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Between the Keys



A publication of the JALT Materials Writers Special Interest Group

The Materials Writers SIG was established for the purpose of helping members to turn fresh teaching ideas into useful classroom materials. We try to be a mutual assistance network, offering information regarding copyright law, sharing practical advice on publishing practices, including self-publication, and suggesting ways to create better language learning materials for general consumption or for individual classroom use.

WWW.MATERIALSWRITERS.ORG



people in the song? Why did they use to laugh and cry? Does the singer laugh much now? Why or why or why not? Do you think the singer cries much now? Why or why not?

The first five lines (unrevised) of the song are below:

We used to laugh, we used to cry
We used to bow our heads then, wonder why
And now you're gone, I guess I'll carry on
And make the best of what you've left to me
Left to me, left to me

I followed the cloze activity with an exercise that is similar to a jazz chant. The chanting activity allowed students to communicate about themselves.

To do this, I showed students a short Powerpoint of photographs of myself at different points of my life: when I was a child, a teenager, a long-haired college student, and so on. I talked briefly about each photograph, saying sentences like "I used to steal candy, but I don't now," or "I used to be shy around girls, but I am not shy anymore," or "My hair used to reach below my shoulders, but it is short now." I repeated these sentences in the rhythm of a jazz chant. And I told students that they would soon similarly talk about themselves.

Students were then required to write at least five sentences that express how they have changed at various times in their lives. In small groups, they took turns chanting their sentences. Following that, students discussed how their bodies, habits, preferences, etc. have changed.

Due to a lack of time and space, this BTK column explained just six ways of adapting songs for English education. However, there are many more. If you have ideas to share, please share them with other teachers. Exchanging ideas is one of the main goals of the Materials Writers Special Interest Group.

To learn more about using music for teaching global issues related EFL course, you should attend Louise Haynes' keynote speech at the 2018 JALT conference. Her talk is titled "Student Choice and Songs of Social Significance."

References

- Goodmacher, G. (2004). Using multi-dimensional activities to improve textbooks. In M. Swanson, & K. Hill (Eds.) *On JALT2003: Keeping Current in Language Education*, pp. 672-678. Tokyo: JALT.
- Sullivan, S. L. (2014). The world through music: Using world music in a comparative culture course, *Global Issues in Language Education Newsletter*, 91, p. 14-16.

Biographical Information

Greg Goodmacher is the author of [Stimulating Conversations Today](#), [This is Culture](#), [Cultural Issues ⇔ Environmental Issues](#), [Multicultural Perspectives](#), and [Nature and the Environment](#). His research interests include materials design, global issues content-based language instruction, and tourism.

Writer's Point

CLIL and the use of Content as a Context for Language Teaching

Brian Cullen (Nagoya Institute of Technology)

Most teachers and materials writers are probably already aware of the CLIL movement (Content and Language Integrated Learning). Years ago, we used to use the name Content-Based Instruction (CBI) for a similar approach that blends content and language learning. The term CBI seems to be more common in the United States whereas CLIL is more of a European term. However, whatever we call it, the use of content to teach language is clearly back in vogue, and for material writers that opens up many possibilities and challenges.

What is CLIL and why is it important?

The MacMillan CLIL website (<http://www.onestopenglish.com/clil/>) offers the following definition: "CLIL stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning and refers to teaching subjects such as science, history and geography to students through a foreign language." Ardiansyah (2015) discusses how CLIL was partially shaped by the need for immersion education programs and schools to integrate students whose native language was not English.

While some educators believe that content makes language learning more complicated, advocates of CLIL counter that it makes language learning more authentic and engaging. They suggest that people learn a second or foreign language more successfully when they use the language as a means of understanding content, rather than as an end in itself. CLIL reflects learners' needs for learning a second language, and well-designed content can provide the basis for activating both the cognitive and the interactional processes that are the starting point for second language learning. Proponents of CLIL will probably agree with the words of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835): 'We cannot teach a language; we can only create the conditions under which it will be learned' (cited in Dakin, 1973, p. 11).

David Marsh, a leading expert in CLIL, argues that it leads to "positive attitude changes in learners towards learning a language, and towards themselves as language learners." He suggests that it is beneficial because of "the ways in which CLIL connects them to their own 'worlds' using multi-mode technology; and the impact on the brain when language learning becomes 'acquisitional', and not just 'intentional'." Another important driving force for the rising popularity of CLIL is globalization and the fact that the modern international workforce is likely to process their work challenges and carry out their tasks through English. Marsh notes that CLIL "is no longer an idea, a fashion, it is a reality. The socio-economic drivers are very strong."

A CLIL-focused material writer

Recently, I had the opportunity to interview the materials writer, Keith Kelly, and he provides us with a good example of how teachers can effectively bring content into their teaching and materials. Keith started off his language teaching career with French and German before moving into ESL teaching.

Keith's interest in using content as a context for teaching language began with his involvement in the Science Across the World programme (www.scienceacross.org). This programme began when a group of scientists reached the decision that better 'communication' is needed in the field of science and began a project with a mission described as: "Science Across the World brings an international dimension to science education in schools and colleges. Students gain a global perspective on scientific issues related to their personal lives, their impacts on the environment and the varying cultural impacts of science on people in different countries." Keith was asked to help these scientists to develop language within their schools' exchange programme of science investigations. At the same time, he was teaching English at a Bulgarian grammar school, and also managing a project for the British Council (The English Across the Curriculum Project) which had him supporting the work of content teachers teaching their subjects through foreign languages, mainly English. All of these factors made him realize the importance of content and led him to CLIL.

Soon, he found himself co-teaching with geographers, historians, and scientists. Using only a small budget, he had to set up workshops for materials writing, and identify resources for their work and others. They began a series of summer school writing workshops for teachers in Bulgaria which lasted 4 years and produced two publications called Factworld (links are included in the Resources section at the end of this article). Factworld and the other links are well worth checking out as they are written in a practical and engaging style and provide good examples of CLIL in action. They are also designed with consideration for the practical realities and difficulties of real-world teaching, including, for example, an "international hot chocolate recipe for teachers" and the tequila recipe/activity for tired teachers given below:

Ingredients: 1 lemon slice, salt, 1 shot Tequila

TASK: Arrange the actions in logical order:

- Sit back and enjoy.
- Lick salt, down tequila & bite the lemon all in quick succession.
- Sprinkle salt onto back of hand.
- Lick back of hand.

As well as linking content to language learning, the activities in these resources also aim to link classrooms with other classrooms around the world. This international linking of groups of students is a good example of bringing authentic communication into and beyond the classroom and has been at the heart of much of the work Keith has done.

He has written CLIL materials for several publishers, most significantly with Macmillan on their "Your CLIL" section of onestopenglish.com. These include a collection of reference phrase lists of academic language for geography, biology, chemistry and physics, and are accompanied by lesson plans and resources aimed at activating this language. With Macmillan, he has also published two self-study resources in the Vocabulary Practice Series for Science and Geography. He also manages a CLIL version of <http://www.tigtagworld.com/>

and produced <http://www.tigtagworld.com/clil>, which won the 2017 ELTons award for innovation in teacher resources.

What is challenging about writing CLIL materials?

As a language specialist, Keith admits that he is often out of his depth with the many subject areas that he deals with. This is a challenge, but not one which is impossible to overcome. He sees a positive side in this too, saying that “being humble about not knowing something creates a level playing field with students and once they know you aren't an 'expert', the teaching and learning can actually be more meaningful as you are discovering along with the students.” It has also given him the opportunity to meet and work with some amazing people, such as Dr. Lida Schoen, a chemistry educator from Holland with whom he created Young Ambassadors for Chemistry (<https://www.factworld.info/en/YACs-Young-Ambassadors-of-Chemistry>) and took a roadshow of workshops around the world. These workshops raised awareness of chemistry in people’s lives and got kids building models of DNA from sweets and extracting DNA from kiwi fruit. These workshops were carried out in public places to get people excited about science and much more. For Keith, language teaching has become all about finding other things to do in that language.

Keith is clearly passionate about CLIL, so five years ago when he opened his own school (Anglia School www.anglia-school.info) in his adopted hometown of Plovdiv, Bulgaria, he knew it had to be a CLIL school. On the school’s website and Facebook page, the photographs make it immediately evident that the children, teens, and adults at the school are all learning English by doing something else.

Recent project

In a recent materials writing project, Keith was approached by the producers of the award winning documentary 'Trashed' narrated by Jeremy Irons. Initially they wanted to write a book of materials for teachers, but he suggested that it would be more beneficial to create a platform for schools to study using the film to have students communicate with each other by sharing their investigations into trash and waste.

Trashed World (www.trashedworld.com) was the product of 18 months of work and has grown rapidly to the point that there are now almost 400 schools registered all over the world. The project gets young people to watch meaningful chunks of the movie, do classroom-based activities such as survey their group about 'a week of waste', find partners, and share their results. In doing so, they see how things are done, better or worse, in other places.

Conclusion

CLIL is rising in popularity worldwide because of globalization and the need for more authentic communication, and also because the use of content in language learning can create better student engagement. This resurgent interest in linking content to language learning provides both new challenges and new opportunities for material writers. In this era of globalization, it is certainly a concept that seems to have finally found its time to blossom. Keith finished our interview by saying: “Frankly, learning language for language sake is an outdated concept. Today, young people learn best because of 'what' they are doing, not the medium through which they are learning it. Finding ways to put foreign language learning in a meaningful context is the key. Young people in many places now do

not see English as a subject, but as a life skill, and they need to be doing stuff with this language rather than learning about it.”

References

- Ardiansyah. (2015). Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Retrieved from <https://www.slideshare.net/arditaher/cbi-and-clil>
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- Marsh, D. (2009). CLIL: An interview with Professor David Marsh. *IH Journal of Education and Development*, Issue 26: Spring 2009. Retrieved from: <http://ihjournal.com/content-and-language-integrated-learning>.

Resources

Factworld Publications

<https://www.factworld.info/cache/files/161.pdf>

<https://www.factworld.info/cache/files/162.pdf>

MacMillan Self-Resource Materials

<https://www.factworld.info/cache/files/159.pdf>

<https://www.factworld.info/cache/files/160.pdf>

More of Keith’s resources and publications can be found at:

<https://www.factworld.info/en/Publications>

Biographical Information

Dr. Brian Cullen is an associate professor at Nagoya Institute of Technology. He is written or edited over 30 textbooks. His current research interests include active learning and positive psychology.