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## Chapter 6

# Inspiring literacy from a global perspective: How to use culturally responsive and inclusive instruction to increase literacy for all learners

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### Introduction

Global education is in the midst of a paradigm shift. The traditionally secluded, monolingual method of learning and instruction is moving to a more inclusive and varied system through culturally responsive practices. These practices attend to the individual needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students who enter the classroom from an array of backgrounds and experiences. This shift is especially timely as researchers increasingly find traditional teaching methods are not as effective in places such as South Africa, a nation that hosts a variety of specific needs as a result of the post-apartheid era. Arguably, the current government of South Africa is based on *ubuntu* or interdependence, the belief that the individual exists because of the strength of the community (Makalela, 2015). Furthermore, the government has adopted eleven official languages and various other policies to empower historically marginalised groups (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). The educators who look globally for research-based practices and trends, which support cultural identities, can help propel this exciting shift at the local level.

One historic effect of colonial oppression is the educational system biased in favour of monolingualism, which suppresses the culture and expression of diverse learning groups (Makalela, 2014; Prah, 2015; Ricento, 2000). Home language, or mother tongue, (the language spoken at home and in the community) creates the foundation for learning and expressing one's ideas. South Africa's Language in Education Policy is explained in two documents: the Act Language in Education Policy, Section 3(4)(m) of the National Education Policy Act (1996) and the Norms and Standards Regarding Language Policy, Section 6(1) of the South African Schools Act (1996). These documents recognise cultural diversity as an asset to the

country and they promote multilingualism as a “defining characteristic of South Africa”. The papers highlight the cognitive and emotional benefits of supporting language development in schools to “achieve equity and redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices” (Language in Education Policy, 1997).

In reality, South African learners begin school in their home language, but at the fourth-grade level, they are required to be educated in either English or Afrikaans. Although the government mandates that all materials must be written in at least two languages, the other nine official languages of South Africa are rarely available in the publication of academic resources. Various reasons are given and disputed concerning this dearth in the publishing of all South African languages, such as some of the languages do not contain technical vocabulary and this is a form of institutionalised oppression (Brook-Utne, 2015; Oyoo & Semcon, 2015). This phenomenon not only lacks cultural responsiveness, but also dismisses the experience of the learner and his/her community. Researchers have established that the Western influenced, one-size-fits-all traditional teaching style is not effective when educating diverse learners (Prah & Brook-Utne, 2009). Global educational groups, such as the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), have proposed the use of inclusive practices to support the diverse learning needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students (Banks, 2008; UNICEF, 2015; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2004). With these global initiatives comes the need for training in and support of such programmes. However, changing the landscape of education is a battle against traditional and accepted beliefs and practices of stakeholders within a system that struggles to evolve. This chapter is intended to fuel the understanding of how educators can support and empower bilingual and multilingual learners’ experiences in language and literacy while charting new pathways for all students to access academic achievement. Inclusive education is a culturally responsive approach that includes educating all individuals in the classroom through research-based strategies. This social justice framework empowers and validates learners while providing them with what they need in order to be academically and socially successful. Inclusion is based on equity rather than equality – not all students need the same support in order to achieve.

As Freire (1970) explained, schools continue to have a “culture of silence” which must be challenged through honest dialogue. The education system should “condition” learners in the “practice of freedom”; however, this cannot happen unless all stakeholders push beyond dialogue and theory to transformative praxis. Traditional systems of education support the “banking model”, according to which CLD learners are seen as “receptacles” who need to be “filled” by teachers. This is often done in a systematic method of teaching that includes teachers’ preparing and presenting a concept (banking model stages) followed by students’ memorising and regurgitating the information in the form of an assessment. Engaging learners and educators in a learning process is paramount for learners moving from

being objects (uninvolved in learning to support oppression) to transformative co-investigators. The current study attempts to provide educators with strategies for engaging CLD learners through the empowerment of language, thought, and action.

The purpose of this chapter is to review briefly South Africa’s currently used educational policy path for the inclusion of all CLD students; to describe a study conducted on the training of teachers regarding inclusive practices for the support of diverse learners in South Africa; and to describe the equity-based pedagogical practices used for training educators during the study. At first, a brief account of South Africa’s history of inclusive education practices is presented, followed by a description of current achievement factors. Next, an overview of a training and support study on inclusive practices in South Africa is presented. Finally, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model is discussed as a possible means of support for increasing inclusive practices for CLD students (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2014; Averill & Rinaldi, 2011). For the purpose of this paper, the terms ‘learners’ and ‘students’ are used interchangeably. It should be noted the terms ‘CLD learners’ and ‘diverse learners’ are used interchangeably in this chapter because global inclusion initiatives recognise factors, which prevent learners from accessing their education, that need to be addressed. The SIOP strategies explained in the discussion section provide educators with effective techniques for including and supporting all learners in the classroom. The study, explained in the methodology section, examined culturally and linguistically diverse learners as learners with challenges that would prevent them from accessing the current curriculum and assessments used in South Africa. These challenges related to issues pertaining to language; auditory and visual processing; emotional, behavioural, physical challenges; and poverty. This chapter aims to provide educators with classroom-practice tools which could be used to empower all learners – monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual.

### **Educational policies**

Over the last two decades, South Africa’s education policies and practices have progressed from the segregation and exclusion of diverse learners from the educational system to a commitment of supporting the academic achievement of historically marginalised learners. South Africa’s educational system began with exclusion of CLD learners from white schools at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and was followed by the apartheid system, 1948–1991. A factor more specific to the problem was the passing of the Bantu (Black) Education Act of 1953, which ended the autonomy of schools and made government funding conditional, based on the acceptance of a racially biased curriculum (Heugh, 1999). Black South Africans were denied access to educational experiences and resources with which white South Africans were provided in the name of solving ‘ethnic problems’. With the ending of apartheid in 1994 and the signing of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

in 1996, a system based on the values of 'human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms' was born (SA Constitution, 1996). Two important sections of the Constitution include the right to education and the support of languages. The Constitution states, 'Everyone has the right to a basic education and everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice.' Additionally, there is the recognition that because of 'historically diminished use and status of indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these [eleven official] languages.'

Furthermore, in 2001, the Education White Paper #6 on Inclusive Education and Training (White Paper #6, 2001) addressed the issue of supporting marginalised learners by increasing support and reducing barriers to learning, especially for students who were at risk of dropping out of school. This pivotal paper outlines the plan for reducing segregated schools based on academic, processing, physical, emotional, and socioeconomic issues in schools and moving to integrating education for all learners. This policy change included training teachers in working with all learners regardless of diverse learning needs, language, socio-economic challenges, and/or emotional well-being. Specifically, there are various barriers to learning identified by South African education researchers: chronic illnesses, sensory conditions, neurological conditions, cognitive impairments; learning difficulties, emotional barriers, and contextual barriers – relating to language, dropout, negative and harmful attitudes, an inaccessible curriculum, poverty, violence, drug abuse, child abuse, and street children (Founie, 2012).

Although South Africa's adoption of an inclusive education is more progressive than what occurs in most countries in the world, all countries are looking globally for strategies to support CID learners. The next section addresses the reasoning behind finding new solutions for issues of academic achievement for our 'lost learners'. Lost learners are the students who leave school or have not met standards due to diverse learning needs such as disabilities, language barriers, socio-economic struggles, and/or emotional/behavioural challenges.

### Academic achievement

Two factors used to examine the academic achievement of students are completion rates and dropout rates. These numbers profile the students who succeed, the ones who struggle, and those who become 'lost' in an educational system that has not supported their needs. According to South Africa's Department of Basic Education (2015), 1,252,071 students entered the school system. In 2003, however, only 150,752 students qualified for a bachelor's degree based on their 2014 matric scores. The matric pass rate in 2014 was 75.8 percent with students from Free State (87.4 percent), Gauteng (84.6 percent), Northwest (84.6 percent), and Western Cape (82.2 percent) outperforming students from other provinces:

Mpumalanga, 79 percent; Northern Cape, 76.4 percent; Limpopo, 72.9 percent; KwaZulu-Natal, 69.7 percent; and Eastern Cape, 65.9 percent (Basic Education Minister, 2015).

Dropping out of school can lead to negative outcomes, including lower pay, higher unemployment, poor health, higher rates of crime, and more reliance on welfare (Bangbose, 2000; Levin & Belfield, 2007; Pies, Ward, & Lucas, 2010; Rouse, 2007). Dropout rates can be misleading because the reason for leaving school is often unknown. For the purpose of this paper, the status, 'dropout rates', is used to describe the dropout phenomenon. 'Dropout rate' refers to individuals in a given age range who have neither obtained a high-school diploma, nor have they completed an alternative programme by the expected date of completion. In South Africa, only 532,860 students (out of an estimated 1,252,071) took the matric test in 2014, which would indicate that 719,211 students left school prior to writing their final exams. Educators need to examine their role regarding school completion and academic achievement. This should include their role in dealing with 'lost' students, especially our CID students in marginalised areas. One promising solution is the use of equity-based pedagogical practices that were established to meet the needs of bilingual and multilingual learners, but which have been effective as an inclusive practice with many diverse learners. This is called the SIOP model.

### Study on educators' inclusive practices

Creating a 21<sup>st</sup>-century curriculum and instruction that meet the needs of all students through active planning, transformative delivery, and collaborative opportunities is possible; however, teachers need additional training and support in equity-based pedagogical frameworks to do so effectively (Jez, 2014; Makala, 2015; Wink, 2005). The current global education trends recognise the importance of individualised, learner-centred approaches (inclusive practices) and implementing evidence-based practices that focus on literacy, value a multilingual society, and incorporate technology (Eaton, 2010; Peters, 2004; UNESCO, 2008; UNICEF, 2002). This shift in pedagogical awareness and application needs to begin in teacher-training programmes, extend to the schools, and continue at all levels (school, district, and national). The following study was conducted in 2013 in three South African provinces to find out more about educators' perception of training and support on inclusive practices and then to provide training and support around the SIOP model to educators working with CID learners (Jez, 2013; Jez & Lunera, 2016).

**Participants.** A convenience sample of 53 university faculty members, 125 current teachers in township government schools, and 47 preservice teachers who were interning in public schools in three provinces of South Africa were surveyed, trained, and asked to complete evaluations on the teacher-training process. Two of the universities were in urban areas (Johannesburg and Cape Town) and one university was located in a rural

part of South Africa (Empanangeni). Six schools were located in the areas surrounding the universities. The preservice teachers were enrolled in courses at one of the three universities.

**Instruments.** The instruments used in the study included the *Inclusive Practices Survey* and *Questionnaire*, field notes, and *Inclusive Practice Training Evaluation*. The *Inclusive Practices Survey* and *Questionnaire* asked participants about demographic information, participation in training on inclusive practices and diverse learning needs, level of confidence in working with diverse learners, interventions, and support available to them. The survey items were scored using a 5-point Likert-type scale strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). The field notes were gathered during interviews, trainings, and support meetings with educators throughout the data-gathering phase. The *Inclusive Practice Training Evaluation* had participants rate the training based on how helpful they found it, what they learned, what they would like to know more about, and additional feedback.

**Data Collection and Analysis.** Prior to implementation, approval from the Institutional Review Board and Ethics committees for each of the institutions was obtained and consent forms were signed. The participants completed the *Inclusive Practice Survey* and *Questionnaire*, and interviews were held with leaders from the sites to gain clarity and understanding of the specific needs of the educators. Data from the surveys and interviews was inputted into an Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to determine the descriptive data for the site and emergent themes concerning current practices, areas of growth, and desired support. A professional development offering was designed and presented, based on the data from the survey and interviews. Once the site approved the plan, the workshops, support sessions, and/or resources/materials were implemented within the six-month implementation phase. After the implementation of the site-based inclusive practice training and support sessions, the *Inclusive Practices Evaluation* was given to participants to complete on a voluntary and anonymous basis.

**Results.** Results from the surveys, interviews, field notes, and evaluations indicated six major findings. Firstly, all educators perceived a lack of training and support from their credential programme, district, and outside agencies (Table). The educators did not feel they had been taught the tools which they could use to work with diverse learners. They also felt they were often struggling to support these learners in their classrooms, in addition to performing all of the other duties expected of them.

**Table 1.** Responses from university faculty members, teachers, and preservice teachers (means and standard deviations) to 5-point Likert-Type Scale regarding perceptions of effective training in working with diverse learners.

n=	Credential Training	District Training	Outside Agency Training	Not Trained Well
	University n=53	M=3.00 SD=1.36	M=2.22 SD=1.09	M=2.14 SD=1.25
Faculty Members				
Teachers n=125	M=3.10 SD=1.31	M=2.67 SD=1.14	M=2.70 SD=1.27	M=3.16 SD=1.42
Preservice Teachers n=47	M=3.89 SD=1.03	M=3.29 SD=1.32	M=2.65 SD=1.45	M=3.43 SD=1.34

Secondly, as seen in Table 2, educators had mixed views about their confidence regarding their knowledge of working with diverse learners (students with visual, auditory, physical, emotional, or language barriers). The university faculty members and teachers reported they did not feel confident in their knowledge of supporting students with visual or auditory issues, while the preservice teachers' confidence levels were higher. This phenomenon may exist because preservice teachers have not had much exposure to working with diverse learners. University faculty members, teachers, and preservice teachers all felt fairly confident about working with students with physical and emotional impairments. Interestingly, educators were split in their confidence regarding their knowledge of language, with the university faculty members feeling the most confident (M=3.44); and teachers (M=2.37) and preservice teachers not feeling confident (M=1.57).

**Table 2.** Confidence of university faculty members, teachers, and preservice teachers regarding their knowledge of visual, auditory, physical, emotional, and language issues (means and standard deviations based on a 5-point Likert-type scale)

Sample	Visual	Auditory	Physical	Emotional	Language
University faculty members N=53	M=2.69 SD=1.39	M=2.63 SD=1.37	M=3.00 SD=1.45	M=3.28 SD=1.33	M=3.44 SD=1.12
Teachers N=125	M=2.71 SD=1.14	M=2.67 SD=1.12	M=2.93 SD=1.20	M=3.02 SD=1.14	M=2.37 SD=1.06
Preservice Teachers N=47	M=3.55 SD=1.06	M=3.40 SD=1.17	M=3.51 SD=1.06	M=3.94 SD=.79	M=1.57 SD=.83

Thirdly, educators answered open-ended questions about the interventions and support that existed at their sites. Due to the nature of the open-ended question format, the answers were organised according to frequency, and follow-up questions were asked during the interview process to clarify the responses. The major findings in this category indicate that many faculty members and teachers did not report any interventions (37 percent and 26 percent of respondents). Many educators were able to identify educational buzzwords such as 'scaffolding' and 'differentiation of instruction' in the survey; however, when asked for specific examples of these during the interview process, there was less of a response. During the interview discussion, the educators explained the difficulty they had in implementing these practices due to large class sizes, language issues, state-mandated curriculum requirements, and lack of resources and support from administration.

Educators reported that teacher support and tutors were the most common form of support available for students. When asked about the teacher support, they identified workshops as the most common method of supporting educators. Faculty members and teachers were asked about the language support offered and 47 percent of faculty members said there was none at university level. Teachers mentioned that language support was often the teacher's responsibility (20 percent).

The interviews and field notes during the study indicated that educators wanted to learn more about inclusive practices; and all sites requested workshops and individual support for teachers in the areas of language, literacy, and working with diverse learners. The final evaluations were completed by 116 of the 225 participants. All of the evaluations returned were positive and showed that they had found training and support very helpful. The evaluations asked educators to identify what support would be most beneficial in the future and the following responses were given: continued professional development, more time for training and professional development, administration and leadership to be involved in the training and support, and more culturally responsive assessments/resources/tools to support literacy and language with learners.

### **Discussion**

Overall, the current study supports a major shift in educators' preparation, professional development, and support in working with diverse learners. This chapter focused on addressing South African educational policies and academic achievement by training educators on the SIOP model to meet the needs of CID learners. All of the participants in the study identified multiple barriers to learning, such as language challenges, auditory processing, visual processing, and physical, emotional, and socio-economic challenges, which supported the premise of South African township schools experiencing an array of challenges in teaching and empowering their learners. This has also been supported by previous research findings (Fourie, 2012).

The study also found that efforts to address the written educational policies in South Africa require support for language and inclusive practices in R-12 classrooms. Educators requested more individualised training, support, and resources for working with diverse learners. Moreover, to be effective in changing the landscape of education, the educators who participated in the current study indicated a desire for educational training to happen at all educational levels (universities, schools, and preservice teacher training programmes). Educators within the study reported on a lack of instruction, training, and support in implementing inclusive practices while following the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) programme. The training offered in the SIOP model for the purposes of this study afforded educators an opportunity to modify their instruction to meet the needs of the diverse learners (as demonstrated in the evaluation of the SIOP training support) while continuing to follow the South African Department of Basic Education's expectations.

Additionally, the study examined tenets of effective professional development for educators. The individualised modifications, made to suit the training and support that each school site received, supported the premise that professional development programmes are essential and that they must be created based on the needs of the educators and their learners (Gadana, Maxwell-Jolly, & Discoli, 2005; Garet et al., 2001; Harwell, 2003; Jee & Luneta, 2016; Luneta, 2012; Wei et al., 2009).

Furthermore, South African educators continue to use common traditional strategies such as lecturing, followed by written assessment. Not only does this hinder the application of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as critical thinking, it also does not empower learners to access the content, nor to make sense of the world and of their experience. The results indicate that there should be provision of explicit, specific, and culturally responsive interventions to support the efficacy of teachers and the academic achievement of their learners (Graham, Harris, Fink, & MacArthur, 2001; Webe Berry, 2006). Further research is recommended on specific strategies for multiple learning environments and language structures. Consequently, providing SIOP training in languages other than English could prove to be a means of supporting the educator in learning what approaches they could use for the students they serve, as there was a clear language barrier experienced by the researcher at some of the school sites. Limitations to the study include the use of convenience sampling, the short implementation timeframe, and the lack of participants who completed the evaluative process.

The equity-based pedagogical practices outlined in the next section give examples of SIOP training provided through the current study. These adaptations can be made to curricula and instruction to support diverse learning needs. The SIOP model was designed to address the bilingual and multilingual language experience; however, it also supports various diverse learning needs found in township schools throughout South Africa and could be the key to transformation in the education system, from the oppressive

monolingual classroom to a more empowering multilingual experience.

### **Practical application: Equity-based pedagogical practice of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model**

Effective teacher education and professional development programmes include a strong vision that highlights a common language, opportunities for high levels of reflection about practice in relation to theory and discipline-specific knowledge of learning and instruction, integration of field experience, and models of positive pedagogical practices (Brownell, Ross, Colon, & McCallum, 2005; Jee & Linares, 2010). To address how educational systems may approach an equity-based educational framework, the SIOP model is explained.

The SIOP model was created to provide an effective way for measuring teacher efficacy and performance that challenges the traditional teaching methods and supports curriculum and instruction for diverse learners (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2014). The protocol was created and provided to teachers prior to observations of their practice so that teachers could be more cognizant of their practice while planning and working with students whose home language was different from the language of instruction. The tool was so effective that over the years the researchers have expanded the focus to all diverse learners and provided textbooks and training to support educators in their practice.

The SIOP model was chosen for this paper because of the explicit and useful alterations that educators can make to their lessons to promote learning for struggling students. Many teachers already employ several of these techniques; however, this section will review the components of the SIOP model that were presented during many of the professional development workshops to township educators, university faculty members, and preservice teachers over the course of the study. The SIOP protocol has eight components for educators to use with diverse learners, including 1) lesson planning, 2) building background, 3) ensuring there is comprehensible input, 4) strategies for working with diverse learners, 5) increasing student interaction, 6) modifying educator's practice, 7) lesson delivery, and 8) review and assessment.

### **Lesson Planning**

SIOP believes that educators should begin with planning their lessons to meet the needs of their individual learners using the following: adapting the lesson, supplemental materials, and meaningful activities. In addition to having clearly written content objectives of the lesson, which are defined, displayed, and reviewed with the students, the SIOP model asks educators also to include language objectives to explicitly support students with language mastery (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2014; Saunders & Goldenburg, 2010). The language objective is especially necessary because academic conversations are more demanding for diverse learners than informal conversations. It is therefore important to provide time and

opportunity for both forms of expression and dialogue throughout the lesson (Cummins, 2000; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2014). Using Webb's (1997) depth-of-knowledge model may be a helpful tool when designing content and language objectives to ensure the four levels of critical thinking are addressed (recall and reproduction, skills and concepts, short-term strategic thinking, and extended thinking). All lessons should include opportunities for practising reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Supplementary materials (such as graphic organisers, outlines, and levelled text) should be provided. Examples of content and language objectives are as follows:

- *Content Objective:* By the end of this lesson, students will be able to compare the daily life experience of the Zulu people in KwaZulu-Natal from the 1800s with the present day and be able to provide at least three specific supportive details for each time period. We will brainstorm ideas, vocabulary, and concepts about both time periods. The teacher will record the brainstorm on the board. The learner will create a chart for comparisons to be made, and will write an essay using the information from the chart.
- *Language Objective:* Students will integrate multiple languages into their chart and essay. Details will be provided in at least two languages with translations provided as needed. Students will edit their work with partners and/or small groups to discuss accurate verbal and written language expression. Academic vocabulary included in your chart and essay includes the following words: compare, examples of, in conclusion.

### **Building Background**

Researchers (August & Shanahan, 2010; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978) believe effective teaching starts where students are and then builds up to a higher understanding of a concept. Building background prior to the lesson can aid students in connecting with the content. Linking the concepts to the students' background, linking to past learning, and developing key vocabulary are the tools which best create real learning. To link the lesson to students' background experience, a teacher could integrate photos, maps, or other visual materials of focal topics before discussing what the students see and/or know about the groups. Educators can explicitly review past lessons where the students have made comparisons and focus on the academic vocabulary used in those lessons. Starter sentences can be helpful in teaching technical terms with examples and non-examples. The teacher may create a word brainstorm where students discuss how oral history is shared in both Zulu and English. Then, they could introduce subject-specific vocabulary such as the morphology of words: 'can' means with or together? Next, a potential sentence starter could be, 'In 1800, \_\_\_\_\_ was in 2016, \_\_\_\_\_'.

### **Comprehensible Input**

Next, research demonstrates that students who have difficulties with comprehension often struggle with the input of information and that small changes to educators' methods can have a largely positive effect on the academic success of the learners (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2014). The SIOP model asks teachers to make the teaching comprehensible for all learners by paying attention to their own speech. This means that educators need to ensure their rate and enunciation is at the appropriate speed for their learners to be able process what they are saying. Also, their complexity of speech must be at a level that the learners can understand; they should not use words that are too complex, or idioms, or unfamiliar academic vocabulary. Educators should monitor their use of pauses and allow for time to help students feel more comfortable, and therefore, more attentive to the lesson.

Clearly explaining the steps relating to academic tasks through using multiple means of explanation also supports students in understanding expectations for an assignment. Too often learners are afraid to ask for help or indicate they have not understood directions (Ryan, Gheen, & Midgley, 1998). If teachers use techniques such as: asking a student to explain the directions to a peer, using multiple forms of expressing the directions (written, visual, verbal, guided practice, providing examples, etc.); and/or developing a system for individual learners' question and answers while other students work on another assignment (to ensure they would have been using their time in class wisely); then the amount of input would increase while the student's (and teacher's) stress levels would decrease. Finally, providing a variety of teaching techniques, such as: previewing assignments prior to having students turn them in and allowing students to have alternative forms of expressing their understanding, are useful tools for successful classroom management. This may be an area where differentiation of instruction is useful.

### **Strategies**

As McCabe (2015) explained, South African learners benefit from innovative and culturally inclusive methods of learning that use non-traditional strategies. The SIOP model uses learning strategies, scaffolding techniques, and higher-order questioning and tasks to explicitly teach self-regulation skills as a means of improving learners' reading and writing (August & Shanahan, 2010; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2014; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Research-based learning strategies can easily be implemented into lessons if thoughtfully planned. Cognitive learning strategies include previewing a chapter before reading, using mnemonics, taking notes, rereading, using graphic organisers to map information, and identifying key vocabulary. Metacognition is monitoring how one thinks about something, using awareness, reflection, and interaction. Examples are predicting, inferring, generating questions about the text (and answering them), making a mental image (visualisation), summarising, and evaluating. Students can improve their

speaking and comprehension by using language-learning strategies such as skimming and scanning during reading, breaking words into component parts (morphology), drawing pictures, gesturing, or translating/paraphrasing when words do not come to mind, guessing and deducing, and/or substituting known words for unknown words. Although strategies are helpful, it is important that the learner does not focus more on the strategy than the content (McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009).

When interviewing educators, Jet and Luneta (2016) found most were able to identify scaffolding as a useful tool; however, they were not able to give many examples of scaffolding used in their classroom. The SIOP model recommends the use of verbal scaffolding such as providing examples in the home language, providing verbal cues to guide the students in their understanding of a topic, paraphrasing, and thinking aloud. Teachers can also use procedural scaffolds such as peer teaching, modelling, or small-group instruction. An instructional scaffold may be as simple as providing graphic organisers or sample assignments. It is important to allow students with diverse learning abilities to access the content; however, not every student needs to use all of the scaffolds offered in the classroom.

Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) outlined six levels of educational objectives. In the lesson planning section, Webb's (1997) Depth of Knowledge model was presented as a useful tool for writing objectives. The important take-away from these models is to provide students with different levels of understanding and opportunities for practising critical thinking during lessons.

### **Interactions**

Researchers (August & Shanahan, 2006; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2014; Marshall, 2000) agree that increasing opportunities for students to interact with one another and the curriculum increases academic achievement. The SIOP model provides four practices for doing so. The first practice is to integrate frequent opportunities for interaction into each lesson. This can be done through the conversational approach (allowing students to informally discuss a topic) or in a more structured manner that allows the members of a class to support the development of ideas using statements such as, "In other words? ... what does that remind you of? ... why is that important? ... can you add to that?"

The second aspect of increasing interactions is through the use of group configurations. This may be done with group size (individual, pair, small group, cooperative, or whole group) or type of group (based on ability, language, background factors, etc.). It is important to make groups purposeful, yet for there to be flexibility and variety within a topic.

The third aspect of interactions is providing sufficient wait-time for students when they are in the process of answering questions. Rowe (2003) found that the average time a teacher

provides for a student to answer a question is nine seconds, although this changes in different cultures. Because diverse learners often need additional processing time, culturally responsive teachers should consciously allow for additional time before requesting answers to questions. Also, many students' attention will increase if they believe they have an opportunity to be involved in the discussion. Pacing is important when determining wait-time because if an educator's pacing is off, other students may lose focus. Wait-time also allows for the fourth aspect of interactions: allowing time for the learner to clarify questions with a peer or the teacher.

### **Practice and Application**

Students benefit from practising and applying new knowledge in a safe environment that allows them to challenge their abilities. Providing diverse learners with hands-on materials or manipulations for physically demonstrating understanding of content and language concepts is effective. Guided practice followed by opportunities for individual and group exploration can be helpful in subjects such as the sciences and mathematics. Having students find solutions to real-life problems allows them to apply new concepts using multicultural viewpoints. Educators should use a gradual release of scaffolding while students attempt to process new concepts. Finally, reading, writing, listening, and speaking should be integrated in all lessons. It should be noted that not all language skills, which are practised, need to be tied to the objectives of the lesson. Also, educators should be sensitive to the developmental stage of language and not be overly critical of students' errors.

### **Lesson Delivery**

Now that the lesson is prepared, the delivery should support the objectives, promote student engagement, and be paced appropriately. The recommended amount of student engagement (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) is 90–100 percent (Ederwanta, Vogt & Short, 2014). The SIOP model identifies student engagement as allocated, engaged, and academic learning time. Educators should allocate time for reading, discussion, practice, and application. Engagement time refers to the time students are actively engaged in the lesson, and to providing students with opportunities to talk about concepts and to practise with hands-on activities. The academic learning time is time-on-task when students demonstrate their acquisition of the objectives for which they will be tested. This is not purely creative fun time, nor is it 'skill and drill'. The SIOP model recommends academic learning be used in most of the lesson time to maximise student learning. Pacing will be different depending on the age and ability of the audience.

### **Review and Assessment**

Educators need to review key vocabulary and key content concepts while assessing lesson

objectives regularly. Providing frequent feedback on student output allows for misconceptions to be corrected. Additionally, feedback allows students to explore the content comprehension and to increase their vocabulary. Continually reviewing the objectives can be helpful in drawing connections between the objective and the assessments. Teachable moments can be found during these formal and informal assessments of student progress. Some other helpful tools for successful learners are rubrics, self-assessments, and response/discussion boards so that students can post questions or ideas to the entire class.

### **Conclusion**

Globally, there is a push for inclusive practices that support all students in the classroom (Eaton, 2010; Petrus, 2004; UNESCO, 2008; UNICEF, 2002). If a child is struggling to learn in the manner in which he/she is being taught, then changing the method of teaching seems reasonable. Although this shift is happening at the policy level globally and locally, the next step is to support educational institutions in implementing inclusion into practice. Increasing literacy not only empowers the youth, but builds capacity and lifelong learners. Providing equitable education can reduce negative societal factors such as poverty, gender issues, conflict, and human rights violations. There is a need to support and value the multiple languages and cultures in our midst through culturally responsive pedagogy. As the study described in this paper found, there is a need for training and support of educators to move away from traditional teaching practices towards innovative and research-based methods for teaching diverse students. Through the SIOP model, educators can purposefully assess, plan, and monitor students' academic, emotional, and social progress without diminishing their individual cultural identities. Further research on implementing these models in schools in South Africa is recommended.

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