Language Awareness in Teaching
A Toolkit for Content and Language Teachers

The Cambridge Teacher series

Timothy Chadwick
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We very much hope that you find this Toolkit to be a useful companion when considering the academic language demands and support you provide in your school classrooms.

If you would like to give your views on this Toolkit, please email international@cie.org.uk (Subject: ‘To Education Division: Language Awareness in Teaching’).

For further information about University of Cambridge International Examinations, please visit the website: www.cie.org.uk.
Timothy Chadwick has been actively involved in education in a range of countries, working in language teaching and testing in Greece, Ecuador, Slovakia, Russia and Germany. Tim became interested in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) while employed at Bahrain’s foremost medical university where students needed an integrated English language programme to support them with their medical studies. He went on to work as a high school teacher in Bulgaria, where core subjects were delivered through English. Tim then became a senior trainer on a large CLIL project in the Middle East co-operating with Science and Maths teachers. He has recently worked as a schools inspector for bilingual schools, also in the Middle East, and has been involved in teacher training in Colombia, Germany and the UK.
Foreword: Why this Toolkit?

Language is a key issue for any classroom. All of us have needed support throughout our education in understanding new jargon and concepts, whether our first language is English or not – an appreciation of language needs cannot be separated from that of content.

This Toolkit has grown out of expertise, experience and research, and seeks primarily to act as a support and catalyst to the teacher working with students who are non-native speakers of English. The lessons learned should be equally useful for a teacher whose first language is not English, and could also be adapted to any modern foreign language situation where content is taught through that language.

The idea for this Toolkit emerged from internal research at University of Cambridge International Examinations, which highlighted the need for greater language awareness in content subjects. The first piece of research built a profile of the academic language used in Cambridge IGCSE Geography, History and Biology. The second piece of research identified some of the cognitive-academic language skills needed to achieve in Cambridge IGCSE History and recommended language awareness guidance.

We have commissioned this Toolkit to be written in a tone to make it feel like a workshop on paper. We hope that you will take the opportunity

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1 *Investigating the Relationship Between Performance in Language Assessment and Other, Non-Language IGCSE Subjects, Phase 1: Analysis of question papers and mark schemes & Phase 2: Analysis of candidate output* (Stuart Shaw, University of Cambridge International Examinations internal research report, 2011).

2 Cambridge IGCSE® is the registered trademark of University of Cambridge International Examinations.

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to reflect on the ideas contained within it, using your own background and knowledge to emerge as a more confident teacher, more able to innovate and engage with your students. Whilst this Toolkit focuses on second language awareness, the two Afterwords raise the importance of first language awareness in multicultural contexts and provide some practical suggestions. We hope you will soon discover the vital importance of language and its use in the classroom.

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Welcome to the Language Toolkit.

This Toolkit aims to help you, as content and English language teachers, support your students in developing the academic language skills they need to be successful in those content subjects that they are studying through English.

Who is the Toolkit for?

This Toolkit is primarily intended to help those of you who teach students through English and for whom English is not their first language. English may well be a second language for you, too.

It is also for those who teach English to students who study some, or all, of their content subjects through English.

What is its purpose?

The Toolkit aims to help you to become more aware of the language issues your students face when they study content subjects like Science or Maths through English. It provides you with strategies to help your students, in both the content and English language classrooms. In particular, the Toolkit seeks to support teachers in helping students to better understand and engage with complex concepts in content classes that are taught through English.

It also aims to raise awareness of how content and English teachers can work together to support students and colleagues in a more integrated way.

Many of the strategies in this Toolkit are compatible with a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach.¹

Finally, the Toolkit looks at language issues specific to subjects of the Cambridge IGCSE – the International General Certificate of Secondary Education taken by 16-year-old students.

How can the Toolkit be used?

The Toolkit focuses on Geography, History, Science and Maths. The sample classroom activities typically target students aged 13 to 16 years. However, the information and guidance in the Toolkit is just as useful for teachers of other subjects and age groups. This means that all sections of the Toolkit aim to include ideas of use to teachers of a wide variety of subjects.

An important component of this Toolkit is the co-operation between the content teacher and the English language teacher. The Toolkit in its entirety seeks to support English language teachers by providing a window on the content classroom. In turn, this can help English language teachers to better support students in developing the academic language they need for their content classes. Similarly, the Toolkit offers content teachers an insight into what takes place in the English language classroom.

The Toolkit is divided into three sections and an introduction:

- **The Introduction** outlines key language issues and the reasons why language needs to be supported in the content classroom.

- **Section 1: Classroom** is a practical and interactive guide on how to identify the language demands being placed on students during a given task in the content classroom, and on how to support students in using and learning that language.

- **Section 2: Co-ordination** looks at practical ways for content and English language teachers to work together to build language support for students.

- **Section 3: Exams** focuses on language issues that relate directly to Cambridge IGCSE subjects. This section identifies common word- and sentence-level problems students have in exams, and how students can be helped to make the best use of their language knowledge during exams.

The Toolkit includes a series of objectives accompanied by tasks. There are two types of task: ‘Reflective Tasks’ and ‘Practical Tasks’. The Reflective Tasks encourage you to think about your own particular students and school, while the Practical Tasks provide an opportunity to consider and practise some of the strategies suggested in the Toolkit. Ideally, you would carry out these tasks with other content and English language teachers. Refer to the Answer key on pages 54–68 for some suggested answers.