



Effective sheltered instruction can change lives

Empower your students to thrive with Lexia® English
as the foundation of your sheltered instruction program



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Sheltered Instruction Programs in the US

Sheltered instruction is a research-based instructional framework that provides clear and accessible content and academic language to Emergent Bilinguals, also known as English Language Learners or ELL, in pre-K–12 grade-level classes¹. The goal of every sheltered instruction program is twofold: to promote content achievement as well as the development of English language proficiency and literacy². Effective sheltered instruction programs are designed to provide Emergent Bilingual learners with the same high-quality, academically challenging content that native English speakers receive.

Sheltered instruction in the United States is used in mainstream classrooms that include a combination of Emergent Bilingual students and native English speakers as well as in classrooms with Emergent Bilinguals only¹. Due to the need to better serve the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners across the country, the sheltered instruction approach has been rising in popularity and its many benefits have been documented by research³.



Following the inception of the sheltered instruction approach, various programs were developed to measure and assess the effectiveness and implementation of sheltered instruction. A prominent example is the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, which consists of eight interrelated components—all equally significant for the effective implementation of such a program⁴:

- » Lesson Preparation
- » Building Background
- » Comprehensible Input
- » Strategies
- » Interaction
- » Practice/Application
- » Lesson Delivery
- » Review & Assessment.

Lexia English: A Must-Have Tool for Sheltered Instruction Implementation

Designed from an asset-based orientation toward learners and learning, Lexia® English Language Development™ is an adaptive blended learning speaking and listening program that supports students' English language development through academic conversations. The program helps students in grades K–6 acquire higher language proficiency levels of English, while providing educators with continuous progress-monitoring and teacher-led instructional resources that empower the prioritization and targeted instruction required to meet the individual needs of all students.



At Lexia, we know that all students bring academic, socioemotional, and cultural strengths that can be harnessed in strategic ways to help cultivate their understanding of both language and content. At Lexia English, bilingualism and multilingualism are valued and seen as a resource and talent; therefore, the program empowers learners to actualize their gifts and strengths, and facilitates teachers in building learning around students' existing capabilities and knowledge.

With Lexia English, schools and districts that have adopted or are exploring sheltered instruction programs can reap numerous benefits when it comes to English language development for their students. Here's how Lexia English addresses specific sheltered instruction features to meet students' needs:

Key components of effective sheltered instruction programs:	Critical features of each component are listed below. Lexia English helps to:
Lesson Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Write language objectives clearly for students ✓ Choose appropriate content concepts ✓ Identify supplementary materials to use ✓ Adapt content to all levels of student proficiency ✓ Plan meaningful activities that integrate the 4 skills
Building Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Explicitly link concepts to students' backgrounds ✓ Explicitly link past learning and new concepts
Comprehensible Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use speech appropriate for students' proficiency level ✓ Explain academic tasks clearly ✓ Use a variety of techniques to make content concepts clear
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide ample opportunities for students to use strategies ✓ Use scaffolding techniques consistently throughout lesson
Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide opportunities for interaction & discussion ✓ Use group configurations that support language & content objectives ✓ Provide sufficient wait time for student responses consistently
Practice/Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide activities for students to apply content and language ✓ Provide activities that integrate all language skills
Lesson Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support content objectives clearly ✓ Support language objectives clearly ✓ Engage students approximately 90-100% of the period ✓ Pace the lesson appropriately to the students' ability level
Review & Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Give a comprehensive review of key content concepts ✓ Provide feedback to students regularly on their output ✓ Conduct assessments of student learning throughout lesson

Lexia English in the Classroom

Choosing the right English language development program and making it fit the needs of your classroom, school, or district can be challenging—but with Lexia English, the possibilities are endless. Whether you have an established sheltered instruction program or are in the process of exploring one, our team of experts will assist you in ensuring that Lexia English fits flexibly to meet the needs of your Emergent Bilingual learners and fulfills your school and district goals. The program can fit within an existing curriculum and can be implemented by all educators.

Sheltered Instruction aims to make content comprehensible by considering the varied linguistic needs of Emergent Bilinguals in the classroom, from the design of the lesson, to its delivery, and beyond. With Lexia English, the language objectives are what is being taught to mastery, and the content is the vehicle.

A “good fit” time to incorporate Lexia English is the time of the day when students work on targeted support; whether that be during ELD time or small-group time, this is a perfect time for students to have targeted practice on their oral language. Independent program usage, a variety of technology stations, and/or classroom center rotations are some of the ways in which the online and teacher-led components of Lexia English can be implemented as part of sheltered instruction to ensure a good fit in the school day. This targeted approach on language learning is proving to be a game-changer in English language development, as our [current research](#) outlines.

While sheltered instruction can focus on accessing and acquiring content knowledge, Lexia English focuses on accessing and acquiring the academic language students need to be successful, while also promoting academic excellence and educational equity for all, leveling the learning field for Emergent Bilingual learners.

The sheltered instruction approach addresses the convergence of content and language objectives and adheres to the premise that language considerations and objectives need to be addressed with the same importance and gravitas as content objectives. Ideally, effective instruction for Emergent Bilinguals should address language goals/objectives and content goals/objectives across all classes.



The Right EdTech for Sheltered Instruction Programs

Lexia English and its teacher-led instructional resources, by design, support the tenets of sheltered instruction:

Sheltered instruction supports scaffolding techniques so that a learner can simultaneously learn language and content; the model emphasizes the benefits of building background knowledge.	Lexia English does this by positioning the language standards first, then using content standards to create context. Language frames are used to introduce grammar structure and provide learners with portable language that helps them make sense of and properly use grammatical conventions in conversation. At the same time, content-specific words are used throughout the program and students engage with meaningful information about the world that helps them build background knowledge.
Sheltered instruction relies on comprehensible input as leverage for learning.	Lexia English relies on comprehensible input at the individual level using a placement test to ensure the learner is at the right level of proficiency. Lexia English also takes it further and adds to the comprehensible input by using the output hypothesis and providing learners with ample opportunity for speaking practice in the academic language.
Sheltered instruction encompasses strategies.	Lexia English uses the following strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Placement test to ensure the learner is at their zone of proximal development » Gradual Release of Responsibility model (I do, we do, you do) » Purposeful repetition » Immediate corrective feedback » Branching; further scaffolding when necessary » Constant progress monitoring so the teacher knows where learners are and can plan lessons accordingly
Sheltered instruction offers students opportunities for interaction.	<p>A key feature of Lexia English is the purposeful repetition, which provides learners with multiple opportunities to practice their speaking and listening skills, at their own pace, in a safe environment. This purposeful repetition supports a learner who is just getting started with academic English, as well as a student who is learning more complex sentence structures.</p> <p>The learner practices one-on-one with the program's characters, as Lexia English is designed to lay the foundation for speaking in a non-judgmental environment that will allow the learner to achieve fluency and automaticity with the English language. In Lexia English, students speak up to 72% of their time in the online, student component, and there are also face-to-face speaking and listening practice opportunities via the teacher-led instruction.</p>

Sheltered instruction provides learners with opportunities for practice and application.	This function is at the core of Lexia English, empowering the student to apply both language and content as they engage in academic conversations with the program's characters and practice speaking and listening.
The delivery of lessons is emphasized in sheltered instruction.	Lexia English's student and teacher-led components engage learners and pace the way in which learning takes place according to each student's English proficiency level and personalized learning needs and goals. The teacher-led lessons reinforce the speaking, listening, and grammar skills taught in the student portion of the program, and point out areas where students could benefit from additional, targeted support. The teacher-led lessons can also be used as exemplars of how to write a lesson for language learning, that the educators can use to create their own lessons.
Sheltered instruction emphasizes the review, feedback, and continuous assessment of student performance.	Lexia English's Assessment Without Testing® continuously gathers and analyzes data as students work through the Lexia English online content and, based on individual student performance, recommends Lexia Lessons® for teacher-facilitated peer-to-peer practice. This real-time view of student performance in specific areas of language proficiency equips educators with actionable insights to support student achievement in a personalized way. At the same time, the embedded Speech Recognition Technology provides students with immediate, guided feedback, helping them to build linguistic confidence in academic English.



“As a teacher of Newcomers, I appreciate the Slide Decks and the comprehensive lesson plans accompanying each level. I was able to incorporate instruction into our daily morning meeting routine.”

– ESL Teacher, MA

“I like that it is getting my students talking and modeling an example of a variety of responses in different academic situations. I have not been using it long, but I like the potential to be able to isolate and pinpoint skills and areas of focus with specific students.”

– ESL Teacher, GA

**Ready to explore what Lexia English can do
for your learners?**

Learn More

References:

1. Holly Hansen-Thomas. 2008. [Sheltered Instruction: Best Practices for ELLs in the Mainstream](#). Kappa Delta Pi Record.
2. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. [Sheltered English Immersion Programs](#). English Learner Education.
3. Echevarria, J., M. Vogt, and D. J. Short. 2008. Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model, 3rd ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
4. [CAL SIOP webpage](#).



Lexia®, a Cambium Learning Group company, is a leader in science of reading-based solutions. For 40 years, the company has focused on pre-K–12 literacy and today provides solutions for every student and educator. With a complete offering of professional learning, curriculum, and embedded assessment, Lexia helps more learners read, write, and speak with confidence. For more information, visit lexialearning.com.



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