

Ellison Grant Final Reflection

SIOE Engagement Cohort

Kim Holloper, La Center Middle School

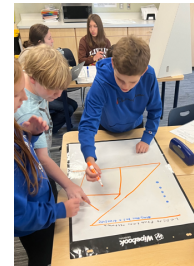
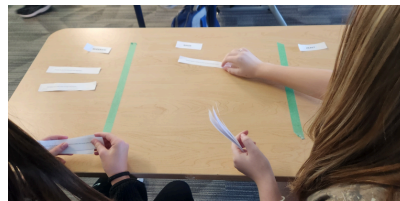
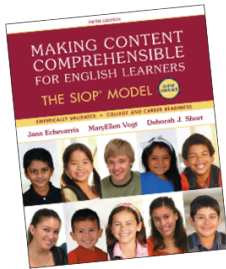
La Center School District

The Vision: Why I Applied

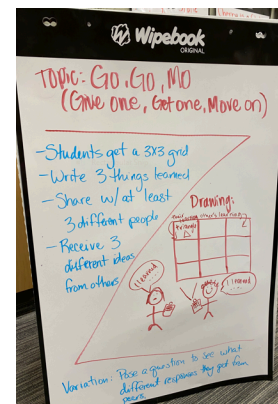
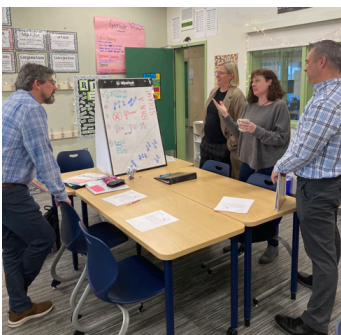
Receiving the Ellison Foundation Grant was an exciting and empowering opportunity that helped turn a vision for professional growth into meaningful practice. I applied for this grant because I saw a need to support both my colleagues and our Multilingual Learners (MLLs) through intentional, structured professional learning. Student engagement was declining, and teachers were eager for tools and strategies that could make a tangible difference in classroom instruction. After experiencing the power of SIOE (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) firsthand, I wanted to create a space where others could learn, implement, and reflect together.

The Work: What We Did

With the support of the grant, I led a year-long SIOE cohort that included 10 middle school teachers. Our work began with an August kickoff session where we introduced SIOE strategies using the core text *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners*. The grant funded books and essential instructional materials, like color-coded supplies and Wipeboards, which allowed teachers to try new strategies without barriers. These tools supported hands-on, language-rich instruction that benefited all students, especially MLLs.



Throughout the year, we hosted after-school professional learning sessions in the fall, winter, and spring. In addition to these formal sessions, teachers participated in embedded coaching and two rounds of learning labs. These labs, one in the fall and another in the spring, were inspired by the TEDD (Teacher Education by Design) model and focused on co-planning and co-teaching in real classrooms. We also introduced learning walks to observe colleagues in action, share feedback, and deepen our understanding of engagement strategies in different content areas.



The Impact: What's Next

Through this experience, I learned how powerful it is to build sustained, collaborative professional learning. Teachers not only implemented strategies, they owned them. Many began sharing new practices with others outside the cohort, sparking curiosity and conversation across the school. The learning walks and labs brought our learning community together and provided space for vulnerable, productive conversations about instruction. They shifted the culture from compliance-based PD to reflective, teacher-led growth.

This grant didn't just fund supplies; it created a structure for lasting professional development and meaningful instructional change. The engagement cohort will now be leading professional development for the entire school, modeling SIOP strategies and sharing insights from their classrooms. The cohort will stay together for a third year to deepen their practice and coach others, ensuring the impact expands beyond the original ten teachers.

Most importantly, we're seeing the ultimate goal achieved: more engaged classrooms and stronger learning outcomes for our students. The ripple effects of this work are only just beginning.

