as well as afternoon planning, reflection, and professional development time that examined artifacts like student work, pictures, and videos to determine accuracy of the GLAD strategies. The second phase encompassed regular school year implementation in which interviews for long-term cognition after summer experience were conducted for the impact of the summer experience in the participants' teaching of GLAD.

Districts can utilize some of Ralston et al.'s (2019) findings. The researchers observed positive changes in GLAD implementation when there was a clarification of strategies through teacher observations of strategies in context and guided practice

with students. However, districts do need to make an effort to alleviate preconceived notions as they can affect the amount of change—a recommendation reinforced by Edgerton and Desimone (2018). In addition, Ralston et al. (2019) commented that a school district needs a plan to harness teacher cognition in a particular strategy or instructional model. One avenue is collaboration. Teachers can work with like-minded individuals to build trust, but overreliance on familiarity can hinder development. In the study, different collaborative models developed, such as co-teaching or one-assists-all, but clarity of roles and expectations would have increased the outcomes (Ralston et al., 2019). Thus, teachers have a natural inclination to form different collaborative configurations, given guidance and direction from the school’s administration.

Summarily, continued professional development is necessary for any district change, but it does not necessarily have to be the traditional teacher training, wherein teachers work with a district expert and practice with an isolated group of teachers—detached from the context of the classroom. Professional development can take the form of PLCs, where learning and improvement of practice—like sheltered instruction—can take place as a result of the discussions within this collaborative framework. Yet, the district and school administration still have a role in fostering the necessary collaboration that is consistent with all teachers—mainstream and non-mainstream alike. Therefore, the efficient use of professional development and collaboration within schools can bolster equity within schools to ensure EL success.

Ensuring Equity

Ensuring EL success within classrooms centers on the idea of equity, which differs from equality. On the one hand, equality espouses the idea of sameness—sameness in resources, sameness in content, sameness in instruction. However, such a

concept is flawed because it fails to recognize the differences among groups of students. On the other hand, equity recognizes difference and seeks to accommodate for this fact by ensuring all students have the opportunity to succeed, whether from modification, understanding, or empathizing on the teacher's part (Alrubail, 2016). SIOP and its strategies also have this mentality in mind when aiding sheltered ELs. Alrubail's conceptual overview espoused some practices for equitable learning: allowing students to use a dictionary or thesaurus, giving students extra time to understand content and formulate responses, allowing translations, and providing an alternate method of teaching and learning that is multimodal with consideration for multiple intelligences. PLC discussions additionally provide a rich professional learning and development experience to explore these suggestions further in practice, and grounding PLC discussions in the equitable dissemination of knowledge and strategies like SIOP benefits teacher practices, ensuring EL success.

By studying the network of international schools in the United States that cater to ELs, Roc et al. (2019) sought to define equitable success with ELs, which provides some insight for teachers using SIOP. Using mixed-method practices by studying student test scores and pedagogy, the study identified oral language development through the use and development of native language materials as a priority, along with project-based learning whereby students work together on a real-world problem, utilizing inquiry, writing, and quantitative reasoning. These schools focus on performance assessments that have students collect and successfully defend artifacts before a panel of experts. Such a daunting task is accomplished through yearly scaffolding of reading and writing tasks that incorporate sentence starters and graphic organizers.

Furthermore, teachers in Roc et al.'s (2019) study received continued professional development through in-school mentoring with more experienced teachers that emphasizes a gradual release of responsibility regarding language and content skills. In addition, weekly, structured time for collaboration with disciplinary and interdisciplinary teams is a part of the culture of continued learning. Teachers use this structured time to discuss differentiation and effective scaffolds for students, to observe classes, and to reflect on practice. Consequently, time to collaborate, in addition to various team configurations that do not focus solely on the same content area, can be beneficial for implementing equitable practices with ELs.

Summary

The purpose of my study was to determine a collaborative process among practitioners to implement SBG with ELs. To accomplish such a task, a teacher needs a clearer picture of EL success to determine accurate approximations to the ideal. EL success is defined within and achieved through data-driven, teacher collaboration structured around instructional changes and interventions, where discussions can revolve around active language production, reprioritization of the native language with the meaningful selection of grammar structures, language accuracy over pronunciation, and the delineation—or lack thereof—between language development and academic tasks. With this in mind, I sought to detail the discussions teacher practitioners have to ensure success with EL instruction as it relates to SBG and SIOP.

Furthermore, the goal of EL success is to ensure instructional equity, which is realized through the aforementioned teacher discussions on best practices and interventions. School administration can promote such discussions through structured time for collaboration, as well as experimenting with different team configurations,

such as the configuration of sheltered EL teachers in the current study. To provide an equitable learning experience for ELs, strategies for success additionally include professional development, collaboration, and a reflection on SIOP strategies.

In professional development, there is a need to transition sheltered instruction's purpose from simplistic and conversational language to academic language, with continued professional development in feedback loops between teachers and administrators. In addition to feedback loops, effective professional development contains classroom-based evidence to reinforce school goals and district initiatives, such as SBG, and evidence can be in the form of PLC discussions centered on performance-based assessments, home language incorporation, graphic organizers, flexible grouping, and sheltered instruction strategies. A PLC discussion can also include learning progressions toward higher order thinking skills. To summarize, there is great difficulty in realizing EL success within an SBG framework, and professional development in the form of teacher collaborative discussions within PLCs can ensure EL success and instructional equity. Thus, my study sought to realize EL success within an SBG framework by having sheltered EL teachers collaborate on the best method to teach toward a district priority standard, with SIOP as a guide. To achieve this end, the next chapter discusses the study's methodology.

CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research plan for a study on the collaborative process of teachers at one school in implementing SBG for the population of sheltered ELs. After selecting an approach, expanding knowledge of the problem of practice, and determining research questions, this planning stage was an important next step that served as a “guide for the inquiry process” (Efron & Ravid, 2013, p. 55).

My school district shifted from a traditional grading framework to SBG in 2018. Choosing rigorous standards from the CCSS that assume student proficiency in the English language. Thus, Wolf et al. (2014) noted the difficult task for ELs: learning academic content and demonstrating complex language skills while simultaneously developing their competence in the English language. Furthermore, my school district has provided no guidance and curricular resources to address the complex task we are asking of our ELs. In addition, there existed no collaborative structure among sheltered EL teachers to address the EL needs, despite several researchers’ insistence on collaboration (Duguay et al., 2013; Johnson & Wells, 2017; Lee et al., 2013; Wolf et al., 2014). Thus, the problem of practice was the lack of formal guidance in the implementation of SBG with a sheltered, secondary EL population.

Therefore, the purpose of the study was to determine a collaborative process among practitioners to implement SBG with sheltered, secondary ELs. Sheltered EL teachers collaboratively designed and implemented a curricular plan for a selected

district priority standard that can lead to sheltered EL success. Lachat (2004) provided a glimpse into a successful curricular plan as one that can “draw upon the real-life experiences of English language learners, allow them to build on their prior knowledge, and allow for diverse ways of solving problems” (p. 81). Schön’s (1983) reflective practitioner theory and Echevarria et al.’s (2006) SIOP model provided guidance and enhanced the collaborative process. Teachers were asked to identify the SIOP strategies they employ or would like to use, and they reflected on the process of executing a curricular plan in line with SBG. Such a theoretical framework provided greater insight into a possible solution that can aid in my school district’s implementation of SBG.

Research Design

To study the collaborative process of teachers at one school in designing a curricular plan within an SBG framework, this study utilized an action research, qualitative case study approach. Because this is a qualitative study, the research design was emergent and was not tightly prescribed to allow for shifts in the research processes that indicate deep, rigorous thinking on the part of the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The following research questions were developed to address the study’s purpose:

RQ1. When designing a curriculum in collaboration, what SIOP strategies will sheltered EL teachers negotiate to effectively help diverse secondary ELs reach a selected district priority standard?

RQ2. How effective is the teacher collaborative process in curricular planning designed to support ELs in SBG?

RQ2a What are the EL team's perceptions on the effectiveness of the process in helping to bolster teachers' confidence in SBG implementation?

RQ2b What are the ELs' perceptions on the effectiveness of the process in helping to develop their confidence in academic and language skills?

Qualitative Case Study

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defined a qualitative case study as an "in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 37), requiring delimitations. The boundary of this case was a high school with a sheltered EL population. Moreover, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted, "The unit of analysis, not the topic of investigation, characterizes a case study" (p. 38). Consequently, the unit of analysis was typically defined as the inner workings found in a single unit of investigation, instead of the multiple sites and participants of a single topic or phenomenon. For example, the phenomenon of SBG implementation could expand and vary based on school populations (i.e., elementary schools, middle schools, general classrooms, foreign language classrooms). However, this study sought to describe and analyze the approach taken by teachers at one school.

Action Research

Efron and Ravid (2013) emphasized the subjective nature of action research. Generalized principles and theories applied to a complex and dynamic environment like a school with no regard to its unique situation results often in failure or lackluster progress. For this reason, more effective actions and results derive from the subjectivity and understanding of a school's intricacies that a teacher possesses. Efron and Ravid (2013) commented on action research practitioners, "Their goal is to

improve their practice and foster their professional growth by understanding their students, solving problems, or developing new skills” (p. 4). Building on their notion, I sought to enhance my practice and situation through a collaborative process among sheltered, secondary EL teachers in the implementation of an SBG framework, where none has existed.

The specific intervention was the collaboration among sheltered EL teachers to foster reflectivity and identify effective teaching practices to work within a newly implemented SBG policy. As previously mentioned, there existed no history of collaboration among sheltered EL teachers. With my school district’s move to implement SBG, collaboration was an integral part of the professional development process to ensure that all student populations, including the sheltered ELs, reach the standard. In a collaborative working environment, teachers developed a plan for the implementation of one of the district’s priority standards. In line with the structure of SBG, the teachers worked together on details to create proficiency scales, determine instructional activities, and assign assessments.

Role of the Researcher

To address the issue of subjectivity and credibility in action research, Efron and Ravid (2013) advocated for disciplined subjectivity in relation to the role of the researcher, or an explicit statement of values, beliefs, and past experiences that are related to the study, as well as an expression of one’s relationship with the study’s participants. For this reason, I believed in the value of collaboration and communication among practitioners and have seen the success of collaboration in my work with my general education, English 9 PLC. There additionally existed many factors, policies, and variables that affect the classroom today that may be overwhelming for one teacher to handle, which is the reason for my strong leniency

toward collaboration and communication. Thus, I wanted to bring collaboration to sheltered EL teachers as a way to alleviate the pedagogical burden of my colleagues in sheltered instruction. Therefore, I was aware that my personal beliefs and convictions may intrude upon the research. I acknowledged my biases and the preconceptions that may enter into data collection, analysis, and the interpretation process. Some teachers may not share this positive view of collaboration and may have negative experiences with collaboration in general. However, if such teachers were a part of the research, then I sought to bring these opposing views to light in an effort to bring about a holistic analysis to the collaborative process undertaken in this Dissertation in Practice.

Research Setting

The focus area of this action research, qualitative case study was to guide professional development within the Pacific school district of Guam, concerning SBG implementation with a sheltered EL population. Because this is an action research study, the results needed to affect and improve the practice of the action researcher (Efron & Ravid, 2013). Therefore, JFKHS, my high school within the school district of Guam, was the research setting. The campus was highly diverse with 31% CHamoru, 33% Filipino, 6% Asian, 21% from the Federated States of Micronesia, 3% Belauan, 4% identified as Other (Mixed), and <1% identifying as Other Pacific Islander, White, and African American, with English as the majority language of academics and general business.

JFKHS was purposefully chosen based on my association with the school and its implementation of SBG with all student populations including the sheltered EL population. Because there is no history of collaboration among sheltered EL teachers, a focus of the study was to develop a collaborative process, or framework, that may

help guide professional development within the district concerning SBG implementation with a sheltered EL population. Given the lack of previous collaborative efforts, I could better understand how collaboration shapes the professional development, reflectivity, and creation of a curriculum to meet the demands of SBG. A highly diverse sheltered EL population at the school also allowed me to explore change that has the potential to impact a variety of sheltered ELs.

One of the goals of educational research was to affect student learning and achievement, thus the study sought to affect the learning and achievement of this particular school population. They additionally provided necessary insight and feedback into the effectiveness of the teacher collaborative process. Further, students were identified as sheltered, Program 3 students if they note a language other than English spoken at home and score poorly on the Language Assessment Survey (LAS) Links. Sheltered instruction was given with modifications at the student's proficiency level, in isolation from English proficient students, and with a single EL teacher.

Participants

Efron and Ravid (2013) explained the preeminence of the research question in study design and sample selection. Therefore, given my research question on the negotiation of SIOP strategies in collaborative curricular planning among sheltered EL teachers and considering numerous possible samples within the district and the study's action research design (Efron & Ravid, 2013), I selected sheltered EL teachers at my workplace, JFKHS, for the study.

Thus, the sample selection was a purposeful, convenience sample (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Further, the study included one female teacher and one male teacher-researcher. The female teacher was invited to participate as her class similarly taught based on literary genre rather than historical timelines (i.e., American or British

literature), and she submitted a consent form (see Appendix E). The participants were in their late 20s with 7 years or less of teaching experience in a ninth- or 10th-grade sheltered EL class. Moreover, five to six ELs were participants in the focus group interview, providing feedback on the study's collaborative teacher process. The students were selected by their teachers based on English proficiency, and parents were given consent forms (see Appendix D). The participants were selected because the focus of the study was on sheltered ELs and the implementation of SBG with this specific school population.

Data Collection Methods

Based on the research questions outlined earlier, data derived from three key actions. First, teacher meetings were an excellent source and came in two phases. The first phase was the instructional preparation phase, which included selecting a standard among the district's priority standards, developing a proficiency scale for the selected standard, and developing assessments and rubrics to complement the proficiency scale. There were eight meetings for the instructional preparation phase. The second phase was the instructional phase that included individual nuances in classroom implementation and moments for teachers to reflect on practice, to meet with the sheltered EL team about concerns, and to adjust accordingly. Similarly, there were five meetings for this process, which was the number of meetings identified as being necessary for the process.

Second, individual classroom instruction also provided data. After the agreeing on and implementing the curricular plan, my fellow teacher and I noted instructional highlights and shortcomings, as well as points of discussion for teacher meetings, with seven journal entries. Lastly, the teacher and sheltered EL opinions were another source of data. As with any change, opinions can improve an

intervention for classroom practice. With these three data sources in mind, the study utilized four instruments of data collection: observations, individual interviews, focus group interviews, and participant journals, which I discuss in the following sections.

Furthermore, I analyzed various details of the teachers' collaborative process. First, observations at teacher meetings concerning the details of the curricular plan were a strong source of data that sheds light on RQ1, or the selection of SIOP strategies and the translation of those strategies into a curricular plan and classroom activities. Moreover, an individual interview with the teacher participant provided perspective on instructional decisions that translated SIOP strategies into practice, as well as other pertinent strategies beneficial to language learners. Second, the effectiveness of the collaborative process was linked to the success of the curricular plan in a classroom setting (i.e., RQ2). Insights into classroom implementation stemmed from the writings of teacher participants in research journals. Lastly, in the subquestions for RQ2, the success of the collaborative process was determined by the levels of confidence found among teacher participants and sheltered ELs, so focus group interviews of each group aided in gauging their perceived confidence levels.

Observations

I developed an observation protocol (see Appendix A) centered on SIOP strategies and conducted observations of curriculum planning collaborative meetings as a participant observer. I also enlisted the help of an additional outside observer—the ESL school coordinator, who had 16 years of experience and expertise in the field of second language teaching, along with training in SIOP, Micronesian studies, and culturally responsive teaching. The school coordinator also provided an unbiased observation to corroborate the strategies I observed. While the outside observer was present, I took on the role of full participant, immersing myself as an insider in the

collaboration process. Moreover, the observations helped to determine the SIOP strategies sheltered EL teachers at the school enlisted and developed when constructing and implementing a curricular plan.

Individual Interview

I developed an interview protocol (see Appendix B) centered on SIOP and, after completing observations, conducted highly structured interviews with the individual teacher to garner opinions and conversational stories on the most successful SIOP strategies for sheltered ELs in meeting SBG goals. Conversational storytelling aids practitioner reflection (Connell, 2014). Additionally, I conducted an anchored interview to discover the reasons behind the teachers' unconscious selection of certain SIOP strategies and to confirm or disconfirm a match between outward practice and individual conviction, as well as gather more data into other possible strategies that teachers view as beneficial.

Focus Group Interviews

After implementation of the curricular plan, I conducted a focus group interview were conducted to determine the opinions of the participating teacher and the students on their confidence levels in relation to SBG and the skills applicable to the sheltered EL team's selected standard (see Appendix B). Moreover, the focus group interview aided in determining the effectiveness of the study. As an underlying principle, conversational storytelling advocated for a focus group, in which teachers build on relevant details and shared stories to reflect on practice. Likewise, students built on the experiences of their peers to provide for a rich conversation, and the presence of peers was less intimidating when compared to one-on-one interviews with an authoritative figure like a teacher.

Participant Journals

During the instructional phase and because I was also an implementor of the curricular plan with dissimilar instructional preparatory periods, conducting classroom observations was not feasible. Instead, participant journals provided a glimpse into the progress of instruction within the classroom setting (see Appendix C). A narrative was a beneficial source of reference for any intricacies of the curricular plan in classroom implementation, considering the classroom was a complex and dynamic environment. Journals also led to points of discussion for follow-up teacher meetings mentioned earlier in the text. Further, SIOP strategies that a teacher confessed as a priority and that were agreed-upon in the teacher meetings were observed through the narrative journals of participants, as well as the SIOP strategies that teachers subconsciously practiced in the classroom and expressed in the journal. The effectiveness of the curricular plan in the instruction of sheltered ELs was likewise observed through journaling.

Implementation and Documentation Schedule

Summarily, the observations, individual interviews, focus groups, and participant journals provided insight into the SIOP strategies that my fellow teacher and I selected for a curricular plan and implemented in the classroom [RQ1]. In addition, focus groups and participant journals provided a source of data for the effectiveness of the plan [RQ2] based on the SBG measure. Furthermore, the observations of the collaborative meeting sessions provided a starting point for individual interviews and focus groups, as a reflection upon the plan's conclusion and overall effect. Similarly, the participant journals expanded the reflective aspect of this study to provide points for conversational storytelling and discussions on best practices among teacher participants.

Table 3.1 *Study Implementation Schedule*

	Key Activities	Key Documentation
Week 0	Obtain permission from district to conduct study	
	Obtain permission from school to conduct study	
	Obtain written consent from study participants	
Week 1	Teacher meeting to select a district priority standard for instruction and develop proficiency scales as a part of the curricular plan	Participant observation
	Teacher meeting to continue work on proficiency scales and instructional activities	Observation with outside observers
Week 2	Teacher meeting to continue work on proficiency scales and instructional activities	Observation with outside observers
	Teacher meeting to continue work on proficiency scales and instructional activities	Participant observation
Week 3	Teacher meeting to discuss assessments tied to proficiency scales	Observation with outside observers
	Teacher meetings to continue work on assessments	Participant observation
Week 4	Teacher meetings to finalize curricular plan inclusive of proficiency scales, instructional activities, and assessments	Participant observation
Week 5	Data analysis of observational data to discover SIOP strategies	Field notes
	Individual interviews to probe further into teacher decisions to select certain SIOP strategies to meet proficiency scales assessment goals	Interview
Week 6	Classroom implementation of curricular plan	Participant journals

	Teacher meeting to reflect on practice and make instructional adjustments	Participant observation
Week 7	Classroom implementation of curricular plan	Participant journals
	Teacher meeting to reflect on practice and make instructional adjustments	Participant observation
Week 8	Classroom implementation of curricular plan	Participant journals
	Teacher meeting to reflect on practice and make instructional adjustments	Observation with outside observers
	Classroom implementation of curricular plan	Participant journals
Week 9	Teacher meeting to reflect on practice and make instructional adjustments	Observation with outside observers
	Teacher meeting to reflect on practice and make instructional adjustments	Participant observation
	Focus group with teacher	Focus group interview
Week 10	Focus group with students	Focus group interview
Week 11+	Data analysis	
	Member checking	
	Peer review	

Data Analysis

This section begins with an overview of the preparation of data for analysis, followed by the approach for each research question. Data were collected and reported to protect participants' confidentiality, using generic names (e.g., teacher-participant, student 1). Transcribing interviews, observations, and journals eased the process of data analysis, and transcripts were organized by data collection instrument. Lastly, I immersed myself in the data by reading and rereading, as well as noting ideas, initial comments, and questions. The purpose of immersion was "to get an overall sense of the information and become familiar with the ideas and views being expressed" (Efron & Ravid, 2016, p. 169).

Research Question 1

To review, Research Question 1 was as follows: When designing a curriculum in collaboration, what SIOP strategies will sheltered EL teachers negotiate to effectively help diverse secondary ELs reach a selected district priority standard? The participant observations, individual interviews, and participant journals gave the best data for this research question. The SIOP model outlined eight components, or categories, of instructional design: preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice/application, lesson delivery, and review/assessment. Thus, with the categories in place, I worked through a deductive analytic approach, comparing data to predetermined categories and segmenting by each category or “unit of analysis” (Efron & Ravid, 2016, p. 171). Moreover, the data within each unit of analysis were coded based on strategies, or themes, representative of the given SIOP categories. Through this method, I determined the SIOP strategies, or related, novel ones, that were most relevant in collaborative curricular planning focused on SBG goals for sheltered ELs.

Research Question 2

To review, Research Question 2 was as follows: How effective is the teacher collaborative process in curricular planning designed to support ELs in SBG? Focus group interviews and participant journals gave the best data for this research question, which I analyzed using emergent thematic coding. The data were coded based on participants’ perspectives, and I further analyzed and organized the codes around emerging categories. I reexamined data for each category to establish congruency, and settle the categories or themes of the participants’ responses, with appropriate data sets, or quotes, to bolster each category or theme.

Validity and Reliability

Triangulation of data is an integral in qualitative research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Efron & Ravid, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Thus, I conducted multiple participant observations to ensure internal validity, comparing data from the participant observations with subsequent individual interviews and participant journals, as well as the outside observers' data. Along with prolonged engagement, member checks with participants were a part of the analysis process to ensure findings accurately portrayed the perspectives of those involved in the study, and a peer review with a colleague unfamiliar with the topic also ensured alignment of emerging findings and raw data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The colleague was not the ESL school coordinator, had no experience with the study, and had been teaching for 7 years at the time of the study. Furthermore, with an earlier discussion and critical self-reflection of my bias, I ensured cognizance of my subjectivity throughout the research process and endeavor to present findings based on participants' views, mindful of the reflexivity necessary to ensure internal validity in qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Efron & Ravid, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Lastly, rich, thick description was a priority in this study and was accomplished through an audit trail of data connected to research findings or hypotheses, as espoused by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and Creswell and Creswell (2018).

In addition, Herr and Anderson (2015) outlined five validity criteria for action research: process validity, dialogic validity, catalytic validity, outcome validity, and democratic validity. First, process validity concerns with ongoing learning of the researcher and participants through a series of reflective cycles and, in this study, was accomplished through the multiple meetings with participants before and during the implementation of the curricular plan. Second, dialogic validity concerns peer review

and the use of a critical friend who is familiar with the setting and can scrutinize the researcher's process, and in this study, was accomplished using a peer review process explained earlier. Third, catalytic validity concerns with the realization of current reality and a need for change among those involved with the study and, in this study, was accomplished through the collaborative process that was previously nonexistent at the research site. Fourth, outcome validity concerns the resolution of the problem under study and, in this study, was accomplished through the implementation of the curricular plan that attempts to instruct and assess EL students within an SBG framework. Fifth, democratic validity concerns with the involvement of relevant parties at the local research site and, in this study, was accomplished through an emphasis on collaboration with other sheltered EL teachers to develop and reflect on a curricular plan to solve the implementation gap left by the local school district concerning proper instruction and assessment of sheltered ELs within an SBG framework.

Summary

In summary, the problem of practice addressed was the absence of local district guidance on the effective implementation of SBG with a sheltered EL population. Thus, the purpose of this action research, case study was to determine a collaborative process among practitioners to implement SBG with sheltered, secondary ELs, and the constructs under study were EL instruction, collaboration, and professional development. The setting of the research was a Guam high school located in the business district of the island, with a highly diverse population and no history of collaboration among sheltered EL teachers. The setting was chosen to yield the most impact for me, researcher-practitioner, as is the goal of action research (Efron & Ravid, 2013). Along with me, the sample included another sheltered EL

teacher with less than 7 years of teaching experience. Additionally, this chapter described the study's emergent design with participant observations of the collaborative process and curricular plan, individual interviews of teacher beliefs, participant journals of teachers' experiences with SBG implementation, and focus group interviews of teachers and students to garner their views on their confidence levels. Moreover, the chapter explained the deductive analytic approach in relation to teachers' SIOP strategies and emergent thematic coding in relation to the collaborative process and curricular plan's effectiveness. Lastly, the chapter noted how efforts such as member checking, peer review, and triangulation ensured the study's validity and reliability.

CHAPTER 4:

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

At the Guam Department of Education school district, there had been a shift in the perception of grading and curriculum—that is, a more traditional grading structure, which blurs the line between behavior and academics, was replaced with SBG, which entailed building a curriculum around a standard and assessing student performance in relation to the standard. Tardiness, a points system, and effort were removed from academic grades. This curricular shift had occurred in the regular classroom; however, special population classes like those for ELs had added difficulty. Wolf et al. (2014) noted ELs’ dual role when teaching to a standard: attempting to master the language while simultaneously mastering content knowledge and higher-order thinking skills, whereas their language-proficient peers need only to master the content knowledge and thinking skills. Thus, language proficiency added a problematic dimension when instructing English learners in an SBG framework.

This study sought to find a compromise between the rigorous demands of SBG and the considerations of ELs. Through individual interviews of research participants, participant journals, observations of teacher meetings, and focus group interviews of students, I sought to discover the collaborative process sheltered English teachers take to implement a SBG curriculum, where no collaborative structure geared toward sheltered SBG instruction had existed. In the school setting, only general education classes had scheduled preparatory periods by content. Therefore, I hoped to find a foundation for the implementation of SBG with the special population of sheltered ELs, whose English proficiency was rated low on a formal language

assessment administered by the ESL coordinator and whose class schedule reflected their sheltered status (i.e., the addition of sheltered English or Social Studies classes). Without a curricular foundation, sheltered ELs continued to fall behind their language-proficient peers and failed at formal district assessments meant to gauge the level of academic proficiency among students in the district.

Intervention

The current study developed a collaborative structure among sheltered English teachers, who were able to work in a way that is beneficial not only to their students but also to themselves. Knight and Cooper (2019) argued that collaboration allows teachers to divide the onerous workload that comes with working on rigorous standards. Moreover, the strategy of collaboration had teachers developing and implementing a curricular plan that incorporated SBG practices, such as proficiency scales, leveled activities, and tiered assessments, coupled with the experiential knowledge of the teachers who work with the ELs. Strategies were observed for their inclusion and success in the plan, and success was determined by qualitative data from the participating teachers on the collaborative process and qualitative data from the ELs on their teachers' instruction.

General Findings

As an action researcher, I assessed the intervention of teacher collaboration to implement an SBG curriculum for sheltered EL students through five methods—observations, an individual interview, participant journals, a focus group interview with students within a case study framework, guided by the following research questions: (1) when designing a curriculum in collaboration, what SIOP strategies will sheltered EL teachers negotiate to effectively help diverse secondary ELs reach a selected district priority standard and (2) how effective is the teacher collaborative

process in curricular planning designed to support ELs in SBG? Observation notes and the transcript from an individual interview after planning and preparing the instructional plan, which were deductively coded based on SIOP strategies, aided in the study of Research Question 1, while the participant journals and transcripts from a focus group interview of students and a teacher interview, which were inductively coded, aided in the study of Research Question 2. I will now discuss the findings from each of the aforementioned methods.

Observations

Creswell and Creswell (2018) emphasized the use of description within data analysis to provide a context for case study research. Observations occurred in my classroom, which is airconditioned and Wi-Fi enabled. The observations took place during lunch time on Wednesdays and Fridays. Initial observations centered on preparatory work and discussions around building a proficiency scale for a vocabulary standard (see Appendix G) and a common summative assessment (see Appendix H).

Those involved included the researcher the 28-year old educator with 6 years of experience in sheltered EL teaching and me a 29-year old educator with 7 years of experience in sheltered EL teaching, and the research participant, who was. Further, I had a history of weekly collaboration with the English 9 PLC and have been trained in SBG and Classroom Instruction that Works (CITW) for ELs, whereas the research participant had occasional experience of collaboration (i.e., attending PLC meetings with English 10 teachers twice every month) and had been trained in SIOP. In addition, a mid-40-year-old outside observer was occasionally present and 15 years of experience in teaching and 8 years of teaching in the sheltered classroom, 8 years as an ESL school coordinator, and a history of collaboration through various trainings relevant to ELs.

The outside observer and I were involved in observations to ensure inter-observer reliability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Thus, I was a participant observer at times and at other times, strictly a participant being observed by the outside observer. Both the outside observer and I used the same observation protocol to guide the observations of SIOP strategies used to build a SBG curriculum (see Appendix A). Comparing the completed protocols surfaced intersections in the data. Table 4.1 outlines the intersecting SIOP strategies observed along with textual evidence:

Table 4.1 *SIOP Strategies Observed During Teacher Discussions*

Code (i.e. SIOP strategy)	Text Sample	Date of Sample	Type of Data Method (i.e., type of observation, individual interview, etc.)
Defined content objectives	“applying words in a 4.0 children’s story”	February 25, 2022	Outside observer
	“divided into 2.0 objectives and 3.0 objectives” “simplified into student friendly language”	February 21, 2022	Outside observer
	“discussed the abilities of students and what they are able and not able to do i.e. starting at the student’s level”	February 2, 2022	Participant observation
Consistent use of meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts and the four domains of language	“working on being more cognizant about students speaking” “share journals or read the sentences posted for word wall”	March 22, 2022	Outside observer

	<p>“students write word on board for spelling”</p> <p>“making students take your meaning in relation to their language”</p>	March 16, 2022	Outside observer
	“options to partner up”	February 25, 2022	Outside observer
	“noted spelling activities, reverse Pictionary”	February 21, 2022	Outside observer
	“discussion considered an activity for each domain which can be placed in the slide, with some activities having more than one domain e.g. fill-in-the-blank sentence examples”	February 18, 2022	Participant observation
Scaffolding	<p>“presentation and assessment reordered by teacher”</p> <p>“pacing of lesson is appropriate with Day 1 introduce words and define; Day 2 review and provide more examples”</p> <p>“translation time through Google Translate and peer collaboration”</p>	<p>March 30, 2022</p> <p>March 16, 2022</p> <p>February 25, 2022</p>	<p>Participant observation</p> <p>Outside observer</p> <p>Outside observer</p>

	<p>“use of pictures, word wall, translations, crossword puzzle, 4 square collage”</p> <p>“clear, simplified directions on slides”</p> <p>“Google slides show progression of skills i.e. definitions to rhyming words to sentences”</p>	February 21, 2022	Outside observer
Concepts linked to students’ background experiences	<p>“personalized journals, cultural myths”</p> <p>“examples of vocab related to their experience”</p>	March 22, 2022	Outside observer
	<p>“students as supplement of translations especially Chuukese students”</p>	March 16, 2022	Outside observer
	<p>“retelling of cultural myths with vocabulary words used”</p>	February 25, 2022	Outside observer
	<p>“reverse Pictionary with ocean v. land”</p>	February 21, 2022	Outside observer
Apply content and language knowledge	<p>“teachers observe during activities and correct as needed; during presentations of lengthy stories or observations, teachers noted unfamiliar understanding</p>	March 30, 2022	Participant observation

	<p>of what children's stories are"</p> <p>"class goes over answers"</p> <p>"noticed the need for more images, possibly on word wall"</p> <p>"corrected spelling and meanings as they go"</p> <p>"formative observations and journals"</p> <p>"corrected and gave examples; encouraged to add another word or sentence"</p> <p>"in assessment, definitions with matching (2.0), writing sentences + spelling (3.0), and creating story (4.0)"</p> <p>"planned teacher meetings to make instructional adjustments"</p> <p>"use of formative assignments e.g. paired work, journals"</p>	<p>March 22, 2022</p> <p>March 16, 2022</p> <p>March 2, 2022</p> <p>February 4, 2022</p>	<p>Outside observer</p> <p>Outside observer</p> <p>Outside observer</p> <p>Participant observation</p>
<p>Conducts assessment of student comprehension and learning of all objectives</p>	<p>"planned teacher meetings to make instructional adjustments"</p> <p>"use of formative assignments"</p>	<p>February 4, 2022</p>	<p>Participant observation</p>

	e.g. paired work, journals”		
Adaptation of content to student proficiency	“shifting assessment and presentation for student level; timing of assessment discussed based on student capability”	March 30, 2022	Participant observation
	“moved quickly through what was easy (crossword)”	March 22, 2022	Outside observer
	“level of video seemed elementary but students still participated”	March 16, 2022	Outside observer
	“rewriting of 4.0 paragraph directions” “time given seems appropriate”	March 2, 2022	Outside observer

Individual Interview

The individual interview, conducted after observations of the preparatory work with the SBG unit, took place in my classroom during the school’s lunch hour. No one else was present in the room. The interviewee noted her SIOP training in 2018 and continued practice with SIOP in the sheltered English classroom. I reviewed the interview data was reviewed for any SIOP strategies that matched the prepared SBG unit, as well as strategies that were not a part of the SBG vocabulary unit. The results of the interview are displayed in Table 4.2. The SIOP strategies noted in the interviewee’s responses include the following: consistent use of meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts and the four domains of language, scaffolding, concepts

linked to students' background experiences, assessment of student comprehension and learning of all objectives, and adaptation of content to student proficiency.

Additionally, the interviewee noted teacher collaboration as part of instructional planning.

Table 4.2 *SIOP Strategies Identified by Participant*

Code (i.e. SIOP strategy)	Text Sample
Consistent use of meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts and the four domains of language	<p>"Them build better character or positive character"</p> <p>"From there, they would seek An improvement for themselves"</p> <p>"They would read like each other's paragraphs and they would share like what they think it means, like the person that read the other students. And then they would try to correct if they see anything that's wrong, like punctuation, spelling, capitalization. And then the next time we do a peer review, the student would take the corrections or consider then they'll improve from there and then I'll talk about it as well"</p>
Scaffolding	<p>"break down the lessons and I believe especially in sheltered classes, that helps a lot of students knowing that their first language isn't English"</p> <p>"SBG and SIOP, their learning strategies are about the same, like breaking down the lessons. And so I believe again, that would be a lot easier for the students to understand"</p> <p>"Graphic organizer [...] When I, especially when I teach subject and verb agreement, they need to see like evidence first before they put their answer for the verb"</p>
Concepts linked to students' background experiences	<p>"including their background experiences and their cultural knowledge, will help them be excited to do these lessons, even not with just themselves, but with their classmates. And just this year in general."</p>
Conducts assessment of student comprehension and learning of all objectives	<p>"it'll help us adjust our pace or modify whatever changes we need to meet their needs"</p> <p>"So they would just write reflections about what they find hard about the class or what they need more clarification on. And that that's one that definitely helps me. So I know what to do better the next time I see them or to change anything in my lesson plan."</p> <p>"journaling and. Seems like, you know, like the journal prompts that I give, like normally to me. Allow them to reflect on their lives and maybe their choices. And I feel like it really helps"</p>

	“for example, like a student that was typically shy or normally shy and quiet beginning of the year. And after a few months, they become comfortable and then they speak their mind. And their opinions, even if they know that, you know, in this case, in sheltered classes, their English might be wrong, but it's OK, at least they're trying with the efforts they're putting in. And then I look at the, you know, the actual assessment like they're writing”
Adaptation of content to student proficiency	“YouTube videos, Images that show like different concepts like rhyme or. Like a metaphor”
Teacher Collaboration	<p>“Yeah, for me to you, because at first, I didn't really understand SBG, I never really implemented in my classroom. But now that I see the bigger picture of it, I guess I think. If I practice it more, then I'll get the gist of it”</p> <p>“It's been, you know, it's not stressful at all. It's been way more beneficial than anything. Less stressful”</p> <p>/ Google Drive. So how did you feel about the sharing? /</p> <p>“Oh, I enjoyed it. It's yeah, it saves paper. And, you know, Google Drive Is like something that I use a lot to. So. It's been pretty easy and like, I Prefer this over anything else. Easier to collaborate. Yes, because we could put our own like both our input”</p>

Participant Journals

The participant journals aided in observing the SIOP strategies in action in the classroom because conducting regular in-person observations was not feasible due to scheduling concerns. In addition to observing SIOP strategies, the participant journals aided in determining the effectiveness of the SBG unit and the teacher collaborative process. By the end of the study, participants wrote a total of seven journal entries discussing their experiences in the classroom.

SIOP Strategies

The following SIOP strategies were noted in the participants' journals:

Consistent use of meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts and the four domains of language, scaffolding, concepts linked to students' background experiences, apply content and language knowledge, conducts assessment of student

comprehension and learning of all objectives, and adaptation of content to student proficiency. Additional strategies included parental involvement; think, write, share; extended time; peer feedback; outlining; and feedback provided to students on output.

Consistent Use of Meaningful Activities that Integrate Lesson Concepts and the Four Domains of Language. The two sub-strategies discussed in participants' journals were "Pictionary" and the "Story-time (fill-in-the-blank)." On Pictionary, the study's participant had the following to say: "What I found most useful was the Pictionary. Even if some students found it difficult to understand some images, all students were actively participating and other students were also giving their own examples to help out their classmates"

In addition, the participant noted the Story-time activity as something worthwhile in her classroom, commenting: "What I found most useful was the story time activity. It allowed my students to critically think about the words and to figure out what word is right for each sentence within the story." I also agreed on the two activities as worthwhile, noting the Pictionary as a good review and Story-time as a good formative assessment for teacher feedback.

Scaffolding. We agreed on the use of scaffolding, specifically the use of rhyme and a crossword puzzle. The teacher participant complimented the use of rhyme: "How engaged the students were, especially during the rhyming section. All of my students were familiar with rhyme so for them to list some words that rhyme with each other was enjoyable." In addition to the use of rhyme to build vocabulary knowledge, I noted the crossword puzzle as a good gauge of student understanding:

During the crossword puzzle activity, all of my students were able to finish it in less than five minutes. They stated that it was rather easy to do and that most of them remember the words without using a word bank.

I also noted the benefits of rhyme and the students' excitement, yet the crossword puzzle's purpose had to be clarified due to the students' ease of use. I also highlighted the use of translation exercises in the classroom: "Translation helped the students to know the words a bit better in their own language. I believe they could understand better and enjoyed the cooperation that came with the activity." Yet, students without a formalized written language (e.g., Micronesian languages) had an observable disadvantage when compared to their peers, who had the benefit of their electronic language translators.

Concepts Linked to Students' Background Experiences. The teacher participant also praised the word wall and crossword puzzle as useful strategies for students' continued review: "The word wall was very useful since some of my students lost their notes from the previous classes. Some students used the crossword puzzle to help them remember the meanings while they continued working on their recreation stories."

Apply Content and Language Knowledge. In relation to application, the teacher participant enjoyed the use of journals to build students' content and language knowledge, saying:

My students seem to enjoy the journal writing activity. All students were able to write two paragraphs while using at least two of the vocabulary words correctly. What I found useful was the journal writing prompt. I feel that these types of exercises allow my students to think about their writing and remember what experiences they went through.

I noted difficulty with the journals at first, but noticed a gain in the students' ability to complete the journals with at least two vocabulary words.

Conducts Assessment of Student Comprehension and Learning of All

Objectives. The participant and I both agreed on the usefulness of matching and journaling as unobtrusive formative assessments. On matching vocabulary words with blank sentences, the participant commented: “The instructional strategy I found most effective was the matching section. It allowed each student to think more of what the sentence is stating and whether the word they choose will be correct.” However, the participant did note that students needed further explanation and examples to students to succeed.

The participant mentioned her use of journaling throughout the school year, and the fact that students had to share their journals for the teacher to provide feedback. Contrarily, I had not practiced the use of journals and saw the most gains: “The journals have been worthwhile as it is practice for their 4.0. I see the growth in my students when compared to their first journal. They struggled initially but have since grasped a noticeable understanding of the words.” In addition, I found the crossword puzzle and four -square activity, which had students write the word, definition, a sentence, and a picture for each vocabulary word, were helpful gauges of student understanding based on observations and interactions with students.

Adaptation of Content to Student Proficiency. The use of nonlinguistic information, such as a video, aided the participant’s students in their understanding: “What I found most useful during Day 1 was the visual example (YouTube video) for understanding rhyme. Students have learned the concept of rhyme previously, so this video was a refresher for them.”

Additional Strategies. Moreover, the participant and I noted other strategies that aided our instruction of the SBG unit. They included parental involvement in the translation exercises; think, write, and share in the story time (fill-in-the-blank)

activity; extended time for the story book project; sporadic peer talk and feedback; and outlining and drafting of ideas for the story book project. In addition, a SIOP strategy not discussed in the preparatory sessions yet evident in the instructional phase of this study was “Provides feedback to students on output.” The participant noted:

Sharing and providing feedback, correcting each other’s responses, further discussing and simplifying the definitions of *Apropos*. Sharing what they wrote for their journal prompts and providing feedback, having students write a first draft before using the xerox paper to create their myth/legend stories while following the outline provided.

Both participant journals advocated for the use of feedback and further explanations with examples as needed, such as after journaling, during the story book project, and as students practiced with *Pictionary*.

SBG Unit Effectiveness

In addition to observing the SIOP strategies in action, the participant journals aided in determining the effectiveness of the SBG unit and the teacher collaborative process. Table 4.3 outlines the themes that emerged upon examination and reexamination of the journals.

Table 4.3 *SBG Unit Effectiveness as Observed in the Participant Journals*

Theme	Text Sample	Source
Student engagement	<p>“How engaged the students were, especially during the rhyming section. All of my students were familiar with rhyme so for them to list some words that rhyme with each other was enjoyable.”</p> <p>“During this lesson, my students were able to all share their journal prompts. Usually, one student dislikes presenting but today, he had a change of heart.”</p> <p>“What I found most useful was the <i>Pictionary</i>. Even if some students found it difficult to</p>	Participant

	<p>understand some images, all students were actively participating and other students were also giving their own examples to help out their classmates.”</p> <p>“My students seem to enjoy the journal writing activity. All students were able to write two paragraphs while using at least two of the vocabulary words correctly.”</p> <p>“The students enjoyed the children’s stories. They all were enthusiastic about it by asking questions, staying focused, using cellphones for research, and discussing with classmates. My typically sleepy student was focused and asked a question about a cultural myth he wanted to share.”</p> <p>“Students were eager to learn the words. They appeared eager to try and find rhyming words.”</p>	Researcher
Reteaching	<p>“Simplifying the definitions and sentences”</p> <p>“During the alphabetizing section of Day 1, two students (one Korean student and one Chuukese student) found it difficult to reorganize the words at first. After writing examples on the board and further breaking it down, they were able to understand what they needed to do. For others, Day 1 went very smoothly.”</p> <p>“Simplifying the definitions and sentences. Feedback based on the activities and lessons.”</p> <p>“For Day 5, two students did not understand what a myth or legend was. My class and I discussed what a myth/legend is and we all talked about some examples of myths and legends in our cultures. From there, those two students understood and figured out a story to rewrite in their own words.”</p>	Participant
Student process	<p>“My students seem to enjoy the journal writing activity. All students were able to write two paragraphs while using at least two of the vocabulary words correctly.”</p> <p>“What I found most useful was the story time activity. It allowed my students to critically think about the words and to figure out what word is right for each sentence within the story.”</p> <p>“The journals have been worthwhile as it is practice for their 4.0. I see the growth in my students when compared to their first journal. They struggled initially but have since grasped</p>	<p>Participant</p> <p>Researcher</p>

	a noticeable understanding of the words. Though, I do need to observe whether they use the same words and are using just words they know.'	
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Student Focus Group Interview

The purpose of the student focus group interview was to determine students' academic and linguistic confidence levels from their perspective. The interview took place during a Thursday lunch hour after the assessment and project had concluded. The focus group initially comprised 6 students—4 from the my class and 2 from the teacher participant's class, but at the time of the scheduled interview, only 2 students from the my class attended. Before the interview began, I reassured the students that their grades would not be affected in any way; the purpose of the interview was to gain their perspective, and the teacher would only be a listener. The students understood with an affirmative “yes” and a head nod. Upon immersion and review of the interview data, three themes emerged: remembering and understanding content, application of content, and the value of time.

Remembering and Understanding Content

According to Bloom's Taxonomy, remembering and understanding content entails students' being able to recall facts and basic concepts and explain ideas or concepts (Armstrong, 2010). In this regard, students cited difficulty in the spelling of certain words yet acknowledged the benefit of classroom practice:

Student 1: “I'm not able to spell the words because it's too difficult.”

Researcher: “Just a word or all the words were difficult to spell.”

Student 1: “Just ephemeral.”

Researcher: “And were you studying the words at home?”

Student 1: “Sometimes.”

Researcher: "How about you? Were you studying the words?"

Student 2: "Sometimes."

Researcher: "When we were working on the words, when we did the spelling test and all the practices, did they at least help you know the words?"

Student 1: "Yes."

Researcher: "How about you?"

Student 2: "Yes."

In addition to spelling, students showed some confidence in recalling and understanding the definitions of the vocabulary:

Researcher: "If you saw the words again, would you know the definition and why?" Student 1: "Yes."

Researcher: "Okay. Why?"

Student 1: "I've been studying sometimes."

Researcher: "So you've been studying the words during the unit or after?"

Student 1: "After."

Researcher: "So just to be clear, you're saying that if you saw the words now, you would know the definitions, but if it's like a long time from now, like two or three months, then you won't know the definition? Is that what you're saying?"

Students: "Yes."

Moreover, when asked about the practices and activities in class, the students noted confidence:

Researcher: “How about the practices, the practices in class that we did when we were working with the words, like using your journal, doing the Pictionary, and then doing the project. Did that help you?”

Student 2: “Yeah.”

Researcher: “Help you to do what?”

Student 2: “To learn to remember the word. I'll write the word and the meaning. If you write a lot and you can remember the words mean.”

Thus, the collaborative process aided remembering and understanding content, and the next section discusses application of content.

Application of Content

According to Bloom’s Taxonomy, application of content entails students’ being able to use information in new situations, such as in sentences (Armstrong, 2010). In this regard, students did not show much confidence in the use of the words in meaningful sentences:

Researcher: “How were the practices in class when we were using them in sentences? Did you do well with that?” [students looked confused]

Researcher: “Like, remember when we were writing them in your journals and other stuff?”

Student 1: “Not really. I don't know.”

Researcher: “Are you like, let's say right now in another class, will you be able to use the words in a sentence?”

Student 1: “No. Not really.”

Researcher: “Why? Did we not do enough practice in class for you to know the words or something else?”

Student 1: “I can use it, but sometimes it makes me confused. I’m confused with some vocab, like I mix up the definitions or begin the sentence.”

Student 2: “Some word is hard making sentence. I don't know how to make the sentence. Use the word. But, it's hard. That's hard.”

To gain further insight, I asked a clarifying question about any part of the unit that would need changing, but the students answered dissentingly and instead valued my efforts as a teacher:

Researcher: “So the way I taught the vocabulary words, would you change anything that I did?”

Student 2: “No.”

Researcher: “Why?”

Student 2: “You know a lot of knowledge and you teach me.”

Researcher: “So, did I teach the lesson well, so that you can understand the words? You can spell the words correctly, and you can use them in sentences.”

Student 1: “Yeah.”

Researcher: “Why? Why do you think you're able to spell the words correctly and use them in sentences?”

Student 1: “I can do better with the words because of your teaching because you show me how to use the word and the mean.”

Although the application of content needed work in the plan, time was a factor in the students’ success.

Value of Time

In addition to remembering, understanding, and applying the content, students also discussed value of time and how time was a factor in their skills:

Researcher: "So are you able to use the words now in a sentence?"

Student 2: "Yes, but not five words."

Researcher: "Any words that you don't know how to use in a sentence?"

Student 2: "I can use words. If I have time, then I can use it in a sentence."

Researcher: "Would you able to do those things again?"

Student 1: "Yeah, I can do it. Like, just keep studying and keep studying the words."

Earlier, I noted that Student 2 said that given time to write a lot, they can use the words. Furthermore, when asked about any changes to the curricular plan, students mentioned time as a change:

Researcher: "Did you want more practice with the words or did you want to keep practicing with the words?"

Student 2: "Yes."

Researcher: "Like what? What's an example?"

Student 2: "We use the word. To practice how we use the word in a sentence"

Student 1: "Okay so giving us more time to do the work that you're giving us, giving you more time."

Researcher: "Anything else to add?"

Student 1: "No, just give us more time and that's it."

Time was a notable factor in planning opportunities for assessment in the students' view, but the teachers' perspective showed promise.

Teacher Interview

Initially, the post-interview would have been with a team of teachers as a focus group, yet due to participant interest and scheduling concerns, the study only included one participant. Thus, the focus group interview became an individual interview. However, the purpose of the focus group as a method to determine the effectiveness of the teacher collaborative process in SBG curricular planning did not change. Consequently, the interview took place the day after the assessment and project concluded. After immersion in the data, the following themes emerged: confidence in implementation, student growth, extended collaboration, and instructional adjustments.

Confidence in Implementation

When I asked the teacher participant about the confidence level on the standard's instruction, she had this to say:

I would say I'm like at a seven because I feel like this standard for vocabulary gave more of like guidelines and like a ladder to reach the goal for all my students. So I feel like if I were to practice it more, I'd just use it more. And maybe even in my regular classroom students, then I would become a ten. It's just all positive and it just helped me, you know, become a better teacher with learning what SBG is really.

In addition, her confidence level had a direct link to the teacher collaborative process when she commented:

And in my classroom, I think it would give me more of like a format of what to do for SBG because honestly, I've never used SBG before, but now it's like we worked on this together and it gives me like a clear direction of maybe

what I would do too, thanks to you and sharing with me with your SBG and your lesson plans as well.

Confidence levels notably improved from the collaborative process, and student growth resulted in the process too.

Student Growth

On student growth, the teacher participant observed a change in student behavior, due to the SBG unit:

One student was very shy at first, but through this, the lesson that we both did, I feel like this student in particular gained more confidence in themselves with speaking English and using, you know, English words in their vocabulary and writing within the journal prompts or even in their stories.

The participant also noted that the growth was due in part to the proficiency scale that comes with SBG curricular planning:

I think it's really fun to see the process of like the scale right from 1 to 4 or 2 to 4. Yes, you can definitely see the growth with students. Every student is different. So their growth will, you know, there's no certain speed that they have to follow or paced it. It pays on their own and we pace with them.

Student growth was paced considering the population, and this growth is due in part to the collaboration present.

Extended Collaboration

The participant also mentioned that she would extend collaboration with her current English 10 PLC “because I think it's just a good experience, learning experience.” She added:

And gave me insight of what you do in your classroom. And since I work with the English ten SET PLC, they don't implement SBG in any of their

vocabulary lessons. I could give them like what I did and what you did and what we shared and what we made together, right? And I feel like that would help them a lot too.

As a final note on collaboration, the participant not only wished to collaborate on vocabulary standards, but also any standard that teachers are charged to meet:

So I think I would collaborate on other district priority standards with other teachers again, because I think it helps, you know, it gives the teacher insight on what they could do better and maybe share ideas with other teachers to help their students.

There developed a yearning for collaboration among participants, so much so that collaboration would be extended to other teacher groups. Such an atmosphere is successful due to collaborative efforts to adjust instruction.

Instructional Adjustments

The teacher participant also noted some unexpected circumstances and necessary adjustments while teaching the curricular plan, namely with simplification, prior knowledge, and oversimplification.

Simplification. The plan was noted to be too difficult at some points, particularly with the definitions and the Pictionary activity:

One downfall was I had to simplify the definitions, like when we were on day one and two, the students had to get used to that. So I had to, you know, simplify it, like I said. You know, with more practice and just with discussions they were able to get the definitions. Another one was when we were doing Pictionary. Some of the images were kind of difficult for some students to understand.

However, more explanation and examples were given to students for them to successfully understand.

Prior Knowledge. The participant mainly focused her discussion on the story book project, wherein students had to share a myth or legend with the class by creating a children's story book complete with pictures and the five vocabulary words. The participant mentioned students' lack of knowledge on what is a myth or legend:

I guess we didn't see or notice that maybe some students might not know what myth or legend is. Okay. We both had to like simplify the definition of myth or legend. And if like a student didn't have a myth or legend that they could think of, they could ask their parents or like their guardians, or they could come up with a story. And that's how we were able to help these students.

In addition, the planned approach to ease students into the makeup of the story book was not entirely successful, according to the teacher participant:

We talked about one, particularly with like when they started on their myth creation booklet, you know, how you had like first page or we both agreed with the first page, we'd have this and this. And then I felt that my students at first didn't really understand that yet. So that's why I suggested maybe we could provide it like an outline first and where they would write their stories following the outline on like a sheet of paper.

Adjusting to student levels is a given because a plan cannot be one-size-fits-all, and this fact is true for difficult and easy material.

Oversimplification. Other than the aforementioned difficulties, some points in the unit were notably easy for the students, according to the teacher participant:

Some of the activities were kind of easy for most of our students. Yeah, maybe. I know I made that one [the crossword puzzle], so maybe I could have added more instead of the definitions. I could have used like sentences and they would have to think of which word is appropriate for that sentence.

The collaborative process helped with experimentation and reflection as SBG practices were implemented, and data is analyzed in the next section.

Analysis of Data

The research questions under study were (1) when designing a curriculum in collaboration, what SIOP strategies will sheltered EL teachers negotiate to effectively help diverse secondary ELs reach a selected district priority standard and (2) how effective is the teacher collaborative process in curricular planning designed to support ELs in SBG? Synthesizing data with each research question provided clarity.

Research Question 1

Data collection methods for RQ1 were observations, the individual interview, and the participant journals. These three methods ensured data saturation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), in terms of the SIOP strategies utilized throughout the duration of the SBG unit. A deductive analytic approach identified evidence that I constantly compared against predetermined themes: the SIOP strategies developed by Echevarria et al. (2006). To review, the SBG unit spanned two phases—the planning phase and the instructional phase. I present the strategies relevant to each phase of the SBG unit in the following paragraphs, discussing meaningful connections and instructional nuances in the following chapter.

The planning phase of the SBG unit incorporated the observations of the teacher planning meetings and the individual interview. During the planning phase, SIOP strategies that warrant prioritization due to their emphasis in both the

observations and the interview include the consistent use of meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts and the four domains of language, scaffolding, concepts linked to students' background experiences, assessments of student comprehension and learning of all objectives, and adaptation of content to student proficiency. In addition to these SIOP strategies, others emerged: defining content objectives, having concepts linked to students' background experiences, and applying content and language knowledge. Lastly, the participant also emphasized the value of teacher collaboration.

The instructional phase of the SBG unit incorporated the findings from the participant journals, which allowed a glimpse of the strategies' active use in the classroom. During the instructional phase, SIOP strategies that warrant prioritization due to their emphasis and continued presence in participant journals included the consistent use of meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts and the four domains of language, scaffolding, concepts linked to students' background experiences, application of content and language knowledge, assessments of student comprehension and learning of all objectives, and the adaptation of content to student proficiency. Lastly, other strategies worth noting by the teacher team included parental involvement; think, write, share; extended time for activities; peer feedback; outlining of assignment expectations; and feedback provided to students on output.

Research Question 2

To determine the effectiveness of the teacher collaborative process, I consulted the participant journals, the individual post-interview with the teacher participant, and the focus group interview with the students. Through emergent thematic coding, I immersed myself in the data to develop themes in relation to RQ2, seeking student and teacher perspectives.

For students, three themes emerged: remembering and understanding content, application of content, and the value of time. In the interview, students noted difficulty at first with the content, yet valued the practices and activities of the SBG unit as useful in remembering and understanding the content like the words and definitions. However, when discussing the application of the content, students expressed struggles with sentence creation, despite their acknowledgement of the teacher and the practice. Students said they would not change anything about the instruction, and they expressed a view of the teacher as the authority in content. To clarify their position, students understood the value in the teacher's efforts, but they advised that more time is necessary for independent study, as well as class practice on application. Summarily, in the students' view, the teacher collaborative process and its product—the SBG unit—had value and greatly helped with their basic knowledge of vocabulary, but more time was needed for application of content.

For teachers, several themes emerged: student engagement, student growth, student process, instructional adjustments, reteaching, confidence in implementation, and extended collaboration. During the SBG unit, teachers observed high levels of engagement among students, and the students' process and efforts demonstrated a high level of growth in varying language domains. Moreover, the structure of SBG allowed for scaffolded and paced growth.

However, the SBG unit did need adjustments, particularly in factoring students' proficiency and their prior knowledge. At some points in the unit, content was presented and not received as intended, so reteaching was required. Despite these drawbacks, teachers expressed confidence in implementing SBG because of the collaboration. Because of this confidence, teachers expressed a willingness to extend the collaborative nature of SBG curricular planning to other PLCs and to other

academic standards. Summarily, in the teachers' view, the teacher collaborative process and its product—the SBG unit—had value and greatly helped their students' growth in academic and linguistic domains that teachers were more willing to collaborate with other teachers on different standards, yet student proficiency and the prior knowledge of students are two factors that are a part of the process and should be revisited frequently to provide instructional adjustments.

Summary

In summary, my problem of practice was the lack of guidance in the implementation of SBG with a sheltered EL population; therefore, the intervention was a teacher collaborative process that would produce an instructional unit centered on an SBG framework. Two research questions guided the study: (1) when designing a curriculum in collaboration, what SIOP strategies will sheltered EL teachers negotiate to effectively help diverse secondary ELs reach a selected district priority standard and (2) how effective is the teacher collaborative process in curricular planning designed to support ELs in SBG?

Data collected through observations, interviews, participant journals, and focus group interviews were analyzed using a deductive analytic approach for the first research question, whereas emergent thematic coding was utilized for the second research question. For the first research question, the team prioritized several SIOP strategies, evidenced through meeting observations, an interview, and participant journals. For the second research question, students complimented the collaborative process and its product, the SBG unit, for helping them with basic knowledge and understanding while voicing a need for more time to grasp application of the content. The teachers noticed positive differences in their students and in their abilities to tackle SBG with sheltered populations, yet a constant review of student proficiency is

necessary to avoid issues related to difficulty or simplicity. In the next chapter, I discuss the implications for teacher practice and SBG implementation.

CHAPTER 5:

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of this study was the sheltered EL population and their teachers who operated within an SBG framework. Given no collaborative structure among the sheltered EL teachers, this study sought to provide a guide for other sheltered EL teachers in their attempts to implement SBG with a sheltered EL population. Schön's (1983) reflective practitioner theory, along with Connell's (2014) practitioner storytelling addendum to Schön's theory, helped frame the data collection methods and analysis of the teacher discussions around the SBG sheltered curricular plan. Moreover, Echevarria et al.'s (2006) SIOP strategies provided the focus for the observations of the teacher discussions around the SBG sheltered curricular plan.

This study observed and analyzed sheltered EL classes with no history of collaboration among the sheltered EL teachers, and the sheltered EL classes were in the process of implementing SBG. To study this population, two research questions gave focus: (1) when designing a curriculum in collaboration, what SIOP strategies will sheltered EL teachers negotiate to effectively help diverse secondary ELs reach a selected district priority standard and (2) how effective is the teacher collaborative process in curricular planning designed to support ELs in SBG? To answer these research questions, the following data collection methods were utilized: observations of teacher meetings, participant journals, an individual interview, and focus group interviews with the students and the teacher participant.

Furthermore, a deductive analytical approach of the observations, participant journals, and the individual interview identified useful SIOP strategies during the preparation and instructional phase of the curricular plan, namely consistent use of meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts and the four domains of language; scaffolding; concepts linked to students' background experiences; assessments of student comprehension and learning of all objectives; adaptation of content to student proficiency; defining content objectives; having concepts linked to students' background experiences; applying content and language knowledge; application of content and language knowledge; parental involvement; think, write, share; extended time for activities; peer feedback; outlining of assignment expectations; and, feedback provided to students on output.

In addition to deductive analysis and to answer the second research question, emergent thematic coding of interview transcripts found the collaborative process and its product, the SBG unit, were integral to students' basic knowledge, yet more time was necessary for application of the content, with students indicating 4-5 weeks of instruction was not sufficient. However, for teachers, the collaborative process and the SBG unit increased their confidence with SBG and encouraged them to collaborate more on other standards, yet the curricular plan needs consistent adjustments due to student proficiency and prior knowledge.

Results Related to Existing Literature

By explicating the research questions for key constructs, I discuss each construct in the following sections, namely SIOP strategies, efficacy of the collaborative process, and collaboration within SBG.

SIOP Strategies

There were different SIOP strategies noted for the preparation phase and instructional phase of SBG curricular planning. However, Echevarria et al. (2006) noted the lack of research into SIOP's application in varying contexts, especially as it relates to specificity and applicability in a given context. In this study's context, overarching SIOP strategies were noted in both the preparatory and instructional phases, and this study goes further by adding specificity. Townsley et al. (2019) also noted that SBG professional development provides monthly learning modules for staff because teachers need to learn new assessment strategies. For this reason, this study's specificity can inform SBG learning modules.

Overarching SIOP strategies and specific strategies that underpin each SIOP strategy provide a glimpse into the content of learning modules. Firstly, Pictionary and a story time (fill-in-blank) activity can inform the SIOP strategy of the consistent use of meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts and the four domains of language. Secondly, translation, rhyming, and crossword activities enhance the SIOP strategy of scaffolding. Thirdly, a word wall enables linking concepts to students' background experiences. ELs' journaling on relevant prompts also facilitates applying content and language knowledge. Lastly, an EL teacher can conduct assessments of student comprehension and learning of all objectives through matching, a four-square activity, a crossword, and reading student journals.

Summarily, Townsley et al. (2019) stated, "Professional development that is focused, ongoing, differentiated, and understands the voice of the classroom teacher will be critical" (p. 292). As SBG gains traction, glimpses into classroom practice are beneficial to provide the focus and voice to SBG professional development. In this study, having teachers share their successes with specific strategies as related to SIOP

strategies gave them a voice in the process, as well as giving teachers input in the topics of professional development. Focusing on successful, specific strategies and practicing with them additionally benefits SBG professional development.

Efficacy of the Collaborative Process

For students, the collaborative process along with its product, the SBG curricular unit, proved to be effective in helping them learn the words and their meaning. The opportunities for practice helped with the process of word retention. One student commented, “I’ll write the word and the meaning. If you write a lot and you can remember [what] the words mean.” The scaffolding and pacing additionally aided students in learning the words. For this reason, students felt less stress and anxiety, had deeper learning, and were more confident (Elsinger & Lewis, 2020). However, students did require more time for practice in sentence creation, which is where the collaborative process faltered. Students commented: “So giving us more time to practice more using the words in the sentences. Some word is hard making sentence. I don’t know how to make the sentence.” Olsen and Buchanan (2019) advised, “If grades are low, then school and classroom practices need changing and/or the students need to work different to improve and demonstrate mastery” (p. 2026). Reassessment allows students to learn from mistakes, grow, and master the necessary standards at their own pace (Elsinger & Lewis, 2020). Thus, the inclusion of tracking and growth charts and time for reassessment opportunities would benefit students in their sentence creation.

For teachers, the collaborative process improved their confidence in SBG implementation. The teacher participant commented, “now it’s like we worked on this together and it gives me like a clear direction of maybe what I would do too.” The collaborative process provided direction, and the conversations with a colleague

helped to alleviate any doubts due to a sense of community and shared responsibility. Moreover, Lee et al. (2018) noted, “the potential student benefits resulting from focusing on the quality of learning [...include] levelling the playing field for underrepresented minorities” (p. 57). On the benefits of the SBG collaborative process for the sheltered classroom, the teacher participant elaborated, “there’s no certain speed that they have to follow. They pace on their own and we pace with them.” Thus, teachers can meet students where they are in SBG, and subsequently, teachers can better understand the strengths and shortcomings of their students based on the priority standard’s skills. However, no plan is perfect. Instructional adjustments, such as simplification and ensuring prior knowledge, were a part of the process. Townsley et al. (2019) recommended extending or slowing implementation timelines to the needs of individual teachers and departments. Despite the process, the teacher participant noted high levels of confidence as evidenced by the following:

So I think I would collaborate on other district priority standards with other teachers again, because I think it helps, you know, it gives the teacher insight on what they could do better and maybe share ideas with other teachers to help their students.

Collaboration within SBG

Collaboration was necessary in SBG implementation, and the construct underpinned this study’s process. The teacher participant commented, “I could give them like what I did and what you did and what we shared and what we made together.” To extend collaboration across the school and solve teachers’ wait-and-see attitude, administrators and implementation teams must listen to teachers’ perspectives (Perrell & Meyer, 2021). Such perspectives from early implementors

like the teacher participant can inform instruction and assessment for other teachers in the early stages of SBG implementation.

To aid these teachers, administrators need to foster collaboration by utilizing existing PLCs to experiment with ideas and support teachers with varying experiences (Townsley et al., 2019). Based on the perception of the teacher participant in the collaborative process, early implementors are more willing and confident to share their insights with other teachers in their PLC: “I would more than likely collaborate for these standards, and I think it's because I think it's just a good experience, learning experience.” Moreover, little compromises and adjustments moved teachers closer to the principles of the SBG program (Olsen & Buchanan, 2019). Thus, successful collaboration is moving teachers incrementally through the new practices, as in this study.

Implications for Practice

With my district's shift to the novel SBG system, teachers can be overwhelmed by the demands of such a shift, especially sheltered English teachers who have not received specialized professional development from the district. For this reason, a handy toolbox of proven strategies is necessary. Moreover, valuable professional development integrates abstract principles with concrete strategies and promotes adaptation and individualized implementation (Olsen & Buchanan, 2019). Consequently, the SIOP strategies accentuated by this study provide a starting point for teachers' preparatory and instructional phase. Sharing these strategies with other teachers is integral to the success of the district's SBG implementation, as well as to ensure equity in implementation among various school populations. However, to ensure successful professional development, simply sharing the SIOP strategies without specificity in practice is insufficient. For example, the general SIOP strategy

of concepts linked to students' background experiences must be reinforced with an introduction to specific strategies used in practice like the crossword and the word wall.

Furthermore, quality professional development depends on a knowledgeable and compassionate facilitator (Olsen & Buchanan, 2019; Percell & Meyer, 2021) who is willing to collaborate with teachers and administrators. Exemplary classes, schools, and teachers who are using standards-based approaches successfully can model and mentor others within the building or district (Percell & Meyer, 2021). The teachers in this study can aid struggling sheltered English teachers in their SBG implementation by acting as mentors for both experienced and newer faculty members. According to Lee et al. (2018), more experienced faculty struggle with practical aspects such as grading, grading management, data management, and how to operate the grading system effectively, while newer faculty members struggle during the preparation phase, such as the lack of teaching assistants and normal classroom flow.

Knowledgeable and compassionate facilitators can tailor professional development to teachers' needs. By the continued sharing of best practices combined with other teachers' individual implementation and adaptation, a snowballing process begins, wherein specific strategies—other than ones outlined in this study—develop and can be shared.

Limitations and Future Research

At the onset, this study had two limitations: sample size and time. Enlisting only one other sheltered English teacher and two students limited the findings to the local context. Moreover, richer data would have been more useful with a larger sample size across multiple school sites to determine levels of transferability and to incorporate other novel and specific strategies that accompany the general SIOP

strategies. The time of the study additionally was an impediment because richer data can come from an extended study. For example, within a school year, numerous standards warrant a teacher's attention. In contrast to this study's use of one vocabulary standard, valuable data would have come from the realistic dynamic of multiple standards working in tandem within the school year and how this relationship may benefit or hinder student achievement within SBG.

Furthermore, researchers have noted the value of reassessments within SBG (Lee et al., 2018; Selbach-Allen et al., 2020). This study did not incorporate reassessments because of time constraints. Because Selbach-Allen et al. (2020) noted students were likely to work ahead to take advantage of instructor feedback, peer collaboration opportunities, and reassessments, including reassessments in a future study may yield more fruitful results. Indeed, students in this study expressed an issue with time for proficiency.

Lastly, the current study focused on the interaction among teachers, yet at any school site, administrators direct and control teachers' actions and affect teachers' work. Townsley et al. (2019) commented, "If the leaders do not understand the philosophical foundation of SBG at a deep level, there's little hope they will be able to defend the practices when challenges arise, as they surely will, when upsetting the status quo" (p. 294). Inexperienced administrators can mislead teachers into practices that do not align with SBG or reinforce the status quo. In addition, teachers who value SBG lose their support within the school, which ignores their efforts and is demoralizing. Thus, exploring the relationship between administrators and teachers and the professional development of administrators would help expand the knowledge of SBG practices.

Summary

This study focused on sheltered EL teachers, their sheltered students, and SBG. The following research questions guided the study: (1) when designing a curriculum in collaboration, what SIOP strategies will sheltered EL teachers negotiate to effectively help diverse secondary ELs reach a selected district priority standard and (2) how effective is the teacher collaborative process in curricular planning designed to support ELs in SBG? Observations, individual interviews, focus group interviews, and participant journals yielded data on successful SIOP strategies along with specific strategies that complement the more general strategies. For students, the teachers' collaborative process and its product, the SBG unit, helped with their understanding of the words, but more time was necessary for application. For teachers, the collaborative process generally increased their confidence levels with SBG implementation, yet instructional adjustments and continued review of students' skills are a part of the process.

For continued improvements, more collaboration among sheltered EL teachers is needed to identify and share specific strategies that are successful in practice. Such sharing can go a long way in developing sheltered teachers professionally, combined with sessions that involve experienced teachers in discussions with novice teachers. For future research, a larger sample size and extended time with multiple standards working in conjunction can improve the knowledge base of SBG practice. Furthermore, the use of reassessments and the involvement of school administration can reveal other nuances within SBG implementation. Summarily, this study added more specific information to SBG knowledge, yet other said variables in future studies can extend the knowledge base of SBG further to find success among teachers that benefits student achievement.

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APPENDIX A:

OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL

Table A.1 *Observational Protocol*

Date of Observation:				
	SIOP Strategy	Observed	Not observed	Comments (<i>i.e. specific examples of behaviors observed</i>)
Preparation	Defined content objectives			
	Defined language objectives			
	Content concepts are appropriate for age and student levels			
	Supplementary materials are used			
	Adaptation of content to student proficiency			
	Meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts and the four domains of language			
Instruction	Concepts linked to students' background experiences			
	Links explicitly made to past learning and new concepts			
	Key vocabulary emphasized			
	Speech appropriate for student proficiency level			
	Explanation of academic tasks clear			
	Uses variety of techniques to make concepts clear			
	Provides ample opportunities for students to use strategies			
	Consistent use of scaffolding techniques			
	Question types throughout the lesson including those that promote higher-order thinking skills			
	Frequent opportunities for interactions			
	Grouping configurations support language and content objectives			
	Wait time for student response			
	Clarify key concepts in first language			

Assessment	Hands-on materials and/or manipulatives			
	Apply content and language knowledge			
	Activities that integrate all language skills			
	Content objectives supported by lesson delivery			
	Language objectives supported by lesson delivery			
	Students engaged 90-100%			
	Pacing of lesson is appropriate to students' ability level			
	Review of vocabulary			
	Review of content concepts			
	Provides feedback to students on output			
	Conducts assessment of student comprehension and learning of all objectives			

APPENDIX B:

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Hafa Adai (Hello)! First, I'd like to thank you for participating in my study on developing an appropriate curricular plan for ELs. The study seeks to understand the strategies that teachers employ in designing instruction for sheltered ELs in an SBG framework. Our interview today will last for around an hour, and I will be asking you:

- Teacher individual interview
 - a few background questions, your experience with SIOP, the PLC's group process, and your pedagogy
- Teacher focus group
 - Your thoughts on the overall group process and collaboration in general
- Student focus group
 - Your thoughts on the lessons your teacher covered

[review consent form]

You have completed a consent form indicating that I have your permission (or not) to audio record our conversation. Are you still okay with me recording (or not) our conversation today? __ yes __ no

- If yes: Thank you! Please let me know if at any point you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record.
- If no: Thank you for letting me know. I will only take notes of our conversation.

Before we begin the interview, do you have questions? *[discuss questions]*

If any questions arise at any point in this study, you can feel free to ask them at any time. I would be more than happy to answer your questions.

Table B.1 *Interview Protocol*

TEACHER INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW: (SIOP strategies exploration)

RQ1: When designing a curriculum in collaboration, what SIOP strategies will sheltered EL teachers negotiate to effectively help diverse secondary ELs reach a selected district priority standard

How many years have you been teaching in the ESL classroom	Have you received training on SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation	With your SIOP training, would you say that you make a	In our curricular planning meetings, the group agreed to <u>insert SIOP strategy observed or</u>	Can you provide a list of three strategies you best believe	Could you provide more insight into your selection of the
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? How many years have you been teaching overall? Can you describe your teaching philosophy?	Protocol) or are familiar with SIOP and its strategies? If yes, how long ago was this training and could you explain your understanding of SIOP? If no, move to question #4.	considerable effort to practice what you gained from the training? Why?	<u>description of strategy</u>). Do you agree with utilizing this strategy in your classroom? Why? (<i>Repeat 2 more times with different observed strategies</i>)	work well with sheltered ELs?	previous three strategies, possibly from experience, personal teaching philosophy, or another source?
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TEACHER FOCUS GROUP: (study effectiveness)

RQ2a: What are the EL team's perceptions on the effectiveness of the process in helping to bolster teachers' confidence in SBG implementation?

How are we doing today?	After implementing the SBG curricular plan for the standard on <u>(insert the area of the PLC's chosen standard i.e. writing, reading)</u> , how confident are you all in your instruction of the selected standard? Explain.	What are the highlights of the collaboration you conducted around SBG planning for sheltered ELs? In your professional development? In your classroom?	What are the downfalls of the collaboration you conducted around SBG planning for sheltered ELs? In your professional development or in the classroom?	In the future, how likely are you to collaborate on other district priority standards? Why?	
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STUDENT FOCUS GROUP: (study effectiveness)

RQ2b: What are the ELs' perceptions on the effectiveness of the process in helping to develop their confidence in academic and language skills?

How are we doing today?	Can you <u>(insert description of skills)</u>	If a future teacher were to give you	Would you say your teacher taught the lesson well, in	Would you change anything	
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	<u>from PLC selected standard)?</u> Why?	similar tasks as your teacher now, would you be able to complete it? Why?	that you understand the concepts and skills better? Why?	in the way your teacher taught you? Why?	
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APPENDIX C:
PARTICIPANT JOURNAL PROMPTS

Hafa Adai! Please use the following prompts during the instructional phase of the study as a daily reflection of your teaching. Please complete your reflection to the prompts on the composition notebook provided to you by the researcher.

Based on your experience and after teaching the curricular plan, please respond to each prompt with your honesty and detail. Thank you!

1. After teaching a lesson from the curricular plan, did you notice any unforeseen circumstances or difficulties during instruction? Please explain.
2. After teaching a lesson from the curricular plan, what were some highlights during instruction? Please explain.
3. After teaching a lesson from the curricular plan, were there any instructional strategies from the curricular plan you found to be most useful? Please explain.
4. After teaching a lesson from the curricular plan, were there any instructional strategies NOT in the curricular plan that you found to be most useful? Please explain.

APPENDIX D:
PARENT CONSENT FORM

Dear Parents/Guardians,

My name is Dylan Orot, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Instruction and Education at the University of South Carolina. I am conducting an action research study as part of the requirements of my degree in Curriculum and Instruction, and I would like to invite you child to participate.

I am researching best practices for sheltered English learners in a standards-based grading framework. Together with my school colleague, we will implement a standards-based grading lesson, in the hopes of discovering strategies that have the potential for success with English learners. Thus, the results of this study will go a long way in helping sheltered English as a Second Language teachers refine our practice.

By permitting your child to participate, you are allowing me to include my analysis of your child's work in my dissertation, as well as any views expressed about the standards-based grading lesson. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but your child's identity will not be revealed.

Participation is completely voluntary and confidential. Participation, non-participation, or withdrawal will not affect your child's grade, or affect the academic expectations or requirements in his or her English as a Second Language class. Study information will be kept in a secure location, and your child's name will not be reported or associated with their work. Participation is anonymous, which means that no one (not even members of my dissertation committee) will know your child's name. Your child's name will be removed from all of the research materials prior to data analysis and storage.

You may contact me (dlorot@gdoe.net) or my faculty advisor, Dr. Leigh D'Amico, Ed.D. (damico@mailbox.sc.edu) if you have any questions about this study. If you have any questions about your child's rights as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance at the University of South Carolina at 808-777-7095.

Please indicate your preference by completing and signing the respective section of the attached letter. You may keep this copy of the letter for your personal records.

By signing this consent form, I confirm that I have read the information in this parental permission form and have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding this study.

Consent: I voluntarily agree to allow my child to take part in this study.

Child's name

Parent/Guardian's Name

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Dissent: I do not agree to allow my child to take part in this study.

Child's name

Parent/Guardian's Name

Parent/Guardian's Signature

APPENDIX E:
RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

1. I (*print name*) _____ voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
2. I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequence of any kind.
3. I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
4. I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
5. I understand that participation involves meetings to discuss the formulation of a standards-based grading lesson plan, interviews with the researcher, and written journals of my experience in the classroom.
6. I agree to my interview being auto-recorded.
7. I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
8. I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
9. I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the published dissertation and the dissertation presentation.

10. I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities—they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
11. I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in a locked filing cabinet or password-protected digital storage space, which only the researcher has access to, until an academic review committee confirms the results of the dissertation.
12. I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for at most two years after the certification of the dissertation.
13. I understand that under freedom of information legislation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
14. I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information:
- Researcher: Dylan Orot (dlorot@gdoe.net)
Faculty advisor: Dr. Leigh D’Amico, Ed.D. (damico@mailbox.sc.edu)
Office of Research Compliance, University of South Carolina: 808-777-7095.

Research Participant Acknowledgement and Consent:

Signature of participant

Date

Researcher Acknowledgement:

Signature of researcher

Date

APPENDIX F:

IRB APPROVAL



OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN RESEARCH
APPROVAL LETTER for EXEMPT REVIEW**

Dylan D'Anthony Orot
820 South Main Street
Columbia, SC 29208

Re: Pro00114770

Dear Mr. Dylan D'Anthony Orot:

This is to certify that the research study ***Reaching the Standard: An Action Research Study on English Learners and Standards-Based Grading*** was reviewed in accordance with 45 CFR 46.104(d)(1), the study received an exemption from Human Research Subject Regulations on **9/13/2021**. No further action or Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight is required, as long as the study remains the same. However, the Principal Investigator must inform the Office of Research Compliance of any changes in procedures involving human subjects. Changes to the current research study could result in a reclassification of the study and further review by the IRB.

Because this study was determined to be exempt from further IRB oversight, consent document(s), if applicable, are not stamped with an expiration date.

All research related records are to be retained for at least three (3) years after termination of the study.

The Office of Research Compliance is an administrative office that supports the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board (USC IRB). If you have questions, contact Lisa Johnson at lisaj@mailbox.sc.edu or (803) 777-6670.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lisa M. Johnson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lisa M. Johnson
ORC Assistant Director and IRB Manager

APPENDIX G:

PROFICIENCY SCALE

Agreed-on Standards:

- L.2: spelling correctly
- L.6: identify the meaning of words and use words correctly

Resources:

- District Proficiency Scales
- Wordly Wise
 - 3 words from 10th grade
 - 2 words from 9th grade

Table G.1 *Proficiency Scale*

Proficiency	Standard	Activity	Assessment Item	Feedback/Adjustments
4	In addition to Score 3.0, in-depth inferences and applications that go beyond what was taught. (student-generated work)	1. Everyday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0. Journals every day to use words in context (writing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0. Multiple prompts to have students choose 1. Sentence frames a. Share journal (speaking) Days 5-7 . (Quitoriano) Journal a. (Orot) Project: Children's storybook 0. Use all 5 words in the story 1. Pick a myth/legend from your culture and share with us as if we were 5-year-olds 	Journal prompt using all 5 words <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompt will be relating to creating a story of some kind?? 	

		2. Two Options: Google Slides or hard copies		
3	In addition to Score 2, accurately use general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level, as well as spell correctly	<p>1. Day 3</p> <p>0. (Quitoriano) Journal</p> <p>1. (Quitoriano) Review words/Refresher</p> <p>0. 4-square collage</p> <p>b. (Orot) Fill-in-the-blank activity for vocabulary words i.e., match the sentence with the vocab word</p> <p>0. 3 words</p> <p>1. Whole class</p> <p>Day 4</p> <p>. (Quitoriano) Journal</p> <p>a. (Quitoriano) Review words/Refresher</p> <p>0. Crossword</p> <p>b. (Orot) Fill-in-the-blank activity for vocabulary words <i>with a story</i> i.e., match the sentence with the vocab word</p> <p>0. 5 words</p> <p>1. Independent work with whole class review</p>	Sentence creation + spelling	
2	Independently gather general academic and domain-specific words and phrases important to comprehension or expression at the college and career readiness level; alphabetize, identify rhyming	<p>1. Day 1</p> <p>0. Introduce words & definitions</p> <p>1. Introduce/review rhyme</p> <p>2. Locate rhyming words in dictionary</p> <p>3. Alphabetizing words</p> <p>2. Day 2</p> <p>0. Re-introduce words (word wall)</p> <p>1. (Quitoriano) Journal (3.0)</p> <p>2. Practice spelling</p> <p>3. Comprehension game/activity (Orot) - ocean vs. land</p>	Definitions (Matching)	<p>1. To share journals</p> <p>2. Use more pictures for Pictionary (2-3 images)</p> <p>3. Simplify the definitions into student-friendly language</p> <p>0. Add words</p>

	words and high frequency words			t u d e n t f r i e n d l y p i c t u r e / s e n t e n c e t o w o r d w a l l
1	With help, a partial understanding of some of the simpler details and processes and some of the more complex ideas and processes (With help, partial success at score 2.0 content and			

	score 3.0 content)			
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Vocabulary List:

1. Clique (n)
2. Endow (v)
3. Ephemeral (adj.)
4. Apropos (adj)
5. Assess (v)

APPENDIX H:

COMMON SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

2.0. Definitions

Write the correct word that matches the definitions.

Apropos Assess Clique Ephemeral Endow

1. a small group of people who spend time together and who are not friendly to other people
2. to give a large amount of money to a school, hospital, etc., in order to pay for the creation or continuing support of (something)
3. lasting a very short time
4. suitable or appropriate
5. to make a judgment about something

3.0 Sentences

DIRECTIONS: Write one sentence for each of the vocabulary words (5 in total). Check your spelling of the words!

4.0. Paragraph

In 5-7 sentences, write about your culture and things that make your culture unique. Your paragraph should have **ALL** of the vocabulary words.

When finished with the test, turn in your paper to your period box/teacher at the front of the room. Then, wait quietly and patiently for your classmates to finish.