



# English Learners Make AYP for the First Time

Little Rock School District, Little Rock, Arkansas

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP®)

## Demographics

- › 28 Title I schools
- › 25,600 students
- › 60% free and reduced lunch
- › 62% African American
- › 19% Caucasian
- › 9% Hispanic
- › 8% EL district-wide; up to 39% on some campuses
- › 11% special education

## Challenge

As of 2007, the English learner group in the Little Rock School District had never made AYP at the district level, according to Dr. Karen Broadnax, director ESL/multilingual services.

Forty-two languages are spoken in the district. English learners are in inclusion classrooms and receive no instruction in their native language. Most are mainstreamed at the elementary level and take the same tests as their peers throughout the grades, with very few accommodations.

“Our goals have always been to help students master English language skills and content area concepts, so they can participate in the regular program as quickly as possible, and to provide them with the cultural literacy to participate in school and the community. But it became clear that we needed a more structured approach to help us achieve these goals,” said Dr. Broadnax.

## Implementation

In 2007, the district selected Pearson’s Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP®) to provide teachers with a highly structured model that helps ELs learn difficult concepts presented in their course areas (such as math, science, and social studies) and a new language at the same time.

At a three-day district institute in 2007, a Pearson SIOP® consultant began to train the first cohort of teachers, drawn from one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school, with the elementary school facing the greatest need for improvement. Each school had a high population of ELs. The three schools already shared a connection since the elementary and middle schools were feeder schools. “We felt it was important that these teachers already knew each other before the training began,” said Dr. Broadnax.

During 2008 and 2009, teachers attended after-school SIOP® trainings on a monthly basis and one six-hour session every two months. But when the middle school became state-directed for school improvement, only two middle school teachers were left in the cohort, and the district decided to train three new cohorts and expand to more schools.

“Now we had a new level of complexity. It was impossible to manage 16 schools with just after-school training,” said Dr. Broadnax. “So we began to provide lesson coaching and after-school meetings on our campuses with a high percentage of ELs. We identified teacher leaders in each building who could take their skills back and train others. The structured SIOP® professional development model facilitated this process.”

The district set a schedule with the Lesson Preparation module as the first priority. “Teachers struggle with this the most,” said Dr. Broadnax. “But with SIOP®, teachers learn to write language objectives to match content regardless of the curriculum area. They get a sense of how to reach students and move them forward. We’re working toward a consistent approach—not hit and miss—that helps teachers understand where outcomes are coming from.” During her classroom visits, Dr. Broadnax makes sure that the SIOP® language and content objectives are posted on the wall. “This forces teachers to be aware of the objectives at all times,” she said.

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— Dr. Karen Broadnax, Director ESL/Multilingual Services,  
Little Rock School District

## Results

The district has continued to work with the same Pearson consultant, who provides coaching on a regular basis. Although Dr. Broadnax is well versed in the SLOP® Model, she feels that the impartiality and continuity provided by the consultant are invaluable. “Teachers see our Pearson consultant as credible external expertise, and that’s what makes the difference. They’re working with someone they know and trust, and it’s not tied to their annual evaluation,” she said. Dr. Broadnax stresses to teachers that SLOP® is about developing lessons—not about their performance.

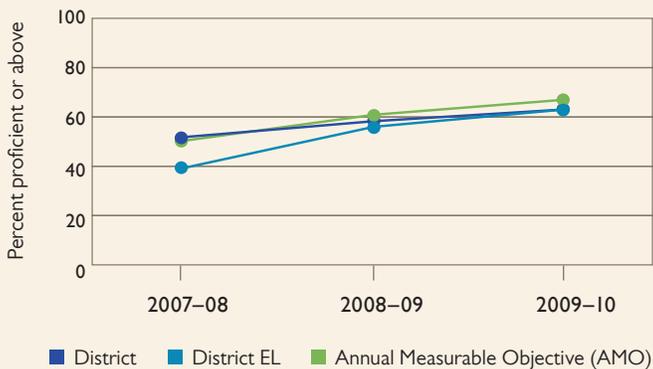
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Teachers and students have responded very positively to the SLOP® Model. “I hear comments like ‘I’ll never teach the old way again’,” said Dr. Broadnax. “Teachers who have taken the SLOP® training are constantly integrating the important questions into their thinking—how are my students going to demonstrate that they know this content and show progress toward mastery?” Students have commented that the approach is tailored to their needs and that the consistent pattern makes it easier to understand the content. One student said to his chemistry teacher, “I really like how you taught this lesson because it’s like how my other teacher teaches, and she’s a really good teacher.”

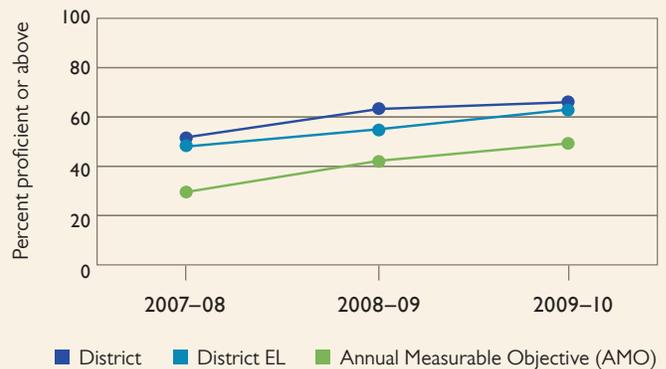
In 2009, district ELs made AYP as a band—literacy in grades 3–8—for the first time, with improved scores on the Arkansas state assessment. In 2010, ELs made AYP for literacy and mathematics for the first time across all grade spans. “There’s a high level of awareness that when teachers have received the SLOP® training, their students are more able to access the content they need,” said Dr. Broadnax.

### ELs Narrow the Achievement Gap in Math on State Test



Percentage of students rated proficient or above in mathematics on the Arkansas state assessment

### ELs Make Continuous Gains in Literacy on State Test



Percentage of students rated proficient or above in literacy on the Arkansas state assessment