

How to Improve Quality in Education Using EAP Approach of - COBI

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Introduction:

Most engineering students today lack content in their subjects (technical & non-technical) and are unable to perform in the job place because of their haziness. Reports say that a majority of the engineering graduates in our nation find themselves extremely difficult to seek employment opportunities. These Engineering graduates lack content along with required skills for right employment. To improve the content and confidence, there exists a need for integrating quality into the technical education system especially in the English language laboratory because every aspect of employment process includes good communication skills. Laboratory is the only platform where a student can learn and improve many things within the academic schedule.

The statistics of the AICTE reveals the facts that, with over 3,000 colleges in the nation churning out 14 lakh graduates annually, there tends to occur a dip in quality that can be overcome only with the parallel increase of facilities amongst other factors. To bring about well-rounded graduates with the right technical and language competence, colleges must adopt student-centered method of learning which should aim at developing learner autonomy and independence.

Content based instruction is an effective method of combining language and content learning together. Since most of the students are not exposed to good word power and language efficiency, it becomes difficult (the subjects appear like herculean task) for the students, to comprehend any given text. Language learning will be more motivating when students focus on something other than the language, such as, ideas, issues and opinions, provided the language teacher is good and knowledgeable in the subject matter and should be able to draw out that knowledge from the students. As Crashen, Swain & Cummins opine that “Language is acquired incidentally through extensive exposure to second language material” this builds in, better college attitudes and higher self esteem. One such activity is experimented in one of the AECS Labs which proved successful and later shaped into a Debating club. The full length description of the paper focuses the relevance of the objectives mentioned in the paper.

Objectives:

In CBI the language is second to learning the content and the objective relates to the content, not to the language.

- To prove that If content is understood by the students, Language will be learnt by them by itself.
- To improve vocabulary and Discourse organization
- To improve communicative interaction and study skills.
- To synthesize all the technical subjects content materials and grammar in it.
- To improve quality in engineering education.

It is shocking to read in the newspaper columns that the quality of Engineering education in twin Telugu states is less than 25% and lakhs of Engineers graduate every year without mastering employability skills and so remain unemployed? Engineering students lack content and quality. Majority of engineering students do their projects either by purchasing them or by copy paste but very few on a research note. Another biggest hurdle for students’ un-employability is Lack of effective conversational skills. Students, without language skills, will always be looked down (especially the second language learners). Whose fault is it?

The basic fault lies with students’ understanding of the content of the subject. Without mastering the language, students cannot understand the content.

How to improve the present status of engineering education? As the industry demands performance than percentage, content and quality, some practical method need to be devised. One such system is Content based instruction. Number of approaches were tried to develop students' understanding of the content and it is found after a great research especially for the second language learners. Content Based instruction results in multiple benefits in integrating content and language and making the student a better learner and performer. The multiple benefits this approach has resulted in multifarious aspects in improving the understanding of the content of the subject given to perform better and improve their quality.

Background research

As per Burkart & Shepparf, 1994, CAL center for applied linguistics has been training K-12 teachers language minority students in content area instruction and has achieved good results.

CAL's Center for Applied Linguistics has been trying to improve the learning efforts and focused on-

- (a) How to integrate the teaching of content and language (Crandall, 1993; Short, 1991, 1994),
 - (b) how the language used in particular academic content areas may create comprehension problems-not due to the content but to the language itself, and
 - (c) how to assess students' knowledge of language and subject matter (Short, 1993a).
- There are eight approaches for CBI to follow: They are

Content based instruction and approaches

CBI is an effective method of combining language and content learning. It is, teaching issues organized around the content or information that students would acquire, and not around the linguistic or other type of syllabus. CBI is built on Communicative language Teaching. Thus it leads to more effective language learning and it also focuses on the learner's needs for learning a second language. In this field of study, number of practical approaches have been suggested and were put to practice and proved that CBI is the best suitable method to improve the quality of education. Researchers suggested 8 (eight) well-known set of approaches to follow CBI. Out of the eight approaches, namely –

Approach 1 CAL Center for Applied Linguistics by (Crandall, 1993; Short, 1991, 1994),

Approach 2 EAP English for Academic Purposes by North American university

Approach 3 *university-level foreign language CBI* (Krueger & Ryan, 1993b; Straight, 1994; Wesche

Approach 4 the use of *discoursal knowledge structures* to convey content information. By Mohan (1986,1990; Tang,1992, see also Chapter 5 in this volume).

Approach 5 a *genre-based approach to K-12 literacy instruction with a content emphasis* (Christie, 1991, 1992; Collerson, 1988; Martin, 1993).

Approach 6 A sixth approach is that of language *immersion programs* in K- 12 contexts in North American university.

Approach 7 A seventh approach is the *Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach*, or CALLA (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990)

Approach 8 An eighth approach combining language and content instruction is a version of *whole language instruction* explored by Enright and McCloskey (1988) and others in elementary school context.

Two approaches were found relevant with the classroom activity. The approach was from discussions of *English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instruction* at North American universities. This work was best represented by studies reported in Adamson (1993), Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989), Snow (1993), and Snow, Met, and Genesee (1989). They suggested that “content-based EAP instruction may follow one of three prototype models: sheltered instruction, adjunct instruction, and theme-based instruction”. In the two former models of instruction (sheltered and adjunct), content is relatively predetermined; in the latter case (theme-based), content is selected by the language teacher (and/or students). Extensions of this framework –from strictly EAP contexts to other instructional contexts-have also been explored (Snow, 1991a; Wesche, 1993).

Basing on one of the objectives of the paper as the CBI is used to improve the learning of the students, focusing more on the content through vocabulary, language learning is more motivating when students focus on something other than the language such as ideas, issues and opinions. One such activity was conducted in Advanced Communication skills lab for third year Mechanical engineering students(Boys) focusing on improving students’ discussion skills while learning needed vocabulary for an effective participation in the G.D. The topic was selected from the Competition Success Review MBA 2015 magazine “Should Rapists be Hanged, Castrated or Awarded life imprisonment”.

Methodology

Group Discussion is an activity which requires lot of content knowledge on the given topic to discuss at length. Otherwise it would not be a successful discussion. Students were given material on the given topic from newspaper clippings and the essay on the given topic, from competition success Review MBA Dec-2015. They were made to use dictionary skills in order to know the meanings of certain words used in the essay and news paper clippings. The facts of the case were also given to the students. In a G.D like this openness, candor and friendly approach send positive signals about the candidates’ leadership qualities. Also the selection of words while stressing certain points should be perfect.

Factfile: The moderator read out the fact file of the recent atrocities and assaults on women. Madras High court gave the verdict that Castration of offenders should be used as deterrent. Highlighted by media on Oct 26, 2015.

Justice Mr. k Kirubakaran gave the judgment, rejecting the plea of the accused, a foreigner facing paedophilia charges.

Judgment is inspired by the recent brutal gang- rape of children in Delhi.

Justice points out the negligible rate of conviction in sex offences against children

Rate of conviction is mere 2 percent between 2006 & 2014

During the same period crimes against children increased by 400 percent.

While giving the judgment, the judge says, “This court is sure that additional punishment of castration of child rapists would fetch magical results in preventing and containing child abuses”.

Complaint was filed under IPC and juvenile Act

The crime was committed in 2011.

This topic was selected for discussion because, 1. It was the burning topic of the day. 2. Expected best suitable alternatives as punishment for such crime holders. 3. As a case study to bring out practical

solution and educate the students. Material on the given topic was distributed to the students. They were made to comprehend the essay. As they started reading the essay they were struck at certain difficult words (which they came across for the first time), where they could contextually understand but not literally, so they were made to refer to the dictionary and follow the meaning of the difficult words and proceed with the essay. They learnt simultaneously the content, seriousness of the topic and learnt vocabulary suitable to the context. This proved the well known approach followed at North American universities practiced, discussions of English for Academic purposes- This work is best represented by studies reported in Adamson (1993), Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989), Snow (1993), and Snow, Met, and Genesee (1989). They suggest that content-based EAP instruction may follow one of three prototype models: sheltered instruction, adjunct instruction, and theme-based instruction. In the two former models of instruction (sheltered and adjunct), content is relatively predetermined; hence the content is predetermined in this case..

Providing suitable material or content before actively participating in the G.D and training them in improving their standards is one of the methods of CBI. Students after learning needed vocabulary for the topic and using good and specific (appropriate) vocabulary with content comprehended, students could combine content and language and it helped them develop academic vocabulary and their higher order thinking skills. This approves another approach of CBI . This approach provides a pedagogical framework for combining content and language instruction, as well as for helping students develop higher order thinking skills. In this approach to K-12 language and content instruction, learning centres around the use of *discourse knowledge structures* try to convey content information. The key to the approach is the assertion that all content information is organized according to six basic types of knowledge structures: description, sequence, choice, classification, principles, and evaluation. The first three types of knowledge structures (description, sequence, and choice) represent more specific ways to organize information; the latter three (classification, principles, and evaluation) represent more general patterns for Organizing knowledge, allowing for generalization and theorizing.

It is assumed that the identification of underlying knowledge structures in one topic area, signalled in various ways through the language used, will transfer to other content areas, thereby providing students with skills for future classroom settings. They gained knowledge and displayed adequate mental strength and gained courage to differ from other participants. They became more involved in the discussion with confidence, as they understood the seriousness of it. They expressed their views in the following way –In India we need to enforce constitutional guarantee of equality for the other gender at home, at the workplace and on the streets. They shared that we should begin the process of destigmatisation and demystification of rape by dissociating it from words like “honor, “violation” defilement, disgrace etc. Rape should be treated as murder and the perpetrators of such crimes can be hanged, castrated or punished anyway, change of mindset is as necessary as punishment.

The other member of the group expressed that there should be an emphasis on moral education from class 1 to PG. Regular seminars at public places can also make the job simple. Elderly people should be allotted the job of educating young boys about the importance of moral uplift.

Students learned new words and used them confidently improving their vocabulary. Words like, **Castration** (also known as gonadectomy) is any action, surgical, chemical, or otherwise, by which an individual loses use of the testicles

offenders = a person who commits an illegal act.

Deterrents = a thing that discourages or is intended to discourage someone from doing something.

Paedophilia= psychiatric disorder in which an adult or older adolescent experiences a primary or exclusive attraction to prepubescent children

Conviction = a firmly held belief or opinion.

Juvenile = young

Destigmatisation = to accuse or condemn

Demystification = as the removal of mystery, suspense or confusion surrounding a subject

Dissociating = do not join hands

defilement etc.= to make foul, dirty, or unclean; pollute'

were learnt by the students and improved their vocabulary. As it is expected in the Classroom, real and meaningful communication where information is exchanged. This was possible with the students and exchanged meaningful and relevant information which otherwise would be a guess or without proper preparation participate in the G.D. They could understand the content so they participated well. The students learnt two things through this activity 1. The content(the meaning) and 2. The language(solution). This was proved through analysis of the questionnaire generated and filled to analyze the results.

Five open ended questions were asked

Q1. How useful was the material given before participating in a G.D.?

Q2. What percentage of content could you understand by reading the material **without** using the dictionary

Q3. What percentage of **Content** could you understand by reading the material using the **dictionary**?

Q4. What are the skills learnt through this activity?

Q5. Can this method be applicable for all the difficult subjects?

Q6. Whether this method was useful to learn 1. content, 2. language, 3. Content +language
4. none.

Q1. How useful was the material given before participating in a G.D.?

Opinions	Number of students
Very useful	39
useful	19
Did not understand	2
Not useful	0
Total	60 students

Q2. What percentage of content could you understand by reading the material **without** using the dictionary?

Opinions	Content (%)
25 students	30%
15 students	55%
12 students	20%
08 students	High standard
60 students	% of understanding

Q3. What percentage of content could you understand by reading the material using the **dictionary**?

Opinions	Content (%)
35 students	80%
15 students	50%
10 students	30%
60 students	% of understanding

Q4.. What are the skills learnt through this activity?

Skills improved	(%)
confidence levels	80%
Reading skills	45%
Language skills	50%
Speaking skills	70%
60 students	% of improvement

Q5. Can this method be applicable for all the difficult subjects?

opinion	(%)
yes	80%
Can try	20%
No	0%
60 students	% of improvement

Q6. Whether this method was useful to learn 1. content, 2. language, 3. Content +language 4. Not useful

Opinion	Number of students
Content	12
Language	08
Content + language	40
None	Nil

Conclusion:

With the above analysis it has become evident that the students should practice knowing the content through language, where both are important and can easily understand the difficult subjects even. However they are expected to practice well before they appear for the G.D to use accurate vocabulary.

In order to generate interest in the subjects which appear to be ‘dry’ for students’ understanding, this method may be adopted to understand the content and once the theme is identified by the student, they can turn any difficult subject easy. CBI makes things practical that learners learn best when they are given language in a meaningful, contextualized form with the primary focus on acquiring information. This leads to achieve desired goals. Hence comprehensibility and authenticity are seen played a vital role in CBI. Students in the above case have learnt the language as a byproduct of learning.

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