Embedding language development across the curriculum

Carmela Briguglio
Teaching Fellow OLT
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Overview

• Exploring the concept of ‘embedding’
• Why embedding?
• Implications for teaching and learning
• An embedded model of language development across the curriculum
• Curtin’s English Language Proficiency Strategy
• Conclusion & discussion

Some terms / acronyms used

• ESL/ EAL (English as a second/additional language)
• EGL (English as a global language)
• L1, L2 (First/ second language speaker)
• Multicultural
• Culturally/ linguistically diverse
• Academic literacy
• ALL staff – Academic Language & Literacy specialists
• Discipline specific/ specialist/ technical language
Exploring the concept of ‘embedding’ language development & support

What do you understand by this term?

What do you think it means in regard to providing students with language development and support?

A definition of embedding language development

Embedding support for language development means providing a variety of strategies and opportunities within the curriculum, from entry to completion of a course of study, which will enable all students to continue to develop their linguistic proficiency in English.

NB: curricular and extra-curricular strategies possible
WHY? University context of 21st century

- **Massification** of tertiary education
- **Internationalisation**
  - Both leading to complex diversity of the student body (cultural, linguistic, socio-economic)
- Elitist view of tertiary education vs massification - changing perceptions of ‘university education’
- Online and multi-modal delivery of ‘instruction’
- Need for *everyone* to develop intercultural communication skills
- University education seen (rightly) as a gateway to a host of benefits and life chances.

Student diversity in the international university

**Worldwide statistics**
- Global mobility of students has quadrupled over last 3 decades
- 3.3 million international students all over world in 2010 (OECD) stats

**Statistics in Australia**
- 335,273 or over 28% of uni. student population international (2010)
- 307 TNE programs in 1996 grew to 1002 (2007)

**Statistics at Curtin**
- 6,828 international students in 1999
- 11,313 international students in 2002
- 19,872 international students (out of 46,634) in 2010
The position of English, the language of instruction for many…..

*The way it has turned out, English has become a world language in both senses of the term, international and global: international as a medium of literary and other cultural life; global, as the co-genitor of the new technological age, the age of information[…] That was not the case 50 years ago and it may well not be the case 50 years from now; but for the moment, that is how it is.*

(Halliday, 2003, 216)
The tertiary context of the 21st century, means that ......

- English is a global language + language of instruction
- All students need academic literacy (local + international)
- All students need to be inducted into discipline discourse in area of study
- Staff need to be overtly aware of own discipline discourse
- Little doubt about correlation between facility with language and success in tertiary studies

What has been the Australian response to internationalisation of education?

Student support - significant increase particularly aimed at international students:
- in the number of units/departments which provide support
- number of ALL staff (around 500 in Australia)
- other support services (psychological, social etc.)

Staff development - comparatively little
- Any exciting/ significant developments in this area usually due to committed individual academics
Language development in a tertiary context – what we need to keep in mind..........

• **Entry level** proficiency means just that
• Development required for **all** students
• Development, **not remediation**
• **EAL students** have other different/ particular needs
• What is good teaching for EAL students is **better teaching for all**
• Development support needed **throughout** a tertiary course (ie at all levels).

What academic staff can do about language......

• As teachers, be aware of how we use language (especially in speech)
• Be aware of Australian idiom and how & when we use it
• **Purpose** and **audience** in all T & L communication
• Be knowledgeable about language needs of EAL/ESL students – indeed, all students
• Be aware of the language demands & academic discourse qualities of your discipline
In an “internationalised” university, staff:

• Are knowledgeable about other languages and cultures
• Have an understanding of linguistic needs of international students
• Make the effort to understand different accents & pronounce names of all students as they should be
• Have & update training in intercultural communication skills and internationalisation of curriculum
• Teach a broad curriculum that includes international perspectives in all disciplines
• Deliberately structure learning to promote the development of intercultural communication skills

And at the university level........

Have a number of strategies and provisions that can meet the complex variety of student needs
A Multi-layered Model of Language Development Provision (MMLDP)

This model

- Includes a **variety** of strategies/methods
- Assumes all **strategies** needed to cater for the range of student diversity & needs
- Allows for **broadest coverage** for student development at all **levels** of their course
- Requires **staff development**
Curtin English Language Proficiency Strategy

1. English language entry management
2. Discipline-based core communication skills units
3. Embedding English language development into discipline-based units
4. Elective language-based communication skills units
5. Academic Language and Learning (ALL) programs
6. English language assessment through curriculum review
7. Monitoring performance

Conclusion

So.........

• What is your university doing well already?
• What else do we need to do?
• What are other universities doing?
• Where do we need to go from here?
Feedback

This is the research area for my OLT Fellowship

If you wish to contact me to discuss any issues or if your institution is interested in some staff development, please contact me as below:

Ass. Prof. Carmela Briguglio
Curtin Business School, Curtin University, Perth, Western Australia
Tel: 08 9266 3079
Email: C.briguglio@curtin.edu.au