

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

by

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My research question is: *What best practices and teaching strategies can teachers use with English Language Learners to close the achievement gap?*

Project Summary

A recent research presented to Congress revealed that English Language Learners' academic performance levels are significantly below those of their peers in nearly every measure of achievement (Roekel, 2008). Beyond academic performance, English Language Learners (ELLs) face a myriad of challenges outside of the classroom including but not limited to communication in English, embarrassments, loneliness arising from lack of interaction with native speakers of English, and feelings of low self-esteem. In the classroom, ELLs may be discriminated against by their peers, perceived negatively by some teachers, given little attention, or denied opportunities necessary for learning. Furthermore, there is demand for them to be English proficient in order for them to be given equal opportunities for learning like their grade-level content peers. This is what led me to the research question: *What best practices and teaching strategies can teachers use with English Language Learners to close the achievement gap?*

This background is what motivated me to come up with this capstone project. Because of the difficulties ELLs face in the classroom, I decided to research on the skills that teachers can use to effectively teach ELLs so that they achieve the same level of academic performance as their non-ELL counterparts. In the forthcoming professional development sessions, my goal will be to equip teachers with various research-based instructional strategies effective for teaching ELLs in the mainstream.

Goals

- Synthesis of strategies for teaching ELLs
- Techniques of developing a SIOP model lesson plan and how to implement it

- Techniques of activating prior knowledge
- Techniques of developing a differentiated lesson plan and its implementation

I have divided my professional development meetings into three sessions. The three sessions address three separate issues. The three sessions have different timelines. Session One is dedicated to discussing strategies for teaching ELLs in the mainstream, strategies for activating prior knowledge, and techniques of developing a differentiated lesson plan to assist ELLs learn. Session One is scheduled to take 60 minutes, Session Two 90 minutes, and Session Three 40 minutes. Assessments for all the sessions are provided through Google Forms. I am intending to hold the professional development sessions in the Spring of the 2022-2023 academic year. The sessions will be spread throughout the Spring semester. Session One will be held in the first quarter of the first semester, Session Two in the second quarter, and Session Three in the first quarter of the second semester. The main goal of holding the professional development sessions is to provide teachers with an outline of various strategies they can use to teach English Language Learners in their classrooms in order for them to close the academic achievement gap.

Session One (60 min)

Session One primarily focuses on going through the best practices and teaching strategies. The session starts with a [pre-assessment](#) exercise conducted on Google Forms. The assessment is meant to provide me with an idea about the teachers' prior knowledge about ELLs. What follows next is the body of the session with a series of slides. Each slide represents a strategy. The session has a demo on strategies that can be used to activate prior knowledge. It also has a demo on how to develop a differentiated lesson plan to use in the mainstream classroom. The next section is a [post -assessment](#) exercise for this session which is immediately followed by an exit ticket. Both the exit ticket and post-assessment will enable me to have an

idea of how the session went. This will guide my future planning for sessions like this one.

Session One starts [here](#).

Session Two (90 min)

Session Two focuses on the Sheltered Instruction and Observation Protocol (SIOP) lesson plan as an effective teaching plan for English Language Learners (ELLs) in the mainstream classroom. It is a series of activities comprising the eight components of the SIOP model of instruction. The main goal of this session is to provide teachers with skills on how they can effectively plan and use the SIOP model for instruction in the mainstream classroom. Session Two starts with feedback from Session One. After discussions on feedback from Session One are done, discussions on the SIOP model begin. The SIOP lesson plan [is here](#). The session ends with a post-assessment exercise. The post-assessment is [here](#).

Session Three (40 min)

Session Three has three tasks to be completed by participants. The first one is to do a brief discussion on the feedback from Session Two. This will be followed by doing a reflection on the SIOP model lesson plan from Session Two. The participants will go through the lesson plan and give various recommendations. Session Three [starts here](#). The third and final task is to complete the [post-assessment reflection](#) exercise provided on Google Forms. The assessment is anonymous. It will help me plan for my future professional development training sessions.

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