Patterns and perceptions of language teachers in a professional development program were examined through various forms of classroom discourse & multimodal products. Research questions include:

What kinds of learning patterns emerge with the use of Skype in an online environment? What phases of cognitive engagement are evident in Skype discussions when compared to written forum discussions? What learning goals are evident in the Skype discussions and the written forum discussions? And, what student perceptions of learning emerge from the use of Skype?

Study participants were teachers enrolled in an English as a New Language (ENL) certification program. They participated in an online class in which it was mandatory to engage in Skype-Buddy discussions during the semester. Data was collected and analyzed in several phases. First, the Skype transcriptions and written excerpts were analyzed for achievement of learning goals based upon the Indiana State Department of Education English Learners (EL) Educator Standards. Then, cognitive engagement was analyzed by using the Practical Inquiry Model. A survey and questionnaire provided insight into how perceptions of Skype as a learning tool contributed to learning patterns. Finally, case studies helped to triangulate the data.

Findings indicate that both synchronous and asynchronous formats were proven to be effective instructional methods in an online environment. There is evidence that the use of the Skype-Buddy model has a distinct effect on learning patterns and levels of cognitive engagement when compared to the Written Forum. Students perceived that face-to-face interaction provided by the use of Skype increased their ability to meet learning objectives and levels of cognitive engagement. They also perceived a higher level of satisfaction with the course when given the opportunity to use the Skype-Buddy model.