TO BLEND, OR TO FLIP: THAT IS THE QUESTION

IT’S WHAT YOU HAVE TOLD US

WHAT IS PLURILINGUISM LIKE IN SPAIN? IT’S WHAT

CULTURE

IT’S A-MAZE-ING!

CURRENT ISSUES

GOOD PRACTICE IN THE CLASSROOM

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT. MAKING A DIFFERENCE

METHODOLOGICAL TRENDS

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Welcome to Bilingual Express

A change of season is always an inspirational time of the year. It represents regeneration and a new beginning. We have chosen **AUTUMN** to share some **INSPIRATION** with you as this is a very special season for teachers: the start of a new school year.

This form of inspiration is called **Bilingual Express**.

**Bilingual Express is an exclusive magazine for Bilingual teachers.** It aims to provide quality and topical content as well as practical activities to help enrich your classes. Through the magazine, we hope a closer relationship with you. You can subscribe to **Bilingual Express** for free and you will receive it in your inbox at the start of quarterly. The magazine is split into four very interesting sections: **Methodology**, containing current methodological trends; **Good Practices**, detailing the most relevant classroom success stories; **Culture**, where you can delve into the most interesting topics related to british culture; and of course, **Current Affairs**, a space dedicated to current global news. In most of these sections, you will find **practical activities** for both Primary and Secondary school students.

In this **first issue of Bilingual Express**, you will find a fascinating infographic showing the results of our survey on the current state of plurilingualism in Spain. We’re also looking at the new use of Blending Learning in plurilingual classrooms. In Culture, there is a very interesting article on... (It’s A-Maze-ing!) and in Good Practices we’ve got a useful idea for encouraging family participation.

We hope that you get inspired, enjoy the magazine and make the most out of the different topics. And of course, we hope that you want to read our future issues... because **Bilingual Express** is a magazine **written by teachers, for teachers.**
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Collaborators

Jennifer Schmidt
Jennifer is a collaborator in the Teach and Learn master’s program at the University of Alcalá. She is a specialist in CLIL and Project-Based Learning for CLIL. She is piloting Interdisciplinary Projects for CLIL in various parts of Spain this year.

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Elena is Head of Studies and participates in the bilingual program at El Raso, a public school in Moralzarzal.

Parental involvement. Making a difference
To blend, or to flip: that is the question

Blended Learning is a hybrid and mixed-mode form of education that combines online digital teaching and learning with traditional classroom methods.

B lended learning uses technology as a vehicle for reinforcing classroom material, personalising learning and for differentiation under the guidance of a teacher. There are different types of blended learning, and the ‘Flipped Classroom’ is one of them. You may have taken a blended language learning class yourself. Many universities include blended learning as part of their course work. In the past, students would go to language labs and work on material to reinforce what they had been learning in class. Nowadays, many universities have replaced language labs with platforms such as Moodle or Blackboard to provide online content in addition to the content covered in class.

The material usually consists of videos, articles, podcasts, infographics, quizzes and other resources. Many professors use online platforms to create ‘blended’ courses, whereby they provide extra, detailed information related to the courses being run. The students work with the material online and at their own pace, and the professor tracks student performance via the platform. The work can be done from anywhere. A flipped classroom is a type of blended learning. It is a means of combining online learning with traditional classroom learning in a very specific way. In most schools, teachers present content from units in the classroom. The students then go home and do further practice, in what is traditionally referred to as ‘homework’. In a flipped classroom, the situation is ‘flipped’. Students are introduced to the content for the first time online, and the practice (homework) is done in class with the teacher. Many teachers create their own videos and material to present the content via online learning platforms such as Moodle and Blackboard.
Activities for primary and secondary classroom

Use blended or flipped techniques to enhance the content of units, offer multimodal input, and provide differentiation. The concepts are similar for primary and secondary. The differences are in the level of difficulty, task expectation and content.

**PRIMARY CONTENT: THE WATER CYCLE**

Flipped (introduction to content): Choose a video or website that introduces the water cycle in a clear and simple way using appropriate language for the level of your students. Make sure the video includes illustrations and some helpful text. Assign a small task for students to complete after watching the video and which they should bring to the next class. The task should integrate content and language. The students will be putting what they learned from the video into practice in the classroom.

Blended (practice content): The water cycle has already been taught in class. Look for material that enables the students to practise what has already been introduced. The practice could be related to vocabulary or more detailed content, or for practising reading, writing and listening. Look for interactive websites, quizzes or games related to the water cycle. Ask the students to complete a task that will be collected in the next class. Make sure the task integrates content and language. If using Moodle, you have more options for tracking student progress.

**SECONDARY ESO CONTENT: SIMPLE MACHINES**

Flipped (introduction to content): find a video or website that introduces the students to the main concepts behind simple machines. It should include examples, illustrations and demonstrations. Make sure the language is of an appropriate level for your students. Assign an activity for the students to complete after the introduction. Make sure the task integrates content and language. They will practise what they learned online in the next class.

Blended (practice content): Simple machines were already introduced in class. Now have your students practise what they have learned. Give them a video, blog, image or website with asimple Rube Goldberg machine. Have the students write about how the machine functions using the concepts learned in class. Make sure the task integrates content and language.
It’s A-Maze-ing!

Up for a challenge? Are you the type that puts your physical abilities to the test in the great outdoors? Do you prefer to sit back and enjoy a puzzle or mind game like Sudoku or a crossword? Would you like something that combines the two?

Historical artefact such as ancient Greek coins and clay tablets, etchings on cave walls, designs on pottery or baskets, ancient Roman floor mosaics and rock drawings tell us that ancient cultures enjoyed such games. Labyrinths and mazes have existed across the world and fascinated all types of cultures for thousands of years. While mazes and labyrinths seem similar, there is a distinction. A maze is a complex branching multicursal puzzle with choices of paths and directions, while a unicursal labyrinth has only a single path to its centre. Mazes and labyrinths have featured in movies, stories, all types of art, and sometimes they even turn up in our dreams. They can be created with different dimensions and using different materials. Some of the most common types of outdoor mazes and labyrinths have been created in gardens, with hedges acting as the walls to keep the players inside. The oldest surviving puzzle hedge maze—at Hampton Court Palace in Surrey, England—was built for King William in the late 17th century. This famous maze attracts visitors from all over the world and is open daily. There are other famous labyrinths and mazes, such as the world’s largest ice maze in Zakopane, Poland, and the Japanese artist Motoi Yamamoto creates intricate mazes out of salt. Most countries have labyrinths and mazes. If you can’t find one, you could always create one!
Activities for primary and secondary classroom

Use mazes and labyrinths in primary to connect your content to real life and provide the ‘culture’ component of CLIL. Use mazes in secondary to incorporate history, promote creativity, and develop critical thinking skills in your students.

**PRIMARY ARTS AND CRAFTS:**

Use mazes and labyrinths to teach your students about how art, creativity and nature can be combined to create something that gives people a challenge, helps them to develop patience, and provides an experience for practicing logic, orientation and deduction. Students can learn about natural materials, ancient history and the world around them by creating their own mazes and labyrinths. You could create a simple outdoor maze using leaves on grass or coloured chalk on the pavement. If creating an outdoor maze is not an option, you could have your students create a marble maze box. You need a shoebox lid, some straws, glue and a marble. You could also create the marble maze using recycled materials. Your students could create a wall or floor mural maze in your school for all students to enjoy. Having students create mazes and labyrinths helps them develop decision-making and critical thinking skills.

**SECONDARY VISUAL ARTS:**

Use Medieval and Renaissance hedge mazes and labyrinths to teach your students about shapes, space, geometrical construction, perspective and visual expression. Have your students learn the steps to drawing a simple maze or labyrinth. Once the basic artistic and technical concepts have been developed, have the students create their own 3D mazes using perspective. Show the students examples from the work of Roxie Munro’s Mazescapes, M.C. Escher, Matthew Haussler, and the website “labyrinthos.net.”
Creating a partnership with the families of students in the bilingual classroom can be hugely beneficial. Here are some practical ideas on how to keep parents engaged.

When I started teaching in the bilingual programme, I realized that it was not going to be an easy task. Many parents have doubts and misconceptions about the bilingual project. Others simply think they are unable to help because they don’t have the necessary language skills. This is how I help them overcome these obstacles.

USE THE INTERNET
Every year, I give my school e-mail to parents to let them know that I will be available and willing to answer their questions. I also create a blog, where I can post information, videos and pictures of what we do regularly to make them feel part of the process.

ESTABLISH A ROUTINE
I have experienced how parents’ confidence shoots up when they know what to expect. I structure the week so parents know the main activities we do every day. On Mondays we have a spelling test, Tuesdays are for oral presentations... ‘Magic Fridays’ are my students’ favorite day because we play games. This structure lets them know in advance if they have to help their children study words (for the spelling tests), play vocabulary games at home, or practice speaking (for the presentations), etc., depending on the day of the week.

GET THEM TO PARTICIPATE
• Science corner: as we start each unit, families...
are encouraged to choose objects related to the unit that can be used to create a Science Corner.

- **Student of the week’ poster:** designing a poster with personal information about the student of the week is a very motivating activity that establishes a link between school and home.
- **Let’s investigate:** as Science homework, I propose an interesting question they have to ‘investigate’ at home with their parents. It only takes five minutes, but it helps to get parents involved in what we are doing in the classroom.

**INVITE THEM TO ACTIVITIES**

At the end of each unit, there is always a special activity as a way of wrapping up what we have been doing. I particularly like these days because students can show how much they have learnt, and families are invited to participate in the different activities. Some of the projects that work out really well are:

- **Treasure hunt around town:** parents leave clues in different places for students to find by following a map.
- **Cooking workshop:** teachers demonstrate how to cook something, then pupils try it out themselves with the help of their parents.
- **Pet day:** families bring students’ pets to class and use them for a variety of activities.

As a way of finishing, I always thank parents for their help and assistance, and make an effort to get to know those parents who don’t regularly communicate through the various platforms. It is important to mention that there are different ways in which parents can help in the learning process, even if they don’t have the necessary language skills. Providing a bridge between school and home is really worth the effort, so let’s keep working on it!

**COMPETENCIES**

- Be available to the parents. Give them your school email address
- Have a routine so parents know what to expect
- Encourage active participation in class activities
- Make an effort to get to know all the parents
What is the current state of plurilingualism in Spain? This is what you told us *

1. There is a high use of the language in Spanish plurilingual classrooms
- Around 8 out of 10 teachers teach over 75% of their classes in English.
- The vast majority of activities are designed so that students have to respond in English. In 6 out of 10 classrooms, almost all activities are designed this way.

2. There is still work to be done to fully implement plurilingualism in schools
- The vast majority of teachers have a B2 English level.
- Students need to participate more in English. In only half of classrooms, the majority of students use the language (over 75%).
- In half of classrooms there is more emphasis placed on curricular content than language.
- Nevertheless, around 7 out of 10 classrooms have a language assistant ©.

3. Speaking and listening are the most practised skills
- As acknowledged by 70% of teachers.
- In 5 out of 10 classrooms, the most commonly used approach is oral presentations given by groups of students.

4. The combination of text book + digital resources is the most common working method in classrooms
- Over 70% of teachers use these materials to varying degrees.

* The data used in this infographic comes from “The map of plurilingualism” survey, which over 100 teachers helpfully participated in. The answers included are those which were received up until the 24th September 2017.