

Research Assessment Exercise 2020

Impact Case Study

University: [The Education University of Hong Kong |

Unit of Assessment (UoA): [31 English language & literature |

Title of case study: [Improving English language learning by teaching content subjects through English |

(1) Summary of the impact

[Our research, based on collaborations with teachers, has developed pedagogical approaches and materials for achieving effective practices in EMI / CBLT among content-trained subject teachers in schools locally and language-trained teachers in Xi'an, China. The key impact is on these teachers' content-language pedagogies so that they are more able to help their students learn both the subject content and English when teaching through English. We have also made an effort to extend our impact to all interested teachers by developing an online resource bank of subject-based content-language integrated learning materials publicly accessible on our Department website and publishing two handbooks for teachers also openly accessible on our University library website. See Section 5 below. |

(2) Underpinning research

[Our research into EMI / CBLT has been mainly subject- and classroom-based. Initial research tracked teachers' implementation of content-language integrated pedagogies in their classrooms after the PDPs. The collected classroom data (e.g., lesson videos, learning materials and interviews with teachers) enabled us to analyse content-language integrated pedagogies that are most workable and effective for the Hong Kong classroom context where the class size is relatively large (35-40) and the classroom tends to be teacher- rather than student-centred (He & Walker, 2009; Kong, 2009; Walker, 2010).

This body of research that was based on a grounded theory and a collaborative approach with content subject teachers led to investigations into a language-across-the-curriculum framework that could meet the needs of different subject disciplines in the local school context (Kong, 2008). It also led to the development of subject-based content-language integrated learning materials (Evans, Hoare, Kong, O'Halloran & Walker, 2001).

Building on the research into EMI in Hong Kong, we have also participated in training teachers for the China-Canada-United States English Immersion (CCUEI) project based in Shaanxi Normal University in Xi'an, China since 2004. While EMI teachers in Hong Kong are content-trained, the immersion / CBLT teachers in Xi'an are language-trained. This scenario has enabled us to investigate and compare the content-language integrated pedagogies used by and effective for content- and language-trained teachers (Kong, 2009). We have conducted classroom-based research into CBLT pedagogies of language-trained teachers and their students' learning in four middle schools participating in the project. This research has led to a better understanding of the progressive levels of student cognition needed in content learning in order that language learning can correspondingly progress (Kong & Hoare, 2011). This understanding is equally relevant to the Hong Kong context.

Our more recent study investigated how to help content-trained teachers (subject teachers) and language-trained teachers (EFL teachers) in Hong Kong schools collaborate within their school context to achieve the dual goals of immersion education (Kong, 2014). The investigation began with ESL researchers (i.e., ourselves) collaborating with content-trained teachers in their classrooms to identify some effective collaboration models. The next stage is to involve the EFL teachers in schools

to identify possible and feasible practices for such collaboration within the practicalities and constraints of the local school context. |

(3) References to the research

1. He, A.E. & Walker, E. (2009). A corpus analysis of pedagogical monologues in a content-based EFL context. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 6(1) 29-56.
2. Kong, S. (2008). Late immersion in Hong Kong: A pedagogical framework for integrating content-language teaching and learning. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 5(3), 107-132.
3. Kong, S. (2009). Content-based instruction: What can we learn from content-trained teachers' and language-trained teachers' pedagogies? *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 66(2), 233-267.
4. Kong, S. (2014). Collaboration between content and language specialists in late immersion. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 70(1), 103-122.
5. Kong, S., & Hoare, P. (2011). Cognitive content engagement in content-based language teaching. *Language Teaching Research*, 15(3), 307-324.
6. Walker, E. (2010). Evaluation of a support intervention for senior secondary school English immersion. *System*, 38(1) 50-62. |

(4) Details of the impact

|Our approach to research, teaching and making social impact in this area has been exemplary of a research-teaching-impact nexus. Our classroom-based research, both in Hong Kong and in Xi'an, has enabled us to make some direct impact on teaching and learning in the EMI / CBLT classrooms. We have supported the teachers to develop some necessary skills for content-language integrated teaching. We have also been able to use the data collected, especially in the form of lesson videos and learning materials, to further enhance our PDPs to convince and support more teachers to develop content-language integrated pedagogies.

Over the years, we have offered different modes of PDPs to maximize the number of in-service teachers we can reach because they often find it difficult to find time amidst their busy teaching and administrative work schedule to attend a PDP. We have offered the following modes of PDP: 16-week block release, 8-week block release, 4-week block release, 1-week PDP, 4-day or 3-day EdB subject-specific tendered programmes, 1-day EdB commissioned programmes, and Saturday seminars and workshops. There are over 1000 content-trained and language-trained teachers in Hong Kong schools who have attended these PDPs. Specifically, for the period of October 2013 to September 2019, more than 170 teachers attended. As there is no pre-service training on content-language integrated teaching in Hong Kong, these programmes offer initial support of teachers' adoption of content-language integrated pedagogies. The programmes focus on building an understanding of the role of language in learning and the rationale for teaching content through a second language, based on which hands-on content-language pedagogical competence will be developed through analysis of language use in content texts and learning materials, design of content-language integrated learning materials, and critique and trying out of classroom strategies through microteaching. The training aims to support immersion teachers' competence in helping their students' content and language learning.

Some of the PDPs (e.g., the 16-week block release, the 4-day subject-specific tendered programmes) include a practicum component where we are able to provide classroom-based support for teachers' implementation of the pedagogical strategies they learnt, thus being able to make a more direct impact on their students' learning. With some teachers who were willing to participate in our school-based support programmes or classroom-based research projects, we worked in one of the following two modes:

- (1) **Mode 1:** supporting teachers within individual subject departments, usually one to two within the school, to make changes to their classroom pedagogies for students' content-language learning through collaborative lesson planning and materials design, lesson observation (often with videoing), post-lesson conferencing for improvement and, sometimes, adjusting the assessment materials; we worked with 10 schools in this mode (see Section 5 below); and
- (2) **Mode 2:** developing a language-across-the curriculum approach within the school by working with a few subject departments and the English department through supporting collaborative work between these departments in the areas of learning materials design, and curriculum planning and reorganization to enable the English Department to better support students' language learning; we worked with 3 schools in this mode (see Section 5).

Through these, we have made an impact on teachers' professional development and, most significantly, on changing the content-trained teachers to be "much more language-aware and thus more able to support our students' learning [of subject content through English and of the English of the content]", in the teachers' own words. We helped them change their classroom strategies and the design of learning and assessment materials.

To extend our impact to teachers who may be unable to join our PDPs, we have built a resource bank of subject-based ready-to-use content-language integrated learning materials which are made publicly accessible online through our Department website (see Section 5). We have also published teachers' handbooks also made publicly accessible on our University Library website (see Section 5) and with two hard copies sent to each EMI school in Hong Kong.

In Xi'an, we have conducted workshops on content-language integrated teaching and learning, with a focus on classroom strategies and materials design, for the language-trained teachers from 8 middle schools who are teaching English using the subject content of science, social studies, society, geography, biology, chemistry and physics. We have also worked with 10 teachers in four schools through collaborative lesson planning and learning materials design, lesson observation and post-lesson conferencing. The work has made an impact not only on the language-trained teachers' pedagogies, but also on their students' learning of English, with the most significant impact on students' improvement in their oral language use which was almost non-existent in the previous lessons relying on grammar teaching. |

(5) Sources to corroborate the impact

Local schools:

1. Christian Alliance Cheng Wing Chee College, Tai Wai (Science Teacher: Ms Ho So Sheung; 26049762, choohss@gmail.com)
2. Immanuel Lutheran College, Tai Po (Head of History: Ms Wan Suk Ling; 26673129)
3. Kau Yan College, Tai Po (Principal: Mr Chow Ka Kui; 26608303, chowkakui@kyc.edu.hk)
4. QESOSA Tong Kwok Wah Secondary School, Tin Shui Wai (Head of Geography: Ms Akki Wong; 26175000, wongakki@gmail.com)
5. Tin Ka Ping Secondary School, Fanling (Head of English: Ms Wendy Lau; 26731778, wendylauhku@yahoo.com.hk)

CCUEI project and schools in Xi'an:

6. School of Education, Shaanxi Normal University (Dean & Head of CCUEI Project: Dr Zhao Wei; zhaowei@snnu.edu.cn)
7. Xi'an Aizhi Middle School (English teacher: Ms Tina Zhou; Zhouxianghong@126.com)
8. Xi'an Xidian Middle School (English teacher: Ms Tan Wei; 515014899@qq.com)

Content-language integrated learning materials:

9. Subject-based e-materials publicly accessible on Department website:
<https://ele.web.ied.edu.hk/web/page.php?msid=64> [previously under the website of our predecessor department – the Department of English, Hong Kong Institute of Education; only moved to the current website upon the restructuring of the Faculty leading to the birth of the Department of English Language Education, The Education University of Hong Kong in early 2017]

Handbooks for schools publicly accessible on University Library website:

10. Evans, M., Hoare, P., Kong, S., O'Halloran, S., & Walker, E.A. (2001). *Effective strategies for English medium classrooms*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Education.
(<http://libdr1.eduhk.hk/dspace/handle/2260/910>);
11. Hoare, P., Kong, S., & Evans, M. (1997). *Coordinating language across the curriculum*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Education.
(<http://www.lib.eduhk.hk/cgi-bin/handle.pl?pub=2260/1021>)

List of schools in Hong Kong we worked with:

Mode 1 schools

1. Carmel Divine Grace Foundation Secondary School (most content subjects)
2. Christian Alliance Cheng Wing Chee College (Science)
3. ECF Saint Too Canaan College (Biology, Business, Economics, Mathematics)
4. HKMA K S Lo College (Science, Mathematics)
5. Immaculate Heart Of Mary (Mathematics, Science)
6. NLSI Peace Evangelical Secondary School (most content subjects)
7. QESOSA Tong Kwok Wah Secondary School (Mathematics)
8. TWGHs Kwok Yat Wai College (most content subjects)
9. TWGHs Lee Ching Dea Memorial College (Science)
10. TWGHs S C Gaw Memorial College (most content subjects)

Mode 2 schools

1. Kau Yan College (Geography, Mathematics, Science, English)
2. Tin Ka Ping Secondary School (Geography, History, Science, English)
3. True Light Girls' College (content subjects, English)

List of schools in Xi'an we worked with:

1. Xi'an Aizhi Middle School
2. Xi'an Jiaotong University Affiliated High School
3. Xian Qujiang No. 1 High School
4. Xi'an Xidian Middle School |