

INTRODUCTION

This project has been done thanks to a Paid Study Leave (Type C) given by the Departament d'Educació de la Generalitat de Catalunya (Resolució EDU/2113/2008, de 27 de juny).

The idea of developing a CLIL project in the last level of Preschool (P5) came up after having taught for two academic years English as a Foreign Language to the students of Preschool (P3 – P5) in the school CEIP ESPAI 3 in Sant Joan Despí under the application of the “Pla experimental de Llengües Estrangeres: Competència comunicativa en Llengua Anglesa a l'Educació Infantil i Primària”.

According to the Preschool Curriculum, the three main subjects of it have to be conceived with a global and interdisciplinary criteria. Bearing in mind this idea, because of the psycho - evolutionary characteristics of the children at these ages and due to the organization of the Preschool stage, we could consider advisable to use the CLIL methodology in the last level of Preschool (P5).

As the project is going to be implemented in the school CEIP ESPAI 3 in Sant Joan Despí with the children of P5 (last year of Preschool) during the academic year 2009 – 2010 and the following years, it has been developed taking into consideration the main pedagogical principles of the PEC (Projecte Educatiu de Centre), the Projecte Lingüístic del Centre (PLC) and the Planning of P5 (3r Nivell de Concreció) of the school.

The project consists in 6 different Didactic Units which last about 6 hours each one (total of 35 hours) and it is going to be put into practice in the school above mentioned with one weekly session that will last about 1 ½ hours.

CLIL IN PRESCHOOL: A GLOBAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

As the organization of the stage of Preschool is very different from the stage of Primary I considered that, instead of focusing on doing CLIL in just one subject (as it's usually done in Primary and Secondary Education), it would be more efficient to organize the project as the preschool stage is arranged: in different topics that few times affect just one subject but that usually affect more than one if not all of them. So, it is for the above mentioned that all the didactic units have been done from a global and interdisciplinary perspective.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The main objectives of this project are:

1. To improve the communicative competence of students, especially when referring to oral skills (oral comprehension and expression) and focusing on fluency rather than on accuracy.
2. To learn contents from other areas using the English language.
3. To conceive the English language as a tool / way of communication that is used in a normalized environment (English as the vehicular language for learning other subjects than English)
4. To develop themselves intellectually and emotionally

PLANNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

As a Preschool teacher that has been teaching English as a Foreign Language in this stage, when I decided to do this project I wanted to maintain the idea of globalization and interrelation that features Preschool. In this way, I knew that when proposing the activities it was essential to bear in mind, at all times, the idea of a Preschool teacher creating materials for Preschool children and leaving apart the point of view of a specialist teacher (English teacher/ Primary teacher/ Science teacher/ etc.) .

Each Didactic Unit has the following features:

1. Stories: Every Didactic Unit, and the contents worked in it, always has, as a starting point, a story, tale, ... Sometimes the stories are presented with a story book, other times in a media support (DVD) and other times in the form of a song and/or dance. The stories and books used in the project are, at all times, original stories/films/songs from English speaking writers (Eric Carle, David McKee, etc.).

2. Type of activities:

There are written and oral activities but it is very important to give special relevance to those activities where a discussion is started.

Because of the age of the students, we can think that it is very difficult to maintain a conversation or a discussion in a foreign language with them. Here the main purpose is to make the children be in touch with the language in a natural way, focusing on the general meaning of what we are saying and assuring that they have a general comprehension that guarantees a global understanding of the concepts worked in the Didactic Unit.

When working with open questions, there are some conditions to take into consideration:

- a) In an oral activity, always try to use the same grammatical structures: This will help children to reproduce them and will make easier their comprehension as well as the students' production.
- b) When children answer in their mother tongue, always repeat their answer in English so they can repeat it and, afterwards, answer in English on their own.
i.e.: - *How do you think this boy feels?*
- *Està trist...*
- *Oh!, so he's sad/ This boy is sad/ We don't say "trist", we say sad*
- *etc.*

Using this strategy, we'll see that the first ones to answer will do it in their mother tongue but after 3 or 4 have answered the same question, the next ones will try to do it in English even though the answer is not the same.

- c) Using open questions and discussions will help the children improve their comprehension as well as a better understanding of the concepts worked in the Didactic Unit.
- d) In order to assure the comprehension it is advisable to use other supports than verbal language. Visual language is very important in this stage, so we're going to need visual aids like images (photographs, illustrations, ...) as well as the use of body language.

About the written activities, these are always going to be an extension of the oral ones. In this way, they are always going to be preceded by an oral activity and, when possible, the correction of them is going to be done orally and with the whole group.

3. Types of grouping:

Depending on the activities we're going to do different types of groups: Individual work, Pair Work, Group work (4-8 pupils) and whole group.

TOPICS OF THE PROJECT

When choosing the topics to develop, I've taken into account the different themes proposed in the general planning of the level P5 in the school. Sometimes, the Didactic Units are an extension of the specific ones (Dinosaurs, Wild animals) but other times are also an extension of the Transversal themes worked during the whole year such as the ones related to the Emotional Education (Feelings, I'm different).

The topics developed in this project are the following:

1. Means of Transport and Community Workers: Differences between Public and Private Means of transport (street signs, stations, etc.); advantages and disadvantages of using Public and Private Means of Transport; different means of transport used by Community Workers (fire men, police men, doctors, etc.); places used to develop Community Jobs, etc.
2. Dinosaurs: A comparison of different types of Dinosaurs and their main features (food, length, weight, ...); differentiation between herbivorous and carnivorous animals; conditions of life of Dinosaurs.
3. Eating Healthy: Recognition and identification of the different meals of the day; Observation and identification of different categories of food; Awareness of the importance of having a healthy diet.
4. Feelings: Identification and recognition of different emotions through pictures; Express oneself emotions orally and through pictures; Anticipation of different behaviours according to certain feelings.
5. Wild Animals: Recognition of different natural habitats and their main features including the animals that live there and their main characteristics.
6. I'm different: Self - esteem (acceptation of oneself and others as they are); differences among people according to a certain criteria: age, race, ...

With the exception of the Didactic Unit "I'm different", which lasts 5 hours divided in two sessions of 90' and two more of 60' each one, the rest have a length of 6 hours divided in sessions of 90' each one.

Even though each Didactic Unit has been planned taking into account what is being done in the general planning and all of them are related in a way that each activity is connected with the one done before, it is also possible to, if necessary, avoid or shorten some of the activities proposed. In the same way, when developing the Didactic Units it is not necessary to follow the order established in this document as the themes are independent and don't have a direct relation among them.

The subjects worked in each topic are:

1. Means of Transport and Community Workers: Environment Discovery (*Coneixement del Medi*) and Communication and Languages (*Comunicació i Llenguatges*)
2. Dinosaurs: Environment Discovery (*Coneixement del Medi*) and Communication and Languages (*Comunicació i Llenguatges*)
3. Eating Healthy: Discovery of Oneself and the others (*Descoberta d'un mateix i dels altres*) Environment Discovery (*Coneixement del Medi*) and Communication and Languages (*Comunicació i Llenguatges*)
4. Feelings: Discovery of Oneself and the others (*Descoberta d'un mateix i dels altres*) and Communication and Languages (*Comunicació i Llenguatges*)
5. Wild Animals: Environment Discovery (*Descoberta de l'Entorn*) and Communication and Languages (*Comunicació i Llenguatges*)
6. I'm Different: Discovery of Oneself and the Others (*Descoberta d'un Mateix i dels altres*) and Communication and Languages (*Comunicació i Llenguatges*)

SUPPORT MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

All the activities proposed have support materials that will be needed in order to develop the project. These are mainly:

1. Power Point and Word files which have been created purposely for this project
2. Books, DVDs, Songs: All the books, DVDs and songs proposed in each Didactic Unit can be bought in book stores or in internet bookstores such as www.amazon.com, www.waterstones.co.uk, ...
3. Internet Files: There are some files that have been taken from Educational websites that offer free downloadable materials (www.learningpage.com, www.readinga-z.com, etc.)

CONCLUSIONS

My assessment about the experience of having spent eight months in United Kingdom to develop a CLIL project is very positive for many reasons.

Having had the opportunity of working there in two different schools as a Spanish Language Assistant, has given me the chance to compare the British Educational System with the Catalan one which has been a very enriching experience, personal and professional.

It also has given me the opportunity of learning other ways/ methods referred to education and management in the classroom and, obviously, without having gone there, it would have been much more difficult and complicated to find and know about the different resources I've used in the project, especially those that refer to children's literature.

In addition, as the amount of hours working as a Spanish Language Assistant was less than the usual for the rest of the teachers, I had the opportunity to attend other lessons in the school in order to take ideas and see how they worked when dealing with certain aspects of the Curriculum that could help me to do the Project.

On the other hand, I found very useful the course organized by the Departament d'Educació before we started our stage in U.K and which helped us to put in order all we knew about CLIL methodology. I should also mention the seminar I attended three years ago in Barcelona with Penelope Williams (also organized by the Departament d'Educació), as when planning and deciding how to develop the project I considered all the ideas and "philosophy" she passed us on when working with preschoolers.

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<u>The Mixed up Chameleon</u>	The Illuminated Film Company LTD/Scholastic	2006		DVD

INTERNET RESOURCES (Images and Downloadable Materials):

NOTE: When using images and downloadable materials, I've always tried to use web pages where images are free. Even though, sometimes I've used web searchers (Google, ...) in order to find a proper image. In the list below I am mentioning those pictures found in different web pages where it wasn't specified if their pictures were free or not. If by any chance, you would find a picture that is not referred and that should be, I would appreciate you let me know it in order to amend the error and add it in the list.

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