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Enhancing Sheltered Social Studies Instruction for ELLs in Secondary School

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Enhancing Sheltered Social Studies Instruction for ELLs in Secondary School

by

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This report explores the concept of sheltered instruction in response to the shifting demographics of English language learners (ELLs) in educational institutions across the United States. Following a discussion of the goals of and threats to sheltered instruction, I recommend the integration of social studies pedagogy and English language development in the sheltered classroom. The blending of social studies instructional practices and language acquisition pedagogy promotes a safe, culturally-sensitive environment in which ELLs can develop linguistic, socio-cultural, and academic skills in secondary school. I also acknowledge that teachers' attitude toward ELLs can potentially influence their academic achievement. Therefore, I recommend that all teachers participate in three areas of professional development: socio-cultural sensitivity, pedagogical practices, and policy awareness. Enhancing sheltered social studies instruction and participating in professional development have the potential to provide ELLs with quality grade-level education and the means to become successful secondary students.

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Introduction: Sociolinguistic Background

Demographics of ELLs in Schools Today

English language learners (ELLs) comprise over 10% of the public school student population in the United States and the number is still growing (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, n.d.). As the ELL population continues to grow, more teachers and school districts struggle to offer effective English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. Out of 308 million people in the United States, the Hispanic-origin population constitutes about 16% and the Asian/Pacific Islander population about 4%, and over 75% of these populations that are over five years of age speak their native tongue at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The largest increases in the general population and in the Hispanic population occurred in the southern part of the United States, a statistic uniquely relevant for the state of Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Furthermore, immigrant-origin youth are the fastest growing population (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008). These sociolinguistic shifts will certainly influence educational institutions in the United States. The term "ELL" as used in this report refers to students whose second language is English and may include but is not limited to *immigrant* youth.

It is now estimated that public school teachers will have at least one ELL in their classrooms, if not more (Haneda, 2009). One of the challenges for schools is that ELLs enroll across all grade levels and throughout the school year (Genesee, 1999). Educators in American schools recognize the need to incorporate pedagogy that meets the needs of our increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Not only are the needs of

ELLs diverse, but also the range of programs that are offered to them. In developing ELL-centered programs, educators will want to research program options to address the specific needs of their ELLs.

Social Studies and the English Language Learner

At the secondary level, ELLs are expected to learn content knowledge and prepare for life after high school. Learning about culture, language, and content in secondary school produces a unique experience for ELLs. I propose sheltered instruction (SI) as a method to support ELLs, specifically emphasizing its implementation within the discipline of social studies. Sheltered instruction refers to classrooms that implement theoretically-sound second language acquisition methodology. Sheltered social studies instruction has the potential to profoundly enhance the learning experience of adolescent ELLs, if implemented correctly.

Linguistic challenges of social studies. Typically, the English proficiency of ELLs is not immediately adequate for the language demands of social studies classes (Case & Obenchain, 2006). Teaching social studies to ELLs is particularly difficult because the lexicon is highly abstract and culturally embedded (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). In addition to technical and abstract vocabulary, ELLs may have difficulty with social studies content because of their lack of background knowledge and the decontextualized discourse of texts (Brown, 2007). Social studies teachers have the challenge of addressing both the linguistic and content-area needs of their ELL students.

The immigrant perspective. Because immigrant students enter US schools with various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, social studies classes can be an effective

means to bridge the linguistic and academic content necessary for secondary school. Both linguistic and academic skills can be developed, for example, through historical thinking activities, which effectively incorporate the perspectives of ELLs into the lessons (Salinas, Franquiz, & Guberman, 2006). Students from various backgrounds may have uniquely different conceptions of history that influence the way they understand or do not understand history in a new context (Seixas, 1993). Nonetheless, ELLs in particular, and immigrant youth in general, may be particularly open to social studies lessons because of the potential to incorporate and relate their personal experiences to the content and classroom environment (Haneda, 2009). Therefore, social studies classes provide ELLs and immigrant youth a place to apply their own perspectives to the development of language and content knowledge.

The goal of social studies and the ELL student. Not only do ELL students encounter new educational and language demands, but they also participate in a new society. As educational institutions prepare all students for participation in adult society after secondary school, ELL youth may also be expected to learn the civic discourse that prepares them to participate in their new society. Traditionally, social studies courses promote and foster the development of citizenry. Specifically, political knowledge can increase considerably through civic instruction in the classroom (Galston, 2001; Atherton 2000; Chaffee 2000; Niemi & Junn, 1998). Also, civic participation during adolescence can greatly influence the construction of civic identity (Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997), suggesting great potential for secondary school social studies in this civic preparation.

Schools that provide special civic learning opportunities can improve students' commitment to participation in society (Kahne & Sporte, 2008). In addition, several factors that appear to contribute to greater civic participation, specifically voter registration and voting, are the number of high school social studies courses taken by immigrant parents, a greater sense of connection to the community (Callahan, Muller, & Schiller, 2008), and the availability of civic learning opportunities provided by the school (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). School-based civic education programs such as the CityWorks (USA) curriculum from the Constitutional Rights Foundation (Kahne, Chi, & Middaugh, 2006), and the Classroom-based Multicultural Democratic Education framework (Marri, 2005) also have the potential to further the civic goals of our educational system. I argue that social studies courses can provide opportunities for ELLs to learn civic discourse and develop civic commitments and participation.

The challenges facing our educational system may be alleviated for ELLs through the teaching of social studies in a sheltered environment, in which students' academic, linguistic, and social and civic needs are met. The following section discusses the theoretical foundations of sheltered instruction.

Overview and Theoretical Foundations of Sheltered Instruction Origin and Background of Theoretical Foundations

Currently the literature classifies multiple sheltered instruction models under the umbrella of ESL instruction. The concept of sheltered instruction is a rather recent phenomenon. In the early 1980s one of the first mentions of what is now referred to as sheltered instruction was developed by Stephen Krashen (1982) under the term "subject matter content." The goal was to provide specialized classes in which ELLs could learn content and English simultaneously, without the presence of native speakers, which could pose potential academic problems (Krashen, 1985). In a review of literature, Faltis (1993) argues that sheltered instruction classrooms share three features: comprehensible input, focus on academic content, and segregation. The first feature, comprehensible input, is a major theoretical component of sheltered instruction, drawn from Krashen's (1991) "i+1" hypothesis, a suggested component of second language acquisition. The second feature, academic content, emphasizes pedagogy and instruction, with less of a focus on language itself. Faltis (1993) argues that the third feature, segregation, results from schools' practices of socially and academically isolating ELLs by enrolling them in sheltered instruction classes. However, contrary to the position of Faltis (1993), not all sheltered environments result in ELL segregation due to scheduling considerations or low numbers of ELLs within a school (Genesee, 1999). Faltis' warning about potential segregation addresses the socio-cultural aspect of sheltered instruction.

Another theoretical foundation of sheltered content instruction is cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), constructed by Cummins (1979). Cummins'

framework suggests that ELLs may require four to six years to develop academic language proficiency; therefore sheltered instruction can provide an environment in which this time frame of language acquisition can be supported appropriately for the ELL student. Many authors propose that ELLs are given the best access to CALP in the sheltered classroom (Chamot & O'Malley, 1989; Crandall, 1987; Northcutt & Watson, 1986; Sasser & Winningham, 1991), which may be better suited to support simultaneous English language acquisition and academic language learning.

Theoretical Foundations

Krashen's (1991) construction of the "i+1" model was influenced by the concept of zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) and the multiple intelligences model (Gardner, 1983). These hypotheses contributed to the understanding of language learning processes and the development of instructional models in the field of second language acquisition. Among the instructional models was sheltered instruction, from which many variations and interpretations have been explored. Building on the theories of Krashen (1981, 1982) and Cummins (1979), Crandall (1987) proposed that content-based instruction was an effective method to teach both English and subject matter to ELLs through the use of comprehensible input and opportunities for language production.

Content-based ESL courses may also support the incremental nature of language learning, particularly academic language (Crandall, 1987). ELLs can gain academic and linguistic support through content-based instruction.

The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) also developed during this time by Chamot and O'Malley (1987). This approach was founded on

Anderson's (1981) cognitive learning theory regarding declarative and procedural knowledge. Declarative knowledge is built upon concepts already mentally organized, whereas procedural knowledge is developed with the meaningful application of knowledge. The social-cognitive theory of motivation forms another theoretical foundation of CALLA; Chamot and O'Malley (1996) posit that ELLs may well find content instruction a valuable method for academic success. CALLA, as a learnercentered approach, provides many opportunities for meaning-focused input, meaningfocused output, and interaction. Explicit learning strategy instruction and the integration of language and content through high-impact topics create the core of the CALLA approach (Chamot & O'Malley, 1996). The intention was to provide intermediate or advanced ELLs a bridge between ESL or immersion programs and mainstream academic classes; therefore teaching academic language across disciplines using the CALLA approach could aid in the transition to mainstream classes. Even though Chamot and O'Malley (1987) do not identify CALLA as a "sheltered" approach, it still provides specialized instruction to ELLs through the teaching of language and content and incorporation of socio-linguistic opportunities.

Throughout the 1990s, Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2010) developed the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model as a teacher evaluation instrument for sheltered classes. In their book *Making Content Comprehensible for Secondary English Learners: The SIOP Model*, Echevarria et al. (2010) state that meaningful use and interaction are important aspects of second language acquisition, therefore these aspects are prominent in the SIOP model. The intention is that ELL

students will learn grade-level content while developing their English language proficiency in a sheltered classroom. Also, SIOP gives teachers the opportunity to evaluate student performance in the classroom, not merely from results of standardized tests (Echevarria et al., 2010). The eight overarching categories of the model are lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice and application, lesson delivery, and review and assessment. These categories include an additional 30 features that provide specific application of the categories (Echevarria et al., 2010). One criticism of this model has been the absence of teacher affect. Disregarding the teacher-student relationships in professional training for classroom instruction of ELLs can counteract the intention to provide quality and equitable education (Gutierrez, Asato, Santos, & Gotanda, 2002). It is implied, therefore, that teacher affect be considered among the categories and features of the SIOP model to enhance its effectiveness and usefulness.

A more recent variation known as sustained-content language teaching (SCLT) emerged in the field of language teaching in 2001. The two main elements of SCLT are a focus on a specific content area and an emphasis on learning and teaching the second language (Murphy & Stoller, 2001). SCLT researchers propose a rigorous curriculum, linguistic and academic peer resources, academic language development, and trained teachers (Murphy & Stoller, 2001). A branch of content-based instruction, SCLT is similar to sheltered instruction in that a content area is sustained throughout a course and opportunities for language development are present.

The state of California has implemented another branch of content-based English instruction called Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE). This model promotes rigorous grade-level content instruction, and language and socio-cultural awareness for ELLs that have intermediate English proficiency and possess cognitive abilities in their first language (Sobul, 1995). SDAIE can be taught by content area teachers who provide English language support to ELLs (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002). Similarly to the aforementioned models, the integration of content and language is emphasized.

The Goals of Sheltered Instruction for ELLs

As discussed above, multiple models of content-based English instruction have been defined and developed, yet they all share a common goal of integrating linguistic and academic content to meet the needs of ELLs. In addition, other goals are intertwined, including the social welfare of students and teacher factors. Research displays the varieties of implementation and practice (Short, 1994), but four general domains support the goals of sheltered instruction: academic, linguistic, social, and pedagogical factors. These domains offer potential strengths to sheltered instruction programs.

One of the concerns for ELLs is their readiness for grade-level academic demands. Secondary ELLs have fewer years to acquire English in the K-12 educational system as contrasted with elementary ELLs, and many secondary ELLs to the United States are not prepared for grade-level work (Short, 1994; Duff, 2001). Beyond linguistic barriers, the lack of background knowledge of culture and content, and possibly prior education, may hinder ELLs' grade-level success in the secondary setting (Short, 1994; Short, 2000; Dabach, 2011). However, a goal of sheltered instruction is to provide grade-level curriculum (Dabach, 2011). Many variations of content-based instruction intend to address the need of grade-level academic readiness.

Many researchers support the use of sheltered instruction to help ELL students stay on grade-level in their academic content areas (Faltis, 1993; Genesee, 1999; Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Short, 1991, 1994). Immediate content instruction is essential for ELLs' success because a delay in linguistic and academic development would be "impractical" (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). Overall success depends on the immediate introduction to

grade-level content and the exposure to meaningful and relevant materials (Genesee, 1999). CALP is one framework that can support the grade-level curriculum and English language learning.

In addition to the development of grade-level content learning, sheltered instruction has the potential to provide ELLs with multiple academic, linguistic, and social advantages. Faltis (1993) describes reasons for the potential value of sheltered classes in which only ELLs are enrolled: greater participation, continued study, cultural sensitivity, and a collective sense of belonging. ELL students might be more willing to participate in an environment in which they feel comfortable to interact and speak with other students also learning English (Faltis, 1993); therefore ELLs may progress more quickly with opportunities that incorporate social interaction. These interactive opportunities have the potential to better enable students to continue their academic and linguistic studies and maintain grade-level status. Faltis (1993) also argues that the teacher and students may well have a greater cultural sensitivity in a sheltered classroom and that this multicultural identity could create a healthy sense of belonging among ELLs. Teachers who support ELL education and value multiculturalism in sheltered classes can facilitate academic, linguistic, and social opportunities that provide ELLs with the resources to assimilate into a new school environment. In review, the goals of sheltered instruction are to provide academic and linguistic learning opportunities with the incorporation of positive socio-cultural awareness by both teachers and students.

However, these conditions assume that the teacher has a positive attitude and optimistic perspective about teaching the ELL population. In the following section, I

assess the potential threats to the goals of sheltered instruction. Teacher attitude and student factors can potentially impact the effectiveness of academic and linguistic instruction and socio-cultural awareness.

Threats to the Goals

Teacher Attitudes towards ELLs and Sheltered Instruction

Content-based programs like SIOP and SDAIE were designed to protect ELLs from academic marginalization. As discussed above, sheltered instruction intends to provide ELLs with many academic and social advantages in addition to those that are linguistic. The SDAIE model has specifically incorporated teacher attitude as a component of the model to magnify the critical impact that teachers can have on ELLs' learning experience. Teachers who believe all students can learn and all students have the capacity to use language and find their self-concept through their language can meet the academic, linguistic, and social needs of their ELLs (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002). However, despite potential benefits of recommended practices, the realities of ELL educational protection and promotion are often waning. Research shows that immigrant students' marginalization can result from teacher attitudes and preferences towards immigrant ELLs (Dabach, 2011; Reeves, 2006). Teachers have the potential to promote or to prevent ELLs' pursuit of school resources, such as content knowledge or academic counseling (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Even though educational institutions are meant to receive and meet the various needs of ELLs, teachers can ultimately shape the educational success of this population of students.

Dabach's (2011) qualitative study investigated teacher preferences for immigrantorigin ELLs in sheltered content areas with teachers demonstrating a range of preferences from 'specialist' to 'dislikes' for teaching sheltered classes. The teacher survey showed that negative preferences were associated with teachers' content area. Social studies had the largest negative preference rate, which Dabach (2011) argues may be linked to higher demands for language, background knowledge, and U.S.-based knowledge in social studies courses. Dabach (2011) also found that anticipated rewards and frustrations in the sheltered classroom were the root causes of teacher preferences. Ultimately, Dabach (2011) recommends improving professional development by preparing content area teachers to work with ELLs. Improved teacher training will help to prevent negative preferences or to improve current teaching practices in the sheltered classroom (Dabach, 2011). Teacher training appears necessary to improve teachers' attitudes towards ELLs and to provide quality education to immigrant ELLs.

Similarly, Reeves (2006) examined teacher attitudes towards ELLs, but focused instead on ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Generally, mainstream teachers responded with 'neutral to slightly positive' attitudes toward the inclusion of ELLs in their classes. However, data showed that attitudes varied with respect to specific aspects of inclusion, such as ELLs' proficiency level (Reeves, 2006). Reeves' work also indicated that teachers preferred that selective ELL modifications be comparable to mainstream students' requirements under certain conditions. For example, teachers would agree to give ELLs more time to complete assignments, but would not agree to shorten the assignments (Reeves, 2006). Additionally, teachers displayed ambivalence to receiving training in ELL strategies. Teachers also maintained misconceptions about second language acquisition theories, for instance, many were particularly unclear as to the length of time needed for ELLs to reach proficiency and the significance of first language use during acquisition (Reeves, 2006), two factors highly associated with ELL

achievement. Teacher attitude can play a large role in the implementation of techniques for ELLs in both sheltered and mainstream environments.

In addition to attitudes and behaviors, mainstream teachers' lack of knowledge about the skills needed to teach and learn a second language may also lead to poor classroom instruction for ELL students (Washburn, Joshi, & Cantrell, 2010; McCutchen et al., 2002; Spear-Swerling & Brucker 2003; Faltis, 1993). Therefore, the lack of ELL-focused professional development may potentially influence ELL instruction and learning. Within both sheltered and mainstream classes, teacher factors may lead to the potential marginalization of ELLs. This reality reveals the importance of ELL awareness and sensitivity for not only ESL-certified teachers, but for all teachers. With the increasing likelihood that mainstream teachers will teach ELLs (Haneda, 2009), the need for ESL training for all teachers increases, creating a sense of urgency for teacher certification programs and professional development. Teachers who have ELL-focused professional development and an underlying sense of cultural sensitivity can begin to close the gap of marginalization.

SI Issues for ELL Students

The issue of marginalization can also be seen from the perspective of the student. In the previous discussion, Faltis (1993) explained the potential benefits of sheltered instruction, but he also recognized the potential disadvantages of removing ELLs from mainstream native-speaking classrooms: linguistic isolation, social isolation, labeling, and 'separate but unequal.' Isolating students linguistically could hold back the rate at which ELLs acquire English. However, exposure to native English speakers in the

classroom can benefit ELLs' language development (Genesee, 1999). In other words, being surrounded by native speakers will expose ELLs to more English language, therefore potentially accelerating their language acquisition. Also, social isolation due to sheltered courses could cause ignorance and reinforce stereotypes among students (Faltis, 1993). Additionally, being in a sheltered program may also cause negative labeling of minority groups. Whereas sheltered classes may intend to provide the best environment for ELLs, sheltered courses may not be 'equal' to mainstream courses in terms of materials or teacher preparation (Faltis, 1993). When ELLs are segregated because of special language programs, they have less of a chance of receiving academic counseling and of accessing extracurricular activities (Necochea & Romero, 1989). Therefore, beyond the school context, ELLs' opportunities to succeed or participate in society could be limited.

Harklau's (1994) three year ethnography explores the advantages and disadvantages of placement in ESL classes and of mainstream classes for ELL students in a California high school. The key advantage of mainstream classes for ELLs was the abundance of verbal and written input; however, these classes provided fewer opportunities for ELLs to participate and produce output, partly because of socio-affective perceptions. On the other hand, ESL classes provided explicit language instruction and feedback, prioritized productive language use, and created accessibility to counseling and peer interactions. ESL classes were stereotyped, however, to be "easy and remedial" by students (Harklau, 1994). Overall, the mainstream classroom proved to be linguistically challenging for ELLs, participation in class was lower for ELLs, and

oftentimes ELLs were placed in a lower track of mainstream classes (Harklau, 1994).

These challenges may be enough for schools to exclude ELLs in mainstream classes, that is, if other services are accessible.

Whereas the potential detriments of sheltered instruction may dissuade institutional implementation of SI, broader policies offer a different perspective on the effectiveness of mainstream inclusion of ELLs. Since No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2001), there has been a tendency to push ELLs into grade-level mainstream classes before they are linguistically ready (Haneda, 2009). Whereas some schools may want ELLs to stay on grade-level and receive native-speaker exposure, these students may not be linguistically or academically ready to enter the mainstream. As mentioned previously, teachers' preparation for the inclusion of ELL students in their mainstream classes may or may not be sufficient. Neither mainstream teachers nor ELLs are always prepared for the demands of the mainstream classroom (Haneda, 2009); students' academic, linguistic, and/or social levels may be temporarily inadequate for success.

Trying to balance the four domains (academic, linguistic, social, and pedagogical) in the school setting can produce challenging decision-making for schools who must meet the needs of ELLs. Despite the challenges, many institutions that decided to implement SI demonstrate successful programs. It is from these successful models and current research that we further explore the issue of sheltered instruction in social studies and promote its use as an effective means to teach both language and content in the secondary setting. In the following section, I propose recommendations for policy and practice.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Research provides empirical and theoretical evidence to support and also to threaten the goals of sheltered instruction. By recognizing these potential threats to the positive intentions of sheltered instruction, educators can make decisions that implement programs founded on the original goals of SI. To establish a program or course that fulfills the goals of SI, I recommend that teachers of ELLs integrate pedagogical practices from the social studies discipline with practices from the field of second language acquisition. I also recommend professional development for all teachers, not only to gain the knowledge of implementing those pedagogical practices, but also to increase teacher sensitivity to the academic, linguistic, and socio-cultural needs of their ELL students. Therefore, improving pedagogical practices and teacher sensitivity can motivate students to become successful academically, linguistically, and socially, and provide the means for them to do so.

In the following sections, I discuss general social studies practices, the importance of integrating language and content, and the merging of social studies and ELL teaching strategies within the SI context. These sections can begin to build a foundation for teachers who will teach social studies sheltered instruction. Recommendations for professional development follow.

General Social Studies Practices

To create a sheltered English course for social studies content, understanding the general pedagogical practices of the discipline is necessary. In *50 Social Studies*Strategies for K-8 Classrooms, eight general instructional strategies for social studies are

categorized as community building, establishing a democratic classroom, developing multiple perspectives, concepts: developments and attainment, discovery learning, inquiry learning, questioning, and primary sources (Obenchain & Morris, 2011). These strategies encompass the development of multiple academic skills and a democratic disposition, and can extend across grade-levels and various social studies courses. The other 42 strategies discussed in the book are more specifically related to certain grade-levels and the learning objectives of the National Council for the Social Studies. For example, the oral histories strategy could be facilitated in grades 3-8 and aligned with the objectives of culture; time, continuity, and change; individual development and identity; and individuals, groups, and institutions (Obenchain & Morris, 2011). The following discussion recognizes the importance of inquiry-based learning, graphic organizers, vocabulary development, and historical thinking as critical strategies in the discipline of social studies education.

Beyond the traditional use of lecture and text-heavy assignments in the social studies classroom at the secondary level, teachers are migrating to modern "best practices." Wiersma (2008) studied three high school social studies teachers who practiced student-centered pedagogy using non-traditional methods, such as inquiry-based learning. One teacher in the study, Mr. Brown, facilitated constructivist pedagogy in which students used inquiry-based learning to study historical data and draw their own conclusions. Mr. Brown also implemented democratic teaching in which he promoted student participation and choice in the classroom. Mr. Allen, another teacher, predominantly displayed social constructivism in his classroom by implementing inquiry-

based learning through group work and discussions. He also used different mediums of learning such as primary sources and fieldtrips. Lastly, Mr. Breen also used inquiry-based learning in which students explored, discussed, and applied the topic. Activating prior knowledge was an important characteristic of his classes. Having students practice higher-order thinking and analytical skills in the social studies classroom through inquiry-based learning represents a contemporary trend within social studies pedagogy, not only in Wiersma's (2008) study, but also as presented by Obenchain and Morris (2011). Whereas traditional methods are still implemented, non-traditional methods such as inquiry-based learning expand the development and expectations of social studies pedagogy.

Multiple uses and types of graphic organizers specifically for the social studies classroom support the various skills needed for academic content and discourse. Eight types of graphic organizers target the following skills: assume and anticipate; position and pattern; group and organize; compare and contrast; relate and reason; identify and imagine; estimate and evaluate; and combine and create (Gallavan & Kottler, 2007). Graphic organizers as a strategy can alleviate the demands of often text-heavy curriculum and complex academic vocabulary (Brown, 2007) by sorting and simplifying social studies information (Gallavan & Kottler, 2007). Graphic organizers can encompass other strategies of learning, such as developing multiple perspectives, discovery and inquiry learning, and concept-building (Obenchain & Morris, 2011). Using graphic organizers can support other strategies and can be applied across disciplines, making it an effective learning tool.

Another specific strategy important in the social studies context is vocabulary development, which can highly determine student success in the social studies classroom. In fact, Alexander-Shea (2011) argues that:

vocabulary instruction should be threaded throughout the curriculum in ways that allow students to interact with concepts, terms, historical figures, ideas, theories, and other field-specific language. Changing how vocabulary instruction is viewed is one key to improving students' overall comprehension of the discipline (p. 102).

Because the social studies curriculum incorporates context-specific vocabulary, vocabulary instruction and learning enhances the understanding of social studies material.

A developing framework for social studies learning is historical thinking (Seixas, 1993; VanSledright, 2004). Historical thinking incorporates three overarching elements, including the abilities to identify significant historical events, interpret and contribute to historical understanding, and examine the elements of agency, empathy, and moral judgment (Seixas, 1993). Historical thinking as a social studies strategy encourages students to investigate the past by critically analyzing sources and creating their own interpretations of the past (VanSledright, 2004). Students must engage with the sources of or about the past to construct their own verbal or written evidence-based interpretation. Therefore, students learn to recognize, understand, and use academic vocabulary within the discipline of social studies, thus enhancing academic skills such as literacy and content knowledge.

Social studies strategies are not limited to those mentioned here, yet these selected strategies provide an understanding of many of the strategies and practices used in contemporary social studies classrooms. In a sheltered classroom, many of these strategies can enrich the teaching of ELLs. In the following section, I will frame the integration of language and content as a critical component for social studies sheltered instruction.

Integrating Language and Content

In order for ELLs to have timely access to the social studies curriculum, sheltered instruction can provide the integration of language and social studies content instruction. If educators expect ELLs to remain on grade-level, ELLs will need support in both linguistic and academic skills and knowledge. However, the linguistic and academic needs of ELLs in social studies classes have only recently begun to receive more attention (Case & Obenchain, 2006). As the number of ELLs in schools increases, educators recognize the growing need for professional development in teaching both language and content so that student needs will be appropriately addressed (Lyster & Ballinger, 2011). Training teachers how to integrate language and content instruction is crucial for successful ELL education, particularly as ELL students transition to mainstream classes (Short, 1999, 2000; Peercy, 2011). In a study on preparing students for the mainstream classroom, the integration of mainstream content and language development enhanced ELLs' readiness for the demands of grade-level curriculum (Peercy, 2011). The teachers in the study also prepared students for active participation in the mainstream environment (Peercy, 2011), which may be a potential challenge for

ELLs. Having academic, linguistic, and social confidence could benefit ELLs as they transition to mainstream classrooms.

In a pedagogical argument, Short (1999) emphasizes the importance of the integration of language and content for ELLs prior to the entrance into mainstream classes. Among the features that promote effective sheltered instruction are curricular materials and learning environments that foster linguistic and academic development, research-based pedagogy, and appropriate preparation for mainstream courses (Short, 1999). Major reasons for the integration of language and social studies content are that the subject is "relevant and meaningful" and builds "communicative language skills," and teachers can prepare students for the demands of the mainstream classroom (Short, 1994). Furthermore, sheltered classes emphasize comprehensible input through techniques such as graphic organizers and realia in order to simultaneously develop both language and content knowledge and skills (Genesee, 1999). Sheltered classrooms can effectively provide ELLs' with the opportunity to engage in classroom activities that can enhance both language and content.

The incorporation of social studies discourse in ESL classes would be useful for ELLs (Mohan, 1986), but their teachers need to be intentional about teaching content in addition to language. ELLs should be exposed to academic language across disciplines, not merely language arts (Chamot & O'Malley, 1996), and because social studies as a discipline depends highly on literacy, integrating language activities with social studies instruction can benefit both native speakers and ELLs (Chamot & O'Malley, 1996).

Overall, this integration can help ELLs maintain grade-level status and provide opportunities for their overall success in the secondary setting.

Salinas, Franquiz, and Reidel (2008) describe how geography in particular creates an effective environment to blend both academic language skills and content knowledge:

The maps, graphic organizers, realia, models, and physical demonstrations that are essential to geography instruction are also valuable visual clues that provide strong academic support for ELLs...[geography education] not only creates academic English-learning opportunities for late-arrival immigrant students, it also honors and authentically integrates multicultural identities into the curriculum (p.76).

These attributes of world geography education support the arguments of greater participation and cultural sensitivity as synthesized by Faltis (1993). Geography students have opportunities to participate through the use of classroom demonstrations and discussions, hands-on activities, and visuals. In addition to academic and linguistic components, ELL instruction must also consider affective factors. Teachers can foster cultural sensitivity by having students make personal connections to critical issues and conceptualize broad topics (Salinas et al., 2008). When teachers plan their lessons (see Echevarria & Graves, 2007 for a list of 10 steps), they can appropriately meet the social and emotional needs of ELL students. For these reasons, I argue that learning language in a sheltered social studies classroom has the potential to motivate students because they develop not only content and language skills, but also participate in a culturally sensitive and supportive environment.

Social Studies-ELL Strategies

Integrating language and content in a sheltered classroom can improve the success of ELLs in secondary school. The question that remains is, what instructional strategies should teachers employ to facilitate this integration? Combining general social studies strategies and second language acquisition strategies can provide students with a comprehensive curriculum, allowing them to remain on grade-level and to have more meaningful opportunities to learn English. However, realities about the nature of social studies endanger the ease of integrating academic and linguistic skills, and current research about social studies as it relates to ELLs is limited (Short, 1994). Many social studies teachers rely on textbooks as a means of instruction and learning because of the significance of literacy in the field of social studies (Short, 1994). Social studies texts can be difficult because: 1) ELLs often lack background knowledge and grade-level reading skills, and 2) social studies discourse can be complex (Brown, 2007). Additionally, the abstractness of social studies content (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Short, 1994; Szpara & Ahmad, 2007; Brown, 2007) creates difficulties for ELLs in making academic and cultural associations to the content. Emphasis on textbooks and other texts can create a barrier for ELL students who may have limited English literacy skills, but may also lack sufficient academic knowledge and relevant cultural experiences. Therefore, teachers of ELLs in a sheltered social studies classroom must consider various strategies that will address the potential linguistic, academic, and sociocultural barriers. I now suggest five overarching strategies that can overcome potential barriers for ELLs: vocabulary development, building background knowledge, academic

strategies, interaction, and the inclusion of multicultural perspectives. These strategies incorporate the domains of academic, linguistic, social, and pedagogical factors as previously discussed.

Vocabulary development. One strategy to address the need for students to understand texts and concepts is vocabulary development. In an empirical study, Short (1994) found that teachers of ELLs in a mainstream middle school social studies class successfully implemented several vocabulary strategies that enriched students' learning: explicit vocabulary instruction, dictionary use, word webs, finding relationships between words, making associations, demonstrations, illustrations, and role-plays. Explicit vocabulary instruction may also be supplemented with visual aids, spaced introduction to new words, and frequent repetition throughout the unit of study (Weisman & Hansen, 2007). ELLs can gain vocabulary knowledge effectively through opportunities for practice and application, especially if interaction with classmates and interesting activities are incorporated (Weisman & Hansen, 2007). Another study showed that native speakers and ELLs in a social studies class both showed significant improvement in vocabulary development and content comprehension with the use of explicit vocabulary instruction, practice, application, visual representations, and cooperative learning (Vaughn, Martinez, Linan-Thompson, Reutebuch, Carlson, & Francis, 2009). Further, Salinas et al. (2006) identified visual demonstrations, realia, and checks for understanding as strategies to enhance vocabulary learning in a sheltered geography classroom. Combined, these strategies can alleviate the burden of heavily-abstract social studies discourse.

Background knowledge. ELL students who have little experience in US schools or limited prior schooling in their home country may encounter academic and socio-cultural barriers because of the lack of background knowledge. Vocabulary development can benefit ELLs who have little or no background knowledge of the social studies content at hand (Short, 1994) by explicitly teaching vocabulary as it relates to the content. Building background knowledge by making connections between content and ELLs' previous experiences and knowledge can address the students' gaps in content knowledge as well (Short, 1999). Teachers can support the development of background knowledge by tapping students' experiential knowledge and incorporating multicultural content (Short, 1999; Salinas et al., 2006). This blending of social studies strategies can provide ELLs with a culturally-sensitive classroom environment that supports students' academic, linguistic, and cultural development.

Academic strategies. In addition to vocabulary development and building background knowledge, academic strategies can be implemented to support ELLs in a content classroom and enable students to learn the specific discourse of the discipline (Short, 1999). Teaching students how to use a dictionary, identify cues of text structure, and preview chapter headings are just a few of the techniques Short (1999) recommends. Additionally, the use of graphic organizers can enrich ELLs' comprehension of content knowledge and discourse (Short, 1994, 1999; Salinas et al., 2006; Weisman & Hansen, 2007; Brown, 2007; Szpara & Ahmad, 2007; Salinas et al., 2008). Graphic organizers can benefit ELLs' comprehension because they can identify relationships between ideas (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007; Weisman & Hansen, 2007; Short, 1999). In addition, they can

be used to activate schema, extract important information from texts, introduce or reinforce text structure and writing styles, study, take notes, or brainstorm for writing tasks (Short, 1999). Content maps, outlines of a unit, guiding questions for reading tasks, and simpler versions of texts are another four strategies to aid in the comprehension of social studies content (Brown, 2007). These recommendations can foster motivation, literacy development, and language and content proficiency despite the cognitive and linguistic demands of social studies content.

Interaction. Both oral and interpersonal interaction can support ELLs in the sheltered social studies classroom. Students who interact verbally can produce oral output while also practicing social skills (Short, 1999) and learning social studies objectives (Short, 1994). ELL students can integrate the learning of content and language through discussions and shared ideas. Moreover, interaction through group work can lower student anxiety by creating a relaxed, supportive environment (Weisman & Hansen, 2007). Therefore, interaction can support the development of academic, linguistic, and social skills in the social studies sheltered classroom.

Multicultural perspectives. The inclusion of multicultural perspectives and students' personal experiences in the sheltered social studies classroom can support the social welfare and motivation of ELLs. Two predominant reasons to include substantive multicultural content in the classroom are to relate the subject more closely to students' backgrounds and to foster cultural acclimatization (Short, 1999). To do this, teachers may use their students, supplementary materials, or community members as additional resources of multicultural perspectives (Short, 1999). Learning about students' cultures,

showing a desire to help students overcome barriers, and eliciting content from students' background experiences are other possible strategies to implement multiculturalism (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007). In the study of late-arrival immigrants in a sheltered world geography class, Salinas et al. (2008) posit that world geography in particular lends itself to the inclusion of multicultural citizenship and education "by highlighting the complexities of human relationships to the land" and "[honoring] and authentically [integrating] multicultural identities into the curriculum" (p. 75). Therefore, social studies content lends itself to the incorporation of multicultural perspectives, which can support the development of civic discourse, language, and content.

Whereas these strategies can be effective in a sheltered social studies classroom, the list is by no means exhaustive. Nonetheless, the implementation of vocabulary development, building background knowledge, academic strategies, interaction, and multicultural perspectives can advance ELLs' linguistic and academic progress and can enhance socio-cultural knowledge and behaviors. I recommend these strategies as a foundation for teacher development of social studies sheltered instruction; further research is needed to explore applications to specific school situations and programs.

Professional Development for Teachers

In order to develop or enhance the pedagogical skillset necessary for quality ELL instruction, teachers might participate in professional development. Teacher candidates who are prepared to teach ELL students will be able to implement effective pedagogy and content instruction as future practicing teachers (Short, 2000). Experienced teachers alike might also receive training on teaching and interacting with ELLs. Fritzen (2011)

recommends that teachers learn the *how*, *what*, and *why* of teaching social studies to ELLs. Just as teachers of sheltered instruction need training and an understanding of their role, mainstream teachers also need the same, as most do not have academic background in teaching diverse students (Zeichner, 1993; Crawford, 1993; Brisk, Barnhardt, Herrera, & Rochon, 2002). This reality encourages the implementation of professional development programs that meet the needs of current teachers. In this section I propose three areas that should be a part of professional development and training for all teachers: socio-cultural sensitivity, pedagogical practices (including the integration of language and content), and policy awareness. I finish by discussing evidence of successful professional development implementation.

Socio-cultural sensitivity. As mentioned earlier, teachers' attitudes and preferences can influence the motivation and achievement of immigrant ELLs (Dabach, 2011; Reeves, 2006). Attitudes toward ELLs can hinder or help the success of their linguistic, academic, and social education; therefore teacher sensitivity to the socio-cultural circumstances of students is crucial. Duff (2001) discusses two issues concerning socio-cultural situations in the classroom. First, Duff argues that teachers should be able to recognize the degree of cultural background knowledge necessary to participate in classroom discussions or activities, and to regulate the input and topic for ELLs. For example, teachers may have native speakers expand on their point of discussion if culturally-relevant, or write key words on the board as they are discussed so that ELLs can receive multiple forms of input (Duff, 2001). Teachers could also recognize the necessary level of cultural background by anticipating the cultural

knowledge needed within lessons so that appropriate accommodations can be made for students from various backgrounds that may lack that knowledge (Dong, 2004). Second, Duff advocates for a safe environment in which ELLs feel welcome to participate without feeling humiliated or unvalued (Duff, 2001). Incorporating ELLs' cultures into classroom activities and discussions can motivate them to participate more freely. Teachers should learn how to accommodate ELLs' linguistic and cultural needs during class activities and to provide opportunities to build schema and share cultural experiences (Dong, 2004; Duff, 2001). Facilitating a culturally-sensitive lesson can encourage student interaction, which supports the intention of sheltered social studies classes to build civic participation and provide opportunities to produce language. Therefore, professional development that trains teachers to do so can enhance ELLs' learning of language, content, and social knowledge.

Pedagogy. Another important area of professional development is pedagogical practices, particularly the integration of language and content. When teachers are knowledgeable about ESL methodology and the discourse of the subject area, they more effectively provide appropriate instruction to ELLs (Crandall, 1987; Dong, 2004). Staff collaboration, in which ESL and social studies teachers can share strategies and resources, has been argued to enhance ELL instruction (Crandall, 1987; Harklau, 1994). In educational institutions that do not have access to outside resources, ESL-mainstream teacher collaboration is a plausible alternative. Brisk et al. (2002) urges *all* educators to become knowledgeable of the academic needs of ELLs and adapt instruction to provide

quality education. Teacher training about pedagogical practices and their theoretical underpinnings can enhance ELLs' opportunity to succeed.

Policy awareness. Educational policies that consider all learners, including ELLs, can improve students' success. de Jong and Harper (2005) state that "until ELLs are explicitly included at all levels of educational policy and practice, we can expect them to remain outside the mainstream in educational achievement" (p. 118). Despite the accountability efforts by NCLB (2001) to include ELLs in grade-level mainstream classes, ELL success is not always outstanding (Haneda, 2009). Therefore, I encourage all teachers to become aware of ELL policies at the local and national levels, and to advocate for quality and appropriate ELL education. Brisk et al. (2002) recommend that our educational system prepare teachers for growing ELL student population. The authors argue that we must challenge educators to recognize educational policies that affect ELLs and to actively pursue improvements. To begin the process, schools can train teachers on ELL assessment policies such as placement and tracking procedures. Understanding policies that affect ELLs can improve the school-wide advocacy for and instruction of ELLs.

Many educational institutions have implemented professional development with success. In one study, Karabenick and Noda (2004) surveyed over 700 teachers in a school district with a rising number of ELL students to determine teacher knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors towards ELL students. The survey results determined the areas needed for professional development. With the guidance of the researchers, the school district successfully implemented professional development initiatives,

restructured its ELL services system, and sought parental and community involvement (Karabenick & Noda, 2004). In addition, training teachers to implement models that integrate social studies and language has the potential to improve ELLs' academic, linguistic, and/or social success (Vaughn et al., 2009; Short, Echevarria, Richards-Tutor, 2011). Educators who are willing to participate in professional development and apply their training to the classroom have the potential to positively influence the educational and social trajectories of ELLs.

Resources & Conclusions

Resources for Teaching Social Studies to ELLs

With an understanding of the social studies-ELL strategies and the consideration of the four crucial domains for sheltered instruction (academic, linguistic, social, and pedagogical), educators may need guidance in facilitating a sheltered instruction program or class. The following resources can offer advice on aspects of program development from choosing a program to delivering a lesson, while also providing other references and resources that can be helpful.

The Sheltered English Teaching Handbook (Northcutt & Watson, 1986) targets educators who have little experience working with ELLs and promotes the application of second language acquisition research to pedagogy. Unfortunately, Northcutt and Watson (1986) do not cite the contributing theorists, rather they focus of the teacher's responsibilities in the sheltered classroom, from the planning to study skills instruction. Tools to initiate and enhance a sheltered program are also provided. Even though there is a chapter that describes cooperative learning strategies, the handbook focuses mostly on the teacher perspective. Teacher affect is missing from the implications of pedagogy in this handbook. However, teachers with little experience teaching ELLs may find this book helpful in grasping the big picture of sheltered instruction.

An additional resource that may serve teachers who already have a sheltered curriculum is *Sheltered Content Instruction: Teaching English Language Learners with Diverse Abilities* (Echevarria & Graves, 2007), which enriches the understanding of the theory, pedagogy, and student issues that influence sheltered instruction. One strength of

this book is the authors' use of prior case study research and visuals to support their arguments. A list of activities at the end of each chapter serves as a check for understanding and an application to individual situations; the immediate opportunity to apply the content is a benefit of the book. The specificity of instructional and student considerations addresses the potential concerns or questions that teachers of ELLs may have, thus serving as a practical and useful resource.

In *The Content-based Classroom: Perspectives on Integrating Language and Content*, a collection of writings present multiple perspectives on teaching ELLs (Snow & Brinton, 1997). Topics range from potential modifications needed for content delivery (Rosen & Sasser, 1997) to ideas for teaching in multicultural classrooms (Tang, 1997), research on the integration of language and content at the secondary level (Short, 1997), and finally, the question, is content-based instruction possible in high school? (Wegrzecka-Kowalewski, 1997). These four areas, out of the 34 chapters presented, are most applicable to secondary sheltered content instruction. For that reason, the book may not seem user-friendly to the reader focused on a particular age group or teaching environment. The book is organized by general themes rather than by a setting such as content-area sheltered instruction for secondary school. Depending on the situation at individual schools, these resources provide broad, yet practical advice and perspectives on teaching academic content to ELLs.

Another excellent resource that directly addresses social studies education for ELLs is *Teaching Social Studies to ELLs* (Cruz & Thornton, 2009). This book targets a range of educators from pre-service to practicing social studies teachers, to district

curriculum supervisors. The main focus of the book is social studies pedagogy that can be applied to both mainstream and sheltered environments. The most significant asset of this book may be the specific lesson ideas for World Geography, US History, World History, Government/Civics, Economics, and Anthropology/ Sociology/ Psychology. Each section provides a guideline to a lesson that uses multiple forms of input, facilitates opportunities for receptive and productive knowledge, and provides teaching tips that give advice about including ELLs in the lesson. Despite the excellent lesson guidelines, teachers must use creativity to apply the lessons to specific contexts. Also, a list of both internet and print resources categorized by topic are presented for teachers and students, providing an up-to-date resource library. This book culminates ESL and social studies research into a reliable and useful depiction of lesson delivery in a potential sheltered social studies classroom.

Exploring these resources and the SI models discussed earlier in the paper may be able to address specific questions or situations for individual schools that are implementing or plan to initiate a sheltered instruction program.

Conclusions

Due to the growing adolescent ELL population, American schools must address the academic, linguistic, and socio-cultural needs of these students. Sheltered instruction was designed to keep ELLs on grade-level and foster the development of both academic and linguistic needs, as such it is a plausible solution to the challenges ELLs face in an English-only educational setting. Sheltered instruction, when implemented in a social studies environment, has the potential to bridge these academic, linguistic, and social

needs through sound teaching strategies. Furthermore, professional development in the areas of socio-cultural sensitivity, pedagogy, and policy awareness can enhance the teaching of ELLs, and ultimately influence students' well-being.

These recommendations for policy and practice can strengthen ELL education; however, it is important to remember that time is of the essence. It takes time for teachers to learn about second language acquisition and social studies strategies, to find a model that fits individual school situations, to become culturally sensitive, and to be mindful of language and content needs in the classroom on a daily basis. Because the implementation of a successful program with school and community support will undoubtedly require considerable teacher and administrator time and effort to develop, I urge our educational system to promptly take the necessary steps forward to provide quality education to our ELL population. Schools that implement sheltered social studies instruction in order to improve ELL students' content area achievement through modified pedagogical practices can provide learning opportunities for them to succeed in school and in our society.

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