Overview of Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)
Verona Area School District
2010-11

Background
On October 6, 2008, the Verona Area School District Board of Education approved recommendations from the Ad-Hoc committee on ELL/Bilingual Program. One of those recommendations was to “increase professional development for VASD staff with a goal of increasing proficiency in working with ELLs”. Soon after the Board’s approval, VASD participated in a SIOP professional development workshop in Memphis designed to help educators provide effective content and language instruction for students acquiring English. That began a multi-year professional development effort within the Verona Area School District to bring SIOP training to VASD staff to increase their ability to support English language learners through instructional practices that are critical for second language learners as well as high-quality practices that benefit all students.

Improving the Quality of Instruction for English language learners and all students
The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2000) was developed to provide teachers with a well articulated, practical model of sheltered instruction. The intent of the model is to facilitate high quality instruction for English language learners in content area teaching. The SIOP Model is based on current knowledge and research-based practices for promoting learning with all students, especially English language learners (ELLs). Critical features of high quality instruction for ELLs are embedded within the SIOP Model.

The SIOP Model can be viewed as an umbrella under which other programs developed for improving instruction can reside. Administrators and teachers alike are bombarded with new approaches to instruction, reform efforts, and practices that sometimes seem to be in competition with one another. Often what is lacking in schools is coherence, or a plan for pulling together sound practices (Goldenberg, 2004). The SIOP Model is not another “add on” program but rather it is a framework that can bring together a school’s instructional program by organizing methods and techniques, and ensuring that effective practices are implemented - and can be quantified. The SIOP Model is currently used in most of the 50 states and in hundreds of schools across the U.S., as well as in several other countries.

Sheltered Instruction and the SIOP Model
Sheltered instruction (SI) is an approach to teaching that extends the time students have for receiving English language support while they learn content subjects. SI classrooms, which may include a mix of native English speakers and English learners or only ELLs, integrate language and content while infusing socio-cultural awareness. Teachers scaffold instruction to aid student comprehension of content topics and objectives by adjusting their speech and instructional tasks, and by providing appropriate background information and experiences. The ultimate goal is accessibility for ELLs to grade-level content standards and concepts while they continue to improve their English language proficiency. SI has become a preferred instructional approach for teaching English language learners, especially at the secondary level, as schools must prepare students to achieve high academic standards and to demonstrate English proficiency on high-stakes tests.

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP®) Model (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2000) was developed to provide teachers with a well articulated, practical model of sheltered instruction. Its effectiveness was validated by a research study conducted through Guarino, et al (2001), who determined that it was a highly reliable and valid measure of sheltered instruction. The SIOP model is
a research-based observation instrument that has been shown to be a valid and reliable measure of sheltered instruction (Guarino, Echevarria, Short, Schick, Forbes, & Rueda, 2001). SIOP is also used as a model for lesson planning and implementation of high quality sheltered instruction. The SIOP protocol provides concrete examples of the features of sheltered instruction that can enhance and expand a teachers’ instructional practice.

The protocol is composed of thirty features that are grouped into eight components: **Lesson Preparation, Building Background, Comprehensible Input, Strategies, Interaction, Practice/Application, Lesson Delivery, and Review/Assessment.** These components emphasize the instructional practice that is critical for second language learners as well as high-quality practices that benefit all students. Although sheltered instruction is widely advocated as an effective instructional strategy for English learners, few research tools allow for the assessment of an effective sheltered lesson. The SIOP Model provides for the assessment of practice through the observation protocol. The items included in SIOP drew upon the knowledge and experience of many teachers and other professionals using sheltered instruction.

The SIOP Model seeks to improve lessons by emphasizing three different areas:

- **Preparation** (six items) — determining the lesson objectives and content objectives, selecting age-appropriate content concepts and vocabulary, and assembling supplementary materials to contextualize their lesson;
- **Instruction** (20 items) — emphasizing the instructional practices that are critical for English language learners, such as making connections with students’ background experiences and prior learning, modulating teacher speech, emphasizing vocabulary development, using multimodal techniques, promoting higher-order thinking skills, grouping students appropriately for language and content development and providing hands-on materials, and
- **Review/Assessment** (four items) — conducting informal assessment of student comprehension and learning of all lesson objectives.

While implementing the model, educators can also observe one another by using the features in the observation protocol to assess the level of sheltered instruction that is seen in their classroom. Ranging from 0 to 4, colleagues identify the level that best reflects their assessment of what they observe in the teacher’s classroom; ranging from highly evident, somewhat evident and not evident. The information is used to reflect on their practices and refine and improve lessons. This form of lesson analysis helps educators prepare appropriate lesson plans to meet the needs of all their students, to share teaching practices, and expand their work.

**Professional Development Plan - SIOP Training for 2010-11 and 2011-12**

- In August, 2010, the Administrative Team participated in the first of two days of intensive training on the SIOP Model focused on classroom observations and supporting teachers.
- All sites will conduct late start SIOP training sessions on the SIOP components that will be part of a two-year professional development effort involving all staff members during the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years.
  
  1st Semester 2010-11  Lesson Preparation & Building Background  
  2nd Semester 2010-11  Comprehensible Input & Strategies  
  1st Semester 2011-12  Interaction & Practice/Application  
  2nd Semester 2011-12  Lesson Delivery & Review/Assessment  
- A third cohort of 40 teachers will be invited to participate in a two-day SIOP Teacher training session which will be held in VASD in April 2011.