

Think CLIL 2014

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Titolo presentazione: A Visual Atmosphere in a CLIL setting

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Abstract

Lesson plans should always be motivating and adapted to the target class. This is even more so when we plan a CLIL unit. To avoid frustration and failure, teachers and students should find a common ground where communication is easier, students are active learners and high language skills are not required. This can be achieved in many ways. Topics should be chosen and presented from an angle that promotes interaction and production from the students. As far as possible, most textual communication should be transferred and reorganized in a more accessible format through visual organizers, presented in alternative ways with visual displays, subtitled videos or animations¹. Graphic organizers are particularly helpful to visually represent ideas, organize information, and grasp concepts such as sequencing and cause and effect. It is essential to create an environment where students feel safe taking risks, learning takes place on many levels simultaneously and a playful attitude to learning is not discarded. A Visual Atmosphere² should be established, where teachers use visual directions and non-verbal behaviours to foster concentration and learning.

Learners should be led to access sensorially previous knowledge and subsequently construct new mental images to acquire new concepts.

Good story-tellers continually offer sensorial strategies to involve the audience in the story and are ready to adjust the narrative according to the feedback.

Units should gradually evolve from basic hands-on experiences and interactive situations, where students are involved more directly and they are allowed to work collaboratively and engage their emotions³. Interactive games can support exploration, interaction and provide an immersive experience in which learners can collaborate with others to solve problems and learn from their mistakes⁴. Students with low-productive skills should be encouraged to give also non-verbal responses to show their understanding of the topic, for example using the interactive tools of Digital Whiteboards.

Riferimenti bibliografici

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- (3) Cuccu, R. (2003) Un modello di uso strumentale della LS per le altre discipline del curriculum: SELM - Scuola e Lingue Moderne, n°1
- (4) Khinen, M. S. (Ed.) (2011) Playful Teaching, Learning Games, Rotterdam: Sense Publisher

Note biografiche

Roberto Cuccu was born in Cagliari, Italy in 1954. Since 1992 he has been an English teacher in Italian State Secondary Schools. From 2000 to 2009 worked as supervisor and contract teacher at the pre-service teacher training school (SSIS) of the University of Cagliari.

He has been a teacher trainer on Interactive Whiteboards for INDIRE and a CLIL teacher trainer in 13 courses. Among others, he has published Educational material for a Museum based on H. Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and an article on Incidental Learning on the Encyclopedia of Information Communication Technology.