

Research Assessment Exercise 2020

Impact Overview Statement

University: The Education University of Hong Kong |
Unit of Assessment (UoA): 31 English language & literature |
Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA: 12 |

(1) Context

English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in secondary schools in Hong Kong, whereby English (the local second language) is used to teach content subjects, has been an economic, socio-political and educational issue especially after the 1997 sovereignty handover (Hoare & Kong, 2008; Tsui et al., 1999). EMI in Hong Kong is a variant of content-based language teaching (CBLT) or immersion education, the former in schools where only some subjects are taught through English and the latter in schools where half or more of the school subjects are taught through English. Worldwide, research findings on CBLT and immersion education has recognised that using a second language to teach content subjects can be an effective bilingual curriculum when appropriate pedagogies are adopted (Coyle, 2007; Fortune & Tedick, 2008).

CBLT / immersion education aims to support students' second language proficiency development to a high level and to the benefit of their subject content learning. Because of these dual curriculum goals, content-language integrated pedagogies are the crux to success (Swain, 1996). However, CBLT / immersion teachers are generally either content-trained or language-trained (Kong, 2009). Helping teachers develop content-language integrated pedagogies is therefore necessary to the success of a CBLT / immersion curriculum.

(2) Approach to impact

To make an impact on EMI / CBLT in Hong Kong and elsewhere, some of the "language" members of UoA 31 who are and were members of the English Language Education Department of the Education University of Hong Kong (and its predecessor the English Department of the Hong Kong Institute of Education) have collaborated with content subject teachers in EMI schools in research and teaching to develop content-language integrated pedagogical expertise to support students' content-language learning.

The collaboration includes school-based research projects and in-class support for teaching and learning, following on-campus professional development programmes (PDPs) for the teachers. Areas of collaboration include (1) working with a subject department and/or individual content teachers on planning content-language integrated lessons, designing learning materials, classroom observation on teaching, post-observation discussions, and changing approaches to assessment; and (2) in some cases, also involving the English Department of the school to adopt a language across the curriculum approach.

The Department has also collaborated with Shaanxi Normal University on a research project and professional development workshops for language-trained teachers involved in the China-Canada-United States English Immersion (CCUEI) project. School-based support, including lesson planning, learning materials design, lesson observation and post-observation feedback, has also been offered to participating schools in the project.

(3) Strategy and plans

To make an impact on teaching and learning in school classrooms is one of the missions of our

Department as a unit in an education university. To achieve this mission, a collegial and trusting relationship with teachers and schools is essential. We build this relationship with teachers through supportive and collaborative teaching and learning processes on our PDPs to help them develop content-language integrated pedagogical strategies and skills based on their enhanced understanding of the role of language in learning.

We offer school-based support, covering lesson planning, materials development, lesson observation and post-observation discussion, for teachers following the PDPs. This allows us access to schools and classrooms where we can make a direct impact on teaching and learning. It also enables us to consolidate our collegial and trusting relationship with teachers and schools, based on which we can invite them for voluntary collaborations in our school-based research projects to develop more in-depth understanding of and competence in content-language integrated pedagogies that are effective for local students.

We have used some of the data we collected (e.g., lesson videos and learning materials) to enhance our PDPs and school-based support to make further impact. We have also extended the impact by creating an e-platform with subject-based content-language learning materials accessible to all teachers and schools on our Department website. |

(4) Relationship to case studies

[Our approach of collaborating with teachers and schools has been effective in directly impacting EMI in about a dozen schools in Hong Kong and some others in Xi'an. Our impact case study reports on the results of this collaboration. We have been able to make an impact on content-language integrated teaching and learning by building a relationship of trust and collaboration so that we can work with teachers in their classrooms. Through enhancing their teaching, we make an impact on students' learning. The trusting relationship is essential because of the socio-political nature of EMI in Hong Kong. Schools are very cautious about publicly exposing the ways they use English and the amount of English they use in the classroom.

The expertise we develop locally has led to collaborations with Shaanxi Normal University on the CCUEI project in which we have offered PDP workshops for their language-trained teachers, enabling us to make further impact on content-language integrated teaching and learning in more than 10 participating schools in Xi'an.

Coyle, D. (2007). Content and language integrated learning: Towards a connected research agenda for CLIL pedagogies. *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 10(5), 543-62.

Fortune, T. W., & Tedick, D. J. (2008). *Pathways to multilingualism: Emerging perspectives on immersion education*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Hoare, P., & Kong, S. (2008). Late immersion in Hong Kong: Still stressed but making progress? In T. W. Fortune & D. J. Tedick (Eds.), *Pathways to multilingualism: Emerging perspectives on immersion education* (pp. 242-263). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Tsui, A.B.M., Shum, M.S.K., Wong, C.K., Tse, S.K. and Ki, W.W. (1999). Which agenda? Medium of instruction policy in post-1997 Hong Kong. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 12(3), 196-219.

Swain, M. (1996). Integrating language and content in immersion classrooms: Research perspectives. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 52(4), 529-548. |