

Building in Language Support in a Hong Kong Chemistry Classroom with English as a Medium of Instruction: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract : Science writing has played a crucial part in science assessments. This paper reports a study in an area that has received little research attention - how Language across the Curriculum (LAC, i.e. science language and literacy) learning activities in science lessons can increase the science knowledge development of English as a foreign language (EFL) students in Hong Kong. The data comes from a school-based interventional study in chemistry classrooms, with written data from questionnaires, assessments and teachers' logs and verbal data from interviews and classroom observations. The effectiveness of the LAC teaching and learning activities in various chemistry classrooms were compared and evaluated, with discussion of some implications. Students in the treatment group with lower achieving students received LAC learning and teaching activities while students in the control group with higher achieving students received conventional learning and teaching activities. After the study, they performed better in control group in formative assessments. Moreover, they had a better attitude to learning chemistry content with a richer language support. The paper concludes that LAC teaching and learning activities yielded positive learning outcomes among chemistry learners with low English ability.

Keywords : science learning and teaching, content and language integrated learning, language across the curriculum, English as a foreign language

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