Encountering Challenges in CBI Course: For pre-service teachers of early childhood education

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The purpose of the study: This study aimed to explore how a college instructor and her students constructed meanings about their subject-matter course delivered in English. Specifically, it focused on major challenges in the instructor’s ways of teaching and pre-service teachers’ perception on their learning experiences in the course.

Research method: This study adopted a qualitative case study method focusing on the experiences and perceptions of the instructor and the pre-service teachers. The target students were pre-service teachers who were majoring in early childhood education. The course title was early childhood mathematics education. Data were collected through observation, individual in-depth interviews, and students’ work samples.

Findings: The instructor’s English language proficiency and the implementation of integrating the content and language objectives were big challenges in her teaching. Another obstacle in delivering contents in English was a cultural component which was embedded in classroom interaction. Moreover, difficulties in reducing gaps of individual differences and more effective instructional design to promote active participation were regarded as challenges in her teaching. As the teaching processed, she revealed that her confidence in using English has been enhanced. However, she still doubted the effectiveness of instructional practices in English to teach the subject matter, early childhood mathematics education.

The pre-service teachers shared their difficulties in understanding texts and communicating in English. The four skills in language learning, listening, writing, speaking and reading, were required in completing the course. Even though they realized the importance of English language, the instructional practices did
not come easy to them. Very often, they lost the stream of lecture, especially when unknown words came up during class. Because key vocabularies contain essential concepts in understanding content knowledge, the students tried to grasp the meanings of the key words, but language input was far beyond their comprehensibility. At the initial stage of the course, the instructor conducted English only policy during the whole class time, but as the course processed, she came to utilize code-switching of English and Korean in order to help students' understanding. The code-switching environment not only allowed students to participate more actively, but also helped them to promote clear understanding of the contents.

**Conclusion:** This study concluded that the instructor and the pre-service teachers experienced various challenges in the CBI class. Implementing the integration of content and language objectives in class engendered the education of amount of content knowledge. On the one hand, this study doubts the effectiveness of CBI proposals which are bound to meet the organization of the curriculum derived from both subject matter core and language forms. On the other hand, this case study will be able to table various issues to be considered to college instructors designing CBI courses for pre-service teachers.

**Key Words:** CBI, pre-service teachers, mathematics education