

Educational proposal to teaching CLIL methodology in a Primary school

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Público: "Maestros y maestras de Primaria que impartan áreas utilizando la metodología CLIL. **Materia:** Cualquier área de la educación primaria. **Idioma:** Inglés.

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Abstract

The article shows a practical tool for teachers who are not specialists in English, however they have to teach their subjects using CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) methodology. This approach involves learning subjects such as History, Maths, Science... through an additional language. It can be very successful in enhancing the learning of languages and other subjects. We propose the required elements of an unit carried out in the fourth course of Primary school, with all the contents, criteria and resources that can be used in the classroom.

Keywords: CLIL, Primary, educational proposal

Título: Propuesta de intervención educativa de la metodología CLIL en una escuela de Primaria.

Resumen

El artículo muestra una herramienta para los maestros y maestras no especialistas en inglés que han de impartir sus clases utilizando la metodología CLIL (Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lenguas Extranjeras). Este método implica estudiar asignaturas como Historia, Matemáticas o Ciencias en una lengua distinta de la propia. CLIL resulta muy beneficioso tanto para el aprendizaje de otras lenguas como para las asignaturas impartidas en dichas lenguas. Proponemos los elementos necesarios que componen una unidad didáctica para 6º de Primaria, con los contenidos, criterios a tener en cuenta y recursos que se pueden utilizar en clase.

Palabras clave: CLIL, educación primaria, propuesta educativa.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of plurilingual and pluricultural competence is increasingly noted as an important goal of foreign language education. Attending to the growing social demand to incorporate more presence of foreign languages at schools, especially English language, the Plurilingual Educational Programs have gained more and more strength.

The plurilingual teaching at non university levels in the Valencian Community is regulated in the Decree 127/2012, 3rd. August. Basically, the aim of this Decree is that, at the end of the compulsory education, our students will have general competence in Spanish and valencian, and a sufficient competence in English.

2. CONTEXTUALISATION

This public school is located in the centre of the city, where the socio-economical level is medium. There are two lines in each year, which makes a total of 18 classes. We have three language learning paths, teaching the non-linguistic subjects in three possible languages: Valencian, Spanish and English.

During the last years educational laws changed and we need to increase our school objectives. Since three years ago, all teachers are focused on integrated language teaching. We live in a bilingual region and in addition to that, English is becoming stronger at school. Thus, we have designed a new multilingual school in which then three languages can be used in specific moments, focusing on language use rather than language teaching.

We want to improve our students communicative skills so we need to offer our students situations to use all languages. This is not a problem with official languages, but now we need to reinforce English language as an international

communicative tool. We must offer our pupils the possibility to use English at school, and this is only possible if it is the teaching language. Since year 2012/2013 we have been developing several CLIL experiences at different levels (pre-primary and primary) and in different areas (assembly, project, science, art, P.E. etc) The results were really good and we decided to continue the same system. So, this year we are teaching in English some P.E. And art classes, and we would like to go on with the programme next year.

The main problem to develop this change at school is the English level of teachers. Most of them are not able to speak English in their classes with an appropriate quality level. For this reason, our lifelong learning project states that all teachers should improve our English level, as well as the use of different resources and strategies to integrate English in their classes in a natural way. Erasmus + offers us the opportunity to improve the quality of our education through teachers courses.

As some of our strong points complementary to the daily teaching practice is the active participation of the parents associations, the opening attitude of the head teacher to suggestions of improvement and the use ICT for every subject in order to foster the digital competence as required in the *Royal Decree 126/2014 of the Ministry of Education*.

3. WHAT IS CLIL?

3.1. Definition

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is a term created in 1994 by David Marsch and Anne Maljers as a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning of both content and language. It provides exposure to the language without requiring extra time in the curriculum because the curricular subject and new language skills are taught together.

Integration of content and language is closely related to the contexts in which the learning and teaching take place (Baetens Beardsmore, 1993: 39): "The social situation in each country in general and decisions in educational policy in particular always have an effect, so there is no single blueprint of content and language integration that could be applied in the same way in different countries-no model is for export".

Coyle, D., Hood, p. and Marsh, D. (2010) defined content in CLIL as: "The concept of what constitutes content in a CLIL context is much more flexible than selecting a discipline from a traditional school curriculum, such as geography, music, physics and drawing. What exactly is meant by content in CLIL will depend on the context of the learning institution (age of learners, language support, social demands...)".

Content can range from the delivery of elements taken directly from a statutory national curriculum to a project based on topical issues drawing together different aspects of the curriculum. It could be thematic, cross-curricular, interdisciplinary or have a focus on citizenship for example. Content is seen as something flexible, wide range of subjects, CLIL is not limited to the bilingual section.

All CLIL programs are based on theoretical framework which integrates four areas: **content** (subject matter), **cognition** (language learning and using), **communication** (learning and thinking processes) and **culture** (developing intercultural understanding). They are also informed by six core features: a *multiple focus* (integrating language and content learning through several subject areas or cross projects); a *safe and enriching learning environment* (use of learning centres, displays of language and content in the classroom); *authenticity* (connecting with other speakers of the language or using current materials); *active learning* (student-centred not teacher-centred, co-operative learning); *scaffolding* (building on learner's existing knowledge, interests, experiences, responding to different learning styles...) experiences; and *co-operation* (involving parents and the local community in the process).

3.2. Methodology

There is no specific methodology that relates to CLIL. However, according to Pavesi et al (2001) some common features are used in different countries, and "CLIL requires active methods, co-operative classroom management and emphasis on all types of communication (linguistic, visual and kinaesthetic)".

- In CLIL, it is important to use audio-visual aids and multimedia in order to overcome problems caused by the use of a new language.
- Pavesi et al emphasize the importance of using holistic ways of learning as well as learning from practical, hands-on experiences.
- The teaching of a second language and content at the same time should include language scaffolding such as reformulation, simplification and exemplification.
- The use of the school lingua franca (SLF) by the CLIL teacher should be kept to a minimum and should be avoided except when appropriate.
- Where possible, any content and/or language problems should be overcome in the planning stage through the cooperation of both content and language teachers.
- Teamwork skills are needed by CLIL teachers when preparing the curriculum as well as while teaching.
- When planning the lessons, teachers should take into account the AL/TL language level of the students.

3.3. Assessment

Teaching involves assessment. There are two main types of assessment in CLIL.

- **Summative assessment** is assessment of learning. Its purpose is to review learning of the subject content and to help to know what learners have achieved at a specific time. This is often at the end of a unit of work or at the end of the course.
- **Formative assessment** is assessment for learning. It is on-going, continuous assessment and helps to understand how much and how well our students are learning about subject content. It gives us information about our learners so we can give them useful feedback on their progress.

Coyle, D. Et al. (2010;p.129-131) summarizes the assessment principles in CLIL as follows:

- Clear learning objectives are needed before an assessment focus can be chosen.
- We should use a mixture of formal and informal assessment.
- We should familiarize the learners with the assessment measures and success criteria.
- Content language should be assessed using the simplest format of language.
- Language should be assessed for a real purpose in a real context.
- If the assessment is orally based, “wait time” is crucial.
- Scaffolding is not “cheating”.
- Students need to be able to take some responsibility for their own assessment.

3.4. Treatment of Diversity

Diversity exists everywhere, also in CLIL classroom where there are different needs, diversity of cognitive styles, diversity of learning rhythms, pupils with special needs.

We have some students with **learning disabilities** and **special needs** so we must adapt our teaching process to their learning process. Attending to diversity means attending to our students’ needs, whatever they are.


We could establish two different ways of attending to diversity in the CLIL classroom:

- In general terms: reinforcement, orientation, flexible groups...
- Specifically: Meaningful Curricular Adaptations (ACIS in Spanish)

4. EXAMPLE OF CLIL UNIT

The Unit I'm going to present is focused on students of 11 and 12 years old who attend to the **Sixth grade of Primary**.

The subject that has been introduced in the plurilingual programme as the CLIL subject is **Science**.

UNIT: The Earth in the Universe	LESSONS: 4	
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LEARNING OUTCOMES

Content	Communication	Cognition	Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Geocentric theory. - The Heliocentric theory. - Our galaxy:the Milky Way 	Vocabulary: Scientific terminology. - "W" questions. - Past simple. - Present simple passive. - Collaborative talks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compare the two contrasting historical concepts concerning the position of the Earth in the Universe. - Understand the concept of galaxy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aristotle. - Ptolomy. - Copernicus - Galileo - Scientific Revolution

LESSON 1

Brainstorming. (15 min/whole class) This is an activity to check student's previous knowledge about the topic. The teacher guides the brainstorming asking questions such as:What is the origin of planet names?, list 5 planets of the Solar system, Which of the planets is the closest to theSun?How can we observe planets of the Solar System.

Scaffolding tips for the learner: I'm sorry I don't know, I have no idea = I haven' t a clue, I'm not sure, I've forgotten, It's on the tip of my tongue

Listening. (20 min/group work). The pupils have to listen to a video carefully titled "Geocentric and Heliocentric theories" and then they have to answer multiple choice questions. When they finish the activity, learners can compare their answers with their group.

Sorting (25 min/ In pairs) Students have to arrange the cards into two logical columns (Geocentric theory/Heliocentric theory). If learners get stuck, teacher can do scaffolding learning by providing a short text about thetwo topics to help them to sort the cards.

LESSON 2

Starting routine:(5 min/whole group). Let's just recap on what we did yesterday. What can you remember?

Reading (15 min/group work) Teacher explains the concept of galaxy. Then students read the text in their Science textbook. If pupils have a doubt, the teacher resolves it.

Asking questions.(15 min/in pairs) Students put the words in order to make questions about the Milk Way. Then ask and answer the questions with a partner.

Activity about the galaxy clusters. (15min/in pairs) After reading the text, pupils will choose the correct photo.

LESSON 3

Final task.(60 min/In groups). In this activity students will investigate about inventions during the Scientific Revolution helped by web pages. They look up information on the internet during the session and then they will prepare a poster (max.5 minutes per exposition).

LESSON 4

Posters presentations (60 min/group work).

WANT TO KNOW/ REINFORCEMENT/EXTENSION



Students **work in groups or in pairs**, so good students can also help children with learning disabilities what motivates both kind of students. I use these **scaffolding strategies** to support comprehension and language development: visuals or images, connect to background knowledge, graphic organizers, sentences structures or starters, read aloud..

The teacher should speak clearly,slowly and loudly:

- Language for the teacher: Settle down quickly please,let's get started, What do you know about...?, Take your book,Find a partner to work with,Is that clear?,Use the vocabulary you've learnt yesterday, Good work!
- Language for the learners: I think..., I don't think so because...,Can you help us,please?, If there is a student with **special needs** it's necessary to develop a **special didactic plan** (e.g.visual aids, adapted activities, select some learning objectives...).

Tasks may be sequenced to their cognitive complexity from more simple to more complex using learning skills.

ASSESSMENT



All the activities will be assessed responding to a **formative and continuous assessment**:

- Observe pair-work interaction helping when required and modelling correct answers.
- Asses work in notebooks and give feedback.
- End of the classes reflection about what we have learned.
- Grid for the presentation.

By the end of the lessons students will be able to:

- **Compare** the two contrasting historical concepts concerning the position of the Earth in the Universe.
- **Understand** the concept of galaxy.
- **Use** the correct scientific terminology in text involving scientific content.
- **Content knowledge** should be assessed using the **simplest form of language** which is appropriate for that purpose.

MATERIAL/ RESOURCES



- Cards.
- Computer, projector and speakers.
- Science textbook.
- Dictionaries.

5. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, I would like to highlight that the main objective of this project is improving students communicative competence in English. With the expansion of the European Union, diversity of language and the need for communication are seen as central issues. For these reasons, English play a key role in curricula across Europe. I want to increase the quality of education, offering equal opportunities to students with social difficulties or learning disabilities.

Applying CLIL in classes within a few months of starting the programme, students are usually able to use the CLIL language for almost all classroom communication. It is necessary to use routine activities and discourse in order to build student confidence trying to experiment with language and content. I also maximize the accomodation of student interests for making a regular connection between learning and the students'live.

References

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Legal frame

- Organic Law on the Improvement of the Quality of Education (LOMCE)
- Royal Decree126/2014, 28th February, establishing the basic primary education curriculum
- Decree 127/2012, de 3 d'agost, from the Valencian Government, by which plurilingual teaching is regulated at non university levels in the Valencian Community.
- Resolution of the 1 st of October 2012, from the General Direction of Educational Innovation, Ordination and Quality, by which instructions regarding the application of Decree 127/2012, of the 3rd of August, from the Valencian government, by which the plurilingualism at the non university levels is regulated.
- Order 19/2011, from the 5 th of April, from the Conselleria of Education, by which the network of Plurilingual schools in the Valencian Community is established.