Sheltered Instruction: An Effective Guide to ESL Instruction

An Honors Thesis (499)

by

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Abstract

This study presents using sheltered instruction as a solution to the national dilemma of academic failure in limited English proficient students. Noting the current drop out rates of English language learners as well as their declining performance on standardized assessments, we recognize that our schools are failing to teach the growing population of limited English proficient students. Current methods used to instruct these students such as immersion, segregation and pull-out ESL programs are analyzed and compared to the methods promoted by the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). This model provides a structure for content-area teachers to follow in order to apply sheltered instruction techniques in the mainstream classroom. With the SIOP, previously unqualified teachers are guided in how to apply tested and researched techniques that make their content more comprehensible to limited English proficient students.
In 1974 a California case was brought before the United States Supreme Court arguing the injustice of teaching Chinese students in a language they did not understand: English. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the students stating,

Where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students (*Lau vs. Nichols*, 1974).

Failing to provide children with a meaningful education was ruled the same crime as denying them an education, which is a violation of civil rights. Ever since, schools across the country have implemented a variety of programs in order to provide equal educational opportunities for all students. Many schools have implemented bilingual and ESL programs while others immerse English language learners into mainstream classrooms as quickly as possible. While the conditions of the law are being kept by school districts, their current methods are not proving successful. Standardized test scores and overall academic achievements of limited English proficient students (LEPs) continue to lag far behind that of the average student. LEP students are not receiving the quality education to which they are constitutionally entitled. The United States educational system is in need of further change in order to better prepare this sizeable population of students for future success. The interceding program must provide structure and training to under qualified teachers, while also being flexible to the wide range of LEP students’ needs. It must promote LEP students’ achievements both academically and linguistically.

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) is a basic program that is capable of making the necessary improvements. The SIOP model is multifaceted in that it blends several ESL theories providing teachers with an applicable structure for high
quality instruction. The model modifies planning, delivery and assessment strategies to better serve English language learners. Applying the SIOP model in the classroom is a beginning towards effectively equipping LEP students with the strategies and confidence necessary not only to survive, but to thrive academically.

**Our Current Situation: The problem**

Today, English language learners are defined as the most neglected and shortchanged group in America. Statistically, students who enter school with limited English proficiency hold the highest risk for school failure (August & Hakuta, 1997). From the very start of their education, it seems these students are doomed to be unsuccessful. By the third grade more than 25% of this population are retained to repeat a grade (Moss & Puma, 1995). Frustrated with low academic achievement, struggling to play catch-up, and discouraged by a system they can’t overcome, the majority of LEP students choose to drop out of school rather than continue the upward battle. LEP student dropout rates average 42%, compared to 10.5% for students who are not limited in English proficiency (McArthur, 1993).

This same group, while being the most disadvantaged, is also the fastest growing population in public elementary and secondary schools (NCES, 1996). The number of non-English-speaking students entering the nation’s school system has doubled each year over the past decade and is predicted to continue increasing significantly (Lewlling, 1992 as cited in Horowitz, 2002). According to the U.S. Department of Education, in the past decade, the total number of children enrolled in U.S. schools speaking a language other than English increased by 41% when overall school enrollment decreased by four percent (Parla, 1994). While overall enrollment is slowly decreasing, the number of minority
students entering our schools is increasing exponentially. Now, schools that never before had to instruct an LEP population of students find themselves stressed to meet their unique language needs.

More than 10% of the K-12 national public school population is made up of LEP students (NCES, 1997). Generally they are concentrated in urban areas, but they now can be found in most any school, and most any classroom. The dilemma of integrating and instructing these students is quickly becoming a nation-wide predicament as institutions stretch themselves to find appropriate faculty and programming to meet their unique needs.

The importance of educating LEP students has become even more pressing as the pressures begin to rise for their immediate success. Federal and state governments have begun implementing mandates to ensure better education for minority groups. The recent 'No Child Left Behind' act, passed by the Bush administration, calls for all students to achieve the "proficient" level on state tests (Rebora, 2004). Congress declared in the Bilingual Education Act of 1994 that limited English proficient students meet the same rigorous standards for academic performance expected of all students, this includes achieving content and performance standards in all academic areas. In addition, many states now require all students to pass end-of-grade tests before advancing to the next level. These directives apply to LEP student achievement and demand abrupt academic improvement for all LEP students. However, enforcing these demands is not proving as beneficial as hoped since the academic achievement of LEP students continues to lag significantly behind that of their English speaking peers (Echevarria & Goldenburg, 1999).
A reason for this letdown is the incapability of current testing methods to accurately evaluate LEP student performance. The standardized testing favored by legislation fails to separate students' academic knowledge from their English proficiency. Language is essential to learning, and therefore, it is essential to demonstrate learned knowledge as well (Lemke, 1988 as cited in Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2004). A student will score no higher on an assessment than what his/her English proficiency allows. Consequently, LEP students often perform poorly on standardized examinations. For example, statistics given from the state of Minnesota indicate 52% of the state's graduating class having passed the required graduation exam, while only 17% of students limited in English succeeded in passing. Receiving low scores, LEP students are not only kept from receiving their diplomas, but are often tracked into remedial programs and thus diverted from taking higher-level courses (Rivera & Stansfield, 1998 as cited in Holmes & Duron, 2000). Yet, these students are not slow or learning disabled. LEP students generally understand great content knowledge; only this knowledge is suppressed from being expressed by their low-level of English skill. Standardized tests focused on analyzing content knowledge fail to appropriately measure these students' comprehension levels, making these evaluations unreliable and invalid in testing LEP students' knowledge or ability.

Another deficiency in standardized testing is the need for a definition of the average LEP student (August & Hakuta, 1997). Lists of abilities and competencies attempting to define this group differ significantly from state to state, district to district and school to school. LEP students vary not only in their language proficiency and cultural diversity but also in educational backgrounds, expectations of schooling,
socioeconomic status, age of arrival, personal adaptations and preliminary school experiences. These factors affect the outcomes of the competencies being tested by standardized assessments. LEP students’ results on standardized assessments are unproductive when generalized, compared or analyzed, as each student exhibits so many uncontrollable and variant factors that directly affect their knowledge base and performance (Holmes & Duron, 2000). The performance of an LEP student who came to the United States, having completed multiple grades in his/her native land, cannot be matched with the scores of an LEP student who received little or no formal schooling in his/her native country.

Without a reliable and valid way to assess their progress, the educational needs of LEP students are being ignored (Spiccuza, et.al, 2000). Little is known about the actual needs of LEP students or how the school can conform to meet them. Yet also, because these students are exempted from standardized assessments, no one is held accountable for their progress or development (Holmes & Duron, 2000). With no one responsible for LEP student improvement, they easily struggle and fail academically with very little assistance or detection in the school system. Without a jarring disturbance, this cycle continues until finally someone recognizes the hole in the system and takes action to repair it.

While great efforts have been made to publicize and improve LEP students’ educational situations across the country, little increase, if any, has been seen in their achievement levels (Moss & Puma, 1995). In order to educate this growing population of students, we need more than just higher standards and legislative policies. Adjustments must be made at the foundation (Villarreal, 1999). The complications point to a need for
rethinking and reevaluating the current educational goals, strategies, and processes that presently shape our method of educating LEP students. Current teacher education techniques, school-based programming, curricula, materials, and assessment practices must all be re-evaluated and adapted. These methods and programs must be flexible enough to meet the variety of services needed by this diverse group of students.

Currently there is a large mismatch between the needs of LEP students and the professional training of their teachers. Relatively few teachers who instruct LEP students feel well prepared to meet LEP students’ needs (NCES, 1999). Indeed, forty-two percent of all public school teachers report having at least one LEP student in their classrooms though only 12% of these teachers have received any education on how to instruct English language learners properly (NCES, 1997). Appropriate training has been unavailable or inadequate to prepare teachers for providing effective instruction to their students. The reality is that the demand for bilingual and ESL endorsed instructors is far greater than the supply can provide (Horowitz, 2002). To accommodate for this shortage, most LEP students are instructed by content area teachers who do not have the appropriate professional development to meet their needs. This shortage has been referred to as “the greatest barrier to the improvement of instructional programs for limited English proficient students” (Gold 1992 as cited in Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2004).

LEP students taught by unqualified teachers are often left confused and/or neglected. Their teachers typically don’t know how to execute effective instruction when they do not share a common language with their students. Many teachers attempt to reach their LEP students by modifying their instruction either watering down content, or
going at a slower pace. However, "talking more loudly or more slowly or teaching for a longer time in an unfamiliar language does not make presentations more comprehensible" (Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs, 1995, p. 6).

Other teachers simply prefer to concentrate on the other students' needs in the class, hoping that LEP students will just 'pick up' English by observing the class, hearing the language, and simply being 'immersed.' Yet, instead of feeling immersed, most LEP students might be described as being 'drowned.' Students left to fend for themselves are held responsible not only to learn and digest new material, but also to learn, read, write, and communicate in an unknown language.

Students in immersion programs are placed immediately into the mainstream classroom with little or no English support. In the classroom they usually receive minimal exceptions from the content-area instructor and otherwise are expected to achieve the same standards as their English proficient peers. A large number of these immersed students drop out of school, becoming a statistic. Subtler though, and perhaps as tragic, is the passive survivor. This is the student who is never disruptive, loud or argumentative, and never bothers anybody, but who equally fails to benefit from classroom instruction (Cornell, 1995). A large percentage of immersed students that remain in the school system endure as passive survivors only observing classroom activities while incomprehensively acting out the motions. A thick language barrier prevents these students from gaining deep comprehension of key concepts or joining in analytical discussions. Students who manage to benefit from immersion programs must persist through a long, difficult 'decoding' period. During this time students fail academically
while attempting to organize and comprehend the muddle of English language surrounding them.

To verify immersion techniques, various studies have been done comparing the quantity of language competence and the amount of exposure to the language either in classroom-years or length of residence. The results of these studies attest to the fact that the more comprehensible input one receives, the more language competency he/she contains (Krashen, 1981). The key word here is comprehensible. While the total immersion technique succeeds in providing students with a high level of authentic input, which should be enriching and useful to the student’s language development, this input is incomprehensible. The student has no way of making sense of it, therefore making it worthless. Comprehensible input is material presented in a way that is understandable to the learner; this might be through vocabulary adjustments, or varied strategies and explanations. The material being learned is relevant and encourages the learner to focus on the meaning of the message and not on the form.

It is no surprise that statistics show decreases in academic achievement for LEP students who have been ‘immersed’ in the English mainstream classroom with little to no outside assistance (Thomas, 2001). Immersion is a ‘sink or swim’ method generating students who either rise to the challenge and trudge through the obstacles, or who give up and drop out feeling hopeless and overwhelmed.

A step up from the immersion technique is the quick-exit ESL (English as a Second Language) program. There are a wide variety of programs that fit into this category. Uniting them is a time allotment that dictates how long a student may participate in the program; this is commonly set between one to three years (American
These programs are most commonly removal/pull-out programs, taking students out of their regular classes three to five times a week for intensive English study. While benefiting LEP students’ language proficiency, this program’s scheduling debilitates students causing them to fall even farther behind in already challenging course work.

The motive behind quick-exit programs is to immerse students into the mainstream classroom and culture as quickly as possible while providing them with supplementary English techniques and proficiency. The set instructional timeframe also helps these ESL programs to keep numbers down to a manageable level as students are regularly coming and going in a steady flow. Research shows that these programs have failed to create a positive impact on the academic achievement of the students they serve. These programs continue to advance students despite their level of achievement or comprehension. All LEP students are placed on the same level, receiving the same support and programming no matter their need. Not only do they fail to conform, but short-exit ESL programs simply do not last long enough to create a foundation upon which LEP students build a future. (Cornell, 1995.) A key ingredient in any educational process is time. Language learning is a long process and can't be accomplished by a "quick fix" (Cummins, 1998 as cited in Echevarria & Graves, 2003). Acquiring the English proficiency necessary to succeed academically is a painfully slow process for most LEP students (Cornell, 1995).

Ample social language skills can be acquired in one to two years, but the level of proficiency needed to read social studies texts or solve mathematics word problems can take from five to seven years to develop. In all research studies following LEP students’
long-term development, the minimum length of time it took to reach grade-level performance in a second language was four years (Thomas, 2001).

While immersion techniques are not effective in completely plunging students into the mainstream, isolation is not the solution either. Thomas (2001) states, “when English language learners initially attend segregated, remedial programs, these students do not close the achievement gap after reclassification and placement in the English mainstream. Instead, they maintain or widen the gap in later years” (p. 7). In areas containing larger numbers of LEP students, entire classes are made up wholly of the population. These programs replace content knowledge instruction with intense English tutoring. Many ESL programs first develop high English proficiency in their students, and then educate them with key content. However, by the time the students return to the mainstream classroom, they are already years behind their peers in content comprehension. Hence, separating LEP students from their mainstream classmates could constitute a form of segregation and a denial of equal educational opportunity (Cornell, 1995). For this reason schools are increasingly depending upon mainstream classrooms and content-area teachers to instruct LEP students.

Traditionally, teachers could rely on the simple transition of a student’s acquired knowledge in the first language to transfer/translate into comprehension in the second language (Short, 1993). However, this is no longer a luxury as so many students come into U.S. schools under-prepared for the required grade-level work. In response, schools have been pushing for language minority students to get involved in the regular curricula before they have fully mastered the English language. There simply is not enough time to delay academic instruction while these students attempt to develop high enough levels of
English proficiency. In order to stay in school, succeed in their classes, and graduate with a high school diploma, English and content instruction must be combined.

Therefore, beneficial ESL programs must enrich English proficiency while teaching content. They must integrate students into the mainstream while providing academic enhancement and achievement.

**Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol: A solution**

The goal of any ESL program should be to promote the earliest possible acquisition of English language skills while sustaining student progress in all subject areas (American Teacher Federation, 2002). Sheltered instruction is an ESL technique teaching content in a comprehensible manner while advancing students' English proficiency. It is an effective and unique ESL program in that it is primarily content driven. Priority is placed first on gaining comprehension of content, and in doing so, the acquisition of English is promoted. This creates a win-win situation where students continue their academic development while gaining language skill.

Most ESL programs attempt to promote language proficiency by teaching pronunciation and spelling rules along with parts of speech and grammar. However, this promotes language learning, which is not equivalent to language acquisition. Language learning is the result of formal instruction, producing conscious knowledge about the language rather than providing needed proficiency in the language. On the other hand, language acquisition promotes communication and expression in the language. According to Krashen (1981), "Acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding" (p. 10). In
effective sheltered instruction, language acquisition is supported by meaningful conversation as students apply and practice their language skills through meeting content objectives.

Sheltered instruction is said to be the most influential instructional innovation since the 1980s (Faltis, 1993). Researchers have recommended this instructional approach, complimenting its development of students' academic language ability and ease of transition to mainstream classrooms (Short, 1993). Therefore, the standards of sheltered instruction have assumed a valued and dynamic place in school curricula across the country. However, having only been introduced as a theory, the application of sheltered instruction in the actual classroom varies greatly depending on the teacher’s interpretation (Echevarria & Short, 2000). A model was needed that would standardize sheltered instruction, combining all its key ingredients and henceforth guiding teachers in its proper use. To meet this need, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) was developed to define, exemplify and analyze effective sheltered instruction techniques. Teachers and researchers worked together to define the best practices and models used in the classroom. This combined effort helped researchers to recognize the time constraints placed on the teachers and the pressures of their multiple-subject schedules. At the same time, teachers were actively able to integrate and improve their teaching styles by applying the latest theories and findings to their classrooms (Echevarria, 1995).

Their combined efforts developed a model that serves as an outline for lessons that best enhance and expand teachers’ instructional routine (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2004). The SIOP model identifies key elements and techniques that should be present in
any lesson plan, delivery or assessment. This protocol was originally used as a rubric to evaluate the use of sheltered instruction in various classrooms. Now the model is more commonly used by teachers as a guide to help prepare, deliver and reflect on the use of sheltered instruction in their classrooms (Echevarria, 1995).

Studies performed in 1997, and again in 1999, validated the effectiveness of the SIOP model in promoting English acquisition in the classroom. Researchers compared English language learning students in classes where teachers had been trained in using the SIOP, to a control group, taught by teachers not familiar with the SIOP, by using a prompt that required narrative writing. The prompt was scored using the writing rubric of the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE) Test. The English learners in classes where teachers had been trained in the SIOP model demonstrated significantly higher writing scores than the control group (Echevarria & Graves, 2003).

Fundamentally, the SIOP model is a checklist of 30 items categorized into eight sections: preparation, instruction, comprehensible input, strategies, interactions, practice/application, lesson delivery and review/assessment (See appendix A). These eight sections are as follows:

**Preparation:** thoughtful planning is hoped to lead to effective instruction. The preparation phase involves stating clear content and language objectives that support school-district-and state-content standards. These objectives are clearly presented to the students both orally and in writing. Content standards are then linked to students’ background experiences in the succeeding segment.

**Building background:** Research clearly emphasizes that in order for learning to occur, new information must be associated with what the learner already knows
Connecting new content with background knowledge provides a foundation for students to associate, relate, and store new information.

Comprehensible Input: calls for teachers to consider how they can integrate multiple learning styles and intelligences through supplementary materials, thus implementing the works of Howard Gardner (1983).

Strategies: Plans are adapted to scaffold instruction, borrowing from Krashen (1985) the idea that effective teaching takes students from where they are and leads them to a higher level of understanding (i + 1 hypothesis). Scaffolding enables students to perform and comprehend at higher levels with guided assistance than they ordinarily would alone.

Interaction: promotes cooperative learning and humanistic learning theory. Teachers develop activities for students to interact with the teacher and with one another, using their peers as resources and cohorts in learning.

Practice/application: activities are incorporated that provide hands on opportunities for students to apply new content knowledge as well as activities that support all language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking).

Lesson Delivery: focuses on providing maximal student engagement and optimal lesson pacing. All elements dealing with delivery directly reflect the quality of planning and preparation given to the lesson.

Evaluation/Review: applies to both the students and the instructor. Informal assessment and periodic review are integrated throughout the lesson to reinforce and reflect on student learning. Teacher reflection is emphasized to evaluate and
improve upon the success of the lesson in achieving the original content and
language goals (Echevarria & Short, 2000).

The SIOP model is advantageous in that it is not driven by one single theory but
exhibits influences from several theoretical perspectives. Serving as somewhat of an all-
star team of ESL instruction, the SIOP takes the best of multiple learning theories, blends
and then dispenses them into the classroom. Most teachers favor applying one single
approach to their procedures and instruction; however one approach rarely meets all the
needs of their students. The best teachers are those who are able to employ various
approaches depending on the context and goals of the lesson (Saunders & Goldenburg,
1996). The SIOP model borrows elements from the humanistic, social interaction,
cognitive, and behavioral learning theories as well as from theories of second-language
acquisition including the works of Krashen, Cummins, and Vygotsky. Serving as a
bridge connecting research to the modern classroom, the protocol allows teachers to
effectively apply years worth of research to their daily plans.

Some may complain that the SIOP model only adds more stress to an already
overworked and underpaid group of teachers. Yet, the protocol does not demand that
teachers abandon their individual techniques in order to add superfluous new elements to
their schedules. The checklist of items is designed, in part, to encourage teachers of
English learners to pay attention to some key aspects of teaching that are often underused
and overlooked. As sheltered instruction teachers design their lessons, they have room to
incorporate their own creativity and teaching style (Echevarria & Goldenburg, 1999).
Only, key instructional features must be still included in order to meet academic and
language development objectives. The SIOP model does not generate cookie-cutter
instruction, but simply provides a framework for well-prepared, well-delivered sheltered lessons for any classroom, in any subject area.

This engenders another major advantage of the SIOP model, its great flexibility. The SIOP model was not designed to fit specific requirements, classrooms or situations; instead it is able to conform to the situations, teachers, facilities and students it serves. Sheltered instruction has been used in ESL programs, bilingual programs, mainstream classrooms and newcomer programs at the elementary, middle school, high school and university levels (Echevarria & Graves, 2003). It is not limited in serving only LEP students, all students can benefit from scaffolding instruction, cooperative learning, and connecting new material to previous knowledge; these are simply essentials when instructing English language learners (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2004). Because of its focus on content instruction before language, the model can also be applied to benefit learning disabled, and struggling students. The great diversity and flexibility of the SIOP model makes it malleable to any classroom and capable of meeting the diverse individual needs of LEP students.

While previously it was only those teachers of densely populated minority groups in urban areas who needed to prepare to instruct linguistically and culturally diverse students; now because of the nation wide increase of the LEP population, it is urgent that all teachers be prepared to meet the needs of these students. Somehow all teachers need to become familiar with appropriate strategies and techniques to use in order to instruct linguistically diverse students in their classrooms. Considering teacher training techniques, inquiries arise as to what would be the best method of instilling ESL techniques into thousands of content area instructors (Crandall, 1992).
The SIOP model is a promising solution to this dilemma since it uncomplicatedly equips regular teachers with the knowledge and the tools necessary to communicate and instruct LEP students. By receiving training in the SIOP model, teachers are better able to meet the demands of English language learners as they attempt to study multiple subjects through their non-native language. The SIOP model educates teachers in how to make content area instruction more understandable and English learning more meaningful. Providing a strategic plan to follow, the model facilitates ESL lesson adaptations.

Yet, many U.S. schools still endorse bilingual education programs as the answer to improving LEP student performance. Researchers agree stating “the most effective method of instruction for linguistically diverse students is instruction delivered in the language they understand best – their native language” (Cummins, 1981, as cited in Echevarria, 1995, p.1). In bilingual education programs students receive academic instruction in their native language while making a gradual transition to English-language instruction (American Federation of Teachers, 2002). While gradual transitioning may be proven to be the best method of instruction, this luxury is not realistically applicable to most schools. The educational system already is suffering from an extreme shortage of bilingual/ESL instructors; to create an even higher demand for bilingual teachers seems foolish. With an estimate of over 300 languages represented in American schools, there is no feasible way enough qualified instructors or materials could ever be produced to instruct the diverse LEP population properly (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2004).

Generally, the SIOP model provides all LEP students, no matter their native language, with the opportunity to excel academically. By educating teachers in how to
supply students with the structures, comprehensible input, and connections they need, the SIOP succeeds in improving LEP student achievement while providing a practical solution to staffing shortages.

However, the national issue of assessment is still being resolved. Most assessment instruments inadvertently test both content and language ability, because language and content are strongly intertwined (Short, 1993). It is difficult to isolate and assess one feature without incorporating effects of the other. Thus, teachers are left unsure as to whether a student is failing to demonstrate content knowledge because of language deficiencies or because of lack of actual comprehension and learning of the material being assessed. A distinction needs to be made between the two in order to identify and see to the students' specific needs.

In response to these complicated assessment issues, the SIOP model advocates alternative assessment approaches for measuring student ability. While not a complete solution to the problem, this is definitely progress compared to the paper and pencil methods of the past. Alternative assessments should mirror instructional practices reflecting actual classroom practices, instead of a one-time standardized exam. These types of assessments focus on students' strengths and give them opportunities to demonstrate their advancing ability, skill, and knowledge levels. Alternative assessments should reveal students' advancements in knowledge and abilities over a long period of time, such as through portfolios, performance based tests, journals, projects, and observation checklists (Short, 1993). This also helps to promote motivation as students are able to actually see their own improvement and achievement. Hopefully, LEP
students will wane in frustration and disappointment and instead will find victory focusing on their daily advancements and achievements.

Our government, in hopes of progressing the country, has set a national vision: to provide a meaningful education for the benefit of all students. Recent legislation has implemented codes and standards, planting the foundations for this vision. Now it is time for the schools to take action in making this vision a reality.

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol tracks the objectives of this existing goal. It is not a complex program that requires years of implementation or millions of tax dollars. Instead, its methods are simple and its target is clear. The protocol equips LEP students for success by equipping their instructors with the training necessary to teach them. SIOP is a reasonable response to our current situation addressing the needs of both students and teachers. It is not meant to be a magical equation that mechanically generates success in LEP students, but must be executed with large amounts of time, incentive and hard work. The protocol only succeeds in training teachers how to equip LEP students with effective learning tools, after that it is the responsibility of the student to decide how he/she is going to use them. Ideally, the protocol would promote an increase in LEP students’ academic achievements and confidence allowing them to compete with their native English-speaking peers and to acquire their constitutional right of a quality education.
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Appendix A

Lesson Plan Checklist

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)  
(modified from Echevarria, 2001)

I. Preparation

✓ Content Objectives (state clearly for students)

✓ Language Objectives (state clearly for students)

✓ Content concepts (chosen for appropriate age and educational background level of students.)

✓ Supplementary materials

✓ Content adapted to all levels of student proficiency

✓ Meaningful activities (lesson concepts integrated with language practice for reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking)

II. Instruction

Building Background

✓ Concepts linked to student’s background and experiences

✓ New concepts linked to past learning

✓ Key Vocabulary
  • Introduce, Write, Repeat, and Highlight

Comprehensible Input

✓ Academic tasks explained clearly

✓ Variety of techniques used to make concepts clear

Strategies

✓ Ample opportunities provided for students to USE strategies
  • problem-solving, predicting, organizing, summarizing, categorizing, evaluating, self-monitoring

✓ Scaffolding techniques used throughout lesson
✓ Varity of question types used (especially those that promote higher-order thinking) literal, analytical and interpretive questions

Interaction

✓ Opportunities for interaction – provided frequently with discussion between teacher and student and among students about concepts. Encourage elaborated responses.

✓ Group configurations used to support language and content objectives

✓ Provide sufficient wait time for student responses

✓ Provide opportunities for students to clarify key concepts in L1 as needed with aide, peer or L1 text.

Practice/Application

✓ Hands on materials and or manipulatives provided

✓ Activities for students to apply content and language knowledge in the classroom integrated.

✓ Activities planned that integrate all language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking)

Lesson Delivery

✓ Support content objectives clearly

✓ Support language objectives clearly

✓ Engage students approximately 90-100% of the period

✓ Pace the lesson appropriately (i + 1)

III. Review/Evaluation

✓ Review key vocabulary

✓ Review key content concepts

✓ Provide feedback to students regularly on their performance

✓ Assess student comprehension and learning throughout the lesson on all lesson objectives.