

LEARNING EUROPEAN LANGUAGES AT SCHOOL: EUROPEAN CLIL RESOURCE CENTRE FOR WEB 2.0 EDUCATION

APRENDER LENGUAS EUROPEAS EN LA ESCUELA: CENTRO EUROPEO DE RECURSOS AICLE PARA LA EDUCACIÓN WEB 2.0

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CLIL has already been established as a valuable approach to both teaching foreign languages and specific subjects since it creates a meaningful context for learning. More specifically, CLIL pedagogical project involves using one or more foreign languages as the vehicle to teach certain subjects within the curriculum (cf. Wolff, 2007). In a global CLIL model ‘both language and content are conceptualised on a continuum without an implied preference for either’ (Coyle, 2007: 543). In Europe, core elements common to all CLIL practice coexist with diverse varieties in implementation depending of national, regional and local characteristics (cf. Ramírez-Verdugo, 2010).

However, in spite of all the attention devoted to CLIL during the last years, recent research reveals that even though CLIL is gaining popularity across Europe, further work is still necessary on relevant methodological strategies and available materials (Ioannou-Georgiou & Pavlou, 2010). Therefore, it seems there is an important need for specific materials, resources and implementation guidelines to guarantee excellence in language and content learning. To reduce the detected difficulties and shortcomings, we have been awarded with the project called *European CLIL Resource*

Centre for Web 2.0 Education (E-CLIL, 504671-LLP-1-2009-1-ES-COMENIUS-CMP), funded with support from the European Commission. The mission of this project is to create motivational resources that will raise engagement and confidence in language and content learning. *E-CLIL* aims at increasing children's exposure to European languages and to improve the quality of teaching through the implementation of CLIL within the European demand for acquiring a mother tongue plus two foreign languages (MT+2, Eurydice, 2006: 8). *E-CLIL* falls within the European philosophy of long life learning programme. It focuses on language learning, learning strategies, multilingualism and multiculturalism. The approach used within E-CLIL involves CLIL and ICT as recommended pedagogical procedure and resources, respectively. The project team has already designed and developed multilingual interactive resources for the use of CLIL teachers and learners.

Within the framework of this three-year- investigation, an initial piloting of the resources created was conducted last June 2011 in Madrid (Spain). The feedback provided by teachers and learners was taken into account to specify the enhancement still required both in terms of content, language and technology development. Once that improvement was complete the research has been extended to a new pilot study which is taking place in Belgium, Bulgaria and Spain at the moment. When this pilot phase concludes, we intend to make the project resources available worldwide so that a large community of children and teachers can benefit from E-CLIL.

More specifically, in the present paper we report on the findings obtained from this initial piloting phase. This study investigates the worth interactive digital resources may bring to a Primary education context. In this sense, a central digital story and related CLIL Internet-based games, all originally created for this project, entail three main learning objectives which involve exposing young learners to European languages, children literature and science content. Our main hypothesis at this stage of the study was to prove whether these interactive digital resources may enhance 8 to 10 year-old students' learning involvement and CLIL achievement. In the initial piloting phase of the study, these digital materials were presented to a total of 120 students enrolled in three different CLIL schools in the region of Madrid. Six experienced English teachers participated in the study and followed the guidelines provided by the project researchers. In order to gather objective data that may prove our hypothesis, both

learners and teachers completed specific questionnaires which were then statistically analysed. The data gathered through questionnaires, interviews and observation has been used to extend progressively the piloting to other European countries participating in the project. This larger study will hopefully provide information on cross-cultural similarities or differences regarding the results already obtained here. The initial findings indicate this approach adds a very positive value to a CLIL learning context at linguistic, content, literary, cognitive, social and cultural levels. This outcome is very much in line with the ideas expressed by scholars such as (cf. Johnstone, Kubanek-German & Taeschner, 1998; Marsh, Maljers & Hartiala, 2001; Marsh, 2002; Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008).

We conclude this paper by referring to the language learning philosophy behind the interactive activities, tasks and games created. All resources created so far have been translated in to the project languages to promote a multicultural dimension. Finally, the project, in its Web 2.0 dimension, involves teachers, learners and educationalists to interact and collaborate with each other. Therefore, it is intended to create opportunities for educators around Europe to engage with the project through social network groups, by providing CLIL resources for evaluation and by using the resources produced by E-CLIL project.

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