Implementation of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach into the classroom pedagogical project of fifth and sixth graders at a local school in Barichara

Implementación del enfoque AICLE (Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lenguas Extranjeras) en el proyecto pedagógico de aula de estudiantes de quinto y sexto grado en un colegio local en Barichara

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Abstract

This article describes the results of a pedagogical experience project that was built in a differentiated educational platform that allows educators and students to create together the way of teaching and learning processes. Using the subject of Arts throughout the classroom pedagogical project together with the English language, students of fifth and sixth grades were able to develop multiple task-based activities in order to create their own short film from the basics of motion, drawing, animation and filming, and working on their imagination to come out with a unique story about the Space. Furthermore, this project was directed towards a common aim of finding a sort of answers to a question that students had about the universe and it became as a means of education to apply CLIL approach.

Keywords:
Arts, CLIL, creativity, English, project-based learning, universe.

Resumen

Este artículo describe los resultados de un proyecto de experiencia pedagógica que fue construido en una plataforma educativa diferenciadora que permite a los educadores y estudiantes crear juntos la forma de los procesos de aprendizaje y enseñanza. Con la materia de artes, a través del Proyecto Pedagógico de Aula y junto con el idioma inglés, los estudiantes de quinto y sexto grado fueron capaces de desarrollar actividades múltiples basadas en procesos, con el fin de crear su propio cortometraje y al partir de las bases del movimiento, dibujo, animación y grabación, trabajaron en su imaginación para crear una historia única acerca del espacio. Además, este proyecto fue dirigido hacia una meta común para encontrar una serie de respuestas a la pregunta que los estudiantes tenían sobre el universo y convirtiéndose en un medio de educación para aplicar el enfoque CLIL.

Palabras clave:
aprendizaje basado en proyectos, artes, CLIL, creatividad, inglés, universo.

Introduction

The traditional education system these days is not aware enough of its students who are turning their minds towards a different reality and changing their positions facing a whole new life

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style. Students are shouting for something new that can come in a "very attractive package" and from where they can explode and learn as much as they want about the world and its culture.

Therefore, reflections come to these matters and teachers need to adapt and bring our best into the classroom, where a relative teacher's improvisation is demanded with the objective of facing and overcome the challenges and difficulties in specific situations of teaching-learning (Lee McKay, 2002). Teachers must adjust the teaching process to students' expectations to guide them so that they are the ones that construct knowledge and not simply give it to them by instructing through a teacher centered method.

The strategies used to develop this project are based on different aspects of the reality that students of fifth and sixth grades are facing through modern education, especially in a foreign language. Supported by a different platform for educating students at a local school in the municipality of Barichara, the Classroom Pedagogical Project (PPA) was used as a teaching tool where the learning converged as a unique methodological process that allowed both, students and teachers, built knowledge based on the learners' interests.

The PPA approach is a flexible mechanism that permits mainstreaming the curriculums from all subjects where students decide what they want to learn about, involving several aspects so they can get constructed answers responding to a variety of queries and doubts that emerged before, during and after the learning process at different moments while developing a topic that they had chosen.

The purpose of this project was to create a classroom design for the Arts subject into the fifth and sixth grades´ PPA, incorporating the English language and by applying a series of bilingual ludic-pedagogical tools that were framed within the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach. During the integration of all the aspects mentioned above is where the language teaching paradigm shift in order to allow students to learn all the content from different subjects and

the continuing usage of English as a medium in the teaching and learning of non-language content (Marsh, 2002).

Practical tasks like games, worksheets and handicrafts to explorations, creations and artistic designs were proposed, as well as the usage of ICT tools (Information and Communication Technology) together with field work prepared in English to apply all activities according to the parameters of the PPA.

The main question that led this project centered the aim of the same in the student's learning process: How can a teacher build different lessons around the students' interests keeping them focused along the entire Classroom Pedagogical Project motivating them to learn many aspects of Arts subject through the usage of English? Consequently, the work through a project-based learning allows assessing students with accuracy and to show a final product.

Literature review

In order to give adequate focus to this project, it is necessary to introduce the theory on CLIL approach and the role of English and its use to develop the activities in the classroom. Also, on the Classroom Pedagogical Project and its parameters and implementation into teaching practices.

CLIL Approach
One of the most useful definitions of CLIL was written by Marsh (2002): Content and Language Integrated Learning refers to any dual-focused educational context in which an additional language, thus not usually the first language of the learners involved, is used as a medium in the teaching and learning of non-language content. It is dual-focused because whereas attention may be predominantly on either subject-specific content or language, both are always accommodated.

As a development tool for language teaching, CLIL emerged around 1995 and it was adopted as an approach for many schools in Europe. The bare essentials of CLIL are founded in three main

different components, Content-driven approach, as unique educational methodology, and as a quality learning experience, all of them mainstreamed by the constant use of a foreign language and with the purpose of promoting bilingualism.

CLIL methodology has been built from the basis of other theories: The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives from Bloom (1956), the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) from Vygotsky (1978), the Multiple Intelligences from Gardner (1983), and the Active Learning of Cummins (2005). Bloom´s taxonomy is a theory in where its author divided the educational objectives in three domains; Affective, Psychomotor and Cognitive. At this last one, he identified a hierarchy (See Figure 1) of thinking skills and divided them in High order and Low order thinking skills with the aim of being more objective at the time of evaluating a learning process.

Figure 1. Bloom´s taxonomy
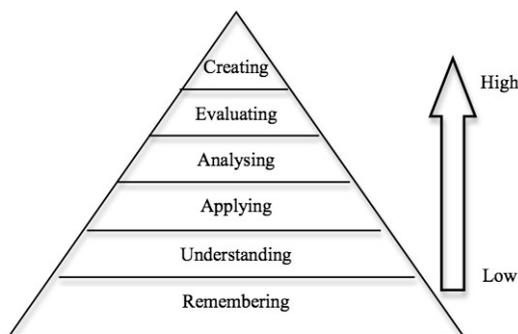
The Zone of Proximal development explains the distance between the level of the affective development (working independently) of the student and the level of potential development (working with others). On the other hand, the Multiple Intelligences of Gardner explain the different ways of learning where intelligence is not seen like one single element that joins different specific capacities, but as a conjunction of many varied intelligences, all diverse and independent.

The Active Learning of Cummins (See Figure 2) lays out the importance of the relationship between the cognitive demand and the level of mother language (L1) and a foreign language (L2),

all of them framed to be useful at measuring and analyzing the interconnectedness of cognitive and linguistic levels of tasks and materials used during a lesson.

Figure 2. Active learning of commins
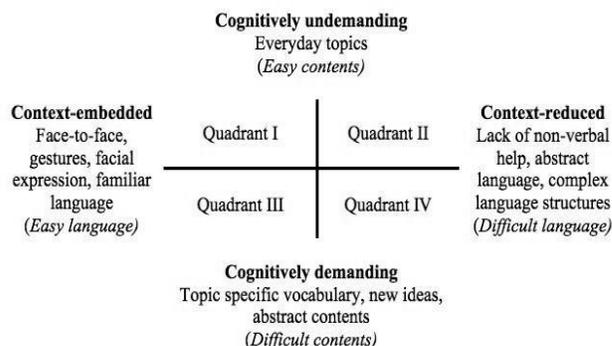
The 4 principles of CLIL

These are the four major components on which the CLIL approach should be based at the moment of creating a lesson plan for a specific class. Culture, Content, Cognition and Communication, each dimension includes many other factors and define nine different perspectives: the age of learners, the sociolinguistic environment, the L2 level of proficiency, the target language set at the learning aim, teachers, the different types of speech, the presence of many other languages in the classroom, the adaptation of a topic and, the proportion of language and content.

Communication is the interaction, progression in language using and learning, Cognition is about engagement in higher-order thinking, problem solving, and accepting challenges and reflecting on them; Culture is based on the ´self´ and ´other´ awareness, identity, citizenship, and progression towards pluricultural understanding, and Content, is the progression in new knowledge, skills and understanding (Coyle, 2005).

Mainstreaming English

As English became the most spoken language around the world it is necessary consider it now as a Lingua Franca and turn to schools and the

learning processes to introduce it according to the academic needs in all curricular programs because it is moving into a position where is a competence to achieve, a subject that pupils learn in order to do something else.

Any form of bilingual education is all applying CLIL and the mainstreaming of English depends on each method and on each teacher's aims for a specific topic or a specific classroom activity, giving to a course, a bilingual status while is using English as a foreign language in order to develop the activities proposed.

Bilingualism. The 21st century competences, according to Chomsky in his Aspects of Theory of Syntax (1985), are defined as the capacity and disposition for performance and interpretation. Meaning that, a competence makes someone capable to do any specific job or to accomplish any position at work and is full of resources to adapt in real life facing real challenges.

Students need to develop better competences in a foreign language and to be able to communicate better in English. In Colombia, it is pretty recent since Bilingualism started to take on a new role. McDougald (2009) assures that schools and universities are not concerned with just learning English anymore, but are more concerned as to what students can do with the new language. Graddol (2005) states that English is no longer a foreign language, rather it is becoming more of a core skill very much like ICT skills, as it transforms and repositions the curriculum. According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA, 2004) bilingualism is commonly defined as the use of at least two languages by an individual. It is a fluctuating system in children and adults whereby use of and proficiency in two languages may change depending on the opportunities to use the languages and exposure to other users of the languages.

 The Bilingual Education Approach is defined as one in "which two languages are used as a media of classroom instruction for the same group of students, so that students receive some of their instruction in one language and some in the other, with the nature and proportion of each language varying according to program type, and instructional goals" (Celce-Murcia, 2001: 345).

The Classroom Pedagogical Project
To know just a few about the Classroom Pedagogical Projects, it is necessary to go back in time at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century when the world, most of it United States, started a new pedagogical movement today known as New School (Escuela Nueva) or Progressive Education (Educación Nueva).

The Pedagogical Project in Colombia, by law, is an activity "inside the study syllabus that in a planning way, train students in everyday problem solution, selected by having a direct relationship with the social, cultural, scientific, and technological environment of the student" (MEN, 1994).

The definition of a classroom project is framed into a didactic teaching methodology based on a sort of components like critical thinking, researching, and creativity, the development of varied competences, answering questions, and learning through making.

To build this kind of projects, students and teachers need to communicate assertively around the knowledge process and the classroom is transformed in a structure to lock up the known and unknown, the daily and the scientific wisdom building a bridge between the real world and the reality at school.

Gonzalez (1998) says that the Classroom Project is to set in a syllabus, the cultural experience of the humanity at a point that acquires a formative sense with a specific orientation. One of the main components of the Classroom Pedagogical Project is the didactics that is formed from the beginning of all times, embracing both the process of teaching and the processes of learning and self-learning.

Methodology

Project design

The nature of this project emerged from the necessity of answering the educational demand to improve teaching methodology. Nowadays is really important to be creative, capable, and also bilingual. As a respond to these social needs, this project was built into the modality of pedagogical innovation that in the educational field could be understood as a "pedagogical renewal".

Such innovation, in Cañal de León's (2002) words, makes reference to a "conjunction of ideas, processes, and strategies, more or less systematized, which serve to provoke changes in the educational practices in force." Innovation is to work again over the same known fields to apply them over new circumstances. Using the CLIL approach to improve teaching and learning performances mainstreaming English within other content areas is a way to innovate in class.

The methodology of the project depends on the different perspectives addressed in the same. According to the nature of the information gathered, this project has a qualitative approach in order to discover complex events in its natural environment. Bryman and Bell (2007) stated that qualitative research is a research strategy that indicates the relationship between theory and research and usually makes emphasis on how theories were generated.

Depending on the nature of the objectives, and according to the level of knowledge wanted, the project also has an explanatory approach which is not only followed to describe or to come closer to a problem, but to try to find the causes of it, and it is experimental because students and researchers are involved during the process.

The object of the study focused on the school subjects of Arts and English made the project be also labeled, according with Zorrilla (1993:43), as an applied research because of its interests in applying, usage and practical consequences of knowledge. The applied research seeks knowledge to do, to act, to construct and modify.

Context and Participants

This Project was developed at a local school in the municipality of Barichara in the second semester of the year 2014, from July to November with a total of 16 students of fifth and sixth grades between the ages of 10 and 13. These students had the experience of working and learning through educational projects before and the majority of them were studying English since first grade, so their level in this foreign language was accurate for their ages. Pupils were very well-disposed to participate in all given activities and since it was a small group, it was possible to follow their progress closely and scaffold their learning.

Techniques and Instruments

The research was developed using four different techniques and some particular instruments in accordance with the structure of each activity:

Observation. It was organized depending on the main objective of activities and it was used as a main source to assess students during the process. It allowed identifying advantages and disadvantages in the progress, to understand the importance of working and to determine the acquisition of knowledge. The main instruments used during the observation were the video recording and photography. These tools allowed registering students' development and capturing important moments when they discovered or understood something. Another supporting tool was a log or notebook where each pupil had to register his/her own important information and where they developed tasks and homework.

Polling and Interviews. This technique was extremely useful for building rapport and to discuss in group the evolution, the results and the feelings about the activities, most of the time it was necessary to ask open questions about the intentions of the exercises, the expected outcomes and to come to an agreement between teacher and students for building the classes according to the structure of the PPA. Two of the most important moments where polling was necessary were when the driven question was built and when the

name for the movie was created.

Questionnaires and Surveys. All the collected information that is written is considered part of the material used to assess the project and its participants. Instruments like quizzes, worksheets, tests, reports, craft works such as posters, homework and any other outcome from researching, contributed to evaluate the progress of the activities and to identify if the aims were accomplished. During the development of this project all of the instruments mentioned above were used and some of them were collected from students as evidence and to demonstrate that the objectives were reached.

RESULTS

The outcomes of this project are explained from the design and implementation of eight bilingual activities and the evidences gathered from student´s development that was completed to learn the curriculum objectives of Arts and English.

Project – Based Learning

Before mainstreaming the subjects of Arts and English into the PPA, leader teachers met with the fifth and sixth graders during the first two weeks of the semester to brainstorm ideas together and to structure a driven question around something that they wanted to learn about. A conundrum about the universe emerged: If there is life in other parts of the universe, how is it and where is it? That question became the object in which all the subject areas were addressed. The solution of this problem, because "a problem is an emerged question from an observation roughly structured, the question that is made could take different forms according to the pursued objective" (Pardinas, 1984), is based on the methodology of the project.

After the topic and the driven question are established, the subject areas of English and Arts are adapted as part of the PPA to build the basis of the research project with educational nature, both were adjusted accordingly with the curriculum guidelines and under the structure of the CLIL approach.

The PPA approach is constructed as a project based learning (See Figure 3) that has different stages to follow a rigorous content. Students also worked for an extended period of time because the driven question is deep and requires completing a finished product so it is possible to share the learning with others at the end of the academic period.

Figure 3 Steps for a project - based learning
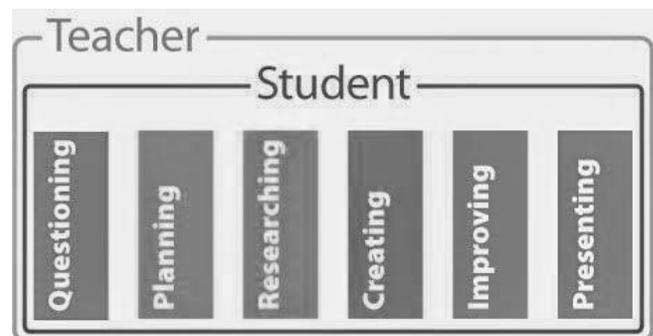
Design of classes and implementation of CLIL

Eight different bilingual activities were created towards the development of the PPA and to help students to answer the driven question. The PPA lasted a semester, where the English and Arts class hours were united to work as much as possible during the project. Both subjects added 6 hours a week and a total of 36 hours to work in class, and another 62 hours of work after school.

 Activities built on CLIL methodology. For the project development, students decided to create a short film about the Universe and life in another galaxy. Planning the CLIL activities allowed the creation of complementary academic exercises that were well structured into the lesson planning embracing many aspects of the Arts field: drawing, exploration, photography, writing, and the usage of ICT´s, fashion, oral expression, animation, acting, cinematography and other audiovisual means. All the tasks involved the main elements of the CLIL approach in which the classes had the pre, while and post moments, the different aims proposed in every activity were

framed into the 4Cs curriculum guidance, and there were always an aim for content and an aim for language.

According with Coyle (2005) in her document "CLIL: Panning tools for teachers", this approach is flexible and there are many different models depending on the range of the contextual factor. Every activity was addressed to fit under a different learning focus and the whole process was either recorder or photographed:

Flip book. This activity was built under a model where CLIL might consist of say the study of motion and the basics of manual animation in a foreign language which is investigated from the art perspective linking wherever possible language to space and place (Coyle, 2005). The main communicative skills that students could develop were Speaking and Listening while following simple instructions.

The aim consisted in creating a short animation in paper to understand the principles of motion. It was asked to students to construct the book from the beginning preparing all the needed material and to draw some sketches freely to practice cartoon drawing (See Figure 4). The intellectual demand was mainly centered in applying and creating, it was an exercise cognitively undemanding because of the artistic perspective but context embedded working through the usage of easy language. Also, students had the opportunity to work in their visual-spatial and intrapersonal intelligences.

Figure 4. Cartoon sketches made by a student for the flip book
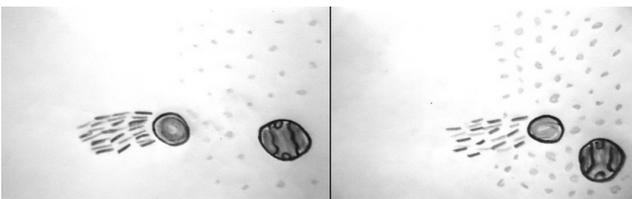
Space exploration. This activity fit, according to Coyle (2005), under the subject topic/syllabus model adapted for teaching in the target language to explore the subject from a different perspective whilst improving all foreign language skills: Speaking, Writing, Listening and Reading. The task had different moments: a warm-up to activate students' pre-knowledge, a lead in to introduce target vocabulary, an input section watching a video and completing a worksheet, and at the end they presented a hypothesis about life in another planet. This entire class had different aspects, some exercises were cognitively demanding with topic specific vocabulary for learning and some had easy content to develop, most of the time the language use was abstract but adapted to the students' English level.

Making a dark camera. This activity was extremely creative in which students comprehended the principles of photography and how a camera works. Likewise, the complete exercise was also constructed where it is possible to re-conceptualize the curriculum in an integrated way and students practiced the skills of Listening, Speaking and Reading while they were following instructions from a worksheet and create, with recycle materials, a black box (See Figure 5). It was an easy content with an easy language exercise, but students learnt the target language and worked three different intelligences: visual-spatial, interpersonal, and naturalistic.

Figure 5. Students with their dark cameras

Creating a screenplay. It was a very challenging task in which students needed to work to develop their Writing skills. This activity is a Cross curricular project (Coyle, 2005) which involves both, language teacher and subject teacher, planning together given that it was necessary for the English teacher to work with the Spanish teacher in order to instruct students how to write correctly under the structure of a script.

After working the film script format in the Spanish subject, students adapted the English language

into the short movie script. The exercise asked for a high cognitively demand because of the complex language structure and it was developed through the modality of R.A.F.T (differentiation strategy for Reading and Writing, Role-Audience-Format-Topic) that is used to do writing activities within other subjects. Students were organized by small groups so the worked in their interpersonal aspects using their verbal-linguistic intelligence and high order thinking skills like composing, imagining, and designing.

A creative storyboard. Developing this task, students worked out their Reading skills in English and their drawing skills in Arts. This was also under the Subject topic/syllabus model adapted for teaching in the target language to explore the subject (Coyle, 2005). Students developed a worksheet (See Figure 6) and read an adapted text about movies. At the end of this lesson, they had to create in groups a part of the storyboard of the movie script, and every time a picture was drawn, they described it with a short sentence. This exercise demanded an easy content because the artistic structure was not so complex; however, there was complex language to process and students developed high order thinking skills like analyzing and constructing.

Figure 6. Student Working in class
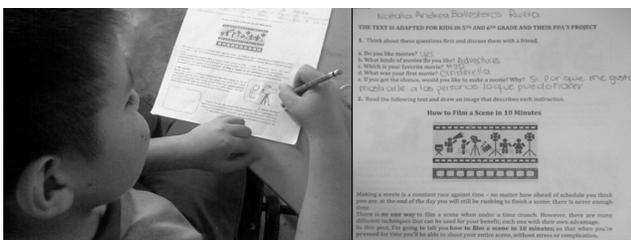
Character presentation
This activity was focused in developing creativity in students so they could appropriate their roles and practice their Speaking skills. The model adapted was also where CLIL might consist of say the study of costumes and makeup in a foreign language which is investigated from the art perspective linking wherever possible language to space and place (Coyle, 2005).

In this lesson students used their imagination to create all the costumes and to write and draw a description for the different characters of the movie. When the characterization was done, students presented orally their outfits and attributes. The activity was highly creative and was embedded with a lot of topic specific vocabulary, although the content was reduced because of its artistic nature. High order thinking skills were also developed more in the content side like invent, construct, and design, and compose in both, language and content areas. Students also worked in through verbal-linguistic, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and interpersonal intelligences.

Doing animation. This exercise had different models, the subject topic/syllabus adapted for teaching in the target language to explore the subject, a Cross curricular aspect because the English teacher worked with the ICT teacher to plan the lesson, and CLIL in part consisted of say the study of animation in a foreign language which is investigated from the art perspective linking wherever possible language to space and place (Coyle, 2005).

During this lesson students developed all four language skills (Speaking, Writing, Reading and listening) activating both, High and Low order thinking skills. It was a very demanding task for students where they had to create a short animation after learning all the basics and how it works. The activity had a warm-up section to active the knowledge in students and to introduce the target language, it had a lead in part with a teacher´s presentation of animation, and then, students moved on to do their own animation movie (See Figure 7) on an internet program in English. As a part of the general assessment, students exhibited and watched their animation videos, answered an evaluation grid, and presented a final test about the content in the foreign language.

The activities in general served as a platform to develop many intelligence aspects where the imagination was the main focus, many exercises demanded high cognition, abstract language and content, and learning target language.

Figure 7. Animation Frames

Shooting the movie. This last task was to wrap up all the knowledge and learning processes where students demonstrated their Speaking skills and acting talent. The adopted model was focused where it is possible to re-conceptualize the curriculum in an integrated way and CLIL was focused on the study of acting in a foreign language.

This was a compelling activity that served as a final assessment to the entire project. Once organized the structure of the shooting, dates and places were set to meet and film the different scenes (See Figure 8). This lesson was the most highly cognitive demand; students needed to memorized their bilingual scripts and sometimes improvise.
Intelligences like verbal-linguistic, bodily-kinesthetic, inter and intrapersonal and musical played an essential part in their performances. Another final product of this project was a song that students composed in the subject of Music that served the purpose of mainstreaming within the PPA.

Figure 8. Some movie scenes

Pedagogical guidelines for assessment
This is the platform in which the students' entire process is evaluated. The guidelines (See Tables N°1 & N°2) are created according to the activities of the PPA and the academic standards of Arts and English endorsed by the National Ministry of Education in Colombia, and they were also revised by the Principal of the School.

Table N° 1. School pedagogical achievements for English for fifth and sixth grades.

Aspect
• Identifies and learns the vocabulary about technology and electronic devices like MP3 player, mouse, email, screen, the internet, DVD, video, button, computer and uses it in everyday expressions in English
• Uses different grammatical structures of present simple to ask and answer in English about objects and belongings
• Describes activities and routines in past and organizes them chronologically saying the time and using the correct date expressions
• Reads and understands stories using supporting images and interpreting their meanings
• Speaks and writes about different types of photography in English for the camera project
• Learns new prepositions like out of, into, round, etc. to describe activities
• Produces small scripts in English with short and coherent phrases for the short film project
• Participates with enthusiasm in the different activities of the project like the making of the camera, creating the characters and the animation applying and performing the knowledge in English
• Develops worksheets adequately with bilingual structure building knowledge in other language and analyzing contents in English
• Speaks properly in English during the shooting of the scenes of the short film and learns the corresponding scripts
• Comprehends video and visual material about the topic of the project to complement the personal and creative work
• Is responsible for the tasks and schoolwork assuming consciously the role into the project
• Enjoys learning in English and shows interest participating actively in all class activities

Table N° 2. *School pedagogical achievements for Arts for fifth and sixth grades.*

Aspect
• Creates and builds with cleanliness the dark camera to do comprehension exercises of the shooting structure
• Develops with creativity the sketch of a fictitious character assigning unique characteristics that fit with the project
• Writes stories that inspire into the creation of the topic for the movie
• Participates in group to develop the structures of the script of the movie being creative and exploring all the imagination
• Builds a part of the storyboard to give structure to the content of the movie
• Makes consensus to distribute the characters and duties that are needed to accomplish the making of the movie
• Assumes with enthusiasm and responsibility the movie character
• Performs properly and with good corporal expression during the acting
• Constructs with imagination and creativity the costume that refers to the character
• Contributes by continuously giving ideas during the shooting of the movie about scenography and photography
• Undertakes with responsibility the role inside the group of work to give structure and continuity to the movie
• Makes short and creative animations accordingly with the topic of the movie
• Is responsible for all the work material fulfilling the assigned tasks and always bringing what it is needed to film
• Assists to all the video recordings and takes responsibility with interest and effort

Table N° 3. Evaluation criterion

0% – 59%	60% – 79%	80% - 89%	90% - 100%
Low	Average	High	Superior
In process		Achieved	

Combining CLIL with Arts, students were able to recreate imaginary situations that took them to understand the environment around them and to learn different topics from different areas of knowledge.

Conclusions

The implementation of bilingual activities in the Arts subject within the classroom pedagogical project was based on the combination of many strategies that worked together towards one common objective: construct knowledge promoting creativity and divergent rationale. The PPA and the CLIL approach complemented each other to generate activities from the didactics; both are open to content adaptation and are models of innovation thinking that pursue the curiosity. The general outcomes that emerged from this project are embedded with these two platforms that combined, offer a special condition for making connections and learning in a more meaningful way.

During the development of PPA, students met the standards, created an authentic product and learnt collaboration and communication skills, critical thinking, and life competences. The structure permitted to the students to be in charge of their learning and to have a voice and choice in the construction of knowledge.

CLIL methodology is a flexible platform in which the content determines the learning route and the emphasis is always on accessibility of a foreign language in order to learn. Using CLIL it is possible to identify the cognitive abilities (high and low order thinking skills) needed to discover and build knowledge, and the language skills (Reading, Speaking, Writing and Listening) needed to communicate what it has been learnt.

The subject of Arts can be adapted to any other content keeping students' interests focused on the academic learning; the creativity can be explored from many perspectives and leads to the usage of the highest thinking skill of creating.

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