

TEACHING ENGLISH IN NON-SPECIALIST SUBJECTS

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Annotation: This article explores the strategies and benefits of teaching English in non-specialist subjects, such as mathematics, science, and history. Integrating language instruction into these subjects helps students enhance their English proficiency while mastering content knowledge. The article highlights methods for embedding language learning in non-language courses, including content-based instruction (CBI), task-based learning (TBL), and vocabulary-building activities. Practical examples are provided to assist educators in successfully incorporating English teaching into non-specialist subjects, fostering both language development and subject comprehension.

Key words: Content-based instruction, non-specialist subjects, English language teaching, integration, subject-specific vocabulary, task-based learning, interdisciplinary learning, communication skills, content knowledge.

Teaching English through non-specialist subjects is an innovative and practical way to help students develop language proficiency while engaging with important academic content. This approach allows students to use English in authentic, meaningful contexts, bridging the gap between language learning and subject mastery. By integrating language instruction with subjects like math, science, and history, educators can create a dynamic learning environment that supports both linguistic and cognitive development.

Why Integrate English with Non-Specialist Subjects?

One of the main reasons for integrating English with non-specialist subjects is that it provides students with the opportunity to learn and practice language skills in a natural setting. Rather than treating language as a separate subject, students can apply their

English knowledge while engaging in content-specific tasks. This not only reinforces language skills but also deepens their understanding of the subject matter.

Another advantage is that students are often more motivated to learn English when they see its relevance to other areas of their academic life. For example, understanding mathematical terminology or scientific processes in English can enhance their overall comprehension and improve their ability to communicate across disciplines.

Key Strategies for Integrating English in Non-Specialist Subjects

1. Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

Content-Based Instruction (CBI) involves teaching English through the content of non-language subjects. In this approach, language learning is embedded within the subject matter, and students develop their language skills as they engage with academic content.

For instance, in a science lesson on ecosystems, students can learn specific terminology such as "photosynthesis," "biodiversity," and "habitat" while also practicing grammar structures related to cause and effect. The key is to design lessons that allow students to acquire both language and content knowledge simultaneously.

2. Task-Based Learning (TBL)

Task-Based Learning (TBL) focuses on using language as a tool for completing real-life tasks related to a non-specialist subject. This approach encourages students to communicate in English while working on specific tasks, such as solving math problems, conducting experiments, or analyzing historical documents.

For example, in a history lesson, students could work together to research a historical event, write a report in English, and present their findings to the class. This method helps students practice their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in a context that is both engaging and relevant to the subject matter.

3. Vocabulary-Building Activities

A key aspect of teaching English in non-specialist subjects is helping students develop subject-specific vocabulary. Educators can introduce new terms through activities such as word matching, gap-fill exercises, and concept mapping. These activities make it easier for students to retain the vocabulary they need to succeed in both

language and content areas. For example, in a math class, students could match English terms like "addition," "subtraction," and "equation" with their definitions or solve word problems that require the use of these terms. By focusing on both vocabulary and subject content, teachers can help students become more confident in using English in academic contexts.

4. Reading and Analyzing Texts

Reading comprehension is another essential component of integrating English with non-specialist subjects. Teachers can select texts related to the subject matter and ask students to analyze and discuss them in English. This not only improves reading skills but also encourages critical thinking and language use in meaningful ways. For example, in a geography class, students could read an article about climate change, answer comprehension questions, and engage in group discussions about possible solutions to environmental issues. This type of activity promotes the use of English while fostering subject-specific knowledge.

5. Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is an ideal approach for integrating English with non-specialist subjects. In PBL, students work on long-term projects that require them to use English to research, collaborate, and present their findings. This method allows for in-depth exploration of both language and subject matter. For instance, in a project on renewable energy, students could research different energy sources, create presentations, and explain their findings in English. PBL encourages independent learning and helps students see the practical applications of their language skills.

Challenges and Solutions

Teaching English in non-specialist subjects does come with challenges, such as ensuring that students of different language proficiency levels can keep up with both the language and content demands. To address this, teachers can differentiate instruction by providing scaffolding, such as visual aids, simplified texts, and additional language support. Collaboration between language and subject teachers can also enhance the learning experience. By working together, they can create lessons that address both language and content objectives, making the learning process more cohesive and

effective. Teaching English through non-specialist subjects is a powerful approach that fosters both language proficiency and content understanding. By using strategies such as content-based instruction, task-based learning, and vocabulary-building activities, educators can create lessons that engage students in meaningful language use while enhancing their subject knowledge. As students learn to communicate and think critically in English across a range of subjects, they gain the skills necessary for academic success and real-world applications. This interdisciplinary approach not only improves language skills but also prepares students for the demands of the globalized world.

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