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Teacher Perceptions on Effective Teaching Strategies for EFL Students

by

Greta Behan

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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English: Teaching English as a Second Language

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Thesis Committee:
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Abstract

Understanding the effect that educational preparation has on American international teachers' perception of their effectiveness on delivering curriculum to EFL students abroad has not been robustly investigated. As a result, this master's thesis and correlating mixed methods research study will attempt to better understand this phenomenon by having current international American teachers answer two questionnaires to bring to light their perceptions on teacher effectiveness when looking at three categories based on the SIOP model. Teachers will answer one questionnaire about their demographics and another including reflective features about how teachers feel they use EFL strategies from the SIOP model in their classroom. These two questionnaires will be crossed examined to see what variables from the demographic questionnaire effect the perceptions teachers have on their effectiveness. Furthermore, it will investigate what strategies in general teachers are using to support students that are learning English as a foreign language. One of the major findings from this study was that positive motivations and willingness to learn allowed for a higher perception of teacher effectiveness.

Table of Contents

| | Page |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| List of Tables | 5 |
| List of Figures | 6 |
| Chapter | |
| 1. Introduction | 7 |
| Introduction and Background | 7 |
| Research Questions | 9 |
| 2. Literature Review | 10 |
| International Schools | 10 |
| SIOP Model | 13 |
| Other EFL Strategies | 19 |
| Teachers Backgrounds | 20 |
| Teaching Efficacy | 24 |
| 3. Methods | 26 |
| Participants | 26 |
| Materials | 30 |
| Procedure | 32 |
| Analysis | 33 |
| 4. Results | 35 |
| Results Introduction | 35 |
| Personal Information | 36 |
| Life Experiences | 38 |

| | |
|--|------|
| | 4 |
| Chapter | Page |
| Teacher Educational Experiences | 40 |
| Current Position | 41 |
| Semi-structured Interview | 42 |
| 5. Discussion | 45 |
| Overview | 45 |
| Research Question 1 | 47 |
| Research Question 2 | 51 |
| Limitations | 53 |
| Conclusion | 54 |
| References | 56 |
| Appendices | |
| A. Demographic Questionnaire | 61 |
| B. Effective Teacher Questionnaire | 65 |
| C. Semi-structured Interview Questions | 66 |
| D. IRB Approval | 67 |

List of Tables

| Table | Page |
|--|------|
| 1. Overall Participant Information | 28 |
| 2. Participant Information | 36 |
| 3. Life Experiences | 38 |
| 4. Teacher Education Training | 40 |
| 5. Current Position | 41 |
| 6. Semi-structured Interview Results | 42 |
| 7. Overall Average of All Participants Results | 45 |

List of Figures

| Figure | Page |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| 1. Gender | 46 |
| 2. Current position in school | 46 |

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction and Background

As the world shrinks due to the democratization of travel, the need for a common language to be spoken amongst individuals of different cultures is growing. It appears that since there is a necessity for a common language, English has been adopted as the default language of choice. In order for students to learn English who are living in countries where English is not the primary language, the need for native English-speaking teachers has increased (Hayden & Thompson, 2013). As scholarship in this area is limited, there is a need for studies that address the growing market for native English-speaking teachers at international schools and tested methodologies that improve outcomes for those students. Specifically, this study investigated the use of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model strategy when evaluating teacher's effectiveness and efficacy at an international school in Vietnam.

The students at these international schools who are learning English as an additional language are called English as Foreign Language Learners (EFLs). These students have the unique opportunity to simultaneously learn more than one language with a diverse group of students and teachers. Given the context of EFL students, the instructors that teach them come from various backgrounds and countries. Since the background of the teachers is so diverse, it is difficult to assume that all teachers have the same knowledge or expectations for students. This can especially be true for teachers from different countries, as education is viewed and taught differently around the world. Not only are there linguistics differences, there are cultural ones as well.

Effective teachers are necessary for students to improve and gain more knowledge. For students that are learning in a language that is not their native one, it is even more important that

teachers are using best practices and effective teaching strategies (Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2006). This study used the SIOP model to evaluate teacher effectiveness in the classroom through teacher efficacy. The SIOP model was selected because it was distinctively created to help embed strategies for English language learners into the classroom. Since most of the students in this study are EFL students, the SIOP model provides a strong instrument to access strategies when evaluating teacher's effectiveness and efficacy. For this study, teachers completed two questionnaires regarding their perception of their teacher effectiveness in the classroom when teaching EFL students and a background demographic questionnaire. They evaluated their ability to use 15 features of the SIOP model in their daily practice. Likewise, in the demographic questionnaire teachers provided relevant background information about their culture and their educational background, as well as their ideas about how they teach in the classroom. Their scores were averaged from their teacher effectiveness questionnaire and cross-tabulated against a variety of demographic variables provided by the participants. Furthermore, five participants were interviewed in a semi-structured interview to gain more insight into EFL strategies that are taking place in the classroom as well as their educational training background.

Given the internationalization of world economies, English as a common language, and now educational systems, scholarship relative to EFL students at international schools is important for both instruction and student achievement. Testing the SIOP model against teacher demographics allowed for deeper insight into any connections that might improve or hinder teacher effectiveness and student outcomes.

Research Questions

RQ #1: How does a teacher's background, in terms of his/her teacher preparation courses, culture, experience level and general background affect the use of effective teaching strategies in a mainstream international classroom to EFL students?

RQ#2: How do international school teachers use effective teaching strategies to teach EFL students in their classroom?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to provide context to the study relative to the research questions based on English as a foreign language (EFL) students and their teachers at international schools. Likewise, it provides foundational scholarship specific to effective pedagogical strategies for teachers who have EFL students in their classroom. Particularly for this study, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model was used and therefore an analysis of its efficacy is included in the literature review as an effective teaching model to ensure that teachers are providing space for EFL students to excel in their classroom. Additionally, the literature review will use supporting scholarship to develop the research question(s) specific to the varying backgrounds teachers come from and how this might affect their perceptions of students, as well as their ability to use effective teaching strategies in the classroom through the SIOP model.

International Schools

All international schools have a different make up of expatriates and locals of the country in their schools. Overtime however, the number of locals and middle-class families in these international schools has increased (Hayden & Thompson, 2013). As a result, this means that there are less and less native English speakers at these schools. This in turn makes it increasingly difficult for teachers to provide instruction due to the linguistic differences of students.

Historically, international schools were composed mainly of expatriate students from business families that would relocate to another country for a year or two, meaning that most of these students grew up learning English as their native language before moving overseas (Hayden & Thompson, 2013). Recently, there has been a shift in student makeup that is increasing the number on non-native English-speaking students at international schools as well as the number

of schools. (Hayden & Thompson, 2013). For example, at the school used for this study, 90% of the students are local Vietnamese students whose native language is Vietnamese, the other 10% of students come from a total of 28 different countries. Within the 10% of non-Vietnamese students mentioned, some of the students do not speak Vietnamese or English. Therefore, in order to successfully teach a diverse student population at the school, teachers need to use effective teaching strategies to ensure students are able to grasp the concepts in their content classes through English (Echevarria et al., 2006).

International school accreditation. International schools have become increasingly popular not only in first world countries, but also third world countries, as English is becoming the common language worldwide (Bunnell, Fetig, & James, 2016). Indeed, there are over 7,000 international schools located all over the world, even in English speaking countries (Bunnell, 2016). Each international school is unique and diverse in its student and staff make-up. In order for a school to be considered and recognized as an international school, it needs to receive an accreditation. The accreditation, or lack thereof, tells what type of framework and standards that school is using. Schools are able to call themselves an international school, but if there is not an accreditation behind it, that means that on one is checking on what they are doing or holding that school accountable. Since international schools in other countries are private schools, depending on the country, the government has little control on how that school is governed (Hill, 2015). Additionally, depending on where the school is located, different accreditation organizations are provided to accredit at that school (ACWASC, 2019). The specific school in this study is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) (ACWASC, 2016).

Going through a valid accreditation process does not only validate the school, it validates and brings meaning to the students' transcripts (ACWASC, 2016). Even though schools receive

this accreditation it does not mean that they are all using the same curriculum (Hill, 2015). International schools get to decide which curriculum and standards they would like to follow; this is usually indicated in the name of the school, as it will likely have the country's name attached to the name of their school to indicate the standards they are aligned to (Hill, 2015). With this being said, students are not necessarily receiving an international education, typically most students are receiving a western education with a more diverse student make up (Hayden & Thompson, 1995).

Certain countries have control over their international schools abroad, as they can sponsor them or provide reserved spots at their school if they are a citizen of the country (Hill, 2015). For the United States, the schools abroad in which the government has control over is through military bases (Duke & Simpson, 2019). These schools can be Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DODDS) which rely on government rules and regulations (Duke & Simpson, 2019). However, it is possible to be a recognized school abroad and not be affiliated with the rules and regulations. These schools are called Department of Defense Independent Schools (DDIS) (Duke & Simpson, 2019). These schools can be split into five categories: community schools, embassy schools, cooperative schools, proprietary schools, or church schools (Duke & Simpson, 2019). For this particular study, the school that the teachers teach at would be considered a proprietary school, as the school is for profit and private.

WASC accreditation. The particular school in this study received its accreditation through WASC, which is partnered with East Asia Regional Council of Schools (EARCOS) (ACWASC, 2016). This accreditation is given to schools that align their outcomes with the U.S. Department of State. For context, WASC is also used to accredit schools in California, Hawaii, the Marshall Islands and other countries in East Asia (ACWASC, 2016). Therefore, even though

these schools are not in the United States, they still take on similar pedagogies, philosophies, and have to match evaluation criteria that is similar to the U.S school system. Even though international schools still have to go through an accreditation process, they are typically not part of the home countries government education system and therefore have more flexibility in how they run the school. As a result, no government official from the United States are monitoring or checking in on what is being taught at the school in this study. For other international schools, sometimes their home country will still govern their school or periodically check in on their operations.

The WASC accreditation process is a cycle that starts with a self-reflection of the school, this process restarts every 6 years (ACWASC, 2016). During those 6 years different actions are being taken that include monitoring changes, making school wide plans and having visits from WASC team members (ACWASC, 2016). During the visit the members of WASC can make suggestions to improve and if not followed, schools might not receive their accreditation (ACWASC, 2016). For the study school, last year when WASC visited the committee expressed that another support staff for learning needs and another EFL teacher needed to be hired to meet the needs of the student population. This recommendation was made based on their principles that students should receive a quality education based on high standards (ACWASC, 2016).

SIOP Model

With regard to teaching students who are learning English through content-based classes, there are many different perceptions and ideologies on which approaches are considered best practices. The SIOP model was developed in order to help make information in English easier to access for students in content-based classes (Echevarria & Short, 2011). The purpose of the model is to give teachers steps and guidelines to help them integrate language learning strategies

into their content-based classes (Echevarria & Short, 2011). When teachers use the SIOP model in their lessons, the intention is to combine language and academic objectives. For this study in particular, it uses the same methods and standards of the SIOP model as its base for effective teaching and best practices for language learners in content-based classrooms.

SIOP history. In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was a law passed in the United States, which started to seriously look at how schools were preparing students for their future as well as the quality of education they were receiving from teachers (Echevarria et al., 2006). From the NCLB Act it created a base line for students, set higher expectations, and provided funding to schools who had English Language Learners (ELLs) students (Echevarria et al., 2006). From this new act, it created standards for English and math as well as standardized tests for all students regardless of their English ability, which placed a lot of pressure on ELL students (Echevarria et al., 2006). This additional pressure placed on students, along with not enough teacher training, had an opposite effect on ELLs ability to perform in school. In fact, it revealed how prevalent the achievement gap was between native English speakers and ELL students was (Echevarria et al., 2006). Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2008) shepherded a 7-year research study from 1996-2003, which would help ELL students in content-based classes and provide teachers with an outline for how to teach ELL students more adequately. Through this study Echevarria et al. (2008) created the SIOP model, which is used to evaluate teacher's ability to integrate ELL strategies, academic language and content learning into a lesson. Even though the SIOP model, for integrating ELL practices in content-based classrooms, was originally designed to help the problems that were occurring in the United States, this protocol is now used in all 50 states, part of college education training, and multiple countries all around the world (Echevarria, 2008).

SIOP protocol. The SIOP model focuses on eight areas, which include, lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice and application, lesson delivery, and review and assessment (Echevarria & Short, 2011). Within these 8 areas, there are 30 features surrounding these areas that act as guidelines for effective teaching practices used by teachers who teach ELL students (Echevarria & Short, 2011). There are about three or four features for every area (Echevarria & Short, 2011). Below you can see how each indicator matches to each of the areas (Echevarria & Short, 2011).

1. Lesson Preparation

- a. Clearly defined content objectives for students.
- b. Clear defined language objectives for students.
- c. Content concepts appropriate for age and educational background.
- d. Supplementary materials use to a high degree making the lesson clear and meaningful.
- e. Adaptation of content to all levels of student proficiency.
- f. Meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts.

2. Building Background

- a. Concepts explicitly linked to students' background experiences.
- b. Links explicitly made between past learning and new concepts.
- c. Key vocabulary emphasized, for example, written, repeated and highlighted.

3. Comprehensible Input

- a. Speech appropriate for student's proficiency level, for example, slower rate, enunciation and simple sentences.
- b. Explanations of academic tasks are clear.

- c. Uses a variety of techniques to make content clear, for example, modeling, visual, hands' on activities, demonstrations, gestures and body language.

4. Strategies

- a. Provides ample opportunity for students to use strategies (cognitive, metacognitive, social/affective).
- b. Consistent use of scaffolding techniques throughout lessons, assisting and supporting student understanding such as think-alouds.
- c. Teacher uses a variety of questions types, including those that promote higher-order thinking skills throughout the lesson, for example, literal, analytical, interpretive questions.

5. Interaction

- a. Frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion among students and between teacher and students, which encourage elaborated responses about lesson concepts.
- b. Grouping configurations support language and content objectives of the lesson.
- c. Consistently provides sufficient wait time for student responses.
- d. Ample opportunities for student to clarify key concepts in their first language.

6. Practice and Application

- a. Provides hands-on materials and/or manipulatives for students to practice using new content knowledge.
- b. Provides hands-on activities for students to apply content and language knowledge in the classroom.

- c. Use adjectives that integrate all language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking).

7. Lesson Delivery

- a. Content objectives clearly supported by lesson delivery.
- b. Language objectives clearly supported by lesson delivery.
- c. Students are engaged 90-100% of the period.
- d. Pacing of the lesson appropriate to the student's ability level.

8. Review and Assessment

- a. Comprehensive review of key vocabulary.
- b. Comprehensive review of key content concepts.
- c. Regularly provides feedback to students on their output, for example, language, content, work.
- d. Conducts assessments of student comprehension and learning of all lesson objectives, for example, spot checking, group response throughout the lesson.

These features were used and adapted in the methods section as the factors for effective teaching. Typically, the SIOP method is used for teacher planning and teacher evaluation.

Through the SIOP model, teachers use a structured lesson plan to create lessons around the 30 features and eight areas, these same guidelines are then used to evaluate teacher's effectiveness overall, and in particular with ELLs (Echevarria & Short, 2011). The purpose of the SIOP model was to be more of a checklist for teachers to make sure they were thinking about, including and incorporating ideas for ELLs (Echevarria & Short, 2011). Additionally, the SIOP model allows teachers to incorporate their own style of teaching and ideas into lessons. It is by no means a restrictive model, it is adaptive and flexible to each lesson (Echevarria & Short, 2011). Thus, the

model can be used in any subject or context, which acts as a universal plan for teachers to use over a variety of variables.

SIOP efficacy. As there are a wide range of opinions about what effective teaching strategies are and what it looks like, the SIOP model was developed as a base for effective teaching for ELLs. Several studies (Bertram, 2011; Echevarria & Short, 2011; Echevarria et al., 2006; Guzman, 2015) have proven that when using the SIOP model with ELLs it has a positive correlation to learning English through content-based instruction. For example, Guzman (2015), conducted a study that looked at different elementary schools regarding their implementation of SIOP. The study focused on two elementary schools during the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school year, during the 2011-12 school year SIOP was not implemented and during the 2012-13 school year it was (Guzman, 2015). From the research conducted by Guzman (2015) it showed the mean average of the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) score for the case study of 113 ELL students increased during the year that the SIOP model was adapted. Another study that supports the value of the SIOP model is through research done by Bertram (2011), where three high school teachers were analyzed using the SIOP model in the classroom that had ELL students. Bertram (2011) used the evaluation criteria for the SIOP during observations on the three teachers, it was determined that the students in the class of the teacher who received the highest score on the SIOP evaluation performed the best on their state test (The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System), the students of the teacher who received the second highest score performed the second highest on the test, and the students of the teacher who received the worst score on the SIOP consequently performed the worst. It appears from the literature that the use of the SIOP model is a valid measure for effective teaching for ELL students and positive student results.

The SIOP model has also been found to work in international settings as well (Whitlock & Ukeje, 2019). Whitlock and Ukeje (2019) did research in a rural school in Uganda, taking baseline data before the SIOP model was implemented into teaching and after. From their use of the SIOP model their results in math, science and English had a statistically significant increase. For example, before the SIOP model 1% of the students were performing at an excellent level and 68% were performing at a poor level, however, after implementing the SIOP model 87% were performing at excellent level and only 3% at the poor level (Whitlock & Ukeje, 2019). The study indicates the universal efficacy of the SIOP model (Whitlock & Ukeje, 2019). Furthermore, recent research validates that using the SIOP model when planning increases students' academic vocabulary and language within the four domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking (Muhanna, 2019).

Other EFL Strategies

While the SIOP model for teaching EFL students is the base for this study, understanding other alternative strategies will provide additional background. Some of the new strategies that will be reviewed have similar or overlapping components to the SIOP model, where others offer new insights. The SIOP model is typically used in whole class general education settings, however, some believe in direct instruction through pull out for EFL learners (Schirmer, Casbon & Twiss, 1996). This direct instruction in pull out sessions is used to reduce class sizes and provide more specialized and focused instruction (Schirmer et al., 1996). Cooperative learning is another strategy that is popular among EFL learners to practice their communication skills (Sachs, Candlin, & Rose, 2003). There are five areas in cooperative learning that are used to prompt communitive skills which are, positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation, simultaneous interaction, and group processing. (Sachs et al., 2003). These five

areas are especially important and should be incorporated into lesson plans for EFL students because it is proven that when individuals collaborate orally and communicate it shows major growth in their cognitive and language developments (Sachs et al., 2003).

While using direct instruction and cooperative learning strategies help EFL learners, some believe in the bilingual education approach to learning another language. Bilingual education is not as common, though it is being used more now than in the past. Through bilingual education individuals learn two language simultaneously, and there are many models in which bilingual education can take place (Bhatia, Ritchie, & Wiley, 2013). Technology has become more and more prevalent for all learners in educations. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) discusses how to use technology to promote learning in the classroom (Egbert, 2018). Depending on the context and outcome of the lesson, incorporating technology can be very effective and beneficial for EFL students (Egbert, 2018).

Teachers Backgrounds

All teachers come to teaching with different experiences, motivations and training. All these factors are variables when determining teacher effectiveness. This is especially true when it comes to international schools, where teacher requirements are not as regulated as they are in public institutions in the United States.

International school teachers. Since most international schools are less regulated and the supply of qualified experienced English-speaking teachers is limited, qualifications and training amongst the applicant pool is very diverse. This is not only including their country of origin, but how they received their degree or certification to become a teacher. Since international schools have more flexibility than public schools in the United States, the hiring progress for teachers is unmonitored and not very regulated (Bunnell, 2016). A recent study

showed that 48% of international teachers are under 40, and a third of them are in their 20's (Bunnell, 2017). Likewise, it showed that most teachers do not teach for more than 5 years overseas and are likely to move on to another profession after their time teaching abroad (Bunnell, 2017). Typically, in international schools' teachers are from native English-speaking countries, with the majority being from Britain and the United States, as well as 85% of all international teachers being Caucasian (Bunnell, 2017).

Teachers experience. As in all occupations, teaching can improve with experience as the law of cause and effect can help teachers self-regulate on their own best practices from one lesson to another or even one year to another. Typically, high end schools will not look at candidates who do not have at least a minimum of 2 years' experience of teaching. Though there might be some merit to this argument, there can be some misconceptions about the number of years teaching, and how that positively effects teacher's performance in the classroom. Research suggests that there was little to no correlation between teacher effectiveness and experience, except for teachers with less than 5 years of experience (Dewey, 1933; Gage, 1978; Sprinthall, Reiman, & Sprinthall, 1996). Antoniou (2013) found this to be true during a 2-year longitudinal study of 113 teachers and their effectiveness based of the Dynamic Integrated Approach and Holistic Approach to teaching. During this study it was discovered that teachers from years 1-5 were at lower stages on the effective teaching scale used compared to those of teachers who had 5 or more years of experience, however, it also determined that there was no correlation between effective teaching from 5 to 28 years (Antoniou, 2013). Teachers with less than 5 years' experience learn and grow from the teacher around them, however, after this 5-year benchmark it does not mean continual improvement from teachers will occur (Antoniou, 2013).

Student teaching. There are many ways to receive a teaching license and the historical requirements of teacher preparation and licensure are being tested currently both in the United States and abroad. Likely, if prospective teachers study education as an undergraduate, they will need to complete student teaching. The student teaching is then part of a graduation requirement, as well as a requirement in order to receive a license from that state. However, there are numerous ways to receive a teaching degree in other situations, meaning that not all teachers need to student teach before receiving their license. This of course depends on state laws and the parameters of the program one is enrolled in. There is little research out there that examines teacher effectiveness between teachers who student taught and those who received their teaching license by other means as a result of educational deregulation. However, Goldhaber, Krieg, and Theobald (2017) did find that teachers who received full time jobs in similar situations and demographics to where they student taught were more effective teachers. Therefore, from this conclusion we can make a hypothesis that teachers who did their student teaching in school districts with a high population of ELL students may be more effective international teachers because of their previous work with the ELL students. This study looked at how student teaching, or the lack thereof, impacts teacher's perceived ability to be effective in the classroom.

Teacher certification and course work. Teachers are able to teach with an assortment of different course work taken, classes completed, and competency tests required. As detailed, there are different paths one might take to receive their teaching licenses or be granted a teaching position at a school. For the purpose of this study and background review two groups of teachers, general education teachers (GETs) and alternative route teachers (ARTs) will be addressed. Darling-Hammond, Chung, and Frelow (2002) define general education teachers as teachers who have completed the course work to become a licensed teacher. Boe, Sujie, and Cook (2007)

outlined alternative routes potential teachers could take who may not have all the course work, requirements or completed a program at an expedited rate, but have been given a waiver to teach in schools. Additionally, ARTs may have actually completed the requirements to be certified (tests, hours working with children, some course work) but not nearly having the same rigor as those that go through intensive schooling to receive a full certification for teaching (Boe et al., 2007). When analyzing specifically these two groups, research has determined that teachers who have gone through an extensive teacher preparation program (fully certified, GETs) are more likely to be effective teachers (Boe et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005). For example, Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) conducted a research study in Texas specifically looking at the credentials of the teachers, they found that teachers who were not truly certified based on common teacher baccalaureate programs or who received their certification in an alternative way had less student growth than certified teachers.

Professional development. Once teachers start teaching at a school, professional development is typically embedded into the year to help teachers grow. Teachers can receive professional development through their school or opt to take courses for credits and go to workshops or seminars to increase their teaching abilities. According to Robinson (2013), teachers who receive more professional development are considered to be more effective teachers and created more student learning. Furthermore, a study by Guskey (1985) stated that for two groups of teachers, one group received specific training on mastery learning during a 15-hour in-service, and the other group did not. After the in-service training was completed, it was determined that the group of teachers who received the extra training used more effective teaching strategies as well as had higher student achievement (Guskey, 1985).

Teacher identity. The way teachers perceive themselves and create their identity is the result of many variables including influence from their personal and professional life. Teachers perceive themselves through their own identify and the effects they have on their students (Chao et al., 2019). Rozati (2017), mentions that both institutional and professional identity are related to the way teachers perceive themselves and their abilities. Teachers belong to an institution when they work at a school and that institution or establishment gives teachers a sense of belonging (Rozati, 2017). Institutional identity refers to the social constructs and beliefs an individual has in accordance with the institution they belong to (Gahafar, Kiany, Akbari, & Azimi, 2011). Professional identity is the way in which one analyzes themselves and then reanalyzes and interprets their actions on the given tasks they have (Kerby, 1991). According to Rozati (2017), when teachers have a strong institutional and professional identity, their teaching efficacy is greater.

Teaching Efficacy

Being an effective teacher is a general baseline goal of education, which is why new pedagogical practices are always being tested. However, the relationship between teacher effectiveness and student outcomes is complicated. Bandura (1995) describes efficacy as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (p. 2). Consequently, teaching efficacy is defined as, “the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance” (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977, p. 137). Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998), found that the more confident teachers were in their teaching efficacy, the more effective teachers they actually were in terms of implementing best practices resulting in improved student achievement. It appears then that when teachers feel confident in their abilities to perform in the

classroom, student outcomes tend to improve and mimic that of the teachers' level of perceived confidence in the classroom.

Teachers perceptions on their efficacy. Though perceptions do not always align to performance, it can be an indicator in performance. The way that teachers' perception themselves can give insight into how effective of a teacher they are. According to Borg (2003), teachers schooling, professional coursework, classroom practices and contextual factors are all involved in teacher cognition, which includes teacher attitudes and perceptiveness of how they are teaching. Additionally, the more intuitive and realistic their perceptions are, the more likely teachers are to look into their weaknesses and work on them (Borg, 2001). Additionally, teacher's confidence and their positive self-perceptions in certain areas correlate to their effectiveness for the positive (Borg, 2001).

Chapter 3: Methods

This study investigated the potential relationships individual teacher backgrounds have on their perceived effectiveness as a teacher at an international school in Vietnam. As the study was seeking both quantitative and qualitative data, a mixed methods case study research approach was used. According to Creswell and Plato Clark (2007), a mixed method research design is appropriate when both generalizations and deep insights are needed to answer the research question(s). Specific to this study, capturing quantitative data is important to determine if their educational or personal background impacts their capability to use and implement effective teaching strategies in correlation with the SIOP model. However, additional qualitative data was needed to provide rich context with respect to the subjective nature of individual teacher perceived effectiveness.

Participants

A sample of participants for the study included the teachers from the participating school. This section will provide context to the make-up of the teachers who are in the study and the school that they were currently working at.

Teachers. The potential sample population of 56 teachers from childhood, elementary, middle school, and high school professional teacher staff came from a total of 10 different countries at this international school in Vietnam. Due to the varying laws, regulations, and educational standards, only teachers from the United States were considered for the study. Individuals from the US have closer educational backgrounds, and having teachers participate from other countries would add additional variables beyond the scope of the study. As a result, 16 individuals were eliminated from the sample population. Of the remaining qualified 40 potential study participants, 22 agreed to the quantitative portion of the study, yielding a

response rate of 55%. Additionally, 5 of the same 22 sample population participated in a semi-structured interview. Of the teachers that participated, they included homeroom teachers from preschool- kindergarten (ECC), 1st grade to 5th grade (elementary), specialist teachers (art, music, library, ICT, and P.E), content teachers in the middle school/high school positions and supporting teachers (EFL and special needs). It should be noted that though an international school in Vietnam, all curriculum, instruction, and communication were conducted in English. Additionally, as cited in the sample demographics, all research participants were university trained in the United States. However, their majors and degrees varied as some sought out teaching after graduation using third party providers for their teaching license. Moreover, the reasoning and motivation to become a teacher is very unique to every teacher involved in this case study. The student population these teachers are teaching is made up of 90% Vietnamese students who are fluent in Vietnamese and speak in Vietnamese as their L1 (first language). The other 10% come to from 28 different countries, although only 1% of the student body are native English speakers and speak English as their L1. As a result, participants in this study are working with a diverse population of EFL students throughout their teaching during the day.

Of the teachers that participated 12 were female and 10 were male, which provide a relatively balanced representation of each gender. Additionally, 14 teachers were 35 and older, and 8 teachers were under the age of 35. In terms of the international expose of the sample, 10 teachers had lived abroad between 0-5 years, 9 teachers between 6-10 and 3 teachers had lived abroad for longer than 10 years. This information is located in Table 1 below, in which each participant is given a letter along with brief information from their demographic survey to be put into context. When speaking specifically about a participant their letter will be used from this point on.

Table 1

Overall Participant Information

| Participant | Gender | Age | Total years teaching | Number of years living abroad | Current Position |
|--------------------|---------------|------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| A | Female | 30 | 9 | 4 | Support |
| B | Male | 34 | 10 | 8 | Specialist |
| C | Male | 36 | 9 | 9 | Elementary |
| D | Female | 32 | 11 | 5 | ECC |
| E | Female | 32 | 7 | 7 | Middle School |
| F | Male | 36 | 5 | 5 | High School |
| G | Female | 28 | 4 | 3 | Elementary |
| H | Male | 34 | 9 | 10 | ECC |
| I | Female | 30 | 8 | 5 | Support |
| J | Female | 59 | 13 | 3 | High School |
| K | Female | 27 | 4 | 4 | Elementary |
| L | Male | 35 | 13 | 10 | Specialist |
| M | Male | 45 | 15 | 12 | Support |
| N | Male | 37 | 7 | 7 | Middle School |
| O | Female | 26 | 2 | 3 | Specialist |
| P | Male | 30 | 8 | 25 | Support |
| Q | Female | 37 | 10 | 8 | High School |
| R | Male | 31 | 10 | 5 | Middle School |
| S | Female | 32 | 6 | 6 | High School |
| T | Male | 38 | 7 | 5.5 | High School |
| U | Female | 31 | 8 | 7 | Middle School |
| V | Female | 32 | 6 | 19 | Elementary |

For the semi-structured qualitative interview portion of the study, four participants were females and one was male and they were between the age of 26-37. Likewise, the group of teachers have lived abroad between 2 and 10 years in various countries. Although they have these variables in common, their make-up of education, teaching experience and approach to teaching EFL students had some similarities and differences. The teachers from the semi-structured interviews were selected by replying to an email that all included the demographic and effective teacher questionnaire. After these five individuals responded a time was selected to conduct the interviews.

Participating school. The particular international school in which the research took place follows similar protocols and procedures of most traditional US schools. For example, this school uses the Common Core State Standard to base their curriculum off of. They also take the MAP test which is given to students in the United States as a standardized test to measure academic growth. This school additionally uses a school wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support and restorative justice for conflict resolution. At the study school students are given a WIDA test to evaluate their English proficiency level. The WIDA test is a universal test given around the world to students who don't speak English as their native language (WIDA, 2018). Students who receive a 1-2 on their WIDA test are considered to be IEFL (intensive EFL) and receive pull out instruction by an EFL teacher in content-based areas. Students who receive between a 2 and 5 receive push in support at various times during a week by an EFL teacher. The students who receive above a 5 are in the general education classroom and rely on the methods of the content teacher to make the lessons accessible in English.

Students at the participating school. Students who speak or learn more than one language can be taught English in many different ways and settings. Therefore, due to the different ways of acquiring the English language, diverse labels can be given to students in this situation. For the scope of this study, the focus will be on students who are learning English as a foreign language (EFL). In this study, the EFL students are at an international school in Vietnam. This does not mean that all students that are taught at this school are Vietnamese, as the students come from a variety of backgrounds, languages and cultures. This is why students are receiving the label of EFL, as they are receiving the teaching of English in a non-English speaking country and some students may know or be learning more than one language. 90% of the students attending this school are Vietnamese, however from that 90% there is a wide range regarding

their English competencies. Some students have been attending school since they were 2, so as they have progressed through school, they have passed out of the language support system at the school. In contrast, other students may enter at elementary school, middle school or high school and have never attended an international school before and have lower abilities in English. Although students have to take the WIDA test upon entry, students are not turned away from this school based on their test scores until they get to high school, and then they need a 3 on their WIDA test to enroll unless already enrolled in the school from the year before. Therefore, the language ability of the students varies greatly within a class.

Materials

The instrument used for the quantitative portion of the study were two questionnaires. The demographics questionnaire (Appendix A) was created to give background knowledge about the individuals taking the questionnaire. The effective teaching questionnaire (Appendix B) used is a common effective teaching questionnaire used in correlation with the SIOP model to evaluate teacher effectiveness. Both of these questionnaires used a closed response technique to narrow down the scope of variables in responses. Although closed responses can limit the information the researcher is able to extract, for the purpose of this case study given the time constraints, it was deemed appropriate. The two questionnaires used together were necessary to form data sets needed for generalizing any correlations that might occur. In terms of the qualitative portion of the study, 5 teachers participated in a semi structured interview where they were asked 6 open ended questions (Appendix C) to guide the conversation.

Background information questionnaire. The first questionnaire was developed to analyze the teacher demographics and compare them to results of the SIOP instrument. A complete copy of the demographic questionnaire can be found in appendix A. The demographic

questionnaire focused on personal information, life experiences, teacher education training, and their current position. For the personal information it asked teachers to provide their gender, age, and opinions on how they got into the teaching profession. Within the life experiences section, it asked about teachers' length of residence in another country, number of countries taught in, and multiple language proficiency ability. The teacher education training section asked for information about university requirements, student teaching experience, and how individuals obtained their teaching degree. The next section on the questionnaire requested teachers to state how many years they've been teaching and what types of populations they've work with in those experiences.

Effective teaching questionnaire. The second questionnaire measured 15 features that help identify teacher effectiveness and is based off of the SIOP model (Echevarria, Vogt, Short, 2008). A complete copy of these features can be found in Appendix B. For the sole purpose of convivence in the appendix these features are split into their respective categories. However, for the actual questionnaire they were randomized when given to the participants.

Typically, these features are used by an evaluator when observing someone teach. However, for this study those features were changed slightly to reflect I statements. This questionnaire used a Likert Scale in which there were four options (always, frequently, rarely, and never) for the categories of comprehensible input, strategies and interaction from the SIOP model. Teachers are asked to read each statement and reflect on how they do this in their classroom. The more "always" boxes that a teacher checked, the higher they perceive their teaching efficacy, which means they are effective in their teaching (Tschannen-Moran, 1998). The premise of this questionnaire is to investigate if teachers' perceptions on their teacher effectiveness draw any correlation with the variables mentioned in the background information

questionnaire. This questionnaire uses the 15 features from the SIOP model that cover focused only in on the three areas of comprehensible input, strategies and interaction rather than focusing on all eight of the categories. The questions on the questionnaire have three or seven features per each of the three areas on the model. This also allows the researcher to look at particular areas of the SIOP model in correlation to variables reported in the background demographic information questionnaire.

Procedure

Potential participants in the study were sent an email explaining the purpose of the study with an attached informed consent form them to read and sign. Other than the initial participant qualifying information, no special training was required. Additionally, all participants are adults, no physical or emotional risks were anticipated, and no compensation was promised for participation.

Eliciting information. For the quantitative questionnaires, a google doc link was provided in the email to the participants to take the survey and the anonymous responses were automatically saved. The researcher was the only one with access to the password protected survey and results. A back-up copy of the data was stored on a thumb drive and secured in a locked drawer with access to the researcher only. In the initial recruitment email, potential participants of the qualitative interviews were asked to email the investigator back if interested. Those that did (5), were given options on how the interview could be conducted that included face to face, skype, or an instant messaging chat.

Questionnaire. The research gave teachers a week to complete the questionnaires and were secured in a password protected google forms account at which time it was turned off. It

was estimated that each participant would need no more than 30 minutes to complete both questionnaires.

Semi-structured interview. Five participants replied to the initial email that had the link to the questionnaire and indicated that they were interested in meeting for an interview. The investigator scheduled the interviews with each of the participants individually based on their availability. Regardless of the medium of the interview, all teachers were asked the same six questions with opportunity in each case for further probing. The researcher took notes during the interview and recorded the conversation to preserve the data. Of the five interviews two were conducted face to face and 3 were done via skype based on the participants preference and schedule.

Analysis

Once all the questionnaires were submitted the research began coding the information into an excel document. The researcher grouped teachers based off their background questionnaire first based on variables such as years of experience, gender, age, etc., and then more qualitative answers about cultural backgrounds and motivation to be a teacher. Using the table developed from the demographic questionnaire, the researcher then crossed tabulated the data provided in the effective teaching questionnaire (SIOP) to look for themes or correlations. From the effective teaching questionnaire, the researcher gave each teacher a mean score. This mean score will be formed by correlating the words from the questionnaire into numbers, always (1), frequently (2), rarely (3), and never (4). The lower the mean score the more teaching efficacy teachers perceived they had. Proceeding this the researcher looked at what the overall mean score is within the categories created for the background questionnaire. Furthermore, when comparing and correlating the background survey to the effective strategies, the strategies were

split up into three different subcategories based on the SIOP model, which were, comprehensible input (A), Strategies (B), and interaction (C). For each category participants got an average based on the scores from the Likert scale and that average was then average again when comparing the other participants that answered the demographics questionnaire in the same way.

For example, the researcher looked at the mean score of teachers who student taught in the United States and those who student taught abroad, then scores were compared to the mean score of all the teachers that fell into those two categories to determine if student teaching in the US or abroad makes for a more effective teacher for EFL students. This process was continued for all the variables on the background questionnaire.

Chapter 4: Results

Results Introduction

For this research the demographic questionnaire, effective teaching questionnaire and the interviews were all analyzed. For the purpose of this results sections, the information will be presented within categories that were used as the headings in the demographic questionnaire. This questionnaire was split into four subheadings to gather information about the participants, which were, personal information, life experiences, teaching education experiences, and current position. For each of these subheadings the results will be shown according to the three subcategories based on the SIOP model of comprehensible input, strategies and interaction. The averages within these categories are based on 1-4 range that models questionnaire. Only the most relevant and informative results from the questionnaire will be shown from each subheading. The purpose of the results section is to look at which variables from the demographic's questionnaire impacted effective teaching, answering research question 1, as well as what strategies teachers are using to teach EFL students, to answer research question 2.

Personal Information

Table 2

Personal Information

| | Number of participants | Category A: <u>Comprehensible Input</u> | Category B: <u>Strategies</u> | Category C: <u>Interactions</u> |
|---|------------------------|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Q1 What is your gender? | | | | |
| Female | 12 | 1.80 | 1.75 | 1.75 |
| Male | 10 | 1.78 | 1.57 | 1.67 |
| Q2 What is your age? | | | | |
| 26-30 years | 6 | 1.67 | 1.72 | 1.67 |
| 31-35 years | 9 | 1.72 | 1.70 | 1.63 |
| 36-40 years | 5 | 1.74 | 1.53 | 1.76 |
| 40+ years | 2 | 2.59 | 1.67 | 2.1 |
| Q3 Do you think you will be teaching the rest of your life? | | | | |
| Absolutely | 3 | 1.57 | 1.44 | 1.47 |
| Most Likely | 9 | 1.71 | 1.63 | 1.60 |
| Unsure | 6 | 1.89 | 2.00 | 1.88 |
| Not Likely | 2 | 1.64 | 1.33 | 1.50 |
| Definitely No | 2 | 2.29 | 1.50 | 2.30 |

From Table 2 it shows that there is little difference between males and females and their perceptions on their teacher effectiveness. The subcategory that had the largest discrepancy for gender was strategies, where the divide between male and female was larger than the other two categories. Even though there was not a large difference between gender, according to the data males overall perceive themselves as more effective because their numerical values are closer to 1, which correlates to always on the effective teaching questionnaire. For the variable of age, the trend with the three questions is that teachers who are below the age of 35 perceive themselves as more effective and those 35 and above. This is true for comprehensible input and interaction, but for the subcategory of strategies teachers who are 35 and older view themselves as more effective. When teachers were asked if they thought they were going to teach the rest of their life their answers varied. However, for each subcategory teachers who said they were

absolutely going to teach the rest of their life received the lowest score on every category but strategies, where not likely going to teach the rest of their life scored below them. Teachers who said they were definitely not or unsure if they were going to teach the rest of their life received the highest score among all the categories, making their view on their teaching the least effective. Therefore, teachers who are going to teach the rest of their life perceive themselves as more effective than those who see them as a short-term job.

Within the personal information section of the demographic survey there was an open-ended question that asked why teachers decided to become teachers or what influenced them. However, when looking at teachers who had the highest and lowest numbers on the effective teaching strategy no trends were seen in terms of their reasoning when looking across all participants. Most said that it involved their love for kids, their parents being teachers, or teachers growing up that influenced them. However, when looking at the highest and lowest scoring individuals in particular the amount they wrote differs greatly. Participant H received the lowest score overall on the effective teaching survey with a 1.26, meaning this participant almost always used the strategies mentioned. Participant H responded to the open-ended question by saying,

It was something I enjoyed doing (helping and educating the kids) that I was also getting paid for....was influenced further by a few teachers I had along the way. I called them "the good ones". For the most part my teachers educated me in a manner that didn't suit me or my learning needs. The "good ones" treated me as an individual instead of trying to force me into the same system they were using for everyone. Scaffolding or switching learning procedures to fit learning styles was not something they did. Perhaps they were never taught to. Unknown.

However, when looking at the respond for participant J who scored the highest overall on the survey, which means they perceived themselves of rarely using these strategies, they said, “Enjoyed sharing my talents.”

Life Experiences

Table 3

Life Experiences

| | Number of participants | Category A: Comprehensible Input | Category B: Strategies | Category C: Interactions |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Q1 How many years have you been teaching, counting this year? | | | | |
| Less than 5 years | 4 | 1.86 | 1.83 | 1.75 |
| 6-10 years | 14 | 1.7 | 1.61 | 1.66 |
| 10+ years | 4 | 2.02 | 1.67 | 1.88 |
| Q3 How long have you consecutively in another country that did not speak English? | | | | |
| Up to 5 years | 9 | 1.83 | 1.70 | 1.84 |
| 6-10 years | 10 | 1.76 | 1.78 | 1.33 |
| 10+ years | 3 | 1.76 | 1.60 | 1.71 |
| Q7 Have you ever taught in the United States as a full-time teacher? | | | | |
| Yes | 5 | 1.97 | 1.67 | 1.92 |
| No | 17 | 1.74 | 1.67 | 1.65 |
| Q8 Do you speak another language beside English? | | | | |
| Yes | 14 | 1.67 | 1.67 | 1.64 |
| No | 8 | 2.00 | 1.67 | 1.85 |

The table above shows how teachers responded to the demographic survey with questions that were related to their life experiences and then were correlated to the effective teaching questionnaire. Teachers that have been teaching between 6-10 years received the lowest scores for all three categories, making their perceptions the most effective. Teachers that were teaching less than 6 or more than 10 varied being the least effective depending on which categories, A, B, or C was being looked at. For the variable of how long teachers have lived in a country that did not speak English, there is a trend that the longer individuals have been abroad, the more

effective they perceive themselves. This is true for all categories, except when looking at teachers who have been abroad between 6 and 10 years for the category of interaction, they scored significantly lower than individuals who have been abroad for longer than 10 years. With that being said, surprisingly teachers who have taught in the United States received higher scores than those who have not taught in the United States, which makes them view their teaching as less effective than those who have only taught abroad. Lastly, when participants answered whether or not they spoke a different language, teachers who said they did speak another language got a lower score on all categories except for strategies where they tied with individuals who did not speak another language. Consequently, of the individuals who said they spoke another language, individuals who said they were native or bilingual speakers scored significantly lower compared to other individuals who indicated different levels of proficiency. Therefore, individuals who speak another language perceive themselves as more effective teachers, and of those, individuals who are bilingual or native speakers have the highest level of perceived teacher effectiveness.

There were some questions from the survey that were not pictured on this graph. Those include questions about how many different international schools, years living abroad, having another full-time job prior to teaching, and years teaching students with an EFL population. All of the questions showed little difference among the variables. Additionally, the question the asked about years teaching EFL students mirrored the first question on this section about total years teaching. This is because most of teachers had the same number for their total years teaching and their years teaching EFL, meaning at most teachers have taught EFL populations for the duration of their teaching career.

Teacher Educational Experiences

Table 4

Teacher Education Training

| | Number of participants | Category A: <u>Comprehensible Input</u> | Category B: <u>Strategies</u> | Category C: <u>Interactions</u> |
|---|------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Q1 Did you study education for your undergrad degree? | | | | |
| Yes | 12 | 1.74 | 1.63 | 1.57 |
| No | 12 | 1.83 | 1.69 | 1.71 |
| Q1 A If yes, did you take course work that discussed strategies to help ELL students? | | | | |
| Yes | 6 | 2.04 | 1.75 | 1.65 |
| No | 6 | 1.86 | 1.73 | 1.89 |
| Q8 Do you have a current valid teaching license in the United States? | | | | |
| Yes | 17 | 1.80 | 1.61 | 1.74 |
| No | 5 | 1.74 | 1.87 | 1.64 |
| Q9 Do you have a license to teach EFL populations (TESL, TEFL, CELTA)? | | | | |
| Yes | 10 | 1.84 | 1.61 | 1.75 |
| No | 10 | 1.73 | 1.73 | 1.68 |
| Q9 A If yes, did you receive it online? | | | | |
| Yes | 5 | 2.07 | 1.74 | 1.97 |
| No | 5 | 1.61 | 1.67 | 1.58 |

When looking at where and how teachers received their degree, training or certificate some trends amongst these variables can be seen. Teachers who studied education as their undergrad degree in undergrad averaged an overall lower score in each subcategory. The largest subcategory difference between those who studied education as their undergrad and those who did not is within interactions. However, among those who studied education as their undergrad, the individuals who took EFL course work as a part of their degree at differing results than those who did not. Individuals who took coursework in EFL scored lower on only interactions, meaning that they perceived themselves to have more effective teaching when providing opportunities of interactions between teachers and students as well as students and students. However, teachers who didn't take course work in EFL had lower scores for comprehensible

input and strategies. Surprisingly teachers who do not have a valid US teaching license scored lower making their perceived teacher effectiveness higher on all areas expect strategies.

Additionally, teachers who do not have a type of EFL certificate or licenses scored lower on all areas expect strategies similar to the previous variable. However, of those who do have an EFL certificate, those who received it online score higher compared to those who didn't received it online. Therefore, teachers who got their EFL certificate in person perceive themselves as more effective compared to those received it online. Lastly, not all questions from the teacher education questionnaire were shown in the tables above. The level of education and how the participants revived their degree did not have results that showed any trends.

Current Position

Table 5

Current Position

| | Number of participants | Category A: <u>Comprehensible Input</u> | Category B: <u>Strategies</u> | Category C: <u>Interactions</u> |
|--|------------------------|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Q1 What is your current position in the school? | | | | |
| ECC Homeroom teacher | 2 | 1.43 | 1.17 | 1.30 |
| Elementary Homeroom teacher | 4 | 1.57 | 1.75 | 1.70 |
| Middle School Content teacher | 4 | 1.75 | 1.58 | 1.70 |
| High School Content Teacher | 5 | 2.03 | 1.67 | 1.92 |
| Specialist Teacher | 3 | 2.17 | 2.11 | 2.10 |
| Support Staff | 4 | 1.64 | 1.58 | 1.50 |
| Q2 Do you have a certification for the position you are teaching? | | | | |
| Yes | 20 | 1.77 | 1.60 | 1.70 |
| No | | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| No, but I had prior work experience in the field I am teaching (ex: worked at an IT company, now teaching ICT) | 2 | 2.00 | 2.33 | 1.90 |
| Q3 Counting this year, how many years have you been working in your current position at the school? | | | | |
| 1 year | 5 | 1.73 | 1.83 | 1.65 |
| 2 years | 5 | 2.09 | 1.73 | 2.04 |
| 3 years | 2 | 1.64 | 1.50 | 1.60 |
| 4 years | 1 | 1.43 | 1.67 | 1.40 |
| 5+ years | 8 | 1.73 | 1.54 | 1.63 |

The school surveyed for this research ranged with diverse teachers and their positions within the school. The school staff personal from early childhood care of 2-3 years old up to seniors in high school. Along the way besides content or homeroom teachers there are various specialist teachers or support/intervention teachers to accommodate the needs and interests of all students. Having said that, when the staff was looked at in terms of their position or department in the school the early childcare teachers had the lowest scores in all three subcategories making their teacher efficacy the highest. However, the teachers who scored the highest and have the lowest teaching efficacy were specialist teachers. In addition, teachers who had a degree or certification for the position they were teaching precise themselves as more effective than those who had just had work experience within their field. Lastly, when looking at the amount of years teaches have been working in the same position at this same school no trends can be seen between years in the position or any of the three categories.

Semi-structured Interview

Through the interview with the five individuals they also stated EFL strategies they use in their classroom to teach English to students. For the purpose of exploring each student's response and making correlations, each member of the interview will receive a letter. This letter only correlates to the interview portion of the research, not the questionnaire portion.

Table 6

Semi-structured Interview Results

| Participant | Gender | Taught abroad before? | Age | Total Years Teaching | Current Position |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| V | Female | No | 26 | 2 | Specialist |
| W | Female | Yes | 36 | 12 | Elementary |
| X | Female | Yes | 32 | 6 | Elementary |
| Y | Female | Yes | 30 | 8 | Middle School |
| Z | Male | Yes | 34 | 11 | ECC |

The first question asked to give specific examples of how the teacher used EFL strategies in their classroom. Some of the strategies that were mentioned by the teachers were giving directions orally, written and with videos, using videos, using total physical response, pulling small groups and having bilingual individuals translate in the classroom. Many of the individuals discussed using the same strategies throughout their lessons. All of the teachers in the interview said that you use many visuals when they are teaching. Depending on the age and areas of teaching the use of visuals varied.

The second question that was discussed in the interview asked the teachers to describe why they got into education and became a teacher. Many of participants interviewed had similar motivations for becoming teachers, all of them included that their love of kids, diversity and learning another language is what motivates them and what got them into teaching. Out of the five that were interviewed four of them went into education right out of the college. They were all passionate about becoming teacher due to the field they were teaching in, teachers that influenced them in the past, or parents that were teachers. Participant X did not get into teaching like the other 4 participants, she said, “My life was falling apart in the western world and I had an opportunity to go to Korea and teach there. This was a good option and it was as far away from my life as possible.” She also mentioned that once they got to Korea it became an easy lifestyle, but education was never something she thought she would do when she was younger.

Following this, teachers were asked how they perceive themselves in their ability to teach EFL students, the responses to this question differed among the teachers. Three of the teachers (W, X, Z) said they felt confident in their abilities and with the strategies they were using. However, two of them (V, Y) said they try their best, but they know there is room for growth, and they are unsure if the strategies they are using are research based. This is shown when one

participant V said. “I don’t know the research around what I was doing, I was never given resources and the support/resources at this school is lacking, in order for me to be more effective I need more feedback from the EFL teachers and support with research-based practices.” This particular teacher studied education as her undergrad and wanted to do her best. She was using many of the strategies that she learned from her EFL classes in college and ideas from coworkers, but she did not feel like it was enough. She had a growth mindset and wanted to do better.

Of the teacher interviewed four of them had different experience teaching abroad (W, X, Y, Z). They have taught in Korea, China, Germany and Thailand. However, for participant V this was her first time teaching a large population of EFL students and her first-time teaching in another country.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview

The three categories of comprehensible input, strategies and interactions for teaching EFL students have similar trend according to the demographic survey. The average score of each of the categories seen in Table 5 that shows that regardless of the answers on the demographic survey the teacher overall as a whole, the participants perceive themselves more effective with strategies, then interaction, and lastly compressible input. One reason for this may be that there was only a total of three questions that were directed towards the category of strategies, which than included less data and ability for the averages to be higher. Interaction had five total questions, which offered a good representation of teachers within the category. However, comprehensible input has a total of seven questions, which offered for more of a range of responses and could potentially be why it had the highest score. Furthermore, from the results section there were similar trends for comprehensible input and interactions, but strategies seemed to be the category that fluctuated each time when in compared to the variables. For example, in Table 4 questions 8 and 9 both had similar trends of high or low numbers for comprehensible input and interaction according to their answers on the demographic survey, but when strategies differed.

Table 7

Overall Average of All Participants Results

| | Category A: <u>Comprehensible Input</u> | Category B: <u>Strategies</u> | Category C: <u>Interactions</u> |
|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Overall Average of all Participants | 1.79 | 1.67 | 1.71 |

The teachers taking this survey gave an accurate statistical representation of the school. Table 1 shows the teachers represented in this survey were about 50/50 with male and female. Additionally, Table 2 shows teachers and their various job positions at the school. There were at least two teachers represented from each department, with the max being five teachers represented in that a single department. Knowing that there was a balanced number of participants helps put the discussion section into context. For the remainder of the discussion it will look specifically at how the results help answer the two research questions posed from this study.

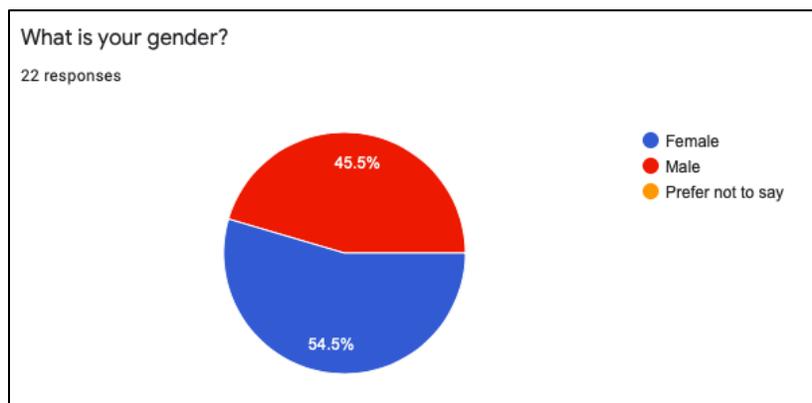


Figure 1. Gender.

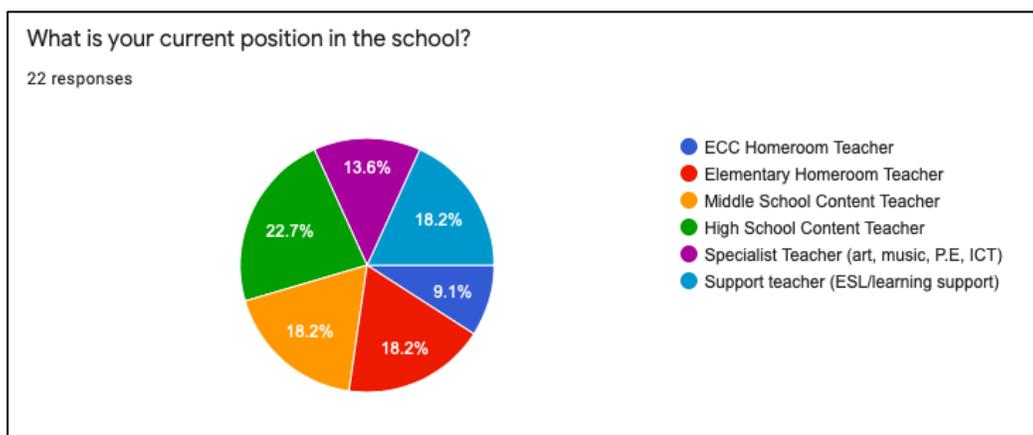


Figure 2. Current position in school.

Research Question 1

RQ #1: How does a teacher's background, in terms of his/her teacher preparation courses, culture, experience level and general background affect the use of effective teaching strategies in a mainstream international classroom to EFL students?

Based on the research provided in the literature review and the results provided above, there were some data points that were surprising and unexpected as to how teachers background were related to their teaching efficacy. On the demographic questionnaire it asked teachers how long they have taught Table 3, Q1). From the result teachers who have taught 6-10 years perceived themselves as the most effective. This matched the research of Antoniou (2013), he stated that teachers with less than 5 years of experience perceive themselves as less effective than those with more than 5. From the results the teachers who had less than 5 years' experience scored the highest on two of the categories, but teachers who were teaching the longest did not received the lowest scores which matched Antoniou's research.

A trend that was found to have a positive effect on teachers' efficacy was their motivations, determination and commitment for being lifelong learners to terms of the education world. As seen in Table 3 (Q3) it asked teachers if they thought they were going to be teaching the rest of their life, teachers who answered it with absolutely scored the lowest, meaning they perceived themselves as the most effective. Therefore, when teachers are invested in their work it correlates to being more effective. Furthermore, one of the open-ended questions on the demographic questionnaire asked about professional development that teachers have attended. Teachers who listed the names or themes of the development they attended and had many to list received scores closer to a 1 than teachers who just said many, none or school wide PD. This shows that teachers who are actively looking for room to grow and remembering the events that

they went to where growth happened are using what they have learned and implementing it into the classroom, which is in turn making them more effective.

This theme of teachers wanting to grow was also apparent in the interviews. From the teachers interviewed that have wanted to be teachers since they were in college and will continue in this profession, it was apparent that they wanted to grow in their profession, they were able to state effective strategies but were always looking for ways to improve and grow in their profession. This is shown as participant Z said,

I feel very confident in my ability to teach EFL students. This is because yes I pay attention in school-wide PD's, but I also pick up text books on the side, I read about teachers experiences, I watch the teachers around me-grow from them or learn from their mistakes. I take this all into the classroom.

In contrast, the teachers interviewed that got into teaching as an afterthought and plan to have other jobs in the future gave less examples of strategies and didn't elaborate as much on the questions. In the interview participant X mentioned that teaching was a short-term thing, it was a way to make money while being abroad. This shows that she has less invested in the career and less willingness to grow, which reflected in her ability to be effective. Although participant X said that she feels confident in her abilities when asked to give specific examples of EFL strategies it was harder for her to pinpoint things. She gave a vague answer by saying, "Well you know I use pictures, ask students to translate and read things out loud," All of the other teachers from the interview were able to give specific examples and elaborate on them when asked.

Although there was demographic data and effective teaching data lined up with the research in terms of what specific demographic points reflect effective teaching, there were also surprising connections that were made that did not necessarily support the research that was

found. Therefore, it was surprising that the distance between numbers was not larger for individuals who had more experiencing teaching EFL students because Goldhaber et al. (2017) stated that when teachers have more experience with a certain demographic, the more they are exposed to that demographic the more effective they are in the classroom. With that being said, only three participants student taught where their EFL population in their class was larger than 10%, which does not provide a large opportunity or exposure of students from a similar population. Additionally, teachers who are licensed teachers did not score as more effective than those who are not licensed, which was unexpected.

From the interviews another trend was found that includes a link to teacher perceptions around age, but also teacher's ability to want room for improvement, which was unable to be detected from the questionnaire. From the five participants that were interviewed. The two youngest participants, Y and V, said that they are semi-confident in their ability to teach EFL students, but know they know that there is room for improvement. Whereas the other three teachers from the interview who are older, are very confident in their abilities, but did not mention any room for growth or ways in which they would like to improve in teaching EFL students. From the doubts of participant V, she said that more resources and support school wide would make her feel more confident in her abilities. She said that sometimes she feels as though she is trying her best but is unsure if that is what is expected. Additionally, participant Y said,

I feel like I came to Vietnam not having any real EFL experience and after the 6 years that I have been here yeah I have learned a lot of strategies like scaffolding and visuals, but I definitely think there needs to be more of an established EFL program in Vietnam in general, because my confidence is definitely not where it should be after 6 years. I

would say it is medium low. I think that going through a direct program for EFL would help or more support school wide.

Both of these participants say that their confidence is lower than they would like mainly due to trainings and support. However, they from their interviews both of these participants are very passionate about education and teaching and want to learn. Additionally, they are both using many components of the SIOP in their classrooms. A conclusion could be drawn that even though some teachers might not perceive themselves as effective, it might not always correlate to teachers not caring. Some teachers may be harder on themselves and have a higher expectation for themselves in the classroom. Furthermore, this lower confidence in these participants could involve the school in the study, if they were at a school that had more EFL support and guideline they may see their confidence go up. Participants W and Z in the interview have taught at other high-end international schools in other countries and mentioned receiving high end training there that made them feel confident. They both brought a lot of EFL strategies with them to their position in Vietnam. Participant Z said,

Right not my confidence is great, I really feel like I have dedicated my life to this profession in many ways. I think about this career all the time and thinking about how I can get better. I can have questioned things throughout my career and feel solid at where I am at.

From the interview process and it was apparent that experience in quality schools that had high expectations positively affected teachers' perceptions in positive way. Additionally, even though participants may not feel as confident in some areas of EFL, they are being critical of themselves and are still using effective strategies in their classrooms. Furthermore, teachers who were

younger said that they wanted to grow and had a growth mind-set compared to the teachers who were older.

Research Question 2

RQ#2: How do international school teachers use effective teaching strategies to teach EFL students in their classroom?

The effective teaching questionnaire lays out which strategies to each EFL students are more apparent. As seen in Table 5, participants in this survey are the best at using strategies, then interaction and then comprehensible input. However, from the first open-ended question on the effective teaching questionnaire and the interview that was conducted more in depth and specific examples of how teachers were using strategies to gain more language in the classroom was provided. In an open response format through the questionnaire and the interview many teachers talked about using pictures, posters, defeminations, scaffolding, collaboration, technology, etc., in their classroom. Most of the strategies that were mentioned are forms of the SIOP model. Some fall into the three categories of comprehensible input, strategies and interaction that were measured in this study and other fall into all areas of the SIOP model. Furthermore, there is overlap within the SIOP and other EFL theories of cooperative learning, CALL, and bilingual education. Therefore, many other EFL theories and ideologies are seen through the SIOP model and many of the participants are using these theories in their practices.

Participant V from the interview said, “When I give directions or worksheets, I make sure to explain it orally as well as written and if there is a worksheet, I provide pictures with that help students access it.” This is would align to the feature of comprehensible input in the SIOP model. Other teachers interviewed said that they use total physical response strategies, preview of vocabulary words for content classes, doing the activity with students in small groups and

scaffolding the language for some students. Likewise, participant Z from the interview gave a specific example of how he uses visuals in the classroom for his 4-5-year-old students. He said,

I have about 40-50 real life pictures on a ring and that way when I asked students a question, I can use the ring that has the picture and the word. For a 4-year-old student who has never spoken English before this makes it less intimidating. For example, I have a picture of a toilet...when I need to ask them if they have to go to the bathroom, I show them this instead of just talking at them. At the end of the month kids have learned these new words.

Many other teachers mentioned using visuals as a way to help students understand concepts, words and directions. Another example of this was when participant V from the interview stated,

Since I am an art teacher, I don't get EFL support in my classroom, which means I need visuals everywhere. In art we do a lot of projects that involve steps. For all of these steps I have written directions and a picture to match every direction. This makes it less confusing for students and helps me control the classroom.

Beyond visuals, using the total body response was used to help students not only learn concepts but communicate with students. Participant Y in the interview said when she used to teach younger grades and the language barrier was even greater, acting things out was a common thing that happened in her classroom.

Bilingual education is one way that is thought to teach students (Bhatia, Ritchie, & Wiley, 2013). Although this is not a bilingual school, many of the students (90%) are Vietnamese and speak Vietnamese as their L1. Therefore, teachers mentioned using the student's abilities to speak two languages in their classroom. Teachers said that if one student did not understand the directions or even just a word, they would rely on other students in the classroom

to translate to help all students learn. For example, participant W in the interview discussed asking the class if they knew what a word meant in English, when not all the students shouted yes, it was a routine in her classroom to have someone be the translator. Other teachers mentioned having an “English expert” at each table to help translate words. Through the concept of having an “English expert” and translating happening, many teachers talked about using different language abilities for cooperative learning and KAGAN strategies. Teachers mentioned using partner work for projects and turn and talks to promote language in the classroom.

Of the strategies used to teach EFL students, some teachers mentioned using technology to help them. This was less prevalent than visuals and cooperative learning. Teachers mentioned that they use audio books, google images, videos, and educational games to promote learning. All of these are components of CALL, which can help EFL learning tremendously, but is less apparent/direct in the SIOP model.

Limitations

While this research provided some correlation between demographic questions, as well as some inconclusive correlations. Some of the limitations to this research are that there were only 22 participants which isn't the largest sample to elicit responses. Likewise, only having three questions for the strategies portion of the effective teaching questionnaire proved to have possibly skewed the data for that category because there was less of an opportunity to respond to those questions. Additionally, this survey provided too many different areas within the demographic questionnaire to correlate data with, which made it difficult to focus in on certain demographic variables. Likewise, having an open-ended question on the effective teaching survey that asked what EFL strategies teachers are the least confident it would bring light what the weaknesses are in the strategies. This could also be correlated to the Likert items to see if the

items are scored the highest were also the items that teacher perceived they needed to work on. Furthermore, another limitation of this study is that it does not capture all of the experiences that teachers may have had that could have impacted their responses to their effective teaching survey. Along those same lines, each person perceives their ability differently, some are harder on themselves, while others perceive their abilities higher than they make actually be. If this were the case some of the data may not be true due to individual's ability to honestly represent their abilities on the survey.

In terms of the SIOP model there are limitations that were present from picking this ideology. Many strategies and ideologies for teaching exist in the world. Though the SIOP model is reached based and proven to generate results for English language learners, as well as the general population of students, there are still limitations to this approach. In the realm of EFL research, the SIOP model is slightly older.

Conclusion

From the surveys and interview done, it can be concluded that overall all individuals that participated in this survey perceive themselves as having effective teaching for EFL students, since only 1 participant gave themselves a 4 (rarely) on some items and zero teachers gave themselves a 5 (never) on the effective teaching questionnaire. However, major trends that were seen with the demographic survey were that overall teachers who want to teach the rest of their life and have shown more investment in their profession perceive themselves as more effective. Additionally, just because some teachers do not perceive themselves as not being effective does not mean they do not care, it may just been they need more support or resources in order to do their job and gain confidence. It is also shown that may teachers are using features of the SIOP

model on a daily basis, as well as other strategies along with the SIOP model. However, not all teachers are using all features of the model in the same way.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

Personal information:

1. What is your gender?
 Female
 Male
 Prefer not to answer
2. What is your age?
 years old
3. Do you think teaching will be your profession for the rest of your working life?
 Absolutely
 Most Likely
 Unsure
 Not Likely
 Definitely No
4. Could you briefly describe how you decided to become a teacher or what influenced you to become a teacher?

Life Experience

1. How many years have you been teaching, counting this year?
 years
2. How many years have you been teaching students with EFL populations, counting this year?
 years
3. How long have you lived conclusively in another country that did not speak English?
 years
4. How many different countries have you taught abroad in at an international school?
 countries
5. How many different schools have you taught at in the last 5 years?
 schools
6. Have you had another full-time paying job prior to teaching?
 Yes
 No

7. Have you ever taught in the United States as a full-time teacher?

- Yes
 No

8. Do you speak another language beside English?

- Yes
 No

If yes please indicate your level, if no leave blank.

Elementary Proficiency (able to satisfy routine travel needs and isolate words in a conversations)

Limited Working Proficiency (able to satisfy routine social demands and read simple texts)

Minimum Professional Proficiency (able to speak and read with sufficient structure and accuracy in informal settings)

Full Professional Proficiency (able to use language fluently within professional settings)

Native/Bilingual (equivalent to an educated native)

*Proficiency levels were taken and modified from the U.S department of State Language Proficiency Definitions

Teacher Education Training

1. Did you study education for your undergrad degree?

- Yes
 No

a. If yes, did you take course work that discussed strategies to help ELL students?

- Yes
 No

2. What is your level of education?

- BA/BS
 BA/BS +15 credits
 MA/MS
 MA/MS +15 credits
 MA/MS +30 credits
 PhD

3. What population of students, grade level, and subjects are you certified to teach?

4. How did you receive your teaching degree/certification?

I physically went to school to study education, I received my teaching degree on completing my course work and graduating.

I went to school online while living in the United States to receive my teaching degree.

I went to school online while living abroad to receive my teaching degree.

I don't have a teaching certification, I only have a certification to teach English to ELLs

I do not have a degree in education.

5. Please indicate where you student taught and for how long, if you did not student teach write that.
6. If you did student teach, what percent of the students in your class were English language learners.

%

I did not student teach
7. How many university courses have you taken that were related to EFL?

courses
8. Do you have a current valid teaching license in the United States?

Yes

No
9. Do you have a license to teach EFL populations (TESL, TEFL. CELTA)?

Yes

No

 - a. If yes, did you receive it online?

Yes

No
10. What professional development have you had related to EFL?

Current Position

1. What is your current position in the school?

ECC Homeroom Teacher

Elementary Homeroom Teacher

Middle School Content teacher

High School Content teacher

Specialist Teacher (Art, music, P.E, ICT)

Support Teacher (EFL/learning support)
2. Do you have a certification for the position you are teaching?

Yes

No

No, but I had prior work experience in the field I am teaching (ex: worked at an IT company, now teaching ICT)

3. Counting this year, how many years have you been working in your current position at the school?

_____ 1 year

_____ 2 years

_____ 3 years

_____ 4 years

_____ 5+ years

Appendix B: Effective Teacher Questionnaire

What EFL strategies do you use in your classroom?

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

| Features* | Always | Frequently | Rarely | Never |
|--|--------|------------|--------|-------|
| Comprehensible Input | | | | |
| 1. I use pictures when introducing unknown words. | | | | |
| 2. I use movements in class to help students understand new concepts. | | | | |
| 3. I model using new concepts for students. | | | | |
| 4. I speak slower for students to understand me. | | | | |
| 5. I use videos and multimedia to introduce new concepts. | | | | |
| Strategies | | | | |
| 6. I ask open ended questions in class. | | | | |
| 7. I scaffold lessons in class. | | | | |
| 8. I ask literal questions. | | | | |
| Interaction | | | | |
| 9. I use wait time for students' responses. | | | | |
| 10. I use partner work in class. | | | | |
| 13. I group students to help support their language needs. | | | | |
| 14. I use more group work and partner work than teacher led lessons. | | | | |
| 15. I ask students if they have questions before going into an activity. | | | | |

*checklist features are adapted from Echevarria et al., 2008.

Appendix C: Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. What are some specific examples of how you accommodate your lessons for EFL students?
2. Could you briefly describe how you got in to teaching and why you decided to teach?
3. How do you see yourself as a teacher in terms of your confidence and ability to teach EFL students?
4. Before teaching in Vietnam what have your experiences, been with teaching students who don't speak English as their first language?
5. Can you tell me about a time when there was a clear language barrier with one of your students and what you did to reduce this barrier, so your student was able to access the content?
6. How do you perceive yourself and your ability to effectively teach EFL students?

Appendix D: IRB Approval



Institutional Review Board (IRB)

720 4th Avenue South AS 210, St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498

Name: Greta Behan
Email: gmbehan@stcloudstate.edu

IRB PROTOCOL DETERMINATION: **Exempt Review**

Project Title: Perceptions on Teacher Effectiveness for EFL Students Based on Various Teacher Backgrounds

Advisor: Choon Kim

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your protocol to conduct research involving human subjects. Your project has been: **APPROVED**

Please note the following important information concerning IRB projects:

- The principal investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of participants in this project. Any adverse events must be reported to the IRB as soon as possible (ex. research related injuries, harmful outcomes, significant withdrawal of subject population, etc.).

- For expedited or full board review, the principal investigator must submit a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated on this letter to report conclusion of the research or request an extension.

- Exempt review only requires the submission of a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated in this letter if an extension of time is needed.

- Approved consent forms display the official IRB stamp which documents approval and expiration dates. If a renewal is requested and approved, new consent forms will be officially stamped and reflect the new approval and expiration dates.

- The principal investigator must seek approval for any changes to the study (ex. research design, consent process, survey/interview instruments, funding source, etc.). The IRB reserves the right to review the research at any time.

If we can be of further assistance, feel free to contact the IRB at 320-308-4932 or email ResearchNow@stcloudstate.edu and please reference the SCSU IRB number when corresponding.

IRB Chair:

Dr. Benjamin Witts
Associate Professor- Applied Behavior Analysis
Department of Community Psychology, Counseling, and Family Therapy

IRB Institutional Official:

Dr. Latha Ramakrishnan
Interim Associate Provost for Research
Dean of Graduate Studies

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SCSU IRB# 1909 - 2455

1st Year Approval Date: 6/14/2019

1st Year Expiration Date:

Type: Exempt Review

2nd Year Approval Date:

2nd Year Expiration Date:

Today's Date: 6/17/2019

3rd Year Approval Date:

3rd Year Expiration Date: