



Research Papers in Language Teaching and Learning

Vol. 8, No. 2, February 2017, 160-161

ISSN: 1792-1244

Available online at <http://rpltl.eap.gr>

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CLIL 'ARENA'—EPISODE 4

Reflection on CLIL implementation in an EFL Primary School classroom

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I have been teaching English in Primary schools for 20 years and I received in-service training in CLIL methodology, for two weeks in 2010, in Edinburgh within the framework of Comenius actions. Ever since, I try to organize CLIL projects with my classes.

A CLIL event that I distinguish was implemented within the framework of the action 'teachers4europe' in the school year 2013-14. The action aimed at engaging students of the 6th grade of the 4th Primary school of Pefka in hands-on activities in order to conceive the idea of the EU 'united in diversity'. The idea was linked to the specific unit in Geography of the sixth grade, which is about Europe and the European Union. Simultaneously, the first unit of the textbook 'English 6th grade' is about countries, nationalities and our multicultural world. To this end, I designed a WebQuest, with the title 'European Corner' available at: www.zunal.com/webquest.php?w=231686.

WebQuests are educational tools that include an authentic task which the students implement using specific sources from the Web, following specific steps. The students work in groups and they investigate the topic, transforming the acquired knowledge into a final product. WebQuests consist of an introduction, an explanation of the task, a description of the process to be followed, the resources, an evaluation and a conclusion (Dodge, 1995; March, 2004).

Following this educational tool, 34 students participated in the project, in two sections. Through the WebQuest, the students gathered information about various countries in Europe, their capitals, flags, population, products, climate, foods and languages. They watched videos and they designed maps, a fairy tale, a board game and finally a European corner with all the materials they had created. They also brought souvenirs to decorate the European corner.

After the creation of the European corner, the project went on with activities about European citizenship. Thus, the children created posters for a better world, with drawings and slogans for the environment, friendship against bullying and racism, respect for the

different. The action developed and the next year it was transformed to an eTwinning and Erasmus+ project with the title 'United in diversity through stories in Europe' for the years 2014-2016. Taking part in this action, I try to design CLIL events combining the aims of this European partnership with the aims of the curriculum.

I think that CLIL is worth the effort because it presupposes designing of interesting tasks. The students feel motivated and confident with CLIL as the activities are organized according to their level and prior knowledge about specific areas of the curriculum. Also, they experience a sense of self-efficacy gaining knowledge about subjects through language learning.

Organizing CLIL activities I constantly search the Internet to find motivating material, videos, worksheets, games, stories, etc. I also cooperate with the teachers of general education about the subject areas I include. An effective CLIL teacher has to search a lot, be competent in new technologies, cooperate, be informed and eager to learn. And within the classroom, (s)he has to act as a facilitator, introducing enjoyable activities away from traditional teaching.

References

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