



Globalizing the Curriculum in the CLIL Classroom

Gabriel Alfaro, Jesús Paz-Albo
Universidad Rey Juan Carlos

Abstract: Twenty-first century learning allows for teachers to incorporate teaching and pedagogy, social media and personal learning networks in education for active and intercultural language learning in their classrooms. The proposed globalized curriculum included inviting guest professional speakers of diverse backgrounds from the global educational community to talk about their careers to students and more importantly how they use the English language and raise consciousness of multilingualism and intercultural contact. This presented an opportunity for students to ask questions, hear personal testimonies and anecdotes about careers and how English is used and how it has shaped those invited speakers. Students had a realistic expectation of the way the English language works in various professional settings.

Keywords: Globalization, CLIL, plurilingualism, multilingualism, innovative curriculum

1. Objectives:

Teaching in the area of English in a country where English is not the dominant or native language is a challenge for many educators. Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is becoming of great significance and it would be interesting to learn how a global curriculum can impact the way students learn about languages, global citizenship and multiculturalism through guest professional speakers and (digital literacy) social media content. Globally conscious teachers can attempt to utilize a curriculum that is more effective, relatable and useful for students to approach their classrooms using their own personal learning networks (PLN), social media and guest speakers to enhance students' understanding of the complex ways language affects them every day. Moreover, promoting students to be aware and prepared for a multicultural society with multilingual and plurilingual skills to be able to work interculturally is all the more urgent. In addition, the learning of second languages in Spain could be further researched in relation to the experiences of students and the multilingualism they are exposed to within an intra-national setting.

2. Theoretical Framework:

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) was adopted in 1994 within the European context to describe and further good design practice as achieved in different types of school environments where teaching and learning take place in an additional language. CLIL is an educational approach to language learning. As Coyle, Hood, & Marsh (2010) stated "the forces of global change, converging

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technologies and adaptability to the subsequent Knowledge Age present challenges for education...CLIL is not exclusive to the promotion of English as a world language but is embedded in the socio-economic, political and cultural traditions of different nations” (p. 9). Further, the reality for many students is that most English speakers around the world speak non-standard English (Crystal, 2012). CLIL and English learning is not looking to promote the learning of English in any hegemonic sense but rather as a language medium that many students throughout the European Union (E.U.) are increasingly learning. In addition, it may be helpful to consider the benefits of introducing this CLIL approach to the teaching-learning process and how the four Cs of CLIL form a conceptual framework connecting content, cognition, communication and culture.

3. Methodology:

Language teachers may often be unaware of educational developments; they may have access to a limited PLN (Commission of the European Communities, 2003). However, language teachers need the advice of trained mentors as well as regular opportunities to “facilitate contacts and effective networks between them at a regional, national and European level” (Commission of the European Communities, 2003, p. 10). Therefore, a *Guest Professional Speaker Series* (GPSS) was implemented in a CLIL English middle school classroom located in Navarre during the academic year.

Guest speakers of diverse backgrounds from the global community were invited to talk about their careers and more importantly how they use the English language. The frequency of this series was monthly and was contingent upon the school schedule, guest time’s schedules and events at the school. This GPSS was facilitated by inviting guests formally to come and speak into the classroom or via Skype-conversation utilizing digital tools and resources available, although in person presence was preferred. This GPSS presented an opportunity for students to ask questions, hear personal testimonies and anecdotes about careers and how English is used and how it has shaped those invited speakers and give the students a realistic expectation of the way the English language works in various professional settings.

Speakers ranged from other educators to wind energy engineers to food scientists to pilot/flight instructors to wine experts to entrepreneurs. They each gave a brief summary with visuals summarizing what they worked in, how they worked and how the English language was a critical medium for them to effectively communicate in their respective fields.

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4. Results:

Of the CLIL classroom of 20 students, 65% of the students passed the Cambridge First Certificate, and 7 students missed it by 2-3 points. This was the group that was exposed to this new GPSS curriculum. This global curriculum with teachers and guests highlighted the importance of English language learning, attainment, and effective usage (as opposed to unlikely native fluency attainment) for students. This GPSS challenged student's perceptions of languages and culture as symbolic systems for creating and interpreting meanings, not as facts and information but rather anew call on building cultural linguistic literacies and understanding. In fact, the metalinguistic awareness in students was heightened deliberately so as to challenge them to think inter and intra-culturally here in global community.

5. Discussion:

The challenge was for the educational community to become globally aware of the accelerated growth of people communicating in more than two languages going beyond traditional ways of thinking of education. CLIL as an approach to language teaching can help remedy this as teachers prepare students to identify, iterate and problem solve many of current dramas undertaking society at the moment that are changing how students live, how they study and how they think. In fact, as more people communicate in English as a lingua franca, it will also be important to use a range of social media tools to interact with other educators and expose students to a wide-ranging PLN. This will allow guest speakers to offer testimony to the complexity that is speaking languages other than your own with people around the world where English may not have been necessarily their first language.

Understanding the study of English in other global settings using the GPSS approach supported the improvement of students learning achievement and language attainment. Moreover, students' language learning was challenged and posited in different contexts through the storytelling and anecdotes of the speakers. The integration of GPSS in the curriculum played a transformational role in students learning, and it may bring greater connectivity about by technology and globalization (European Commission, 2012).

6. Contributions:

The merits of sharing guest professional knowledge of how English language learning has been fundamental for their careers is an innovative use of teachers PLN. Learning how the English language is the predominant medium of communication and understanding (and misunderstandings) in global contexts, especially relating to socio political, economic, business, science and technology matters. Additionally, offering the students the ability to hear from local

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community professionals in their fields, it would lend credence to the English teaching educators to constantly reflect on their curriculum. Although this study sample was small, it can further the notion of the reflective learner and teacher in the pursue of meaningful feedback to enhance the curriculum, and it can transform and deepen students understanding of language attainment.

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