Texas A&M University System's Support Activities Related to the Limited English Proficient Student Success Initiative

Evaluation Report
August 31, 2007

Erin McCann, PhD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDICES

Appendix A
- LEP SSI Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Cycle 3 Grant Recipients

Appendix B
- Expert Reviewer Guidelines – ISLA Conference
- Expert Reviewer Guidelines – ISLA Certification Preparation Institute

Appendix C
- Expert Review: ISLA Conference
- Expert Review: ISLA Certification Preparation Institute
- Expert Review: TAMUS Online Certification Preparation Course – Content
- Expert Review: TAMUS Online Certification Preparation Course – Delivery

Appendix D
- Survey Cover Letter – ISLA Certification Preparation Institute
- Survey of Participants of the ISLA Certification Preparation Institute
- Survey Cover Letter – TAMUS Online Certification Preparation Course
- Survey of Participants of the TAMUS Online Certification Preparation Course

Appendix E
- Survey Results of Respondents from the ISLA Certification Preparation Institute
- Survey Results of Respondents from the TAMUS Online Certification Preparation Course

Appendix F
- Site Visit Interview Protocol: District/Region Coordinator
- Site Visit Interview Protocol: Campus Administrator
- Site Visit Interview Protocol: Teacher Interview/Focus Group

Appendix G
- Site Visit Summary: Hays CISD, San Marcos, TX
- Site Visit Summary: Northside ISD, San Antonio, TX
- Site Visit Summary: Education Service Center, Region 12, Waco, TX

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In June 2004 the Texas Education Agency (TEA) provided grants totaling approximately $4.8 million to the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) and Texas A&M – Corpus Christi (TAMU - CC) to provide technical assistance and support to Limited English Proficient Student Success Initiative (LEP SSI) grant recipients. This initiative was designed in response to the growing enrollment of limited English proficient (LEP) students in the state and the low performance of these students, as compared to all students, on standardized assessments.

Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires that children with limited English proficiency "attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet" (NCLB, 2001). According to the legislation, school districts must take specific steps to ensure that students with limited English proficiency meet the same standards that all students must meet. The 78th Texas Legislature adopted SB1108 which amended the Texas Education Code Sections 21.456 and 39.024(d)-(e) to provide for such assistance. Through this legislation, intensive programs of instruction, training materials, and other teacher training resources were provided to assist teachers in developing the expertise required to enable LEP students to meet state performance expectations.

The goals of the LEP SSI project were to:

- Increase academic achievement of LEP students as demonstrated through improved TAKS scores, growth in English reading proficiency, grade promotion, and increased rates of secondary credit accrual; and

- Increase the number of teachers prepared to enable LEP students to meet state performance expectations through training in LEP instruction and reduction of LEP teachers teaching under a Bilingual exception or ESL waiver.

Approximately $18 million was awarded to a total of 69 LEP SSI grantees in three funding cycles: 20 Cycle 1 awards (Grant period: May 2004 – May 2006), 34 Cycle 2 awards (Grant period: June 2005 – May 2007), and 15 Cycle 3 awards (Grant period: February 2006 – August 2007). The majority of grant awards went to school districts, which served multiple campuses. Four Education Service Centers (ESCs) were among those receiving awards in the Cycle 1 (three ESCs) and Cycle 2 (one ESC) funding periods. The ESCs subsequently provided funding to school districts within their regions needing assistance with LEP student populations on their campuses. Award amounts ranged between $180,000 and $425,000 for Cycle 1 grants. For Cycle 2, award amounts were between $86,000 and $500,000; for Cycle 3, the range was $99,000 to $500,000.

The first year of TAMUS support coincided with the Cycle 1 grant awards. The LEP SSI, Cycle 1 grant period ran from May 2004 to May 2006. During that period of time, TAMUS established the Institute for Second Language Achievement (ISLA) at Texas

A&M–Corpus Christi as a primary means for providing assistance to LEP SSI grant recipients. An online English as a Second Language (ESL) certification preparation course based at Texas A&M–College Station was also offered through their Education Department.

In March 2005, TEA contracted with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) to conduct an evaluation of the TAMUS support activities related to the LEP SSI Cycle 1 recipients. The evaluation was to review the content and delivery of the TAMUS online ESL certification preparation course and the effectiveness of TAMUS' technical assistance and professional development services to Cycle 1 grant recipients. A report on these activities was submitted to TEA in April 2006 *(Texas A&M University System's Support Activities Related to Limited English Proficient Student Success Initiative Cycle 1 Grants – Final Evaluation Report)*, and included recommendations for the continued evaluation of the project as follows:

- An expert review of the ISLA summer ESL institute content
- Perceptions of participants to the online certification course
- Continued perceptions of participants of the ISLA institute
- An examination of the full spectrum of support services offered by TAMUS
- Site visits to a sample of LEP SSI grant recipients to assess their perceptions of support received by TAMUS
- An examination of the certification rates of teachers from LEP SSI grant districts in comparison to the state average

In April 2006, TEA elected to extend the evaluation of the LEP SSI contract, expanding the scope of work to also examine the influence of the project on Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grant recipients. The objectives for the expanded scope of work were to:

1) describe the services provided by ISLA and the four outreach centers that have been awarded sub-grants from TAMUS and assess the quality of those services;
2) examine the quality, usefulness, and effects of the support and services provided by TAMUS/ISLA; and
3) examine the relationship between participation in TAMUS/ISLA trainings and rates of ESL/bilingual teacher certification in Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Cycle 3 grantee teachers, and state certification rates.

SEDL'S EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

The evaluation was designed to look at the types and quality of services provided to grantees and the impact of those services. SEDL's evaluation collected data regarding the quality and effectiveness of the TAMUS support to LEP SSI grant recipients using a mixed method design that included both qualitative and quantitative data. The evaluation study was guided by the following questions:

(1) Support services provided by TAMUS/ISLA
   a. What services have been provided?
   b. To what extent are campus needs assessment data used to guide services?

    c. To what extent are campus implementation plans being developed and implemented for target campuses?

(2) Quality, usefulness, and effects of support services
    a. To what extent do ISLA seminars and the TAMUS online course reflect best practices and standards for ESL and bilingual teaching and learning?
       i. Content
      ii. Design and delivery
    b. To what extent are teachers implementing the content and instructional strategies learned through ISLA seminars and the TAMUS online course?
    c. What factors have contributed to or hindered implementation?
    d. What teacher and student effects have resulted from TAMUS/ISLA support and services?

(3) Relationship between TAMUS/ISLA support services and success in passing ESL/bilingual certification exams
    a. To what extent do teachers who attend ISLA supplemental certification seminars take and pass the certification exam?
    b. To what extent do teachers who take the TAMUS online certification preparation course take and pass the certification exam?
    c. How do certification rates of LEP SSI grantee teachers participating in TAMUS/ISLA trainings compare to state certification rates?

Methods for data collection included the following:

- **Expert Reviews** of two ISLA-sponsored professional development trainings to determine how the content and delivery compare to promising practices in ESL content and instruction. Excerpts from the review of the online certification preparation course[1] are also included.
- **Surveys** of participants of the ISLA Certification Institute and of teachers who took the TAMUS online certification preparation course to determine their perceptions of the quality of the trainings, usefulness, and effects of those trainings.
- **Site Visit Interviews** conducted with staff at a sample of grantee districts and schools to examine perceptions of the extent that TAMUS/ISLA support and services have resulted in improvements in ESL teaching and learning. Two Cycle 1 sites and one Cycle 2 site were selected for visits, chosen based on their and the evaluation consultant's availability during the month of March 2007.
- **Document Review** of ISLA and outreach center files to compile a description of the types of services and support provided to LEP SSI grantees.
- **Participation and Certification Data Analyses** to determine the extent that teachers who attended the ISLA certification preparation institute or who took the

---

[1] An expert review of the online certification preparation course was conducted as part of the April 2006 evaluation report of Cycle 1 grant recipients. Excerpts from the original report are provided as part of this report, with the entire summary report provided in Appendix C.

online certification preparation course passed the ESL/bilingual certification exam, and a comparison of those rates with state certification passing rates.

Key findings from the evaluation, organized around the evaluation questions, are presented below.

KEY FINDINGS

TAMUS/ISLA Support Services

Description of Services Provided
The first year of the grant awarded to TAMUS and TAMU – CC (beginning June 2004) was described by ISLA staff as a planning year with TEA, and activities were devoted to setting up the ISLA offices, hiring staff, meeting with the project advisory committee, creating the project Web site, and designing a needs assessment process for Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grant recipients. In addition, because the first year overlapped with the first cycle of funding to grantees, TAMUS' goal with those grantees was to establish relationships. ISLA staff also established outreach centers at Texas A&M University–Commerce, Texas A&M International University at Laredo, and Texas A&M University–Kingsville.

Data from a document review of ISLA records indicated that support and services included the following:
- The ISLA Web site, established during its first year and currently maintained and updated by ISLA on a regular basis;
- Web site resources including ESL/bilingual information, documents, and resources for administrators, teachers, students, and parents, such as ESL instructional strategies, documents on best practices, needs assessment and planning instruments, and notices of upcoming professional development opportunities;
- A variety of professional development workshops, symposia, and institutes developed and presented throughout the state to LEP SSI Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Cycle 3 grantees. Professional development content included ESL certification preparation, information on ESL best practices, sheltered instruction training, and numerous sessions devoted to ESL instructional strategies in various areas;
- Site visits to grantee districts and schools, both at the request of grantees for specific professional development or technical assistance and to monitor grantees' progress related to their implementation plans and goals and discuss future needed support.

Data from evaluator site visits to three grantee districts indicated that support and services included:
- assistance in curriculum planning;
- opportunities to attend numerous professional development sessions, ESL certification trainings, and newcomer programs; and
- teaching and learning resources provided by their districts and the ISLA Web site.

Grantee Needs Assessments and Implementation Plans
Grant awards were received through the school districts. Funds were then allocated to campuses within the districts based on the districts' implementation plans. Funding was also used to support district-level program components, when needed. A review of ISLA documents, interviews with ISLA staff, and evaluator interviews at three grantee sites indicated the following:

- Cycle 1 grantees were not required by TEA to submit needs assessments, but all 34 Cycle 2 and 15 Cycle 3 grantees submitted needs assessments to ISLA staff;
- All Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grantees also submitted implementation plans based on stated needs in their districts and schools;
- ISLA staff reviewed Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grantee documents, providing consultation on aligning implementation plans with district/campus needs when necessary;
- Cycle 1 grantees developed implementation plans independent from ISLA as they received their grant awards during the time that ISLA was establishing itself;
- ISLA used implementation plans to target services to grantees, particularly Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grantee districts/schools; however, in establishing relationships with Cycle 1 grantees, ISLA also strived to provide support based on the grantees' extant implementation plans and requests for services aligned with those plans; and
- Interviews with the three grantees selected for site visits indicated that their plans were being implemented effectively with the support provided by TAMUS/ISLA.

Quality, Usefulness, and Effects of TAMUS/ISLA Support Services

Expert reviews, survey, and site visit data were collected to examine the extent that ISLA services and support have contributed to improvements in districts' and schools' capacity to serve their LEP student populations. Expert reviews examined the quality of TAMUS/ISLA professional development and the alignment of the professional development with content and design standards reflecting best practices in ESL teaching and learning. Survey and site visit data examined grantees' perceptions of the quality, usefulness, and effects of TAMUS/ISLA professional development, resources, and other support services. Included were perceptions of the extent of implementation of knowledge and skills gained from TAMUS/ISLA support, factors that facilitated and/or hindered implementation of new knowledge and skills, and perceived teacher and student outcomes.

Expert Reviews: Extent Seminars and Online Course Reflect Best Practices and Standards for ESL and Bilingual Teaching and Learning
Expert reviewers determined that the content of the ISLA seminars and the TAMUS online course:

- was well-grounded in current research on ESL/bilingual instruction;
- was based on sound ESL educational and language learning theory;
- used practical and effective strategies easily transferable to classroom settings; and
- was aligned with national standards for ESL teaching and learning, and standards for certification from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and

Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES), preparing teachers for both classroom instruction and ESL certification.

Reviewers also indicated that the design and delivery of the professional development
- adhered to most of the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards for professional development;
- emphasized curriculum-centered and standards-based content;
- used and provided a variety of research-based instructional strategies, collaborative processes, and student assessments; and
- modeled teaching methods and provided hands-on, engaging activities to achieve effective learning environments.

Reviewers also noted areas that were not aligned with NSDC standards for professional development. ISLA institute and conference trainings, while spanning multiple days, did not provide follow-up sessions for reflection and feedback on implementation issues, which is cited by the NSDC as a critical component in the effective implementation of new knowledge and skills. However, several of the survey respondents and site visit interviewees commented that their schools had used some of the LEP SSI funds for ESL specialists, who worked with teachers on the implementation of ESL strategies. While follow-up sessions were not offered for reflection/feedback, school-based follow-up with ESL specialists for teachers was available.

With respect to the online certification preparation course, reviewers noted several limitations in the design and delivery, including the absence of activities that foster the development of an online learning community and the need for better organization and presentation of the content. However, since the review of the online course was submitted (April 2006), TAMUS staff indicated that modifications have occurred based on recommendations offered in that report. The revisions to the online course were not examined in this evaluation.

Quality, Usefulness, and Effects of the ISLA Trainings and the TAMUS Online Course
Survey and site visit data indicated that teachers who attended ISLA trainings and/or took the online course found them useful in improving their instructional practices with their LEP students. Teachers and administrators reported the increased use of:
- learning centers with ESL students;
- technology incorporated into lessons;
- cultural activities embedded in lessons;
- more small group activities with LEP students; and
- instruction and assessment primarily provided in English.

A number of teachers and administrators noted (in site visits and in open-ended survey responses) an increased awareness of how to help their LEP students as a result of attending workshop/training sessions that focused on second language acquisition, ESL methodology and instructional strategies, and assessing LEP students' English proficiency.

Factors Facilitating Implementation
The most frequently cited factor that teachers reported as facilitating their implementation of knowledge/skills learned through TAMUS/ISLA professional development and other services was the support they received from school administrators and staff. Campus administrators and staff were described as "very sensitive to the needs of the ESL learners" and "very supportive of LEP students." District staff also were perceived as facilitating implementation through providing resources and access to professional development. Other factors noted were the availability of technology resources (e.g., software), collaborative planning time, and campus ESL specialists.

Factors Hindering Implementation
A relatively small number of survey respondents mentioned factors hindering implementation (27% - institute participants; 18% - online course participants). Those factors included lack of planning time, lack of support, untrained faculty, and insufficient instructional resources. Site visit interviewees stated that the only challenges they encountered were veteran teacher resistance to new methods, the reluctance of some principals to allow teachers to attend trainings, and an inability to provide services to all teachers interested in ESL instruction.

Teacher and Student Outcomes From Participation in LEP SSI Project
According to survey responses and site visit interviews, teacher perceptions of outcomes from participating in the LEP SSI project included:
- more teachers taking and passing the ESL/bilingual certification exam;
- increased opportunities for professional development in ESL instruction;
- increased access to needed instructional resources and materials;
- an increased understanding of the processes for and influences on second language learning; and
- improved instructional practices.

Student outcomes as reported by teachers included:
- increased confidence on class tasks;
- increased levels of comfort in expressing themselves and asking for help; and
- performance increases on the Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE) and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).

Relationship Between Support Services and Passing Rates on the ESL/Bilingual Certification Exams

Regarding the relationship between LEP SSI support services and passing rates on the ESL/bilingual certification exams, findings indicated:
- 82% of the 2005–2007 ISLA institute participants were from LEP SSI grantee districts. Of those, 65% passed their ESL/bilingual certification exams during that time period;
- Only 29% of the 2006–2007 online course participants were LEP SSI grantee teachers; however, of those, 81% of them passed their ESL/bilingual certification exams; and

- The state passing rate on the ESL/bilingual certification exams between 2005 and 2007 was 85.9%. The overall passing rate of LEP SSI grantee teachers during that period was 69%.

CONCLUSIONS

This report summarizes SEDL's evaluation of TAMUS support activities to LEP SSI grant recipients. The goals of the LEP SSI project were focused on reducing the number of teachers teaching under a bilingual exception waiver by increasing the number of teachers trained in ESL instruction, thereby improving LEP students' performance outcomes.

The first year of TAMUS' award from TEA (June 2004) was considered more of a planning year to establish the ISLA and outreach center offices, design a needs assessment process, develop workshops and seminars to further teachers' knowledge and skills in ESL instruction, and develop and gather useful ESL information and instructional resources. In the following two years, ISLA staff provided a full range of support and services to LEP SSI grant recipients. For example, teachers from Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Cycle 3 LEP SSI grantee districts attended more than 30 different types of professional development sessions offered between January 2006 and June 2007. An expert review of two of the ISLA sessions indicated that their content was grounded in current research on ESL/bilingual instruction, based on sound educational and language learning theory, and aligned with national standards for ESL teaching and learning as well as with SBEC/TExES standards for ESL certification.

The result of professional development opportunities, as well as of other support services provided by ISLA, was that grantee district teachers felt better prepared for LEP instruction through a greater understanding of the processes underlying second language learning. They also perceived that their students appeared more confident about their class tasks, were not afraid to ask for help, and felt increasingly more comfortable expressing themselves. Teachers and administrators also indicated they were seeing improvements in their LEP students' performance on both the TAKS and RPTE tests. Survey results may be beneficial for future program development; however, it must be remembered that there were only 30 to 40 participants at each of the three ISLA institutes. Of those, slightly over 50% submitted surveys. The low number of participants might be the result of these institute trainings being held during the summers when a number of teachers may have other plans and/or responsibilities. In addition, teachers may have participated in an ESL/ bilingual training offered by ISLA other than the certification preparation course.

Finally, SBEC certification data on pass rates indicated that of teachers participating in the TAMUS/ISLA certification preparation trainings, a substantial number are subsequently passing their ESL/bilingual certification exams. However, this percentage is still lower than the overall state pass rate. Nevertheless, a continued examination of pass rates for LEP SSI grantee teachers may show increases over the next several years. The data suggests that a number of teachers who participated in the trainings did not immediately take their certification exams at the conclusion of the trainings. This focus

may also reveal the extent that the LEP SSI project may be reducing the number of teachers teaching under ESL and bilingual exemptions and waivers.

In summary, the evaluation of the LEP SSI project indicates that grant recipients welcomed the support and services provided by TAMUS/ISLA. In addition, through such support and services, TEA is moving well toward attaining its goals of reducing the number of teachers teaching under bilingual exception waivers by increasing the number of teachers trained in ESL instruction and prepared to take the certification exams. Self-reported findings suggest that the project is also beginning to positively impact LEP student outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) provides grants to school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and shared services arrangements (SSAs) through the Limited English Proficient Student Success Initiative (LEP SSI). In June 2004, TEA provided grants to the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) and Texas A&M - Corpus Christi (TAMU – CC) to provide technical assistance to LEP SSI Cycle 1 grant recipients.

NCLB Title III requirements state that children with limited English proficiency "attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet" (NCLB, 2001). In accordance with these requirements, the 78th Texas Legislature adopted SB1108 which amended the Texas Education Code Sections 21.456 and 39.024(d)-(e) to provide assistance to students with limited English proficiency in meeting the same academic achievement standards that all students are expected to meet. Performance by the state's students on the TAKS tests suggest a need for assistance focused on LEP students. Through the LEP SSI project, teachers throughout Texas school districts received intensive programs of instruction on ESL teaching and learning, training materials, and other resources to assist teachers in developing the expertise to enable LEP students to meet state performance expectations. The LEP SSI was designed to:

- Increase academic achievement of LEP students as demonstrated through improved TAKS scores, growth in English reading proficiency, grade promotion, and increased rates of secondary credit accrual; and
- Increase the number of teachers prepared to enable LEP students to meet state performance expectations through training in LEP instruction and reduction of LEP teachers teaching under a Bilingual exception or ESL waiver.

To qualify for LEP SSI awards, grant recipients had to have at least 20 LEP students enrolled in their schools and no more than 40 percent of the students may have met the standard performance level on the TAKS. Approximately $6.9 million was awarded to the LEP SSI Cycle 1 grantees. Cycle 1 award amounts ranged between $180,000 and $425,000. A total of 20 Cycle 1 awards were made to three Education Service Centers (ESCs), 16 school districts, and 1 charter school in Texas (See Appendix A for full list of Cycle 1 grantees). The Cycle 1 grant period ran from May 2004 through May 2006.

As a key element of its support to LEP SSI grant recipients, TAMUS established the Institute for Second Language Achievement (ISLA) at Texas A&M–Corpus Christi as a primary means for providing assistance and began offering an online ESL certification preparation course based at Texas A&M–College Station. In March 2005, TEA contracted with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) to perform an evaluation of the TAMUS support activities related to the LEP SSI. The evaluation was to review the content and delivery of the TAMUS online ESL certification preparation course and the effectiveness of TAMUS' technical assistance and professional development services to Cycle 1 grant recipients. Because long-term outcomes, such as improved student achievement of LEP students, were not expected

since funds had only recently been awarded, SEDL's evaluation was designed to collect and present formative information to strengthen TAMUS services for future grantees.

Evaluation information collected about the services provided to Cycle 1 grantees included:

- The extent of services provided to Cycle 1 grantees;
- An expert review of the TAMUS ESL online certification course as it compared to promising practices in instructional technology and ESL professional development; and
- The extent that the certification preparation training (the TAMUS online certification preparation course and the ISLA certification preparation summer institutes) prepared teachers to take the ESL/bilingual certification exams and prepared teachers to better address the needs of their LEP students.

The contract was completed in April 2006. At that time TEA elected to extend the evaluation of the LEP SSI contract. The objectives of the extended contract were in response to the recommendations offered in the April 2006 evaluation report and included the following components:

- An expert review of the ISLA summer ESL institute content;
- Perceptions of participants to the online certification course;
- Continued perceptions of participants of the ISLA institute;
- An examination of the full spectrum of support services offered by TAMUS;
- Site visits to a sample of LEP SSI grant recipients to assess their perceptions of support received by TAMUS; and
- An examination of the certification rates of teachers from LEP SSI grant districts in comparison to the state average.

The expanded scope of work examined the influence of the project on Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grant recipients. Approximately $7.4 million was awarded to 34 Cycle 2 grantee districts. Cycle 2 grant awards ranged from $86,000 to $500,000. The grant period ran from June 2005 to May 2007. Fifteen grant awards, totaling approximately $4 million, were made in Cycle 3 of the LEP SSI project with awards ranging from $99,000 to $500,000. The Cycle 3 grant period spanned from February 2006 through August 2007. (See Appendix A for full list of Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grant recipients, the number campuses receiving project funding, and the number of students being served at those campuses.)

The objectives for the expanded scope of work were to:

(1) describe the services provided to Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Cycle 3 grantees by ISLA and the four outreach centers that were awarded sub-grants from Texas A&M–Corpus Christi;
(2) evaluate the quality, usefulness, and effects of the TAMUS/ISLA support and services; and

(3) examine the relationship between participation in TAMUS/ISLA trainings and rates of ESL/bilingual teacher certification in Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Cycle 3 grantee teachers, and state certification rates.

This report presents the findings from SEDL's evaluation carried out during the period of April 2006 through August 2007.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The number of LEP students is increasing in the nation's public schools. Short and Echevarria (2004) report that the fastest-growing subset of the K–12 student population is students from non-English-speaking backgrounds. According to McCardle and Leung (2006), there are currently more than 5.5 million language minority students in the United States. For 80% of them, Spanish is their first language.

Enrollment statistics from TEA (2007) indicated that in the 2005–2006 school year, 15.7% of the total enrollment in Texas public schools were LEP students. The number of students identified as LEP grew by 48.3% between 1995-1996 and 2005-2006. Those receiving bilingual or ESL instructional services increased by 55.6%.

According to TEA (2007), Hispanic students in Texas comprised 45.3% of the total public school population in the 2005-2006 school year, and 93% of students enrolled in ESL/bilingual programs are Hispanic. Texas data indicates that the performance of LEP students falls far below the average passing rate for all students (TEA, 2006). In both reading and mathematics and in all grades, LEP students and students taking the Spanish language TAKS have the lowest passing rates of any subgroup, including special education student populations. Passing rates become even more disparate at the higher grade levels. While the gap between White students and Black, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, and LEP students is fairly constant in grades 3–11, the gap between White and special education and LEP students widens with each successive grade. In reading, there is a 17 percentage point difference between White and LEP students in grade 3. On the English language arts (ELA) TAKS test, the gap increases to 56 percentage points in grade 10 and 59 percentage points in grade 11.

Although there has been steady growth in the number of LEP students for years, resources for classroom instruction to address these students' needs has not grown at comparable rates (Thompson, 2004). Further, Thompson asserts that while classroom teachers are the primary instructors in helping LEP students attain proficiency in English, these teachers often lack fluency in a second language. It is, therefore, important for them to have an understanding of instructional strategies effective in helping their LEP students gain proficiency.

No Child Left Behind

In accordance with Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), educational reforms for Texas students with limited English proficiency were implemented. Schools and school districts have faced a number of issues in responding to the legislation, including the need for training and technical assistance that enables classroom teachers to

implement instructional programs focused on the needs of these students. During the 78th Texas Legislative Session SB1108 was adopted, amending the Texas Education Code to provide assistance to schools and districts to help LEP students meet state performance expectations. In particular, this legislation provided for intensive programs of instruction, training materials, and other teacher training resources to assist teachers in developing the needed expertise in bilingual/ESL instruction.

Shortage of ESL Teachers

As in many states, a shortage of certified bilingual/ESL teachers is a problem in Texas. Results from a Texas A&M University study (2002) indicated that the greatest shortage in the bilingual/ESL area was found in the elementary grades, although critical shortages occurred at the secondary level as well. In a 2004 study conducted by the Texas A&M University Bilingual/ESL Teacher Retention and Recruitment Coalition, 40% of Texas school superintendents reported a shortage of certified teachers in bilingual/ESL education. Further, 30% of Texas school districts indicated that more than 11% of their bilingual/ESL teachers were uncertified in the area (Lara-Alecio, Galloway, Irby, & Brown, 2004).

In-Service Teacher Professional Development

According to Fratt (2007), a major challenge in meeting the instructional needs of LEP students is that pre-professional programs do not focus on instructional strategies for ESL. She goes on to note that school districts need to employ tools to raise their LEP students' performance, and professional development is an important component for doing so. Nixon, McCardle, and Leos (2007) note that practitioners must understand the cultural and language influences on reading instruction for cross-linguistic transfer to occur between languages. Professional development for teachers of LEP students must include a focus in these areas as well as in methods of instruction (e.g., Hammer, Rodriguez, Lawrence, & Miccio, 2007; Cardenas-Hagan, Carson, & Pollard-Durodola, 2007). Additionally, the research indicates that in order for teachers to implement ESL instructional practices, there must be high-quality professional development available.

A number of researchers in the past decade have explored best practices in professional development initiatives (e.g., Corcoran, McVay, & Riordan, 2003; Elmore, 2002; Hawley & Valli, 1999). The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) (2001a), drawing on years of research and practical experience, developed 12 standards for high-quality professional development that offer a comprehensive framework for guiding the planning, implementation, and assessment of effective staff development. Sparks and Hirsh (1999) synthesized the characteristics of high-quality, effective professional development, and indicated that it

- is job-embedded, results-driven, and can be incorporated into every teacher's work day;
- focuses on improving student learning that deeply immerses teachers in their subject matter and instructional methods;
- is curriculum-centered and standards-based;

- is sustained and intellectually rigorous and provides cumulative opportunities for implementing the content learned; and
- requires strong leadership at all levels of the system to facilitate implementation.

Effective professional development should expose teachers to quality experiences that transform their traditional practices into a superior level of education (Sparks & Hirsh, 1999). Sparks and Hirsh indicate that long-term professional development is needed for teachers to integrate new practices into their classroom instruction, and that instructional strategies that enhance, rather than replace or radically alter a teacher's repertoire, are most successful.

Online Professional Development

In addition to the traditional professional development formats, programs have begun utilizing Web-based instruction to meet the educational needs of teachers seeking professional development and certification opportunities. In *E-Learning for Educators,* NSDC (2001b) holds online learning to the same standards as other more traditional forms of professional development, stating the following:

> Because staff development available through electronic resources serves the same function as face-to-face staff development, the context necessary to support adult learning, the processes by which they learn, and the content they need to increase student achievement are the same. E-learning has the potential to expand and enrich learning opportunities for educators employing alternative learning processes not available in the face-to-face arena. However, in order to be as effective as face-to-face staff development in deepening understanding and improving performance of both educators and their students, e-learning for educators will need to meet the same high standards as those for face-to-face professional learning. (NSDC, 2001b, p. 4)

Additional considerations, such as costs of maintaining the infrastructure and support necessary for the effective use of the technology associated with online learning must also be emphasized. As noted by NSDC (2001b), the effectiveness of e-learning must not be gauged solely in terms of "numbers of participants, completion rates, or preference for e-learning over face-to-fact staff development" (p. 11). A review of the literature by Sunal, Sunal, Odell, and Sundberg (2003) indicates, however, that "at the present time, the lack of adequately designed research does not allow us to rate online instruction as better, or even as the same, as traditional forms of classroom instruction" (p. 17).

The conclusion drawn from the review of literature on online learning suggests that there are generally no unique principles of professional development that apply only to online learning opportunities. What constitutes good professional development is the same for online learning as it is for face-to-face learning opportunities. Nevertheless, some specific practices may enhance the success of online learning, and special considerations should be made to ensure the technological resources and infrastructure are in place to support it.

Texas A&M University System's Role in Improving ESL/Bilingual Instruction

In its role of providing technical assistance to LEP SSI grant recipients, TAMUS developed an online certification preparation course to assist LEP teachers in gaining ESL/bilingual certification. TAMUS also established ISLA at TAMU – CC to help districts with curriculum analysis and alignment, student performance analyses, and improvement planning. ISLA staff also offers professional development opportunities in ESL instructional methods, second language acquisition processes, and ESL/bilingual certification preparation seminars to teachers in underperforming schools.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

EVALUATION APPROACH

TEA contracted with SEDL to evaluate the TAMUS and TAMU – CC support services to LEP SSI Cycle 1 grant recipients early in the initiative's commencement and implementation. The evaluation was extended in April 2006 to include Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grantees. The evaluation was designed to look at the types and quality of services provided to grantees and the impact of those services. SEDL collected data regarding the quality and effectiveness of the TAMUS support to LEP SSI grant recipients using a mixed method design. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected including self-perception data, expert reviews, project documents, and State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) records.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The following questions guided SEDL's evaluation study:

(1) Support services provided by TAMUS/ISLA
   a. What services have been provided?
   b. To what extent are campus needs assessment data used to guide services?
   c. To what extent are campus implementation plans being developed and implemented for target campuses?

(2) Quality, usefulness, and effects of support services
   a. To what extent do ISLA seminars and the TAMUS online course reflect best practices and standards for ESL and bilingual teaching and learning?
        i. Content
        ii. Design and delivery
   b. To what extent are teachers implementing the content and instructional strategies learned through ISLA seminars and the TAMUS online course?
   c. What factors have contributed to or hindered implementation?
   d. What teacher and student effects have resulted through participation in the LEP SSI project?

(3) Relationship between TAMUS/ISLA support services and success in passing ESL/bilingual certification exams
   a. To what extent do teachers who attend ISLA supplemental certification seminars take and pass the certification exam?
   b. To what extent do teachers who take the TAMUS online certification preparation course take and pass the certification exam?

EVALUATION METHODS AND ANALYSES

Methods for this evaluation included an expert review of ISLA seminars, surveys of participants of ISLA summer supplemental certification institutes and of the online certification preparation course, site visit interviews, a document review of ISLA records of support services provided, and a comparison of certification rates between participants

of ISLA institutes and the online course with those of the overall state. These methods are detailed below.

Expert Review

To determine the quality and effectiveness of the professional development sponsored by ISLA, reviews of two trainings were conducted:

- *Bilingual and ESL Classroom Conference.* Houston, TX, April 24–25, 2006.
- *ESL Supplemental Certification Institute.* Corpus Christi, TX, August 7–10, 2006.

The reviews examined the training content and materials, comparing them to best practices and national standards in ESL/bilingual teaching and professional development. The expert reviewer for the two ISLA seminars was:

- ***Rossana R. Boyd, PhD***, director of Title II National Professional Development Projects "TEACH" and "IMPACT," College of Education and Human Development, Southeast Louisiana University, Hammond, LA.

Dr. Boyd was provided with the objectives of the study and general guidelines, developed by SEDL, for conducting the reviews and submitting the evaluation reports (see Appendix B for the guidelines). Dr. Boyd was to (1) compare the content and delivery of the professional development with best practices in ESL/bilingual teaching and professional development; (2) provide the criteria by which she made her assessments; and (3) provide a list of references for the reviews. Dr. Boyd was given approximately three months to perform the reviews, assess the materials, and submit her reports. The evaluation team summarized the reports and returned them to Dr. Boyd to check for clarity and accuracy. See Appendix C for the reports.

In addition to the above expert reviews, a review of the online certification preparation course, sponsored by TAMUS, is included in this report. This review was conducted during the time period of September 1, 2005 to December 1, 2005.[2] The content of the online course was examined and compared to best practices and national standards in ESL and bilingual teaching. The review also examined the online medium as a vehicle for delivering the course, comparing it to best practices and national standards for online learning, as well as its ability to foster authentic learning environments.

The following individuals served as SEDL's expert reviewers for the online course:

---

[2]This expert review of the online certification preparation course was conducted as part of the April 2006 evaluation of Cycle 1 grant recipients. Excerpts from the review are provided as part of this report in their original form. The entire report, included in Appendix C, does not reflect changes that may have been made in the online course as a result of evaluation recommendations. (Final Evaluation Report, April 1, 2006. *Texas A&M University System's Support Activities Related to Limited English Proficient Student Success Initiative Cycle 1 Grants.* Prepared by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Evaluation Services.)

- *Ms. Maggie Rivas*, program associate at SEDL's Southeast Comprehensive Assistance Center (SECAC) in Louisiana. Ms. Rivas conducted the content expert review of the TAMUS online professional development.

- *Ms. Kimberly Hughes*, program associate with SEDL's South Central Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SCRTEC). Ms. Hughes conducted the review of the online delivery medium.

Each reviewer was provided with a username and password to access the TAMUS online course. Copies of course materials and resources were printed and provided to the reviewers. Each was also provided with the objectives of the study and general guidelines, developed by SEDL, for conducting the review and submitting their evaluation reports. The reviewers were asked to (1) compare the content and delivery of the online professional development with best practices in ESL/bilingual teaching and online professional development; (2) provide the criteria by which they made their assessments; and (3) provide their list of references for the reviews.

The experts were allowed approximately three months to assess the materials and submit their reports. The evaluation team summarized the reports and returned them to the expert reviewers to check for clarity and accuracy. See Appendix C for the reports.

Survey

SEDL developed and administered a survey to teachers who participated in the 2006 summer ISLA Supplemental Certification Summer Institutes. A parallel survey was developed and administered to teachers who took the TAMUS online certification preparation course during Fall 2006 through Spring 2007.

Survey Development
Survey items were designed to collect teachers' demographic and certification information as well as perceptions regarding the following:

- Reasons for attending the summer institutes or taking the online course;
- Quality of the summer institutes or online course;
- Previous knowledge of content presented;
- Usefulness of the materials provided for preparing for the exam;
- Structure of their ESL/bilingual program;
- Frequency with which they use certain teaching strategies with English Language Learner (ELL) students; and
- Perceptions of teacher and student outcomes as a result of attending the institutes or taking the online course.

The survey instruments underwent a series of reviews to check for item clarity and relevance, including an internal SEDL review, a review by ISLA staff, a review by TEA staff, and a review by external content advisors. The instruments were submitted to TEA's Data and Information Review Committee (DIRC) and approved for use in the

study. See Appendix D for the survey instruments and Appendix E for responses to each survey item.

Survey Administration
Surveys were mailed to online course participants in February 2007 and to participants of the ISLA ESL summer institutes in April 2007. The cover letters requested that the participants complete the enclosed survey and return it in the pre-paid return envelope (see letter in Appendix D). Participants were also provided the option of completing an online version of the survey if they preferred. Respondents who completed the online version used a unique identification number to access the survey. The identification number allowed the evaluation team to track the response rates and identify non-respondents.

To ensure a reasonable response rate, the evaluation team conducted follow-up activities to encourage the completion of surveys by recipients who had not responded. Follow-up postcards were mailed to non-respondents of the online course survey in late February 2007 and to non-respondents of the institutes survey in early May 2007. Finally, e-mail reminders were sent to the remaining non-respondents of the online course in April 2007 and non-respondents of the institutes survey in mid-May 2007.

Survey Sample
The initial survey population for the ISLA institutes consisted of a total of 103 teachers. The sample represents three of the four institutes held during the summer of 2006. Addresses were not found for five teachers and six surveys were returned, resulting in a final sample size of 92 teachers. For the online course, the initial survey population was 173 teachers. This sample is comprised of teachers who participated in the online course between October 2006 and April 2007. Two surveys were returned as "undeliverable," resulting in a final sample size of 171. Table 1 shows the survey samples and response rates.

Table 1. Disposition of Survey Sample and Response Rate

Training	# of Surveys Sent	# of Surveys Undeliverable	Resulting Total Surveys Sent	Total # of Surveys Completed	Response Rate
Summer Institutes	103	11	92	52	57%
Online Training	173	2	171	94	55%

Source: Survey of ISLA ESL summer institute participants and ESL online course participants.

Site Visit Interviews

Site visits were conducted at three grant recipient sites. Sites selected were from Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 districts to gain a sense of longer term impacts of the LEP SSI project than Cycle 3 grantees might provide. The specific sites were selected based on the evaluator and district/school staff schedules. The focus of the site visits was to determine the

degree to which the TAMUS support services and technical assistance (provided by ISLA and/or the outreach centers) have affected the school community and the extent that the support has resulted in improvements in effective ESL/bilingual teaching practices. These interviews are intended to supplement other data findings, providing detail on support and services of TAMUS/ISLA reported in document reviews, indicated through survey findings, and examined during expert reviews.

SEDL contracted with the following consultant to conduct the site visits:

- *Isela Almaguer, PhD,* professor at the University of Texas, Pan American, College of Education, Edinburg, Texas. Dr. Almaguer teaches classes in bilingual education, leads ExCET/TExES workshops, and has published numerous articles in the area of English language learning practices.

Dr. Almaguer spent four days conducting interviews with district program coordinators, campus administrators, and teachers at the three grantee sites. Interview questions probed for information regarding the types of services and support received through the LEP SSI grant and the impact of those services on teachers and students at the schools. (See Appendix F for the site visit protocol and Appendix G for site visit summaries.)

Document Review

Two visits to the ISLA offices were conducted. One took place on August 1-2, 2005 to determine the goals and objectives of ISLA and the outreach centers. Documents and informal staff interviews were held. The second visit was conducted on May 23-24, 2007. During that visit, informal interviews were conducted with ISLA and outreach center staff, and center files were reviewed to compile a description of the types of services provided to LEP SSI grantees over the course of the project. Documents reviewed included meeting agendas, notes, training agendas, grantee needs assessment data and implementation plans where available, and other relevant materials. The information was documented and summarized to show the extent of ISLA support services to grantee districts.

Participation and Certification Data Analyses

To determine the number of teachers who participated in the ISLA summer institutes and TAMUS online ESL certification course, SEDL obtained participant records from ISLA and TAMUS. These records were compared with SBEC records to determine the proportion of participants from LEP SSI grantee districts who took and passed the certification exam and then compared to the state average passing rate. The SBEC data consisted of records of teachers passing either the bilingual or ESL certification exams, and were not broken out by content area.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

In this section, the evaluation findings across the multiple data sources and methods are presented organized by the three sets of evaluation questions on: (1) support services provided by TAMUS/ISLA; (2) the quality, usefulness, and effects of the support services; and (3) the relationship between support services and passing rates on ESL/bilingual certification exams.

TAMUS/ISLA SUPPORT SERVICES

Evaluation findings address the services provided by TAMUS/ISLA and the extent that campus needs assessment data were collected and used to develop campus implementation plans.

Support Services Provided

The extent of support services provided by TAMUS/ISLA was determined through a review of ISLA documents and perceptions of interviewees at three LEP SSI grantee districts. This section sets out the goals of TAMUS/ISLA in support of the LEP SSI project and then describes the extent that those goals have been attained according to the document review and interview data.

As primary support to the project, TAMUS established ISLA at its Corpus Christi campus. The mission of ISLA is to "assist high-potential schools with planning and implementing effective practices that enhance language and academic achievement of ELL students." A site visit was conducted at the ISLA center at Texas A&M–Corpus Christi from August 1–2, 2005, prior to the current contract extension. The purpose of the site visit was to conduct informal interviews with ISLA staff members to identify the staff's goals. The seven goals identified are described below.

1. Establish a research and development office as a base for a project work team.
ISLA staff stated that the first year of TAMUS' award from TEA (2004–2005) corresponded with the LEP SSI Cycle 1 grant awards. This year was described as a planning year with TEA, and activities were primarily devoted to achieving the first five of the seven goals, including setting up the ISLA offices, hiring staff, meeting with the project advisory committee, creating the project Web site, designing a needs assessment process for Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grant recipients, and establishing relationships with the Cycle 1 districts and schools.

2. Establish 3-4 outreach centers at TAMUS institutions.
ISLA opened its offices at Texas A&M–Corpus Christi in December 2004. Staff consist of a program director, an assistant director, three program specialists, and support staff. The program director, assistant director, and support staff are housed at the Corpus Christi ISLA office. The three program specialists reside at the universities serving as outreach centers: Texas A&M University–Commerce, Texas A&M International University at Laredo, and Texas A&M University–Kingsville. The outreach centers, along with the ISLA office at Corpus Christi, provide professional development and

technical assistance to the school districts that have been part of the LEP SSI grant project in their areas.

3. Establish a project Web site.
ISLA established, maintains, and continually updates its own Web site (http://ell.tamucc.edu/). The Web site contains numerous documents and information on such topics as best practices for English language learners, bilingual education certification, sheltered instruction, and ESL/bilingual education resources for administrators, teachers, students, and parents. It also includes school-level needs assessment forms and program planning instruments for assessing bilingual and ESL programs in schools. Additional links to other ESL/bilingual resources and information are provided, as is a calendar of upcoming events. An online learning center is in development, and an online discussion feature, with restricted access to online training or workshop participants, is active on the Web site.

4. Develop a prototype for online ESL certification preparation for secondary teachers.
Texas A&M University–College Station used contract funds to implement an online ESL certification preparation course that had been designed prior to the establishment of ISLA. The online course received an expert review of both content and design and was originally presented in the April 2006 evaluation report of Cycle 1 grant recipients. The original review is provided in Appendix C of this report, with excerpts appearing within the body of this report. It should be noted that according to project staff, key changes to the online course have occurred based on reviewer recommendations. However, modifications to the online course are not reflected in this report.

5. Identify materials and resources available to improve ELL student learning.
In addition to the materials and resources available on the Web site, ISLA staff provided materials to be used in bilingual/ESL classrooms to Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 districts to improve student performance. Among those are *Teaching and Assessing Comprehension Strategies* for grades 3, 4, and 5, provided in both English and Spanish; *Developing English Literacy Through the Magic of Music; Developing Spanish Literacy Through the Magic of Music;* and a "Stop to Think" Process Chart that is used in the classroom to focus on higher order thinking skills.

6. Design, develop, and implement a series of professional development workshops for teachers in high-potential ELL campuses.
A number of professional development workshops have been designed and disseminated as part of ISLA's support to LEP SSI districts and schools. The workshops spanned various bilingual/ESL topics and were provided directly to schools and school districts as well as presented at conferences, symposia, and institute trainings. Thirty-five presentations were made through conferences, symposia/workshops, and institutes between January 2006 and June 2007 and were attended by both LEP SSI grantees as well as others from districts not involved in the project. Twenty-seven workshops were provided directly to LEP SSI grantee districts. Table 2 shows the breakdown of professional development provided.

Table 2. Professional Development Provided by ISLA

Professional Development	Dates–
Conferences	
4th Annual CEDER Conference	2/17-18/06
10th Annual Reading Conference	3/31/06
Strengthening Language Arts Instruction in the Bilingual/ESL Classroom Conference	4/4-5/06; 4/24-25/06
ACET Conference	4/11/06
National Staff Development Council Conference	4/27/06
4th Annual Bilingual Spring Conference	4/29/06
Two-Way Dual Language Conference	5/12/06
Best Practices Conference	3/1-2/07
5th Annual Spring Bilingual Conference	3/5-6/07
Estrella State Conference	5/10-11/07
Secondary LEP Student Conference	6/19-20/07
Institutes	
Dual Language Institutes	5/22-23/06; 2/1-2/07
ESL Certification Institutes	5/30-6/5/06; 6/5-8/06; 6/5-9/06; 8/7-11/06
Newcomer Institutes	7/26-27/06; 11/2/06
5th Annual Title 3 Management Institute	5/1-2/07
Symposia, Workshops, and Other Trainings	
Secondary ELLs Symposium—ESL Modules and Best Practices	6/28-29/06
Best Practices Symposium	1/26-27/06; 11/13-14/06; 12/7-8/06
Math and Science Symposium	2/22-23/07; 3/5-6/07
Sheltered Instruction—Part I Workshop	5/1-4/06; 7/10-11/06
Sheltered Instruction—Part II Workshop	7/12-13/06
Kagan: Structures for Successful Second Language Learners	5/16-18/06; 6/7/06
TAKS Workshop	5/30-6/1/06
What Works for ELLs Workshop	5/25-26/06
Modules for Bilingual Teacher Certification (for Harris Co. DOE)	5/3/07
Professional Development at LEP SSI Grantee Districts/Schools	
ESL Strategy Trainings (e.g., K–12, K–3, Interactive, Content Areas, Vocabulary)	1/5/06; 1/28/06; 3/29/06; 5/31/06; 6/1/06; 8/7/06; 8/16/06

Professional Development	Dates–
Sheltered Instruction Trainings	1/27/06; 5/5-6/06; 6/28-29/06; 8/15/06; 8/17/06; 11/14-15/06
Planning for the Success of ELLs	1/16/06; 2/28/06; 3/1/06
Dual Language Training	2/3/06; 7/14/06; 10/18/06; 2/18/06
School Effectiveness for ELLs (morning and afternoon workshop at two ISDs)	2/8/06
Kagan Training	9/28/06; 9/29/06
Linking Literacy to Content	1/2/06
Overview of Introduction to Training Modules	10/4/06
Esperanza Training	2/15-16/07

Source: Documents on file at ISLA offices.

ISLA also participated in staff trainings and planning meetings with TEA staff and held several leadership meetings with Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grantees during the same timeframe.

7. Provide technical assistance to selected ELL campuses that may include online professional development, performance analysis of ELL students, program consultation, model improvement plans, and evaluation of campus improvement plans.
As noted above, Cycle 1 grantees had proposed and implemented plans independent of the TAMUS services. No protocol had yet been established for discerning the needs of Cycle 1 grantees by TEA or TAMUS. Individual ISLA staff were assigned to groups of grantee districts to establish contacts and determine the need for support and services within the scope of work planned for and implemented by their schools. ISLA staff reported that the majority of schools were seeking ESL teacher professional development. In response to such requests, ISLA staff focused on providing LEP SSI Cycle 1 grantees with access to a variety of professional development opportunities, including the online ESL course facilitated by instructors at the College Station campus and the summer ESL institutes provided by ISLA staff.

At the time of Cycle 2 funding, ISLA had developed a systematic process for working with the new LEP SSI grantees. Both Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grantees followed this protocol. Grantees developed and completed their needs assessment and implementation plan instruments prior to the release of their Notification of Grant Award (NOGA). ISLA staff reviewed these instruments and consulted with Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grantees on the best ways to meet their needs. ISLA continued contact with Cycle 1 grantees, providing services (primarily professional development) when requested and inviting them to all

regional workshops, institutes, and trainings being planned. Site visits by ISLA were arranged with the Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grantees, at which interviews, focus groups, and consultations occurred in order to assess grantees' progress and discuss future needed support. Table 3 shows the site visits that occurred between the end of 2005 and July 2007.

Table 3. Site Visits to Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 Grantees

Cycle 2 Districts	# of Site Visits	Cycle 3 Districts	# of Site Visits
Bandera ISD	2	Donna ISD	1
Castleberry ISD	1	East Central ISD	2
Chapel Hill ISD	1	El Campo ISD	1
Eagle Academy	2	Elgin ISD	2
East Chambers ISD	1	Evins Regional Juvenile Center	1
Fort Hancock ISD	1	Laredo ISD	1
Gilmer ISD	1	Mansfield ISD	1
Hearn ISD	1	Mineola ISD	1
Houston Gateway Academy	1	San Diego ISD	1
Jacksonville ISD	1	Wylie ISD	1
La Villa ISD	3		
Levelland ISD	2		
Manor ISD	1		
Marlin ISD	4		
Mercedes ISD	2		
Progresso ISD	2		
Roma ISD	2		
Tornillo ISD	1		
Zapata ISD	1		

Source: Documents on file at ISLA offices.

Site Visit Data on Services Provided by TAMUS/ISLA
Three site visits to LEP SSI grantee recipients were conducted in March 2007 by SEDL's evaluator. Two of the visits were with Cycle 1 grantees and one with a Cycle 2 grantee. Interview data from the Cycle 1 site visits at the campus level did not reference ISLA as providing services and support. Instead, teachers and administrators credited their district with these activities, perhaps unaware of the association between ISLA and their district. However, grant coordinators at the district level were aware of ISLA and provided information on the types of support ISLA provided through the LEP SSI project. In addition, the types of support and services mentioned by campus teachers and administrators are those that ISLA documentation indicates have been provided to the Cycle 1 grantee districts and schools in the LEP SSI project.

When asked about the types of support received through their LEP SSI grant, both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 interviewees mentioned services such as assistance in curriculum planning, opportunities to attend numerous professional development sessions, ESL certification

trainings, newcomer programs, and teacher meetings on student assessment. They also stated that they received teaching and learning resources through their districts and the ISLA Web site and that funds had been allocated for tutors and for substitutes to allow teachers to attend professional development trainings.

Grantee Needs Assessments and Implementation Plans

This section discusses data reflecting the extent that ISLA assisted in coordinating grantee district/campus assessments of needs related to their LEP student populations and implementation plans developed to meet those needs and the extent that they provided services in line with those plans. Findings reflect data collected from ISLA document reviews and perceptions of staff at the three grantee sites visited by the SEDL evaluator.

As mentioned above, Cycle 1 grantees proposed and implemented plans independent of ISLA because ISLA was in the process of establishing itself and developing site assessment instruments and protocols during the Cycle 1 funding period. TEA did not require Cycle 1 grantees to submit either needs assessments or campus implementation plans to ISLA staff. These were requested of Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grantees, however. Informal interviews with ISLA staff indicated that each Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grantee submitted needs assessments and implementation plans for their districts to ISLA for review. Documentation on file at the ISLA offices reflects needs assessments and district implementation plans for all Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grantees. ISLA staff analyzed the needs assessments and reviewed their corresponding implementation plans. When needed or requested, ISLA provided consultation on implementation plans for ways to best address grantee needs. These documents were required by grantees prior to the release of their NOGAs. During grantee site visits by ISLA, staff reported monitoring the progress of the implementation plans in meeting grantees' goals, consulting with grantees about their progress, and assisting grantees in making adjustments to their plans to more effectively address their needs. ISLA support and services throughout the LEP SSI project were based on the needs addressed in grantee implementation plans.

Although needs assessments and implementation plans are not on file with ISLA for Cycle 1 grantees, ISLA staff interviews and SEDL evaluator interview data from the Cycle 1 grantee site visits indicated that these grantees had developed implementation plans to address their districts' ESL student needs. During ISLA site visits, staff reported having reviewed the progress of Cycle 1 grantees in meeting the goals and objectives of their implementation plans and consulting with grantees on types of support that ISLA could provide toward meeting those ends.

During site visits to the three grantee districts, interviewees discussed with the evaluator the extent that their plans had been developed and implemented. Grantee coordinators at the two Cycle 1 sites discussed specific needs related to teacher professional development. While not directly attributing services to ISLA, several of the campus-level interviewees stated that they had received professional development focused on the needs of their LEP student populations. One campus administrator noted that even after the grant funds ended, they continued to receive invitations from ISLA for ESL/bilingual trainings and institutes. These interviewees also mentioned receiving curriculum planning

assistance and ESL instructional resources. Although they weren't as engaged with ISLA as Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grantees, Cycle 1 grantees indicated that their plans had been implemented and that the support provided by ISLA had been valuable in helping them progress toward their goals.

In interviews at the Cycle 2 grantee site, the program coordinator indicated that they had reviewed student performance scores to identify areas in need of improvement and targeted their grant funds to those areas. Indicating that their plans were being effectively implemented, they reported using LEP SSI funds primarily for classroom and teaching resources, teacher professional development, and student tutoring and that the support they received came primarily through ISLA.

Summary of Support Services Provided by TAMUS/ISLA

To support the goals of the LEP SSI grant project, ISLA served as a primary component in assisting grant recipients. Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grant recipients developed performance analyses of their ESL students and grant implementation plans in consultation with ISLA, received professional development opportunities, and had access to various other resources and services designed to enhance ESL instruction.

Services have been provided primarily by ISLA and three outreach centers located in Commerce, Kingsville, and Laredo, Texas. The exception is the online certification preparation course, which is sponsored by TAMUS. ISLA established and maintains a Web site that contains documents and information on various ESL topics for administrators, teachers, students, and parents. ISLA holds summer institutes to prepare teachers for the ESL/bilingual certification exams and provides numerous training seminars on various ESL topics.

Although Cycle 1 grantees were not required to submit needs assessments and implementation plans to ISLA, they were apprised of the available services ISLA had to offer as they began establishing relationships with ISLA. They primarily received support in terms of professional development opportunities. However, ISLA staff reported that Web site resources and consultation services were also requested by some of the Cycle 1 grantees.

ISLA records of attendance at professional development sessions, grantee site visit documents, and interview data suggested that district and campus staff have been taking advantage of the professional development opportunities, resources, and other available support to address the needs of ESL students.

QUALITY, USEFULNESS, AND EFFECTS OF TAMUS/ISLA SUPPORT AND SERVICES

This section examines the quality, usefulness, and effects of TAMUS/ISLA support and services to LEP SSI grant recipients. Included first are expert reviews of the content and delivery of two professional development trainings and the online certification preparation course. These reviews examine the quality of the TAMUS/ISLA trainings in

relation to the extent that they reflect best practices and standards for ESL/bilingual teaching and learning. Next, the opinions of teachers and administrators collected through site visit interviews and surveys are presented with respect to their perceptions of the quality, usefulness, and effects of TAMUS/ISLA support and services. Findings examine the perceived usefulness of ESL professional development and resources, the extent of the implementation of content and strategies learned from the professional development trainings and as a result of other TAMUS/ISLA support services, factors that contributed to and/or hindered their implementation, and perceived teacher and student outcomes as a result of participating in the LEP SSI project.

Expert Reviews

Presented below is a review of the content and delivery of three of the professional development trainings with respect to best practices and standards for ESL/bilingual teaching and learning. First is a review of two ISLA seminars (a 2-day conference titled *Strengthening Language Arts Instruction in the Bilingual and ESL Classroom,* held in Houston, Texas, on April 24–25, 2006, and the *ESL Supplemental Certification Institute*, held in Corpus Christi, Texas, from August 7–10, 2006). Next is the review of the online certification preparation course (included in the April 2006 Evaluation Report of Support Activities Related to the LEP SSI Cycle 1 Grants; excerpts from that report are presented in their original form[3]). The reports for each of the expert reviews may be found in Appendix C.

Dr. Rossana Boyd served as the expert reviewer for the April 2006 conference and the August 2006 certification institute. Ms. Maggie Rivas conducted the review of the content of the TAMUS online course, and Ms. Kim Hughes reviewed the design and delivery of the course.

Evaluation questions examine (1) the content and (2) the design and delivery of the ESL seminars and the online course with respect to being grounded in best practices and standards on ESL/bilingual teaching and learning. Each question is discussed in further detail below.

Is the Content of the ISLA Seminars and the TAMUS Online Course Grounded in Best Practices and Standards on ESL/Bilingual Teaching and Learning?

ISLA Seminars
Dr. Boyd utilized a variety of references, specifically Richard-Amato (2003), Brown (1993), ESCORT (1998), Dickinson and Tabors (2001), Moll (1996), Baker (1993), and Padilla, Fairchild, and Valadez (1990). Generally Dr. Boyd found that the conference sessions aligned well with the above research and stated that the conference "was grounded in research and current clinical knowledge related to teaching and learning in ESL and bilingual education. [The sessions] addressed topics supported by the research of many authors about promising instructional practices." Specific findings for the sessions are detailed below.

---

[3] The information presented reflects the online course structure and design prior to modifications that may have occurred as a result of the recommendations from the expert reviewer in the original report.

Dr. Boyd attended several conference sessions and reported that all reflected current research in ESL/bilingual instruction. She noted that the content of the session titled *Effective Vocabulary Strategies for English Language Learners* "is supported by the research of Richard-Amato (2003) and Brown (1993)" and provided effective vocabulary strategies. Dr. Boyd found the session to be "highly useful," comparing well to promising practices. She stated the following:

> The activities were highly interactive and practical. They can be easily transferred to the classroom because of the variety of examples and strategies for vocabulary development in English. . . . This was the most relevant session related to the title of the conference, very helpful for participants, and the most [well] attended. The handouts provided copies of the actual charts, matrices, and steps for the implementation of the methods.

She indicated that this session included key elements of effective reading instruction, providing a foundation upon which to build knowledge in learning processes and instructional strategies.

Dr. Boyd reported that in another session, the focus was on activities for improving oral language skills. She noted that it "was highly interactive and provided valuable information for participants on ways to strengthen language arts instruction." Effective teaching techniques were based on work by ESCORT (1998) and Hamayan, Genesee, and Cloud (2000), who recommend using engaging, interesting activities in the instruction of language enrichment for second language learners. She notes that this is consistent with Thompson's (2004) review of research on successful educational approaches for ELL literacy learning that include applying contextual activities that relate to students' life experiences.

Dr. Boyd noted that the conference also contained sessions devoted to key elements of reading instruction on phonics and decoding strategies, as well as assessment practices that are supported by the work of Padilla, Fairchild, and Valadez (1990) and Brown (1993).

With respect to conference alignment with national standards for ESL teaching and learning, Dr. Boyd reported that several of the sessions addressed the National K–12 ESL Standards and the National Foreign Language Standards, while others, such as *Second Language Acquisition: A Total Integrated Language Approach,* addressed portions of the National K–12 ESL Standards. Describing the session, *National Language Standards and Local Knowledge and Practices,* Dr. Boyd says the following:

> This session focused on the 1999 standards for Foreign Language Learning and the 2006 TESOL standards for preK–12 students. The main focus was on issues surrounding standardized tests, local and state decision making, and the need to link national standards to local knowledge and practice. The handout included suggestions for linking national standards to local practice.

Although Dr. Boyd noted some limitations in the session, she found that it addressed all nine National K–12 ESL Standards and all of the National Foreign Language Standards (see full report in Appendix C for list of standards).

Dr. Boyd also attended the ESL Supplemental Certification Institute held in August 2006 and offered her opinion on the extent that the content and material were grounded in current research and knowledge of the teaching and learning in ESL instruction. Sessions she attended included ESL methodology and strategies, background on second language learning, and assessments of English proficiency. She found the methodology and strategies sessions to be consistent with the research in this area (e.g., Asher, 1960; Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989; O'Malley & Charmot, 1990; Center for Applied Linguistics, 2000), providing strategies relevant to LEP students at various developmental stages of learning. She noted that providing teachers with an understanding of how second language learning works and the use of approaches tailored to students' level of language development is important to successful approaches in LEP literacy learning. She found the session topics to be consistent with best practices in the current literature.

Dr. Boyd noted that the institute was focused on key elements of LEP instruction such as vocabulary, comprehension, and phonics. The institute provided a solid foundation in the understanding of language learning as well as instruction in reading processes and strategies designed to provide effective instruction to LEP students. She recognized that some of the methods presented were no longer considered particularly relevant; however, their inclusion, according to ISLA staff, addressed their likelihood of appearing as distracters on the certification exams and their continued current application as cited by Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989).

Theories of language acquisition were presented that Dr. Boyd indicated were grounded in the seminal works of Chomsky (1950), Cummins (1979, 2000), and Krashen (1981). She found them to be relevant to LEP instruction, illustrating the processes by which language acquisition occurs. She noted that their presentation aligned with best practices by including both discussion and videotaped presentations, which provided teachers both with information and modeling of the concepts.

Dr. Boyd further indicated that the session devoted to assessments of English language proficiency effectively presented the topic using information and charts. This discussion aided participants in distinguishing the differences between academic and language assessments and provided references for locating appropriate instruments for assessing English language proficiency. The information discussed was based on the research of Canales (1988) and Charmot and O'Malley (1994), which is regarded as best practice in the area.

With respect to alignment with the national standards for ESL/bilingual teaching and learning, Dr. Boyd found that the institute sessions addressed multiple components of the ESL National Standards. For example, the session *ESL Standards* addressed Goal 2, Standard III ("Students will use appropriate *learning strategies* to construct and apply

academic knowledge") and Goal 3, Standard III ("Students will use appropriate *learning strategies* to extend their sociolinguistic and socio-cultural competence"). The other three sessions were also focused according to various Texas standards for ESL certified teachers: *ESL Methodology* aligned with Standard IV ("The ESL teacher understands ESL teaching methods and uses this knowledge to plan and implement effective, developmentally appropriate ESL instruction"); *Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition* aligned with Standard III ("The ESL teacher understands the processes of first- and second-language acquisition and uses this knowledge to promote students' language development in English"); and *Assessing English Language Proficiency: A Training Model* aligned with Standard VI ("The ESL teacher understands formal and informal assessment procedures and instruments [language proficiency and academic achievement] used in ESL programs and uses assessment results to plan and adapt instruction").

Online ESL Certification Preparation Course
In December 2004, Texas A&M–College Station began offering an ESL online certification preparation course through its Office of Continuing Education and Public Outreach. This online course was designed to give teachers an opportunity to prepare for the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES) ESL supplemental certificate exam. The 7-week course targets elementary, middle, and secondary school teachers working with LEP students who do not hold ESL certification and newly certified teachers who need to refine their skills when working with English language learners. The two expert reviewers obtained access to the online course as auditors, which allowed them to view the course lessons, assignments, readings, quizzes, and comments within the discussion groups.

To conduct the content review, Ms. Rivas compared the TAMUS online ESL course content to a variety of literature on promising practices in ESL professional development. Her references included Wong, Fillmore, and Snow (1999), Hamayan (1990), Richard-Amato (1988), and Epstein (2001).

First, Ms. Rivas noted that the content of the TAMUS course materials and readings is strongly grounded in current research on ESL professional development. For example, a notable strength of the course was that it is based on sound educational and language learning theory with a strong focus on second language acquisition. She observed that the Domain I course readings connect to the literature in the following way:

> Hamayan (1990) suggests that in order for second language learners to be successful academically, teachers must understand the process of second language learning. While teachers do not usually get the opportunity to learn about language structures and usage the way linguists do, they need to recognize how language relates to the learning process. In support of this, Wong, Fillmore, & Snow (1999) have proposed that preservice teacher preparation programs should include second language acquisition theory and a general understanding of linguistics.

Ms. Rivas adds:

> The [TAMUS online ESL course] materials and activities provide an opportunity for teachers to achieve a basic understanding of what language is—that it represents a functioning, rule-governed language system. By completing Domain I successfully, teachers will be able to make the distinction between the teachers' knowledge of second language acquisition and the needs of second language learners.

At the same time, during her review, Ms. Rivas detected and noted several places where there was limited use of research in the online course materials. First, Ms. Rivas considered the content of Domain II, Instruction and Assessment, to be the most critical as it relates to ESL teaching methods, knowledge of TEKS, content-based ESL instruction, and classroom management. However, she suggested that the organization of Domain II materials could be improved. She explains that:

> According to Richard-Amato (1988) an ESL *approach* consists of a succinct group of related assumptions about language and teaching. A *method* is an ordered plan on how the materials are going to be presented, and a *technique* is what the teacher uses to implement a method and accomplish the objectives. The course materials could be better organized and presented by explicitly explaining/defining what constitutes an ESL approach, ESL method, and ESL technique.

Second, Ms. Rivas indicated that the treatment of family and community involvement was not as strong as other elements of the training, noting that the TAMUS online ESL course has limited readings and resources on the role of families and communities in a child's learning process. She also noted that more could be provided regarding issues of diversity, culture, language, and learning. She explained:

> Of all the competencies, the content in Competency 10, *Family and Community Involvement*, is the weakest. Although the topics (advocating for ESL students, facilitating family involvement in the education of ESL students, communicating and collaborating with parents, and accessing community) are important to know, the course does not provide opportunities for the content to be applied to real classroom situations.

Regarding alignment with SBEC/TExES standards for ESL teaching and content to pass the TExES ESL certification test, Ms. Rivas states:

> It is clear that the course content is carefully aligned with the SBEC/TExES standards for ESL certification and in that regard should be helpful in preparing participants for the exam. My concern, as stated in specific cases above, is not with course content itself so much as with how it is delivered and the degree to which this impacts the learning experience.

Summary of Findings from Content Reviews. The reviewers of the content of the ISLA seminars and the online certification preparation course indicated that the trainings were based on current research on ESL/bilingual learning and instruction. According to the reviewers, the content was in line with sound educational and language learning theory, emphasized the use of practical and effective strategies, and was aligned with

national standards for ESL teaching and learning as well as with SBEC/TExES standards for certification.

Is the Design and Delivery of the ISLA Seminars and the TAMUS Online Course Grounded in Best Practices and Standards for Professional Development?

A well-accepted framework for best practices in professional development is represented by the National Staff Development Council's (NSDC's) 12 standards. Synthesizing the characteristics of high-quality, effective professional development, Sparks and Hirsh reported that elements in designing high-quality professional development should include

- using content that is curriculum-centered and standards-based;
- equipping teachers with instructional strategies that assist their students in meeting academic standards;
- applying teaching methods in professional development that closely mirror those that teachers would use to instruct their students;
- providing a variety of assessments for gauging student progress;
- using collaborative problem solving to allow for sharing of knowledge and expertise, reflection on classroom experiences, and discussion of new understandings; and
- providing ongoing support for teachers to implement what they have learned.

Following are comments by the expert reviewers on the extent that the design and delivery of the professional development seminars and online course are associated with best practices.

ISLA Seminars
According to Dr. Boyd:

> Overall, the content and materials do meet standards of high-quality professional development. The content and materials were very helpful and relevant to participants. They are supported by Schifini (2003), who states that the reason for the success of students in acquiring English is the emphasis placed on staff development for teachers.

She notes that in several of the sessions, in both the conference and the institutes, hands-on, interactive activities engaged conference participants. The topics were also "curriculum-centered and standards-based, providing concepts related to oral proficiency, literacy, and comprehension strategies, and included ESL methods and techniques for teaching." She further remarked that the sessions provided for audience participation and included well-organized and structured content containing examples of instructional strategies.

Dr. Boyd indicated that many of the sessions met NSDC standards in that they used content that was curriculum-based and aligned with ESL standards; included research-based instructional strategies stressing hands-on activities and collaborative learning opportunities; provided a variety of teaching methods and strategies; and addressed student assessment processes.

Areas less addressed in traditional professional development such as workshops, training sessions, and institutes are the follow-up support recommended by the NSDC to most effectively promote the implementation of knowledge and skills gained from professional development. While the ISLA trainings provided multiple days of instruction, follow-up was a function provided by those schools funding ESL specialists who could continue to work with teachers on issues related to implementation. This provides an alternative avenue to the reflection and feedback that follow-up training might allow.

Online Certification Preparation Course
According to NSDC (2001), online learning should be held to the same standards as traditional forms of professional development. They note that online professional development serves the same function as staff development presented in face-to-face trainings. However, additional considerations concerning the technological aspects of online learning should be addressed. These include maintaining the infrastructure and support necessary for teachers to effectively use the technology. NSDC suggests that specific measures are needed to assess the effectiveness of e-learning that "reach beyond the number of participants enrolled, completion rates, or preferences for e-learning over face-to-face staff development" (p. 11). They assert that effectiveness should be measured in relation to teachers' application of their learning and to student outcomes.

In their reviews of the TAMUS online ESL certification course, Ms. Hughes and Ms. Rivas commented on the ability of the online course and materials to provide professional development aimed at improving classroom instruction for LEP students. Both expert reviewers acknowledged the importance of providing ESL test preparation via online courses and view the TAMUS online ESL certification preparation course as a step in the right direction toward improving the instruction of LEP students.

However, both reviewers recognized the limits of the TAMUS online course and reported concerns that its design does not provide teachers professional development opportunities that will result in changes in the instruction of LEP students. These concerns regard three primary areas of the course: (1) organization and presentation of course content; (2) absence of activities that foster the development of an online professional learning community; and (3) the nature of the learning opportunities offered.

Ms. Hughes explains:

> The alignment of the course's general framework with the TExES ESL certification test is beneficial for teachers preparing for the exam; however, the structure of the learning activities themselves is not consistent. In addition to the issue of consistency among activities, the internal organization of most of them is not as helpful as it could be, and related resources are weak. Activities (steps 2 and 3) have no overview of expectations, student instructions, or activities. There is a list of links to various types of readings and content, but no guidance on how to use this information to complete learning tasks. There are no instructions on how to visit and use the discussion area in cases where this is required by weekly assignments.

In their reports, both reviewers emphasized that effective professional learning communities prepare for instruction collaboratively and take advantage of preparation as a learning opportunity. Participants form a professional community in which they examine and discuss student work in relation to standards and how it is differentially produced through a variety of instructional approaches. The reviewers observed that opportunities for such collaborative interaction with the instructor and other participants of the course are not part of the TAMUS online ESL course design.

The reviewers also voiced concerns about the nature of the learning opportunities afforded by the TAMUS online course. Both Ms. Hughes and Ms. Rivas stressed the importance of job-embedded learning structures for teachers in daily activities that include such elements as study groups, action research, and reflective logs. They also noted the importance of providing teachers with opportunities for lesson planning, reflection on classroom experiences, and discussions of new understandings. Both reviewers noted that there are no opportunities for the participants of the course to articulate and revise their thinking about the content. In addition, there are few activities that require the participants to reflect on their own classroom experience.

Finally, the reviewers noted that without school-based follow-up with the teachers, there is little expectation that what the teachers learn in the TAMUS online ESL certification course will translate into better instructional practices.

[See Appendix C for recommendations offered by the reviewers. According to LEP SSI project staff, the recommendations for the online course were addressed during the summer of 2006.]

Summary of Findings of Expert Reviews of the Design/Delivery. The ISLA seminars were reported to have aligned well with most of the NSDC standards for professional development, emphasizing curriculum-centered content that is standards-based. The reviewer also noted that the seminars consisted of research-based instructional strategies, used collaborative processes, and provided instruction on student assessments and methods for providing individualized student instruction. While the seminars spanned several days, the reviewer noted that there were no follow-up sessions for participant reflections and to provide feedback, which is often critical in the extent that new knowledge and skills are implemented effectively.

The review of the online course determined several factors that needed to be addressed related to the organization and presentation of the content, and the need for more effectively fostering an online professional learning community. Recommendations were offered in the evaluation report on Cycle 1 activities (April 2006), and TEA program staff have indicated that the issues raised in the report have been addressed.

Survey & Site Visits

Responses to teachers surveys and site visit information are presented in this section to examine perceptions about the ISLA supplemental certification institute and the online certification preparation course offered by ISLA and TAMUS, the extent that the

instructional strategies learned through staff development are being implemented by participants of these trainings, and the perceived effects of the trainings on teachers and students. While these survey results may be useful in enhancing the training sessions, it must be remembered that each of the three ISLA institutes consisted of only 30 to 40 participants. Of those, slightly over 50% submitted surveys. The low number of participants might be the result of these institute trainings being held during the summer when a number of teachers may have other plans and/or responsibilities. In addition, ISLA offers numerous trainings on various ESL/bilingual topics throughout the year, of which the certification preparation institute is only one. To gain a greater sense of participants' perceptions of the TAMUS/ISLA professional development and effects thereof, surveys of other seminars and workshops, in addition to the certification trainings, might be instructive.

Further, it should be remembered site visit data is collected from only 3 of the 69 LEP SSI grantees. The selection of the sites was also not a random process, but instead designed to look at effects that may be occurring based on being involved in the project for a substantial period of time (e.g., Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 grantees). Therefore, the data reflected from site visit interviews is primarily intended to support or provide more detail to other data collected in the evaluation of the LEP SSI project.

Quality of the Institutes and Online Course

One group of items on the surveys asked institute and online participants to rate several statements about their perceptions of the quality of those trainings. These items were rated on a scale where *1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree,* and *0 = no opinion.* Means were calculated by excluding ratings of *no opinion.*

As shown in Table 4, average ratings for all statements fell between *agree* and *strongly agree.* Between 94% and 99% of the participants from both the institutes and the online course perceived the trainings as suitable to their level of experience, worth their time, prompted them to think, and as professional development trainings that they would recommend to other teachers.

Table 4. Perceptions of Quality of Summer Institutes and Online Course

Statements:	Institutes			Online Course		
	Mean	*sd*	N	Mean	*sd*	N
The institute/online course was suitable to my level of experience.	3.5	*.78*	51	3.4	*.65*	93
Attending the institute/participating in the online course was worth my time.	3.6	*.73*	52	3.6	*.63*	93
The institute/online course made me think.	3.6	*.54*	52	3.6	*.55*	93
I would recommend the institute/online course to other teachers.	3.6	*.73*	50	3.5	*.78*	92

Source: Survey of ISLA ESL Summer Institute participants and ESL Online Course participants. N = number of respondents; *sd* = standard deviation.

Usefulness of TAMUS/ISLA Support

Participants from both the institutes and the online course were surveyed as to the extent that they had received prior instruction in the topics presented at the institute/course and of the usefulness of the resources provided through the trainings. In addition, district and school staff were asked in site visit interviews about aspects of the TAMUS/ISLA support that were most useful to them.

With respect to the topics presented in the institutes and the online course, survey respondents rated each topic on a scale of *1 = none, 2 = a little, 3 = about half, 4 = quite a bit, and 5 = all of it.* On average, as shown in Table 5, most respondents reported that they had previously received only *a little* to *about half* of the information presented in the institutes and the online training. Means for the institute responses were between 1.8 and 2.9, with the lowest mean associated with the information on ESL test preparation for certification (item d). For online respondents, mean ratings ranged between 1.9 and 2.7. The mean of 1.9 was associated with information on foundations of ESL education (item c). Overall, these ratings suggest that the topics presented in the institutes and the online course were appropriate for the majority of participants attending these training events.

Table 5. Previous Instruction in Institute and Online Course Topics

	Topic	*None*	*A Little*	*About Half*	*Quite a Bit*	*All of it*
	ISLA Institutes (N = 52)					
a.	Second Language Acquisition	9	16	8	16	3
b.	Methodology/Teaching Strategies	6	14	13	15	4
c.	Assessment Practices	12	15	9	13	3
d.	ESL Test Preparation for Certification	30	11	5	4	2
	Online Course (N = 94)					
a.	Language Concepts and Acquisition	23	34	16	17	4
b.	ESL Instruction and Assessment	33	40	12	8	1
c.	Foundations of ESL Education	38	34	13	8	1
d.	Cultural Awareness	14	31	22	24	3
e.	Family and Community Involvement	14	30	24	23	3

Source: Survey of ISLA ESL summer institute participants and ESL online course participants. N = number of respondents.

As to the usefulness of resources provided to participants of the institutes and the online course, ratings indicate that the respondents perceived the materials provided to be useful in preparing for the ESL/bilingual certification exams and for improving their instruction with LEP students. They further *agreed* that information and materials available through the ISLA Web site were helpful resources. Table 6 presents these findings.

Table 6. Perceptions of Usefulness of Resources
Provided through the Institutes and Online Course

Statements		Institute			Online Course		
		Mean	*sd*	N	Mean	*sd*	N
a.	The ISLA institute/online course provided me with useful materials to prepare for the ESL/bilingual certification exams.	3.5	.80	38	3.5	.61	52
b.	The ISLA institute/online course provided me with useful materials for improving the way I teach LEP students.	3.4	.87	37	3.4	.59	52
c.	The ISLA Web site is a helpful resource for me.	3.1	.96	32	3.4	.62	45

Source: Survey of ISLA ESL summer institute participants and ESL online course participants. N = number of respondents; *sd* = standard deviation. Scale response options: *1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree, 0 = no opinion.* Means were calculated by excluding ratings of *no opinion.*

During site visits to the sample of grantee districts and schools, interviewees were asked about the usefulness of TAMUS/ISLA support. District and school staff indicated that because of the LEP SSI project they were now receiving more professional development opportunities and increased ESL instructional resources. Support from the project has also enabled their schools to provide extra tutoring for LEP students and ESL specialists to work with content teachers to better assist their LEP students.

Effects of TAMUS/ISLA Support

Both participants to the institutes and online course, as well as interviewees from LEP SSI grantee sites visited were asked about outcomes within their district and school communities related to the TAMUS/ISLA support and services they had been receiving.

ESL/Bilingual Instruction. Because it was expected that not all institute and online course participants would be currently teaching ESL/bilingual students, the survey asked about their status in this regard. Further questions about instructional implementation and teacher/student outcomes were directed to only those currently teaching ESL/bilingual students.

Thirty-eight of the institute survey respondents (73%) reported currently teaching ESL/bilingual students, and 54 (57%) respondents to the online course survey indicated similarly. These individuals were then asked about the percent of ESL/bilingual students they teach, the structure of the ESL/bilingual program at their schools, the extent to which they implemented specific instructional practices in their classes, and effects attributed to the LEP SSI grant project. The instructional practices listed on the survey were determined as appropriate through consultations with ISLA staff, who provided extensive survey feedback in this area.

Over 60% of both institute and online course survey respondents currently teaching ESL/bilingual students indicated that up to 20% of their students were ESL/bilingual, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Number of ESL/Bilingual Students in Current Classes

Number of Current ESL/ Bilingual Students	Institute		Online Course	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1–20%	25	68	34	63
21–50%	5	14	11	20
51–70%	2	5	2	4
71–90%	4	11	3	6
91–100%	1	3	4	7

Source: Survey of ISLA ESL summer institute participants and ESL online course participants. Percents may not equal 100 due to rounding. Institute N = 37; online course N = 54.

As can be seen in the Figure 1, the vast majority of respondents indicated that the structure of the instructional program for LEP students at their schools was English as a second language.

Figure 1. Structure of Program at Respondents' Schools
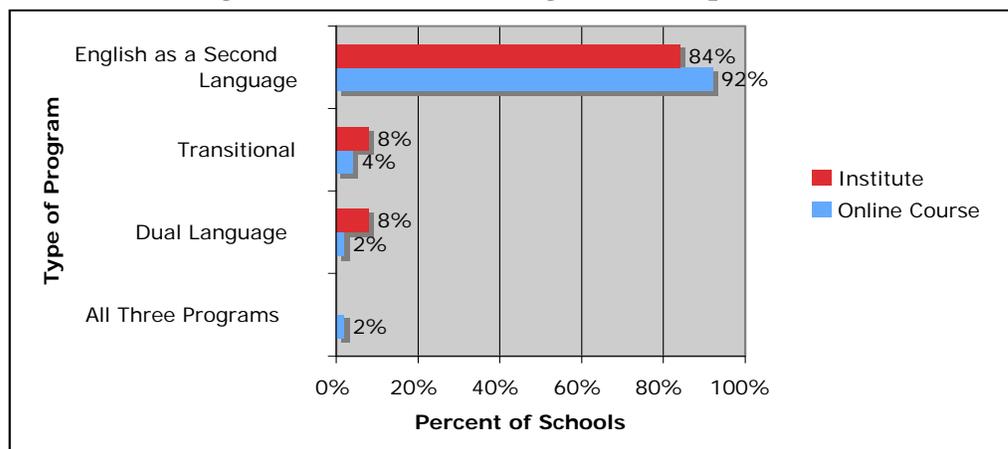
Source: Survey of ISLA ESL summer institute participants and ESL online course participants.

This type of program provides instruction only in English as opposed to transitional or dual language programs. Native language support (e.g., limited translation in an otherwise all-English environment on an as-needed basis from an aide) or special English support programs (e.g., additional instructional time devoted to English as a second language in order to support the development of English oral skills) may be provided.

Implementation of Instructional Practices. Institute and online course participants were asked about the extent that they were implementing ESL instructional practices gained through the trainings. Rating scale options were *1 = never, 2 = rarely (a few times a month), 3 = sometimes (once or twice a week), 4 = often (several times a week),* and *5 = in all or almost all of the lessons.* Across the strategies, those most used by respondents of both the institutes and the online course were providing instruction in English, using

technology in their lessons, displaying student work in English, and assessing English language development. Mean ratings ranged between *sometimes* to *often.* Least used instructional practices were providing instruction in the students' primary language and displaying student work in their primary language. These were rated as *rarely* used. Respondents from the online course also reported a somewhat frequent use of learning centers with their LEP students and embedding cultural activities in their lessons. The institute respondents also reported embedding cultural activities in lessons fairly frequently, as well as allowing their LEP students to express themselves in their primary language during teacher and group interactions. Table 8 shows these findings.

Table 8. Instructional Practices Used With LEP/Bilingual Students

Practices		Institute			Online Course		
		Mean	*sd*	N	Mean	*sd*	N
a.	Allow LEP students to express themselves in their primary language during teacher and group interactions.	3.5	*1.06*	38	2.9	*1.44*	53
b.	Assess English language development.	3.5	*1.01*	38	3.4	*1.19*	54
c.	Assess primary language development.	2.6	*1.20*	38	2.6	*1.42*	54
d.	Display student work in English.	3.4	*1.31*	38	4.0	*1.26*	53
e.	Display student work in students' primary language.	2.0	*1.13*	37	2.0	*1.21*	54
f.	Embed cultural activities in instruction.	3.3	*1.11*	38	3.1	*1.18*	54
g.	Group LEP students for English language instruction according to language proficiency.	2.7	*1.22*	38	2.9	*1.36*	53
h.	Group LEP students for primary language (i.e., Spanish) instruction according to language proficiency.	2.4	*1.15*	38	2.1	*1.16*	52
i.	Have meaningful and supportive parental involvement in my classroom.	2.4	*1.03*	38	2.4	*.88*	53
j.	Limit the use of primary language use during instruction.	2.7	*1.40*	37	2.6	*1.55*	52
k.	Provide instruction in language arts in English that includes understanding, speaking, reading, and writing skills.	3.7	*1.33*	38	4.3	*1.19*	52
l.	Provide instruction in language arts in the LEP students' primary language that includes understanding, speaking, reading, and writing skills.	2.1	*1.17*	38	1.9	*1.25*	52
m.	Provide instruction in math, science, and social studies in English.	3.8	*1.32*	38	4.0	*1.43*	50
n.	Provide instruction in math, science, and social studies in the LEP students' primary language.	1.8	*.94*	38	1.8	*1.21*	51
o.	Use learning centers with LEP students.	2.8	*1.31*	38	3.3	*1.33*	51
p.	Use technology in lessons.	3.8	*1.01*	38	3.6	*1.12*	53

Source: Survey of ISLA ESL summer institute participants and ESL online course participants. N = number of respondents; *sd* = standard deviation.

During site visits to three grantee districts, the evaluator asked both administrators and teachers about the extent to which specific instructional practices were occurring in their schools as a result of ISLA professional development trainings and other TAMUS/ISLA support. While the teachers interviewed did not identify particular practices, they did report a growing confidence in the new methods of ESL instruction they had learned about. Administrators stated that their teachers were better equipped in providing individual and small group interventions (e.g., tutoring) and were more aware of cultural issues facing ESL students. Teachers reporting improved instructional practices attributed them to professional development sessions on sheltered instruction, ESL teaching strategies, and best practices. Teachers noted that their instruction with LEP students had also improved due to increased collaboration with campus specialists and content-area teachers. One administrator stated that because of the services provided through the LEP SSI grant, teachers at the school had an expanded awareness of how to help their students make smoother transitions in grade levels.

Factors Contributing to/Hindering Implementation. Participants of the institute training and the online course were asked to respond to several open-ended questions on the survey. Two of those addressed the factors at their schools that they felt supported or hindered their efforts to implement what they learned. Those interviewed during site visits also offered their perceptions of facilitating factors and challenges to implementation.

Of the 38 respondents to the institute survey who reported currently teaching LEP/bilingual students, 29 (76%) listed factors that supported the implementation of what they had learned. Of the 54 respondents from the online course survey, 30 (56%) responded to the question on factors supporting implementation. For both, the largest percentage of responses cited the support they received from their school administrators and staff for their ESL programs. They stated that their principals and fellow teachers were "very sensitive to the needs of the ESL learners" and "very supportive of LEP students" and that their principals and fellow teachers facilitated the incorporation of ESL teaching techniques and other concepts in their classrooms. Many mentioned having strong ESL programs in their districts and schools, where district and school administrators encouraged ESL professional development and provided needed instructional resources. Some of the teachers referred to receiving stipends for attending the institute or taking the online course as a supporting factor, while others mentioned things such as the availability of teaching resources, parent organizations, and new knowledge and understanding about second language learning gained from the institute or the online course.

In interviews during the site visits, teachers and administrators mentioned the professional development sessions as facilitating changes to their ESL instructional practices. The sessions informed them of appropriate instructional strategies for ESL students. Additionally, interviewees stressed the importance of the availability of new technology (e.g., computer software) and other resources that support their ESL instruction. In one school, faculty and staff attributed their improvements in ESL instruction to district and campus administrators. They reported that the district staff

ensured the campuses were receiving the necessary resources, including access to professional development. On campuses, administrators provided instructional specialists to work with content and ESL teachers, regular collaborative planning time, and continued access to professional development to ensure successful implementation of ESL instructional practices.

When asked about hindering factors at their schools, 45–50% of the institute and online course survey respondents stated that there were no hindrances to their implementation of what they had learned. Another 20-30% of the respondents mentioned district or school factors as hindrances, stating reasons such as lack of planning time, lack of support, untrained faculty, and insufficient instructional resources. In site visit interviews, challenges to implementation included overcoming apprehension about implementing new instructional methods, reluctance on the part of some campus principals to allow teachers to attend trainings despite funds for substitutes, and an inability to provide services to all of the teachers interested in enhancing their ESL instruction due to limited funds.

Perceived Teacher Outcomes. In terms of the impact of the ISLA institutes and the TAMUS online course on teachers currently instructing LEP students, the vast majority of survey respondents indicated positive outcomes that they attributed to the institute or online course. Eighty-seven percent of the institute respondents and 89% of the online course respondents reported sharing what they learned with other teachers and staff at their schools (rated the statement as *agree* or *strongly agree*). They also perceived that these professional development trainings were instrumental in improving their instruction with ESL students. Eighty-six percent of the institute respondents marked the options *agree* or *strongly agree* as did 92% of online course respondents.

Open-ended survey responses revealed that one of the components of the ISLA trainings and the online course that respondents said most enabled them to assist their LEP students was the session on methodology/teaching strategies. Respondents particularly mentioned the hands-on activities, strategies associated with reading and vocabulary, and strategies that focused on conducting group exercises. In addition, the respondents indicated that the sessions on language acquisition and cultural awareness gave them background information that increased their understanding of the processes for and influences on second language learning. Several respondents from the online course survey also mentioned the online discussions that provided the perspectives and experiences of other teachers regarding their LEP instruction.

During site visits, interviewees stated that because of the LEP SSI project they were receiving more professional development opportunities in ESL instruction. Many related that as a result of attending the professional development and having increased ESL resources, more teachers were seeking and obtaining ESL certification. Also mentioned by interviewees were an increased cooperation between ESL and content-area teachers and improved instructional practices. They noted that the ISLA Web site was very beneficial; it not only provided instructional strategies, resources, and information, but also allowed school staff to stay abreast of upcoming training opportunities to increase

their knowledge and skills in ESL instruction. Other outcomes mentioned included improved instructional practices through collaboration with content interventionists that had been hired using grant funds, and generally having a higher awareness of the needs of their ESL populations. Overall, they felt their schools were now better able to assist their LEP students.

Perceived Student Outcomes. During interviews with LEP SSI project coordinators, school administrators, and teachers at the grantee sites visited, the evaluator asked about positive effects that had occurred for students as a result of the grant program. Interviewees from all of the three sites visited stated that they were seeing increases in student performance on the Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE) and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). They attributed these effects to the professional development in which their teachers participated and the instructional resources provided through grant funds. At one of the grantee sites, interviewees also reported that they had implemented planning time for content-area teachers and ESL teachers and had developed a New Arrival Center for their LEP students. These were also associated with the improvements in LEP student performance.

On the survey completed by participants of the ISLA institute and the online course, teachers indicated that their students' performance had improved as a result of their attending the institute or having completed the online course. Survey scale options for responding to this item were *1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree,* and *4 = strongly agree.* The mean rating for institute participants was 3.1, with 82% of the respondents marking *agree* or *strongly agree.* For the online course, the mean rating was also 3.1, with 90% choosing the options *agree* or *strongly agree.*

Ratings of the overall usefulness, or value, of the institute and the online course ranged between *average* and *above average* (response options: *1 = below average, 2 = average, 3 = above average).* The mean rating for institute participants was 2.7, with almost three fourths of the respondents selecting *above average.* For the online course, the mean rating was 2.6, with slightly less than two thirds of the respondents selecting *above average.*

Summary of the Quality, Usefulness, and Effects of TAMUS/ISLA Support Services

With the goal of improving the performance of LEP students, ISLA and TAMUS provided professional development to teachers in LEP SSI project districts. The attainment of this goal depends, in part, on the quality of the professional development with respect to best practices and standards for ESL/bilingual teaching and learning. Therefore, expert reviews were conducted of two ISLA training seminars and of the online certification preparation course offered by TAMUS through its College Station campus.

Expert reviewers determined that the content of the ISLA seminars and the online course were well-grounded in the current research on ESL/bilingual instruction, citing numerous studies to support their contention. They reported that the content aligned with criteria for

best practices and was based on sound educational and language learning theory, with an emphasis on second language learning and the use of practical and effective strategies that are easily transferable to the classroom. They further noted that the professional developments' alignment with national standards for ESL teaching and learning and with the SBEC/TExES standards for certification prepares teachers for both classroom instruction and ESL certification exams.

The design and delivery of the professional development was also reviewed. In adhering to most of the NSDC standards for professional development, the ISLA seminars emphasized curriculum-centered and standards-based content, used and provided a variety of research-based instructional strategies, collaborative processes, and student assessments. Presenters modeled teaching methods and discussed ways of providing instruction based on individual differences. However, while spanning multiple days, these seminars did not provide follow-up for reflection and feedback on implementation issues, which is often a critical component in the effective implementation of new knowledge and skills.

The reviewers of the online certification course viewed the online venue as a viable alternative method for obtaining professional development. However, they mentioned several limitations in the design and delivery of the course: (1) the organization and presentation of the content, (2) the absence of activities that foster the development of an online professional learning community, and (3) the nature of the learning opportunities offered. It should be noted that since this review was submitted (April 2006), program staff indicated that modifications to the course have occurred based on recommendations offered in the report. This evaluation, however, did not conduct a second expert review to examine the extent those modifications aligned with best practices.

Survey participants indicated that the topics presented at the ISLA institute and in the online course were useful to both passing the certification exam and improving their instructional practices with LEP students. They indicated an increased understanding of second language learning processes, assessment practices, and effective ESL instructional strategies, which they had begun implementing in their classrooms.

Facilitating the use of instructional practices learned from the TAMUS/ISLA professional development were the school administrators and staff, who encouraged and supported teachers' efforts to improve the quality of their instruction to LEP students. Support included securing campus ESL specialists, providing increased time for teacher/specialist collaboration, and providing needed instructional resources and opportunities for teachers to attend professional development. As a result, both administrators and teachers reported an expanded awareness of the needs of LEP students and a growing confidence in their ability to implement new methods for meeting those needs.

Overall, teachers reported that ISLA support and services provided valuable opportunities that prepared them for the ESL/bilingual certification exams, increased their access to ESL instructional resources, and improved the quality of their instruction to their LEP

students. They further indicated that these changes were contributing to improvements in their students' performance on the RPTE and TAKS.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPPORT SERVICES AND PASSING RATES ON THE ESL/BILINGUAL CERTIFICATION EXAMS

This section explores the extent to which a relationship exists between the participation of teachers from LEP grantee districts in ISLA supplemental certification seminars and the online certification preparation course and their success in passing the ESL/bilingual certification exams. These data are also compared to ESL/bilingual certification exam passing rates statewide. Certification data provided through the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) is used to determine these relationships.

Certification exam passing rates are used in this analysis instead of actual ESL/bilingual certification rates for several reasons:

- Examinees may pass the certification exam but not become certified because they did not complete all the certification requirements (e.g., additional coursework, internship, etc.);
- Examinees who passed the certification exam may not have applied for certification, or may obtain certification at a later date;
- Examinees who did not pass the certification exam may show up as being certified through obtaining an exemption based on an out-of-state certification exam that is considered comparable to the Texas exam; and
- Examinees may have become certified through an alternative certification program for which there is no exam.

Participation lists of teachers from LEP grantee districts who attended the ISLA supplemental certification institutes during the summers of the 2005 and 2006 and those who took the online course between October 2006 and April 2007 were compared to the SBEC data of ESL/bilingual certification exam pass rates during the same period of time. As shown in Table 9 below, a total of 343 teachers participated in these certification preparation professional development trainings during that period. Between the summer of 2005 and spring of 2007, 59% of LEP SSI grantee teachers participated in the trainings and 69% of those participating passed the ESL/bilingual certification exams.

With respect to the institute trainings held in the summers of the 2005 and 2006, participant lists were provided for 3 of the 4 trainings. Of the 3 trainings, 193 teachers participated and 82% (n = 159) of those teachers were from LEP SSI grantee districts. Of those from grantee districts, 65% passed the ESL/bilingual certification exams. Participation records for the online course only span from October 2006 to April 2007 and indicate that 43 (29%) of the 150 teachers taking the course were LEP SSI grantee teachers. Of those, 81% (n = 35) passed the certification exams according to SBEC records.

Table 9. ESL/Bilingual Certification Exam Passing Rates of Institute and Online Participants

Summer Institute Year	Total # of Attendees	# of LEP Attendees	# of Total Attendees Passing Certification Exam	# of LEP Attendees Passing Certification Exam	Percent of LEP Attendees Passing Certification Exam of Total LEP Attendees
2005	106	75 (71%)	70 (66%)	49 (46%)	65%
2006	87	84 (97%)	57 (66%)	55 (63%)	66%
Sub-Total	**193**	**159 (82%)**	**127 (66%)**	**104 (54%)**	**65%**
Online Course Year	**Total # of Attendees**	**# of LEP Attendees**	**# of Total Attendees Passing Certification Exam**	**# of LEP Attendees Passing Certification Exam**	**Percent of LEP Attendees Passing Certification Exam of Total LEP Attendees**
2006–2007	150	43 (29%)	116 (77%)	35 (23%)	81%
Total	**343**	**202 (59%)**	**243 (71%)**	**139 (41%)**	**69%**

Source: Participation lists of ISLA institute trainings and online course and SBEC certification exam passing rate data.

Table 10 shows the breakdown of Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Cycle 3 grantee teachers who attended each of the institute and online trainings, and percentages of LEP SSI grantee teachers who passed the certification exams of the number attending. As shown in the table, the majority of LEP SSI grantee teachers were from Cycle 1 grantee districts. However, the passing rates for teachers from all three funding cycles are fairly comparable.

Table 10. ESL/Bilingual Certification Exam Passing Rates of Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Cycle 3 Grantees Participating in Institute and Online Trainings

LEP Grantee Teachers	ISLA 2005–2006		ISLA 2006–2007		Online 2006–07		Total	
	Attended	Passed	Attended	Passed	Attended	Passed	Attended	Passed
Cycle 1	67	46 (69%)	18	11 (61%)	36	28 (78%)	121	85 (70%)
Cycle 2	1	1 (100%)	21	14 (67%)	4	4 (100%)	26	19 (73%)
Cycle 3	7	2 (29%)	45	30 (67%)	3	3 (100%)	55	35 (64%)
Total	75	49 (65%)	84	55 (66%)	43	35 (81%)	202	139 (69%)

Source: Participation lists of ISLA institute trainings and online course and SBEC certification data.

In summary, the timeframe for the above trainings ranged from May 1, 2005 through May 31, 2007. During that time period, 343 teachers participated in TAMUS/ISLA certification preparation trainings, with an overall passing rate on the ESL/bilingual certification exams of 71%. For those examinees that were from LEP SSI grantee districts, the pass rate was 41% of all participants to the trainings. The state pass rate on the ESL/bilingual certification exams during that same period of time is 85.9%. This is quite a bit higher than that of teachers from LEP SSI grantee districts. However, when comparing the pass rate of LEP SSI grantee district teachers to the total number of those teachers from grantee districts who participated in the trainings, the pass rate reaches 69%.

Considering that the majority of LEP SSI grantee district teachers passing the certification exams were Cycle 1 teachers, it may be that teachers do not take the exams directly after participating in the trainings. As such, continued tracking of exam passing rates for LEP SSI project teachers may show increases that approach the state rate in the next several years. The tracking may also reveal the extent that the LEP SSI project has contributed to reducing the number of teachers teaching under ESL/bilingual waivers and exemptions.

CONCLUSIONS

This report summarizes SEDL's evaluation of TAMUS support activities to LEP SSI grant recipients. The goals of the LEP SSI project were focused on reducing the number of teachers teaching under a bilingual exception waiver by increasing the number of teachers trained in ESL instruction, thereby improving LEP students performance outcomes. The evaluation of the project began in March 2005 with an evaluation of TAMUS' support activities to Cycle 1 grantees and was extended in April 2006 to include Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 grantees. The objectives of the expanded scope of work, in response to recommendations from the April 2006 report of TAMUS support activities related to Cycle 1 grantees, were to:

- describe the services provided by ISLA and the four outreach centers that have been awarded sub-grants from Texas A&M–Corpus Christi and assess the quality of those services;
- examine the quality, usefulness, and effects of the TAMUS/ISLA support and services; and
- examine the relationship between participation in TAMUS/ISLA trainings and rates of ESL/bilingual teacher certification in Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Cycle 3 grantee teachers, and state certification rates.

Evaluation methods included expert reviews of TAMUS/ISLA professional development, surveys of participants of the ISLA certification institutes and the online certification preparation course, site visit interviews with three LEP SSI grantees, a document review of ISLA records, and a review of SBEC certification data to examine the relationship between participating in TAMUS/ISLA certification preparation sessions and subsequently passing the ESL/bilingual certification exam.

The following conclusions were drawn from the evaluation data gathered using these various methods.

TAMUS achieved its goals for the LEP SSI project of providing technical assistance and professional development to project grant recipients.
During the first year of TAMUS' award from TEA (June 2004), activities were primarily devoted to setting up the ISLA and outreach center offices, hiring staff, establishing its Web site, designing a needs assessment process for grant recipients, and implementing its newly designed summer ESL certification preparation institutes and online certification preparation course. In the following two years, ISLA staff continued developing and presenting professional development seminars and workshops to increase the knowledge and skills of ESL teachers and identifying materials and resources for improving the instruction and learning of LEP students, providing them through the ISLA Web site, in workshops and institutes, and as requested by grantees. They provided technical assistance to grantees in many forms including consultations on needs assessments, implementation plans, and site visits for monitoring the progress of implementation plans and suggesting and complying with requests for assistance and resources.

As funding ended for Cycle 1 grant recipients, ISLA continued to invite them to all professional development programs being offered. Teachers from Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Cycle 3 LEP SSI grantee districts attended more than 30 different types of professional development sessions that were offered between January 2006 and June 2007. An expert review of two of the ISLA sessions indicated that their content was grounded in current research on ESL/bilingual instruction, based on sound educational and language learning theory, and aligned with national standards for ESL teaching and learning as well as with SBEC/TExES standards for ESL certification. Aligned also with many of the NSDC standards, the professional development provided hands-on sessions, modeling of ESL instructional strategies, and useful knowledge and skills for both classroom instruction and preparation for ESL certification exams.

The expert review of the online course reported in the April 2006 evaluation of support activities to Cycle 1 grantees indicated that the content of the course reflected current research in ESL teaching and learning but that the design and delivery of the course needed modifications (see Final Evaluation Report, April 2006, *Texas A&M University System's Support Activities in Relation to Limited English Proficient Student Success Initiative Cycle 1 Grants*). In informal conversations, the program staff at TEA indicated that modifications had been implemented in the online course. However, this extended evaluation of the LEP SSI project did not undertake a second expert review to assess the extent that the modifications adhered to standards and best practices in delivering online professional development. It is recommended that a second review be conducted to ensure the effectiveness of the online course.

In the April 2006 report, a recommendation offered was that the online course focus on the preparation of teachers for passing the certification exam while the ISLA institutes focus on improvement of teacher practices. At that time, other ISLA professional development was not widely offered; however, a variety of sessions devoted to the improvement of teacher practices are presently offered and well attended. Because an important goal of the LEP SSI project has been to reduce the number of teachers teaching under bilingual waivers and increase the number of ESL certified teachers, it is critical to consider the circumstances under which teachers engage in such professional development. It is advantageous to offer both face-to-face trainings and online training. Some teachers may prefer multi-day, face-to-face trainings and have the support necessary to engage in them; others prefer self-paced activities, allowing for ESL exam preparation without interrupting their daily responsibilities. TAMUS support currently provides both of these opportunities, and with a confirmation that the design and delivery of the online course aligns with standards, both types of trainings will aid in meeting the ESL certification goals of the TEA.

The TAMUS/ISLA trainings have been providing teachers with useful ESL instructional strategies that they are implementing in their classrooms.
Survey and site visit interview responses indicated that teachers were receiving new and useful resources and information that are reflected in improvements to their classroom instruction. Further, responses from participants of the ISLA institutes and the online course indicated that they had received little of the information presented in these

professional development sessions previously and subsequently increased their understanding of second language acquisition and skills with respect to methods for more effectively addressing the needs of their LEP students.

District and campus administrators were perceived as providing support and resources that encouraged the implementation of new instructional strategies gained through TAMUS/ISLA services, with positive outcomes resulting for both teachers and students. While the professional development trainings did not provide structured follow-up sessions to ensure the most effective implementation of knowledge and skills acquired at the trainings (as recommended by the NSDC standards for professional development), school-based follow-up with ESL specialists helped fill this gap. LEP SSI funds contributed to the hiring of ESL specialists on a number of campuses. As a result of the support and services of the LEP SSI project, teachers stated that they felt better prepared for LEP instruction and that their students appeared more confident about their class tasks, were not afraid to ask for help, and felt increasingly more comfortable expressing themselves. Teachers and administrators also indicated they were seeing improvements in their LEP students' performance on both the TAKS and RPTE tests.

SBEC certification exam data indicate that of teachers participating in the TAMUS/ISLA certification preparation trainings, a substantial number are subsequently passing the ESL/bilingual certification exam.
Between 2005 and 2007, 82% of those attending ISLA certification institutes were teachers from LEP SSI grantee districts. Of those, 65% took and passed ESL/bilingual certification exams. Records for 2006–2007 of participants to the online course indicate that only 29% were from LEP SSI grantee districts. However, of those, 81% took and passed ESL/bilingual certification exams. These pass rates suggest that the statements made by administrators and teachers on the surveys and in site visit interviews, that they are seeing more of their teachers obtaining ESL certification, may in fact be occurring.

The state passing rate for ESL/bilingual certification exams over the 2005 through 2007 timeframe is 85.9%. The overall certification exam pass rate for LEP SSI grantee teachers who attended the certification preparation trainings was 69%. The majority of these teachers were from Cycle 1 grantee districts, suggesting that perhaps teachers attending the trainings may not be taking their exams directly after the completion of the trainings. Assessing the passing rates of these teachers within the next few years might better show the relationship between TAMUS/ISLA trainings and teacher pass rates on the ESL/bilingual certification exams, as well as their role in reducing the number of teachers teaching under ESL/bilingual exemptions and waivers.

Overall, TAMUS/ISLA support services were strategically comprehensive and targeted to meet the growing challenges and needs in this area. The trainings met standards for high-quality professional development and were well-received by project teachers. Support services generally were judged to be of good quality, were perceived by administrators and teachers to be useful and positively affecting teacher practices and student performance. Further, certification exam records show that TAMUS/ISLA

support has led to over half of LEP SSI grantee teachers participating in certification preparation trainings passing the ESL/bilingual certification exams.

REFERENCES

Cardenas-Hagan, E., Carlson, C.D., & Pollard-Durodola, S.D. (2007). The cross-linguistic transfer of early literacy skills: The role of initial L1 and L2 skills and language of instruction. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 38,* 249–259.

Corcoran, T., McVay, S., & Riordan, K. (2003). *Getting it right: The MISE approach to professional development.* Philadelphia: CPRE. Retrieved January 26, 2004, from http://www.cpre.org/Publications/PD%20Paper.pdf

Elmore, R. (2002). *Bridging the gap between standards and achievement: The imperative for professional development in education.* Washington, DC: The Albert Shanker Institute.

Fratt, L. (2007). Professional development for the new century: Teacher education programs address a growing number of non-English speaking students. *District Administration.* Retrieved August 17, 2007, from http://www.DistrictAdministration.com

Hammer, C.S., Lawrence, F.R., & Miccio, A.W. (2007). Bilingual children's language abilities and early reading outcomes in Head Start and kindergarten. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 38,* 237–248.

Hawley, W. D., & Valli, L. (1999). The essentials of professional development. In L. Darling-Hammond & G. Sykes (Eds.), *Teaching as the learning profession: Handbook of policy and practice* (pp. 127–150). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lara-Alecio, R., Galloway, M., Irby, B. J., & Brown, G. (2004, April). *Bilingual/ESL teacher recruitment/retention.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA. Retrieved March 10, 2006, from http://ldn.tamu.edu/Archives/rrAERA04.pdf

McCardle, P., & Leung, C.Y.Y. (2006). English language learners: Development and intervention. *Topics in Language Disorders, 26*(4), 302–304.

National Staff Development Council. (2001a). *NSDC standards for staff development* (Rev. ed.). Retrieved February 3, 2006, from http://www.nsdc.org/standards/index.cfm

National Staff Development Council. (2001b). *E-Learning for educators: Implementing the standards for staff development.* Retrieved March 15, 2006, from http://www.nsdc.org/library/authors/e-learning.pdf

Nixon, S.M., McCardle, P., & Leos, K. (2007). Implications of research on English language learners for classroom and clinical practice. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 38,* 272–277.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Title III, *Moving Limited English Proficient Students to English Fluency.* Pub.L. 107-110, 107th Congress. Retrieved February, 1, 2006, from http://whitehouse.gov/news/reports/no-child-left-behind.pdf

Short, D., & Echevarria, J. (2004). Teacher skills to support English language learners. *Educational Leadership, 62*(4), 8–13.

Sparks, D., & Hirsh, S. (1999). *A national plan for improving professional development.* Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

Sunal, D. W., Sunal, C. S., Odell, M. R., & Sundberg, C. A. (2003). Research-supported best practices for developing online learning. *The Journal of Interactive Online Learning 2*(1), 1-40.

Texas A&M University. (2002). *Teacher demand study, 2001–2002*. Bryan, TX: Institute for School-University Partnerships. Retrieved March 10, 2006, from http://partnerships.tamu.edu/publications/00-01supplyanddemandstudy.pdf

Texas Education Agency. (2007). *Enrollment in Texas public schools, 2005–06.* (Document No. GE07 601 05). Austin TX: Author.

Texas Education Agency. (2006). *2006 comprehensive annual report on Texas public schools.* (Document No. GE07 601 04). Austin, TX: Author.

Thompson, L.W. (2004). Literacy development for English language learners: Classroom challenges in the NCLB age. *A Title I Communique Special Report*. CTB/McGraw Hill.

Appendix A

- LEP SSI Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Cycle 3 Grant Recipients

LEP SSI Cycle 1 Grant Recipients

	Grantee*	Award Amount
1	Edinburg ISD	$424,998
2	Santa Maria ISD	$273,825
3	Weslaco ISD	$408,386
4	Alvin ISD	$183,930
5	Pearland ISD	$326,574
6	Sulpher Springs ISD	$220,753
7	Dallas ISD	$425,000
8	ESC Region 10	$425,000
9	Fort Worth CAN! Academy	$180,915
10	Fort Worth ISD	$180,915
11	Lake Worth ISD	$425,000
12	Pilot Point ISD	$196,920
13	Belton ISD	$215,426
14	ESC Region 12	$425,000
15	ESC Region 13	$425,000
16	Georgetown ISD	$425,000
17	Amarillo ISD	$424,312
18	Yselta ISD	$425,000
19	North East ISD	$223,676
20	Northside ISD	$424,202

Source: SEDL Evaluation Report, April 2006.
*Number of schools within districts and number of LEP students served not available at ISLA offices. This information was provided on needs assessments, which were not submitted to ISLA by Cycle 1 grantees.

LEP SSI Cycle 2 Grant Recipients

	Grantee	Award Amount	# of Schools in District	# of LEP Students Served
1	Andrews ISD	$173,050	6	253
2	Athens ISD	$308,100	5	587
3	Bandera ISD	$106,080	4	65
4	Brownfield ISD	$120,140	4	122
5	Castleberry ISD	$311,800	7	637
6	Chapel Hill ISD	$193,400	5	267
7	Crystal City ISD	$217,450	5	274
8	Dayton ISD	$156,770	6	232
9	Eagle Academy – Laredo – Charter School	$100,900	1	70
10	Eagle Academy – Midland – Charter School	$132,720	1	156
11	Eagle Academy – San Antonio – Charter School	$86,100	1	30
12	East Chambers ISD	$116,070	3	115

	Grantee	Award Amount	# of Schools in District	# of LEP Students Served
13	Fort Hancock ISD	$178,600	2	295
14	Fort Stockton ISD	$174,900	4	234
15	Gilmer ISD	$102,750	4	75
16	Gonzales ISD	$155,660	5	223
17	Hays CISD	$435,010	15	973
18	Hearne ISD	$116,810	4	111
19	Houston Gateway – Charter School	$131,610	1	137
20	Jacksonville ISD	$412,810	7	813
21	La Villa ISD	$175,640	3	257
22	Levelland ISD	$120,510	3	111
23	Manor ISD	$388,390	5	796
24	Marlin ISD	$111,630	3	108
25	Mercedes ISD	$500,000	6	1,798
26	Pecos-Barstow-Toyah ISD	$140,490	5	198
27	Progreso ISD	$400,600	5	956
28	Raymondville ISD – ESC 1	$183,780	4	294
29	Roma ISD	$500,000	10	2,937
30	San Diego ISD	$138,270	4	157
31	Shepherd ISD	$108,300	4	90
32	Tornillo ISD	$272,950	4	535
33	Uvalde ISD	$242,240	4	443
34	Zapata ISD	$500,000	6	1,315

Source: Needs Assessment documents on file at ISLA offices.

LEP SSI Cycle 3 Grant Recipients

	Grantee	Award Amount	# of Schools in District	# of LEP Students Served
1	Donna ISD	$500,000	4	5,927
2	East Central ISD	$195,200	8	359
3	Edcouch-Elsa ISD	$500,000	8	2,429
4	El Campo ISD	$172,680	2	80
5	Elgin ISD	$267,400	6	441
6	Evins Reg. Juvenile Center	$99,050	1	---
7	Lamesa ISD	$136,050	4	164
8	Little Elm ISD	$286,640	8	1,158
9	Mansfield ISD	$500,000	31	2,598
10	Mineola ISD	$123,470	3	23
11	Monte Alto ISD	$155,290	2	243
12	Pampa ISD	$136,790	6	280
13	Santa Rosa ISD	$178,970	3	281
14	United ISD	$500,000	2	787

	Grantee	Award Amount	# of Schools in District	# of LEP Students Served
15	Wylie ISD	$217,080	5	561

Source: Needs Assessment documents on file at ISLA offices.

Appendix B

- Expert Reviewer Guidelines — ISLA Conference

- Expert Reviewer Guidelines — ISLA Certification Preparation Institute

```
          ISLA Conference ESL Content & Materials
                 Expert Reviewer Criteria
```

```
Professional Development Evaluation Criteria
```
As an expert reviewer of the ISLA ESL Conference, you will be asked to provide responses divided into three sections. Section 1 asks you to compare the conference sessions and materials to what you understand as "promising practices" in ESL professional development. Questions in this section prompt you to compare the ESL content to what you know from current research and national standards for ESL teaching and learning and to identify major strengths and weaknesses related to the conference content and materials. In Section 2, you are asked to provide final comments regarding whether or not the conference meets your standards for high quality professional development. Finally, in Section 3, please provide a list of the resources, references, and journal articles that you used to make your overall decisions in Sections 1& 2.

```
Section 1. How does the ISLA conference content and
materials compare to "promising practices" in ESL
professional development?
```

1. Is the professional development grounded in research and clinical knowledge of teaching and learning in ESL instruction? Please describe how you reached your conclusion and identify specific research you used to make your decision.

2. Is the professional development aligned with the national standards for ESL teaching and learning? Please describe how you reached your conclusion and identify specific standards you used to make your decision.

3. Provide a concise summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the conference content and materials related to your comments in questions 1 and 2 above.

```
Section 2. Final Comments: Does the ISLA conference content
and materials meet your standards of high quality
professional development?
```
Please provide any final comments summarizing your overall evaluative decision regarding quality of the content of the professional development. Feel free to contribute additional criteria that helped you answer the question, "Does the ISLA conference meet your standards of high quality professional development?"

```
                 SECTION 3. REFERENCE LIST
```
Please provide us with a complete list of references you used during your evaluation of the ISLA conference.

ISLA Institute ESL Content & Materials
Expert Reviewer Criteria

Professional Development Evaluation Criteria
As an expert reviewer of the ISLA ESL Institute, you will be asked to provide responses divided into three sections. Section 1 asks you to compare the institute sessions and materials to what you understand as "promising practices" in ESL professional development. Questions in this section prompt you to compare the ESL content to what you know from current research and national standards for ESL teaching and learning and to identify major strengths and weaknesses related to the institute content and materials. In Section 2, you are asked to provide final comments regarding whether or not the institute meets your standards for high quality professional development. Finally, in Section 3, please provide a list of the resources, references, and journal articles that you used to make your overall decisions in Sections 1& 2.

Section 1. How does the ISLA institute content and materials compare to "promising practices" in ESL professional development?

1. Is the professional development grounded in research and clinical knowledge of teaching and learning in ESL instruction? Please describe how you reached your conclusion and identify specific research you used to make your decision.

2. Is the professional development aligned with the national standards for ESL teaching and learning? Please describe how you reached your conclusion and identify specific standards you used to make your decision.

3. Provide a concise summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the institute content and materials related to your comments in questions 1 and 2 above.

Section 2. Final Comments: Does the ISLA institute content and materials meet your standards of high quality professional development?
Please provide any final comments summarizing your overall evaluative decision regarding quality of the content of the professional development. Feel free to contribute additional criteria that helped you answer the question, "Does the ISLA institute meet your standards of high quality professional development?"

SECTION 3. REFERENCE LIST
Please provide us with a complete list of references you used during your evaluation of the ISLA institute.

Appendix C

- Expert Review: ISLA Conference

- Expert Review: ISLA Certification
            Preparation Institute

- Expert Review: TAMUS Online Certification
            Preparation Course — Content

- Expert Review: TAMUS Online Certification
            Preparation Course — Delivery

EXPERT REVIEW OF THE CONTENT AND DELIVERY OF THE ISLA CONFERENCE ON STRENGTHENING LANGUAGE ARTS INSTRUCTION IN THE BILIINGUAL AND ESL CLASSROOM

Rosanna R. Boyd, Ph.D.

Section 1. How Does the ISLA Conference Content and Materials Compare to "Promising Practices" in ESL Professional Development?

The ISLA conference was designed to provide teachers of ESL students with information and instructional strategies to increase the effectiveness of their classroom practices. In general, the content and materials were grounded in the research and clinical knowledge of teaching and learning in ESL instruction and are aligned with National and State Standards. Below are some examples of session topics presented during the conference that are supported by the research on promising practices in ESL instruction.

Grounding in Research and Clinical Knowledge of ESL Teaching and Learning

Effective Vocabulary Strategies for English Language Learners

The content of this session, Effective Vocabulary Strategies, is supported by the research of Richard-Amato (2003) and Brown (1993). The presenters posted many samples of vocabulary teaching method charts on the walls of the room. Included were a 5-step process for teaching vocabulary, 3x3 vocabulary models, different methodologies such as demonstration, drama, explanation, characterization, visual definition, and mystery. They emphasized strategies of humming, word sorts, vocabulary quilts, and cognates for vocabulary development., Richard-Amato regards drama as an excellent vocabulary building strategy in that it "includes activities involving roles, plots, and dialogues that are written in play form to be memorized and acted out on stage or to be read aloud" (2003, p. 226). She also recommends using visual representations from television show segments to help ESL students with listening and writing skills, and with making inferences through acting out their own shows. Supported also by the work of Brown (1994), he stated that children are easily able to capture main ideas – that they seem to understand more than what they can actually produce. He points out that "children exhibit a remarkable ability to infer the phonological, structural, lexical, and semantic systems of language" (p.36).

The activities in this session were highly interactive and practical for classroom instruction. Presenters provided a large variety of example strategies for English vocabulary development.

Oral Language Enriching Activities

The content of this session is supported by the research conducted by the Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training (ESCORT; 1998) and by Hamayan, Genesee, and Cloud (2000) who state that for language minority students, "the single most important predictor of success in second language learning is their level of proficiency in their

primary language" (p.53). The authors recommend that teachers structure oral language development within a meaningful context, centering instruction around interesting and engaging activities. As the learner's attention is focused on the activity, language becomes internalized naturally. The review of research by Thompson (2004) indicates that successful educational approaches for ELL literacy learning include applying contextual activities that relate to students' life experiences. Activities such as name card discussion and KWL are engaging activities that promise effective oral language development among second language learners and were addressed in this session. The session was also highly interactive and contained hands-on activities throughout.

"Leer Más" Training: Assessment Instrument
The focus of this presentation was on teaching reading, developing oral language, phonology, writing knowledge, strategies for developing fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and the assessment of student progress in those areas. The strategies presented in this session were supported by research conducted by ESCORT (1998) on how English language learners learn to read effectively. This research indicates that when students practice whole sentences, phrases, and individual words useful in everyday life, they learn to read more effectively. The most effective teaching technique is to go from the known to the unknown when introducing words orally before incorporating them into a reading lesson. As discussed in this session, the research asserts that English language learners will be able to then better relate the new words to meaningful situations. In addition, the research notes that Spanish speaking students have difficulty with English vocalic contrasts because in Spanish there are only five vowel sounds while English has eleven. This session stressed these issues, noting that Spanish-speaking students may not hear the difference between, for example, bit and bet, boat and bought, or bat and but. Students must be able to hear the vowel distinctions before they may be expected to produce them.

With respect to assessing reading achievement in English language learners, Brown (1993) states that testing should be directly related to classroom lessons, units, or a total curriculum within a particular time frame. The testing instrument presented in this session is supported by Brown's research. It included lessons and units matching test objectives in reading. Brown makes the clear distinction between tests that measure language proficiency and those that measure reading cognitive ability. He points out that proficiency tests often have validity weaknesses because they confuse oral proficiency with literacy skills, or they confuse knowledge about a language with an ability to use a language. Supported also by the research of Canales (1988) and Charmot and O'Malley (1994), this session helped participants distinguish differences between academic and language assessments. This session provided valuable theoretical and practical information for teachers. Two handouts were distributed, one in Spanish and its translated version in English. The contents of the handouts were very structured and comprehensive.

<u>**Decoding to Fluency: First Language Instruction into English**</u>

Some of the topics addressed in this session were decoding, concepts of print, phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, reading comprehension, adapting instruction to support second language learners, and principles of writing. Research from Dickinson and Tabors (2001), Moll (1996), Brown (1993), and Baker (1993) supports the appropriateness of of these topics to English language development. For example, the session addressed the importance of focusing on first language vocabulary, oral language skill, and literacy skills, as all are asserted to support successful English literacy development (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Moll, 1996). This session also discussed developmental issues such as "generalization" with respect to language structures and the associated special constraints in the English language. This discussion relates to the work of Brown (1993) who addresses this issue.

With respect to writing, Padilla, Fairchild, and Valadez (1990), state that an important misconception is that children learning English as a second language can and should begin writing before they will have complete control of oral English. Studies in literacy development before schooling have shown that most children have some knowledge of print before they come to school. However, in addressing this issue, presenters noted that it is possible to teach reading and writing to English language learners at the same time, supporting this contention with the research from Padilla, et al. (1990). These authors point out the importance to English language development in being able to hear and sound out letters of the English alphabet, and seeing how they can be used in written form.

This session's discussion of adapting instruction to support English language learners is based in the work of Baker (1993), who indicates that teaching in second language classrooms is different from teaching in other classrooms because the language control is separate from the subject matter taught. This session stressed that when adding instruction of subject matter, adaptations are necessary for English language learners so that they will be able to develop language concepts as well as content concepts. Several teaching approaches that address second language learning were presented, including Total Physical Response, the Silent Method, Suggestopedia, the Natural Approach, and Community Language Learning. Session participants were able to easily follow the sequence of the presentation in a well organized handout that was distributed. This was a very valuable session for the attendees.

Alignment with National K-12 ESL Standards and the National Foreign Language Standards

Following are the National K-12 ESL Standards and the National Foreign Language Standards.

National Standards for ESL	
Goal 1	**To use English to communicate in social settings**
Standard 1	Students will use English to participate in social interaction.
Standard 2	Students will interact in, through, and with spoken and written English for personal expression and enjoyment.
Standard 3	Students will use learning strategies to extend their communicative

National Standards for ESL	
	competence.
Goal 2	**To use English to achieve academically in all content areas**
Standard 1	Students will use English to interact in the classroom.
Standard 2	Students will use English to obtain, process, construct, and provide subject matter information in spoken and written form.
Standard 3	Students will use appropriate learning strategies to construct and apply academic knowledge.
Goal 3	**To use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways**
Standard 1	Students will choose a language variety, register, and genre according to audience, purpose, and setting.
Standard 2	Students will use non-verbal communication appropriate to audience, purpose, and setting.
Standard 3	Students will use appropriate learning strategies to extend their sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence.
National Foreign Language Standards	
Communication	**Communicate in languages other then English**
Standard 1.1	Students engage in conversation, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.
Standard 1.2	Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.
Standard 1.3	Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.
Cultures	**Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures**
Standard 2.1	Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.
Standard 2.2	Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.
Connections	**Connect with other disciplines and acquire information**
Standard 3.1	Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.
Standard 3.2	Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.
Comparisons	**Develop insight into the nature of language and culture**
Standard 4.1	Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.
Standard 4.2	Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.
Communities	Participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world
Standard 5.1	Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.
Standard 5.2	Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

The sessions in this conference addressed various of the National K-12 ESL Standards and the National Foreign Language Standards. In general, they focused on providing teachers with methods and strategies for instructing their ESL students in gaining competence in the English language both academically and socially. For example, the sessions described below dealt overtly with a discussion of the standards and framing

learning through the use of social interaction, which met foreign language learning standards, national standards, and TESOL standards.

National Language Standards and Local Knowledge and Practices

This session focused on the 1999 standards for Foreign Language Learning and the 2006 TESOL standards for PreK-12 students. The session was minimally related to strengthening Language Arts Instruction with the main focus on the issues surrounding standardized tests, local and state decision making, and the need to link national standards to local knowledge and practice. With the onset of state standards and assessment, participants may have not found much value on national standards at this time. However, the session handout included suggestions for linking national standards to local practice.

Second Language Acquisition: A Total Integrated Language Approach

This session included a number of concepts that addressed both the National and Foreign Language standards. It was a very interactive session that focused on oral proficiency, literacy, cognitive objectives, comprehension strategies, and techniques for teaching among others. Methods of instruction included singing, repetition, and humor.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the ISLA Conference

The major strengths of the conference content and materials were that they addressed methodologies and strategies for teachers of English language learners in English as a second language, mainstream, and bilingual education classroom settings.

There were very important sessions that described how children learn a second language, how to teach them effectively and how having knowledge about the structure of their students' native language assists educators in understanding how to help these students. For example, understanding how the sounds of the letters of the Spanish alphabet compare to the English alphabet. Additionally, participants expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to attend this conference. They spoke highly about the sessions they attended. They made particular mention of the helpfulness of the session conducted during the keynote address, *Conventions of L1/L2 and the Teaching of Reading*. The comparisons presented gave participants an understanding of how bilingual children learn to read in both English and in Spanish.

In general, the handouts that were distributed to participants in the different sessions were very helpful for participants because they contained ideas that teachers could use in the classroom. Heller (2004) states that professional development "is where the excitement of teaching as a profession lives. This is where the best teachers thrive and want to be, applying new learning in their classrooms" (p.80). More sessions that allow teachers to transfer their new knowledge and skills into the classroom should be the focus of the conferences and workshops that ISLA sponsors.

Weaknesses observed included low attendance at some sessions, examples of teaching strategies that were not easily transferable to the classroom, and in one session, too little time spent on instructional strategies. Several conference sessions were delivered to a

small number of participants. It appeared that there were too many concurrent sessions, with some only drawing and handful of attendees. In other sessions, it would be difficult to transfer the strategies learned to the classroom. For example, one presentation included songs and lists of books. For integration of session ideas, participants would need recorded songs and the books presented. Finally, in another session, more time was spent on the introduction of the topic than on the strategies for grammar instruction. Further, little audience participation occurred; however, the handout was very informative and comprehensive.

Overall, the institute provided many opportunities for the participants to interact with one another and to request follow-up interventions to plan, implement, or to expand their ESL and bilingual educational programs.

Section 2. Final Comments: Does the ISLA Conference Content and Materials Meet your Standards of High Quality Professional Development?

Overall, the ISLA Institute content and materials do meet standards of high quality professional development. The content and materials seemed very useful and relevant to participants. Schifini (2003) states that the reason for the success of students in acquiring English is the emphasis placed on staff development for teachers. The strategies presented were consistent with the kinds of ideas put forth by Schifini. He states that "Oral interaction should be used extensively. Students can be engaged in small group tasks such as science experiments, mapmaking, creating murals, preparing skits. It is the teacher's job to demonstrate or model the task for the students to then carry out" (p.401-402). Modeling and demonstrations of strategies were a substantial part of most conference sessions. Instructional strategies offered in some sessions, such as mapping or other types of graphic organizers, are recommended by Schifini to help students obtain meaning from the materials.

With respect to the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards for staff development, these conference sessions met a number of them. While conference sessions do not generally provide for follow-up sessions to reflect and receive feedback on practice in the classroom with knowledge and skills learned, they do meet the standards in other ways. For example, the sessions variously
- Prepare educators to apply research to decision-making,
- Use learning strategies appropriate to intended goal(s),
- Apply knowledge about human learning and change,
- Provide educators with knowledge and skills to collaborate,
- Prepare educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement, and
- Deepen educators' content knowledge, providing them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards and prepare them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.

I offer several recommendations to increase the potential effectiveness of future conference sessions. First, session objectives should be consistently provided to facilitate participants' clarity of focus for the presentations. In future sessions, it would also be helpful to ensure that those related to instructional methodologies and strategies be interactive. Since teachers generally participate in these types of sessions, this structure may better promote transfer to classroom practice. Administrator sessions would also be useful additions to the conference schedule. Their focus might include information and strategies related to planning transitional, ESL, and bilingual programs, or implementing them. Various participants at this conference were in both phases, mentioning a need for some direction. They might also include sessions that would provide administrators with information on the knowledge and skills their teachers are being instructed in to increase the supportive environment for teachers of ESL students. Finally, end-of-session evaluation forms might be provided to inform conference staff of participants' perceptions of the extent that the sessions met their needs and to indicate topics they would like to see offered or followed-up.

Section 3. Reference List

American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). (1999). National Foreign Language Standards. Yonkers, NY.

Baker, C. (1993). Ten dimensions of classroom language learning. *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism*. Avon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Brown, D. (1993). Kinds of tests. *Principles of language learning*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

Cloud, N., Genesee, F. & Hamayan, E. (2000). Oral language development. *Dual language instruction*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Dickinson, D.K., & Tabors, P.O. (2001) and Moll (1996). *In Claiming opportunities. A Handbook for improving education for English language learning through school reform,* 2003. Providence, RI: Brown University, Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory (LAB).

Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training (ESCORT) (1998). Help! They don't speak English starter kit. Oneonta, NY.

Heller, D. (2004). *Teachers wanted. Attracting and retaining good teachers*. Embedding professional development. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

National Staff Development Council (NSDC) (2001). Staff Development Standards. Oxford, OH.

Richard-Amato, P. (2003). Storytelling, role play, and drama. *Making it happen. From interactive to participatory language teaching*. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.

Schifini, A. (2203). Staff Development. In Richard-Amato, P., 2003. *Making it happen. From interactive to participatory language teaching* (pp. 401-402). White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.

Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) (2006). K-12 National ESL Standards. Alexandria, VA.

Padilla, A., Fairchild, H. & Valadez, C. (1990). What we know about ESL Children's writing. *Bilingual Education, Issues and Strategies*. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Thompson, L.W. (2004). Literacy development for English language learners: Classroom challenges in the NCLB age. *A Title I Communique Special Report.* CTB/McGraw Hill.

EXPERT REVIEW OF THE CONTENT AND DELIVERY OF THE ISLA ESL SUPPLEMENTAL CERTIFICATION INSTITUTE

Rosanna R. Boyd, Ph.D.

Section 1. How Does the ISLA Institute Content and Materials Compare to "Promising Practices" in ESL Professional Development?

The ISLA institute was designed to prepare teachers of LEP students to take the ESL Certification Exam. In general, the content and materials were grounded in the research and clinical knowledge of teaching and learning in ESL instruction and are aligned with National and State Standards. Most of the content and materials reflect promising practices in ESL professional development. Below are some examples based on topics presented during the four day Institute.

Grounding in Research and Clinical Knowledge of ESL Teaching and Learning

The first two days of the institute presented ESL methodologies and instructional strategies. The information presented was based on the research of Asher (1960), Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989), the Center for Applied Linguistics (2000), O'Malley and Chamot (1990), and Richard-Amato (2003). In the session "ESL Methodology," the presenter provided information about a number of the different methodologies for teaching ESL. Of the methodologies discussed, several were identified as no longer being considered as best practices. The presenter noted that the older methods were addressed because they frequently continue to appear as distractors on certification exams. In addition, while the newer methods move from grammar-based lessons to a stronger focus on communicative competence, elements of the older methodologies still maintain some current applicability. For example, the Grammar Translation Method encourages the use of dictionaries and provides translation when necessary, the Direct Method promotes small group work and provides reality-based topics, and the Audio-lingual Method stresses initial memorization of relevant utterances in the target language and suggests the use of skits in mastering dialogue.

According to Asher (1960), promising practices in ESL teaching and learning are reflected in the newer methodologies. For example, Asher notes that the cognitive process of language acquisition is facilitated by body movements. Discussed in this session was that as an alternative to the audio-lingual method, Asher introduced the total physical response (TPR) method which involves student reactions to commands focused on comprehension building. Consistent with the research of Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989), this session pointed out that language acquisition does not need to be separated from content learning. In content-based methods, language learning is integrated with academic subjects such as math, science, and social studies.

In addition to the above topics, these sessions emphasized strategies in line with research by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) for facilitating engaging and effective learning. The

strategies addressed methods for processing new information, recalling old information, applying new knowledge and skills, and facilitating problem-solving.

A strength of these presentations involved the modeling and demonstration of pre-listening activities such as *anticipation* and *Draw What I Describe*. These activities engage students actively as a way to verify that they understood what they were to do. Another activity, *Ballad Blast,* exposed participants to songs similar in content and asked them to brainstorm ideas about the composers' inspiration and the meaning of the songs. This activity promoted conversation and discussion in English. According to Patricia Richard-Amato (2003), "Music can break down barriers among those who share its rhythms and meaning. Its unifying effects can extend across time, nations, races and individuals" (p.202). She asserts that music reduces anxiety in second language learners and is a great motivator because lyrics are frequently meaningful. Through music, language finds roots in the experience of students at any age or proficiency level.

Further reflecting promising practices, listening skills were addressed on three levels: (1) the literal level – hearing, receiving, attending; (2) the interpretive level – remembering, responding, assigning meaning; and (3) the critical level – evaluating, judging, reacting, and responding. In accord with research from the Center for Applied Linguistics (2000), these sessions also addressed language development stages: pre-production (new to English), early production (low beginners), speech emergence (beginners), and intermediate fluency (high beginners, intermediate, or advanced. Session presenters discussed strategies useful to learning at each developmental stage. Examples consistent with the literature include having a set of texts in different languages so students can preview lessons in their native language and grouping students according to proficiency levels or stages of language development.

The sessions included the use of various hands-on activities, cooperative learning situations, strategies related to using visual cues to clarify and reinforce concepts, and graphic organizers to represent ideas and develop thinking skills. The discussion also addressed encouraging creativity through discovery, enhancing and supporting mainstream curricula, "recycling" language to ensure learning, teaching new language in context, and assessment tasks relevant to stage of development. These methods reflect best practices in ESL teaching and learning.

Another session addressed seminal research on language acquisition. The discussion began with the mentalistic view of language acquisition put forth by Noam Chomsky in the 1950's which stressed innate mechanisms responsible for language learning. Institute staff continued with more current research theorizing the influence of social and interpersonal mechanisms. Krashen's work (1981) expanded Chomsky's view to also include learning acquired through academic settings and cognitive development. He asserted that learning is facilitated through comprehensible input – the type of language that parents provide naturally to their children that focuses on meaning, rather than form, and elaborates on the child's level of language.

Specifically relevant to academic learning situations for ESL students, presenters addressed the research of Cummins (1979) on Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). While the ESL student may have a command of the English language used in social settings, this research stresses the importance of classroom and academic subject understanding as also needed in order to master cognitive/academic assessments and advance to the subsequent grade levels. The session presented the work of Cummings (2000), who indicated that students can advance through different levels of cognitive and academic language development by being exposed to new information in context-embedded situations, addressing the emotional side of language learning, which is often neglected in the classroom. Thompson's (2004) review of important elements to successful educational approaches for ELL literacy learning supports these ideas. Cummins suggests that empathy can transform teachers' attitudes and, consequently, the type of instructional strategies utilized when teaching English language learners. Caring enters the equation as it conveys the message that teachers and students are partners in the educational arena. A true dialogue in education can occur when instruction is truly accessible and the doors to learning are open to all students. Highlights of the sessions were the video clips that the presenter showed to illustrate the language acquisition process in young and older children and that focused on different accents and dialects.

Another institute session addressed various assessment methods, and Texas Education Agency (TEA) requirements for assessing English language learners were presented. Participants were directed to the TEA Web site as a reference. Assessments discussed included:
- Home Language Survey (HLS)
- Oral Language Proficiency (OLPT)
- Norm Referenced Test (NRT)
- Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC)

Other assessments addressed were the Texas Observation Protocols (TOP) for reading, listening, speaking, and writing at all levels of English language proficiency and the Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE). In accordance with the work of Canales (1988), recommendations for exiting students from ESL programs were also discussed.

Example activities engaged participants as they learned about the various assessments. For example, Cloze activities were presented. It was noted that these allow students practice in integrative language skills, and at the same time they are also useful in assessing grade appropriate content knowledge in reading which "eliminates the need to develop multiple choice items" for assessment (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994, p. 113). The pace of the session was excellent and participants easily followed the sequence of topics through handouts containing information and charts distinguishing academic versus language assessments.

Alignment with National/Texas Standards

Following are the National and Texas Standards for ESL teaching and learning:

National Standards for ESL	
Goal 1	**To use English to communicate in social settings**
Standard 1	Students will use English to participate in social interaction.
Standard 2	Students will interact in, through, and with spoken and written English for personal expression and enjoyment.
Standard 3	Students will use learning strategies to extend their communicative competence.
Goal 2	**To use English to achieve academically in all content areas**
Standard 1	Students will use English to interact in the classroom.
Standard 2	Students will use English to obtain, process, construct, and provide subject matter information in spoken and written form.
Standard 3	Students will use appropriate learning strategies to construct and apply academic knowledge.
Goal 3	**To use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways**
Standard 1	Students will choose a language variety, register, and genre according to audience, purpose, and setting.
Standard 2	Students will use non-verbal communication appropriate to audience, purpose, and setting.
Standard 3	Students will use appropriate learning strategies to extend their sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence.
Texas Standards for ESL	
Standard I	The ESL teacher understands fundamental language concepts and knows the structure and conventions of the English language.
Standard II	The ESL teacher has knowledge of the foundations of ESL education and factors that contribute to an effective multicultural and multilingual learning environment.
Standard III	The ESL teacher understands the processes of first- and second-language acquisition and uses this knowledge to promote students' language development in English.
Standard IV	The ESL teacher understands ESL teaching methods and uses this knowledge to plan and implement effective, developmentally appropriate ESL instruction.
Standard V	The ESL teacher has knowledge of the factors that affect ESL students' learning of academic content, language, and culture.
Standard VI	The ESL teacher understands formal and informal assessment procedures and instruments (language proficiency and academic achievement) used in ESL programs and uses assessment results to plan and adapt instruction.
Standard VII	The ESL teacher knows how to serve as an advocate for ESL students and facilitate family and community involvement in their education.

According to TEA, the above "standards are focused on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the required statewide public school curriculum, and reflect current research on the developmental stages and needs of children from early childhood through grade 12. [These] educator standards are intended for implementation in SBEC-approved educator preparation programs." (www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/standtest/standards) The standards form the basis for the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES).

Examples of session content that aligns with national and Texas standards for ESL teaching and learning include:

- Session entitled "ESL Strategies" – addressed learning strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990) used by teachers and was associated with Goals 2 and 3 of the national standards: to use English *to achieve academically in all content areas (Goal 2)* and *in socially and culturally appropriate ways (Goal 3).* The session highlighted learning strategies for constructing and applying academic knowledge and to extend students' sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence.
- Session entitled "ESL Methodology" – addressed Texas standard IV for ESL certified teachers, providing teachers with an understanding of ESL teaching methods that guides their planning and implementation of developmentally appropriate ESL instruction.
- Session entitled "Assessing English Language Proficiency" – addressed Texas standard VI for ESL certified teachers, providing an understanding of formal and informal assessment procedures and instruments, and the use of assessment results for planning and adapting instruction. This session also addressed Competency 007 of the TExES.
- Sessions entitled "Linguistics" and "Second Language Acquisition" – addressed Texas standard III promoting an understanding of the processes for first- and second-language acquisition, and their use in facilitating students' English language development.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the ISLA Institute

The strengths of the ISLA Institute are reflected by the research-based content and materials and their alignment with national and state standards for ESL teaching and learning. Sources for the research and materials were furnished by presenters and clear objectives and goals were generally provided for the sessions. The modeling of instructional, learning, and assessment strategies was a strength in most sessions. Selected session activities engaged Institute participants and provided hands-on demonstrations for the use of strategies reflecting elements consistent with effective professional development.

The more successful sessions provided organized handouts with relevant information that allowed participants to stay focused on the presentation rather than feeling a need to be taking copious notes. The use of video clips enhanced the session on linguistics and second language acquisition, providing true examples of dialects and language development. Finally, the information appeared to be closely aligned with that needed for performing well on the ESL certification exam.

Weaknesses of the Institute were few, yet if addressed would further enhance the effectiveness of the sessions. For example, the session on methodologies lacked somewhat in activities that engaged participants in the learning process. Further, the use of examples/demonstrations of the various methods would likely increase participants' understanding of particular methodologies. The lack of interaction in the session on

linguistics resulted in many participants losing interest at various points throughout the session. Three extensive handouts were provided with only one being partially addressed, and the pace of the session was slow. A more engaging presentation would likely improve participant knowledge and skill gains.

Presenters in all sessions discussed the work of Cummins (1979) on Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), information on receptive and expressive language, and first- and second-language acquisition. The repetition of these concepts illustrated an uncoordinated effort in the flow of the Institute topics. Finally, some handouts that participants received lacked organization (e.g., page numbers, references). Another lacked relevant information, resulting in extensive note-taking, drawing attention away from the presentation itself.

Section 2. Final Comments: Does the ISLA Institute Content and Materials Meet your Standards of High Quality Professional Development?

Overall, I believe that the ISLA Institute is high quality professional development. The content is consistent with the current research on ESL teaching and learning and were aligned with national and state standards. Most sessions included modeling, demonstrations, and activities that engaged participants in the learning process, and provided teaching strategies and information useful to classroom instruction. The materials and handouts were helpful, generally providing relevant and useful information. To further increase the effectiveness of the ISLA Institute, I make the following recommendations:

- All materials distributed to participants should include objectives, tables of contents, research citations, and pages should be numbered for easy reference.
- Session content should be designed to avoid repetition in topics.
- All sessions should be interactive, providing activities to engage participants that will facilitate more effective gains in knowledge and skills.

Section 3. Reference List

Asher (1960). The total physical response. In Richard-Amato, P., 2003. *Making it happen. From interactive to participatory language teaching* (pp. 158-159). White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.

Boyle, O.F., & Peregoy, S.F. (1990). Literacy scaffolds: Strategies for first and second language readers and writers. *The Reading Teacher*, 44(3), 194-200.

Brinton, D.M., Snow, M.A., & Wesche, M. (1989). Content-based instruction. In Richard-Amato, P., 2003. *Making it happen. From interactive to participatory language teaching* (pp. 308). White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.

Center for Applied Linguistics (2000). Language development stages. *Enhancing English language learning in elementary classrooms.* McHenry, IL: Delta Systems Co., Inc.

Cummins, J. (1979a). Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimal age question and some other matters. *Working Papers in Bilingualism.* No. 19 (pp. 197-205). Toronto, Canada: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire.* New York: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/standtest/standards.

Http://www.tesol.org.

Http://www.tea.state.us.

Krashen, S.D. (1981). *Second language acquisition and second language learning.* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

O'Malley, J.M., & Chamot, A.U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

O'Malley, J.M., & Chamot, A.U. (1994). *The CALLA Handbook. Implementing the academic language learning approach.* New York, NY: Addison Wesley Publishing Company.

Richard-Amato, P. (2003). Music. *Making it happen. From interactive to participatory language teaching* (pp. 202). White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.

EXPERT REVIEW OF THE <u>CONTENT</u> OF THE TAMUS ONLINE ESL CERTIFICATION PREPARATION COURSE

Maggie Rivas, M.A.

The review and evaluation of the TAMUS Online ESL certification preparation course was conducted by examining the downloadable course materials, the bulletin board correspondence between the course instructor and participants, the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES) Preparation Manual, and related literature in the area of ESL instruction.

Section 1. How does the Texas A&M University (TAMUS) online professional development compare to "promising practices" in ESL professional development?

To better evaluate the TAMUS on-line course material, I first reviewed the literature on promising and best practices for ESL professional development. Overall, the content of the TAMUS course is of high quality and grounded in current research on ESL professional development. However, the content delivery could be improved by implementing a constructivist teaching approach that allows participants opportunities to explore, question, and discuss the material in order to better integrate new knowledge and ideas. This would not only increase the likelihood of participants passing the TExES ESL supplemental certification exam, it would better prepare them for actual classroom practice. More detail on this approach is presented in answering specific questions below.

In light of current mandates from the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, it is worth noting that this course is potentially beneficial for all educators, not only those specializing in bilingual and ESL instruction. Darling-Hammond (2000) and Villegas (2000) have found a correlation between the academic achievement of English language learners (ELL) and their teachers' effectiveness and competencies. Nonetheless, many teachers have not received the essential professional development needed to meet the demands of a changing and diverse student population. Lucas (2002) reported that teachers greatly benefit from knowledge about the nature of language, the relation of language to culture, first and second language development, and approaches to content area instruction that facilitate learning for students with limited English proficiency.

Wong Fillmore and Snow (2002) have identified the following critical competencies that effective teachers of English language learners should develop:
- knowledge of linguistics and language
- language and cultural diversity
- sociolinguistics,
- language development and second language acquisition, and
- an understanding of academic discourse.

The content of the TAMU online course appears to address these critical competencies. In addition, I observed the following strong points of the course as a whole:

- Recognizes the demand for services for Bilingual/ELL students and shows a need for trained professional to provide services to facilitate student learning.
- Recognizes that the bilingual/ELL course must be based on sound educational and language learning theory, implemented through effective strategies, uses a variety of resources, and taught by properly prepared educators.
- Recognizes the need to develop knowledge and skills in second language acquisition to increase the competency of teachers of English language learners.

1. Is the professional development grounded in research and clinical knowledge of teaching and learning in ESL?

The TAMUS Online ESL certification preparation course is designed to help the participants expand their knowledge and skills that an entry-level educator in the area of bilingual ESL must possess to pass the TExES ESL supplemental certification exam #154 and to become effective ESL teachers. The course's framework and content are in clear alignment with the framework and content of the exam, which is itself based on research related to practices that promote student learning. Essentially, the exam is organized into three domains, which are each defined by a set of competencies. What follows is an outline of each domain, a summary of teacher expectations as found in referenced research, and a review on the course's manner of addressing them.

Domain I: Language Concepts and Language Acquisition

- Competency 1: The ESL teacher understands fundamental language concepts and knows the structure and conventions of the English language.
- Competency 2- the ESL teacher understands the processes of first-language (L1) and second language (L2) acquisition and the interrelatedness of L1 and L2 development.

Research Related to this Domain	Summary of Teacher Expectations
August, D. & Hakuta, K. (Eds.) 1997 Bailey, Butler, LaFramenta, & Ong, 2004; Chamot & O Malley, 1994 Collier, V. (1997) Cummins, J. (2001a) Freeman, D. & Freeman, Y. (2001) Krashen S. (1982) Villegas, A.M. (1991) Wong Fillmore, L., & Snow, C. (1991) Vygotsky, L.S.(1962)	• Understands the principal theories of Second language acquisition • Compares L2 development to L1 development, • Understands the role of L1 in acquiring L2 • Compares and contrast speech patterns, • Identifies various affective filters that influence the learning process • Defines BICS and CALP

Hamayan (1990) suggests that in order for second language learners to be successful academically, teachers must understand the process of second language learning. While teachers do not usually get the opportunity to learn about language structures and usage the way linguists do, they need to recognize how language relates to the learning process. In support of this, Wong Fillmore & Snow (1999) have proposed that preservice teacher preparation programs should include second language acquisition theory and a general understanding of linguistics.

The online course materials and activities provide an opportunity for teachers to achieve a basic understanding of what language is—that it represents a functioning, rule-governed language system. By completing Domain I successfully teachers will be able to make the distinction between the teachers' knowledge of second language acquisition and the needs of second language learners.

While the course content within this domain is sound, it is my opinion that delivery of the material needs to take into account constructivist principles of teaching and learning. The course's PowerPoint presentations and readings are useful as an introduction and background to the topics addressed. However, there is room for more variety and creativity in the learning activities. Engaging participants through active learning and discovery would increase the likelihood of their success in passing the exam, as this domain comprises 25% of the test. While a discussion board is provided and reading and posting of comments is sometimes required, more could be done to promote a richer discussion of the material, as well as collaborative interaction to complete assigned tasks. The KWL strategy, for example, could be woven into an activity to help participants explicitly articulate for the purpose of discussion their progress in integrating the course content into their existing knowledge and understanding.

> K: This is what I know about language and second language acquisition
> W: This what I want to learn about language and second language acquisition
> L: This is what I learned about language and second language acquisition.

An opportunity to engage in a live online discussion with guest speakers or experts in the field of language and language concepts would provide participants another type of authentic learning experience.

Domain II: ESL Instruction and Assessment
- Competency 3: The ESL teacher understands ESL teaching methods and uses this knowledge to plan and implement effective, developmentally appropriate instruction.
- Competency 4: The ESL teachers understands how to promote students' communicative language and development in English.
- Competency 5: The ESL teacher understands how to promote students' literacy development in English.
- Competency 6: the ESL teachers understands how to promote students' content-area learning, academic-language development, and achievement across the curriculum.

- Competency 7: The ESL teacher understands formal and informal assessment procedures and instruments used in ESL programs and uses assessment results to plan and adapt instruction.

Research Related to this Domain	Summary of Teacher Expectations
Bartolomé, L.I (1993) Beck, I., McKeown, M., & Kucan, L, (2002) Calderón, M.E., Hertz-Lazarowitz, R., & Slavin, R. (1998) Chamot & O Malley, 1994 Chomosky, N. 1995 Cloud, N., Genesee, F. Hamayan, E. (200) Cuevas, J.A. (1996) Cummins, J. (2001b) Echevarria, J., Vogt, M.E., & Short, D. (2002) Farr, B. & Trumbull E. (1997) García, G.G. (ED) (2003) Gibbons, P. (1993) Hamayan, E.V. (1990) Kusimo, P., Ritter, M.G., Busick, K., Ferguson, C., Trumbull, E. & Solano-Flores, G. (2000) Perez, B. &Torres-Guzman, M.E. (1992) Tinajero, J. V. & Hurley, S., R. (Eds.)(2001)	 - Prepares lessons in content area using specific academic dialogue to explicitly teach language structure - Plans effective lessons according to different levels of language proficiency - Develops effective strategies instructional practices for students of all ages - Compares and contrasts the orthographies of other languages - Uses approaches to assessment that are congruent with instructional goals - Ensures that assessment criteria and standards are clearly communicated - Promotes vocabulary development through a variety of approaches - **Identifies key elements to effective instruction.** - Explores own attitude about and approach to teaching ELL students. - Uses high order thinking skills questions in reading, predicting content outcomes.

According to Richard-Amato (1988) an ESL *approach* consists of a succinct group of related assumptions about language and teaching. A *method* is an ordered plan on how the materials are going to be presented, and a *technique* is what the teacher uses to implement a method and accomplish the objectives. The course materials could be better organized and presented by explicitly explaining/defining what constitutes an ESL approach, ESL method, and ESL techniques.

The Domain II competencies were clearly addressed by the content. As with other domains, however, the delivery of the material could be improved. In this case, I would recommend the addition of "social working opportunities" such as cooperative learning and learning communities activities. To some extent the e-mail and discussion board activities were intended to fill this role, but I found these activities were being accessed by very few participants. Ideally, the course would contain activities to promote

participant interaction and collaboration to enhance personal understanding of the material.

The required reading was adequate in terms of quality, but overwhelming in terms of volume. More concise books or articles are available that cover the same material, such as: (1) Collier's *Promoting Academic Success for ESL Students*, which addresses the need by probing three main dimensions of language acquisition, linguistic, sociocultural, and cognitive process all in instructive contexts for all age learners, (2) Echevarria, Vogt, Short's *Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model,* which provides teachers of ELLs and other diverse students with a model of sheltered instruction, and (3)*Gibbons'Learning to Learn in Second Language*, which offers a variety of best practice strategies and practical ideas for the classroom instructor. These are just three examples that provides the same information as many of the selected readings.

With respect to standards, simply reviewing the TEKs is not sufficient. The course should contain activities that have participants practice integrating the TEKs into actual lesson plans and learning activities.

One of my concerns is that this particular domain comprises 45% of the test and these competencies are the heart of how to effectively teach ESL students. They are critical as they relate to such topics as ESL teaching methods, knowledge of TEKS, content-based ESL instruction, and classroom management. The materials need to be better organized and presented. Using the jigsaw strategy in cooperative learning, for example, would require the participants to explain/define what constitutes an ESL approach(s), ESL method(s), and ESL techniques. This would provide participants an opportunity to take an active role in monitoring and reflecting on their learning experience.

The goals of this important section should more explicitly address the following:
- Demonstrating knowledge of language learning stages, processes, methods, and strategies
- Applying knowledge of major concepts from the readings to issues discussed online
- Demonstrating a critical awareness of issues, methods, and theories of research in both individual second language learning and teaching of ESL learner

Domain III: Foundations of ESL Education, Cultural Awareness, and Family and Community Involvement.
- Competency 8: The ESL teacher understands the foundations of ESL education and types of ESL programs.
- Competency 9: The ESL teacher understands factors that affect ESL students' learning and implement strategies for creating an effective multicultural and multilingual learning environment.
- Competency 10: The ESL teacher knows how to serve as an advocate for ESL students and facilitates family and community involvement in their education.

Research Related to this Domain	Summary of Teacher Expectations
Chavkin, N. F. & Williams, D.L. (1993) Epstein, J.L. (1995) Epstein, J.L. (2001) Moll, L. (1992) Gay, G. (2000) Luder,D.C. (1998) Shartrand, A.M., Weiss, H.B., Kreider, HM,. & Lopez, M. (1997) Sheets R.H. (2005) Shields, P.M. (1995) Trumbull, E., Rothstein-Fisch, C., Greenfield, P. (2000) Trumbull, E., Rothstein-Fisch, C., Greenfield, P., & Quiroz, B (2001) Zeichner, K. (1996)	• Develops an awareness of issues related to culture and impact on ELLs. • Knowledgeable in the area of culture • Identifies the impact of culture and linguistic differences on the teaching and learning processes • Provides and promotes high level challenging, culturally relevant curriculum and instruction • Uses culture knowledge in communicating with families

Research confirms the important role that families and communities play in a child's education. (Epstein, 2001; Hidalgo, Bright, Siu, Swap, & Epstein, 1995). Teachers should be encouraged to view families and communities as a potentially rich resource for supporting student learning. To utilize them effectively involves taking time to understand the relevant cultural environment.

It is particularly important for the participants to explore what the research says about professional development for teachers of diverse learners. There is a need to enhance teachers understanding about the connections among culture, language, and learning, and to increase their knowledge about instruction that embraces diversity. As the Holmes Report Group (1990) cites:

> "Much of the basic knowledge necessary for better teaching and learning in classroom with widely diverse students is not yet part of the essential core of education studies. Along with their subject matter, teachers need to become students of their students—their *cultural metaphors*, *languages* and *linguistic understandings, learning styles*—to recognize them as resources for learning. Similarly, teachers need to study themselves. To revisit their own experiences as learners and to gain greater understanding of the cultural assumptions they bring to their students (p. 41).

The lessons for Competency 8 cover the history of bilingual education and reviews different models of bilingual and ESL programs. (It is should be noted that no source information was provided on two of the assigned book chapters). A TEA PowerPoint covers bilingual and ESL program models, features, and instructional techniques. A second TEA PowerPoint provides a lengthy presentation on updates regarding numerous

Title III developments including statistics and profiles of ELLS in US and Texas public schools, PEIMS data collected for LEP students, performance-base monitoring and interventions, and information regarding several related TEA initiatives including the LEP Student Success Initiative (SSI) grant and the Mathematics English Language Learner Initiative (MELL).

Of all the competencies, the content in Competency 10, Family and Community Involvement, is the weakest. Although the topics (advocating for ESL students, facilitating family involvement in the education of ESL students, communicating and collaborating with parents, and accessing community) are important to know, the course does not provide opportunities for the content to be applied to real classroom situations.

Bermúdez (1994) identifies various barriers that limit family involvement, including (1) working parents, (2) lack of confidence, (3) lack of English skills, (4) lack of understanding of the home-school partnership, (5) lack of understanding of the school system, (6) negative past experiences with schools, and (7) insensitivity and hostility on part of the school personnel. The TAMUS course does not address this.

2. Is the professional development aligned with the SBEC/TExES standards for ESL teaching and does it cover the content to pass the TExES ESL certification tests? Please describe how you reached your conclusions and identify specific standards you used to make your decision.

It is clear that the course content is carefully aligned with the SBEC/TExES standards for ESL certification, and in that regard should be helpful in preparing participants for the exam. My concern, as stated in specific cases above, is not with course content itself so much as with how it is delivered and the degree to which this impacts the learning experience. Ideally, the course would allow participants some manner of demonstrating their understanding of the material and how there are going to use the knowledge and skills acquired. More about strengths and weaknesses, as well as some recommendations for improvement, are presented in the following section.

Section 2. Final comments: Does the Online ESL Professional Development meet your standards of high quality professional development?

The opportunity to address ESL educator development through an on-line course is commendable, especially given the tremendous need for teachers in this area. It is important for teachers who are preparing to take the certification test to begin to explore their own beliefs about teaching and learning, and to understand the beliefs that direct the practice of other teachers. I believe that this on-line course is a beginning. I also hope my comments are taken in a context of a *critical friend.*

My comments are organized in the context of the following three criteria:
  A. quality of the course content, materials, resources, and assessment;
  B. access to and interaction with course materials and resources; and
  C. opportunities to communicate with the instructor and other participants.

A. Overall, the course content is of high quality. It recognizes that ESL instruction is demanding and covers the domains and competencies around which the SBEC/TExES standards are organized. These domains and competencies, in turn, reflect current research related to the field of ESL instruction, and the materials and readings support common understandings among various sources of research that have been referenced above.

I have concerns about the quantity of materials the participants were given to study for each domain relative to what is ultimately assessed for certification and, importantly, necessary for developing good practice. Domain II, for example, comprises 45% of the test and yet the information was not as instructive as it could be, particularly with respect to Competencies VI and VII. In the case of Domain III, there is extensive reading about the issues themselves, but less instruction on how to overcome some of the challenges, particularly in the area of promoting families and community involvement.

August & Hakuta (1997) expresses the need for a follow-up component to any professional development to assess the knowledge gained and the subsequent implementation of that knowledge. This element of assessment is lacking, and would be helpful in helping participants assess their own learning as they progress through the material.

B. Access to and, therefore, assimilation of the course material could be improved by a course description, clearly presented objectives, and some initial orientation to the format of the course and methods for accessing material and navigating the on-line environment. Organization of the material was not always intuitive, and I would recommend a more consistent format for lessons and for assigned reading material. It would also helpful if materials were presented in the order in which they are to be accessed.

The reading material for Domain II was so extensive as to potentially overwhelm the participants. It would also be beneficial to pose questions at the beginning of each lesson to guide participants as to the key ideas and concepts they are to absorb in their reading assignments. Some of the readings were lacking the source from which they were copied.

As mentioned, most lessons are presented in the form of PowerPoint presentations and independent readings; there was limited employment of instructional methodologies to address different learning styles. An important feature of effective learning experiences is the opportunity for learners to process information in more than one context and in more than one way. Especially important is that learners connect new information and concepts to their actual experience. Ideally, participants should be explicitly encouraged to consider how to apply new knowledge, strategies, and skills within the context of familiar situations. Helpful strategies include hands-on activities, structured participant interactions, cooperative group projects, vignettes, and research projects.

C. I view interaction among colleagues as one of most important sources of learning. It is apparent that the lessons were intended to provoke online discussion, planning, and

actions that would lead participants to learn and acquire knowledge translating into improved teacher practice. However, I found little evidence that such robust, cooperative learning actually occurred. Though the participants were passively encouraged to share their views and insights on the topics and issues by posting to the discussion board, there was only limited interaction with the instructor and fellow participants in some of the domains, particularly in the area of language.

Overall, the lessons and activities could be modified to better encourage dialogue and collaboration among participants, as well as with the instructor or even external experts. Asking a provocative questions is one effective strategy for getting students to participate and discuss key issues. There was a missed opportunity in the parent involvement thread, for example, when one of the students shared her beliefs and the strategies she used to encourage parent involvement in her class. Two other participants responded, but the focus of the discussion was not related to strategies and parent involvement; it was about how to make a business card magnet that had pertinent school information. The instructor could have been helpful in actively redirecting the discussion by soliciting comments related to the more important aspects of the material.

References

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000).Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy. *Education Policy Analysis Archives,* 8(1). [Online]. Retrieved September 15, 2005, from http//epaa.asu.edu/v8n1

Epstein, J.L. (2001). *School/family/community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Hamayan, E.V. (1990). *Preparing mainstream teachers classroom teachers to teach potentially English proficient students*. Paper presented at the First Research Symposium on Limited English Proficient Student Issues, OBEMLA. Retrieved February 21 2002, from http//www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/symposia/first/preparing.htm

Hidalgo, N.M., Bight, J., Siu, S., Swap, S., & Epstein, J. (1995). Research on families, schools, and communities: A multicultural perspective. In J. Banks (Ed.). *Handbook of research on multicultural education*. 9pp.498-524). New York: Macmillian.

Holmes Group Report. (1990). *Tomorrow's school: Principles for the design of professional development schools.* East Lansing, Mi: The Holmes Group, Inc.

Villegas, A. & Lucas, T. (2002).*Educating culturally responsive teachers: coherent approach.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). (1998). *English as a new language standards.* Arlington, VA: Retrieved September 14, 2005 from, http//www.nbpts.org/pdf/ecya_enl.pdf

Villegas, A.M. (2000). Preparing culturally responsive teachers: rethinking the curriculum. *Journal of Teacher Education,* 53(1).

Wong Fillmore, L. & Snow, C. (1999). *What teachers need to know about language.* Washington, DC; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Language Concepts and Language Acquisition Domain

August, D. & Hakuta, K. (Eds.) (1997). *Improving schooling for language minority students: A research agenda*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Bailey, A.L., Butler, F.A., LaFramenta, C., & Ong, C. (2004). *Towards the characterization of academic language in upper elementary science classrooms*. (CST technical Report, No. 621). Los Angeles: University of California.

Chamot, A. & O'Malley, J.M. (1994*). The CALLA handbook: Implementing the cognitive academic language learning approach*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Collier, V.P. (1997). *Promoting academic success for ESL students: Understanding second language acquisition for school*. New Jersey City, NJ: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other languages.

Cummins, J. (2001a). *Empowering minority students. A framework for intervention. HER Classic. Author's Introduction—Framing the universe discourse: Are the constructs of power and identity relevant to school failure*? Harvard Educational Review. 71(4). 649-655

Freeman, D. & Freeman, Y. (2001). *Between Worlds: Access to second language acquisition*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Krashen S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon.

Villegas, A.M. (1991). *Culturally responsive pedagogy for the 1990's and beyond.* Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education. ERIC Document No. ED339698.

Wong Fillmore, L. (1991)). Fillmore, L.W. (1991). Second language learning in children: A model of language learning in social context. In E. Bialystok (Ed.), Language processing by bilingual children (pp. 49-69). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: University Press.

ESL Instruction and Assessment Domain

Bartolomé, L.I. (1993). Effective transitioning strategies: Are we asking the right questions. In J, V. Tinajero & A.F. Ada (Eds.) *The power of two languages: Literacy and biliteracy for Spanish-speaking students* (pp.209-219). New York: McMillan/McGraw –Hill.

Beck, I., McKeown, M., & Kucan, L, (2002). *Bringing Words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction* New York: The Guildford Press.

Calderón, M.E., Hertz-Lazarowitz, R., & Slavin, R. (1998). Effects of bilingual cooperative integrated reading and composition on students making the transition from Spanish to English reading. *Elementary School Journal,* 99(2), 153-164.

Chamot, A.U., & O'Malley, J.M. (1994). *The CALLA handbook: Implementing the cognitive academic language learning approach.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Chomosky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Cloud, N., Genesee, F. Hamayan, E. (200). *Dual language instruction: A handbook for enriched education.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Cuevas, J.A. (1996). *Educating limited-English proficient students. A review of the research on school programs and classroom practices.* San Francisco: WestEd.

Cummins, J. (2001b). Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society (2nd ed,). Los Angeles: California Association for Bilingual Education.

Echevarria, J., Vogt, M.E., & Short, D. (2002). Making content comprehensible for English language learners. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon

Farr, B. & Trumbull E. (1997). *Assessment alternatives for diverse learners.* Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon

García, G.G. (ED) (2003). English learners: Reaching the highest levels of English literacy. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Gibbons, P. (1993). Learning to learn in a second language. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Hamayan, E.V. (1990). *Preparing mainstream teachers classroom teachers to teach potentially English proficient students.* Paper presented at the First Research Symposium on Limited English Proficient Student Issues, OBEMLA. Retrieved February 21 2002, from http//www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/symposia/first/preparing.htm

Kusimo, P., Ritter, M.G., Busick, K., Ferguson, C., Trumbull, E. & Solano-Flores, G. (2000).Making assessment work for everyone. San Francisco,: WestEd.

Perez, B. &Torres-Guzman, M.E. (1992). *Learning in two worlds: An integrated Spanish/English biliteracy approach*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Tinajero, J. V. & Hurley, S., R. (Eds.). (2001). Literacy assessment of second language learners. Boston; Allyn & Bacon

Foundations of ESL, Cultural Awareness, and Family and Community Involvement Domain

Chavkin, N. F. & Williams, D.L. (1993). Minority parents and the elementary school: Attitudes and practices. In N.F. Chavkin (Ed.). *Families and schools in a pluralistic society*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Epstein, J.L. (1995). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we hare. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76, 701-712.

Epstein, J.L. (2001). *School/family/community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Moll, L. (1992). Bilingual classroom studies and community analysis: *Educational Researcher*, 21, 20-24.

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice. New York: Teachers College Press.*

Luder, D.C. (1998). *Creating partnerships with parents: An educators guide*. Lancaster, PA: Technomic.

Shartrand, A.M., Weiss, H.B., Kreider, HM, & Lopez, M. (1997). *New skills for new schools: Preparing teachers in family involvement*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education. Harvard Family research Project.

Sheets R.H. (2005). *Diversity pedagogy: Examining the role of culture in the teaching-learning process*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Shields, P.M. (1995). Bridging schools and communities together in preparation for the 21st century. In B. Rutherford (Ed.), *Creating family/school partnerships* (pp.191-207). Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association.

Trumbull, E., Rothstein-Fisch, C, Greenfield, P. (2000). *Bridging cultures in our schools: New approaches that work.* San Francisco: WestEd.

Trumbull, E., Rothstein-Fisch, C., Greenfield, P., & Quiroz, B (2001) *Bridging cultures between home and school: A guide for teachers.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum

Zeichner, K. (1996). Educating teachers to close the achievement gap: Issues of pedagogy, knowledge, and teacher preparation. In B. Williams (Ed.), *A vision for changing beliefs and practices* (pp.56-57). Alexandria VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

EXPERT REVIEW OF THE <u>DELIVERY</u> OF THE TAMUS ONLINE ESL CERTIFICATION PREPARATION COURSE

Kimberly Hughes, M.Ed.

Section 1. How does the TAMUS online professional development compare to "promising practices" in instructional technology and online learning environments?

The NCLB goal that every child be taught by a qualified teacher underscores the central role that teachers play in the success of students. In rural areas of the Texas, and other areas where resources are limited, it is often difficult for districts and schools to attract certified teachers, as well as to provide professional development opportunities for existing staff. Online professional development has the potential to provide teachers in these areas with the opportunity to strengthen their content and pedagogical knowledge provided the course are of high quality. The design and delivery of online professional development is as critical as the material content in addressing the challenges associated with developing qualified teachers across the state of Texas.

In a 2003 meta-analysis of 155 empirical research studies of online learning, Sunal, Sunal, Odell, and Sundberg (2003) found that while the research base in the area of online course design is still emerging and not yet conclusive, current studies can inform us in regard to variables and best practices, especially when the results of the studies are viewed in concert with effective, research-supported, classroom pedagogical practices.

The authors, therefore, created a 51-item *Checklist for Online Interactive Learning* (COIL) based on the results of their meta-analysis, suggesting that it "could form the basis for evaluation of courses and modules used in online learning environments." As such, it is the only research-based evaluative tool that focuses upon attributes of online learning environments drawn from a large number of empirical studies. The instrument is currently being tested for validity and reliability. It is divided into four categories: student behaviors (8 items), faculty-student interaction (16 items), technology support (2 items), and learning environment (25 items). The last two categories include criteria that are appropriate for this review of the TAMUS course materials and design. These practices emphasize that good online learning environments do the following:

Category 3: Technology Support

- Insure a low level of technological difficulties in accessing Web site and communication,

- Provide adequate, friendly, easy, continuous technical support,

Category 4: Learning Environment

- Use structured activities to provide an effective framework for online learning;

- Create social interaction through group collaboration to facilitate high achievement;

- Uses streaming audio for reading online;

- Present course content in a manner that hierarchically structures the sequence of information;

- Organize Web site to enable students to interact with the content, other students, and instructor;

- Create a welcoming, safe, nurturing online environment;

- Present problem-solving situations in a realistic context;

- Provide opportunities for students to question the instructor to insure accuracy of understanding;

- Create opportunities for students to communicate with each other to share understanding of course content;

- Provide opportunities to collaboratively construct knowledge based on multiple perspectives, discussion and reflection;

- Provide opportunities for students to articulate and revise their thinking to insure accuracy of knowledge construction;

- Include cooperative and collaborative learning to distribute workload through the group and support female student' preferred method of connected learning;

- Allow time for reflection at end of course;

- Include "warm-up" period with light-hearted exercises aimed to help students get to know on another;

- Provide opportunities for students to control online learning and structure it for themselves;

- Provide discussion forums encouraging open and honest dialog;

- Conduct teleconferencing during and at the end of the course to discuss successes and problems; and

- Use computer conferencing to develop overall critical thinking skills.

What follows is a review of the design and delivery of the TAMUS online ESL course materials within the framework of those criteria which apply from categories 3 and 4 of the COIL instrument.

Category 3: Technology Support

25. *Insure a low level of technological difficulties in accessing Web site and communication.*
An initial difficulty for the user is that there is no initial orientation to the online course environment. Upon logging in, the user is simply provided a link to the course introduction in the form of a downloadable PowerPoint document. This document provides an overview of the course material; however, there is no information about how to use the online features that are to be employed, such as the discussion board, announcements, Intranet mail, online assessments, organization of course materials, etc.

Of particular note is that I was initially unable to open this PowerPoint document. Microsoft Office for Windows XP displayed the following message: "PowerPoint cannot open because part of the file is missing." Eventually, a colleague working on another computer platform was able to access the file and convert it to PDF format, which I was able to view. Although this may have been an isolated incident, it demonstrates a basic tenant of online course design: To the extent possible, course instructions and content should be displayed on the course Web pages with the additional option to download copies of the information. In addition, such materials should be provided in a more universal format, such as PDF, whenever possible.

Moving past the introduction to the course, I found navigating to and through the various activities and areas of the course a challenge. The organization of material is not intuitive and finding my way was accomplished largely by trial and error. It would be helpful, for example, if there were a consistent format for the presentation of weekly assignments and content. Coded: Partially Addressed.

26. *Provide adequate, friendly, easy, continuous technical support.*
Although I did not have an opportunity to request technical assistance, phone and e-mail access to the instructor is provided in the introductory PowerPoint. Not being able to access this information due to technical problems, as mentioned above, would obviously limit the user's access to technical support. Once again, providing this information on the Web pages of the course would be a helpful alternative. One avenue for accessing technical support that I found easy and useful is the discussion area devoted to WebCT issues. Here, the instructor can respond directly to students' questions. Coded: Partially Addressed.

Category 4: Learning Environment

27. *Use structured activities to provide an effective framework for online learning.*
The alignment of the course's general framework with the TExES ESL certification test is beneficial for teachers preparing for the exam; however, the structure of the learning activities themselves is not consistent. Reading and composing discussion postings, for example, is a valuable part of most activities that should be required in all cases.

In addition to the issue of consistency among activities, the internal organization of most of them is not as helpful as it could be, and related resources are weak. Activities (steps 2

and 3) have no overview of expectations, student instructions, or activities. There is a list of links to various types of readings and content, but no guidance on how to use this information to complete learning tasks. There are no instructions on how to visit and use the discussion area in cases where this is required by weekly assignments. Also, the order in which weekly resources are presented is not in alignment with the order in which they are to be accessed. Steps 4 through 6 offer more consistency in the presentation of materials, although similar problems persist. Explicit and clear instructions, as well as a consistent organizational format, are key design features for reducing participant anxiety and facilitating success with learning activities. Coded: Not Addressed.

30. *Create social interaction through group collaboration to facilitate high achievement.* This is a particular area of concern. The building of online community is crucial to promoting high levels of learning through quality reflection. (Collison, Elbaum, Haavind & Tinker, 2000; Conrad & Donaldson, 2004) It is essential to foster online social elements similar to those found in face-to-face courses. The TAMUS ESL online course does not actively engage participants initially with a structured activity to promote this kind of community building. Further, structured collaborative learning opportunities are essentially absent from the entire course. Collaboration in the discussion area is, for all intents and purposes, accidental, as there is no formal requirement that participants respond to the postings of others or that they build upon the ideas presented. Coded: Partially Addressed.

31. *Use streaming audio for reading online.*
There is no use of audio or video for delivering content. This might be especially helpful due to the sheer volume of content being presented in the course. The use of best practices video is advisable, especially video depictions of teacher interactions with students where particular concepts are illustrated. For example, with regard to Competency 3, which deals with ESL instruction, the use of either video or audio for instructor delivered content would be helpful. Coded: Not Addressed.

32. *Present course content in a manner that hierarchically structures the sequence of information.*
The organization and presentation of information throughout the course is an area of great concern. Assignments appear to be required weekly, but information is organized in a series of 6 steps. These steps do not correspond to the 7 weekly assignments, and there appears to be no alternative reason for organizing information into these 6 steps. In some cases, participants are directed from within one area to learning materials located in an entirely different section of the course (e.g. directing students to the Recent Demographics area from within Competency 10 information).

As mentioned above, there is no orientation information presented on the main course Web page; there is also no introductory information on any of the main pages of the individual course sections (steps). In each case, the information is found in PowerPoint "lessons." Instructions for participant activities are embedded within course content which is presented in these PowerPoint lessons. In at least one case (Step 1), there

appears to be a discussion area for introductions but there are no participant instructions to post there. Coded: Partially Addressed.

33. *Organize Web site to enable student to interact with the content, other students, and instructor.*
The TAMUS ESL content is presented, for the most part, in text format. There are few activities which require participants to interact with, analyze, and apply the content to their own professional practice. As mentioned above, opportunities for students to interact with each other are mostly absent from the design of this course. Opportunities for interaction with the instructor generally appear to be question/answer format. Coded: Partially Addressed.

The instructor often responds to the discussion postings of participants. Her responses serve largely to provide her own perspective, to clarify information, or to validate the ideas presented. While her expertise is clear and her conversational tone inviting, there were missed opportunities to facilitate further discussion among participants or to push their thinking forward on a topic. The instructor could better promote professional dialogue among the group as a whole through the use of online facilitation techniques to sharpen the focus of the dialogue or to help participants dig deeper (Collison, Elbaum, Haavind & Tinker, 2000). Coded: Partially Addressed.

34. *Create welcoming, safe, nurturing online environment.*
The instructor herself sets an inviting and comfortable tone in her discussions with participants, and this is very important. It is the shortcomings of the course design itself that are likely to cause user distress. The absence of Web pages providing orientation to the course and to the weekly content and assignments creates a disorienting initial experience as the participant figures out how the course is structured and what the expectations are. The lack of a consistent template is likely to create an unsure rather than safe environment as the participant attempts to wade through and prioritize the content found in voluminous readings. A nurturing online environment is signified by a strong online professional community where participants learn through ongoing collaboration and where new knowledge is constructed though reflecting on the experiences of others. As mentioned earlier, this course has not been designed to promote the development of an online professional community. Coded: Partially Addressed.

35. *Present problem-solving situations in a realistic context.*
The Competency 8 activity where participants are instructed to research and report back on ESL programs available in their district is an good example of this type of authentic task. Unfortunately, there are few other activities that require participants to reflect on and make connections to their own experiences. Most activities involve reading handouts, articles, and book chapters, and then summarizing or responding to the information. Without structured activities that engage learners in analyzing and applying information within the context of their own professional environment and practice, we cannot be sure that participants are mastering the content presented much less implement what they have learned. Coded: Not Addressed.

36. *Provide opportunities for students to question instructor to ensure accuracy of understanding.*
The instructor clearly appears responsive to student questions and observations in the discussion area. While I was unable to observe specific student-to-instructor interactions apart from the discussion area, there is no reason to believe that the instructor did not make herself available privately for questions and clarifications. Creating a public thread specifically reserved for student questions and instructor responses in the discussion area would provide allow participants to view and benefit from the entire exchange. Coded: Partially Addressed.

37. *Create opportunities for students to communicate with each other to share understanding of course content.* and 38. *Provide opportunities to collaboratively construct knowledge based on multiple perspectives, discussion and reflection.*
As addressed above, the TAMUS course is not designed to provide structured opportunities for participant collaboration in these ways. Coded: Not Addressed.

39. *Provide opportunities for students to articulate and revise their thinking to insure accuracy of knowledge construction.*
The reviewer did not see any evidence of opportunities for these kinds of learning activities. The obvious opportunity for this type of activity would be following the assessments, however there were no opportunities afforded participants to discuss their assessment results and revise their thinking. Coded: Not Addressed.

41. *Include cooperative and collaborative learning to distribute workload through the group and support female students' preferred method of connected learning.*
The TAMUS course is not designed to provide structured opportunities for participant collaboration. Cooperative and collaborative learning opportunities encourage negotiation, dialogue, debate, and reflection among participants, thus deepening their understanding of the content with which they are working. Coded: Not Addressed.

44. *Allow time for reflection at end of course.*
There is an end-of-course survey employed, but no opportunity for discussions among participants. There is no end-of-course unifying activity that requires participants to reflect on professional applications of all that they have learned as a result of the course. Coded: Not Addressed.

45. *Include "warm-up" period with light-hearted exercises aimed to help students get to know one another.*
As discussed earlier, there are no activities that foster the development of an online learning community through structuring social interactions similar to that found in face-to-face courses. Coded: Not Addressed.

48. *Provide opportunities for students to control online learning and structure it for themselves.*
There do not appear to be opportunities for students to make choices about the readings or other elements associated with any of the learning activities presented. Activities are

for the most part prescriptive. At most, the participants are sometimes to select an area of focus for a discussion posting. Coded: Not Addressed.

49. *Provide discussion forums encouraging open and honest dialog.*
While the design of the discussion forums does not promote high levels of collaboration, the discussion forums appeared to have fostered open and honest dialog around the topics presented. The instructor's tone was inviting, encouraging, and responsive to the ideas presented. Coded: Partially Addressed.

50. *Conduct a teleconference during and at the end of the course to discuss successes and problems.*
As discussed above, there was an end-of-course survey employed, but no structured opportunities to solicit participants' thoughts with regard to successes and problems experienced while taking the course. Coded: Not Addressed.

51. *Use computer conferencing to develop overall critical thinking skills.*
The lack of opportunities for participants to collaborate with one another is an area of primary concern with respect to this issue. Whether online or face-to-face, without such opportunities for teachers to discuss, reflect, apply, and offer and receive constructive criticism as part of a professional learning community, the best that can be achieved with the course content is learning limited to the knowledge and comprehension levels of Bloom's Taxonomy of types of learning. Opportunities for application, synthesis, and evaluation of the ideas and concepts presented in the course should be added. Coded: Not Addressed.

Graham, Cagiltay, Lim, Craner & Duffy (2001) identified "seven principles of effective teaching" online as a way to evaluate online courses. These principles are generally accepted by evaluation practitioners as they have been applied again and again. While there is some overlap with the COIL criteria listed above, considering the TAMUS course content in light of these principles provides a different framework for discussing strengths and weaknesses of the course design.

Principle 1: Good practice encourages student-faculty contact.
While I had no opportunity to assess private communication between the instructor and her students, the instructor's tone in the discussion area was certainly inviting, encouraging, and responsive to the ideas presented by participants. Coded: Partially Addressed.

Principle 2: Good practice encourages cooperation among students.
As discussed earlier, this aspect is missing from the course design. Coded: Not Addressed.

Principle 3: Good practice encourages active learning.
Most of the learning fostered by the course activities is passive. Participants are occasionally instructed to reflect on the content presented, but rarely to analyze, evaluate,

or apply the content to their own professional practice in any authentic way. Coded: Not Addressed.

Principle 4: Good practice gives prompt feedback.
The course instructor did provide feedback to the ideas presented by participants in the discussion area; however, there were no opportunities for feedback following assessments. Coded: Partially Addressed.

Principle 5: Good practice emphasizes time on task.
Regularly scheduled deadlines in the form of weekly assignments are a positive design feature of the course. This practice promotes time on task by participants while providing a context for regular interaction between participants and with the instructor. Coded: Fully Addressed.

Principle 6: Good practice communicates high expectations.
Graham et al. suggest using "challenging tasks, sample cases, and praise for quality work" to communicate high expectations for learners. While the instructor does offer praise in response to discussion postings, it is mostly limited to "keep up the good work" comments. It would be helpful to identify exemplary contributions by participants to communicate the expectation of higher levels of discussion. Generally speaking, the activities required of participants are not challenging as they do not promote analysis or evaluation of the content, or authentic application to participants' professional practice. Coded: Partially Addressed.

Principle 7: Good practice respects diverse talents and ways of learning.
There is no evidence that the course designers intended to accommodate for diverse talents and ways of learning among the course participants. Activities are prescriptive, and participants are not offered multiple ways to respond to the course content through the selection from among various activities or even to make choices within a single prescribed activity. Coded: Not Addressed.

National standards for online staff development that were released by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) in 2001 echo most, if not all, of the criteria presented above. The NSDC addresses context, process, and content in their standards. They suggest that "ongoing teamwork, discussions, product and project development, research, reflection, demonstrations, and modeling are just some of the ways technology facilitates active engagement of the learner," and they strongly encourage the use of these and similar techniques in online staff development. Such features, with the exception of discussions, are either absent or only superficially available (i.e., reflection opportunities) in the TAMUS course.

Section 2. Does the TAMUS Online Professional Development meet your standards of high quality online professional development?

The strongest features of the TAMUS online course design are the inclusion of a discussion board and facilitation by a content expert. Although, for the reasons discussed

in the previous section, the TAMUS online course falls short of established standards of high quality online professional development. My concerns with the course are in three primary areas: poor organization and presentation of course content; absence of activities that foster the development of an online professional learning community; and the passive nature of the learning opportunities offered.

What follows are a number of suggested additions or changes that, if implemented, might bring the TAMUS course more into line with the standards and research-based evidence cited in this evaluation.

With regard to the organization and presentation of course content, overall, there is too much information and too little targeting of focus in the form of activities. The following suggestions could improve the accessibility and use of course materials:

- Adding a comprehensive, Web-based orientation to the course that includes a description of the technical requirements to access course content, an overview of the weekly course structure, participant outcomes, a preview of weekly activities, a discussion of how participants will be assessed, WebCT features to be used in the course, how to access technical assistance, etc.

- Reorganization of course materials by week so that all materials necessary for that week are accessible from that week's Web page. When a participant navigates to that page, they should be presented with information about that week's assignments rather than prompted to automatically download materials.

- Preparation of text materials so that they are easy to read. I also wonder whether the course designers have secured the necessary permissions to re-publish copyrighted works. If not, they should do so immediately. If they do have such permission, a statement of such should accompany all copyrighted materials being made available to participants.

- Adding a weekly instruction Web page that orients the participant by providing an overview of the content for the week, student expectations or outcomes for the week, and a preview of student activities and tasks for the week.

- Preparation of weekly course instructions and content in PDF format to the extent possible. Text-based course content should be prepared using a consistent document format.

- Student instructions should be presented separately from the instructional content for the week. Additionally, instructional content should be organized into shorter, mini-lesson documents to better "chunk" the voluminous information being presented.

With regard to the development of an online professional learning community, structured opportunities for participants to interact with one another socially should be added. The following suggestions will provide increased opportunities for building a cohesive online learning community:

- Adding an initial activity designed to provide participants with an introduction to other participants, especially in a lighthearted, non-academic context.

- Adding activities throughout the course to promote meaningful interaction among participants, especially activities requiring small and large group discussions and activities to be completed by small groups of participants.

- Expansion of and more emphasis given to the reflective components of the course so that they appear in more activities. These reflections should be designed to elicit real-world experience, background and applications of the concepts being discussed rather than simply summarization of information learned. For example, the discussion prompt in Week 3 to read an article and respond by "discussing several factors that are involved in L2 acquisition" could be expanded to elicit what impact these factors have on classroom instruction. These reflective activities should also be designed to require participants to build upon the ideas of others presented in the discussion area.

Finally, with regard to the nature of the learning opportunities offered, active learning opportunities, especially those that promote analysis, evaluation, and application of course content to professional practice in authentic ways should be added. The following suggestions will improve the likelihood that participants actually transfer new knowledge and skills to their own professional practice:

- Ideally, there should be learning activities designed for every student task. For example, if a student is asked to read something, an activity should be designed which provides focus for that reading. Merely reading information does not ensure that learners can effectively apply that information to their own professional practice. For example, an activity in Domain II, Competency 4 instructs the learner to access and review the listening and speaking portions of the second language acquisition TEKS. This task should be followed up with an activity which requires the learner to apply this information they have just read. Perhaps participants could be asked to design a learning activity incorporating the TEKS.

- Content should be provided in multiple formats, not just text. The use of best practices video is advisable, especially video depictions of teacher interactions with students where particular concepts are illustrated. For example, with regard to Competency 3, which deals with ESL instruction, the use of either video or audio for instructor delivered content is advisable. The use of interactive chat for discussions of newly presented content is also advisable.

- Design of more learner-centered activities that provide an opportunity for participants to organize the information they have learned in ways that are personally meaningful. Students should be asked to do something in response to what they are learning. Ideally, activities would require them to apply what they are learning to their own classroom and students in order to ensure transfer of their learning into their professional practice. Activities similar to the Competency 8 activity where participants are instructed to research and report back on ESL programs available in their district are a good start.

- Assessment tasks should be added that require learners to demonstrate their knowledge in an authentic manner, rather than rote memorization of facts for a quiz. Also needed would be an emphasis on discussion postings and reflection as a component of assessment.

Section 3. Reference List

Collison, G., Elbaum, B., Haavind, S. & Tinker, R. (2000). *Facilitating Online Learning: Effective Strategies for Moderators*. Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing.

Conrad, R.M. & Donaldson, J.A. (2204). *Engaging the Online Learner: Activities and Resources for Creative Instruction*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Graham, C., Cagiltay, K., Lim, B.R., Craner, J. & Duffy, T.M. (March/April 2001). Seven Principles of Effective Teaching: A Practical Lens for Evaluating Online Courses. Available: http://technologysource.org/article/seven_principles_of_effective_teaching/

National Staff Development Council (2001). E-Learning for Educators: Implementing the Standards for Staff Development. Available: http://www.nsdc.org/library/authors/e-learning.pdf.

National Staff Development Council (2001). NSDC Standards for Staff Development. Available: http://www.nsdc.org/standards/index.cfm.

Sunal, D.W., Sunal, C.S., Odell, M.R. and Sundberg, C.A. (Summer 2003). Research-Supported Best Practices for Developing Online Learning. The Journal of Interactive Online Learning 2.1, Available: http://www.ncolr.org/.

Appendix D

- Survey Cover Letter — ISLA Certification Preparation Institute

- Survey of Participants of the ISLA Certification Preparation Institute

- Survey Cover Letter — TAMUS Online Certification Preparation Course

- Survey of Participants of the TAMUS Online Certification Preparation Course

Survey Cover Letter to ISLA Certification Institute Participants

[TEA Letterhead]

[DATE]

SUBJECT: Survey of Participants in the Institute for Second Language Achievement (ISLA) at Texas A&M University

To Survey Recipient:

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) to conduct a study of teacher training activities provided under the Limited English Proficient (LEP) Student Success Initiative Grants. The Texas A&M University System provides the LEP Student Success Initiative grant recipients access to training and program design resources through the ISLA at Texas A&M University– Corpus Christi. As part of the LEP Student Success Initiative, ISLA offers Summer Institutes in English as a Second Language (ESL) certification.

SEDL is conducting a survey of teachers across the state who participated in the ISLA Summer Institutes to gather their perceptions of the training and of teaching practices in bilingual and ESL instruction. You have been selected to complete SEDL's LEP Teacher Survey because, according to ISLA records, you participated in one of the ISLA ESL Certification Institutes. The information you provide will help ISLA improve future institutes and provide TEA with valuable information about the grant initiative. The entire survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete and your identity and responses to this survey are confidential, so we appreciate your candid response.

If you prefer, you may access and complete the survey online by going to the following website: http://www.sedl.org/es/lep/isla.html**.** The online survey will require an access ID #.

To access the online survey:
Please use the code located in the lower, left-hand corner of the attached paper survey.

If you choose to complete the paper survey, please return it to the address listed below using the pre-paid return envelope or FAX by **[DATE}.** If you choose to complete the online survey, we ask that it be completed by **[DATE]** as well.

For more information or clarification about this survey, please contact Erin McCann, SEDL Evaluation Associate, emccann@sedl.org, (800) 476-6861 or Jessica Sievert, TEA Project Manager, Jessica.Sievert@tea.state.tx.us, (512) 463-7814.

Thank you for your time and insight.

Sincerely,

Nora Hancock

Nora Ibáñez Hancock, Ed.D.   ***Mail survey to:*** SEDL Research & Evaluation Services
Associate Commissioner   211 East 7th Street, Austin, TX 78701
Office for Planning, Grants and Evaluation   ***FAX survey to:*** (512) 476-2286

Enclosure   **DUE:** **[DATE]**

Survey of Participants of the ISLA Certification Institute

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your responses will be strictly confidential and only reported in group summary form.

Section 1: Teacher Demographic Information

My District: **My School:**

1. **How many years have you taught prior to this school year?**

    π   0-1 years   π   2-4 years   π   5-9 years   π   10-20 years   π   21 or more years

2. **Prior to this year, how many years have you taught students who are English language learners (ELLs)?**

    π   0-1 years   π   2-4 years   π   5-9 years   π   10-20 years   π   21 or more years

3. **Please indicate your proficiency level in languages other than English:**

	No Fluency	Some Proficiency	A Fair Amount	Fluent	Very Fluent
Spanish	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

4. **What grade level do you teach?**
    1   Early childhood/Pre-Kindergarten
    2   Elementary
    3   Intermediate/Middle School
    4   High School

5. **What is your ethnicity?**
    1   Black/African American
    2   Hispanic/Latino
    3   White
    4   Other: _____

6. **Are you:**   1   Male
                        2   Female

Section 2: Certification Information

7. **Which level of certification do you hold?**

        π   Elementary   π   Grades 4-8   π   Grades 9-12   π   Not Certified

    If you hold a certificate, what content area/discipline are you certified in?

8. **Prior to attending the ISLA ESL Certification Institute, did you hold a teaching certificate in:**

        ESL   π   Yes   π   No
        Bilingual   π   Yes   π   No

9. **Did you, or do you plan to take the TExES/ExCET test for ESL or bilingual certification?**

ESL	π Yes	π No	
Bilingual	π Yes	π No	

10. **If you took the TExES/ExCET test for ESL or bilingual certification, what was the result of your test?**

ESL	π Passed	π Failed	π Not Sure
Bilingual	π Passed	π Failed	π Not Sure

Section 3: ISLA ESL/Bilingual Certification Institutes

11. **Have you attended other Institutes/trainings in bilingual/ESL education from vendors other than ISLA?**

   π   Yes   π   No

   If *yes*, how did the ISLA Certification Institute compare to others?

   1   Below Average
   2   Average
   3   Above Average

12. **To what extent did the following influence your decision to attend the ISLA Institute?**

		No Influence	A Little Influence	A Fair Amount of Influence	Strong Influence
a.	Upcoming certification exam	1	2	3	4
b.	Availability of a stipend for attending the training	1	2	3	4
c.	My principal or other campus/district administrator	1	2	3	4
d.	Content of the training	1	2	3	4
e.	Location of the training	1	2	3	4
f.	Length of training	1	2	3	4
g.	Time of year	1	2	3	4
h.	Sponsor or trainer of the Institute	1	2	3	4
i.	State or district professional development requirements	1	2	3	4
j.	Recommendation from others	1	2	3	4

13. **Regarding the subject matter presented in the ISLA Institute, to what extent had you already received instruction or information about the following:**

		None	A Little	About Half	Quite a Bit	All of it
a.	Second Language Acquisition	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Methodology/Teaching Strategies	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Assessment Practices	1	2	3	4	5
d.	ESL Test Preparation for Certification	1	2	3	4	5

14. Please provide your opinion about each of the following statements regarding the ISLA Certification Institute:

		Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*	*No Opinion*
a.	The Institute was suitable to my level of experience.	1	2	3	4	0
b.	Attending the Institute was worth my time.	1	2	3	4	0
c.	The Institute made me think.	1	2	3	4	0
d.	I have shared what I learned at the Institute with other teachers and/or school staff.	1	2	3	4	0
e.	I would recommend the ISLA Institute to other teachers.	1	2	3	4	0

15. How would you rate the overall usefulness/value of the ISLA Certification Institute you attended:

        1   Below Average   2   Average   3   Above Average

    Please explain your rating:

Section 4: Teacher ESL Instruction

16. Do you currently teach bilingual or ESL students?   π Yes   π No

> **If *YES*, please continue to complete the remainder of the survey.**
> **If *NO*, please stop, you have finished the survey. Please return your survey to SEDL in the self-addressed, postage-paid envelope or Fax it to (512) 476-2286. Thank you.**

17. What percentage of your students are ELLs?

   π 0%   π 1-20%   π 21-50%   π 51-70%   π 71-90%   π 91-100%

18. Please indicate the type of structure of your bilingual/ESL program for your students.

	Program Name	Program Description
1	English As A Second Language	Instruction only provided in English. Some native language support may be provided (e.g., limited translation in an otherwise all-English environment on an as needed basis from an aide) or special English support programs (e.g., additional instructional time devoted to English as a Second Language in order to support the development of English oral skills).
2	Transitional	Instruction is provided in the students' native language with a transition to all English instruction once a particular English proficiency level is reached. This program supports the development of LEP students' native language literacy (and, in some cases, content knowledge) until they become proficient enough in English to fully participate in English-only instruction.
3	Dual language	Literacy instruction is provided in both the native language and English from the outset, where instruction is provided at different times of the day or on alternating days. Students may subsequently be moved into all English instruction. The goal of these programs is English literacy mastery, where work at strengthening native language skills is thought to transfer to the development of English language literacy skill.

19. Please provide your opinion about each of the following statements:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
a.	The ISLA Institute provided me with useful materials that helped me prepare for the bilingual/ESL certification exams.	1	2	3	4	0
b.	The ISLA Institute provided me with useful materials that helped me improve the way I teach LEP students.	1	2	3	4	0
c.	The ISLA Website is a helpful resource for me.	1	2	3	4	0
d.	My teaching has improved as a result of my attending the Institute.	1	2	3	4	0
e.	My students' performance has improved as a result of my attending the Institute.	1	2	3	4	0

20. In your current class(es) with bilingual/ESL students, how often do you:		Never	Rarely (e.g., a few times a month)	Sometimes (e.g., once or twice a week)	Often (e.g., several times a week)	In all or almost all of the lessons
a.	Allow LEP students to express themselves in their primary language during teacher and group interactions.	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Assess English language development.	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Assess primary language development.	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Display student work in English.	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Display student work in students' primary language.	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Embed cultural activities in instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
g.	Group LEP students for English language instruction according to language proficiency	1	2	3	4	5
h.	Group LEP students for primary language (i.e., Spanish) instruction according to language proficiency	1	2	3	4	5
i.	Have meaningful and supportive parental involvement in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
j.	Limit the use of primary language use during instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
k.	Provide instruction in language arts in English which includes understanding, speaking, reading, and writing skills.	1	2	3	4	5
l.	Provide instruction in language arts in the LEP students' primary language which includes understanding, speaking, reading, and writing skills.	1	2	3	4	5
m.	Provide instruction in math, science, and social studies in English.	1	2	3	4	5
n.	Provide instruction in math, science, and social studies in the LEP students' primary language.	1	2	3	4	5
o.	Use learning centers with LEP students.	1	2	3	4	5
p.	Use technology in lessons.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 5: Open-Ended Questions

21. What components of the ISLA Institute *most enabled* you to assist LEP students?

22. What component(s) of the ISLA Institute were *least useful* to you for assisting LEP students?

23. What factors at your school do you feel *supported* your efforts to implement what you learned at the ISLA Institute?

24. What factors at your school do you feel *hindered* your efforts to implement what you learned at the ISLA Institute?

Survey Cover Letter to TAMUS Online Certification Preparation Course Participants

[TEA Letterhead]

[DATE]

SUBJECT: Survey of Participants in the Online English as a Second Language (ESL) Certification Preparation Course at Texas A&M University

To Survey Recipient:

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) to conduct a study of teacher training activities provided under the Limited English Proficient (LEP) Student Success Initiative Grants. As part of the LEP Student Success Initiative, the Texas A&M University System offers an online ESL certification preparation course provided through the College Station campus.

SEDL is conducting a survey of teachers across the state who participated in the online ESL preparation course to gather their perceptions of the course and of teaching practices in bilingual and ESL instruction. You have been selected to complete SEDL's LEP Teacher Survey because, according to Texas A&M University records, you participated in an online ESL course. The information you provide will help Texas A&M University improve future sessions of the course and provide TEA with valuable information about the grant initiative. The entire survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete and your identity and responses to this survey are confidential, so we appreciate your candid response.

If you prefer, you may access and complete the survey online by going to the following website: http://www.sedl.org/es/lep/online.html. The online survey will require an access ID #.

| **To access the online survey:** |
| **Please use the code located in the lower, left-hand corner of the attached paper survey.** |

If you choose to complete the paper survey, please return it to the address listed below using the pre-paid return envelope or fax by **[DATE].** If you choose to complete the online survey, we ask that it be completed by **[DATE]** as well.

For more information or clarification about this survey please contact Erin McCann, SEDL Evaluation Associate, emccann@sedl.org, (800) 476-6861 or Jessica Sievert, TEA Project Manager, Jessica.Sievert@tea.state.tx.us, (512) 463-7814.

Thank you for your time and insight.

Sincerely,

Nora Hancock

Nora Ibáñez Hancock, Ed.D.
Associate Commissioner
Office for Planning, Grants and Evaluation

Mail survey to: SEDL Research & Evaluation Services
211 East 7th Street, Austin, TX 78701
FAX survey to: (512) 476-2286

Enclosure

DUE: [DATE]

Texas A&M/Online ESL Preparation Course
Participant Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your responses will be strictly confidential and only reported in group summary form.

Section 1: Teacher Demographic Information

1. **How many years have you taught prior to this school year?**

   π 0-1 years   π 2-4 years   π 5-9 years   π 10-20 years   π 21 or more years

2. **Prior to this year, how many years have you taught students who are English language learners (ELLs)?**

   π 0-1 years   π 2-4 years   π 5-9 years   π 10-20 years   π 21 or more years

3. **Please indicate your proficiency level in languages other than English:**

	No Fluency	Some Proficiency	A Fair Amount	Fluent	Very Fluent
Spanish	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

4. **What grade level do you teach?**

   4 Early childhood/Pre-Kindergarten
   5 Elementary
   6 Intermediate/Middle School
   4 High School

5. **What is your ethnicity?**

   1 Black/African American
   2 Hispanic/Latino
   3 White
   4 Other: _____

6. **Are you:**   1 Male
                    2 Female

Section 2: Certification Information

7. **Which level of certification do you hold?**

   π Elementary   π Grades 4-8   π Grades 9-12   π Not Certified

   If you hold a certificate, what content area/discipline are you certified in?

8. **Prior to completing the TAMUS online ESL course, did you hold a teaching certificate in:**

   ESL   π Yes   π No
   Bilingual π Yes   π No

9. **Did you, or do you plan to take the TEXES/ExCET test for ESL or bilingual certification?**

ESL	π Yes	π No	
Bilingual	π Yes	π No	

10. **If you took the TEXES/ExCET test for ESL or bilingual certification, what was the result of your test?**

ESL	π Passed	π Failed	π Not Sure
Bilingual	π Passed	π Failed	π Not Sure

Section 3: TAMUS Online ESL Certification Preparation Course

11. **In addition to the TAMUS Online ESL course, have you attended similar *face-to-face teacher trainings* in bilingual/ESL education?**

    π Yes   π No

If *yes,* how did the TAMUS Online ESL course compare to other face-to-face trainings?

1 Below Average
2 Average
3 Above Average

12. **In addition to the TAMUS Online ESL course, have you taken similar *online teacher trainings* in education?**

    π Yes   π No

If *yes,* how did the TAMUS Online ESL course compare to other online trainings?

1 Below Average
2 Average
3 Above Average

13. **To what extent did the following influence your decision to take the TAMUS Online ESL course?**

		No Influence	A Little Influence	A Fair Amount of Influence	Strong Influence
a.	Upcoming certification exam	1	2	3	4
b.	Availability of a stipend for attending the training	1	2	3	4
c.	My principal or other campus/district administrator	1	2	3	4
d.	Content of the training	1	2	3	4
e.	Accessibility through distance learning	1	2	3	4
f.	Self-paced nature of the training	1	2	3	4
g.	Convenience of a flexible schedule	1	2	3	4
h.	Sponsor or trainer of the course	1	2	3	4
i.	State or district professional development requirements	1	2	3	4
j.	Recommendation from others	1	2	3	4

Please return survey to SEDL Research & Evaluation Services
211 East Seventh Street, Austin, TX 78701
«AccessID»   **Fax: (512) 476-2286**   D - 9

14. Regarding the subject matter presented in the TAMUS Online ESL course, to what extent had you already received instruction or information about the following:

		None	*A Little*	*About Half*	*Quite a Bit*	*All of it*
a.	Language Concepts and Language Acquisition	1	2	3	4	5
b.	ESL Instruction and Assessment	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Foundation of ESL Education	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Cultural Awareness	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Family and Community Involvement	1	2	3	4	5

15. Please provide your opinion about each of the following statements regarding the TAMUS Online ESL course:

		Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*	*No Opinion*
a.	The online ESL course was suitable to my level of experience.	1	2	3	4	0
b.	Participating in the online ESL course was worth my time.	1	2	3	4	0
c.	The online ESL course made me think.	1	2	3	4	0
d.	I have shared what I learned at the online ESL course with other teachers and/or school staff.	1	2	3	4	0
e.	I would recommend the online ESL course to other teachers.	1	2	3	4	0

16. How would you rate the overall usefulness/value of the Online ESL course:

1   Below Average   2   Average   3   Above Average

Please explain your rating:

Section 4: Teacher ESL Instruction

17. Do you currently teach bilingual or ESL students?   π   Yes   π   No

> **If *YES*, please continue to complete the remainder of the survey.**
> **If *NO*, please stop, you have finished the survey. Please return your survey to SEDL in the self-addressed, postage-paid envelope or Fax it to (512) 476-2286. Thank you.**

18. What percentage of your students are ELLs?

π   0%   π   1-20%   π   21-50%   π   51-70%   π   71-90%   π   91-100%

19. Please indicate the type of structure of your bilingual/ESL program for your students.

	Program Name	Program Description
1	English As A Second Language	Instruction only provided in English. Some native language support may be provided (e.g., limited translation in an otherwise all-English environment on an as needed basis from an aide) or special English support programs (e.g., additional instructional time devoted to English as a Second Language in order to support the development of English oral skills).
2	Transitional	Instruction is provided in the students' native language with a transition to all English instruction once a particular English proficiency level is reached. This program supports the development of LEP students' native language literacy (and, in some cases, content knowledge) until they become proficient enough in English to fully participate in English-only instruction.
3	Dual language	Literacy instruction is provided in both the native language and English from the outset, where instruction is provided at different times of the day or on alternating days. Students may subsequently be moved into all English instruction. The goal of these programs is English literacy mastery, where work at strengthening native language skills is thought to transfer to the development of English language literacy skill.

20. Please provide your opinion about each of the following statements:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
a.	The online ESL course provided me with useful materials that helped me prepare for the bilingual/ESL certification exams.	1	2	3	4	0
b.	The online ESL course provided me with useful materials that helped me improve the way I teach LEP students.	1	2	3	4	0
c.	The online ESL course is a helpful resource for me.	1	2	3	4	0
d.	My teaching has improved as a result of my completing the online ESL course.	1	2	3	4	0
e.	My students' performance has improved as a result of my completing the online ESL course.	1	2	3	4	0

21. In your current class(es) with bilingual/ESL students, how often do you:	Never	Rarely (e.g., a few times a month)	Sometimes (e.g., once or twice a week)	Often (e.g., several times a week)	In all or almost all of the lessons
a. Allow LEP students to express themselves in their primary language during teacher and group interactions.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Assess English language development.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Assess primary language development.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Display student work in English.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Display student work in students' primary language.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Embed cultural activities in instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
g. Group LEP students for English language instruction according to language proficiency	1	2	3	4	5

	21. In your current class(es) with bilingual/ESL students, how often do you:	*Never*	*Rarely (e.g., a few times a month)*	*Sometimes (e.g., once or twice a week)*	*Often (e.g., several times a week)*	*In all or almost all of the lessons*
h.	Group LEP students for primary language (i.e., Spanish) instruction according to language proficiency	1	2	3	4	5
i.	Have meaningful and supportive parental involvement in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
j.	Limit the use of primary language use during instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
k.	Provide instruction in language arts in English which includes understanding, speaking, reading, and writing skills.	1	2	3	4	5
l.	Provide instruction in language arts in the LEP students' primary language which includes understanding, speaking, reading, and writing skills.	1	2	3	4	5
m.	Provide instruction in math, science, and social studies in English.	1	2	3	4	5
n.	Provide instruction in math, science, and social studies in the LEP students' primary language.	1	2	3	4	5
o.	Use learning centers with LEP students.	1	2	3	4	5
p.	Use technology in lessons.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 5: Open-Ended Questions

22. What components of the TAMUS online ESL course *most enabled* you to assist LEP students?

23. What component(s) of the TAMUS online ESL course were *least useful* to you for assisting LEP students?

24. What factors at your school do you feel *supported* your efforts to implement what you learned from the TAMUS online ESL course?

25. What factors at your school do you feel *hindered* your efforts to implement what you learned from the TAMUS online ESL course?

Appendix E

- Survey Results of Respondents from the ISLA Certification Institute

- Survey Results of Respondents from the TAMUS Online Certification Preparation Course

Survey Results of Respondents from the ISLA Certification Institute

Number of Survey Respondents: 52

Section 1: Teacher Demographic Information

1. **How many years have you taught prior to this school year?**

0-1 years	2-4 years	5-9 years	10-20 years	21 or more years	No Response
4	12	12	17	6	1

2. **Prior to this year, how many years have you taught students who are English language learners (ELLs)?**

0-1 years	2-4 years	5-9 years	10-20 years	21 or more years	No Response
19	13	10	8	1	1

3. **Please indicate your proficiency level in languages other than English:**

	No Fluency	Some Proficiency	A Fair Amount	Fluent	Very Fluent	No Response
Spanish	11	12	8	7	13	1
Other*	1	4	0	0	4	43

***Other Languages: Filipino, French, Hebrew, Portuguese.**

4. **What grade level do you teach?**

EC/Pre-K	Pre-K/ Elementary	Elementary	Intermediate/ Middle School	High School
2	1	17	2	30

5. **What is your ethnicity?**

Black/African American	Hispanic/ Latino	White	*Other	No Response
0	23	20	7	2

***Other: Asian, Hispanic/White**

6. **Are you:**

Male	11
Female	41

Section 2: Certification Information

7. Which level of certification do you hold?

Elementary	Grades 4-8	Grades 9-12	Elementary & Middle School	Middle School & High School	All Grades
15	3	28	2	1	3

8. Prior to attending the ISLA ESL Certification Institute, did you hold a teaching certificate in:

	Yes	No
ESL	3	49
Bilingual	3	49

9. Did you, or do you plan to take the TExES/ExCET test for ESL or bilingual certification?

	Yes	No	No Response
ESL	46	6	0
Bilingual	4	40	8

10. If you took the TExES/ExCET test for ESL or bilingual certification, what was the result of your test?

	Passed	Failed	Not Sure	No Response
ESL	39	5	2	6
Bilingual	2	1	4	45

Section 3: ISLA ESL/Bilingual Certification Institutes

11. Have you attended other Institutes/trainings in bilingual/ESL education from vendors other than ISLA?

Yes	No
13	39

If *yes,* how did the ISLA Certification Institute compare to others?

Below Average	Average	Above Average
0	2	11

12. To what extent did the following influence your decision to attend the ISLA Institute?

		No Influence	*A Little Influence*	*A Fair Amount of Influence*	*Strong Influence*	*No Response*
a.	Upcoming certification exam	8	3	14	24	3
b.	Availability of a stipend for attending the training	12	9	9	22	0
c.	My principal or other campus/district administrator	13	11	13	13	2
d.	Content of the training	2	6	14	26	2
e.	Location of the training	12	5	13	20	2
f.	Length of training	14	9	16	11	2
g.	Time of year	7	8	14	22	1
h.	Sponsor or trainer of the Institute	20	11	7	12	2
i.	State or district professional development requirements	18	3	14	15	2
j.	Recommendation from others	19	11	8	12	2

13. Regarding the subject matter presented in the ISLA Institute, to what extent had you already received instruction or information about the following:

		None	*A Little*	*About Half*	*Quite a Bit*	*All of it*
a.	Second Language Acquisition	9	16	8	16	3
b.	Methodology/Teaching Strategies	6	14	13	15	4
c.	Assessment Practices	12	15	9	13	3
d.	ESL Test Preparation for Certification	30	11	5	4	2

14. Please provide your opinion about each of the following statements regarding the ISLA Certification Institute:

		Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*	*No Opinion*
a.	The Institute was suitable to my level of experience.	3	0	19	29	1
b.	Attending the Institute was worth my time.	2	1	15	34	0
c.	The Institute made me think.	1	0	21	30	0
d.	I have shared what I learned at the Institute with other teachers and/or school staff.	2	5	25	20	0
e.	I would recommend the ISLA Institute to other teachers.	2	1	11	36	0

15. How would you rate the overall usefulness/value of the ISLA Certification Institute you attended:

Below Average	Average	Above Average	No Response
3	11	37	1

Please explain your rating:
(See open-ended question responses at end survey)

Section 4: Teacher ESL Instruction

16. Do you currently teach bilingual or ESL students?

	Yes	No
*Currently Teach ESL/Bilingual Students	38	14

*The remainder of the survey data reflect the perceptions of the 38 teachers who responded that they currently teach ESL/bilingual students.

17. What percentage of your students are ELLs?

1-20%	21-50%	51-70%	71-90%	91-100%	No Response
25	5	2	4	1	1

18. Please indicate the type of structure of your bilingual/ESL program for your students.

Program Name	#
English As A Second Language	30
Transitional	3
Dual language	3
No Response	2

19. Please provide your opinion about each of the following statements:

		Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*	*No Opinion*
a.	The ISLA Institute provided me with useful materials that helped me prepare for the bilingual/ESL certification exams.	2	1	10	25	0
b.	The ISLA Institute provided me with useful materials that helped me improve the way I teach LEP students.	2	3	10	22	1
c.	The ISLA Website is a helpful resource for me.	4	1	15	12	6
d.	My teaching has improved as a result of my attending the Institute.	4	1	13	17	3
e.	My students' performance has improved as a result of my attending the Institute.	4	2	14	13	5

20. In your current class(es) with bilingual/ESL students, how often do you:		*Never*	*Rarely (e.g., a few times a month)*	*Sometimes (e.g., once or twice a week)*	*Often (e.g., several times a week)*	*In all or almost all of the lessons*
a.	Allow LEP students to express themselves in their primary language during teacher and group interactions.	1	6	12	12	7
b.	Assess English language development.	1	6	10	16	5
c.	Assess primary language development.	10	6	14	6	2
d.	Display student work in English.	5	5	5	16	7
e.	Display student work in students' primary language.*	16	10	8	1	2
f.	Embed cultural activities in instruction.	3	5	13	12	5
g.	Group LEP students for English language instruction according to language proficiency	9	5	13	9	2
h.	Group LEP students for primary language (i.e., Spanish) instruction according to language proficiency	12	7	13	5	1
i.	Have meaningful and supportive parental involvement in my classroom.	7	17	8	5	1
j.	Limit the use of primary language use during instruction.*	10	8	8	6	5
k.	Provide instruction in language arts in English which includes understanding, speaking, reading, and writing skills.	4	3	6	11	14
l.	Provide instruction in language arts in the LEP students' primary language which includes understanding, speaking, reading, and writing skills.	15	9	10	2	2
m.	Provide instruction in math, science, and social studies in English.	3	4	7	8	16
n.	Provide instruction in math, science, and social studies in the LEP students' primary language.	19	10	7	2	0
o.	Use learning centers with LEP students.	6	12	9	5	6
p.	Use technology in lessons.	1	2	11	13	11

*One person did not respond to these questions.

Section 5: Open-Ended Questions

15. Please explain your rating of the overall usefulness/value of the ISLA Certification Institute you attended.

Q.#15: Explanation of Rating of Usefulness/Value of ISLA Certification Institute
The training was helpful in preparing me to teach ESL students.
The seminar was a tremendous help on giving me more insight into how ELL learn.
The Institute presented "good teaching skills/techniques" that are helpful in any classroom setting. Very, very motivational.
I rated the ISLA Institute as above average because I have directly utilized methods I learned at the Institute in my classroom.
The information and strategies in teaching English learners helped me accommodate more of my ESL students in my content area.
Prepared me for exam. Great classroom exercises shared for all my classes as well as ESL.
Above average since it gave me the skills necessary to get my ESL certification.
The presentations helped me prepare for the Certification exam.
This class really helped me prepare for the ESL certification test, and provided valuable resources for the future.
Without the terminology definitions I would have been completely lost in my exam.
Accomplished its goal of preparation for Texas/ExCet test for ESL certification.
The training was so good - I almost felt like I cheated on the test. They <u>know</u> their stuff!
The information provided at the ISLA conference was very useful because I learned everything about ESL through this conference my background before the conference was very weak.
It gave me broader picture about ESL.
The 2006 Summer Institute provided me with the necessary theoretical knowledge and principles to understand the process of acquiring a second language and it surely helped me to pass the ESL Certification test. It was quite an extraordinary learning experience. One thing that I also learned during the different sessions is that the academic findings, research and theories are confined to the university halls. There is a tremendous gap between what it is taught in the university classrooms and what we do in the school regarding programs, time given to students to learn ESL, and evaluation processes. I think there is a major need to improve communications and establish working projects between Universities and schools.
There was very good information along with ways to use in the classroom.
The sessions were extremely informative and hands-on. I have never experienced a session with so many hands on activities. This was a great because I can teach examples since I have already done many of the activities.
Very helpful in providing strategies for teaching ESL students; certification exam was different than what was emphasized in the course, but I did fine on the exam.
The ISLA training gave me a thorough understanding of ESL components and enabled me to pass my ESL exam. Unfortunately, the "powers that be" won't allow those 40 hours of ISLA training to count toward the 150 hours of continuing ESL certification because I passed the ESL test AFTER I took the ISLA training! I wish that could be changed. To be honest, the ISLA training has proven to be much more helpful and applicable than subsequent trainings my district has offered!! Actually, I'd like to take the A&M ISLA training again! (I need the reinforcement AND the 40 hours would count!!) I found out most of my ESL colleagues haven't attended such a training as ISLA...only specific SIOP workshops. I've recommended the A&M ISLA training to many teachers because of its thoroughness and effective teaching styles. Thank you for the chance to give feedback.
I thought it was extremely helpful.

Q.#15: Explanation of Rating of Usefulness/Value of ISLA Certification Institute
I appreciated that it was divided into the different domains tested.
It was nice to review the ESL methodologies and see the provided examples on the implementation on each of them.
I believe it is important to know how we can help our LEP population.
The information delivered at the Institute was very useful and can be utilized by all teachers in our area of Texas.
The information provided was very well presented and relevant to subject.
It was useful.
The activities were interactive and thought provoking.
It was very informative and well organized.
I was very pleased with the institute, thank you and all your staff that participated in the program.
The information was up-dated, very related to the subject at hand, and well explained with ample examples to prove points.
Every day was full of professional and well informed presenters, staff. Well organized, great tools and handouts for future reference and use - very informative and helpful. Week very well spent. Location was not good - out of the way - long distance, but still worth the drive for the education.
All the presentations at the institute were great.
The training was in fact very extensive.
I was very pleased with the institute, thank you and all your staff that participated in the program.
It was a good course.
The time the presenters took to make sure I understood the materials; the quality of the presentation and materials; the food - also excellent.
The training was very intense with a significant amount of information within a limited amount of time.
Session length (too much content vs very little time). Last session was outstanding (content extremely appropriate, interactive, wonderful).
A lot of the information I was already familiar with and a lot of the information/games/activities seemed liked they didn't apply to a high school art class--it seemed to apply better to a general ed elementary class. Though, I did learn a lot of useful terminology and policy. Overall, I am proud to be certified in ESL and the class definitely helped me pass the ExCET exam.
It helped me pass the certification test, however it did not provide me with knowledge of SIOP which was one thing our district wanted us to get trained in.
I felt that the linguistics portion of the training was useless. It was very long and it did not provide me with any information that I've needed to use in the classroom. I would have liked to see more hands-on activities to use with my students.
Most of the things taught were not new to me.
Not geared to the high school level.
I would of liked more examples for high school students.

21. What components of the ISLA Institute *most enabled* you to assist LEP students?

Q#21: Components of Institute that Most Enabled Assisting LEP Students
Resources
Learning different strategies and best practices to enhance my LEP students' comprehension and learning.
Instructional strategies & activities.
The activities that were taught and how they help students improve in their education.

Q#21: Components of Institute that Most Enabled Assisting LEP Students
I loved the speaker that presented the music. I have implemented these types of activities not only for ELL students, but for all of my classes.
I liked the music suggestions.
Graphic organizer and increase in vocabulary.
Hands-on activities and handouts.
Learner-centered activities.
The component that helped me the most was using several teaching strategies.
Practice tests.
Teaching strategies.
Activity ideas for younger students.
Learning about progressive profiles; how to properly conduct group exercises and activities.
The interest in the presenters to be more understanding of all the needs of our students; TDRS techniques, games; teaching through singing; all the information I received for my ESL certificate was useful.
It allowed me to incorporate teaching techniques in my lessons. It taught me to be patient with students during their silent period. It reinforced the fact that it's acceptable for students to express themselves in their native language.
Content
Components on when & how to encourage students to switch from primary to secondary language. Component which showed how to evaluate readiness for this transfer.
Language acquisition.
SIOP training.
The SIOP.
The exposure to the language acquisition theories and processes focused on Recent Arrivals/Recent Immigrants at the High School level.
Understanding of level of support LEP students may need in the classroom; I teach art, so I learned some tips as to how to be consistent with English phrases and reinforce the verbal phrases with consistent visual cues.
The institute reminded the class how people learn a second language and provided information on how to present and instruct these learners. It also made me aware of the importance of the affective domain in learning a second language.
I think the institute reinforced my belief of how important the arts are in school. Many of my ESL students are very successful in my class because they are taught in a visual, verbal, and physical manner, in a relaxed environment. Another useful thing I learned is that illegal students have a right to education. I have many illegal students who often worry about their status and I bring out the law to show them they have a right to learn in public school and even in public colleges. Not being afraid helps them relax and focus on learning.
To be honest, I had already received training in assisting LEP students. The importance of ISLA into my instruction was mainly as a reference to history of LEP populations. Yet, the most important aspect of ISLA was the last day, how to prepare for the certification exam.
Teaching methodology for ESL students.
One of the components that really benefits me is the Methodology on Strategies to accommodate LEP students and help them be successful. Another component that helped me understand better LEP students is the Principles of Language Acquisition. Knowing the various principles, theories, and studies presented to me opened my eyes to the plight of the LEP students.
Other
All
Every component is related to the whole ESL program.
The entire training – we have a very nice resource book. The examples of the different level

Q#21: Components of Institute that Most Enabled Assisting LEP Students
learners helped me to see I needed verbal and visual.
Don't have anything to compare it to really.
Increase students' achievement and success in class.
There was little about high school students. Focused on lower level elementary.

22. What component(s) of the ISLA Institute were *least useful* to you for assisting LEP students?

Q#22: Least Useful Components for Assisting LEP Students
Content/Activities
Sessions where the social context was at the elementary/middle school levels.
Since I do not teach Language arts, I have not used the strategies and instruction for this section of the training, but still found it interesting and informative.
The linguistics portion.
The linguistic component. I can't recall the gentleman's name, but he was very negative, intimidating, and none of his material seemed relevant. There were no linguistic questions on the ESL test, but if there had been, I would've probably answered incorrectly due to the volume of linguistic information and the rapid way it was presented. Ironic that a PhD professor is not familiar with Best Teaching Practices and Sheltered Instruction!
Playing games with other teachers to model how a good ESL/LEP teacher teaches seemed irrelevant to a high school art class. I think they could've cut out these parts and we could've had a shorter day.
Although it was somewhat useful, least useful to me was the technical background on the history of ELL students.
Gallery walk was not useful.
The TAKS class was very boring.
Other
Can't think of any.
Don't recall any.
None
All information presented were useful.
I feel that all the components were useful.
None
None
To me, all the components were useful.
All useful.
None
I believe that to a certain extent all the components were helpful for assisting my LEP students.
Everything in the ISLA Institute was helpful to me. For years, I have been teaching English learners mainstreamed in my class, and by attending the ISLA Institute I realized all the wrong practices I have implemented due to my unfamiliarity to English language learners' plight.
All was useful.
Anything for the bilingual student is useful - my classroom is English; if they are LEP, it is on the advanced/advanced high, so primary language isn't used much - but I changed parts to make them useful.
The instruction was poor and the teachers were teaching about lower grades and nothing about high school age student learning techniques or learning.

23. What factors at your school do you feel *supported* your efforts to implement what you learned at the ISLA Institute?

Q#23: Factors at the Schools that Supported Implementation
School Administration/Staff
My school principal is very sensitive to the needs of the ESL learners. Therefore, she is supportive and encourages the teachers of ESL.
Administration is very supportive in supporting LEP students; ESL training is strongly encouraged at the District level because of our high bi-lingual student population.
Other teachers.
My principal (he's from Corpus Christi) and my department head support, as well as the lack of a standardized ESL program in the school district.
Working together with other teachers.
Supportive administration that allowed me the freedom to incorporate ESL teaching techniques and other concepts in my classroom.
We have a very supportive ESL teacher, so if I have questions or concerns, I can always go discuss issues with her.
Our population.
Teacher and administrative support - access to classes and materials as needed.
Administrative support that allows me to work with students in science.
Since our school has a great population of ESL students, the school is supportive in whatever assistance I can give the ESL students, such as after school tutorials for content area.
Administration was supportive of implementation of new techniques.
Bluebonnet Elem. is very supportive.
The principal and administration is helpful in supporting me with whatever I needed.
Good ESL program at Alexander.
Resources
Technology for LEP students.
Availability of instructional materials.
Finally receiving an elmo combo/visual projector (The Avermedia).
Take home materials.
Scope and Sequence (Lesson Plans); Instructional/Learner Center.
The school provided teachers with a lap top that has a notebook. This was perfect as the notebook program allows for highlighting/different colors etc.
Other
The need to involve ELA students in regular (English) activities, and classes. Also to improve these students' grades.
All of the information provided in the conference.
Students demographics.
I believe the main factor that supported my efforts to implement what I have learned is receiving each student's information.
Stipend for attending and passing exam; was able to teach an ESL class.
Much of the instruction taught would lose most of my students in graphic arts. My instruction is technology driven and highly visual.
Nothing. I've had to do everything myself. I continue to go to district ESL/LEP trainings, but the only real help I've had is the study material from the ISLA sessions (except the linguistic material). All of the presenters at training ISLA (except the linguistic PhD) left me with the feeling that I could call on them for any assistance.

Q#23: Factors at the Schools that Supported Implementation
You can tell as students spoke - their language structure. In the past, I would have corrected - now I have totally changed to fit the learner.

24. **What factors at your school do you feel *hindered* your efforts to implement what you learned at the ISLA Institute?**

Q#24: Factors at the Schools that Hindered Implementation
School/District Factors
A solid ESL Reading/ELA curriculum would have helped. The ESL English and Reading teachers are in the process of developing a program using "High Point."
I would like a few more opportunities to plan with the other ESL teachers.
Taking up our time during our conference period because this did not allow much time for planning.
The district guidelines for the ESL students kept changing and all the paperwork.
An uninformed, disinterested principal and a new assistant principal (he does monitor the LEP files correctly and continues to attend LEP/LPAC training sessions). It is frustrating to have only one campus copy of "Fifty Strategies for Teaching English Lang. Learners," by A. Herrell and M. Jordan. I use my own money to purchase resources recommended by presenters during the ISLA training. I guess this campus is still in a "learning curve" because the attendance secretary has finally figured out that ESL/LEP students go in my room; now I have 25 students in my first grade room! Nothing can be done, because they don't want to move anyone out of my room this late in the year. I have a wonderful class, so I don't mind the volume; just wish the enrollment process at our school was more efficient. Thank you for the chance to give feedback! The Corpus Christi A&M system is superb and I appreciate the time and effort it took to implement the ISLA course!!!
Having to comply with a strict scope and sequence curriculum that does not afford us the time to properly assess students with their language acquisition.
Resources
Lack of materials and support.
Insufficient materials to use for instruction.
Resources.
None
None. Maybe the lack of materials, but it did not represent a great problem.
None
Nothing as of present time
None at all. On the contrary, everybody in our district has ISLA in high regard.
None
None
None
None
No hindrances at this time.
At the moment, I can not mention any hindrances.
None
None
None
Nothing

Q#24: Factors at the Schools that Hindered Implementation
None
Other
I believe that my school staff is always willing to help us with problems dealing with our LEP population.
My students are almost as fluent as other English speakers. I did not need a lot of the training due to them not needing the help. The one who needed it had other issues than language.
We do have identifying information given to us in advance of which students are our ESL students. Only English teachers are given the chance to mentor ESL students.
What I learned is to instruct very simple teaching on an individual need which would lose most of my students. Graphic Arts is taught by students sharing knowledge with students and teacher, teacher and students.

Survey Results of Respondents from the TAMUS Online Certification Preparation Course

Number of Survey Respondents: 94

Section 1: Teacher Demographic Information

1. **How many years have you taught prior to this school year?**

0-1 years	2-4 years	5-9 years	10-20 years	21 or more years
9	27	18	30	10

2. **Prior to this year, how many years have you taught students who are English language learners (ELLs)?**

0-1 years	2-4 years	5-9 years	10-20 years	21 or more years	No Response
39	29	14	8	3	1

3. **Please indicate your proficiency level in languages other than English:**

	No Fluency	Some Proficiency	A Fair Amount	Fluent	Very Fluent	No Response
Spanish	47	31	7	3	5	1
Other*	0	6	3	1	0	84

*Other Languages: French, German, Portuguese, American Sign Language.

4. **What grade level do you teach?**

EC/Pre-K	Elementary	Intermediate/ Middle School	High School
8	49	20	17

5. **What is your ethnicity?**

Black/African American	Hispanic/ Latino	White	No Response
8	9	76	1

6. **Are you:**

Male	5
emale	89

Section 2: Certification Information

7. Which level of certification do you hold?

Elementary	Grades 4-8	Grades 9-12	All Grades	Not Certified	No Response
58	11	13	7	3	2

8. Prior to completing the TAMUS online ESL course, did you hold a teaching certificate in:

	Yes	No
ESL	3	91
Bilingual	0	94

9. Did you, or do you plan to take the TExES/ExCET test for ESL or bilingual certification?

	Yes	No	No Response
ESL	90	4	0
ingual al	9	77	8

10. If you took the TExES/ExCET test for ESL or bilingual certification, what was the result of your test?

	Passed	Failed	Not Sure	No Response
ESL	64	1	12	17
Bilingual	3	0	13	78

Section 3: TAMUS Online ESL Certification Preparation Course

11. In addition to the TAMUS Online ESL course, have you attended similar *face-to-face teacher trainings* in bilingual/ESL education?

Yes	No
29	65

If *yes,* how did the TAMUS Online course compare to other face-to-face trainings?

Below Average	Average	Above Average
2	12	15

12. In addition to the TAMUS Online ESL course, have you taken similar *online teacher trainings* in education?

Yes	No
14	80

If *yes,* how did the TAMUS Online ESL course compare to other online trainings?

Below Average	Average	Above Average
0	5	9

13. To what extent did the following influence your decision to take the TAMUS Online ESL course?

		No Influence	*A Little Influence*	*A Fair Amount of Influence*	*Strong Influence*	*No Response*
a.	Upcoming certification exam	33	12	12	36	1
b.	Availability of a stipend for taking online course	54	8	10	20	2
c.	My principal or other campus/district administrator	26	16	23	29	0
d.	Content of the training	11	7	35	41	0
e.	Accessibility through distance learning	7	8	19	59	1
f.	Self-paced nature of the training	6	5	25	58	0
g.	Convenience of a flexible schedule	5	5	20	64	0
h.	Sponsor or trainer of the Institute	49	17	19	7	2
i.	State or district professional development requirements	46	16	18	13	1
j.	Recommendation from others	57	11	14	11	1

14. Regarding the subject matter presented in the TAMUS Online ESL course, to what extent had you already received instruction or information about the following:

		None	*A Little*	*About Half*	*Quite a Bit*	*All of it*
a.	Language Concepts and Language Acquisition	23	34	16	17	4
b.	ESL Instruction and Assessment	33	40	12	8	1
c.	Foundation of ESL Education	38	34	13	8	1
d.	Cultural Awareness	14	31	22	24	3
e.	Family and Community Involvement	14	30	24	23	3

15. Please provide your opinion about each of the following statements regarding the TAMUS Online ESL course:

		Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*	*No Opinion*
a.	The online ESL course was suitable to my level of experience.	1	5	43	44	1
b.	Participating in the online ESL course was worth my time.	1	4	30	58	1
c.	The online ESL course made me think.	1	0	32	60	1
d.	I have shared what I learned at the online ESL course with other teachers and/or school staff.	3	7	51	32	1
e.	I would recommend the online ESL course to other teachers.	4	4	30	54	2

16. **How would you rate the overall usefulness/value of the Online ESL course:**

Below Average	Average	Above Average
1	35	58

Please explain your rating:
(See open-ended question responses at end survey)

Section 4: Teacher ESL Instruction

17. **Do you currently teach bilingual or ESL students?**

	Yes	No
***Currently Teach ESL/Bilingual Students**	54	40

*The remainder of the survey data reflect the perceptions of the <u>54</u> teachers who responded that they currently teach ESL/bilingual students.

18. **What percentage of your students are ELLs?**

1-20%	21-50%	51-70%	71-90%	91-100%
34	11	2	3	4

19. **Please indicate the type of structure of your bilingual/ESL program for your students.**

Program Name	#
English As A Second Language	48
Transitional	2
Dual language	1
All are Present	1
No Response	2

20. Please provide your opinion about each of the following statements:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
a.	The online ESL course provided me with useful materials that helped me prepare for the bilingual/ESL certification exams.	1	0	22	29	2
b.	The online ESL course provided me with useful materials that helped me improve the way I teach LEP students.	1	0	31	20	2
c.	The online ESL course is a helpful resource for me.	1	0	24	20	9
d.	My teaching has improved as a result of my completing the online ESL course.	1	3	26	19	5
e.	My students' performance has improved as a result of my completing the online ESL course.	1	3	28	10	12

21. In your current class(es) with bilingual/ESL students, how often do you:		Never	Rarely (e.g., a few times a month)	Sometimes (e.g., once or twice a week)	Often (e.g., several times a week)	In all or almost all of the lessons
a.	Allow LEP students to express themselves in their primary language during teacher and group interactions. (n=53)	12	11	11	9	10
b.	Assess English language development. (n=54)	3	11	13	16	11
c.	Assess primary language development. (n=54)	18	10	11	8	7
d.	Display student work in English. (n=53)	4	5	3	18	23
e.	Display student work in students' primary language. (n=54)	25	14	9	2	4
f.	Embed cultural activities in instruction. (n=54)	5	12	16	14	7
g.	Group LEP students for English language instruction according to language proficiency. (n=53)	11	12	10	13	7
h.	Group LEP students for primary language (i.e., Spanish) instruction according to language proficiency. (n=52)	23	12	9	7	1
i.	Have meaningful and supportive parental involvement in my classroom. (n=53)	9	20	19	5	0
j.	Limit the use of primary language use during instruction. (n=52)	20	8	7	8	9
k.	Provide instruction in language arts in English which includes understanding, speaking, reading, and writing skills. (n=52)	4	1	4	10	33
l.	Provide instruction in language arts in the LEP students' primary language which includes understanding, speaking, reading, and writing skills. (n=52)	31	6	10	1	4
m.	Provide instruction in math, science, and social studies in English. (n=50)	6	3	5	7	29
n.	Provide instruction in math, science, and social studies in the LEP students' primary language. (n=51)	33	5	8	2	3
o.	Use learning centers with LEP students. (n=51)	7	7	12	14	11
p.	Use technology in lessons. (n=53)	3	6	14	19	11

Section 5: Open-Ended Questions

16. Please explain your rating of the overall usefulness/value of the ISLA Certification Institute you attended.

Q#16 – Explanation of Overall Value of Online Course
The online course prepared me to pass the ESL supplement test. I also learned ways to improve my teaching ability for ESL and all other students.
The usefulness and value of the ESL course will prepare me to take the certification test.
Very valuable information provided. Prepared me to succeed on the ExCET Test.
The ease and accessibility, as well as the content proved a useful tool toward achieving certification in this area.
I easily passed the EXCET with no other preparation than the course.
It helped me to pass my EXCET test.
I feel the ESL course helped me better prepare for the test.
It made me more aware of ELLs' struggles in the regular classroom. It prepared me for the EXCET test.
The course provided the knowledge to pass the test.
The online course was very helpful in gaining knowledge about the ESL program and LEP students. It was very professionally handled. I really liked the chats that were required to get questions answered. I loved the self paced, flexible schedule. The information was very helpful in passing the ExCET test.
Information was provided in a meaningful way which allowed me to think about the way that I teach my students.
Not only does the information gained from the course allow me to better serve our ELL students, but also other at-risk students.
The readings and assessments of the course really familiarized me with the ESL content material. I am so grateful I was able to take part in this program.
The course flowed smoothly from one topic to another, expanding our knowledge of ESL services, laws, student language acquisition, assessment, etc. Resources provided are useful and available when needed. Much of the content is relevant to any classroom.
The information I received was very useful in my current job as District ESL coordinator and my interactions with ESL students.
It has helped me realize the challenges that my ESL (not officially labeled) students have when learning English.
I felt this course was very helpful and I received valuable information from this online course.
It has been invaluable to me in my job.
I understand much information after this course.
Taking the course allowed me to work at my own pace. I became more aware of ESL cultures and the language concept as well as language acquisition. It will definitely help me in the future when I have an ESL student.
The online course provided access to excellent readings on relevant and current research on the teaching of ELLs. I learned a lot from those readings and they also supported much of what I intuitively felt about ELL instruction in the first place.
The course was helpful to gain knowledge about ELL students.
It has a direct influence on my day-to-day interaction with students who are ELLs and on students with limited language skills who are English speaking.
When I first began the class I asked the professor if this course covered the test I would take to teach ESL. The course mostly covered the history of ESL. I was glad to have the background of the class though.

Q#16 – Explanation of Overall Value of Online Course
I enjoyed learning at my own pace and relating the material learned to students in my class.
Compared to studies offered by regional service centers, this online course was optimal with information. I had 4 notebooks to their one - plenty of research and resources.
It gave a lot of information about the different domains (regarding ESL). The material explained more than some classes I have taken.
Very in-depth.
Good information; Instructor was very helpful.
I enjoyed the online discussions with others that had experienced the students struggling and the teaching techniques/strategies they used.
I loved the content and the flexibility.
I thought it was very easy to navigate through the information which made it easier to understand.
I took the course seriously, worked hard, and supplemented by attending workshops. As part of my "plan of attack" the course was great.
The course provided readings, suggested links to useful websites, interaction from other students.
The steps to each section were quick, simple, understandable; the connect among participants was awesome support and the website was consistent in accessibility.
I'm glad to have a certification that broadens my teaching.
The course was very useful.
It was very user friendly and all the information has come to great use.
I am moving schools and it made me more marketable.
I learned so much through the readings and power point presentations.
It was a good experience and a lot of info.
The interaction with others during the course was extremely helpful. If I had questions, I was able to visit with the instructor during the online chat times.
It was very good.
It was online, so it fits a teachers busy schedule. It gave excellent information and opportunities to chat with others. It even gave me study sheets for the exam.
The very fact that I was able to self pace and communicate through postings was invaluable to me. I was traveling throughout the summer and being able to access my course online was great! I couldn't have taken a class "face to face" last summer.
I have changed schools since taking the course and I don't come into contact with ESL students like I did in my other school. I do use what I learned in the course to help students who are struggling in my social studies class.
Full of excellent material--My only problem was not knowing what I missed on the quizzes.
I learned a lot through the course and I just would have liked more clarification on some of the articles.
The strategies discussed are very general in their applicability.
If you are self-motivated you will do fine. If you are familiar with computers you will do fine.
I learned a lot of strategies to use in the classroom, but I missed having classroom discussions.
This was a harder course to take compared to other courses offered for this same certification. It took a lot longer to complete. I did probably learn more, though.
I enjoyed the course, the information, etc. However, the readings were overwhelming for a working person, trying to stay ahead of the weekly assignments and tests. I would have preferred that all additional readings be given to us at the end of class so that we could read at our leisure and not feel that we had to read all of the materials to take the quizzes and keep up with the class.
I rated the course average because some of the instruction/teachings left me with questions that would have been better answered through face-to-face interactions.

Q#16 – Explanation of Overall Value of Online Course
It took a great deal of time. Could have gotten the same benefit from less reading.
There was an awful lot of reading and it was hard to fit it in with my schedule.
The beginning segments of the course were extremely difficult and would have been better offered after we had already explored what was familiar (foundations and historical info), easing us into the new terrain. I don't think some of it was necessary to anyone but a speech therapist.
All the information was overwhelming. This class would be better to have in a classroom instead of online.
The amount of reading expected was beyond my schedule capabilities; mainly because I got a late start and had difficulty keeping up. If I had not enrolled in the course, however, I would probably not have sought the ESL certification since we had to pay the region center back if we got out of the class. It was my first experience with an online course and it was not as easy as it was presented to our staff by the principal who himself did not participate.
It is the first course I have taken online; so I don't have an experience to compare it to.

22. What components of the TAMUS online ESL course *most enabled* you to assist LEP students?

Q#22: Components of Institute that Most Enabled Assisting LEP Students
Resources
The resources made available in our readings most enabled me to assist LEP students.
Online discussions.
The learning modules.
The different types of activities for LEP students.
The online chats.
Online chat - I enjoyed knowing about other classes and experiences.
The components that helped me most were the many examples of ways to teach and present the information for the students to learn at their level and how they each learn best.
Lesson plans; newcomers objectives; modifications.
The strategies to help ESL students - hands-on, reading, vocabulary, etc.
Competency 8 strategies.
Teaching strategies that develop vocabulary.
Content
Sheltered Instruction Strategies 4 components - Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.
Vocabulary needs--discussion of the kids and their vocabulary needs in the classroom.
Learning about cultural differences.
Cultural Awareness enabled me to better assist these children in the learning process.
Awareness of culture; teaching strategies - reminded again and again.
Because I teach art most of these questions don't apply to my situation. Understanding the sequence of response of new language learners was the most helpful (understanding not speaking may be their not understanding, not just being quiet.)
The cultural and philosophical aspects of ESL education. The explanation of how second language learners learn.
I think what most enabled me to help them was learning the background knowledge about the ideas that researchers have come up with and how to use their ideas in the classroom.
Understanding how ESL students best learn on instructional lessons.
The progression of the ESL student into our system helped me to be aware of their growth and needs. It also helped me to be more explicit in my teaching.
Language concepts and language acquisition; ESL instruction of ESL strategies.

Q#22: Components of Institute that Most Enabled Assisting LEP Students
I was glad to have had the opportunity to take this course. The instructor was helpful. Classroom teachers need lots of hands-on ideas. I think the course made me more aware in an in-depth way.
Covered all of the theory. The ability to network with others taking the class and the teachers - exchange of ideas is a very strong feature of online.
A lot of good information on how students learn and what to look for in each student each step of the learning process for ESL. Lots of suggestions on how to teach ESL. Other teachers postings were useful also.
The components which I found most enabled my services to my LEP students were the lessons on language acquisition and ESL instruction. These components helped me to regroup/refocus my lessons.
Not sure; the levels of transition were worth studying.
I think all components were useful, and I especially think the readings were useful in enabling me to assist LEP students.
The concepts revolving around their incomplete academic development of their primary language and how that effects instruction.
The language concepts, language acquisition, and ESL instruction and assessment components helped me most to assist LEP students.
Information that gave me ideas and activities to use in my classroom.
Explaining the importance of 1st language and the parents' role. My school is not equipped with resources for other languages, so I do the best to include their first language. Unfortunately, I don't speak any other language.
Other
Format - PowerPoint; Easy to understand and logically organized.
The ideas from other teachers.
None

23. **What component(s) of the TAMUS online ESL course were *least useful* to you for assisting LEP students?**

Q#23: Least Useful Components for Assisting LEP Students
Content/Structure
Information about specific ways sounds made ...fricatives, affricatives, etc.
Length of the course--I think I could have gotten the same benefit from a shorter course.
Background reading.
The prep for the ExCET.
Foundation of ESL education.
The history of the development of ESL processes and programs.
All the information on linguistics really didn't help me with the ESL students. There were only a few pieces of information that I felt were beneficial to me.
Some readings couldn't be downloaded - not sure why.
Questions were not answered immediately.
Components directed toward a large group as I have only one student.
While I found all components useful, if I had to rate one as least useful, it would be online chats. No one was ever available for chats and responses posted on the message board often went unnoticed.
Other
At this time, I can not think of any component that was least useful.

Q#23: Least Useful Components for Assisting LEP Students
I think that it was all very useful.
I loved everything about the course.
None
None
None
None
I found all components helped me in some way.
Can't think of any.
None - I felt all are very important in some way or another.
I believe all components of the course helped me to assist my LEP students.
I found it all useful.
All the components were good for my class.
Really, I feel that all components were necessary and useful because of the systematic way that I was enlightened by theories, research, and then case scenarios and strategies. Compared to what is offered through educational service centers, this information was substantial and appreciated.
The whole course was thoughtful and informative. I can't pinpoint anything that was not useful.
All was useful to me to gain a better understanding of LEP students.
I cannot think of any. There was a lot of reading (helped me to understand better) but nonetheless, still a lot. We divided reading between several, then reported back to each other.
The course and its ideas were wonderful but the main thing that keeps me from doing all the things I should is time.

24. **What factors at your school do you feel *supported* your efforts to implement what you learned from the TAMUS online ESL course?**

Q#24: Factors at the Schools that Supported Implementation
School Administration/Staff
They paid for the course.
Administrative support from the tech department was my biggest support.
Pretty much, I get to decide the format of what I teach. So, I can do what I want, as long as I have clear objectives and my students are progressing in the areas they are weakest in.
The Bilingual/ESL Director being located on our campus.
The support from administration to support my students, taking risks, doing a lot of face-to-face interaction with real people, animals etc., to get hands-on learning.
The support from administration.
I have very good support with ESL assistance and extra help during math instruction.
Our school has had a 50/50 bilingual program for at least 7 years. The district encouraged and encourages individuals to obtain their ESL endorsement.
Open-minded administration; Positive ESL reinforcement.
The staff, administration, and being supplied what I needed to teach successfully. Strong support system.
The school is supporting the teacher with new information about ESL programs and trainings.
A supportive administration allowed me to implement what I learned.
We have a supportive administration, materials available, and other teacher support.
My campus coordinator has taken the load of non-English speaking students and grouping them in her instruction which has spared me. Now I have just received my first non-English speaking student and my coordinator and I work closely to meet the student's needs.

Q#24: Factors at the Schools that Supported Implementation
The factor would have to be no student left behind. Every student should be able to succeed no matter what the obstacles they come to meet. Our school believes in this.
We have a strong ESL program in our district.
The creation of ESL class at campus; more diverse population.
The fact that it's a requirement in our school district. We did not have a choice.
Very high percentage of ELL students.
Growing ESL population; principal.
My school is not very supportive of what I have learned. They are worried about funding.
Other
Getting certification.
Scholarship opportunity; knowing that ESL training would benefit most of my students because I have at-risk and low socio-economic students.
We have a wonderful parent organization that involves bilingual parents in our school.
Centers that I had done with the children seemed to increase their understanding so I introduced more ideas and it has really seemed to help their understanding in many areas.
Knowing that I have a class of ESL learners helps me to be more aware of their needs and learning styles.
It benefited me to see instruction and language acquisition broken down. Also, to not assume my kids have been exposed to all cultural references.
I no longer teach at the school where what I learned from the course would have been useful. There would have been very little support.
I am able to use what I learned inside my own classroom and also as a new member of our LPAC committee. I have a better opportunity to voice ideas and improvements.
Our students are 100% integrated into an English speaking situation. I was already doing things like making a word wall with vocabulary words and pointing out similarities/differences to known words. And almost all lessons in my classroom involve a hands-on demonstration accompanied by language, and hands on activities as follow-ups for the students.

25. **What factors at your school do you feel *hindered* your efforts to implement what you learned from the TAMUS online ESL course?**

Q#25: Factors at the Schools that Hindered Implementation
School/District Factors
Lack of District Administrative support.
Just the nature of our program--I am a teacher at an alternative school.
Not all faculty understood the concept; they had little or no training.
Overlapping of students from different groups, such as ELL and Special Ed. Together.
I felt completely hindered in my efforts, due to reticence to change, misperceptions about ELL instruction, attitudes about speaking Spanish, and what I felt was an undercurrent of "benevolent bigotry." Also, a lack of awareness of what current research indicates is effective instruction.
I do have one translator for conferences, but not lessons or written communication.
It would help me to be more involved with the current ESL teacher.
I do not have any ESL instruction materials. I do have a workbook of one level and a book of another. This is not the year for adoption of ESL materials.
Not knowing which students are LEP... no one gives us such a list despite my having requested one!!
None

Q#25: Factors at the Schools that Hindered Implementation
None
None
None
None
None
None
None
None
None
None
None
Nothing
There was nothing that hindered my efforts.
I did not think or do not think that there are any conditions that have hindered or would hinder the things learned.
Other
Scheduling of time.
Time in the day.
Time. I work with small groups of children in all grade levels based on the needs of the entire student body. I only see them for about 40 - 45 minutes a day, 4 days a week. There is just so much I can do in that time. We primarily work on reading skills.
The inability to get forms and take home letters for students' parents, written in their home language. And the inability to have someone available to help me with parent conferences from the district level because I only have a few students with different languages.
Factors which hindered my efforts were (1) a very low percentage of students being classified as ESL; (2) My ESL student's reluctance to learn because he was new to Texas schools; (3) My ESL student's moving back to Ohio.
I feel that the parents of a lot of my bilingual students do not oversee their child's homework - is it completed? The value they place on their child's grades does not seem to be at the same level as our other parents. I feel that this is the ESL student's biggest hindrance.
I am in a "mainstreamed" classroom so I do not teach the LEP students who are newcomers to our country. I can only help those who have improved to "advanced" or "advanced high." Not that I am hindered, but I only have a portion of our ESL children. We have another teacher who teaches the LEP children that are beginners in the English language. She does a wonderful job; I now can help her if needed but mainly my instruction will help me with the ESL/LEP that have "graduated" out of her class into mine.
I had trouble getting some of the reading assignments to come up and other technical difficulties.

Appendix F

- Site Visit Interview Protocol: District/Region Coordinator

- Site Visit Interview Protocol: Campus Administrator

- Site Visit Interview Protocol: Teacher Interview/Focus Group

Site Visit Interview Protocol
District/Region Coordinator

Thank you for participating in the evaluation study of the Limited English Proficient Student Success Initiative (LEP SSI) grant program conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL).

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the implementation of trainings and support services offered through Texas A&M University System's (TAMUS) Institute for Second Language Achievement (ISLA) related to LEP SSI grants funded by the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

1. **Role in LEP SSI grant program:**

   a) What is/was your role in the LEP SSI grant program in your district? (or in your region – for the ESC interview)

   b) What was your plan for administering the grant program funds in schools in your district? (or districts in your region – for the ESC interview) (e.g., how did you choose the districts/schools, who was your primary focus – administrators, teachers, students – for the grant program, what were your objectives, etc.)

   c) Did your plan for administering the grant program funds proceed as expected?

   d) Are there some grade levels or campuses that receive more grant funds than others? If yes, why?

   e) Do you have/did you have enough personnel funded by the grant to carry out the planned objectives in your district's schools? (or region's districts and schools – for ESC interview) If not, how did you compensate for that situation, and how did that work?

2. **Program Description/Elements:**

   a) After having reviewed the program objectives for your district (or for your ESC), can you tell me how you addressed those objectives with the LEP SSI grant funds. *(Provide cues from documents if needed.)*

   b) To what degree was your program plan fully implemented?

   c) Have you used any of the services that ISLA/TAMUS offers to meet your program objectives? If so, which ones? *(Ask about the following if not brought up.)* And, how helpful were those services?

      o Professional development opportunities?
         - Online ESL/bilingual certification preparation courses?

- ESL/bilingual certification preparation institute training workshops?
- Other workshops on instructional strategies for teaching ESL students?

  o Materials and resources from ISLA for improving student learning?
  o ESL program consultation from ISLA (e.g., performance analysis of ESL students)?
  o Web site resources generated through ISLA for ESL instruction/learning?

d) Tell me a little about the assistance or support you provide/provided to your campuses (or districts for ESC) that are/were involved in the grant program.

3. Outcomes:

a) What are some of the positive effects that have occurred through the grant program? *(Ask about the following if not touched on.)*

  o Improved ESL instructional practices?
  o More ESL certified teachers in your district (or region)?
  o Improvements in ESL student performance?

b) Were there any unintended negative effects that occurred?

c) How have you documented the effect of the grant program on students? *(e.g., what assessment instruments are/were used to show changes in students; are/were both pre- and post-assessments being used?)*

d) How have you documented program effects related to ESL/bilingual teachers (in addition to whether they become certified in ESL)?

e) What, if any, obstacles did you encounter implementing the grant program? (If obstacles, how did you/are you trying to overcome them?)

4. Other:

a) What has been done to sustain any parts of the grant program in your district (or region)? Are there concerns as to program sustainability?

b) Are there other things/support (that ISLA/TAMUS could provide) that would be useful for you or the district/school staff? (This question may not be appropriate if the ESC/district/campus is no longer receiving LEP SSI funds.)

c) Are there any other comments you would like to make about the grant program that we have not covered in this conversation?

Site Visit Interview Protocol
Campus Administrator(s)

Thank you for participating in the evaluation study of the Limited English Proficient Student Success Initiative (LEP SSI) grant program conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL).

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the implementation of trainings and support services offered through Texas A&M University System's (TAMUS) Institute for Second Language Achievement (ISLA) related to LEP SSI grants funded by TEA.

1. **Role in LEP SSI grant program:**

    a) What is/was your role in the LEP SSI grant program at your school?

    b) What other staff in your school are/were involved with the administration of the program and what were their roles?

2. **Program Description/Elements:**

    a) I've reviewed the objectives of the grant program for your school. Can you tell me how you are addressing (or did address) school needs and the objectives with the LEP SSI grant funds. *(Provide cues from document if needed.)*

    b) To what degree have the grant program elements been implemented as originally planned. (Explain)

    c) What services have you used through ISLA/TAMUS to address the grant program objectives? *(Ask about the following if not brought up.)* And, how helpful were they?
        o   Professional development opportunities for teachers?

            *   Online ESL/bilingual certification preparation courses?
            *   ESL/bilingual certification preparation institute training workshops?
            *   Other workshops on instructional strategies for teaching ESL students?

        o   Materials and resources from ISLA for improving student learning?

        o   ESL program consultation from ISLA (e.g., performance analysis of ESL students)?

        o   Web site resources generated through ISLA for ESL instruction/learning?

d) Tell me a little about the assistance or support you ***provide/provided*** to your teachers that are/were involved in the grant program.

e) Tell me a little about the assistance/support you ***receive/received*** from your district?

3. Outcomes:

a) What are some of the positive effects that have occurred through the grant program? *(Ask about the following if not touched on.)*

- o Improved ESL instructional practices?
- o More ESL certified teachers at your school?
- o Improvements in ESL student performance?

b) Were there any unintended negative effects that occurred?

c) How have you documented the effect of the grant program on your students? *(e.g., what assessment instruments are/were used to show changes in students; are/were both pre- and post-assessments being used?)*

d) How have you documented program effects related to ESL/bilingual teachers (in addition to whether they become certified in ESL)?

e) What, if any, obstacles did you encounter implementing the grant program? (If obstacles, how did you/are you trying to overcome them?)

4. Other:

a) What has been done to sustain any parts of the grant program in your school? Are there concerns as to program sustainability?

b) Are there other things/support (that ISLA could provide) that would be useful to you or your teachers? (This may not be appropriate question if the campus is no longer receiving LEP SSI funds.)

c) Are there any other comments you would like to make about the grant program that we have not covered in this conversation?

Site Visit Interview/Focus Group Protocol
Teacher(s)

Thank you for participating in the evaluation study of the Limited English Proficient Student Success Initiative (LEP SSI) grant program conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL).

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the implementation of trainings and support services offered through Texas A&M University System's (TAMUS) Institute for Second Language Achievement (ISLA) related to LEP SSI grants funded by TEA.

1. **Program Description/Elements:**

   a) After having reviewed the implementation plan (or program application) for your school with respect to the Limited English Proficient Student Success Initiative program, do you feel that the program is addressing the objectives detailed in the implementation plan/program application? Can you provide some examples?
   (Provide cues from document if needed.)

   b) Have you used any of the services that ISLA/TAMUS offers to assist you with ESL/bilingual instruction? If so, which ones? *(Ask about the following if not brought up.)*

      o Professional development opportunities for teachers?

         • Online ESL/bilingual certification preparation courses?
         • ESL/bilingual certification preparation institute training workshops?
         • Other workshops on instructional strategies for teaching ESL students?

      o Materials and resources for improving student learning?

      o ESL program consultation from ISLA (e.g., performance analysis of ESL students)?

      o Web site resources generated through TAMUS or ISLA for ESL instruction/learning?

   c) Tell me a little about the assistance or support you receive(d) during the grant program that helps/helped you better work with your ESL students:
      o from your school administrator(s)
      o from the district staff that are/were involved in the grant program

2. Outcomes:

a) Have you found the services and/or materials (from ISLA/TAMUS) to be helpful to you? Why or why not?

b) What kinds of things are you doing differently since receiving services and/or materials (through ISLA/TAMUS)?

c) What are some of the positive effects that have occurred through the grant program for you and other ESL teachers at your school?
(Ask about the following if not touched on by teachers.)

- o   Ability to better assist ESL students?
- o   Improved instructional practices?
- o   More ESL certified teachers at your school?
- o   Improvements in ESL student performance?

d) Were there any unintended negative effects that occurred?

e) How are you/have you been documenting the effects that the grant program is having (or had) on your ESL students? *(e.g., what assessment instruments are/were used to show changes in students; are/were both pre- and post-assessments being used?)*

f) What, if any, obstacles did you encounter implementing the grant program? (If obstacles, are there things that were (or could have been) done to overcome them?)

3. Other:

a) What has been done to sustain any parts of the grant program in your school? Are there concerns as to program sustainability?

b) Are there other things/support (that ISLA/TAMUS could provide) that would be useful to you or other ESL teachers? (May not be appropriate question if campus no longer receiving LEP SSI funds.)

c) Are there any other comments you would like to make about the grant program that we have not covered in this conversation?

Appendix G

- Site Visit Summary: Hays ISD, San Marcos, TX

- Site Visit Summary: Northside ISD, San Antonio, TX

- Site Visit Summary: Education Service Center, Region 12, Waco, TX

Site Visit Summary for Hays ISD, San Marcos, TX

KEY FINDINGS DISTRICT/REGION COORDINATOR INTERVIEW

ROLE IN LEP SSI GRANT PROGRAM

Bilingual Coordinator, Hays CISD.
Responsible for: writing and coordinating grant, implementation of grant, and overseeing data analysis.

District bilingual instructional strategist for Elementary level with additional instructional strategist hired to assist teachers at individual campuses.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/ELEMENTS

Grant coordinator along with Bilingual Advisory Council, looked at TAKS scores, RPTE scores, and TELPAS to identify areas in need of improvement. By using State Performance Base Monitoring System which identified needs of areas and groups, Secondary needs of academic instruction became evident, so target area became Secondary with the inclusion of the Elementary 5th grade Science which was also identified as area in need of improvement. The grant program has worked out as planned and is fully implemented.

The objectives were addressed through the LEP SSI grant funds in the following manner:
- Provided support for new teachers
- Bought Science content area readers in Spanish as supplemental readers
- Provided content intervention resources for 2nd language learners
- Made tutoring available
- Secondary Instructional Strategists assisted in secondary academic instruction
- Intervention teachers assisted with content and language development

The following services were provided by ISLA/TAMUS to meet program objectives:
- Elementary teachers attended ESL trainings and participated in institute
- Four teachers took the online ESL/bilingual certification course
- Best Practices, CALLA, sheltered instruction workshops
- Yes, used website resources to train teachers

Support and Assistance
Assistance and support was given by discussing budget with principals and looking at the number of ESL students and their needs in terms of tutoring. Also, by providing SIOP professional development and allocating funds for resources and materials based on needs, i.e., Rosetta Stone and science supplemental readers.

Outcomes

Positive effects that occurred through the grant program:

- More professional development opportunities regarding best practices for ESL students is provided
- Four ESL teachers certified
- Higher success rates in RPTE and TAKS scores and an awareness of needs from Superintendent to teachers. Everyone hears about results of grant. District is sensitive to needs and allocates resources where needed i.e., Rosetta Stone and Science readers needed as supplemental resources.

Unintended negative effects are that although substitutes were paid for by LEP SSI grant funds, many principals did not want to allow their teachers to attend trainings offered and there seems to be resistance on their behalf. The effect of the grant program on students is documented by student success rates on RPTE, TAKS, LAS, and TELPAS assessments. With teachers this is documented by their verbal compliance, ensuring that they are certified, and attending the trainings. The obstacles encountered are in finding the right person(s) to serve as content interventionists and tutors. Additionally, realizing the importance of sharing the responsibility of student achievement.

Sustainability

There is an effort to extract funds from various sources in order to sustain efforts set forth by grant and an increased concern that without the grant there will be fewer funds to pull from. Thus, fewer funds will be available for content intervention specialists, for professional development opportunities for teachers, for providing tutoring, and for travel.

Other

A concern was expressed that without ISLA/TAMUS's support through professional development, the grant implementation would not have been as effective.

Other Notes: Issues/Concerns with Interview

Interview was informative; however, the grant coordinator expressed that she has already been through several grant evaluators and was hesitant when contacted initially as well as throughout the interview. In her demeanor, there was hesitation and she expressed feelings of unnecessarily having to go through this.

KEY FINDINGS CAMPUS ADMINISTRATOR(S)

ROLE IN LEP SSI GRANT PROGRAM

Principal of Wallace Middle School, Hays CISD.
Responsible for supporting the ESL Teacher who provides content support in classroom and the Instructional Strategist who assists teachers on implementation of SIOP strategies that benefit ESL students.

Principal of Lehman High, Hays CISD.
Responsible for the implementation of grant as designed, to hold teachers and staff accountable, allocate grant funds appropriately, and the hiring of staff. She works with the Content Intervention Specialist who works with ESL students in the New Arrival Center. The morning is geared for ESOL, Speech, Public Speaking, and Reading and the afternoon is geared at providing inclusion in the content areas.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/ELEMENTS

The objectives were addressed through the LEP SSI grant funds in the following manner:
- Content intervention, support via inclusion for students
- SIOP training and monitoring through student assessment and benchmarks
- Monitoring reports are used to ascertain level of student success in sheltered instruction
- Content intervention for student success in Science and through SIOP and inclusion
- Tutoring, after school
- Assistance with TAKS scores for secondary students through SIOP training and ESL instructional strategies
- Assistance with RPTE scores through SIOP training and ESL instructional strategies
- Teacher training in sheltered instruction
- All core teachers received professional development in SIOP during summer
- Tutoring and Content Intervention
- Technology
- Benchmark testing to better prepare students
- RPTE scores to gauge progress of second language development
- SIOP training for all teachers working with ESL students

The grant has been implemented as planned.

The following services from ISLA/TAMUS have been used to address the grant program objectives:
- SIOP training for teachers, summer institutes
- National Trainer of Trainers Program and follow-ups on SIOP training
- Best Practices Conference
- Training on ESL Instructional Strategies

- Professional development for certification sought through sources other than ISLA/TAMUS
- Workshops: Content teachers in Language Arts, Math, Science went through training for ESL students aside from SIOP and without certification
- Best Practices Handbook
- Have used website as a resource for providing teacher training and from the website, "Best Practices" handbook was obtained and used for teacher training

Support and Assistance
The following support/assistance was provided to the teachers:

Assistance was provided by working with scheduling for best possible collaboration between ESL teacher and content area teachers. Additional assistance was provided with logistics such as scheduling, providing materials and resources for New Arrival students, technology, equipment and financial support. Further, support provided on being an advocate for ESL students and helping meet their needs while providing emotional support to teachers and students.

The following support/assistance was received from the district:

Training was provided for the instructional strategist on campus, including returning to respective campuses and providing training in sheltered instruction and SIOP to teachers working with ESL students. There was an awareness and support for teachers, as well as, resources provided for the campus. Additionally, there was motivation and direction and they provided data for student success.

Outcomes
Positive effects that have occurred through the grant program:
- Training for ESL teacher and for instructional strategist on campus providing the awareness of the ESL population needs
- Awareness for teachers as well as Content Intervention Specialist and paraprofessional support staff
- More teachers became interested in the ESL population
- Scores were increased due to professional development
- Resources to help improve learning there were improvements in the scores on RPTE and TAKS

There were no unintended negative effects. The grant program is documented by student assessments such as RPTE and TAKS, as well as benchmarks and student grades. The grant program effects related to ESL/bilingual teachers is documented through walk-throughs, evidenced and included in lesson plans, as well as by support provided by the ESL teacher to the content area teachers in need of it. Additionally, one teacher is now ESL certified because of his/her desire to be involved with Newcomers program as it is viewed as a prestigious program to belong to.

The obstacles encountered were the need for more support on how to efficiently use the strategies as well as appropriate modeling of strategies. There was uncertainty as to how to provide content intervention for the teachers, as well as inclusion but through training, this was learned and implemented. Obstacles were encountered in identifying the most effective SIOP trained teachers that would provide the best instruction possible along with the scheduling and logistics that it entails.

Sustainability
The content area specialist, as well as the ESL teacher will remain including all of the SIOP professional development attained and put into use. Resources and materials purchased through the grant funds such as Rosetta Stone will continue as will trainings in ESL strategies that will be supported by the district.

Concerns about Sustainability: Providing support for students by maximizing staff so that there are a smaller number of students in content classes, hence, improved student teacher ratio.

Other
Providing content area support through means of professional development would continue to be useful to teachers. This continuation of professional development opportunities for teachers, as well as follow-up trainings are essential. The Newcomer Center is a great initiative and accomplished/developed through the LEP SSI grant funds.

Other Notes: Issues/Concerns with Interview
Administrators were grateful about having the opportunity to participate in the LEP SSI grant program and expressed hopes of extending the grant.

KEY FINDINGS TEACHER FOCUS GROUP

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/ELEMENTS

The objectives were addressed through the LEP SSI grant funds in the following manner:

- Provided SIOP training for teachers while reinforcing skills for them
- Provided tutoring services focusing on content areas (i.e., math, science for content mastery)
- Inclusion for content mastery
- SIOP classrooms
- Tutoring

The following are services that ISLA/TAMUS provides to assist with ESL/Bilingual instruction:

- Received National Training of Trainers sponsored by ISLA and paid for by LEP SSI grant funds
- Professional development offered on SIOP strategies
- Instructional strategies for addressing ESL students
- Attended Thomas and Collier professional development opportunity
- Attended Math and Science Symposium
- Resources such as Readers Handbook, CALLA, SIOP, National Geographic for Social Studies, Rosetta Stone
- Resources from ISLA/TAMUS are used by district personnel to provide professional development for teachers

Support and Assistance

Support received during the grant program from school administrator(s) included:

- Support for model of professional development
- Efforts regarding teacher professional development and teacher assistance were supported by campus principal(s)
- Arranging schedules to allow for planning to take place between 2 district middle schools for a full day including planning for SIOP content area strategies in the morning
- Support for SIOP trainings, including paying for substitutes through LEP SSI grant funds
- Providing an instructional strategist to assist content area teachers and be involved in planning effective strategies to work with LEP population

Support received during the grant program from the district staff that are/were involved in the grant program included:

- Support for model of professional development
- Resources, materials and software received from district
- Resources such as Rosetta Stone to increase the levels of language proficiency
- Spanish dictionaries, US and World History resources dealing with ESL learners
- Providing professional development opportunities

Outcomes
Services and/or materials from ISLA/TAMUS helped increase scores on RPTE and TAKS. Things being done differently since receiving the services include the opportunities for professional development offered and the growth in knowledge with the SIOP trainings, as well as the after school tutoring to assist ESL students.

Positive effects that have occurred through the grant program for teachers at campus include the following:
- Ability to better assist ESL students by having sheltered classrooms
- Extra tutoring opportunities offered
- Improved instructional practices from looking at ESL as remediation to looking at ESL as enrichment
- Improved instructional practices that have increased student levels of understanding and comfort
- Improved instructional practices through collaboration of interventionist, content area teachers, and ESL teachers
- Because of professional development opportunities such as SIOP there are better informed and equipped teachers.
- Students success rates in TAKS scores and RPTE have increased

Unintended negative effects are the need to help some teachers make connections, particularly veteran teachers, who are intimidated with learning a 2nd language. Also, students may be taken out of elective courses for content instruction when these courses are also important. The effects the grant program is having on the ESL students has been documented by increased scores on the RPTE, TAKS and other benchmarks used by district. Additionally, an ESL tracking/monitoring document was developed to ascertain student progress and to diagnose areas in need of improvement for future instruction. Obstacles encountered that are being worked out deal with logistics such as scheduling.

Sustainability
SIOP training provided will be sustained and continued through other funds and the content area interventionist on the campuses which will have to be assumed by district or Title III funds. The LEP SSI grant program was valuable in providing the awareness of the need for such services and personnel. With the LEP SSI grant there are 2 ESL teachers for ½ day as well as 1 content intervention teacher who has half of her salary paid by LEP SSI grant funds.

Sustainability concerns: Having funds to sustain an ESL teacher and content intervention teacher which can hopefully be assumed by district budget.

Other
Teachers expressed that they would like to continue to be provided with resources and professional development opportunities, as well as TAKS resources geared for second language learners.

Other Notes: Issue/Concerns with Interview
Teachers and instructional strategist were very positive about the benefits of the LEP SSI grant program and compliment the awareness and success it has had on their campuses.

Key Campus Observational Notes

STAFF ACTIVITIES

I observed an ESL class for beginners and recent arrivals, where students were given content and language objectives. In this class the teacher was having students learn to use verb tenses appropriately, to use accessible language, and learn new and essential language in the process. She encouraged them to use their prior knowledge and to use what they know in English and Spanish, as well as cognates. She provided them with practical sentences that they could easily understand. I observed another classroom where the students were discussing the use of simple machines in a science content area classroom. The teacher used the overhead to describe vocabulary for simple machines. They focused on different uses of vocabulary words, their meanings in English and in Spanish. The teacher(s) assisted students by translating words for them and by providing examples to increase their comprehension.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

In each classroom, the students responded by working on the assignments. They continuously sought one another's assistance and used each other as resources to achieve the tasks. They conversed with one another often and many times used their background knowledge and their first language to better understand the task at hand. It was evident that students were at different levels of English language proficiency. The teacher(s) assisted as necessary and allowed them to question one another about the assignment or about certain word usage. They were careful about pronouncing words correctly and accepted one another's attempts at tackling new vocabulary. They often asked the students that were more proficient in English for assistance with word meanings or words that they were not sure how to pronounce.

In one of the classrooms I observed, as the students finished the assignment, they were to begin working on the Rosetta Stone software on the computers located in the classroom.

Other

It was evident that the students were very confident with their abilities and shared their expanding vocabulary with each other. They often asked each other for the meanings/pronunciations of words. They helped each other.

Overall Summary

Evaluator's Comments of LEP SSI Program Administration:
The district staff and campus administrators are able to collaboratively accomplish the objectives set forth by the grant. The district staff oversees the program and that the objectives are being achieved at the various campuses i.e. that they are receiving the necessary tutoring, the use of instructional strategist and the supplemental science readers. The campus administrators oversee that the program objectives are being met at their respective campuses by making certain that the appropriate roles are being followed by each person, for example, that the instructional strategist is working with the ESL and content area teachers utilizing SIOP strategist that benefit ESL students.

Evaluator's Comments of LEP SSI Program Implementation:
The program services, i.e., summer SIOP training, follow-up SIOP training, sheltered instruction training, training on ESL practices, National Trainer of Trainers Program and tutoring that were to be implemented because of the grant were all implemented.

Secondary needs of academic instruction became evident so target area became Secondary with the inclusion of the Elementary 5th grade Science, also identified as area in need of improvement. The grant program has worked out as planned and is fully implemented.

Most helpful was the planning between the content area teachers and the ESL teachers that took place, the materials and resources that were provided to the schools, the follow-up training that takes place to ensure successful implementation of SIOP strategies, as well as the development of the New Arrival Center for LEP for students who have recently migrated to the district. The obstacles encountered at the beginning of the grant period were (1) a need for more support on how to efficiently use sheltered instruction, as well as appropriate modeling of strategies, (2) uncertainty as to how to provide content intervention for the teachers, as well as inclusion, but through training this was learned and implemented, (3) difficulty in identifying the most effective SIOP trained teachers who could provide the best instruction possible, along with the scheduling and logistics that are entailed. An effort was made to have a good mix of personalities that could work collaboratively with the common goal in mind, which is to provide the best instruction for ESL students.

Assistance and support was given by district administrators by discussing budget with principals and looking at the number of ESL students and their needs, and by providing SIOP professional development and allocating funds for resources and materials based on needs, i.e., Rosetta Stone, dictionaries, and other classroom resources. Assistance was provided by campus principals by working with scheduling for best possible collaboration between ESL teacher and content area teachers. Additional assistance was provided with materials and resources for ESL students and those in the New Arrival Center, such as Spanish dictionaries, US and World History resources, and science supplemental readers. There was motivation and direction and they provided data for student success.

Evaluator's Comments of LEP SSI Program Effectiveness:
The impact of the program involves higher success rates in RPTE and TAKS scores. Also, student data is disseminated to all stakeholders involved from the Superintendent to the teachers. This allows everyone to be informed about the needs of ESL students and gains made because of the LEP SSI grant program funds. District has now become more sensitive to needs and allocates resources where necessary i.e., Rosetta Stone and Science readers needed as supplemental resources. Additionally, a mind frame has taken place in which ESL is viewed as enrichment instead of as a remediation and there is now knowledge of and implementation of improved instructional practices for ESL students that have increased student levels of understanding and comfort. These improved practices are facilitated through the collaboration that takes place between the instructional strategists, content area teachers, and ESL teachers.

The effect of the grant program on students is evidenced by increased student success rates on RPTE, TAKS, LAS, and TELPAS assessments, as well as by district benchmarks and student grades. The effect of the grant program on teachers is evidenced by ensuring that they are certified and attend the designated professional development trainings. Additionally, this is documented through walk-throughs and is evidenced in their lesson plans.

Evaluator's Comments of LEP SSI Program Sustainability:
SIOP training provided will be sustained and continued through other funds. Sustaining the content area interventionist on the campuses will have to be assumed by district or Title III funds. The LEP SSI grant program was valuable in providing the awareness of the need for such services. With the LEP SSI grant there are 2 ESL teachers for ½ day as well as 1 content intervention teacher who has half of her salary paid by LEP SSI grant funds. There is an effort to extract funds from various sources in order to sustain efforts set forth by the grant. There is an increased concern that without the grant there will be fewer funds to pull from, thus, fewer funds for content intervention specialists, professional development for teachers, and for providing tutoring and for travel. Resources and materials purchased through the grant funds, such as Rosetta Stone, will continue as will trainings in ESL strategies that will be supported by the district.

This district is in Cycle 2 of the LEP SSI grant and continues to receive funds to help support the SIOP trainings, content area interventionist on the campuses, for professional development for teachers, for tutoring and for travel. Software, materials, and other resources purchased through the grant funds (e.g., Spanish dictionaries, US and World History supplemental readers, science supplemental readers) will continue to be used. Trainings in ESL strategies that are currently implemented will continue to be implemented as the grant is exhausted.

Evaluator's Comments of (1) Needed Support to continue LEP SSI program activities and (2) other issues brought up by interviewees:
Comments were expressed that without ISLA/TAMUS's support through professional development, the grant implementation would not have been as effective. The continuation of professional development opportunities for teachers, as well as follow-up training is essential. The New Arrival Center is a great initiative and was accomplished through the LEP SSI grant funds. The goal is for this to be sustained after the grant funds are exhausted. Other funds are being targeted for further support of this program. What was a pattern was the request for extension of the grant by all levels of district personnel. They felt that they benefited tremendously by being a part of the grant program. The grant continues to make an impact in their district and they would want it to continue.

Summary/Implications from Site Visit

In interviewing the district personnel, campus administrators, teachers and observing several classrooms, including the New Arrival Center, I found that teachers had received the professional development to benefit the ESL population they are teaching. The students in the classrooms seemed very confident about achieving the tasks required of them. It was evident that the students used one another's language proficiency and knowledge as a vital resource. Students were immersed in a socially inviting atmosphere where they were not afraid of asking for help and where they could express themselves. It was evident that the LEP SSI grant program prepared the teachers as well as the students.

The challenge was having all stakeholders involved, content area teachers, instructional strategists, and ESL teachers work collaboratively to benefit the ESL population they served. Achieving the right mix of personalities and commonalities among the staff is important.

March 5 - 6, 2007

KEY FINDINGS DISTRICT/REGION COORDINATOR INTERVIEW

ROLE IN LEP SSI GRANT PROGRAM

The Secondary ESL Specialist and the Instructional Specialist: wrote the grant and checked on implementation on campuses.

The LEPSSI Grant Coordinator checked on grant implementation at campus level and provided assistance to teachers. The Grant coordinator had various responsibilities in addition to coordinating the grant and assumed clerical responsibilities, i.e., balancing checkbook, in addition to planning and implementing SIOP trainings.

The Instructional Support Teacher and ESOL Secondary provides professional development trainings.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/ELEMENTS

Grant writers considered all middle and high schools; educated administrators as to benefits of grant. Teachers needed exposure to staff development; students needed to receive better instruction and credits to graduate; students needed to attain higher levels of proficiency in English; increase the number of students passing TAKS. Primary focus on student success and teacher professional development. They applied and were granted an extension in order to include another round of RPTE and TAKS scores, hence more data supporting its benefits and ensuring objectives met. Grant funds were divided by number of LEP students enrolled in campus.

The objectives were addressed through the LEP SSI grant funds in the following manner:
- TAKS: Newcomer Program to help avoid gaps in education
- Summer Program: Enrichment and provided high school level credits
- Materials: Supplemental software for enrichment and intervention; computers and headphones
- Tutoring: Middle and high school, including inclusion and small group instruction
- Linguistic Units: English textbooks, some modified and adapted to use in content area courses
- Parental Involvement
- Professional Development for Teachers; SIOP trainings were successful as well as current follow up trainings still provided by district
- Funds used for strategies to achieve objectives, materials, substitutes so that teachers could attend training, and to provide tutors

Limitation: Parents did not participate in the summer school initiative.

Support and Assistance
On site SIOP staff development training for particular campuses was provided; Teacher support by planning and modeling lessons especially teachers new to the profession; Resources provided as well as assistance in using them; Technology implementation; Dialogue with campus administrators about TAKS, RPTE, LAS data; Work with ESL students.

Outcomes
Positive effects that occurred through the grant program:
- SIOP Training not only for ESL teachers but for content area teachers as well
- Because of the awareness this grant brought, 10-15 teachers became ESL certified
- Higher success rates in RPTE and TAKS scores; Drop out rate decreased

Resonance of grant was an awareness of ESL population and a conscious effort to better help meet the needs of this population which did not exist before grant implementation. Unintended negative effects that occurred were that teachers became accustomed to stipends for trainings and continue to ask for stipends even though grant period is over. The effect of the grant program on students is documented by student success rates on RPTE, LAS and summer school roster enrollment. With teachers this is documented by the dissemination and use of materials provided. These materials were used and tied to training. Teacher evaluations of professional developments provided by district ESL department in form of feedback and observations, both informal, are also documented. Obstacles encountered were that content area teachers did not feel responsible for ESL achievements so instructional support needed and was sought in order to inform teachers that all student achievements, regardless of type of population, are every teacher's responsibility. The importance of sharing in the responsibility of student achievement was emphasized.

Sustainability
Funds are now being provided by district to pay for substitutes and tutors so that teachers are free to attend SIOP trainings, SIOP follow up trainings, trainings on ESL instructional strategies, Newcomer trainings, tutoring and inclusion trainings. There still exists a need for tutors and trained teachers. The Emergent Reading Curriculum was developed with LEP SSI grant funds and district sanctioned to continue to be used with LEP students. As grant was exhausted, they have looked for funds to continue what was initially started with grant.

Other Notes: Issues/Concerns with Interview
Interviews were very successful and interviewees were willing to share information about grant benefits and challenges.

KEY FINDINGS CAMPUS ADMINISTRATOR(S)

ROLE IN LEP SSI GRANT PROGRAM

Principal of Clark High (during grant cycle), currently the Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Instruction, Northside ISD.
Responsible for working with grant coordinator to effectively coordinate schedules, informing teachers of LEP SSI grant, providing an awareness for content area teachers and ESL teachers of working together and assuming testing of students. Also, an important role in educating the entire staff and community about LEP population, their needs and how to address those needs. Additionally, the counselor was involved in working with the socio-emotional needs, the academic dean for correct placement of LEP students as well as much teacher involvement.

Academic Dean, Sul Ross Middle School, Northside ISD.
Responsible for: Instructional courses, delivery and overseeing the coordination of the grant on campus along side the district grant coordinator.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/ELEMENTS

The objectives were addressed through the LEP SSI grant funds in the following manner:

- Tutoring
- Sheltered classroom instruction and combining LEP kids with content area teachers while still maintaining support of regular education teacher
- Increasing the level of proficiency on the RPTE through SIOP instruction model geared at developing both language and content
- Including classes such as Practical Writing especially for increasing the number of credits for students to bring them up to level and to meet their needs while also using sheltered instruction
- Hosting team meetings between administrators and teachers to provide support and strategies, and plan for sheltered instruction which included more formalized SIOP trainings
- Educating the entire community as to needs of LEP population
- Academic support such as the ESL teacher and tutor was sought
- Resources and materials were purchased
- Tracking and being knowledgeable of RPTE and TAKS scores
- Focusing on group and helping them succeed while connecting with programs such as Gear Up, Pre-Engineering program, GT and Magnet Schools

Support and Assistance
The following support/assistance was provided to the teachers:

Team meetings between administrators and teachers to provide support and strategies and plan for sheltered instruction which included more formalized SIOP trainings. Assistance in educating the entire community as to needs of LEP population and how to address those needs. Additionally, they disseminated information about students to teachers, provided information regarding how they were grouped (i.e., at-risk, LEP, differentiated

populations), as well as providing information on inclusion and assistance. Encouraged teachers to attend professional development opportunities and helped with monitoring student success through the LEP SSI grant program.

The following support/assistance was received from the district:

Curriculum planning provided a framework and provided support including resources. Additionally, the curriculum planning helped with targeting and working with specific needs, i.e., counseling. They supported efforts in assisting with parental meetings, presenting to parents, providing materials and resources, and follow-up training for material usage which contributed to continuity.

Outcomes
Positive effects that have occurred through the grant program:
- Better educated regarding a culture's second language development and making connections with culture
- Focus on getting students to graduate
- Student involvement with campus initiatives, student honor society
- Increased self-efficacy

Unintended negative effects:
- Being uncomfortable about doing things they had not done before such as teaching in sheltered instruction, modifying curriculum, and credit attainment
- Communication barriers because of language that still exist and equating language ability with intelligence

The grant program documents student success through a focus on progression from grade to grade and progression from course to course, which then measures credit attainment. The SIOP training helped teachers realize their potential and feel more comfortable. Additionally, with the LEP SSI grant came more benchmarking and the use of assessments such as LAS, RPTE and TAKS scores.

The grant program effects related to ESL/bilingual teachers was documented through the activities of the ESL teacher; now provides assistance to the LEP students as well as being a liaison to the general education teacher. Team teaching between content area teacher and ESL teacher took place and SIOP trainings brought an awareness and better understanding of how to work with LEP population.

The obstacles encountered were related to parental involvement. Increasing the involvement of parents of LEP students was sometimes difficult due to the language barrier and informing/educating them so that they support the initiatives was a challenge. Additionally, finding certified staff was sometimes difficult.

Sustainability
Many changes were a direct result of grant program and will continue. The campus now believes in the notion that this is the way they educate LEP kids so it helped to change

minds about how to effectively work with the LEP population. Large budget items identified through grant have been worked into district budget and there is more of an awareness. Increased knowledge of sheltered instruction has helped to provide an attitude change that is enduring.

Concerns about sustainability: Sustaining sufficient staff development for new and regular staff through follow-ups, completing summer program initiatives, meeting the tutoring needs, and providing inclusion.

Other Notes: Issues/Concerns with Interview
Administrators were grateful about having the opportunity to participate in the LEP SSI grant program and expressed hopes of continuing.

KEY FINDINGS TEACHER FOCUS GROUP

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/ELEMENTS

The objectives were addressed through the LEP SSI grant funds in the following manner:

- Sheltered accommodated instruction
- Training of SIOP, Sheltered Instruction
- Newcomer classes
- Practical Writing classes for ESL students with ESL Reading from emergent, intermediate and advanced reading levels
- Summer School
- SIOP training for sheltered teachers
- Parental Involvement: LEP open house, transportation provided
- Periodical Newcomer meetings where ESL and Sheltered Teachers get together
- Newcomer: ESL, sheltered Math, Science, Social Studies, Keyboarding, Reading
- Technology - Rosetta Stone, 4 computers in 2 classrooms
- Tutoring: after school and during school

Teachers expressed that they did receive professional development being offered by the school district, but did not recognize ISLA/TAMUS.

Support and Assistance

Support received during the grant program from school administrator(s) included:

- Becoming involved with National Trainer of Trainers opportunity
- Help in attaining certification requirements
- Professional development opportunities through district
- Support in implementing SIOP professional development to address LEP students
- Inclusion training
- Kathy Mitchell, Academic Dean and Leslie Kvapil, Assistant Principal work with daily accountability and monitoring of ESL/LEP students at John Jay High and keep teachers informed as to growth
- Strong belief in the initiative and led the way, innovative
- Teachers were required to take sheltered instruction classes
- More materials and resources
- Hand scheduling and allocating classrooms

Support received during the grant program from the district staff that are/were involved in the grant program included:

- Assistance from ESL district department in terms of answering questions and providing support
- Resources made available for different levels of reading, writing, and language level proficiencies
- Acquired substitutes which were paid by grant program so teachers could attend SIOP trainings

---

Outcomes

Positive effects that have occurred through the grant program for teachers at campus include the following:

- Ability to better assist ESL students by having computers in the classroom that were purchased through the grant
- Ability to better assist ESL students by having sheltered classrooms
- Providing extra tutoring opportunities
- Improved instructional practices through SIOP training
- Improved instructional practices that increased student comfort levels because they receive the content with the language and are able to better understand it so consequently they feel better prepared.
- Because of professional development opportunities such as SIOP there are better informed and equipped teachers
- Students success rates have increased because of Newcomer and SIOP trainings
- Students success rates in TAKS scores and RPTE have increased

Sustainability

Because of technology provided by grant, the students now have a permanent classroom and there is no floating by ESL teachers. Instead they are provided with a classroom which provides sustainability. This provides for a environment that is conducive to learning and beneficial in meeting the LEP population needs. Additionally, an awareness of LEP's language development and various beneficial teaching strategies along with a permanent classroom setting.

Sustainability Concerns: The newcomer program, because of the need for solid sheltered 9th and 10th grade Science instruction; need consistent sheltered trained bilingual science teachers because of high turnover rate for science teachers on campus.

Other

Teachers expressed they felt fortunate for having received the grant and feel that this has been a confidence booster for the population they serve.

Other Notes: Issue/Concerns with Interview

Teachers were very positive about the benefits of having the grant.

Key Campus Observational Notes

STAFF ACTIVITIES

I observed several Practical Writing classes where students had several tasks to complete. In one class, the teacher asked them to write a poem using descriptive words. She set a list for them to select from and encouraged them to use cognates. In another class, the students were to write a poem using descriptive words and again encouraged to use cognates. In another classroom observed, the teacher was explaining the civil rights movement and was going to follow that up by showing a video. In the last classroom I observed, the teacher was focusing on the main idea in "The Story of My Life" which was the biography of the life of Helen Keller. In each classroom setting, the teacher(s) explained the task and wrote it on the board thereby providing students with a visual.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

The students responded by working on the assignments. Many times they used Spanish/English dictionaries to assist them in writing the poem or the main idea. They conversed with one another often and often used their background knowledge regarding the type of poem they would want to write about or the person they would like to write about in their poem. They often used their first language and definitely relied on each other as resources for deciphering words or meanings. It was evident that students were at different levels of English language proficiency. The teacher(s) assisted as necessary and allowed them to question one another about assignment or about certain word usage.

Several students were independently working on the Rosetta Stone software on the computers located in the classroom.

Other

It was evident that the students were very confident in their abilities and shared their expanding vocabulary with each other. They very often asked each other for the meanings/pronunciations of words, as well as, looking them up in the dictionary.

Overall Summary

Evaluator's Comments of LEP SSI Program Administration:
The district staff and campus administrators were able to collaboratively accomplish the objectives set forth by the grant. The district staff oversaw the program and that the objectives were being achieved at the various campuses while the campus administrators oversaw that the program objectives were being accomplished at their respective campuses.

Evaluator's Comments of LEP SSI Program Implementation:
The program services, i.e., SIOP training, sheltered instruction training, training on inclusion, and tutoring that were to be implemented with the grant were all implemented. The program service that was a challenge was the parental involvement component. According to the district coordinators, parents did not participate in the summer school initiative.

Most helpful was the curriculum planning, presenting initiative to parents, providing materials and resources and the follow-up training that took place and continues to take place in order to ensure successful implementation of instructional strategies that benefit the ESL population. The main obstacle was the communication barrier with parents because of the language issue, as well as, having parents support the initiatives and participate in initiatives such as the summer school project.

The allocation of funds for resources and materials for use on campus by district administrators was beneficial as was the professional development opportunities offered to teachers (i.e., SIOP training was very beneficial in helping the collaboration between the ESL teacher and the content area teacher for the success of the LEP population). Additionally, providing the appropriate software, such as Rosetta Stone, the dictionaries and the computers with headphones by campus administrators was very beneficial in working with ESL students.

Evaluator's Comments of LEP SSI Program Effectiveness:
The whole notion of educating every child is everyone's responsibility is resonating from this grant program. Particularly, there was a new awareness of the ESL population and a conscious effort in working with them, which did not exist before this grant. The sheltered instruction, SIOP professional developments, resources, and materials provided a means for working with this population. It is now accepted and understood by everyone and part of what is done. This has become the norm because of the grant and the ESL population is now viewed as an essential component of the school and not as a separate entity.

The effects of the grant program for students have been documented by RPTE, TAKS, and LAS assessments, as well as by summer school enrollment rosters. The effects of the grant program for teachers have been documented by team meetings between administrators, ESL teachers, and content area teachers in order to provide support and strategies for sheltered instruction including more formalized SIOP trainings.

Evaluator's Comments of LEP SSI Program Sustainability:
SIOP trainings, professional developments for instructional strategies that benefit ESL students, newcomer trainings, tutoring, inclusion trainings, resources such as Rosetta Stone, computers, headphones, and the Emergent Reading Curriculum developed with the LEP SSI grant funds are being maintained for campuses after grant funds were exhausted. There is an understanding that this is here to stay and the district has been able to assume expenses for substitutes so that teachers can continue with SIOP follow-up trainings provided by the ESL/bilingual district department. Additionally, because of the resources purchased through the grant funds, campuses can now offer a permanent classroom for their ESL students so that they do not have to be floating. This gives them a sense of belonging in the school and is a confidence booster for them.

Concerns with sustainability deal with sustaining sufficient staff development for new and regular staff through follow-up trainings.

Evaluator's Comments of (1) Needed Support to continue LEP SSI program activities and (2) other issues brought up by interviewees:
What was a pattern was the request for extension of the grant by all levels of district personnel. They felt that they reaped the benefits of having the opportunity to be a part of the LEP SSI grant program. The grant made an impact in their district and they would want it to continue.

Summary/Implications from Site Visit

In interviewing the district personnel, campus administrators, teachers, in observing several classrooms, and a SIOP follow-up training, I found that teachers had received the professional development to benefit the ESL population. The students in the classrooms seemed very confident about their daily tasks in class and worked diligently on assignments. It was evident that the LEP SSI program prepared the teachers as well as the students. The benefits of the grant are profound and the implications it has for the ESL population it serves are immense.

The challenge was having everyone accept the ESL population, the diversity that they bring and the contributions that they make, as well as, the importance of having sufficient professional development opportunities for the ESL and content area teachers in order to collaboratively learn to work well with them.

March 8, 2007

KEY FINDINGS DISTRICT/REGION COORDINATOR INTERVIEW

ROLE IN LEP SSI GRANT PROGRAM

Bilingual/ESL Specialist, Education Service Center, Region 12.
Oversaw entire grant program project; wrote grant, administrative role, provided staff development for teachers, met with advisory group and consortiums.

Assistant Superintendent, McGregor Independent School District. Oversaw grant implementation; administrative role, meeting with the Bilingual/ESL Specialist, Region 12, participating in the book study program looking at problems and solutions, as well as, targeting effective use of grant funds and resources.

All personnel needed were taken into consideration during the writing of the grant.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/ELEMENTS

Each district with less than 5 campuses would receive $3,000.00 in LEP SSI grant funds per campus and districts with over 5 campuses would receive $2,500.00 in funds per campus. This included elementary and secondary campuses. McGregor ISD has less than 5 campuses and received $3,000.00 per campus. Additionally, they focused on the number of LEP students in each campus, providing professional development for the teachers in sheltered instruction, dual language, reading and writing strategies, and a Newcomer program in the high schools. Professional development was offered and newcomer training was offered, but continuation of the grant would have been beneficial especially because it started later than originally intended. It was started in August instead of February based on needs.

The objectives were addressed through the LEP SSI grant funds in the following manner:
- Provided Professional Development with scientifically-based reading strategies and programs to better meet the needs of the ESL population
- Professional development was included for teachers, counselors, book study with Bilingual ESL Directors 4 times a year in order to build background knowledge
- ESL training for certification
- Targeting RPTE and TAKS
- SIOP- sheltered instruction, ESL Academies, Best Practices
- Brought in 2 districts that had Newcomer Program for a question and answer session on how to implement program in district
- Researched how to obtain credits for students/Region 1 collaboration
- Newcomer academy program with strategies at high school level
- Professional development on sheltered instruction for Middle and High School levels

Objectives were met, professional development was offered and newcomer training was offered, but needed more time and so that grant could have continued.

Support and Assistance
Support and assistance was provided to the district through professional development, advisory group meetings, meetings with contacts and schools. Additionally, meetings were held with teachers to focus on needs of ESL students, on how to allocate LEP SSI grant funds appropriately and also on evaluating progress of ESL students.

Outcomes
Positive effects that occurred through the grant program:
- Expanded the knowledge base of both ESL and content area teachers and helped to build that capacity
- Teachers were able to attend trainings and come back and implement what was learned
- There were more resources available such as software (i.e. Rosetta Stone)
- Because of the awareness this grant brought, there are now more teachers certified in ESL
- Improvements in TAKS and RPTE scores and help in obtaining credit for secondary students

Unintended negative effect that occurred was that the time frame of grant was very short and served as barrier because grant was implemented in August instead of February, resulting in reduced time. The effect of the grant program on students is documented by student score achievements on RPTE and TAKS assessments. With teachers this is documented by the increase in number of ESL certified teachers, as well as improved teaching ability because of professional development geared at helping meet the needs of ESL population. Obstacles encountered were the reduced time frame and that they were not able to have the opportunity to get involved with ISLA to the depth that they had wanted.

Sustainability
They will continue with professional development based on teacher evaluation of needs (i.e., SIOP, sheltered instruction) which will be supported with district funds. Additionally, a variety of resources, materials, and software is now available such as Rosetta Stone, dictionaries, literature programs. Also, a better relationship has developed among teachers as ESL students are their common focus. An effective book study program where administrators share books about best practices for working with ESL students was developed and has been sustained.

Other
They mentioned they would like to extend the length of the grant.

Other Notes: Issues/Concerns with Interview
Interviews were successful and informative. Interviewees were willing to collaborate and share information about grant.

KEY FINDINGS CAMPUS ADMINISTRATOR(S)

ROLE IN LEP SSI GRANT PROGRAM

McGregor Elementary School Principal, McGregor ISD.
Responsible for: Working with teachers, and meeting their professional development needs with LEP SSI grant funds. Additionally, administering and facilitating the grant program.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/ELEMENTS

The objectives were addressed through the LEP SSI grant funds in the following manner:
- Was able to have a reading specialist to help with instructional strategies and to help with the professional development of teachers involved with ESL students regarding the implementation of best practices to use with ESL population
- Resources, materials, and software such as Rosetta Stone provided
- Increased communication with parents
- Increased TAKS scores
- More teachers became ESL certified on her campus and others became interested
- Professional development was geared at helping LEP children and providing support and strategies
- Professional development related to sheltered instruction which included more formalized SIOP trainings

The grant was implemented as planned.

Support and Assistance
The following support/assistance was provided to the teachers:

Professional development opportunities for teachers were offered with substitutes paid for with LEP SSI grant funds.

The following support/assistance was received from the district:

Assistance with targeting needs of ESL population and providing information on assessments, benchmarks, as well of scores.

Outcomes
Positive effects that have occurred through the grant program:
- Provided an awareness for teachers in order to help children make a smoother transition in grade levels.
- 2 teachers obtained their ESL certification.
- Increased student performance in RPTE and TAKS.

Unintended negative effects:
- Not being able to send everyone for professional development because more teachers wanted to attend

---

The grant program effects on the students are documented with RPTE, TAKS, LAS, and IPT scores. The grant program effects related to ESL/bilingual teachers were documented by 2 more teachers becoming ESL certified on campus and more professional development being obtained by teachers in direct contact with the ESL population. The only obstacle encountered was the small amount of funds, i.e., $3000.00.

Sustainability
Have resources, software and materials that were purchased with the LEP SSI grant funds such as Rigby's Reading program, as well as the professional development provided for teachers. No concerns about sustainability.

Other
Comments were given regarding the benefits of the many opportunities for professional development provided for teachers through LEP SSI grant, as well as useful resources, materials, and supplies.

Other Notes: Issues/Concerns with Interview
Hopes of lengthening the grant program were expressed, as well as being fortunate about having the opportunity to participate in the LEP SSI grant program.

KEY FINDINGS TEACHER FOCUS GROUP

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/ELEMENTS

The objectives were addressed through the LEP SSI grant funds in the following manner:

- Instructional strategies obtained through professional development, such as the use of comprehensible input for LEP students
- Professional development useful in implementation and success of strategies
- Resources such as Rosetta Stone
- Rubrics provided through professional development sessions
- Sheltered Instruction Training
- Textbooks purchased to better align TEKS to TAKS

Teachers expressed that they did receive professional development being offered by the school district, but were not aware of ISLA/TAMUS.

Support and Assistance

Support received during the grant program from school administrator(s) included:

- Professional Development opportunities and being able to pay for substitutes through LEPSSI grant funds
- Resources to use in classroom
- Opportunities for peer teaching with other teachers when implementing what was learned in professional development sessions

Support received during the grant program from the district staff that are/were involved in the grant program included:

- Professional Development opportunities
- Funds to pay for substitutes so that teachers could participate in professional development opportunities
- Resources to use in classroom

Outcomes

There were no unintended negative effects from grant. The effects of the grant program on ESL students were documented via RPTE, TAKS and IPT scores.

Positive effects that have occurred through the grant program for teachers at campus include the following:

- Ability to better assist ESL students by having resources such as Rosetta Stone
- Curriculum materials geared at helping develop a second language
- Professional development information helpful in improving instructional practices
- Ability to improve instructional practices by having resources such as Rosetta Stone
- Curriculum materials geared at helping develop a second language
- Because of professional development opportunities there are better informed and equipped teachers

- Students success rates in TAKS scores and RPTE have increased

Sustainability

Resources such as Rosetta Stone will be beneficial, as well as, the professional development on sheltered instruction in sustaining the grant program in the school. Sustainability Concerns: None

Other

The LEP SSI grant program was beneficial and impacting for ESL students and for teachers through the professional development opportunities which also contributed to increased TAKS scores. Teachers expressed they felt the benefits of having been part of the grant program.

Other Notes: Issue/Concerns with Interview

Teachers were very positive about the benefits of having the grant.

Key Campus Observational Notes

STAFF ACTIVITIES

Teachers and students were attending a field trip and not available for observation.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Other

Overall Summary

Evaluator's Comments of LEP SSI Program Administration:
The ESC Coordinator, district staff, and campus administrators were able to work collaboratively to accomplish the objectives set forth by the grant. The ESC Coordinator made certain that the funds were appropriated to each district based on number of schools and LEP population. The district staff, assistant superintendent, allocated the funds to each of the campuses and communicated regarding professional development opportunities for the teachers at each of the campuses. The campus administrators oversaw grant program and made certain that the program objectives were being accomplished at their respective campuses and purchased resources to assist in the instructional practices of ESL students.

Evaluator's Comments of LEP SSI Program Implementation:
The program services, i.e., providing professional development for the teachers in sheltered instruction, reading and writing strategies, a Newcomer program in the high schools, and SIOP training that were included in the plan were all implemented. The challenge was the short duration of the grant, particularly because they started later than they had originally anticipated.

Most helpful were the curriculum materials, software and resources provided. Additionally, the professional development obtained by teachers in direct contact with ESL students. Obstacles encountered were the reduced time frame for the program and that they did not have the opportunity to get involved with ISLA/TAMUS to the depth that they had wanted.

The support provided to the district was through professional development, advisory group meetings, as well as, meetings with schools. Additionally, the district and campus administrators held meetings with teachers to target the needs of ESL students on how to allocate LEP SSI grant funds appropriately and on how to effectively monitor and evaluate the progress of ESL students.

Evaluator's Comments of LEP SSI Program Effectiveness:
The impact the grant program had is evident in increased success rates of students on the RPTE and TAKS assessments. Additionally, more teachers have begun seeking ESL certification. The professional development obtained through the grant continues to benefit the ESL students. There is a new found awareness of the ESL population and cooperation between ESL and content area teachers in meeting their needs and improving the instructional practices to ensure their success.

The effect of the grant program on students is documented by student score achievements on RPTE, TAKS, LAS, and IPT assessments. With teachers this is documented by the increase in number of ESL certified teachers, as well as an improved teaching ability because of professional development geared at helping meet the needs of the ESL population. Additionally, through team meetings between administrators and teachers in

order to provide support and increased knowledge of strategies for improved instruction for ESL students, including sheltered instruction.

Evaluator's Comments of LEP SSI Program Sustainability:
There is a continuation in professional development opportunities, initially supported by the LEP SSI grant funds and now being supported by district funds in areas such as SIOP and sheltered instruction. Additionally, a variety of resources, materials, and software such as Rosetta Stone, dictionaries, and literature programs are still available and being used. A collaborative relationship has developed among ESL teachers and content area teachers in an effort to assist the ESL population. An effective book study program in which administrators share books about best practices for working with ESL students was developed and has been sustained as well. They have been successful in continuing with the efforts set forth by the LEP SSI grant program.

Evaluator's Comments of (1) Needed Support to continue LEP SSI program activities and (2) other issues brought up by interviewees:
What was a pattern was the request for extension of the grant by all levels from ESC to district personnel to teachers. They felt grateful for participating in the LEP SSI grant program and feel they have gained much from it. The grant has made an impact in their Region and in their districts and they shared the hopes of lengthening the grant.

Summary/Implications from Site Visit

In interviewing the ESC coordinator, assistant superintendent, district and campus personnel, as well as teachers, I found that they felt fortunate to be a part of the LEP SSI grant program and particularly emphasized the benefits of having received the professional development to improve the instructional practices for ESL students to benefit this population. Through the interviews, it became apparent that the LEP SSI grant benefited everyone, but especially the teachers, who because of the professional development opportunities and the resources provided to them, now feel better equipped to work and support their ESL students.

The challenge was the short time frame of the grant.