

A FRAMEWORK FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH THE SHELTERED
INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION PROTOCOL (SIOP)

Beinerth A. Chitiva Mosquera

Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana- UNICA

Bogotá, Colombia

Abstract

This research study examines how higher education instruction is affected when faculty members participate in a Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Coaching Program. The results indicate that both novice and experienced teachers can benefit from participating in a coaching program. In addition to outlining the guiding principles of the program, this study also describes the steps taken to plan and implement a SIOP Coaching Program, which goes beyond the path prescribed by the creators of the SIOP Model.

KEYWORDS: coaching, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), professional development

Introduction

The World Education Forum, held in Dakar in April 2000, was the opportunity for the international community to highlight the key role of education in eradicating poverty. A similar commitment had been ratified in the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, which also deemed abject poverty as a severe injustice and an abuse of human rights. UNESCO, an agency of the United Nations, has stated:

The role of education in poverty eradication, in close co-operation with other social sectors, is crucial. No country has succeeded if it has not educated its people. Not only is education important in reducing poverty, it is also a key to wealth creation.

Some recent decisions seem to indicate that Colombia wants to achieve growth and eradicate extreme poverty, but there are many challenges ahead. Colombia has been ranked 25th on the list of countries with the largest number of income-poor people in the world, on a par with Zambia and Burkina Faso, and second on the list for Latin American countries, behind Brazil. To reduce that lasting gap between the rich and the poor, a great deal of initiatives will have to be implemented, and some of them have a government origin. For the Colombian government one way to tackle inequality and poverty is to invest in a good quality education at all levels.

In order to better understand the scope of this study, I want to point out that since we are a teacher's college, we are concerned not only with the quality of the curriculum but also with the approach to implementing such curriculum. *What* we teach and *how* we teach become crucial factors in defining the essence of what we are. Very often when we think

about quality teaching, represented by effective teaching methods, we tend to think about formal basic education, k-11/12. There is extensive work done in what school teachers should and have been doing to make instruction more effective; not as much has been done at the college level. In fact, there are many highly qualified and educated specialists—medical doctors, dentists, lawyers, engineers, etc — teaching or lecturing across the country, but most of them lack sound pedagogical foundations to enhance instruction and student achievement.

Because of the small number of participants and the intensive analysis conducted, this research may be referred to as a case study. A background to the study helps contextualize the reader about professional development in higher education institutions, bilingualism in Colombia, and effective teaching practices using SIOP. Key theories—self-awareness, self-determination, and shared vision—dealing mainly with emotional and psychological factors, serve as the foundation of the framework for the SIOP Coaching Program. The literature review covers a set of standards aligned with SIOP. Then, from a variable perspective of what an effective professional development program should have, I present standards, elements of quality professional development, and effectiveness and its fundamental aspects—structural and core features.

To analyze and interpret all the data collected, I mainly used qualitative research methods. Then by summarizing and coding this information I was able to shed light on the complexities of planning and implementing a professional development program with SIOP. Therefore, to answer the research questions artifacts (self-assessment, lesson plans,

and archived information), observational data (field notes and observational records), and inquiry data (interviews and surveys) were used throughout the study.

It is important to stress that higher education institutions are more concerned about *what* to teach rather than *how* to teach. While there has been extensive research on what school teachers should and have been doing to make instruction more effective; not as much has been done at the college level. In fact, there are many highly qualified and educated specialists— medical doctors, dentists, lawyers, engineers, etc — teaching or lecturing across the country, but most of them lack sound pedagogical foundations to enhance instruction and student achievement. It seems as though colleges and universities are deliberately turning a blind eye and ignoring the consequences on the quality of instruction they offer. Current statistics on the dropout rate at the college level may be underestimated, and little research has been conducted to discern the connection between school failure and quality of instruction. To keep things in perspective, we must remember that being an outstanding surgeon, for example, does not make such a specialist good at teaching or instructing. At the end of this study, we expect to offer, especially to college instructors a research-based tool to make teaching/learning a more effective and meaningful experience. In so doing, UNICA—a teacher’s college—will serve the community by providing a solution to an existing problem.

Research Questions

This study documents the steps taken to plan and implement a coaching program that uses the SIOP model as a cohesive means of accomplishing professional development at the college level in Bogotá, Colombia.

-How does the use of the SIOP Coaching affect teachers' instruction in a higher education setting?

-What are the steps taken when planning and implementing a professional development program with SIOP?

-How do participants (coach/coachees) feel about participating in a SIOP coaching program?

Background To The Study

Meeting the goal of offering a quality education to all is essential but not easy. The scope of this study involves professional development, effective teaching practices, bilingualism and what can and should be done to improve instruction. On the whole, the ultimate purpose of this work is to help teachers—especially at the college level—provide effective instruction, enhance student achievement, and provide teachers at all levels to have a simple but helpful tool when planning and delivering their lessons.

In 2004, the Institucion Universitaria Colombo Americana-UNICA began to offer its bachelor degree in bilingual education in alignment with the goals of the Ministry of Education and more specifically with the National Bilingual Program 2004-2019. UNICA's mission and vision statements clearly speak of the commitment to improve education by preparing proficient language users as well as effective educators, capable of implementing

high quality learning in a bilingual setting. Well-established organizations have expressed their concern about how ready Colombia is to become bilingual. For instance, according to the Colombian Association of English Teachers ASOCOPI (*Asociación Colombiana de Profesores de Inglés*) the situation does not seem to be very promising, especially for public schools:

With a limited number of hours for English language teaching, not many resources, large classes, a shortage of qualified teachers, and scarce use of the English language in authentic communication.

Official figures also show that English language teachers are not prepared to help students achieve the ambitious goals of the National Bilingual Program. According to the 2010 *Prueba Saber 11*, only 8% of the high school graduates had a pre intermediate English proficiency level (the rest scored lower). The situation could have been even worse, considering that demanding skills such as listening and speaking were not tested. The low scores of Colombian high school graduates on standardized English tests are not so difficult to understand if we examine how teachers themselves do when confronted with these types of tests. Recent information provided by the Ministry of Education indicates that just 25% of the English teaching staff in public schools managed to be placed as intermediate language users, and only 6% were able to reach a higher level. The most recent English diagnostic test (June 12, 2011) taken by English teachers nation-wide shows that the problem is still far from being solved:

English Diagnostic Test taken on June 12, 2011

Number of teachers who registered	3,270
Number of teachers who actually took the test	1,846
How the 1,846 teachers were placed according to the Common European Framework... (CEF)	A1: 303 A2: 206 B1: 588 *B2+ : 496 *B2+ means scores ranging from B2 to C2.

All these data clearly converge to indicate that the great majority of our English teachers still require substantial support in order to upgrade their knowledge and skills.

Another issue to be considered is the fact that English is being taught now as soon as students begin preschool and elementary school as a result of the enactment of the General Education Act of 1994 (*Ley 115 de 1994*); it is a widespread practice in many regions to have the homeroom teacher (who does not hold a degree in English language teaching) teach all subjects, including English. Consequently, having a teaching staff that is not qualified enough to get the job done has impaired the teaching-learning process of thousands of students across the country. It is also important to point out that in order to

meet the goals of the National Bilingual Program it will not be enough to just devote more time to English learning. A more ambitious approach will have to be adopted; one that makes content-based instruction (CBI) central. In other words, teachers must be better equipped to help learners succeed across content areas by means of Sheltered Instruction, which has proven to be an effective tool in making content comprehensible for English learners while they keep on developing English proficiency (Echavarria, Voght, and Short-2008).

This vision of bilingualism and first-rate teaching calls for a new approach and attitude towards teacher development and training, especially one that can be sustainable and cost effective. For example, a carefully designed multiple-tiered coaching program may be used to train the first cohort of coaches who will be in charge of training hundreds of other teachers. Those newly trained can eventually become coaches as long as they possess the professional knowledge, skills, and experience to become a Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol -SIOP coach: deep knowledge of the SIOP Model, basic understanding of second language acquisition and literacy development for children and adolescents, knowledge of ESL methods, basic understanding of the content area curricula (for subjects taught by the SIOP teachers), leadership skills, and coaching or mentoring experience (Sherris, Bauder, and Hillyard 2007).

A Leap Forward In Bilingualism

The following figure shows the goals the Colombian Ministry of Education (through its National Bilingual Program) expects to meet by 2019:

NIVELES SEGÚN EL MARCO COMÚN EUROPEO (CEF LEVEL)	NOMBRE COMÚN DEL NIVEL EN COLOMBIA TERM COMMONLY USED IN COLOMBIA	NIVEL EDUCATIVO EN EL QUE SE ESPERA DESARROLLAR CADA NIVEL DE LENGUA GRADE LEVEL	METAS PARA EL SECTOR EDUCATIVO A 2019 GOALS TO BE MET BY 2019
A1	Principiante/ Starter	Grados 1 a 3	
A2	Básico/ Basic	Grados 4 a 7	
B1	Pre intermedio/ Pre intermediate	Grados 8 a 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nivel mínimo para el 100% de los egresados de Educación Media
B2	Intermedio / Intermediate	Educación Superior Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nivel mínimo para docentes de inglés Nivel mínimo para profesionales de otras carreras
C1	Pre avanzado/ Pre advanced		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nivel mínimo para los nuevos egresados de licenciaturas en idiomas

C2	Avanzado / Advanced		
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Simply put, in 2019 the minimum English proficiency requirement for all high school graduates will be B1; for all English teachers as well as undergraduates from all other higher education fields the minimum requirement will be B2; and for all new English teachers earning a degree as of 2019, they will be required to be at least at the C1 proficiency level. These goals are to be met in seven years. But unless something effective and radical is done now, we are set up for failure. Urgent measures, such as using CBI, have to be taken. A new type of professional development will have to be carried out as the turning point to obtain efficient and effective results.

Although Sheltered Instruction and CBI as approaches to teaching English and content are not new (Horn 2011), many teachers have never been trained to use them. CBI is directly connected with both Content and Language Integrating Learning (CLIL) projects and the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model that are used mainly in Europe and in the United States respectively. For these teaching approaches the effective integration of language and content allows students to acquire the target language as well as disciplinary concepts and skills within multiple subject areas (e.g. mathematics, science, social studies, etc.) in an interactive manner. This trend has grown more popular around the world in recent years (Crandall and Kaufman 2002-p1). The positive experience of teaching both language and content in a higher education setting has been reported (Noel 2009) at Institución Universitaria Colombo Americana (UNICA), the only known bilingual (Spanish-English) college in Colombia. To meet the high standards of a first-rate bilingual

education, at all levels, Colombian teachers will have to be trained in delivering lessons that carefully integrate language as well as content. Freeman and Freeman (2009 p176-177) argue that there are four reasons to teach language and content: 1-students learn both language and content simultaneously, 2-language is kept in the natural context 3-students have reasons to use the language 4-students learn the academic vocabulary in the content areas.

At the higher education level, some Colombian universities offer courses that are taught in English, but these universities do not offer bilingual programs or degrees. These institutions and their teaching faculty members could benefit from a professional development experience that would allow them to improve not only their teaching methods in general but also their ability to successfully integrate content and language instruction in interesting and meaningful ways. This new approach to teaching in higher-education settings is coherent with the goals of the National Bilingual Program because by 2019 all students finishing their undergraduate studies are expected to be at least B2. Implementing the SIOP Model through a carefully planned Coaching Program can be used as an in service professional development activity for all teachers, but especially for those who do not have a background in pedagogy. That seems to be the case of many specialists—medical doctors, engineers, lawyers, etc—that have made teaching a part of their careers.

SIOP Coaching in a higher- education institution

Our experience with the SIOP Model goes back to 2008 when Dr. Barbara Noel first introduced our teaching staff to a model that has been used in districts throughout all fifty states in the United States, and in several countries (Echavarria et al. and Sherris et. Al).

Given the nature of UNICA, a teacher's college preparing bilingual educators, we found a great connection with a teaching model that could help our students succeed across content areas while enhancing their English skills, especially what Cummins (1979) has called Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Our SIOP journey at UNICA has had four major stages: 1-participating in several SIOP training sessions, 2-teaching courses using the SIOP Model, 3- doing action research on the use and impact of the model, and 4-coaching with SIOP as a professional development choice. I have been directly and actively involved in every single stage, and began coaching other faculty in August of 2009. More recently in the second semester of 2011, I was in charge of coaching two professors: one teaching American history and the other one North American literature. This experience has served as the foundation and input for this research study on how a SIOP Coaching program can be implemented in a bilingual context in a higher-education institution in Colombia.

Theoretical Framework

Most people, including leaders, decision makers, parents, and teachers themselves would agree that teachers are fundamental in the type of education that is provided. In other terms, the outcome of the educational process is directly proportional to the quality of the teaching force. As cited by Day (1999), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reports, "teachers are at the heart of the educational process." It must be stressed that for teachers to develop their full potential high quality teacher professional development is a prerequisite. Then, it is not surprising that professional development plays a central role in enhancing what teachers do in the classroom. There are

a number of definitions of professional development, but Day's—one of the most comprehensive—will serve as the guiding light throughout this study. He writes:

Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone or with others, teachers review, renew, and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives (Day, 1999, pp 4.).

This definition incorporates some theories (e.g. awareness, attitude, self-determination, emotional intelligence, etc.) and essential elements (e.g. content, duration, collaboration, etc.) that have to be considered when planning and implementing any professional development program.

The efforts of the Colombian Ministry of Education and higher education institutions have to go hand in hand if the goals of the National Bilingual Program are to be met at some point. At UNICA, the only bilingual teacher's college in Colombia, all faculty members are offered continuous professional development opportunities in the form of workshops, seminars, conferences, symposia, action research projects, observations, mentoring and coaching programs. One way to promote such opportunities is by the implementation of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Coaching, which

is based on the SIOP Model—a scientifically validated model of sheltered instruction to make academic content understandable for English learners as they improve their English proficiency (Sherris, Bauder, Hillyard & Echavarría 2008).

The SIOP Model has been used as a framework for instruction and coaching. Echavarría et al. (2008) advocate the position that the SIOP Model is an effective resource for teachers to plan and implement high-quality shelter lessons for English learners. The following figure has the eight components of the SIOP Model.

Figure 1

The Components of the SIOP Model
Lesson Preparation: Content and language objectives, grade-level concepts, content adaptation, supplementary materials, meaningful activities
Building Background: Connections with students' prior experiences and knowledge, vocabulary development
Comprehensible Input: Appropriate speech, clear explanation of tasks, various ESL techniques
Strategies: Explicit learning strategies, teacher scaffolding, various question types
Interaction: Frequent interaction, appropriate grouping, increased wait time, clarification in the native language
Practice/ Application: Practice with hands-on materials integrated language skills

development

Lesson Delivery: Meeting language and content objectives, student engagement, appropriate pacing

Review/Assessment: Review of key vocabulary and concepts, regular feedback on student output, informal assessment

The SIOP Coaching Program teams up an experienced SIOP user with one or several less experienced user. However, this is a relationship of mutual respect and trust, and most of the time it has to be nonjudgmental and nonevaluative (Richards and Farrell p.143). Of course, there must be a level of accountability in every one participating in the coaching process. But in the best case scenario, all changes should be the result of conviction and the positive dynamic of the peer-coaching relationship.

SIOP Coaching has been widely used in K-12 schools across the United States, and some other countries, now including Colombia. Something that can be innovative about this study is the fact that SIOP Coaching has never been attempted in a higher education institution as a means for faculty professional development. The SIOP Model offers a coherent and cohesive framework for this coaching experience, but other essential aspects (supported by several theories) will have to be taken into account to implement a successful professional development experience for all: teachers, administrators, and schools. This research study explores three relevant theories—1) self-awareness and self-observation, 2)

self-determination and 3) shared vision—that shed light on the dynamic relation of a coaching program as a way to promote professional development among teachers.

Self-Awareness And Self-Observation

First, self-awareness and self-observation are deemed as the cornerstones of all professional development (Bailey et al). Similarly, Diane Larsen-Freeman has indicated that for teachers to make informed decisions, four steps have to be followed: 1) heightened awareness; 2) a positive attitude that allows one to be open to change, 3) various types of knowledge to change; and 4) the development of skills. Professional development, of course, entails the display of new attitudes and behaviors confirming that changes have actually taken place. Awareness, according to Freeman (1989) as cited by Bailey et al. “is the capacity to recognize and monitor the attention one is giving or has given to something. Thus, one acts on or responds to the aspects of a situation of which one is aware.”

The great link between self-awareness and self-observation is that someone cannot make well-informed decision unless those choices are known. It is important to highlight (Bailey et al) that awareness is necessary but not sufficient for professional development to occur. Daniel Freeman, using Larsen-Freeman’s steps to teaching, developed a descriptive model of teaching:

Figure 2

Awareness	It serves the function of triggering our attention to attitude, skills, and knowledge.
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Attitude	It is described as a “stance toward self, activity, and others” (ibid.).
Skills	They constitute the “how to teaching,” include our methods, techniques, activities, materials, and other tools (ibid.).
Knowledge	It embodies “the what of teaching,” which includes our subject matter and our knowledge of the students, as well as the sociocultural and institutional context (ibid.).

Freeman has indicated that the traditional knowledge transmission model of teacher education neglects awareness and attitude, strengthening the role of skills and knowledge. This model of teacher education, which can also be extrapolated to professional growth in general, aims at fostering self-awareness and self-observation as prerequisites for effective teacher professional development.

Self-awareness and self-observation are closely related. That is why (Bailey et al.) state that “one way to increase self-awareness is to monitor or observe our own behavior as teachers. In underscoring the importance of awareness and reflection, Richards wonder:

“How can teachers move beyond the level of automatic or routinised responses to classroom situations and achieve a higher level of awareness of how they teach, of

the kinds of decisions they make as they teach, and of the value and consequences of particular instructional decisions? One way of doing this is through observing and reflecting on one's own teaching, and using observation and reflection as a way of bringing about change.”

To sum up, the benefits of reflective teaching are equally important for both teachers and students. Richards (1990) confirms that critical reflection develops changes in attitudes as well as in awareness, which also enhances the professional growth of teachers. Richards also writes: “teachers engaged in reflective analysis of their own teaching report that it is a valuable tool for self-evaluation and professional growth. Reflective teaching suggests that experience alone is insufficient for professional growth, but that experience coupled with reflection can be a powerful impetus for teacher development.” Undoubtedly, the self-awareness and self-reflection approach to professional development emerge as solid foundations that have to be laid early in the process. Skipping this stage may seriously hinder the goals set by institutions or teachers themselves.

Self-determination theory (SDT)

Awareness and reflection are the result of a process that can be used as a means to enhance teaching and professional development itself. However, this process of reflection and awareness will not render effective unless some further steps are taken by the people involved in such development endeavors. In other words, knowing that something exists is that first or lowest rung of the ladder of professional development, but another thing—even more complex—is what one decides to do because of intrinsic or extrinsic motives with

such information. Self-determination (Deci and Gagné, 2005), which has been regarded as a framework for the study of human motivation and personality, has been given a lot of attention in education, health care, citizenship, and sports. This theory, initially developed by professors Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, is mainly concerned with what motivates human beings, what causes people to act, and how others can be moved to act. According to the self-determination perspective, “everywhere, parents, teachers, coaches, and managers struggle with how to motivate those that they mentor, and individuals struggle to find energy, mobilize effort and persist at the tasks of life and work.” Based on the above understanding of what SDT is, it can be easily inferred that genuine professional growth will take place if individuals are determined to do it. Certainly, the role of organizations or institutions in promoting motivation should not be underestimated since they can either stimulate or deter engagement in professional development.

When a professional development program is established, the program provider expects to meet the goals set. But for this to happen, the participant’s commitment and willingness to change, acquire, or implement new behaviors is extremely vital. To illustrate how the volitional and motivational aspects play a key role (Deci and Gagné, 2005) in increasing effective performance, Carnegie, Dale writes:

“There is only one way under heaven to get anybody to do anything, and that is by making the other person want to do it. Remember there is no other way. Of course, you can make someone want to give you his watch by sticking a revolver in his ribs. You can make your employees give you cooperation—until your back is turned—by

threatening to fire them. You can make a child do what you want by spanking or a threat. But these crude methods have sharply undesirable repercussions.”

This quote depicts the great power of a person’s motivation. In the case of teacher professional development, a teacher’s motivation needs to be supported by school or institutional efforts to create an ideal balance between the individual and his/her context. Christopher Day (1998) believes that schools that are effective, “good” and engaged in continuous development have to pay attention to teachers’ lives, their learning and development needs and working conditions as well as those of the students they teach. He goes on emphasizing that schools are to establish professional learning cultures to support that continuous development. That is why schools or the people running them have to make institutional or administrative changes to allocate the resources for professional development.

Very often when professional development opportunities arise, the participants tend to assume a position. They may be interested or not, and SDT has created special categories to name that. SDT ((Deci and Gagné, 2005) has created a dichotomy between amotivation (i.e., lack of motivation) and motivation. Within the spectrum of motivation, SDT identifies autonomous motivation and controlled motivation. All these concepts (amotivation, autonomous motivation and controlled motivation) directly affect an individual’s relation to an activity (e.g., coaching program) or set of activities (e.g., teaching). This idea is also related to the Meta-Theory: The Organismic Viewpoint:

“SDT is an organismic dialectical approach. It begins with the assumption that people are active organisms, with evolved tendencies toward growing, mastering

ambient challenges, and integrating new experiences into a coherent sense of self. These natural development tendencies do not, however, operate automatically, but instead require ongoing social nutrients and supports. That is, the social context can either support or thwart the natural tendencies toward active engagement and psychological growth.”

Based on this statement, it is evident that when planning professional development programs, such as coaching or mentoring, the participants must be provided with opportunities to foster their natural interest in exploring and learning.

Shared vision

Any coaching or mentoring program is a joint effort, at least one coach and one or more coachees. Since this relation may be described as an active event that involves two or more people, it is necessarily deemed as a collective vision, one that can be convergent or divergent. In the context of schools and professional development, for individuals and institutions to meet goals, having a shared vision is a must. Shared vision is a widely practiced theory among modern organizations Harris describes vision as:

The common dream or goal of individuals in an organization which inspires working to achieve the vision. Encouraging personal vision is important for shared vision because “people’s capacity for caring is personal” (p.9). Therefore the best shared vision ideas reflect the personal visions of the individuals within the organization. If not connected to personal vision, shared vision is unwilling compliance, not wholehearted commitment.

Day (1999- p92) drawing on much of the literature on ‘effective schools’ and ‘school improvement’ says that institutional and individual personal professional development needs should be synchronized or at least reconciled. That is why the convergence of multiple visions can help educational institutions and teachers develop a shared vision, giving all stakeholders a common purpose and direction.

In short, UNICA’s institutional effort to improve student achievement, and support its teaching faculty with a wide range of professional development choices led us to begin offering a SIOP Coaching program. To plan and implement that program, we have used the SIOP Model, which is a research-based framework for instruction and coaching. Professional development, and specifically SIOP Coaching, is seen as an opportunity for teachers to grow professionally while learning becomes a more meaningful and fruitful experience for their students. In this study the theoretical framework that underpins the SIOP Model (and SIOP Coaching) has been expanded and enriched by means of three theories: self-awareness and self-observation, self-determination, and shared vision.

Literature Review

Professional development has to be seen as a process as well as an investment. According to Echavarría et al (2008), one doesn’t “become a teacher” after completing a certain number of teacher education (or preservice) courses. Consequently, in order to stay abreast on the ample spectrum of education, ongoing professional development becomes extremely important. Coaching and mentoring—Forms of professional development—are

two terms commonly used in business and academe, but their use and implications go far beyond these fields. Parsloe (2012) defines coaching as follows:

a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve. To be a successful coach requires a knowledge and understanding of a process as well as a variety of styles, skills and techniques that are appropriate to the context in which the coaching takes place.

I will not attempt to underscore the differences between coaching and mentoring, but rather will keep in mind their similarities and how they are used as means for furthering professional development.

Elements Of Quality Professional Development: Standards

To compile the available research literature on professional development three main variables were included—elements of quality professional development, standards, and effectiveness. In identifying the elements of quality professional development, there is a paucity of research delineating the elements of effective professional development (Echavarría et al.2008-p.12). Nevertheless, there is a consensus on what quality programs should have. For instance, the National Staff Development Council has prescribed standards (three areas) for quality professional development: context standards, process standards and content standards. Those standards are accepted and aligned with the SIOP model (Echavarría et al. 2008). Furthermore, the literature available as well as some theories already mentioned in this study also offer a framework and key elements when planning and implementing professional development.

Although the standards above were written in the context of the United States, their relevance is of paramount importance in understanding and enacting professional development in other places, such as Colombia. The following figure summarizes a standards-based vision of the fundamental elements a high quality professional development program should embrace.

Figure 3

Context
1-The purpose of the program is well articulated to all participants, and the participants know what they are expected to do with the information being presented.
2-Everyone in the school or school district needs to be encouraged to get on board.
3-Effective professional development programs generally take place in the setting or context where the teachers work so that they can deal with the actual issues and challenges faced when implementing the SIOP.
4-Effective professional development programs are consistent in message.

Process
Theoretical knowledge: The training provides an opportunity for participants to learn the SIOP Model and its theoretical underpinnings, and understand why the features are important for English learners.

Modeling: teachers have the opportunity to observe classrooms in which SIOP teachers or coaches show how to organize their classes for SIOP teaching and model the features during SIOP lessons.

Practice: Participants practice implementing SIOP features with guidance and support. Teachers plan (model) SIOP lessons collaboratively with peers and a more experienced teacher, coach, or administrator.

Feedback and In-Class Coaching: Teachers' SIOP lessons are observed by coaches or their peers, and teachers are provided with constructive feedback (protocol used) on the lesson.

Independent Application and Analysis: Teachers begin to apply the SIOP Model independently, usually through independent lesson planning and teaching.

Content

1-There is a focus on content knowledge.

2-There is a focus on program coherence (consistency in message).

It is worth indicating that the SIOP model provides a framework for a coherent professional development program. The leading SIOP voices (Echavarria, Short, and Vogt) argue that SIOP professional development activities are likely to improve both teaching and student achievement when they focus on knowing and understanding SIOP content (the

eight SIOP components coupled with information on second language acquisition), and when they consistently reflect the SIOP Model.

The supporters of this approach see it as the essential foundation for a successful professional development program, claiming its positive effect on teachers' knowledge and skills. This study seeks to strengthen what the SIOP Model attest to help teachers acquire knowledge and skills. However, I would like to go a bit further, and draw on what others have said (Freeman 1989) in order to argue that factors such as attitude and awareness play a key role in establishing a framework for planning and implementing a professional development program, especially a coaching program based on SIOP.

Effectiveness

Once the fundamental elements of a quality professional development program have been identified, it must be carefully designed and implemented in order to guarantee effectiveness. We can say that something is effective when it is successful or it allows us to achieve the results we want. Policy makers, school and district leaders and researchers are all interested in the effectiveness of teacher professional development (Penuel et al., 2007-p.921). To measure how effective teacher professional development programs may be, we have to consider from what perspective results are assessed. For example, in Colombia the Ministry of Education at the national level and the Secretaries of Education at the local level in the best case scenario are concerned with improving the quality of instruction and student achievement. They also want to see evidence that such professional development activities have improved standardized test scores. The *Prueba Saber* in Colombia serves to illustrate the case.

In their seminal study *What Makes Professional Development Effective?* Garet et al. rely on a sample of 1,027 teachers who participated in the Eisenhower Professional Development Program in order to make the claim that some key aspects have to be considered to create an effective professional development program. The following figure shows how the interplay of structural features and core features serve as a framework and predictor of effectiveness when planning and implementing professional development programs.

Figure 4

STRUCTURAL FEATURES	CORE FEATURES
1-Activity type (reform vs. traditional)	1-Content focus
2-Duration (time span and contact hours)	2-Active learning
3-Collective participation	3-Coherence

Structural Features

This aspect deals with the characteristics of the structure or design of the program to be implemented. Traditional professional development activities include courses, institutes, conferences, workshops or college courses. Traditional forms of professional development, usually conducted by someone with considerable expertise, occur outside the teacher's classroom or school. Despite their popularity, these traditional forms of development have been criticized because they fail to provide teachers with the sufficient time, activities, and

content necessary for increasing teacher's knowledge and fostering changes in their classroom practice (Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, & Stiles, 1998 as cited by Garet et al.).

Thus there is a growing tendency toward reform-oriented professional development activities such as study groups, mentoring and coaching, peer observation, networks for developing teaching within specific subject matter areas, collaborative research, and interschool visitations (Penuel et al 2007 & Garet et al 2001). Reform-oriented activities may be easier to sustain over time, and they may also promote more collective participation of teachers from the same school, department, or grade level (Garet et al.).

Duration

Training and development are two different strands within the scope of teacher education, (Richards and Farrell). As a way to establish a major difference between training and development, they also state that "development generally refers to general growth not focused on a specific job. It serves a long-term goal and seeks to facilitate growth of teachers' understanding of teaching and of themselves as teachers." This view can account for duration and time span as key variables or predictors of effective professional development (Garet et al, 2001). In teacher professional development, a recurrent criticism is that the activities designed are too short and offer limited follow-up to teachers once they begin to teach (Penuel et al.-p929). A number of studies cited by Garet et al (2001) (Shields, Marsh, & Adelman 1998; Weiss, Montgomery, Ridgway, & Bond, 1998) indicate the duration of professional development is related to the depth of teacher change. Similarly, Sherris et al. (2007) argue that if real changes are to be made, teachers and coach

should view SIOP implementation as a multi-year undertaking. In fact, in their *An Insider's Guide to SIOP Coaching*, Sherris et al. propose a three-year coaching program to meet the goals set.

Garet et al.,(2001) claim that collective participation—professional development designed for groups of teachers—has several advantages. First, collective participation or interaction allows teachers to explore, share, and discuss ideas, concepts, skills, and problems while they are participating in professional development activities. Second, having teachers from the same school or grade level creates genuine opportunities for them to share curriculum materials, course offerings, and assessment requirements. Finally, when teachers share the same students, they can focus their attention on students' needs and develop courses of action. In short, collective participation of teachers from a single school can foster trust, support, motivation and focus in dealing with real-world problems.

Core Features

This aspect mainly concerns what Garet (2001) describes as “dimensions of the substance or core of professional development experience.” In other words, if the structural features of professional development deal with how things are arranged or organized, the core features are concerned with what teachers learn as a result of their participation in those professional development activities. The central question is what is entailed in professional skill development (Dall'Alba and Sandberg, 2006-p383).

Content Focus

This feature can help determine to what extent participants improve their content knowledge in areas that may range from teaching methods or general pedagogy to the ways students learn. In a study sponsored by the Colombian Ministry of Education on professional development in Colombia, it was found that most of the training offered to pre-service teachers is focused on academic knowledge, neglecting essential skills for teaching. While there is no single answer to teacher education programs should offer, it is clear that dealing with only one dimension of teachers' professional development can be detrimental. Garet et al. (2001) as well as Penuel et al. (2007) see the content of professional development mainly as the learning of knowledge and skills. This perspective of teacher education is more comprehensive than the one described in the study sponsored by the Colombian Ministry of Education. Similar to what other authors have endorsed, Shulman (as cited by Collinson 1999 p-5) states that "expert" or professional knowledge for teachers should include subject-matter knowledge, curricular knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge.

Although many agree with this technical expertise conception of what teachers should know and do in the classroom, Collinson (1999) extends the horizon of teacher's knowledge in the quest for excellence to interpersonal knowledge (relationships with students, the educational community, and the local community) and intrapersonal knowledge (teachers' ethics and dispositions). This view is closely connected with what Goleman (2005) has called emotional intelligence. Having a clear focus and vision (a shared vision) is a desirable characteristic for any professional program. In the case of SIOP coaching, experience has shown that when teachers follow all of the SIOP guidelines,

they acquire a new set of teaching behaviors and attitudes (Sherris et al. 2007 & Echavarría et al).

Active Learning

Another important core feature is active learning, which is about the opportunities teachers have to interact and be engaged in various forms of meaningful sharing with others. For instance, teachers are actively involved in reviewing their professional performance and their role as learners. Penuel et al.(2007- p.931) argue that the strategy of more hands-on, active learning seems to be beneficial in promoting an inquiry approach to teaching and learning. Consequently, they also advocate for professional development that incorporates time for instructional planning, discussion, and consideration of underlying principles of curriculum since this can lead to the implementation of innovations. Garet et al. list the following forms of active learning: *observing and being observed* (e.g. teachers benefit when they observe expert teachers/coaches as they model effective lesson delivery), *planning classroom implementation* (teachers can link ideas introduced to the teaching context), *reviewing student work* (by reviewing students' work, teachers may gain an understanding of students' assumptions, reasoning, and solution strategies), and *presenting, leading, and writing* (by giving presentations, leading discussions, and producing written work teachers tend to be more engaged).

Following a similar approach, at UNICA as our coaching activities were carried out, there was always time for coach and coachees to meet on a regular basis to work around the SIOP components, lesson planning, class observations, and the integration content and language instruction.

Coherence

According to Garet et al. (2001) & Penuel et al. (2007) an effective teacher professional development program is coherent when all of its parts or activities are clearly connected with the learning goals of teachers and students. It is worth highlighting that the above authors give a preponderant role to teachers' perceptions and goals. Of course, that should be the ideal situation, but Garet et al. (2001) argue that professional development is often criticized because activities are disconnected from one another. The standards movement that can be traced back to 1994 when the Clinton administration enacted the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Later the Bush administration passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 in hopes that the quality of education would be improved. This trend has also become prevalent in Colombia in recent years.

With a standards-based vision teaching and professional development are expected to be aligned with national, state, and local frameworks, standards, and assessment. Such an approach to teaching and professional development may increase coherence. However, the National Academy of Education, a well-established and reputable American organization, has warned that creating high standards would require a systematic and sustained effort from all levels of the education system. Teacher training and development is at the center of such reforms. Intensive training at all levels will be necessary for all stakeholders to have the knowledge and skills to cope with this new reality. The Colombian Ministry of Education in a recent study on professional development underlines the lack of coherence between the reforms enacted and the professional development programs offered by professional development providers (teacher colleges and normal schools).

In short, most of the literature advocates for well-structured professional development programs that seek for coherence and active participation. The teacher/coach relationship or interaction has proven to be beneficial in general (Ross 1992- p51), since it has been confirmed that student achievement was higher in the classrooms of teachers who interacted more extensively with their coaches. Simply put, coaching aids teachers. But it seems to be obvious that such relationship can be even better if the elements of quality professional development are properly arranged to meet clear, observable goals.

Data Collection

This study was conducted for two consecutive semesters, beginning in August 2011. I used a wide range of qualitative data collection techniques that shed light on the complexities of planning and implementing a professional development program with SIOP. Therefore, to answer the research questions, I mainly used artifacts (self-assessment, lesson plans, and archived information) observational data (field notes and observational records), and inquiry data (interviews and surveys). The information was gradually gathered, beginning with our weekly meetings, and going over one SIOP component at a time. I designed and used a format to keep track of the main issues in every coaching meeting. There were many opportunities for sharing viewpoints and planning lessons. Of course, we also had time to reflect and discuss what was done in the classroom.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

To complete the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered, I began by reviewing and identifying three key variables in the available research literature on teacher professional development—elements of quality professional development, standards, and

effectiveness. Then, I proceeded to summarize this information as well as all other data collected. I used coding as a tool to make sense of all data and to track emerging themes. In order to carry out this stage of the research study, all data sources were classified into three groups (artifacts, inquiry data, and observational data) in an attempt to make the information more manageable. In addition, a triangulation matrix, illustrated by the following figure was also vital for answering the research questions posed.

Figure 5

Research Questions

Data source

Question	1	2	3	4
1- How does the use of the SIOP Coaching affect teachers' instruction in a higher education setting?	Field notes	Reflections	Interviews	
2- What are the steps taken when planning	Field notes	Lesson plans	Self-assessment	-Available research

and implementing a professional development program with SIOP?				literature -theories on motivation -SIOP Model
3- How do participants (coach/coaches) feel about using/ participating in a SIOP coaching program?	Field notes	Surveys	Interviews	Self-assessment

The context of this research study shows that Colombia is in dire need of highly qualified teachers to meet the goals of the Ministry of Education and more specifically the National Bilingual Program 2004-2019. In an attempt to make English learning more authentic, content-based instruction has become a practice in higher education settings. However, the data collected through surveys and interviews indicate that many faculty members do not have the basic and general pedagogical foundations to teach. The situation seems to be more challenging when subject- area content (e.g. math, history) requiring specialized knowledge and skills has to be taught in English.

There has been little research delineating the elements of effective professional development (Echavarría et al.2008-p.12), but the available literature addresses the use of three types of standards—context, process and content—for first-rate professional development. Those standards, prescribed by the National Staff Development Council, are aligned with the SIOP model, which is a scientifically-validated framework for teaching both content and language simultaneously. This model propounds that SIOP professional development activities are likely to improve teaching as well as student achievement. It is also worth noting that the interplay of structural features (activity type, duration, and collective participation) and core features (content focus, active learning, and coherence) serve as a framework and predictors of effectiveness when planning and implementing professional development programs. While these more tangible characters are of crucial importance, since professional development is a human endeavor, other aspects such as attitude and awareness also play a key role in assembling a program that works.

Artifacts: self-assessment, lesson plans, and archived information

In this section I will describe how the two teachers I mentored were rated by their students and how they made important gains in their teaching performance in a one-year period, the time the SIOP Coaching program lasted. As it was stated before, to protect the privacy of the participants, I will not use their names, and I will refer to them as the first and second teacher.

The first teacher

By the end of the second semester of 2011, after examining how students evaluated the first teacher's performance through a survey, it was evident that they were not satisfied.

On a scale ranging from 1 (poor) to 5(excellent), this teacher's rating average was 2.35.

Although the SIOP Coaching program began the second semester of 2011, it was during the first semester of 2012 that the program was completely developed. The same type of data— student surveys—reveal that after completion of the SIOP Coaching program in May 2012, this teacher was given a rating average of 3.34. It is worth mentioning is that students went from labeling this teacher as being ineffective as being excellent. Student surveys and comments along with field notes, class observations, and the teacher's self-assessment converge to indicate that this teacher's teaching performance has been enhanced.

The second teacher

At the beginning of this SIOP Coaching program in August 2011, the only available data that I could rely on to measure the second teacher's performance was his students' assessment through surveys, which indicated a satisfactory level. More data collected in 2012 –self-assessment, field notes, and class observations— supported how this teacher had incorporated new teaching elements to create an effective learning environment for his students. During the first semester of 2012 the teacher kept a similar teaching performance, especially from the students' point of view in two of his four classes. However, for his two other classes, he still has inadequate teaching methods and needs to challenge his students more, incorporating relevant practice and application into his daily work with them.

Students' surveys are useful to have a better understanding of what is happening in the classroom, but in this case—as in some others— they are not conclusive because the students' opinions were divided, especially during the first semester of 2012. Therefore, the other data (field notes, lesson plans, class observation) gathered throughout the research

study become vital when assessing the outcome of this professional development intervention. By checking this teacher's lesson plans and his teaching strategies displayed during class observations, it can be stated that he has properly used the components of the SIOP Model when planning and teaching. In short, both these teachers gained more confidence in teaching content and language at the same time. Their students, in a great majority, expressed positive comments.

Inquiry Data: surveys and interviews

After carefully coding the surveys and interviews, the most salient aspects to consider are as follows:

In higher education settings, colleges and universities do have some form of professional development. However, professional development that focuses on strengthening faculty teaching knowledge and skills is not a priority. In fact, according to the higher education officials surveyed about 80% of their efforts are concerned with accreditation and other processes, not with teaching.

It is evident that if only a small part of professional development is devoted to teaching, more time (duration) will have to be invested in future programs. Increasing follow-up work and strategies is another key aspect in ensuring the desired changes. For instance, once teachers have completed a mentoring program, they need ongoing feedback and support to refine what they have learned and how they use the new teaching methods and tools.

Most of the professional development activities offered by higher education institutions are in the form of seminars and conferences, which are examples of what the available research literature on this subject has called traditional professional activities. These forms of professional development are usually conducted by experts, but they tend to occur outside the teacher's classroom or school, and do not allow for sufficient time, activities, and content development. These criticisms seem to explain why there is growing interest in reform-oriented professional development activities such as study groups, mentoring and coaching, peer observation, collaborative research, and networks for developing teaching within specific subject matter areas. As Garet et al. have said, reform-oriented activities may be easier to sustain over time, and they may also promote more collective participation of teachers from the same school, department, or grade level.

One last aspect to highlight is that even though having an undergraduate degree is a minimum requirement for all faculty members, many of them, especially specialists such as psychologists, lawyers, engineers, accountants, etc., do not have any knowledge or training in pedagogy. As this research study is being conducted, these specialists are teaching hundreds of students across the nation. The collected data show that these specialists, who also work as college and university instructors, are facing the challenge of teaching without the appropriate pedagogical tools and training. Thus there is need for a coherent professional development program as an instrument to improve instruction at all levels of the educational spectrum.

Observational Data

As the SIOP coach of two faculty members, I was directly involved in collecting observational data mainly through field notes, class observations, and reflections. These coaching meetings were held once a week and every other week respectively. For every session one of our major objectives was to cover one of the SIOP model components and the corresponding unit teaching scenarios. Lesson plan discussion, analysis, and feedback served the purpose of making this SIOP coaching a more active learning process for both coach and coachee. As it has happened in other SIOP action research studies, differentiating content objectives from language objectives has been a challenge. Teachers need time, practice, and follow-up work to master this feature. In spite of the expected challenges in writing, especially language objectives, coachees have found that language objectives are a central characteristic of SIOP. As a result, teachers say they are constantly reminded of the importance of helping learners to acquire not only content but also language competence necessary to meet academic requirements.

In sum, the data collected for this project show that professional development in higher education needs to be more focused on improving the teaching knowledge and skills of faculty members. For those novice instructors or specialists, oftentimes highly qualified in a specific field, a carefully crafted teaching program is a must. Consequently, reform-oriented forms of professional development such as coaching or mentoring programs emerge as important alternatives. In bilingual education settings, where helping students succeed across subject-area content is a priority, a well-implemented SIOP coaching program can make a difference.

If coaching or mentoring is regarded as a learning opportunity, then any such attempt has to be a joint effort to create an effective learning environment for all participants. In order to raise awareness and self-motivation, the faculty members—coach and coachee— should have a voice (shared vision) and active role in how the professional development program is going to be established and implemented. Data collected through group discussions, observations, and self-assessment show that for all faculty involved in this SIOP Coaching program, there were substantial gains. The experience was positive. However, we all feel that some changes will have to be made to enhance the impact of this program.

Findings

Given the scope of this research case study, as a caveat we cannot extrapolate these findings to all cases of SIOP Coaching. However, the theories, literature review, and the data collected indicate that teaching can be improved by means of this type of professional development. The main findings of this study can be summarized as follows:

Professional development in Colombian higher education tends to have an emphasis on procedural aspects such as accreditation processes rather than on teaching more effectively. Thus, little effort goes into the intricacies of what instructors actually face in the classroom. The assumption seems to be that most faculty members are proficient both in what they know and how they teach it. Survey results show, however, that many students are far from being satisfied with their teachers' teaching performance in the classroom, especially *how* they teach.

Most forms of professional development are mainly traditional (seminars, conferences, etc.), to the neglect of reform-oriented professional development activities such as study groups, peer observation, mentoring and coaching, etc., that have proven to promote more collective participation of teachers from the same school, department, or grade level.

Although most colleges and universities offer some type of professional development, they need to do more follow-up work to ensure that the intended changes, especially in the classroom, do take place.

The participants in this SIOP Coaching program found the experience to be positive, and the coachees or mentees made important gains in their teaching.

Specialists such as engineers, lawyers, psychologists, etc., who have chosen teaching as part of their professional career, do not have the much needed or required training or educational background to make learning an effective and enjoyable experience.

The SIOP Coaching program, based on the SIOP model, provides a coherent framework for professional development, especially in bilingual education settings. This program includes important features of quality and effectiveness: standards (content, process, and content), structural features (activity type, duration, and collective participation), and core features (content focus, active learning, and coherence).

Teachers want to participate in mentoring or coaching programs, but they also want to have sufficient time to do so. To create an effective program, the participants should not be pressed to choose between time for their daily workload and time for completing coaching assignments.

Conclusions

We all found this professional development experience to be positive, and all participants made important professional gains. We began this journey with the conviction that teaching and learning can always be improved, even in higher education settings. There is no reason why quality teaching at the tertiary level should be neglected, and learners denied the opportunity to see learning as a lifelong rewarding experience.

To inform the process of the required steps to plan and implement a SIOP Coaching, all participants should be properly engaged from the very beginning. The data collected indicates that the SIOP model is a scientifically validated and coherent framework for instruction and coaching. But that is not enough to guarantee the success of this professional development program. Emotional and psychological factors must have a preponderant role in the creation and implementation of professional development that works. Therefore, self-awareness, self-determination, and a shared vision have to be the foundation of any program intended to have lasting effects.

Faculty members would be more willing to participate in coaching or mentoring programs if they are motivated and, if they have actively participated in creating a shared vision. An active role will give all participants a sense of ownership. Thus, teachers will not perceive coaching as something mandatory or as “busy-work.” In this vein Harris states, “the best shared vision ideas reflect the personal visions of the individuals within the organization. If not connected to personal vision, shared vision is unwilling compliance, not wholehearted commitment.” Experience also shows that reluctant participation often leads to poor results.

It is advisable to reduce the teaching assignment or duties of all participants so that they have sufficient quality time devoted to their professional development. Teachers should not be forced to decide whether to attend coaching activities or participate in other scheduled duties. This situation can also send an ambiguous message to the faculty. Everyone involved may begin wondering, if this professional development is important, why are we supposed to cancel all coaching meetings whenever there is a scheduling conflict? The allocation of time and resources will be telling of the commitment to uphold professional development.

Finally, it is worth noting that although the SIOP Coaching program proved to be very interactive, incorporating team teaching as a component will drastically increase the amount of interaction and strengthen the coaching experience. In addition, serious follow-up work will have to be added as an essential component of the SIOP Coaching. It is not enough to know that all participants have the knowledge and can apply the newly acquired skills. In fact, future research could explore or propose the path to operationalize such follow-up effort and how it may impact teaching and student achievement.

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