

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER KNOWLEDGE
OF
SHELTERED INSTRUCTION METHODOLOGY
IN SERVICE TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS:
A MULTI-CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines self reported survey evaluations and interviews of full-time elementary school teachers in regards to their use of sheltered instruction techniques when serving the English Language Learner (ELL) population in the Midwest. Many teachers are not equipped with adequate information about ELLs and about what comprises effective instruction for the ELLs. This study surveyed 161 Missouri certified, K-6, full-time public school teachers from urban, suburban, and rural school districts, and interviews were also conducted with 11 Missouri certified teachers located within the western mid-central region of the State of Missouri. Teachers were provided with self reported evaluations as to their use of sheltered techniques, as described by the Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP) Model (Echevarria, 2006; Echevarria, et al., 2008), in their regular classroom environments.

Research Question 1 asks, “How do practicing elementary school teachers perceive their level of preparation in sheltered instruction methods/strategies?,” results indicate that the representative sample of Missouri certified, K-6, elementary public school teachers perceive their preparation in sheltered instruction methodology/strategies to be inadequate at all levels of professional development and training when in fact many teachers are actually prepared with “good teaching strategies” to teach ELLs, but they are just now aware that they already possess the necessary skills to serve ELLs with their academic growth.

Research Question 2 asks, “How do practicing elementary school teachers use sheltered instruction techniques in mainstream classrooms?” teacher surveys demonstrated a very good knowledge base of sheltered instruction techniques based upon the SIOP Model (Echevarria, 2006; Echevarria, et al., 2008) of teacher evaluation in sheltered instruction to ELLs. Most of the teachers surveyed used the sheltered instruction techniques necessary for advancing ELLs academically. Teachers have the basic requisite skills that can be nurtured by professional development in sheltered instruction techniques in service to ELLs and improving academic success among Diverse Linguistic Communities (DLCs), but for some reason were never informed as to the valuable use of the those good teaching skills in service to ELLs in their classrooms.

The researcher believes more must be done at all levels of teacher preparation, to include university teacher preparation, graduate teaching programs, and school districts to provide quality, research based instructional sheltered instructional techniques in service to the academic advancement of DLCs in the U.S.