

Creating “Glocal” Classrooms to Promote Communication

Creación de aulas “glocales” para promover la comunicación

Criação de salas de aula “glocais” para promover a comunicação

Jermaine S. McDOUGALD

<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2558-5178>

Universidad de La Sabana, Colombia.

jermaine.mcdougald1@unisabana.edu.co

Introduction

With the globalization of human activities, it has become gradually more important to improve one’s ability to communicate in an additional language. Today, everyone needs to be able to successfully operate in an increasingly globalized world (Ke, 2015; Youssef, 2014), where new communication styles and cultural perspectives differ, allowing learners greater appreciation and understanding of cultural differences. These differences are key in helping learners adjust to various cultural scenarios that will arise throughout their lives. Thus, it is imperative that learners be prepared for the demands of working and living in an increasingly multicultural and interconnected world, and this preparation can be significantly improved by improving language learning and language instruction. By introducing learners to new cultures, historical perspectives, and ways of living and thinking, language classes (L1, L2, or L3) can offer a unique opportunity for creating “glocal” (global + local) classrooms, allowing learners to cross borders within the confines of the educational institution.

Nowadays, it is evident that there is extra added pressure to change certain outdated educational practices that learners and society have outgrown and to find new pedagogical approaches that can be adapted to the cultural and contextual demands (Ananyeva, 2014; Ke, 2015). Latin American institutions are no exception and need to be updated to help learners develop the now necessary societal global skills, while simultaneously helping students to become more competent in today’s world. Including such changes in educational programs demands the integration of learners, teachers, and communities into the process (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010; McDougald, 2016). Aside from curriculum changes, learners should be exposed to knowledge and skills such as ethics, oral communication, languages (L2, L3, etc.), collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving. These skills, which are often left out, are nevertheless inherently connected to language learning and use, which is why it is important for content and language practitioners to focus on authentic and/or genuine ways to promote communication in the classroom.

Unsurprisingly, 21st century skills have catapulted to the forefront of many educational agendas. Yet, even though it has become a “buzz word” for many, they are still essential “multidimensional” skills that learners will need if they are to successfully compete at all levels within society, both in education and the workplace (Granados, 2018; Scott, 2015). The skills students now need are not new to educators, however, and they basically evolve around three main areas: a) critical thinking and problem solving (which has to do with meeting the challenges of delivering content and skills in a rich way that genuinely improves outcomes for students); b) developing self-direction, collaboration, creativity, and innovation (which are part of the life skills that everyone should develop); and c) skills for collaborating with teachers.

Strategies to Use the Language Class to Prepare Students for Real-World Communication

There are a number of strategies that could be employed to increase communication in the classroom as part of preparing 21st-century learners (Eaton, 2001; Scott, 2015). Such strategies are a reminder of how effective communication can lead to authentic, real-world opportunities for languages in the classroom. To begin with, it must be understood that language learning is a process that cannot be completed overnight. There are five distinguishable phases of first- and second-language acquisition, and each phase is based on those preceding it and can be classified by its own challenges and advances. Educating learners about this process would better prepare them to understand that mistakes are a natural part of a language-learning process, an understanding that could increase learner motivation, decrease affective filters, and ultimately lead to increased authentic communication.

Another strategy is to create an immersion-like experience. It is no secret that one of the best ways to learn a language is through immersion, allowing learners to be in constant contact with the language and using that language to communicate basic information (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, & Smit, 2010; Smit, 2007; Tatzl, 2011). This kind of situation challenges learners to expand their vocabularies, increase their confidence,

and develop improved speaking and listening skills. Immersion does not necessarily require learners to travel abroad to countries where the target language is spoken by a majority; it can also be accomplished if teachers become more creative—by, for example, inviting a target-language (English, French, Spanish, etc.) speaker to speak in front of the class from time to time, or by connecting students through audio/video/conferencing ICT tools (e.g., Skype, Zoom, Google Hangouts) to students in another class who are speakers of the language being taught. Teachers can even create conversation groups, book clubs, or any other semi-formal spaces to communicate in the target language outside the classroom. Yet, even changing interaction patterns within the classroom (e.g., through pair and group work) can be tools through which students can experience forms of linguistic immersion.

Additionally, teachers should constantly encourage their learners to think in the target language (Halbach, 2012; Ranney, 2012). Thinking in a second or third language is an important step towards fluency, and although it may be easier said than done, teachers and practitioners alike should nevertheless encourage thinking throughout the learning process (Anderson, 2011; Khatib & Taie, 2016; Valian, 2015). This process can be facilitated by creating open environments: Teachers should not be afraid to let students take control of the class or content from time to time by letting them teach. Even better, they can be assigned research projects in the target language, or by asking them open-ended “fat” questions, which tend to require thoughtful, multiword answers.

In this issue

The articles in this issue of the *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning* (LACLIL, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2018) focus on the role of language, the importance of materials design, and the need for teacher training when integrating language and content. These issues are all prime examples of the challenges still faced in many classrooms around the globe, continuing to drive practitioners to ever-greater innovation and creativity in the classroom, as students’ needs set the pace for teaching and learning. The articles in this issue of LACLIL provide

perspectives on increasing communication in the classroom in preparation for 21st-century learners and further touch on how varying degrees of communication can lead to more realistic and authentic opportunities for language learning (whether, L1, L2 or L3). This issue also reports results from studies of how to bring authentic language into the curriculum and create/design appropriately contextualized CLIL materials.

The issue begins with an examination of the role of language objectives in secondary math and science courses with Emergent Bilinguals. Hansen-Thomas, Langman and Farias (2018) argue that teachers, over time, tend to develop awareness of language objectives; however, increased teacher training with both pre- and in-service teachers is still a priority. Yang (2018) looks at how English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teachers and trained interns could work collaboratively to produce “contextualized” CLIL learning materials for university students in Taiwan. In this study, the research team used data relating to learners’ gender and language proficiency, along with the interns’ knowledge gained during their studies in secondary school. Ferrando (2018) also considers challenges with the design and adaptation of CLIL materials for a history course in Spain. Tailor-made courses were found to be a key part of ensuring a real connection between the language and historical content, and Ferrando included different historical-linguistic discourse levels as part of the new didactic materials designed for such courses.

On the other hand, Mede and Çınar (2018) examines the effects of implementing CLIL with Turkish EFL learners in a university-level language program, looked at the effects of CLIL on students’ motivation, grammar scores, and vocabulary development, finding that CLIL indeed helped support performance increases. Areas such as assessment and evaluation are also still on researchers’ radar, and not only as parts of CLIL approaches but because assessment and evaluation are concepts often mistaken for each other, which can create unnecessary stress for learners and teachers alike. Otto (2018) conducted a systematic literature review on CLIL assessment and proposes a functional model to aid teachers—of both content and language—with management of language issues for learners with limited language proficiency in a variety of content and language subjects.

Taken together, the articles in the present issue of LACLIL are reminders of the many complexities that remain to be addressed when

combining/integrating language and content, due to the many variables existing in such contexts: diverse teacher profiles, types of learner, and curriculum requirements. Although the ingredients for good “CLIL cooking” can be found in different shapes, sizes, and colors, we need to be aware of our learners’ tastes, interests, and likes/dislikes. With attention to such elements, “CLIL cooking” can start to look, smell, and taste like the recipe for which it was designed. Yet questions remain about how well we are preparing our classes for “glocal” diversity and how teachers can best adapt teaching styles and classroom culture, use authentic classroom examples derived from different industries, embrace language difficulties, and encourage shy learners by focusing on their strengths rather than their deficiencies. All these issues need to be placed at the top of our lists for success in the “glocal” classroom, the need for which is, after all, not so far away—and, in fact, much closer than many of us may imagine.

References

- Ananyeva, M. (2014). A learning curriculum: Toward student-driven pedagogy in the context of adult English for academic purposes, English for specific purposes, and workplace English programs. *TESOL Journal*, 5, 8 -31. DOI: 10.1002/tesj.73
- Anderson, C. E. (2011). CLIL for CALP in the multilingual, pluricultural, globalized knowledge society: Experiences and backgrounds to L2 English usage among Latin American L1 Spanish-users. *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning*, 4(2), 51–66. DOI: 10.5294/laclil.2011.4.2.5
- Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (2010). *CLIL: Content and language integrated learning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Dalton-Puffer, C., Nikula, T., & Smit, U. (2010). ‘CLIL and Immersion Classrooms: Applied Linguistic Perspectives.’ *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 20(3), 432–433. DOI: 10.1111/j.1473-4192.2010.00271.x
- Eaton, S. E. (2001). Global trends in language learning in the 21st Century 2010. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 27–43. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED510276>

- Granados, J.** (2018). The challenges of higher education in the 21st century. *Global University Network of Innovation*. Retrieved from <http://www.guninetwork.org/articles/challenges-higher-education-21st-century>
- Halbach, A.** (2012). Questions about basic interpersonal communication skills and cognitive language proficiency. *Applied Linguistics*, 33(5), 608–613. DOI: 10.1093/applin/ams058
- Hansen-Thomas, H., Langman, J. & Farias, T.** (2018). The role of language objectives: Building math and science teachers' language awareness with emergent bilinguals in secondary classrooms. *Latin American Journal of Content & Language Integrated Learning*, 11(2), 193-214. DOI: 10.5294/lacil.2018.11.2.2
- Ke, I.-C.** (2015). A global language without a global culture: From basic English to global English. *English as a Global Language Education (EaGLE) Journal*, 1(11), 65–87. DOI: 10.6294/EaGLE.2015.0101.04
- Khatib, M., & Taie, M.** (2016). BICS and CALP: Implications for SLA. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 7(2), 382. DOI: 10.17507/jltr.0702.19
- Ferrando, E.** (2018). La enseñanza de segundas lenguas mediante contenidos históricos. Propuesta de un modelo teórico-práctico para el diseño de materiales basados en el enfoque AICLE. *Latin American Journal of Content & Language Integrated Learning*, 11(2), 275-307. DOI: 10.5294/lacil.2018.11.2.5
- McDougald, J. S.** (2016). Is CLIL becoming a hub connecting research, policy, and practice? *Latin American Journal of Content & Language Integrated Learning*, 9(1), 7–16. DOI: 10.5294/lacil.2016.9.1.1
- Mede, E. & Çinar, S.** (2018). Implementation of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and its effects on student motivation. *Latin American Journal of Content & Language Integrated Learning*, 11(2), 215-235. DOI: 10.5294/lacil.2018.11.2.3
- Otto, A.** (2018). Assessing language in content and language integrated learning: A review of the literature towards a functional model. *Latin American Journal of Content & Language Integrated Learning*, 11(2), 308-325. DOI: 10.5294/lacil.2018.11.2.6
- Ranney, S.** (2012). Defining and teaching academic language: Developments in K-12 ESL. *Linguistics and Language Compass*, 6(9), 560–574. DOI: 10.1002/lnc3.354
- Scott, C. L.** (2015). *The futures of learning 3: What kind of pedagogies for the 21st century?* (Education Research and Foresight Working Papers No. 15). Paris, France: UNESCO.

- Smit, U. (2007). CLIL and immersion classrooms: Applied linguistic perspectives. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 17(2), 266–268. DOI: 10.1111/j.1473-4192.2007.154_1.x
- Tatzl, D. (2011). English-medium masters' programmes at an Austrian university of applied sciences: Attitudes, experiences and challenges. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 10(4), 252–270. DOI: 10.1016/j.jeap.2011.08.003
- Valian, V. (2015). Bilingualism and cognition. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 18(1), 3–24. 10.1017/S1366728914000522
- Yang, W. (2018). Evaluating contextualized CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) materials at tertiary level: A collaboration between ESP practitioners and learners. *Latin American Journal of Content & Language Integrated Learning*, 11(2), 236-274. DOI: 10.5294/lacil.2018.11.2.4
- Youssef, L. (2014). Globalisation and higher education: From within-border to cross-border. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 29(2), 100–115. 10.1080/02680513.2014.932686