

Evaluation Findings from Implementation of the SOAR Professional Learning Model

EVALUATION SUMMARY

The Strategic Observation and Reflection (SOAR) Professional Learning Model was designed to build district capacity to support coaches and teachers in the academic language and literacy development of English learners. The key components of the SOAR Model focused on facilitating successful CCSS implementation by providing coaches and teachers with a common language and vision of effective instruction, in-person professional development, training for instructional coaches, formal and informal observations of teachers, and establishment of professional learning communities sustained through teacher-led, continuous professional learning and growth.

The evaluation found that:

1. Treatment teachers showed significantly higher levels on all SOAR instructional practices than those of comparison teachers

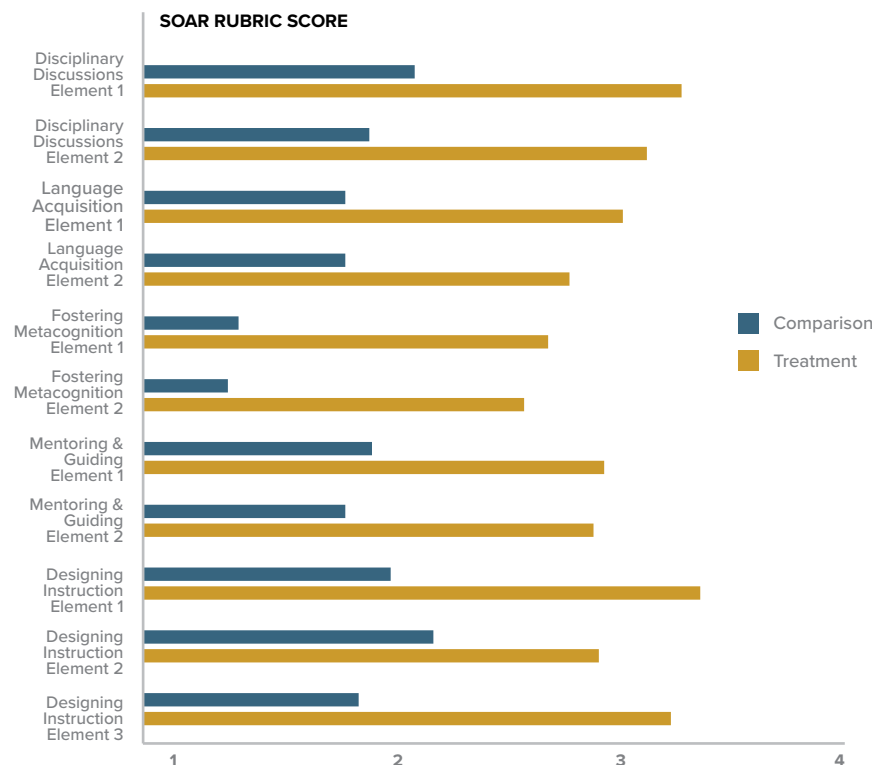


Figure 1.
SOAR Rubric Elements

Observations of treatment teacher instructional practices were also consistently rated significantly higher on all 11 SOAR Rubric elements than those of comparison teachers, on average (0.75-1.40 points; $p > .001$).

2. Teacher instructional practices significantly improved post-intervention

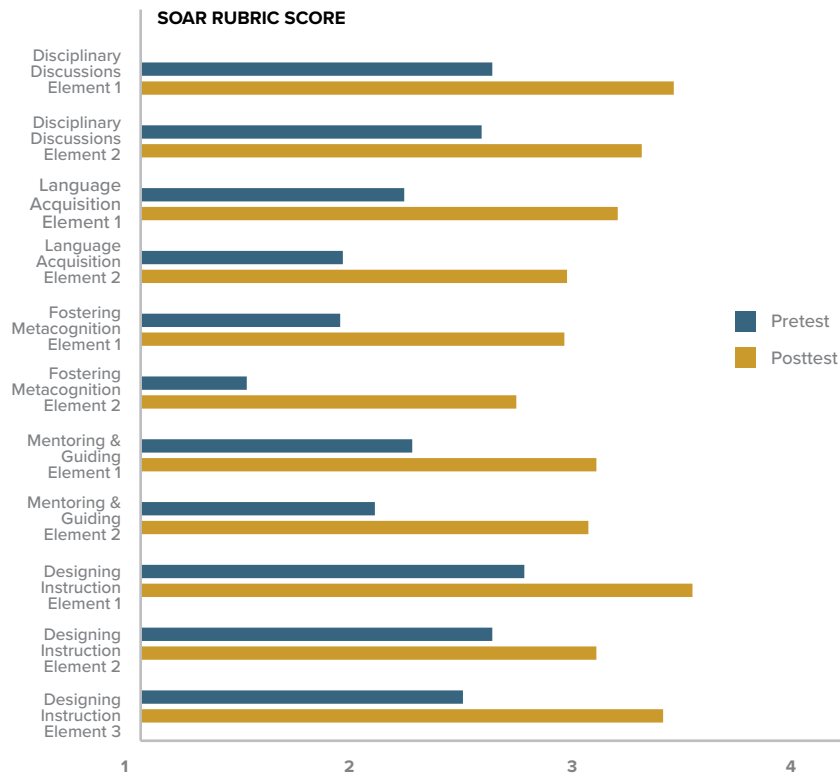


Figure 2.
SOAR Rubric Elements

Teachers' use of SOAR instructional practices significantly improved, on average, on all 11 observed SOAR Rubric elements post-intervention (.50-1.00 points; $p > .001$).

3. Student outcomes significantly improved post-intervention

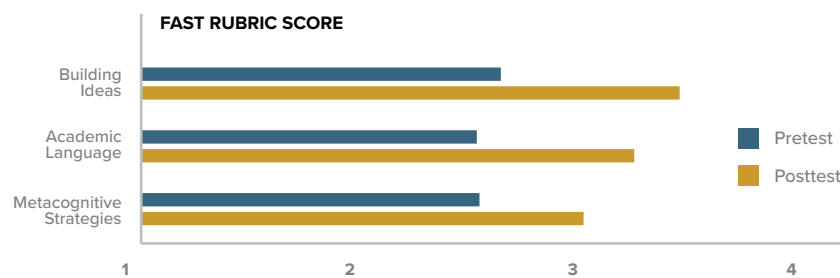


Figure 3.
Formative Assessment of Student Talk

Observed student disciplinary discussions elements (building ideas, academic language use, and use of metacognitive strategies) also significantly improved post-intervention (0.44-0.79 points; $p > .001$).



4. Participating teachers reported instructional improvements

- Participants reported greater emphasis on disciplinary discussions, particularly building students' conversation skills and diversity in conversation partnerships.

- Teachers and coaches reported greatest impact on teacher metacognition and that metacognition was the driving force behind the changes seen in teachers' instructional practices.
- SOAR Professional Learning made participants more aware of what they were doing in the classroom and why they were doing it.
- Participants noted overall improvement of students' listening skills and conversational interactions with peers.
- Students had more self-confidence and greater autonomy of their own learning.



CONSIDERATIONS

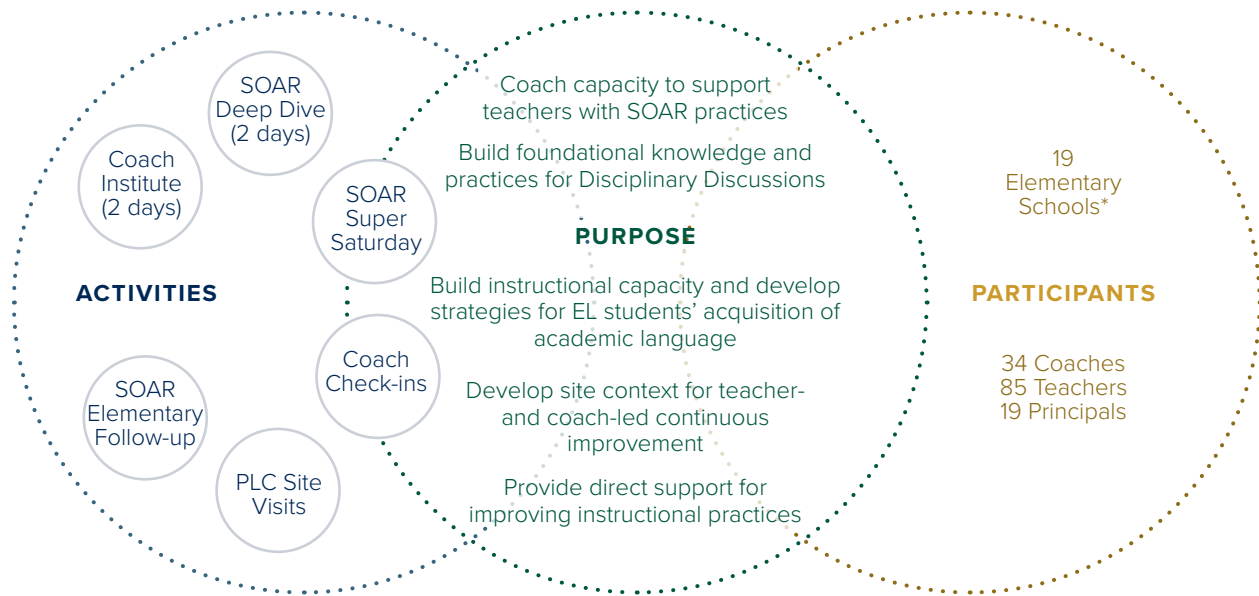
Participating teachers indicated their on-site coach, the SOAR Professional Learning sessions, and the PLC meetings were vital to the successful implementation of SOAR practices. There was strong consensus that continued implementation would benefit teachers throughout the school. Further, teachers advocated for the schoolwide implementation of SOAR because they felt that the practices would benefit all students, not just English learners.

While participating teachers and school-based teams reported they had developed supportive professional communities, they indicated that the absence of schoolwide implementation would limit potential impact. Teachers believed that the SOAR Professional Learning Model could be more easily sustained over time than other district or school initiatives because the model did not require extensive resources aside from a dedicated on-site coach.



Teachers reported that attainment of schoolwide implementation would require the presence of a dedicated on-site coach, in addition to exposure of all teachers to SOAR Professional Learning, reinforced by support for integrating and balancing other priorities. Therefore, teachers felt future sustainability of the SOAR Model would be contingent upon some degree of district support.

SOAR PD Model and Participants



*Comparison group included 19 elementary schools, 63 teachers and 19 coaches.

Evaluation Findings from Implementation of the SOAR Professional Learning Model in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)

Evaluation conducted by:
 Johns Hopkins University School of Education Center for Research and Reform in Education