



Promoting Bilingualism: the Innovative Use of Technology to Enhance the Development of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Programs

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Abstract

This paper is the result of a first stage analysis into the development of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) programs at the Italian Bilingual School of Sydney in Australia. It explores the role of technology in developing and delivering bilingual programs which promote language acquisition in primary age students.

As the first school in Australia to provide a bilingual and bicultural education in English and Italian, the Italian Bilingual School aims to empower students for a global existence.

A unique feature of the Italian Bilingual School is that it combines elements of both the Australian and the Italian curriculum in order to provide a program of study which targets the needs of students.

The method selected to deliver the curriculum is based on language immersion principles and follows the one person/one language approach, which requires each teacher to communicate with the children in only one language. This is to help children establish clear delineation between the two languages from the earliest stages. Teachers use a variety of methods outside the language, such as using gestures to give clues as to their meaning in order to link the verbal communication with something the child already knows and understands. The introduction of technology, including Interactive whiteboards, laptops, Ipods and videoconferencing facilities has enhanced the development of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) by increasing methods of communication which support language learning.

Technological applications promote communicative classroom activities including group-work, pair-work and independent work and are critical in the development of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) programs. Technology continues to play a pivotal role in delivering and developing CLIL programs at the Italian Bilingual school of Sydney.