

Integrating Content and Language in Specialized Language Teaching and Learning with the Help of ICT

Viviana Gaballo

E-mail: viviana.gaballo@unimc.it

University of Macerata (Italy)

Abstract

In recent times globalization has had a significant impact on content-teaching methodologies. Mobility in Europe is also a major issue that stimulated the implementation of such practice. David Marsh and Peeter Mehisto have pointed out that many governments have adopted some form of second-language-medium instruction. But reading in a second language per se does not make an example of language teaching, as the focus is primarily on content, not language. The instrumental use of a vehicular language – generally a second or foreign language to learners – does not imply analyzing and practicing the communicative structures of the vehicular language itself. Conversely, as **Andy Kirkpatrick** argued, all good language teaching needs to be based on content that engages the learner, but this is meant to provide useful contexts of use which will enhance the learning experience.

Integration of content and language can only be achieved through the combination of professional expertise and linguistic competence provided by subject teachers and language teachers. Yet, although team teaching would seem to be the ideal solution, this is very difficult to achieve in practice for a number of reasons. Drawing on the successful experience of Canadian immersion programmes, where teachers are trained to teach French, and the subject through French, we believe that a second-language medium of instruction should ideally use teachers trained in both language and content pedagogy. ICT plays a fundamental role in achieving this dual goal as the case study presented in this paper proves. By analyzing a scenario of content and language integrated learning based on the use of e-learning technologies, the paper points out the relevance of involving students in ICT-based activities which give them a combination of professional expertise and linguistic competence.