

# OBSERVATIONS OF THE USE OF ICT IN AN ENGLISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

*Angel Martinez*  
and  
*Mara Rodriguez Fonteboa*

The spread of English around the world has opened new models of teaching languages. Among these is a new project for Spanish state schools: the Primary school bilingual project which began in Madrid two years ago and since then, qualified teachers come to England to attend a teacher training course. Part of the course involves a primary school placement where Spanish teachers can observe what English teachers actually do and what English children learn in their classrooms. We chose to focus on what we considered the most innovative resource we had a chance to see: the use of computers and how they were applied in a practical way. We focused on two different uses of ICT: the white board and PowerPoint. Our comments should be interesting for those teachers who do not have a chance to visit other classes to look for new ICT ideas.

## The White Board

Angel's observation begins in the heart of Education: a Reception class. These pupils are four-five year olds and are beginning their journey through the Educational System.

Let me begin with a description of the board. It consists of a projector hanging from the ceiling which allows the image of the computer to be seen on a board that is similar to the traditional one we are so used to in our classes. This board is rectangular and it measures approximately 100 x 70 cm. The board has four pens under it and an eraser. This allows pupils to write in four different colours and to erase at their own pace. In this class it was hung on the wall near the teacher's area. Two speakers were also hung above the board. So how is it used? The class teacher allowed me to watch a lesson where kids interact with the board. The main uses I had a chance to see included:

- Pupils listening to stories while watching them. They can interact by using their fingers (which are like a mouse) to press buttons. By doing this they can, for example, see special effects and they can control the voices of the story. Pupils are very fond of these stories and have a wide range to choose from.
- Science work is done in different ways: pupils can explore different environments e.g. the countryside. The interesting fact

is that they have a chance to interact with the environment by using their fingers. I loved the activity where a collection of materials piled up were then recycled by dragging them into the correct recycling containers. I believe it's important to make pupils aware of the importance of recycling at a very young age and the interactive use of the whiteboard helped achieve this.

- Writing and drawing: Pupils can draw or write whatever they want by dragging their fingers across the screen. There are interesting options for them and for teachers. For instance, teachers can record how students build their work to focus on forming words.
- Music: A keyboard appears on the screen allowing pupils to learn melodies and play different instruments. Again, work can be recorded, but this time on fun memory work.
- Digital blue: With the help of a movie camera connected to an USB port, the teacher records classroom images and then adds special effects, such as a bug flying across the screen. Children love watching their movies. Options include pausing and repeating.
- Pen pals for writing: A man on the screen makes movements which pupils imitate while watching the vocabulary underneath. It allows a lot of TPR activities.

These are some of the uses I had the chance to see. I now look forward to having this amazing resource in my Spanish classroom. Fun and learning, for sure.

## PowerPoint → Windows Movie Maker

Mara's observation is in a Year 3 class. They are almost at a half way stage in their journey through primary school.

## THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

Imagine the scene. Twenty eight-year-olds, who have spent some hours of the previous days making presentations and transforming them into films, are now listening to their teacher and waiting for the premiere of their first film.

Besides being a primary teacher, he is also an expert in ICT. He knows how to be inspiring, how to keep control and how to get the best out of his pupils. As part of his ICT teaching, he wanted the children to improve and extend their narrative skills by teaching them how to use PowerPoint to create digital texts based on their own stories. These stories could be about favourite things, their biographies...

The motivation and enthusiasm generated by this project was overwhelming. All the children focused on producing interesting and exciting digital texts, adding music and sounds (files with their own voices recorded), transition effects, animations...

And, to finish the project, Lights, Camera, Action! The pupils turn the PowerPoint presentations into films using Windows Movie Maker. They even added credits!

This is how I enjoyed stories about pets, music bands, Doctor Who, Star Wars, pupils' biographies... or the astonishing story "The Girl and the Yeti" which made me think of an old silent movie.

Let's see Ella, "How does it feel to see your first film shown on a big screen?"

We are both looking forward to applying the motivating ideas we observed in Norwich to our English lessons in Spain. We will try our best to integrate interactive uses of ICT into the bilingual programme.

**Angel Martinez** is a Spanish Primary teacher currently working at CEIP El Cantizal, Las Rozas, Madrid

**Mara Rodriguez Fonteboa** is a teacher at CEIP Doctor Tolosa Latour, Madrid, Spain.



# Subject Materials and Publishers' Websites for the CLIL Teacher

## Context and rationale

**Sandra Lucietto**

"CLIL is the solution for the future of language learning", we are told by politicians... "Children who learn through CLIL will be more motivated and will get better results both in the language and the curriculum subject" we hear at Conferences...

Many teachers are indeed attracted by CLIL's promised land, given that the profession gets tougher and tougher as school years go by: kids seem to be more and more disaffected with being at school, classes become more and more mixed-ability and difficult to manage, parents want their kids to have every possible opportunity to learn more effectively and more quickly... In the last three or four years I have witnessed a burgeoning of CLIL projects in schools of all levels and denominations in the area where I work (Trento, Italy).

In my experience, teachers who set themselves the task of developing CLIL programmes are generally enthusiastic, really

wanting to do the best for their pupils, but they soon find out that structuring and implementing CLIL modules is not as straightforward and easy as they may have imagined at the beginning. One of the questions they have asked me more frequently over the years is "Where can we find suitable teaching materials?", meaning by that both *appropriate* to learners' age and *accurate* in terms of subject-specific language.

In Italy, CLIL teachers have easy access to a rich market of foreign publishers who produce materials in L2 for foreign language teaching. Due to CLIL's relatively short heyday, however, none of them seems to have a good enough selection of resources for CLIL teachers yet – some of them are now starting to diversify their production, but the range of publications is still limited. Teachers can also explore the internet, where they can find a wealth of documents/materials they can use as a starting point, but unless they search in CLIL-dedicated websites, most of what they find is written for the general public, and as such it does have some limitations: being written for purposes that are not educational and by people whose competence in English can sometimes be uncertain, it is often not immediately applicable in class and may be linguistically inaccurate, becoming heavy on the CLIL teacher's time.

As part of my own professional development as a teacher educator, I spent some time in the UK recently focusing on CLIL, and I found that subject publishers in the English-speaking world can be an asset for the foreign CLIL teacher, and that exploring their publication list can solve many problems. I started to analyse and classify printed textbooks and support materials available in the UK for UK pupils. Through the printed materials I got to know publishers' websites, which I spent a good deal of time visiting and exploring. My search enabled me not only to go back home with lots of reference titles to pass on to teachers and with a good list of useful websites, but also to produce two lists of criteria which I found relevant to my own purposes and which other CLIL teachers may want to use as guidelines in their searches as well:

1. a list of criteria of "good" teaching materials produced in the UK or other English speaking countries for their internal markets, which may be suitable for CLIL
2. a list of quality criteria for publishers' websites.

## Key features of a subject textbook for native speakers of English useful to CLIL teachers in other countries

In looking through published materials for English children and teenagers at school, I began to form some ideas about what I wanted to find in a textbook which I could recommend to CLIL teachers back home.

1. the **language** of the book should be **accessible to the foreign CLIL teacher**, who often is a non-language specialist, and whose language competence may be between A2+(?), B1, and B2 of the CEFRL;
2. the materials should contain **subject-specific language**, which subject teachers do have in their first language, but they very rarely have in the foreign language, and which language