

CONTRIBUTION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN CLIL TO ENGLISH ORACY

L'APORTACIÓ DE L'EDUCACIÓ FÍSICA EN CLIL A L'EXPRESSIÓ ORAL EN LLENGUA ANGLESA

JOSEP CORAL I MATEU

jcoral@xtec.cat

ESCOLA PAU BOADA – VILAFRANCA DEL PENEDÈS

UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

Keywords: Physical Educacion, CLIL, oracy, Action Research, balanced tasks

Paraules clau: Educació física, CLIL, expressió oral, investigació-acció, tasques equilibrades

1. Introduction

This paper shows the results obtained in a CLIL Action Research project carried out as part of a PhD programme within the Faculty of Teachers Training (Departament de Didàctica de l'Expressió Musical i Corporal), University of Barcelona. The research is based on a Physical-Education-in-CLIL programme that has been in use since 2007; however, these results are focused solely on the second and third terms of the 2010-2011 school year.

2. Theoretical framework

This PE-in-CLIL programme called “*Mou-te i aprèn*” is based on Coyle’s “4Cs” approach (Coyle, 2006; Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010). PE-in-CLIL should be understood as a holistic approach that utilises a basic, yet essential principle of learning; that is we learn by doing. This programme fosters content, language, cognition and

cultural awareness. The Physical Education in a CLIL programme provides learners with motor skills, communication skills, life-long learning and even citizenship skills for the global world of the 21st Century. We use students' intrinsic motivation for movement in order to create the best tasks. Furthermore, we provide language support so that the students can achieve greater results.

Although PE is a popular subject in CLIL, very little research has been published about it. Rottmann (2007) presents a qualitative study dealing with a fifth grade class in a German CLIL school. Her study demonstrates how suitable PE is for CLIL pedagogy. It is also interesting how Tomlinson & Masuhara (2009) connect physical games with language acquisition. They believe that a rich experience of language in use is a prerequisite for language acquisition, and that physical games can enhance the learning of a language.

3. Aims

Four aims are established:

1. To identify the features of Physical Education tasks that promote integrated learning.
2. To identify the specific teaching strategies that improve oral communication.
3. To check that a meaningful improvement occurs in both oral comprehension and oral interaction.
4. To identify PE and English integrated tasks which appeal most to students.

Afterwards, these aims are transformed into Action Research questions that are more suitable for qualitative classroom research.

4. Methodology

4.1. Practical Action Research

Elliot's (Elliot 1991, 2007) practice model best represents British Action Research's pragmatic tradition. His practice model solves problems in a realistic way based on the correlation between academics and teachers in schools. We, following Elliot's footsteps,

mesh the curriculum with the reality of school life and change it according to systematic reflection. If we discover a problem, we resolve it right away. Henceforth, we theorize about practical problems which occur in particular situations. Lastly, we identify which theories are widely applicable.

4.2.Participants and tools

The participants were 26 fifth grade students of primary education in a school in Catalonia *Escola Pau Boada de Vilafranca del Penedès*. They had been previously exposed to English for approximately 700 school hours. When they joined the PE in CLIL programme in January of 2011, their exposure to English was increased by four hours each week. During the research they received 63 hours of regular English class and 80 extra hours of English through PE in CLIL. Four different tools were used for gathering data: teacher diaries, video recordings, analysis of documents and motivational tests.

4.3.Data analysis

The analysis was divided into three levels. The first level took place during the cycles of action research. The main goal of this analysis was to improve the PE programme. The second level of analysis was done when all three action research cycles were finished. The goal was to find evidence by analyzing data gathered using each observation tool. Data from each tool was examined separately in order to bring forth different kinds of evidence. The findings were henceforth applied in complementation and triangulation techniques. Finally, in the third level of analysis, Action Research questions were answered, and teaching dilemmas that had emerged during the research were solved.

This PE-in-CLIL research uses a wide range of strategies to achieve Guba's (1985) criteria for evaluation of research in pursuit of a trustworthy qualitative study.

5. Results

We found that many features of PE tasks that promote integrated learning are linked to balanced tasks. Related to oral communication, evidence shows that collaborative and cooperative strategies combined with the leader technique foster oracy in PE in CLIL.

In fact, the comparison of pre-test, on-going and post-test video recordings reveals a significant improvement in speaking. As far as efficient tasks are concerned, three features are identified: they have to be cooperative, maintain the motivation for movement and include language in the activity without slowing down the pace of the game or drill. Finally, there aren't meaningful differences between pre-test and post-test results in Achievement Motivation in Physical Education Test.

6. Conclusions

The results presented here, along with further complementary results of this research, suggest several conclusions. First, the contribution that PE in CLIL makes to English oracy is larger than expected. Second, is fundamental for keeping the internal structure of the tasks a good balance between motor, language and cognition demand. Third, the most advantageous PE-in-CLIL activity involves a balanced task that incorporates language and movement without slowing down the pace of the activity. Drills with long explanations that reduce time allotted to physical activity are rejected. Lastly, we have to consider that activities need to offer learners an attainable goal. For this reason, scaffolding (Coral, 2011) becomes essential.

7. References

- Coral, J. (2011). *Using Cooperative and Collaborative Learning to Improve Track and Field Skills*. Barcelona: CESIRE, Departament d'Ensenyament. Generalitat de Catalunya.
- Coyle, D. (2006). Developing CLIL: Towards a theory of practice. *CLIL in Catalonia from Theory to Practice. APAC Monographs*, 6, 5-29.
- Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (2010). *CLIL Content and Language Integrated Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Elliot, J. (1991). *Action Research for Educational Change*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Elliot, J. (2007). *Reflecting Where the Action Is*. London: Routledge.

- Guba, E.G. (1985). Criterios de credibilidad en la investigación naturalista. In A J. Gimeno & A. Pérez (eds.) *La enseñanza: su teoría y su práctica* (p.148-166). Madrid: Akal.
- Rottmann, B. (2007). Sports in English. Learning opportunities through CLIL in Physical Education. In C. Dalton-Puffer & U. Smit (eds.), *Empirical Perspectives on CLIL Discourse* (p. 205-227). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Tomlinson, B., & Masuhara, H. (2009). Playing to learn: A review of physical games in second language acquisition. *Simulation & Gaming*, 40(5), 645-668.