

**CALLA LESSON PLAN MODEL: TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT
OF ACADEMIC LANGUAGE SKILLS AND LEARNING STRATEGIES
OF ESL AND BILINGUAL STUDENTS IN THE ELEMENTARY
AND SECONDARY LEVEL**

By Anita U. Illenberger, Ed.D

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study is to describe Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) as an instructional system designed to develop academic language skills in English of students in the elementary and secondary level. It is also the aim of the study to develop content-based lesson plans using CALLA lesson planning technique.

The study is divided into two parts. Part I consists of the rationale and objectives of the study of CALLA, review of studies conducted on language and cognition, learning strategies and academic performance, analysis of academic difficulties of English as Second Language (ESL) and Bilingual learners in language and content-based classes, and comprehensive discussion of the components of CALLA. Part II is an overview of the CALLA lesson planning strategy and a compilation of the content based lesson plans covering different subject areas such as; Science, Mathematics, Language Arts, Social Studies, Values Education, Literature, Grammar, Reading and Writing. The study highlighted research findings on the aspects of language as a complex cognitive skill and its implication to language instruction. Analysis of these findings revealed that ESL and Bilingual students in mainstream classes encountered many difficulties because of differences between the type of language used for ordinary social conversation and the type of language used for academic purposes and the fact that these language skills take considerably longer to develop than social language skills.

INTRODUCTION

Many English as Second Language (ESL) teachers have realized that General English Proficiency is not all that students need in order to succeed in mainstream courses. Students need the academic language which demands the ability to understand and generate the complex syntax of Standard English in formal and written expression (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994).

The thesis upon which this study is built runs parallel with Cummins' (1981) suggestions that cognitive academic language proficiency is necessary in order for students to use language for higher level thinking skills, rather than use language exclusively for interpersonal communication or conversation. On this basis, this research paper addresses the need to study a pedagogical approach which is grounded on research and provides guidance for academic language instruction.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to make a descriptive study of the Cognitive Academic Language Approach (CALLA). Specifically, the study aims to:

1. identify and discuss the different academic difficulties encountered by ESL/bilingual students;
2. analyze the components of CALLA and its theoretical bases; and
3. develop lesson plan models that can be utilized to improve the academic competence of the students.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

As a qualitative study, this paper utilizes research studies made on CALLA and gives critical analysis of data on the theoretical development in cognitive learning. The lesson plan models are designed using CALLA lesson planning techniques.

The theoretical framework of the study is focused on language learning as a cognitive skill. CALLA is based on a theory that implies language as a complex cognitive skill, similar in many respects to other complex cognitive skills such as reading for comprehension, writing, and problem solving in mathematics. The theory indicates that learning a language has more in common with learning any other complex cognitive skill than it does with learning fact, isolated pieces of information, or even meaningful texts. It is considered, therefore, that many of the techniques that classroom teachers use in teaching other complex skills will apply directly to teaching the ESL/Bilingual learners. The basic theories that the study explored are on the interaction between language and cognition, the direct parallelism between learning strategies and cognition process, and the cognitive approach to learning that helps develop students' learning strategies and skills to enhance academic performance.

Paradigm of CALLA Variables

CALLA Lesson Plan

Communicative
Competence
and
Academic
Achievement

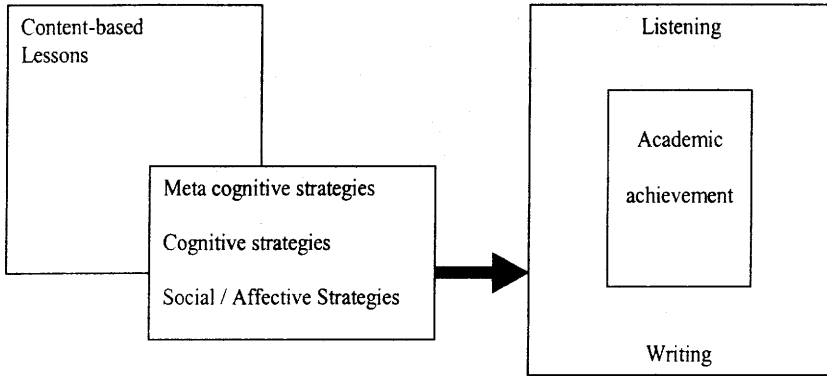


Figure 1. The integration of the content-based lessons and learning strategies

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Language as Cognitive Skill and Its Implications to Language Instruction

There are four aspects of complex cognitive skills, namely: cognitive skills that consist of procedures, performance that takes several years, feedback that is necessary for language learning, and transfer of complex skill which is difficult. Hence, this implies that language instruction should consider the use of authentic content-related materials, peer evaluation, and cooperative learning for immediate feedback, and inclusion of four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in every content area.

Academic Difficulties of ESL/Bilingual Students in Language and Content-Based Classes

ESL/Bilingual students' common problems are in language acquisition process. There are two language acquisition processes which involve mental activities to be able to communicate. Transfer and generalization are directly related to the general cognitive mechanisms that individuals use in any type of learning. Transfer is most noticeable when learners use rules from their first language that are not applicable to the second. Generalization is the process observed when young children begin to acquire concepts and put labels to them and transfer them to learn the second language. In second language acquisition, the term overgeneralization is more frequently used and refers to situations in which the learner incorrectly generalizes a rule to cases when it does not apply. In this case, difficulty occurs when first language affects a second.

Another problem that comes in the way of second language learning is interference. The idea that early learning, such as learning a native language, interferes with latter learning, such as a second language, is a pro-active interference. This interference is a confusion resulting from the same or similar schema or script used in a different occasion. Many terms in a second language cannot be translated directly into first language, and attempts to form cognates interfere with understanding rather than facilitate comprehension.

CALLA as an Instructional System

Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach aims to enrich the language the students may use for academic communication while furthering their ability to comprehend the language and discourse of different subject areas. It is a framework for teaching academic language skills and learning strategies that can help English language learners succeed in content areas. It is intended to supply added support in English language development for ESL/Bilingual students, and not to replace mainstream content instruction (Rico & Weed, 1995). The three components of the CALLA model, namely; 1) content-subject areas, 2) language development, and 3) learning strategy instruction are integrated into an instructional system which teaches ESL students how to use the language and learning strategies that they need for success in academic areas of the curriculum.

Reasons for the advocacy of these instructions are the following:

- Mentally active learners are better learners.
- Strategies can be taught.
- Learning strategies transfer to new tasks.
- Academic language learning is more effective with learning strategies.

Teaching ESL students to use conscious learning will accomplish three important goals; learning language, learning through language, and learning to learn. Adopted together with the instructions are the following general rules in selecting the strategies of learning (Chamot & O'Malley 1994, p.64):

- The curriculum determines the strategy.
- Start with a small number of strategies.
- Use tasks of moderate difficulty.
- Choose strategies with strong empirical support.
- Use strategies that apply to different content domains.

Moreover, the study identified the three major types of learning strategies used by the students. These are the *metacognitive strategies* (decision making, organizational planning, self monitoring, self evaluation), *cognitive strategies* (sourcing information, organizing data, taking notes, inferring, summarizing, deduction/induction, imaging, and transferring linguistic information), and *social/affective strategies* (cooperation, questioning technique, and self talk).

CALLA Lesson Plan Model

The CALLA lesson plan model incorporates learning strategy instruction, content-area topics, and language development activities. In this plan, learning strategy instruction is embedded into daily lessons so that it becomes an integral part of the regular class routine, rather than a supplementary activity. There are five phases of CALLA lesson planning which aims to integrate language development, content learning, and enhance development of effective learning strategies.

- *Preparation* phase helps students to develop awareness that prior knowledge can be applied to the topic of the unit.
- *Presentation* phase provides the new information supported by context clues, such as demonstration and visuals.
- *Practice* is the phase which is learner-centered. It uses scaffolding which is a process that provides more extensive, instructional support teaching in learning and gradually withdrawn as the students gain more skills and independence.
- *Evaluation* phase helps students' metacognitive awareness of which strategies work for them as they check the performance level. Evaluation activities can be individual, cooperative, or teacher directed.
- *Expansion* phase gives the students variety of opportunities to think about new concepts and skills they have learned.

*Lesson Plan Sample***Jazz Chants**

Class: English Grammar
Year Level: Second Year High School
Class Time: 45 minutes
Lesson: *Possessive Pronouns*

Language Learning Objectives:

- identify pronoun
- use pronouns in the sentence

Learning Strategies:

- classification or grouping of ideas on ownership/possession or demonstratives
- cooperation and team learning

Materials: Handouts on “Selfish” Jazz Chants by Carolyn Graham

Procedures:

1. *Preparation*

Ask students if they know or have ever heard about jazz songs/music. If one or two students have background knowledge of jazz music, ask them to describe or even hum it. The teacher can add a little explanation of jazz music.

2. *Presentation*

- Teacher writes on the board the following:
this, that, mine, yours, hers, his, theirs, our, ours
- Distribute copies of the chant to the students.
- Teacher models the activity by chanting the lesson first.
- Students are asked to listen carefully to the **th** sounds and final **s** sounds.

3. *Practice*

- Divide students into four voice chants and chorus.
- The chorus begins the chant repeating single word “mine” on the handout.
- Groups continue in the background as each of the four voices enters.

4. *Evaluation*

Using the classification strategy, students will categorize or group the pronouns according to function and use each in the sentence. Ask students to write their answer in a sheet of paper to be corrected by their seatmate.

5. *Expansion*

For homework, ask the same group if they can make a jazz chant for lessons on informative questions “wh”. Using categorizing strategy, students will group the kind of information one can get from each “wh” question.

Selfish

- FOCUS** Listen carefully to the *th* sounds of **this, that** and the final *s* in **yours, hers, ours, theirs.**
- STRUCTURE** This chant offers practice in the *possessive pronouns, mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs* and in the *demonstratives, this/that.*
- NOTES** Notice the strong feeling of **your own** when compared to **yours.**
Note the use of the *present continuous, Hey, what are you doing?* to indicate *immediate action taking place.*
- PRESENTATION** *Variation: Four-Voice Chant and Chorus*
- NOTES** The chorus begins the chant repeating the single word **Mine** and continues in the background as each of the four voices enter.

CHORUS

Mine

Mine

Mine

Mine

Mine

Mine

Mine

Mine

This is mine!

That's yours!

Don't touch mine!

Get your own!

This is mine!

That's yours!

Don't touch mine!

Get your own!

This is mine!

That's yours!

This is mine!

That's mine!

This is mine!

That's yours!

That's yours!

That's yours!

Hey, what are you doing?

What are you doing with that?

That's mine!

Hey, what are you doing?

What are you doing with that?

That's his!

Hey, what are you doing?

What are you doing with that?

That's hers!

What's mine is mine.

What's yours is yours.

What's his is his.

What's hers is hers.

What's ours is ours.

What's theirs is theirs.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This descriptive study of CALLA provided a better understanding of the foundation for the second language teaching and language learning strategy instruction to theory, research, and practice. The theoretical foundation of CALLA was explained by the description of the interaction between language and cognition. Using cognitive theory as basis for understanding of the processes underlying language comprehension and production, ESL/Bilingual teachers will have insights into the academic language needs of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students. This is the need of students which CALLA intends to meet. CALLA was developed as an instructional system to teach LEP student how to apply learning strategies to both academic language and tasks and use language functionally as a tool for learning academic subject matter.

Since there is no one best method to make classroom teaching perfectly effective, it is recommended that integration of other techniques in language be explored. As life-long learners, creative teachers are committed to their profession. In this regard, the following are further recommended:

1. effective teacher training to help teachers adapt to the changing needs of language teaching;
2. encouraging teacher research/action research in the classroom;
3. involvement in curriculum development for teachers to better understand the goals, scope, and sequence of language learning in their school; and
4. developing lesson plan and material design to meet specific needs of the students.

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