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## *Content-based Instruction*

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## **Introduction**

The Communicative Approach has two versions: a strong version and a weak version. The weak version emphasizes providing learners with opportunities to practice English for communicative purposes, while the strong version asserts that language is acquired through communication. Content-based instruction, task-based, and participatory approaches are in the strong version category, focusing on teaching through communication rather than predetermined linguistic content. Some language educators may object to the inclusion of these approaches in a methods book, but others believe a 'method' designation is appropriate. Content-based instruction is a 'method with many faces', encompassing various forms and settings. Some question whether these methods are different enough to be treated separately, but they are unified by the assumption that students learn to communicate by communicating.

## **Rationale for Content-based Instruction**

Using content from other disciplines in language courses is not a new idea. For years, specialized language courses have treated content relevant to a particular profession or academic discipline. So, for example, the content of a language course for airline pilots is different from one for computer technicians. This is usually thought of as teaching a language for specific purposes. In an academic setting, it might be called teaching language for academic purposes. Other examples of language programs that use specific content to teach language to adults are programs that teach workplace literacy for adult immigrants and competency-based programs, which serve the same population. In the former, adult learners learn at their workplace to read and write about content that relates to what they need in their work environment, for example, being able to read technical manuals. In competency-based instruction, adults learn language skills by studying vital 'life-coping' or 'survival' skills, such as filling out job applications or using the telephone.

Content-based instruction (CBI) is an instructional approach that integrates language learning with other content, such as academic subjects. This approach has

been influenced by the 'language across the curriculum' movement in England, which integrated reading and writing into all other subject areas. In Canada, second language immersion programs have been in place for years. In the United States, CBI instruction was introduced to help English language learners in public schools. This approach aims to prevent students from not mastering either content or English, and to delay their study of academic content when studying English first. In Europe, content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is another instructional approach that uses an additional language as a medium for teaching non-language content.

However, the teaching of language to younger learners needs to be carefully considered. It is important for children to establish literacy in their native language before learning to read and write another language. Teachers must have clear language and content learning objectives for their lessons, considering both verbs and language objectives. This approach can be implemented in various countries, such as Estonia, Finland, Latvia, the Netherlands, and Spain.

### **Reviewing the Principles**

1- What are the goals of teachers who use CBI?

In a CBI class, teachers aim for students to master both language and content simultaneously, avoiding delays in academic or language studies, based on students' interests and hobbies.

2- What is the role of the teacher? What is the role of the students?

The teacher establishes learning objectives for content and language, creates activities, and scaffolds language for content study, requiring active student engagement to effectively learn both.

3- What are some characteristics of the teaching/learning process?

Teachers aid learners in understanding authentic texts through visuals, realia, repetition, and examples. They design activities that address language and content, highlighting language usage in specific subjects. Students are actively involved in learning, often through interaction. Thinking skills are taught, using graphic organizers for academic tasks.

4- What is the nature of student–teacher interaction? What is the nature of student–student interaction?

The teacher guides student learning by focusing on language usage and scaffolding their development, encouraging collaborative work and active language use to understand content.

5- How are the feelings of the students dealt with?

It is assumed that learning content and language together keeps students interested and motivated. They understand the relevance of what they are studying and that language is a means to an end.

6- How is the language viewed? How is culture viewed?

Language is meaningful and a medium through which content is conveyed. Culture is addressed in teaching to the extent that it is present in the content area being studied.

7- What areas of language are emphasized? What language skills are emphasized?

The content of a text determines the language taught, including vocabulary, grammar, and discourse organization, all of which are integrated in authentic contexts.

8- What is the role of the students' native language?

There is no overt role for the students' native language.

9- How is evaluation accomplished?

Students are evaluated on their knowledge of content and their language ability.

10- How does the teacher respond to student errors?

The teacher corrects student errors by providing correct forms or allowing self-correction, noting them, and recycling content to ensure they learn necessary language for school context.

- **Teacher Preparation**

CBI inspires questions about appropriate teacher preparation. Clearly teachers need to have content and language knowledge and teaching skills. Teacher preparation can also help teachers to understand the rationale for integrated instruction and give them practice designing lessons with language and content objectives, and interesting, stimulating content material

One well-known resource is the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), Sheltered-language instruction, and sometimes an adjunct model is used.

- **Whole Language**

The Whole Language Approach (WL) is a philosophy that emphasizes holistic language learning, rather than focusing on individual linguistic forms. It is often used with second language learners, as it encourages students to understand the overall text before constructing meaningful texts. WL educators provide content-rich curriculums that encourage purposeful use of language and experimentation with reading and writing. They also embrace Vygotsky's ideas about the social nature of learning, focusing on collaboration between teachers and students. Higher order thinking emerges through social interaction, particularly in the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Techniques like the Language Experience Approach and process writing are used to teach WL.

## **Reviewing the Techniques**

- Dictogloss

In a dictogloss (Wajnryb 1990), Students listen to a talk or reading twice, listening for main idea and details. They write down their memories, take notes, and reformulate the text. They work with partners or groups to create a better version, which is then shared for peer-editing. This helps students understand text organization within a content area.

- Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers are visual aids that aid students in organizing and remembering new information. They use words, symbols, and arrows to map knowledge, aiding in understanding text organization and completing academic tasks. They facilitate recall of cognitively demanding content, enabling deeper processing and language practice.

- Language Experience Approach

The Language Experience Approach involves students dictating their life experiences, with the teacher writing them down in the target language. This collaborative, whole text facilitates the link between text and meaning.

- Process Writing

Traditionally, teachers assign writing topics and students write without interruption. This method is product-oriented, with no teacher involvement. Process writing involves brainstorming, writing, and feedback from teachers and peers. Students learn to view their writing as someone else's reading, improving expression and form through revision. This shift shifts the focus from evaluation to revision in teaching writing.

- Dialogue Journals

Students can improve their literacy skills by keeping dialogue journals. These journals are used in class or homework, with a specific focus on expressing feelings or communicating with the teacher. The teacher reads the journal entry and responds, but does not correct its form.