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Résumé : La méthodologie CLIL fournit des instruments non seulement pour résoudre certaines difficultés mais aussi pour créer un milieu d'apprentissage favorable aux apprenants et aux enseignants. L'utilisation des principes CLIL comme la planification collaborative, la réflexion sur l'apprentissage entre apprenants et enseignants, la présentation plus authentique des arguments, etc., nous ont induit à utiliser des techniques d'enseignement et des exercices, tels que le *scaffolding*, les études de cas, les présentations PowerPoint et les dossiers. Ainsi, nous abordons une expérience d'apprentissage partagé qui nous rapproche du niveau de langue ou de contenu requis pour soutenir les examens de la certification de Cambridge. Le parcours débute par une matière complexe qui vise à améliorer progressivement la langue par les connaissances géographiques, et donne des résultats satisfaisants en trois ans dans les deux disciplines, linguistique et non linguistique.

Mots-clés : Géographie, CLIL, certification, étude de cas.

Riassunto: La metodologia CLIL fornisce gli strumenti non solo per risolvere alcune difficoltà, ma anche per creare un ambiente di apprendimento che metta a proprio agio gli studenti e gli insegnanti. L'uso dei principi CLIL come la pianificazione collaborativa, la riflessione sull'apprendimento tra gli insegnanti e gli apprendenti, la presentazione in modo più reale degli argomenti, etc. ci ha indotto a usare tecniche di insegnamento ed esercizi, quali lo *scaffolding*, gli studi del caso, presentazioni PowerPoint e dossieri. Così facendo, ci stiamo avvicinando ad un'esperienza di apprendimento condiviso che porta vicino al livello di lingua o di contenuto richiesto per sostenere gli esami Cambridge. Il percorso inizia con una materia complessa e migliorando via via la lingua con la conoscenza geografica e dà dopo tre anni risultati soddisfacenti in entrambe le materie.

Parole chiave: Geografia, CLIL, certificazione, studio di casi.

Abstract: Content and Language Integrated Learning provides guidance not only on how to solve some learning difficulties but also gives some reassurance with respect to how to create a learning environment that puts both students and teachers at ease. Using CLIL principles like cooperative planning; reflection on learning between teacher and student; making topics more real for students etc.. led us to use teaching techniques and exercises such as scaffolding, case studies, PowerPoint presentations and dossiers. In doing so, and not without hitches and mishaps, we are getting closer to a shared learning experience that leads to the language level approaching or even reaching the content level in time to face the international exams. The trip starts with a

complex subject and by improving language along with geographical knowledge returns after three years with satisfactory results in both fields.

Key words: Geography, Integrated Learning, Certification, Shared Learning, Case Studies.

The background to the article is the presence in the state school where I teach in Ivrea near Torino of an international language section which promotes a high level of language learning and requires certain subjects to be taught directly through the medium of a second language. The difficulties which have emerged from time to time have led content and language teachers to search for and experiment with new teaching models in order to make the learning and teaching experience both worthwhile and pleasant.

Based on my experience as a teacher of English as a Second Language and Geography taught through the medium English at the liceo Carlo Botta I and my colleague Patrizia Barone began to research (still *work in progress*,) how to motivate our students to learn *with pleasure* a subject which is of itself already linguistically complex in the first language. The peculiarity is that the syllabus is indicated by an external certification body, Cambridge International Examinations. This means that already in their first year students need to use a textbook and read materials which are written entirely in an English that is at a linguistic level above that of most students.

In 2004 Liceo Classico e Internazionale Statale Carlo Botta, the Italian upper secondary school where I teach became an official centre for Cambridge International Examinations, one of the largest providers of examinations in the world. The lead-up to this decision was the fact that the Liceo Classico already had an international bilingual Italian - Spanish Liceo Linguistico and there was local interest in increasing the quantity and quality of English on offer. Cambridge International Examinations was the organization which met our requirements, that is, the opportunity to dedicate more time to the language, to teach other subjects through the medium of English and to obtain a form of qualification which is recognized in the United Kingdom and other English-speaking countries. The school therefore adopted an IGCSE syllabus for English as a Second Language and Geography with other subjects to follow.

The choice of English as a Second Language was obvious whereas the reasoning behind the choice of Geography was first and foremost inspired by the introduction to the CIE Geography syllabus for IGCSE;

« Through the IGCSE Geography syllabus, students will develop a 'sense of place' by looking at the world around them on a local, regional and global scale. Students will look at the ways in which people interact with their environment, and the opportunities and challenges an environment can present, thereby gaining a deeper insight into the different communities and cultures that exist around the world ».

The second reason for the choice of Geography was the conviction that this subject, taught through another language in an international environment would enrich the students linguistically and culturally. The third and simplest reason was the availability of native speaker teachers with a qualification to teach Geography.

The next step was the passage from theory to practice and the selection of teaching materials. We decided not to create new materials or to adapt existing material but to throw students (and ourselves) in at the deep end and use a textbook specifically intended for this type of syllabus without any simplification for non native-speakers. As the syllabus was being offered at first year of upper secondary school and the language level of the students was approximately A2 on the European Language Framework this led us to the quandary; how can we adapt content level to language level?

After some trial and error, while trying to keep first language to a minimum, the best solutions turned out to be the use of scaffolding and brainstorming as an introduction to each new topic and the identification of key words and phrases in a group-work situation. While encouraging students to find out meanings among themselves and to compare different ideas in a non-competitive way, it goes without saying that one of the roles of the teacher was to maintain a relaxed and secure learning environment.

As young 14 year olds approach a new subject in a new school they bring with them a certain enthusiasm and positivity. However as a school subject in Italy, Geography is rarely among students' favorites. So how does one maintain the motivation for a subject which is not only considered to be of secondary importance but is also being studied in another language?

I found it necessary to remind myself of my own experiences as a secondary school student and to try to see the situation from the students' point of view. At this point I remembered a handout I had read at a teacher-training meeting (Dweck, 2006):

Mindsets

How do you feel and what do you do:

- when you are faced with a problem or obstacle?
- when you are criticized?
- when you are faced with a challenge?
- when you are asked to expend a lot of effort?
- when you see someone else succeed?

As these are common-place situations for students on a daily basis I became convinced that I needed to spend more time on my approach to teaching not only Geography in English but also teaching English itself. This of course led directly to how best to approach teaching Geography and English together, in other words Content and Language Integrated Learning.

My own training in CLIL includes attendance at a British Council conference in Berlin, training days organized by publishing companies in Turin and Milan, the University of Torino CLIFU conference in 2010, the Helsinki CLIL Competence Building for Globalization conference in 2006 and the State-of-the-Art CLIL training course in Rovaniemi in September 2009. From these courses/training days I took on board the CLIL methodology goals including the four Cs; Cognition, Community, Content; Communication (Mehisto, Marsh, Frijols, 2008).

I also began some in-house training with interested colleagues based around the Core CLIL Activators (Mehisto, Bertaux, Frijols, 2009):

- engaging students
- making it real
- planning with students
- cooperating for consolidation
- managing the affective side of learning
- managing language
- systematizing integration
- reflecting on practice

The combination of this training and reflection with colleagues confirmed for us the necessity to continue with the use of Scaffolding and Key Word identification in a group situation as the model to follow when introducing new topics before continuing along more traditional lines integrated by personal research and the production of Case Studies.

As oral production is an important part both of language learning and traditional Italian assessment we adopted the PowerPoint presentation as the most suitable method to assess language and content. This system has the added advantage of being almost *natural* for today's students while offering a form of support to those who are less inclined to speak in class.

At the moment written Case Studies and PowerPoint presentations appear to us Geography teachers to be efficient tools for assessing language and content as well as being gratifying for the students. Moreover recent results at IGCSE Geography examinations have borne this out.

Bibliography

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Presentazione dell'autore

Gerry Colohan, laureato presso la National University of Ireland Galway in Inglese e Geografia (B.A.), e anche in Higher Diploma in Education presso la stessa Università (abilitazione all'insegnamento), è stato docente d'inglese in Irlanda, Regno Unito, Svizzera e Italia, scuole private e statali, e insegna attualmente al Liceo Botta, Ivrea. È autore di *First Aid* e *Grammarland* con Patrizia Gorgerino per Edisco editore.