

Actas

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EL BILINGÜISMO A DEBATE

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El bilingüismo a debate

Actas del IV Congreso Internacional de Enseñanza Bilingüe en Centros Educativos

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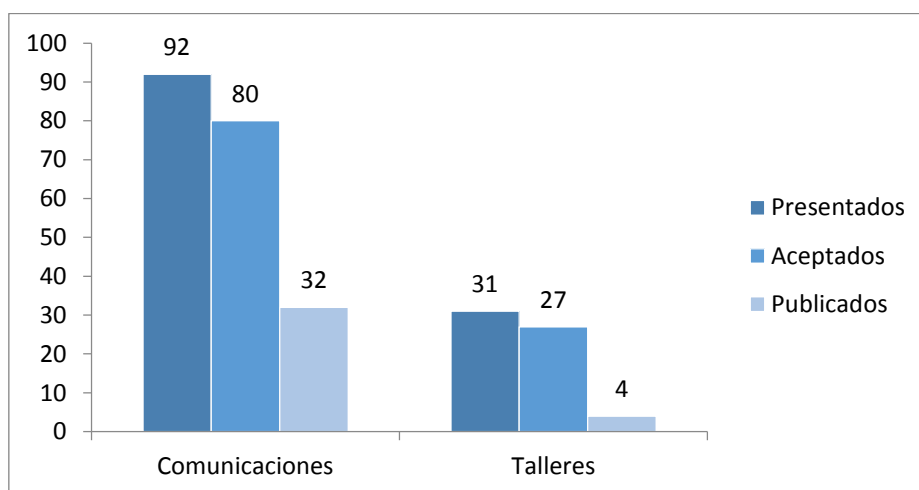
CIEB 2017

En el IV Congreso Internacional de Enseñanza Bilingüe en Centros Educativos (CIEB 2017) se presentaron para su valoración un total de 92 comunicaciones y 31 talleres.

Tras la revisión de todas las propuestas por parte del Comité Científico, se aceptaron un total de 80 comunicaciones, siendo rechazadas 12 propuestas, y un total de 27 talleres, siendo rechazados cuatro propuestas. No obstante, no todos los participantes enviaron su artículo para su publicación dentro del plazo previsto.

Por tanto, en estas Actas no se recogen las ochenta comunicaciones y los veintisiete talleres que fueron presentadas oralmente durante el Congreso, sino solamente las treinta y dos comunicaciones y los cuatro talleres cuyo texto completo fue recibido, revisado, evaluado y aceptado por los editores para su publicación. El Programa completo del Congreso puede consultarse en la página web del congreso: <http://www.cieb.es/>.

Para la publicación de la Actas del Congreso, se propone un formato digital con ISBN. En el siguiente gráfico, se muestra un resumen de los datos finales.



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PRESENTACIÓN IV CONGRESO INTERNACIONAL DE ENSEÑANZA BILINGÜE EN CENTROS EDUCATIVOS “LA ENSEÑANZA BILINGÜE A DEBATE”

La Universidad Rey Juan Carlos y la Asociación Enseñanza Bilingüe, fueron los organizadores del IV Congreso Internacional de Enseñanza Bilingüe en Centros Educativos –CIEB 2017– que se celebró en Madrid, en el Campus de Vicálvaro de la Universidad Rey Juan Carlos los días 20, 21 y 22 de octubre de 2017.

CIEB 2017, bajo el lema “La enseñanza bilingüe a debate”, planteo no solamente seguir analizando su funcionamiento sino también debatir sobre la enseñanza bilingüe, los programas, sus ventajas e inconvenientes, su desarrollo y su gestión, sus resultados, con el fin de contribuir a la búsqueda de soluciones para los problemas que se plantearon y por lo tanto, a la mejora de la calidad de todos los programas.

Un objetivo prioritario fue generar un foro de discusión, de debate, de intercambio de ideas y de experiencias entre profesionales de la enseñanza bilingüe y la enseñanza de idiomas y, a la vez, apoyar a los miles de maestros y profesores que han entendido perfectamente el potencial que supone ofrecer enseñanzas bilingües a sus alumnos, y que trabajan incansablemente, esforzándose por adquirir el mayor dominio de la lengua de instrucción y las máximas competencias posibles, tratando de incorporar a su labor docente los últimos avances tecnológicos y de utilizar en la enseñanza de idiomas, las variadas metodologías activas en boga hoy en día.

El Congreso CIEB 2017 como siempre tuvo un carácter innovador y promovió la presencia de expertos nacionales, tanto en aspectos prácticos como teóricos del bilingüismo.

WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE BILINGUAL PROGRAMME? TALKING FROM EXPERIENCE

Ramón Herranz Blokker
CEIP Los Arévacos

Abstract: There is currently a growing need for bilingual programmes in Spain due to a process of European integration and pressing globalization trends; these convergent factors have made the English language gain the status of today's *lingua franca* not only in the European Union but also around the world.

The different regional education administrations in Spain have made a great effort in establishing bilingual programmes in primary and secondary education. CLIL (Content Language Integrated Learning) is being implemented in mainstream schools but, even if all the regions follow the recommendation that students learn curricular content through an additional language, there are as many bilingual models as autonomous communities. As a result regional schemes are developing distinct characteristics and follow specific divergent courses of action. Thus, the various models differ significantly from one region to another.

Finally, this paper stresses the need of national regulations affecting all regional bilingual programmes in Spain so that they all operate with at least some basic common principles. On the base of my experience I seek to raise awareness that conditions such as the provision of human resources with the appropriate level of English, a sufficient number of sessions in the school's timetable to implement the programme, material resources and the availability of training programmes and assessment tools that, together with the eagerness and motivation of the teachers involved, are key to determine the degree of effectiveness and success of the bilingual policies at a regional level.

Key words: Bilingual programmes, regional, effectiveness, experience.

Resumen: En la actualidad existe una necesidad creciente de establecer Programas Bilingües en España debido a un proceso de integración Europea y globalización, estos factores convergentes han hecho que la lengua inglesa adquiera el estado de *lingua franca* no sólo en la Unión Europea sino también alrededor del mundo.

Las diferentes administraciones educativas regionales en España han hecho un gran esfuerzo para establecer Programas Bilingües en Educación Primaria y Secundaria. AICLE (Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lengua) está siendo implementado en los centros educativos, pero incluso si todas las regiones siguieran la recomendación que los estudiantes aprendan contenido curricular a través de una lengua adicional, seguirán existiendo tantos modelos bilingües como número de Comunidades Autónomas. Debido a esto los programas regionales están desarrollando características distintas y siguen diversas vías de acción. Por consiguiente, los diferentes modelos difieren significativamente de una región a otra.

Finalmente este artículo hace énfasis en la necesidad de una normativa nacional que afecte a todos los Programas Bilingües en España para que todos operen, al menos, con unos principios comunes. Desde mi experiencia pretendo concienciar que condiciones como la provisión de recursos humanos con un nivel apropiado de inglés, un número suficiente de sesiones en el horario escolar para implementar el programa, recursos materiales y la disponibilidad de programas de formación y herramientas de evaluación que, junto al entusiasmo y motivación de los profesores involucrados, son elementos clave para determinar el grado de efectividad y éxito de las políticas dirigidas al bilingüismo a nivel regional.

Palabras clave: Programas Bilingües, regional, efectividad, experiencia.

Introduction

In order to find ideas and proposals for an effective bilingual programme we have to determine first what bilingualism is. There are different definitions of bilingualism but to me bilingualism is the ability of a person to speak and communicate in two languages with a good level of competence in the second language in order to switch from one to the other without difficulty and use both languages on a regular basis.

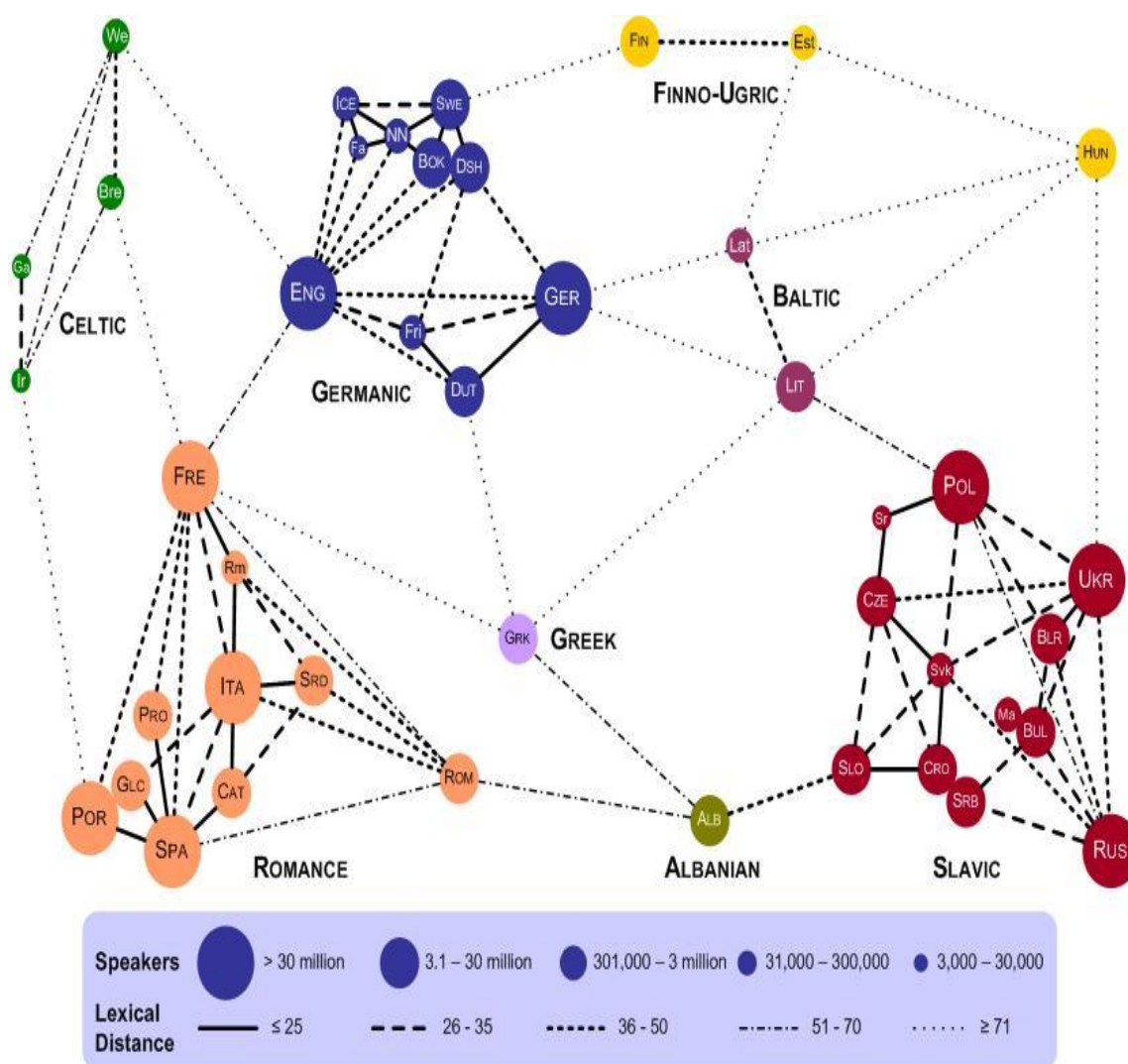
After that we have to consider what methodology we are going to be implementing in a bilingual school. Most bilingual schools in Spain have opted for CLIL. This acronym stands for “Content Language Integrated Learning”, term coined by David Marsh and defined in his book “CLIL” written together with Do Coyle and Philip Hood as “an educational approach in which various language supportive methodologies are used which lead to a dual-focused form of instruction where attention is given both to the language and the content” (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010) and that in my opinion is a good option from a practical point of view since for the students the goal is to learn and pass the subject while along the way students learn English but it has to be a subject with loads of linguistic content and vocabulary so that the students can achieve both objectives, that is to grasp a non-linguistic subject while learning English at the same time. Some schools in Spain have decided to have only a few subjects in English, besides English itself, for instance Arts and Physical Education, which also has benefits but since they are not linguistic subjects we lose the academic field and a wider linguistic scope.

Basic keys for an effective Bilingual Programme

In this paper I want to establish what we need in order to have an effective bilingual programme; this is a very extensive matter but I have broken it down into **3 keys: good English, sufficient number of sessions and resources.**

Key #1= Good English

English may be indeed hard to learn to Spaniards because Spanish and other romance languages do not belong to the same English linguistic family. Other authors talk about this fact as we can see in graph number 1 (Elms, 2008).



Graph 1: Lexical distance among the languages of Europe

When I was a child I went to a primary school in Madrid and we had the subject of English. One day while entering my home I said "JI" and my mum looked at me raising her eyebrow and asked me what I was saying and I repeated "JI" eventually my mum found out that what I was trying to say was "HI". There are loads of examples like this one. Who hasn't heard in Spain people say "eipol for Apple" or "parpel for Purple"? but the question isn't only pronunciation; the teacher of English especially in a bilingual programme needs to have an advanced level of English, this should be a common thing to do in all Spain; that all comes down to regional legislation and if we think out of the box at national level. The level of English of the teacher is of paramount importance; the teacher can be funny or serious, may use a more dynamic or a more static methodology but the teacher's level of English needs to be high because in most bilingual schools in Spain we are talking about teaching Natural Sciences and Social Sciences in English, so teachers have to be able to explain what mass, gravity, volume, density, mixtures, etc. are. This is all in the Spanish Syllabus and that can't be done properly with a teacher that holds a B1 CEFR (low intermediate - basic communicator) or even a B2 (high intermediate) more able but not with quite enough level of English.

Things have changed quite a bit since I was saying "JI" instead of "HI" for the better due to the regional bilingual programmes but there is room for improvement especially for some autonomous communities.

So first and foremost bilingual teachers need superior language skills, then the teacher should speak in English 100% of the time and if the school's policy also includes speaking to the students in English in playtime, field trips, etc. that could also make a difference; students need all the English input they can get, if the students' English is too low to follow the lesson they will start falling behind and not understanding basic concepts in Science because their English is below what is expected.

In Spain teachers in some regions were allowed to teach in bilingual programmes with a B1 level of English but from the 4th of December 2011 the Royal Decree 1594/2011 made it compulsory for all bilingual teachers to have at least a B2 level of English in order to teach in a bilingual programme. Some regions had to train the in-service teachers to achieve this level and the Community of Madrid took a step further and demanded all new arriving teachers to hold a C1 (CEFR). For a bilingual programme to succeed it needs certain prerequisites to be much more demanding especially what regards to the teachers English level, this should be considered in forthcoming calls for applications.

Something that helped my fellow bilingual teachers to keep their English in shape in my school when I was the bilingual coordinator was to speak in our bilingual meetings in English, as well as speaking to each other in the foreign language in the school corridors and even outside of school, just to practice the language on a daily basis. This improvement would be even greater if bilingual schools are provided with a language assistant and also if non-bilingual teachers get involved, even if it is at a very basic level, this would make an impact on the students and the programme in the school. On top of that, if outside of the school parents also make their contribution in different ways that would be another step forward.

Another requirement to have effective bilingual teachers should be to hold an appropriate bilingual teaching certificate and be highly trained in CLIL pedagogy; they need to have high levels of conversational fluency and academic proficiency, but also have training in order to be able to teach very specific subjects like Natural or Social Sciences in the foreign language.

Key #2= Sufficient number of sessions

We need a sufficient number of sessions in the school's timetable to implement the programme. From my experience in Spain as a bilingual primary school teacher a sufficient number of sessions to work at an appropriate level starts with 5 hours a week for the subject of English as a foreign language, that is one hour a day; Natural Sciences and Social Sciences 4/5 hours a week, plus one more of Arts or P.E in English or both, because these subjects are also a great addition because the students will get used to commands especially in Arts which are very repetitive and will stick in their minds forever. Although to maximise the efficiency of the programme it would need even

more sessions in English going up to half of the school's timetable. The subject of English should be given more importance than it normally has in a non-bilingual school and should be promoted to what we call in Spain an "instrumental" subject that means it is as important as Maths or Spanish.

Some programmes around Spain allow teaching CLIL subjects with a percentage of Spanish that can go up to 50% of the subject's time or even more. This is definitely a setback especially if the subject of English is not included in the programme and keeps its old curriculum not adapted to bilingualism and the same number of sessions as in non-bilingual schools. Doing these two things together reduces the amount of sessions in English to the minimum.

Effective bilingual programmes maintain a separation of languages, teachers will provide instruction in the foreign language while teaching in the bilingual classes, Natural and Social Sciences should be taught only in English, except in my opinion translating the names in Spanish in Geography (rivers, the names of autonomous communities...) using the students native language in very rare and delimited occasions when students are in need and with the purpose of clarifying something that otherwise would be time consuming.

Key #3= Resources

There are many types of useful resources. Money for useful materials, ICT resources, languages labs, etc. but the most powerful are human resources for instance including support teachers in class to deal with children with low academic abilities who struggle with English and therefore this approach can be detrimental to their learning science; split groups: where the class is divided into two separate groups for two teachers to handle each half, another version of this could be two teachers teaching as a team with appropriate planning for both to be in one class together, etc.

In addition to this the matchless human resources are language assistants (From now on L.A). They are of great help for the programme not only for educational / language purposes but also to share their culture. But in order to be really effective there has to be a plan for them that determines their functions in the School. This is the list we give out to our L.As in my school to show them things they can be helping with:

1. Small groups conversation
2. Vocabulary games (Where is the... in a science Unit)
3. Final review games (question cards in groups...)
4. Reading with the class/ students repeat
5. Small groups (for speaking test practice, asking countries' capitals, talking about sense organs...)
6. Songs/ Dance
7. Online readings (related to a Science topic)
8. Help with Celebrations: Halloween, Saint Patrick's (look for songs, games...)
9. Prepare/search for a worksheet related to Science.
10. TPR activities

11. Crossword worksheets for vocabulary
12. Take a set of books from the library and read with the students
13. Prepare a set of questions to ask things to the class.
14. Bring some flashcards to class to review vocabulary about the topic
15. PROJECTS: help out in class groups, suggest things for new projects
16. Work with new materials; bring in realia (a dollar, pound, brochures...). Find out if the school's microscope works.
17. Arts presentation of an important painter.
18. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation of a topic.
19. Spelling contests of vocabulary of the unit.
20. One to one questions (2 minutes per student) – different themes.
21. When one teacher says “no normal class” (exam or similar) volunteer to go to another class.
22. Help out to make photocopies.
23. Help out with special needs students. Sit next to them and help.

L.As can also find many suggestions that are available in the Language Assistant's Guides provided by the National and Regional governments. L.As need to be aware of their role in the school and each of these points of the list needs to be explained thoroughly. Also these functions should be included in the school's bilingual project. I have seen L.As sitting at the back of the classroom without being told what to do. The teacher also needs to send the weekly planning of the curriculum and activities that are going to take place in the class in order for the L.A to be prepared and ready to help out in class. What I found quite effective is that the L.A can prepare a PowerPoint presentation about the unit and have the L.A speak most of the time. The presentation should be interactive with the students, asking them questions, doing TPR activities... also a quiz at the end to reinforce the concepts learned would enhance the activity.

The number of language assistants in the different regional bilingual programmes in Spain varies a lot, some models have lots of L.As having more than one and going up to even 6 per school and others don't have any L.As at all. It would be highly recommended to have at least 1 L.A in every bilingual school, failing to do so would seriously hamper the programme.

Other important aspects for an effective bilingual programme

There are a vast number of elements that could be considered helpful in order to optimise a bilingual programme but I will try to pinpoint briefly some of the ones I consider could make a difference, always ones the 3 keys mentioned before have been consolidated.

One fundamental factor to take into account is to analyse when to start the bilingual programme. Most bilingual models in Spain start in the first course of primary education and it is progressively implemented from then on, year by year, until the whole of the primary education stage becomes bilingual, nevertheless most bilingual schools in Spain extend voluntarily the number of sessions in English in infants' stage.

At the CEIP Villa de Guadarrama a bilingual school I worked in some years ago, our administrators allowed that Sarah Conacher Smith, one of our language assistants, could work exclusively in the infants' stage. This decision marked a big difference in the bilingual project of the school and the results were very satisfying. In the project we extended the English sessions to 5 a week, one per day, lasting each of them half an hour, and the improvement of the students was remarkable and proved to be very beneficial. By the time these students graduated from infants' education after 3 years having English class every school day and promoted to the primary stage, their level of English was already of high standard linguistically and also in terms of motivation to the learning of the language. In my experience it is better for infant students together with year 1 and year 2 of primary education to focus primarily in the oral acquisition of the language, providing the students with lots of input. Neurological studies show that the human brain has highest receptivity for language in early infancy and childhood; children at an early age can acquire a second language with less effort than if we wait for a later age; also if the learning occurs before the child is 6 years old, the linguistic activity will be located in the left hemisphere of the brain, just like the native language does (Sussman, Ritter, & Vaughan, 1998). Recently the Community of Madrid has announced that there will be a pilot project this school year where bilingualism will be implemented in the infants' stage.

Moreover, there are many more things that also contribute and some of them I also find even essential for a programme to be effective. Even if we have the 3 keys everything can be ruined if schools are forced to be bilingual without the support of the Educational Community and the School Board. The proliferation of bilingual schools has been so fast in some regions that some have been opened ex-officio and that could lead to a sense of rejection from parents, teachers and also indirectly by the students themselves. Also however great the programme might be it needs to take into account and either offer a bilingual and non-bilingual programme within the school or ensure that children have both types of schools within easy travelling distance to choose from.

On top of that, school's headmasters and headmistresses in bilingual schools often do not speak English and do not understand the needs of bilingual educators. It is highly recommended that administrators possess basic proficiency in the second language. It might not be essential for the programme to succeed but if the school's administration becomes an obstacle this can prove to be very negative and a real burden. Initiatives like the Community of Madrid offering more points for the schools opting to become bilingual if the Headmaster / Headmistress have at least a B1 level of English are in the good direction.

Effective bilingual programmes need to have administrators, parents, teachers and students well informed about the bilingual regional model; they need to have very clear and defined goals and expectations and need to have assessment tools from international institutions that test the student's level of English every two years. There needs to be a balance between the contents and concepts being taught at the school and the level of English competence the students are expected to have to follow the lesson in English. Additionally these international certificates will help students in their future labour activity.

Leadership of the bilingual coordinators is also critical; an eager hard working coordinator will push their fellow bilingual teachers to the max and will make them go that extra mile that makes a programme successful.

In many Schools in Spain, classroom teachers in primary schools “*tutores*” teach Spanish, Maths, Natural and Social Sciences together with perhaps another subject like arts. This in primary education is essential since students need to have a reference teacher that looks after them and is in charge of everything related to that class. Depending on the region, bilingual schools have to change this traditional system, now too many teachers come into the classroom. The subject of English is taught by one teacher, another one comes in to teach Natural Science and Social Science, a different person for arts, somebody else for Music, one more for Physical Education and so forth. To sort out this issue is up to the school’s administrators. For instance in the Bilingual School I worked in CEIP Villa de Guadarrama the solution was to establish a coordination between the classroom teachers in two combined classes, let’s say 4A and 4B, where we would have a bilingual teacher in charge of the bilingual subjects for both classes while the non-bilingual teacher would be in charge of the non-bilingual subjects. This in my experience worked really well because the students have a classroom “*tutor*” and a “*co-tutor*” for the bilingual subjects. This reduces the amount of teachers coming in in both classrooms.

Furthermore, to give bilingual teachers the recognition they deserve for their extra work would boost these teachers motivation and can be a Knock-on effect to the school’s bilingual programme. Parents, administration and even fellow non-bilingual co-workers sometimes are not aware that being a bilingual teacher requires extensive planning and organisation, and that it can be extremely complex to plan a lesson taught in a foreign language. It can be very frustrating for the teacher and the students alike but bilingual teachers should be patient and understanding with the students. In some occasions we may need different approaches before a lesson starts to click with the students. These are teachers I call “bilingual warriors”; sometimes I think you really have to love what you're doing in order to be able to carry on everyday. Some regions have decided to give a productivity bonus to bilingual teachers but not all regions do the same thing. We need happy and eager teachers for a better programme. To be a teacher is a tough job and working as a bilingual teacher is even harder especially if the students’ level is too low to be able to follow the class in English due to a faulty programme.

Conclusion

In Spain bilingual schools are being opened in a wide scale all over the country and the integration of CLIL methodology has been an important change for the schools as well as for the Educational Community.

The Educational Authorities are at a crucial moment; they need to custody and direct rigorously this new incorporation to the Educational System if they really want to be successful. Bilingualism cannot be based exclusively on the effort of teachers, parents and students. There is a wide consensus about the educational value of bilingual

programmes and the results are very satisfactory despite the long way to go and all the difficulties. That's why taking into consideration the 3 keys mentioned: good English, sufficient number of sessions and resources, and other important elements if included in the bilingual programmes properly at a national level via new legislation, we would face a more uniform and effective scheme in Spain.

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