

| <i>Teaching Other Subjects Through English</i> | | | |
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| Author: | Sheelagh Deller and Christine Price (2007) | | |
| Publisher: | Oxford: Oxford University Press | | |
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In the past few years, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) has attracted much attention in Europe and other parts of the world. In contrast to language teaching, where the emphasis is on the language, CLIL focuses on the subject that is taught through the medium of a second language. Although there are many books and articles discussing the theories behind CLIL, there are few books that provide practical ideas for putting CLIL into practice. Deller and Price's book, containing over 60 creative activities for implementing the CLIL approach in the classroom, is a noteworthy addition.

This book is intended for two types of teachers: English language teachers working at a school where they are expected to teach content courses, and content course teachers who need to teach their subject in English. The first group will probably have difficulties dealing with the new subject matter. The second group may need help teaching the language. Both can benefit greatly from the ideas in this resource book.

Each activity in the book gives an example how a subject area can be taught (including geography, chemistry, mathematics, religious studies, biology, environmental studies, and many others). The authors also point out that the activities can easily be adapted to subjects other than the ones mentioned in the example.

| Chapter | Focus | Sample Activity |
|-----------|------------------------|--|
| Chapter 1 | Giving new information | Getting students to put sequential items (such as historical periods) in order |

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| Chapter 2 | Teaching and activating key vocabulary | Using a mind map to generate and organize vocabulary |
| Chapter 3 | Speaking | Having students ask and answer questions about a topic |
| Chapter 4 | Writing | Assigning students to write an advertisement about an article |
| Chapter 5 | Consolidation and revision | Asking students to play bingo as a way of reviewing definitions |
| Chapter 6 | Using supplementary resources | Letting students search for information on the Internet |
| Chapter 7 | Project work | A project about the environment and community |

One thing I liked about this book is that the activities are extremely student centered. I think most students envision subject area courses being dominated by a teacher lecturing the entire class period. In contrast, the activities presented here emphasize student input and interaction. There are a lot of activities where students are moving around the classroom, asking each other questions, and writing things on the blackboard. This approach allows students to gain fluency in English while they are learning the subject. For example, in the activity "Ask me, tell me" (from Chapter 3), students choose two topics from the subject you are teaching: one they feel confident about and one they're not so confident about. Students then wander about the classroom sharing information on the first topic and gathering information on the second one. Then the teacher provides a list of references so that students can check their information. I'm sure this activity will appeal to kinesthetic learners.

The chapter I enjoyed the most is Chapter 5, "Consolidation and Revision". I am always looking for new ways to help my students review language and content in hopes it will help them retain what they learned in previous lessons. This chapter contains fourteen ideas for review. There's an appealing mix of activities here, including dictation, bingo, jumbled sentences, and question practice. I'm looking forward to using some of these activities next semester with my university students. I'll share with you here one example, "Call my bluff". Students work in groups of five, writing statements about a topic. Three statements should be true, and two false. Then each group takes a turn reading out its list of statements. If the other students believe a statement is true, they write it down. If they believe it's false, they don't. Then the group reveals each statement's truth or falsity. I think this is a clever way to get students to create their own material for review.

In addition to the activities, there is other support for the CLIL teacher. The book has a well-written introduction to CLIL for teachers new to this approach, as well as some tips on modifying activities to suit a particular group of students. One such tip is to simplify a text you want students to read by making sentences simpler, replacing difficult vocabulary, and taking out anything that seems redundant. The book's appendix has several pages of suggested language that can be used by teachers and students using this approach.

Teacher language:

- Let's just recap what we did last lesson.
- Find a new partner to work with.
- Keep an eye on the time.

Student language:

- Can you tell me something about. . . ?
- The end result is. . .
- If we do this, then . . . will happen.

There's also a list of books for teachers who want to learn more about CLIL.

I found this book very appealing, its range of activities quite impressive. While the book is written for teachers using the CLIL approach, I think many of the activities could be used in a non-CLIL language teaching setting as well.

References

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