

Content-Based Second Language Instruction


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Background

- **Definition:**
An approach to second language teaching in which teaching is organized around the content or information that students will acquire, rather than around a linguistic or other type of syllabus.

"Content"


- refers to the substance or subject matter that we learn or communicate through language rather than the language use to convey it.
- **Examples:** Biology?
203514?
English I, II?



The role of content in other curriculum design

- “Every teacher, an English teacher” (mid 1970s)
 - Language skills should also be taught in the content subjects and not left exclusively for the English teachers to deal with.
- Focus on reading and writing


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The role of content in other curriculum design

- Immersion education
 - A type of foreign language instruction in which the regular school curriculum is taught through the medium of the foreign language.
- It started in Canada in 1970s.

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The role of content in other curriculum design

- Immigrant On-Arrival Programs
 - These learners typically need to deal with different kinds of real-world content as a basis for social survival such as immigration bureaucracies, finding a job, accommodations etc.
- It is based on competency-based approach and lexical specifications built around particular themes.

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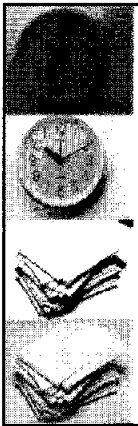
The role of content in other curriculum design

- Programs for Students with limited English Proficiency (SLEP)
- Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) for example:
 - EST English for Science and Technology
 - EOP English for Occupational Purposes
 - EAP English for Academic Purposes

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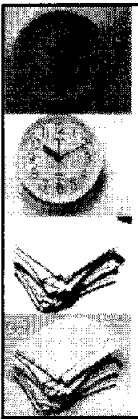
Approach

- Two central principles
 - A. People learn a second language more successfully when they use the language as a means of acquiring information, rather than as an end in itself.
 - B. CBI better reflects learners' needs for learning a second language.

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Theory of language

- Language is text- and discourse - based. (genre)
- Language use draws on integrated skills.
- Language is purposeful.

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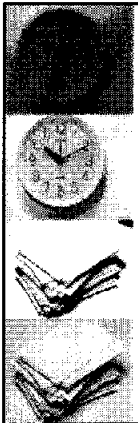
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Theory of learning

- A. People learn a second language more successfully when they use the language as a means of acquiring information, rather than as an end in itself.
- B. Some content areas are more useful as a basis for language learning than others – geography – highly visual, contextual, the use of maps, charts, and realia, and the language tends to be descriptive.

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Theory of learning

- Students learn best when instruction addresses their needs.
- Teaching builds on the students' existing knowledge.


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Design: Objectives/ Syllabus

- Sheltered content instruction
 - Adjunct language instruction
 - Theme-based language instruction
- See the picture


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Design:
Learning and teaching activities

- Language skills improvement
- Vocabulary building
- Discourse organization
- Communicative interaction
- Study skills
- Synthesis of content materials and grammar


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Design: Learner roles

- Learners are expected to become active, autonomous and support each other in collaborative modes of learning.
- Learners may be sources of content and joint participants in the selection of topics and activities.
- However, they need proper training.


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Design: Teacher roles

- Together with being a good language teacher, they must be knowledgeable in the subject matter and able to elicit that knowledge from their students.
- Context and comprehensibility are central of the teaching.
- Good questions are on pp. 214-5

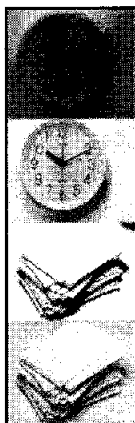
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Design: The role of materials

- Authenticity (not produced for language teaching purposes)
- High comprehensibility
- Materials used for subject matter courses
- Heavy use of instructional media is recommended to enrich the teaching esp. comprehension.


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Procedure

- It is considered an approach rather than a method so there is no specified teaching procedure in the classroom.
- Communicative language teaching activities are suggested.

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Conclusion

- CBI leads to more successful outcomes than alternative language teaching approaches.

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Conclusion

- Critics have noted that most language teachers haven't been trained a content subject. Thus they may feel insufficiently grounded to teach subject matter. Team-teaching proposal is often unwieldy and likely to reduce the efficiency of both.

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Reference

Content-based Second Language Instruction (2006)
By Donna M. Brinton
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