

Editorial introduction to *LACLIL* 5(1), April 2012

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It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to a new issue of the *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning (LACLIL)*, offering insights on the theory and practice of CLIL-based approaches from practitioners and researchers in Latin America and around the world.

THIS ISSUE

This issue begins with the first part of a two-part article by Andy Curtis, which takes as its focus the importance of teachers' voices and calls into question an apparent tendency within the field of applied linguistics towards focusing principally (or even exclusively) on students' voices. This article moreover offers a survey of attitudes towards teacher vis-à-vis student voices in Latin American literature on CLIL, and discusses the collection of data from a group of teacher trainees participating in a new joint Master's-level program developed and implemented jointly between Anaheim University (CA, USA) and the University of La Sabana. We may eagerly await the end of this particular story in the second part of this article in the October 2012 issue of the journal.

From Latin America, the next article takes us to Europe: Poland, specifically. In this piece, Beata Gregorczyk addresses issues that will perhaps be familiar to many CLIL advocates—that of doubtful teachers and parents—and describes a research project at the middle school in which she teaches that was able to demonstrate that not only can students learn (in addition to the target language) content in an L2 CLIL context as effectively as in a traditional L1 content-subject context, but that they may even learn that content more effectively than their peers in the L1 classes. This study is not only a welcome addition to the growing body of empirical evidence attesting to the efficacy of the CLIL approach, but a valuable example to other CLIL teachers of “thinking globally, acting locally” and in terms of how research can be effectively employed as a tool for policy development.

Issues related to the implementation of CLIL approaches also feature in Kai Spies's article on the experience of teaching within an intercultural studies program offered as an alternative to the higher levels of more “traditionally” oriented English language courses in a university context. Considering the natural applicability of a CLIL approach to issues of interculturality, but finding that the intercultural studies courses, as designed, included little provision for specific language learning, he reflects on the benefits of bringing together the linguistic competences from the English courses with the content focus of the intercultural studies courses to generate a new CLIL-based offering that would be available to wider range of learner levels and potentially increase the motivation of lower-level learners by building their language skills through interaction with meaningful and relevant content. Similar challenges may well be faced in other language education departments or institutions seeking to incorporate either intercultural focuses (or other content subjects) or CLIL into their curricula.

Challenges posed by CLIL form the subject of Dario Luis Banegas's article, which draws on experiences with teacher development workshop at the University of Warwick (UK) and through workshops in Argentina. Particularly, this article looks at how teachers respond to the

kinds of issues that can be raised by the introduction of CLIL and ways to create space within teacher training programs for systematic reflection and evaluation on the pedagogical implications of implementing CLIL approaches.

The implementation of CLIL likewise takes center stage in the final article presented in this issue of *LACLIL*, as Elaine Hewitt and María Elena Sánchez García present the findings of a research project focused on significant issues encountered within the context of implementing CLIL courses in a university context in Spain—and country that has seen significant activity in terms of CLIL in recent years. This study highlights addresses not only a justification of the CLIL approach, particularly in terms of student attitudes and motivation, but also highlights the need for more extensive CLIL implementation at the secondary level, as well as the importance of minimizing possible student anxiety when first encountering CLIL.

It is indeed heartening to see the wide range of activities and experiences related to CLIL that teachers and researchers around the globe are actively continuing to develop and—at least as importantly—share with the CLIL community and educators everywhere. Naturally, challenges remain—and always will—but as our community and collective experience grow, so will our ability to meet those challenges.

On behalf of the LACLIL Editorial Board
Carl Edlund ANDERSON
Editor-in-Chief