

IMPROVING COMPREHENSION OF EXPOSITORY TEXT FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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BACKGROUND ON STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT

- In 2001-02, over 4.7 million school age children were identified as LEP, almost 10% of the K-12 public school population.
- From 1991-92 to 2001-02, the number of LEP students grew 95% while the total enrollment increased only 12% (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2002).
- In 15 states, LEP enrollment grew 200% between 1992 and 2002.
- By the year 2050, it is estimated that Hispanics will represent 30% of the country's total preK – 12 school population (Waggoner, 1999).
- The academic achievement of these ELL's consistently and significantly lags behind their native English-speaking peers and have higher dropout rates: In 1998, 30% of Hispanics dropped out vs. 14% for African Americans and 8% for Whites (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000).
- Overall, English learners are not getting the support they need to develop academic literacy skills.
- The educational reform movement and the No Child Left Behind Act clearly offer opportunities and challenges for students learning English.
- Increasing academic rigor and delivering standards-based instruction appropriately for ELLs relies, to a large extent, on the qualifications and experience of teachers.

CREDE RESEARCH: THE EFFECTS OF SHELTERED INSTRUCTION ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS

This 7-year research project (1996-2003) was conducted for the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE), funded by the U.S. Department of Education. This project worked with middle school teachers to identify key practices for sheltered instruction (SI) and develop a professional development model to enable more teachers to use SI effectively. The project's goals were to: 1) develop an explicit model of sheltered instruction; 2) use that model to train teachers in effective sheltered strategies; and 3) conduct field experiments and collect data to evaluate teacher change and the effects of the SIOP Model of sheltered instruction on students' English language development and content knowledge.

- After 4 years of teacher-researcher collaborative research, the SI project developed a model of effective sheltered instruction, operationalized in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2000).
- Research Questions:
 1. What are the characteristics of sheltered instruction and how does it differ from high quality non-sheltered instruction?

2. What are the characteristics of an effective professional development program for implementing quality sheltered instruction to a high degree?
 3. Does sheltered instruction improve the achievement of LEP students in content areas such as social studies?
 4. Are there significant differences in achievement data (e.g., reading scores, writing samples) for students of project teachers versus students in sheltered classes whose teachers have not received SIOP training?
- After several years of field-testing the SIOP, a study was conducted to establish the validity and reliability of the instrument (Garino, Echevarria, Short, Schick, Forbes & Rueda, 2001). Findings indicated that the SIOP is a highly reliable and valid measure of sheltered instruction.
 - 1998-99: Using a prompt that required expository writing, ELL students in classes whose teachers had been trained in implementing the SIOP to a high degree out-performed students whose sheltered teachers did not implement the SIOP (manuscript under review).
 - The participants involved in the intervention classes were 346 students in Grades 6 through 8. Of these participants, 237 were from the west coast school district and 109 were from the east coast districts. Approximately 56% were Hispanic, 41% Asian/Pacific Islander, 2% European American, and 1% African American. . Although not specifically matched student to student, the comparison group was drawn from a different school on each coast but with similar student populations in terms of ethnic makeup, proportion of English language learners, and free/reduced price lunch status. The participants involved in the comparison group were 94 students in Grades 6 through 8; 87 were from the west coast and 7 were from the east coast. Approximately 69% were Hispanic and 31% were Asian/Pacific Islander.
 - Though professional development is a complex and multifaceted endeavor, the SIOP is an effective tool for improving teachers' instructional practice.

Uses of the SIOP

- Teacher lesson plan checklist, lesson delivery system
- Research observation tool for fidelity of model implementation
- Classroom observation tool by administrators
- Program of professional development
- Supervision and observation tool of student teachers

THE SIOP MODEL: SHELTERED INSTRUCTION FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004)

In the SIOP Model, language and content objectives are systematically woven into the grade-level subject curriculum that teachers present to students through modified instruction in English. The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) operationalizes the model. The protocol is composed of 30 items grouped into 8 components.

Preparation. Each SIOP lesson has separate language and content objectives that are linked to the curricula/standards and taught systematically. The content concepts should suit the grade and developmental level of the students. SIOP lessons include meaningful activities that integrate concepts with language practice and supplemental materials that support the academic text.

Building Background. Effective SI teachers make connections between new concepts and past learning and between concepts and students' personal experiences. These connections help students organize new information as part of their cognitive processing. Furthermore, teachers must explicitly teach and emphasize the key academic vocabulary of the concepts and provide opportunities for ELLs to use this vocabulary in meaningful ways.

Comprehensible Input. Accomplished SI teachers modulate their rate of speech, word choice, and sentence structure complexity according to the proficiency level of ELLs. They make the content comprehensible through content-ESL techniques. SI teachers must also explain academic tasks clearly, both orally and in writing, providing models and examples wherever possible.

Strategies. Teachers and students need to use strategies in SIOP lessons. Teachers must scaffold instruction, beginning at a level that encourages student success and providing support to move the students to a higher level of understanding and accomplishment. Teachers highlight study skills and learning strategies for students and create tasks and ask higher-order questions that require students to use the strategies and talk about them.

Interaction. High quality SIOP classes provide frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion between teacher and students, and among students. It is through discussion with classmates and with the teacher that ELLs practice important skills like elaborating, negotiating meaning, clarifying and confirming information, persuading, disagreeing, and evaluating.

Practice and Application. Effective SIOP lessons include activities that encourage students to practice and apply the content they are learning, AND practice and apply the language skills they are learning too. These activities are most beneficial when they include visual, hands-on, and other kinesthetic tasks.

Lesson Delivery. Successful delivery of a SIOP lesson means that the content and language objectives were met, the pacing was appropriate, and the students had a high level of engagement throughout the class period. All students must have opportunities to practice their language skills within the context of the academic tasks.

Review/Assessment. ELLs need to review key vocabulary and concepts, and teachers need to assess how well students retain the information—through frequent feedback to students and informal assessments throughout the lesson. SIOP teachers should offer multiple pathways for students to demonstrate their understanding of the content.

CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

The SIOP Model of instruction is used schools in all 50 states and in many university teacher preparation programs. The goals of the current project are to 1) learn about issues of implementation and 2) to examine student outcome data, where appropriate. We will collect data on selected sites through interviews, observations and student assessment records.

RESOURCES ON SHELTERED INSTRUCTION

Chamot, A.U., & O'Malley, J.M. (1991). *The CALLA handbook*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Echevarria, J., & Colburn, A. (in preparation). Inquiry approach to science using the SIOP Model. In (A. Lathman & D. Crowther, Eds.), *Teaching English through Science: A guide for developing skills in English and Science, Grades K-8*. NSTA.

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- Thomas, W., & Collier, V. (2002). *A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement*. Santa Cruz, CA and Washington, DC: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

www.cal.org/siop

www.siopinstitute.net

www.crede.ucsc.edu