



Features

- Digital Corner
- Current Research
- CPS Partner Inter-view

Important Dates

- **June 21:** Transition to Special Education Teaching Workshop
- **August 28:** Resource Library Opens
- **September 12:** CPS Partner Professional Development Workshop, 4-6 p.m
- **September 26:** Partner Connection, 4-4:50
- **October 24:** Fall Field Advisory, 4-4:50
- **November 14:** Fall Field Advisory, 4-4:45

STEP=UP
Co-Directors
Michelle Parker-Katz
Marie Tejero Hughes

STEP=UP Staff
Diane Chin
Peggie Klekotka
Eileen Ryan
Kelly Kenna

Visit our website:
[http://www.uic.edu/
orgs/stepup/](http://www.uic.edu/orgs/stepup/)

Sheltered Instruction Lesson Planning

The number of English Language Learners (ELLs) in our nation's schools has been increasing rapidly over the last three decades. Between 1970 and 2000 the percentage of foreign-born as a share of the total population of the United States more than doubled from less than 5 percent in 1970 to almost 12 percent in 2004. This growth is even more pronounced among the school age population as the percentage of immigrants in the school-age population more than tripled from 6 percent in 1970 to 19 percent in 2000. Although the number of these students is increasing rapidly in U.S. schools, they are not achieving at the same rates as their English-speaking peers. Thus, U.S. schools, and particularly those in Chicago, will need to change instructional practices in order to better address the needs of this burgeoning population.

Sheltered instruction is one example of a set of instructional strategies that are designed to support the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs). As many of these strategies encourage the use of visuals, they are also helpful for special education students, and particularly for bilingual special education students. In an article that is summarized later in this newsletter, Short and Echevarria (1999) outline three components of exemplary lessons that utilize sheltered instruction strategies: preparation, instruction, and review/evaluation.

In the preparation phase, teachers develop both language and content objectives in order to help ELLs learn age-appropriate content at the same time that they improve their skills in English proficiency. In order to scaffold student understanding, teachers identify supplementary materials, like graphs and models, and content adaptations that will help ELLs understand the content the teacher is attempting to convey.

During instruction, teachers utilize a number of strategies in order to make the content of the lesson comprehensible for ELLs. First, teachers activate students' prior knowledge about the topic and link the new concepts to student's background and experience. Second, teachers scaffold their instruction in a number of different ways. These scaffolding techniques involve simplifying language, providing support in the native language, modifying texts, repeating key points, frequent checks for understanding, explicitly teaching vocabulary, and using a number of visual supports like real objects, words or pictures on the board or on an overhead projector, multimedia technology, graphic organizers, tables, graphs, timelines, maps, pictures, gestures, and demonstrations. Third, teachers provide students with manipulatives and hands-on activities in order to help them understand the content. Fourth, teachers create frequent opportunities for interactions between students and between the teacher and the students in order to engage the students with a discussion of the content of the course at the same time that the students are improving their language proficiency skills. In this way, ELLs practice new language in a meaningful way. These opportunities for interaction allow ELLs to improve their English proficiency as they negotiate meaning through social interactions with their peers.

At the end of each lesson, teachers review key vocabulary and key content concepts with their students in order to reinforce the objectives of the lesson. Students are then assessed on both the language and content objectives from the lesson. Learning language and content are seamlessly interwoven.

For more information about bilingual special education, visit our Web Spotlight at:

[http://www.uic.edu/orgs/stepup/
bilingual-spotlight.shtml](http://www.uic.edu/orgs/stepup/bilingual-spotlight.shtml)

Partners' Corner: Focus on Juanita Rodriguez from Big Picture High School

Bilingual special education students face two challenges as they are identified for both bilingual and special education services. As a teacher, how do you help your students to address these dual challenges?

I use a number of strategies including: visuals, hands-on activities, sheltered English, and explicit vocabulary instruction, but I use the vocabulary in a way that students will understand. I encourage general education teachers to model what they are doing, so the students increase their understanding of the content and of key vocabulary words. Both ELL and SPED kids need to improve their language processing skills, so when you provide them with visuals or a model, the content becomes clearer for them. I always ask: can they see it? Can they hear it? Can they touch it? Can they talk about it?

What strategies, resources, or tool would you recommend that are effective for bilingual special education students?

Using cooperative groupings is really helpful because it gives the students who are not confident with their English language development an opportunity to be active in a small group and to communicate their ideas. Cooperative learning strategies provide ELLs with good opportunities to build their confidence with English and to listen to auditory models from native speakers. This helps them to improve their English.

Using graphic organizers is also very important because they allow bilingual special education students to see the content visually. Graphic organizers also help bilingual special education students think about things before they write, for example by using a Venn diagram, so they can see what the topics have in common and how they differ.

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol: A Tool for Teacher-Researcher Collaboration and Professional Development. By Short and Echevarria. (1999).

Educational Practice Report #3, Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence. Available at: <http://www.cal.org/crede/pubs/edpractice/epr3.pdf>

In this article, Short and Echevarria describe a tool, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), which they developed to help teachers meet the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs). The number of ELLs is increasing dramatically in schools nationwide, but teachers, by and large, are not receiving training about effective instructional strategies for ELLs. Thus, the SIOP was developed to provide professional development for teachers about this model of sheltered instruction that is based on research about best practices for ELLs and on the experience and expertise of classroom teachers who worked collaboratively with the researchers to develop the SIOP. The SIOP tool is in the appendix of this article.

The protocol outlines three components of exemplary lessons that utilize sheltered instruction strategies: preparation, instruction, and review/evaluation. The SIOP provides a structured checklist for lesson planning that helps teachers: to integrate language and content skills for ELLs, to adapt the content in appropriate ways, to provide students with comprehensible input that is linked to their background and experience, to create opportunities for students to interact in collaborative groups, and to assess students on both language and content objectives.

Digital Corner

Inspiration/Kidspiration are two helpful pieces of software that provide scaffolding for students who need assistance with reading and writing. Both programs are available for a 30-day free trial at: <http://www.inspiration.com/freetrial/index.cfm>. These software sets facilitate student use of graphic organizers for a variety of pre-writing activities, so they are great for visual learners and ELL students. Students develop their own graphic organizers, add links to elements within the graphic organizers, and label those connections in order to help them better understand relationships between ideas. After students have completed their graphic organizers,

the software helps them to easily transfer their work to an outline format in a word processing program. This allows students to build on their strengths in order to improve their writing skills. Both software sets also feature a variety of helpful prepared templates for teachers to use in their classroom instruction. Kidspiration is intended for grades K-5 and includes both audio clips and symbols to provide additional support for students who struggle with reading. Inspiration is designed for students in grades 6-12 and features more advanced tools, like "Rapid Fire," to help students with brainstorming activities.