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Soleado

Promising Practices from the Field

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# Sheltered Instruction—Putting it all Together

*by Ruth Kriteman—Dual Language Education of New Mexico*

In the fall of 2014, we used this forum to re-introduce you to DLeNM's eight components of sheltering. We felt that we had some new things to share about making content and language accessible. Our work with educators representing many different grade levels, in many different contexts and in both English and Spanish, highlighted the reality that sheltering content is as essential as it has always been. Not only do we continually welcome students at various levels of academic English proficiency to our classrooms, but in our dual language classes we also welcome students at varying levels of Spanish proficiency.

*Class routines, like this student-led literature circle, provide all students with the opportunity to use academic language.*

In our Winter 2014 edition, we zeroed in on accelerating student success through a focus on language and peer interaction. In the Spring 2015 newsletter, we focused on accessing students' knowledge and experience. In the Summer 2015 issue, we looked at ways to make text accessible and teach learning strategies as a way to promote student success; and in the Fall 2015 newsletter, we considered ways to affirm our students' identity and help them to bridge their two languages. In each of these articles we reminded readers that these eight components do not stand alone, nor are they as neatly discrete in practice as they are in description. A teacher does not choose one sheltering strategy and call it a day! Instead, a teacher considers multiple layers of sheltering and scaffolding as s/he plans for instruction, chooses assessments that reflect the desired learning, and actually teaches the lessons that will allow the students to showcase their learning. It truly is the best way we know to teach rigorous, grade-level content while modeling, supporting, and practicing the complex academic language needed to understand, speak, read, and write about it.

This final entry in our sheltering series is designed to help demonstrate how this complex perspective of teaching and learning can be achieved. Pauline Gibbons, in the second edition of her book *Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning* (2015), suggests that as we plan, we ask ourselves questions in an effort to "unpack" a unit or topic to determine what language students need to know in order to participate in learning about that topic. The example from Gibbons that follows on page 12 illustrates this process in the planning of an integrated intermediate nutrition unit. Notice how identifying content and language objectives serves as a springboard for incorporating *all* of the sheltering components.

With proper scaffolding and sheltering afforded by this careful planning, all students should have complete access to the concepts and language of the instructional unit.

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**Sample Big Idea:** *All people have the same nutritional needs regardless of where they are from, but they meet them in different ways.*

**Students will:** 1. learn how culture and climate shape what we eat, 2. understand that everyone has a need for good nutrition, 3. study the food pyramid, and 4. learn that not everyone in the world has enough healthy food to eat.

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| ***Spoken language activities:*** What activities are planned to provide authentic practice of academic language? | Paired or team activities:<br>• Sample and discuss foods that are common to class traditions and backgrounds<br>• Plan healthy meals<br>• Plan a class recipe book<br>Component Areas: Peer interactions, Accessing Students' Knowledge and Experience |
| ***Listening tasks:*** What do students need to understand when listening to teacher or classmates? | Student presentations of traditional family foods, with background info on culture and/or countries of origin.<br>Video clip on food pyramid, cloze note-taking form.<br>Component Areas: Affirming identity, Use of Realia, Making Text Accessible, Teaching Learning Strategies |
| ***Reading texts:*** What texts will students be reading? What cultural, conceptual, or linguistic difficulties could students encounter? | A written account of the diet of a child living in poverty—urban context, statements of poverty, food types<br>Component Area: Accessing Text |
| ***Writing tasks:*** What is the purpose of the written pieces? Does the genre have specific organizational or grammatical structures? | Comparative piece: the diet of a child in poverty and their own diet (5 paragraph format)<br>Class recipe book – procedural language (*mix, add, chop*), (*first, then, after …*)<br>Component Areas: Focus on Language, Affirming Identity, Accessing Students' Knowledge and Experience |
| ***Key aspects of grammar:*** | Connectives used in comparisons: *similarly, at the same time*<br>Connectives used to contrast: *however, on the other hand*<br>Expressions of personal reaction: *I am shocked, sad, surprised*<br>Component Area: Focus on Language |
| ***Specific vocabulary:*** | Grains, proteins, dairy products, etc. Poverty, finances, status, etc. |

*Adapted from Pauline Gibbons, 2015*

Gibbons' suggestions are excellent, and while this language "unpacking" will certainly add a layer to the teacher's planning and teaching, the lens needed to address the questions posed will become more automatic and more intuitive the more it is used.

Attendees at various DLeNM presentations on sheltering have also discussed the questions a teacher would ask during a particular lesson. *What will you ask the students to answer? What will they need to know linguistically and in terms of the content? What sentence frames might be modeled to help students participate? Can the frames be combined in ways that are typical of disciplinary experts so that ideas are connected and the thinking deepens?* Thinking through the questions is another way of unpacking the lessons/unit so that the language focus can be intentional and targeted.

But, is it enough? In conversations with experienced second language educators, talk turns to class routines or systems that promote the integrated use of the eight components of sheltering. Often discussed were the various ways student-to-student talk becomes an integral part of the instructional day. Many teachers use a 10/2 routine in which the teacher presents new information for approximately 10 minutes and then directs students to turn to an elbow partner or tablemates to debrief and discuss what was presented. This strategy can be used many times during the day to give students the opportunity to reflect on the learning and practice articulating opinions/ideas/questions with one another. Collaborative structures can be routinely used as an alternative to the typical "teacher questions/one student answers" interaction. Structures such as numbered heads together or think-pair-share require students to talk and practice the language of the content. This kind of routine allows for a *focus on language, peer interaction, creating shared knowledge, and affirming identity*.

Another system or routine discussed involved general scaffolding for intentional redundancy. Experienced and successful teachers of developing bilinguals have found that careful and intentional modeling—i.e., of a genre or writing, of ways to approach a reading task, of the necessary academic language, of agreeing and disagreeing in a debate—followed by collaborative tasks with others that require practicing what was modeled almost guarantees successful individual accountability. In other words, the teacher routinely

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models new learning for the whole class and then assigns a team or paired task that allows the students to practice this new learning. Only after the students practice and rehearse the new learning with others does the teacher assign an individual task or project. The results are far more positive because the scaffolding has been carefully planned and executed. This planned redundancy provides layers of support and guarantees that the sheltering components are consistently well integrated into instruction throughout the day and the unit.

Another system or routine might involve a daily shared reading of a selection from a content textbook or related publication. The teacher would carefully select a shared reading passage and use it to point out, discuss, and model text features, grammatical and stylistic elements common to the discipline, or questions or controversies that arise. If this is followed by an opportunity for students to turn to a partner or team and discuss, along with authentic reading and writing assignments that incorporate the instructional focus of the shared reading, then instructional redundancy is achieved. This shared event would incorporate sheltering components of a *focus on language, peer interaction, teaching learning strategies, accessing text, and affirming identity*.

There are many strategies and routines that teachers can consider as they plan their lessons, match authentic assessments to the standards and skills taught, and execute the activities that will provide the students with the knowledge and understanding, as well as the opportunity to practice what they are learning. All of this is "good teaching." But, it is so much more than that. As with all teaching, it is the result of a careful and intentional look at the knowledge and skills that must be taught and a flexible and thoughtful selection of the ways that students' knowledge and skills can be showcased. It also involves careful identification of the language demands of the content and intentional planning for ways for that language to be modeled, taught, practiced, and mastered. Content and language are carefully interwoven in the instructional activities, which, over the course of the instructional day, the unit of study, and even the whole year provide the students with layered redundancy and the opportunity to communicate like the developing scientists, historians, professionals they are.

## *Update on ESEA Reauthorization*

*by James J. Lyons, Esq., Senior Policy Advisor—DLENM*

As I write this short column in early November, members of both the House of Representatives and the Senate are meeting in small groups to discuss a "deal" agreed to in principle by Democratic and Republican leaders of both bodies and the White House. The deal addresses how lawmakers might simultaneously move forward on two "must do" legislative matters: raising the ceiling on our national debt and setting budget levels for the federal government.

What do these legislative matters have to do with ESEA Reauthorization? Nothing and everything! Nothing in the sense that the deal has no direct bearing on ESEA, and everything in that both the debt ceiling and a budget must be passed before Congress will move forward on other matters such as ESEA reauthorization.

If you missed the recent news, Washington, especially the Republican-led House, is in a state of disarray. Shortly after Pope Francis addressed Congress, Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) announced that he was resigning the Speakership and his seat in the House effective October 30th. Boehner agreed that he would stay on a "little longer" if necessary for the House to choose and install a new leader.

The 40 or so Republican members of the ultra-conservative "Freedom Caucus" agitated against the appointment of Boehner's hand-picked successor, Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA), and McCarthy quickly announced he didn't want the job. Since that time, after discussion and negotiation, Paul Ryan (R-WI) has been elected Speaker.

Although a Conference Committee comprised of the Chair and Ranking minority member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and the House Committee on Education and the Workforce has been working assiduously to resolve differences between the ESEA reauthorization bills passed by both bodies, a final compromise bill must be approved in each chamber and signed by the President. Whether it will be accomplished before the conclusion of this session of Congress is an open question that only time will answer. Stay tuned….