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GOOD PRACTICE IN THE CLASSROOM

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CULTURE

EDUCATION, SO DRAMATIC
The spring-summer issue!

With this special late spring issue, we’ve been trying to get into the spirit of this time of the year with lots of light, colour and warmth! In order to achieve that, we’ve been in touch with some busy contributors who have provided us with some great content to energise your classrooms.

In this third issue (how amazing is that – three issues!), there’s a nice range of articles and classroom proposals. To start with, David Marsh is going to talk about CLIL. We know the CLIL teaching trend is nothing new, but it still seems to stir up a lot of debate. Also, don’t forget to check the article in our Culture section, So Dramatic, by Tricia Audette. She’ll be telling us about how the performing arts can help create a more inclusive and intercultural classroom.

In the section Current Issues, we’ve got an interesting article on how to make your home smarter by our regular contributor Shawn Redwood. And to finish things off, there’s something in the section we all love so much: Good practice in the classroom – those little ideas that make our classrooms so much more fun and effective. In this issue, we’ll be telling you about a great way to implement CLIL methodology, with an interesting proposal by Laura Jiménez Cañadas.

Well, we hope you have a lovely spring-summer, full of material to enrich our world and your classrooms.
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Collaborators

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Shawn Redwood
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Effective Reading Strategias

Laura Jiménez Cañadas
A graduate of foreign languages (English), she enjoys researching child development and behaviour, as well as creating her own materials.

How to prepare Infant pupils for Primary education!

Tricia Audette
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Education, So Dramatic
Teachers are faced with a variety of pressures on a daily basis; and all the while... the clock never stops. Tick, tock, tick, tock... every minute counts. What perfect timing to pause for laughter.

Language isn’t knowledge. It’s what we use to move knowledge around. This is not a new idea. Back in the 1990’s language luminaries such as MAK Halliday were advocating the deep integration of language with real content. It was in 1994 when David Marsh (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) coined the term ‘Content and Language Integrated Learning’ as an umbrella term to describe this approach. When people talk about bilingualism in Spanish schools, they are talking about CLIL.

Although CLIL is not new, it does seem to stir up debate. There are people who think that CLIL is just changing the language of instruction in the classroom. It categorically is not. Others think that bilingual students are at a disadvantage when compared to monolingual students. There is scientific evidence that this is, quite simply, not true.

In April 2018 I had the opportunity to speak with David Marsh for Bilingual Express and I asked him what, if any, are the benefits of integrating English with other subjects. The problem, he said, was that we have not gone far enough in understanding that language teaching, such as English in Spanish schools, needs to be linked across the curriculum, with, for example, Natural Science, in order for students to learn in the most successful way.

“It isn’t just about English,” said David, “because these students will also be reflecting on and thinking in Spanish. If you integrate English with Natural Science in the curriculum, it is more than one plus one - English plus Natural Science. It is a language learning experience, which is clearly effective when done well, but which is also very much part of modern-day thinking about how we should be teaching students...
different subjects including languages. I think it is a win-win situation, and it has to be done well. Yes, it involves quite a big jump from traditional modes of thought, but it is not a jump into the unknown, it is a jump into the 21st Century."

I also asked David what he thought about our decision, in the Bilingual Department at SM, to divide our Natural and Social Science courses into term projects. For example, to have an entire term devoted to one context such as the human body or living things.

“By aligning the learning of English with the learning of content in English, over a term,” he said, “you can have a better systemic approach where both language teaching and content teaching complement each other. A close alignment between the English language curriculum in a Spanish school and the topics being learnt in Biology and Chemistry is ideal. That is quite hard to achieve if it is concentrated in shorter periods of time.”

24 years after creating the term ‘CLIL’, David Marsh is still convinced that the integration of language and content – learning the language, learning through the language, and learning about the language – is the best way to prepare our children for their global, bilingual future. Indeed, he mentioned a possible next step in CLIL called ‘Phenomenon Based Learning’ currently being tested in schools in Finland. More about that in a future edition of Bilingual Express!
Close your eyes and picture a classroom with boundless imagination where creativity flourishes, confidence thrives and collaboration blossoms. Put yourself in the centre of the room. Now, open your eyes to the world of performing arts in education.

All subjects play an important role in a well-balanced education system. From Science to Physical Education to Maths, every discipline helps students develop skills which often overlap and spill into all areas of academia.

However, we should also include Performing Arts in this list. Drama is where expression and communication emerge, and it’s been shown to increase all-round academic results. This is most likely due to the variety of skills it helps develop, from public speaking to leadership to critical thinking, to name just a few.

Performance provides an outlet for students to explore themselves and the world around them, creating a strong sense of self. The importance of Performing Arts in education should not be overlooked. Its role has led to the success of many artists in the world today. Just look at actor Timothée Chalamet. He recently took the 2018 award season by storm as the youngest male to receive an Oscar nomination in 80 years. He graduated from La Guardia, a high school in Manhattan, renowned for its specialised art programmes. Every year, students like him are given the opportunity to build on their artistic talent while still meeting the demands of a full academic work load.

While not everyone may have access to this prestigious school, we do all have an open door to creative expression. We just need to walk through this door, and understand that the end goal need not be Hollywood. Performing Arts, particularly theatre-in-education projects, offer a wide platform for exploration of the curriculum and will always be valuable in the development of life skills.
Activities for the primary and secondary classroom

So what happens if you aren’t a director and have no stage, yet want to incorporate elements of performance in your non-drama classroom? Luckily for you, there are several many avenues to explore!

**PRIMARY:**

Movie makers from around the world often gather to honour talent and outstanding achievements. So, why not jump on board and join in the festivities by hosting your very own awards show? There’s no need to make a movie (unless you want to, of course)! You can adapt the nominations to fit a project you’re already doing (Best Science Project), or adapt it so it works around a classroom activity. For example, who will win the Oscar for “Tidiest Student”, “Most Punctual Student” or “Best Listener”? Decorate the classroom to prepare for the ceremony and let the voting begin. And remind your students to prepare their acceptance speeches carefully – they wouldn’t want to miss out anyone on their “thank you” list!

**SECONDARY:**

The complex connection between movies and culture runs deep. Hollywood is just one example, as countries such as India (Bollywood) and Nigeria (Nollywood) are making their own mark on the world of entertainment. Invite your students to explore other ways in which art interacts with society. Then, they can share their discoveries with the class. This could be a film, song, dance, poetry, storytelling or any idea they can think of. So, for example, your students could look at propaganda films in the UK during the Second World War to see how they shaped society. Or, they could do some research into how works of art by artist Pablo Picasso changed the way we view the world. The possibilities are countless! Give your students full rein to show their interpretation of how art interacts with society.
How to prepare Infants pupils for Primary education!

Despite the concerns that many teachers, parents and students have about the transition from Infants to Primary education, it’s a period that fascinates me. Every year, I get students who start off reticent about participating, but by the end of the course, you can see some amazing results.

It’s a well known fact that Infants education is generally characterised by a basic level of oral English. In fact, when they get to Primary 1, the following is often true:

- They have a lot of trouble working out the meaning of written words. For them, there’s no logical connection between the written form “table” and the spoken version /ˈteɪbəl/.
- Many remain stuck in a phase of non-communication, more than likely because at Infants level they weren’t exposed to enough English or because they’re still building up their knowledge of the language.
- An awareness of self has also developed which leads to a fear of making mistakes so they often avoid saying anything in order to avoid any possible comments by their classmates.

A lot of changes take place (above all in the first term) during the changeover from Infants to Primary. And on top of this, they have to deal with the trepidation that some parents feel with respect to the new situation, as well as having to deal with new surroundings, subjects, methodologies and teachers, to name just a few things.

So, what’s the best way of dealing with this? Personally, I think it’s essential to give children the necessary skills and tools from a very early
age (the age of three, for example) so they don’t have any of the aforementioned difficulties. The best way to learn a second language is to do so progressively, naturally and communicatively – just as they learnt their first language.

This is why the CLIL methodology (Content and Language Integrated Learning) has become one of the most appreciated and effective methods when it comes to learning a second language. However, a lot has been said about it in Primary, but why not apply this successful methodology to Infants education too?

When we speak about CLIL, we’re referring to the teaching of subjects in a foreign language in order to achieve the simultaneous acquisition of both contents and a foreign language – for example, studying maths or natural science in another language. Most importantly, this is extremely beneficial as the “problem solving” and “learning to learn” aspect of this methodology motivates students.

As teachers, we have to present pupils with communicative tasks (within the appropriate context) to get them to express themselves in English, without forgetting the habits and routines that should be worked on in a foreign language, such as the school assembly, calendar, etc.

We should aim to make English language teaching fun and pleasant, using resources such as stories, songs and games. Also important is the use of gestures and/or audiovisual support (such as flashcards, stories with images, videos, digital whiteboards, etc.).

This term, I’ve been an English teacher in Infants Education, and I’ve been able to work on the deficiencies that I’ve observed while I was a primary specialist. However, I’m not doing this alone as I’m working with the new Liam and Liu method that will come out on the market for the next school year (we are in the process of testing it at the moment).

One of the reasons I like this method is that it uses CLIL, presenting students with real-life situations that they can identify with. This helps to ensure that language learning takes place completely naturally. The method’s own phonics system is also very good and it helps pupils learn in a global fashion, getting pupils to appreciate the difference between the spoken and written language.

It’s still early to talk about results, but I’m pleased with the progress they’re making, and I feel that I’m giving my pupils the essential knowledge and skills they need to pass over to Primary education effortlessly.
How smart homes work: a lesson for the classroom

Shawn Redwood

We would have never thought years ago that we could do so much with the push of a button on our smartphones. We can download apps that tell us when the next bus or train is coming.

Many banks have apps which allow us to use our mobile phone to pay for our purchases. And restaurant apps let us make reservations without having to call or e-mail. Our mobile phone is a mini computer which can do so much more than the first mobile phone on the market ever could.

The same smartphones many people can’t live without, can also be used to control our home, security, heating and air conditioning. All these devices can be connected to the internet and be controlled with a mobile device or smart speaker.

The impact that future domestic technology might have on our daily lives is huge. For example, the Samsung Family Hub Smart Refrigerator has a large touch screen so you can create shopping lists, order groceries and see inside your refrigerator. Amazon Echo has Alexa, the ‘intelligent’ assistant, which lets you control your connected household with your voice.
Activities for the primary and secondary classroom

The aim of these lesson ideas is to help your students learn more about smartphones and smart homes and how the two work together to make life easier. Students will explore the benefits and drawbacks of new domestic technology.

**PRIMARY**

- Put your students into groups of 3 or 4 and ask them to list the ways in which they use their smartphones in their daily lives. Give them about 3 minutes to do this.

- Get your students to brainstorm some appliances at home that can be controlled with their smartphones. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this?

- Get your students to work in groups again to design their own smart home. Which parts of the house and which appliances would be controlled from their smartphones?

- Students present their smart home to the class as a presentation.

**SECONDARY**

- Put your students into groups of 3 to 4. Ask them what technology they have in their home that wouldn’t have existed 50 years ago. Give them about 3 minutes to do this.

- Ask students to define the term smart home. Ask them how it is different from the home that they live in now.

- Show the iKettle video (a smart gadget) and ask students if this product is useful. This video is on YouTube.

- Get students to work in groups again to design a smart gadget for a smart home. What part of the home will it control? What does it do?