



Ensuring Primary School Teachers' Professional Development through the CAMPS Project and Its Tools

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Abstract

The study examines the CAMPS project, funded by the European Commission, and implemented by the EuroED primary school in Iasi, Romania, along with other educational institutions from Ireland, Italy, Spain, and Romania. It brings to the fore the use of the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology in primary schools, a method commonly used in secondary education. The article gives insights into the project's goals, target groups, key findings, and the online training programme. The project aims to raise awareness of the role that the use of CLIL methodology may play in primary schools, particularly in the arts and music classes. It explores different uses of videos and lesson plans that have become part of the teacher educational landscape and gives practical examples of how to incorporate these teaching tools into teacher professional development. The article focuses on the main teaching tools that were created for primary school teachers within the project: the CLIL-based educational videos and their accompanying lesson plans illustrating the CLIL methodology. The article also provides information about the reception of these tools by beneficiaries.

Keywords: CLIL, videos, lesson plans, primary school teachers, arts and music

1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, education has encountered challenges such as increased mobility, the internationalisation of education, and unprecedented technological advancement. Schools are constantly under pressure from Europe's multiculturalism and multilingualism expectations. Students require new competencies to adapt to new situations, where arts, sciences, and foreign languages are important. The Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) method meets this need by teaching subjects in a foreign language, using the language as a tool rather than the main objective. Similar to learning a first language, this approach emphasizes meaningful learning experiences by integrating language structures into the content. CLIL activities boost communication, cognitive skills, and cultural awareness, making it possible to teach subjects like math, science, and the arts in different languages. CLIL enhances both linguistic and scientific literacy, bringing advantages such as cultural understanding, language proficiency, and increased motivation [1, 2, 3]. CLIL has gained popularity in Romania, leading to the widespread teaching of languages like English, German, French, and Spanish. Various educational levels can implement it with adequate resources and qualified teachers. Parents favour CLIL due to its practical learning methods, which prepare students for the job market and collaborative settings [4]. However, the reach of CLIL is still limited. Initiatives such as the CAMPS project aim to help teachers by offering online courses, resources, and best practices, particularly in integrating arts and music into CLIL for primary education [5].

2. The CAMPS Project

2.1 The CAMPS Project's Objectives

The CAMPS project aims to raise awareness about the relevance of the CLIL methodology for primary schools with a focus on arts and music. Language studies have demonstrated the ease of learning foreign languages at a younger age, a phenomenon that appears to hold true for foreign languages taught and learned through the CLIL methodology. The CLIL approach is priceless since it offers a



comprehensive education combining not just language acquisition but also creative inquiry, cultural knowledge, critical thinking, and links among disciplines [5].

The project's specific goals are to provide teachers with CLIL-based video lessons in English concentrating on arts and music as examples of best practices to follow; to provide teachers with substantial training to enable them to create content in English suitable for their children, and to raise awareness of and promote the CLIL methodology at the primary school level through motivating case studies.

2.2 The Project's Partnership

The project's partnership consists of primary schools (EuroEd Primary School, Iasi, Romania, and the IC Pier Cironi, Italy), language teachers' associations (LEND – Lingua e Nuova Didattica, Roma, IT), education, research, and training institutions/organizations (Pixel, Florence, Italy, and Universal Learning Systems, Dublin, Ireland), and local government officials (The Guadassuar Town Council, Spain). These institutions support the European component of education through innovation, multiculturalism, multilingualism, child and citizen engagement in community social life, and the use of ICT for training and education purposes [5].

2.3 Target Groups

The project targets primary school principals, teachers, parents, and children.

2.4 The CAMPS Project's Results

The main project deliverables are an online training course using digital solutions to improve accessibility and usability by main schoolteachers, a collection of video lessons on arts and music topics, and a database of CLIL case studies illustrating direct experiences of CLIL experts, main school decision-makers, and policymakers in the field of education.

3. The CAMPS Online Training Course

The teachers involved in the testing activities were from seven schools (one private—EuroEd—and six public schools). They were mainly primary school teachers (36); three were music teachers, one was an art teacher, and four were English teachers. The survey is based on evaluation questionnaires from a total of 44 respondents who reviewed different numbers of CLIL Arts videos, the most reviewed being Shapes, Colours, and Emotions (reviewed by 32 respondents), followed by Hello Autumn (reviewed by 25 respondents) and My Landscape (reviewed by 20 respondents), and the least reviewed video was Sculpting Techniques (reviewed by only 3 respondents) [5].

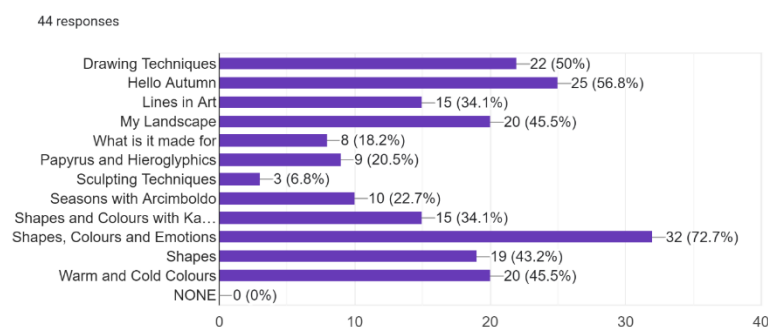


Fig. 1. The art CLIL videos reviewed by the teachers

The most popular videos focused on music were Musical Instruments (reviewed by 31 respondents), followed by Dancing Styles and Alla Turca (both with 21 views). The least reviewed video was Rhythm Activities with Flamenco (reviewed by only five respondents).

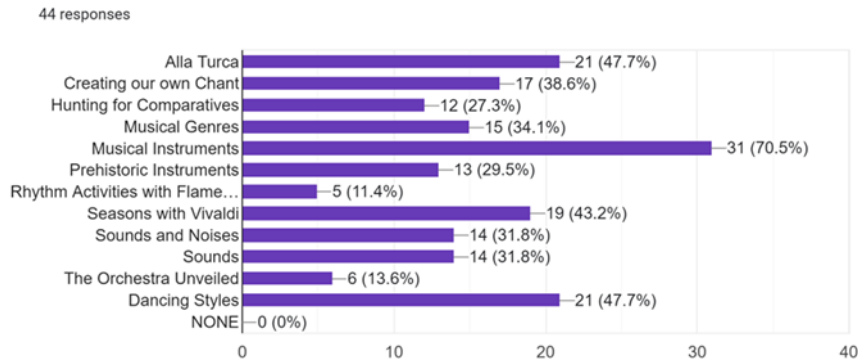


Fig. 2. The Music CLIL videos reviewed by the teachers

The videos were evaluated in terms of their didactical appropriateness, consistency with teachers' and pupils' expectations, interactive and attractive potential, usability, innovativeness, and transferability, as well as the extent to which CLIL-Based Educational Videos support teachers to implement the lesson plans through English and enable them to conduct the lessons accurately using English. The high overall average for the didactical appropriateness (9.72) demonstrates that the CLIL-Based Educational Videos match the intended objectives for learning and outcomes. On a scale of 1-10, 75% of the respondents (33 out of 44) gave a score of 10, 22.7%, 10 respondents out of 44 provided a score of 9, and only 1 respondent scored the didactical appropriateness of the videos with an 8. Overall, the videos' high score for didactic appropriateness demonstrates that the content, presentation, and pedagogical approach are all well-designed and effective for learning arts and music topics in a way that is both engaging and informative [5].

Didactical appropriateness of the Videos

44 responses

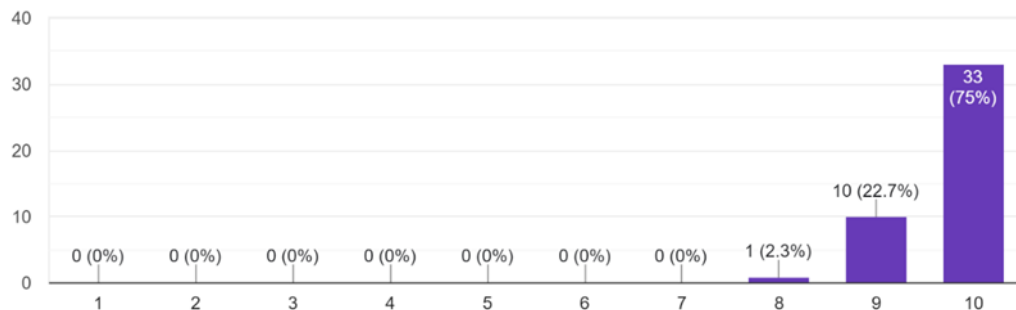


Fig. 3. Didactical appropriateness of the CLIL Based Educational Videos

The criterion regarding consistency with teachers' and pupils' expectations got an overall score of 9.75. A vast majority of the respondents appreciated the videos for covering the topics and skills outlined in the curriculum, providing a balanced focus on both language and content, using techniques like scaffolding and visual aids, supporting various teaching strategies, and providing supplementary materials, such as teacher guides, lesson plans, and activity suggestions. Some of the teachers highlighted the main strengths of the videos: "It's an innovative project that provides teachers with highly creative and engaging CLIL lesson plans for arts and music in the form of videos."



Consistency with teachers' and pupils' expectations

44 responses

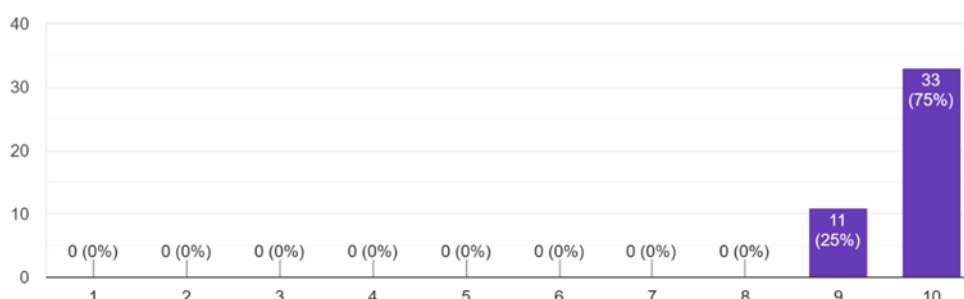


Fig. 4. Consistency with teachers' and pupils' expectations of the CLIL Based Educational Videos

The Romanian respondents were highly appreciative of the interactive and attractive potential of the CLIL-Based Educational Videos, which received a high rating of 9.75 on a scale of 1-10, demonstrating that the features and strategies suggested by the videos engage both educators and students, facilitate active learning, and integrate seamlessly into the classroom environment. The teachers' testimonials substantiate this high score: "The brevity of the explanations/activities, the creativity of the lessons, and the cultural references, which are somewhat lacking in traditional textbooks, where CLIL is neglected, if not entirely omitted." "One of the most useful aspects of the videos is their applicability in the classroom, through their interactive nature, involving all students with different abilities and skills. The activities presented in this way are simple to understand and adaptable to the needs of students, ensuring the involvement of all students." [5]

44 responses

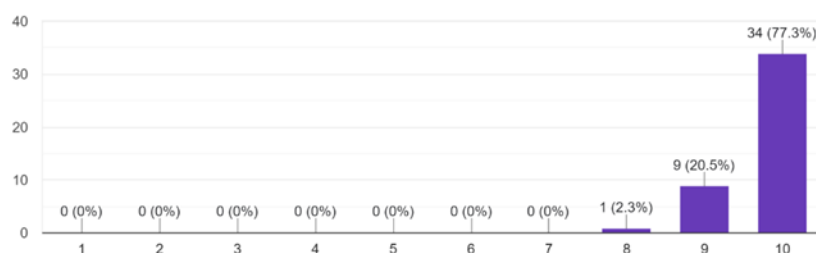


Fig. 5. The CLIL-Based Educational Videos for Teachers have interactive and appealing potential

The high score, 9.84, that the participants rated the usability of the videos demonstrates that the respondents felt that the videos provide a smooth and intuitive learning experience, and the teaching methods used in the videos reflect best practices in both subject matter teaching and language acquisition. The videos allow teachers to easily pause, replay, and skip sections to emphasise key points or revisit difficult concepts, as well as ensure compatibility with classroom technology, allowing teachers to use them interactively on whiteboards or smartboards. According to the respondents' testimonials, "They present knowledge in a clear and understandable way and offer a wide range of activities that we can do in the classroom. The activities are engaging for both students and teachers. In conclusion, the high usability score of the CLIL-based educational videos demonstrates their high effectiveness in enhancing both content and language learning.



Usability
44 responses

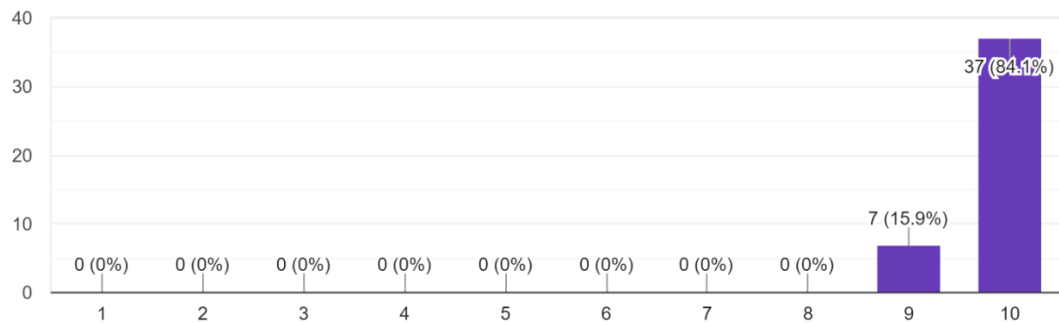


Fig. 6. Usability of the CLIL Based Educational Videos

Romanian respondents have also highly rated the innovativeness of the CLIL-Based Educational Videos, which scored 88.6%. The participants stated that the videos incorporate advanced educational technologies, pedagogical strategies, and content delivery methods to enhance learning outcomes. They employ new, engaging teaching methods and instructional technologies, inspiring creativity and critical thinking in learners. The videos fill a gap in traditional curricula and textbooks, providing guidance and lesson sequences for primary school pupils. They also offer innovative teaching methods, such as project-based learning, online collaboration and modern technologies. The respondents also highly appreciate the novelty of addressing specific art and music content through a foreign language. [5]

Innovativeness
44 responses

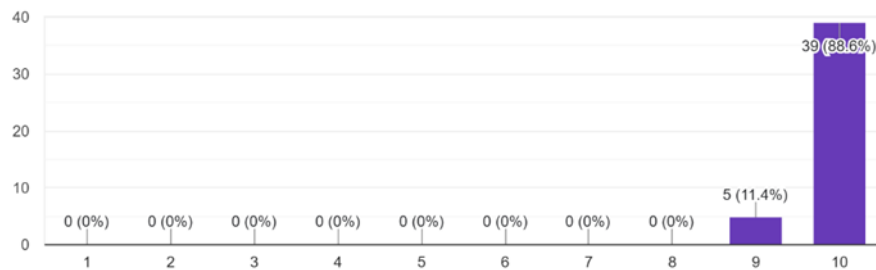


Fig. 7. Innovativeness of the CLIL Based Educational Videos for teachers

4. Incorporating the Teaching Tools of the CAMPS Project into Teacher Professional Development

In recent years, the integration of video technology into teacher education programs has gained significant momentum [6]. Videos offer a dynamic and engaging way of supporting the acquisition and upgrading of knowledge about effective teaching principles.

For in-service teachers, videos offer a convenient and flexible means of continuous professional development. Teachers can access video resources at their own pace and revisit them as needed to reinforce their learning. This flexibility is particularly beneficial for teachers with busy schedules who may not have the time to attend in-person workshops or seminars. By incorporating videos into their professional development plans, teachers can stay up-to-date with the latest educational practices and continuously improve their teaching skill [6, 7]. One of the primary advantages of using videos in teacher education is that it enhances visual and contextual learning. Videos provide a rich, multimodal learning experience that combines visual, auditory, and sometimes kinaesthetic elements. This multimodal approach caters to different learning styles and helps teachers grasp complex concepts



more effectively. Additionally, videos provide context by situating teaching practices within classroom environments, making it easier for teachers to relate theory to practice.

Using videos in teacher education programs also fosters collaborative learning and peer discussions. Teachers can watch videos and engage in group discussions to share their interpretations and perspectives. This collaborative approach encourages teachers to learn from one another's experiences and insights, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of effective teaching practices. Peer discussions can spark new ideas and inspire teachers to experiment with different teaching approaches [6, 7].

The gap between theory and practice is a longstanding challenge in teacher education. The project makes good use of videos conveying theoretical knowledge and lesson plans, providing teachers with the practical context needed to prepare them for the realities of the classroom. As the videos focusing on foundational knowledge and the theoretical background necessary for understanding complex educational principles are supported by lesson plans, the theoretical concepts discussed can be immediately visualised, making abstract ideas more concrete and accessible. For instance, a lesson plan demonstrating differentiated instruction in a real classroom can follow a video on the topic. This combination enables teachers to observe the practical application of theoretical principles, enhancing their comprehension and simplifying the recall and integration of these concepts into their teaching [7, 8].

5. Conclusions

The CLIL-Based Educational Videos produced by the CAMPS project offer significant benefits for teachers. They enhance English proficiency by providing high-quality language models, boosting teachers' confidence and skill in using English during lessons. The videos also improve lesson delivery by offering clear guidance on content, language, and pedagogy, resulting in more engaging and effective teaching. With an impressive average score of 9.78 for key features, these videos serve as valuable models, aligning well with educational standards. They offer practical tips for student engagement and interactive activities, giving teachers effective tools to enhance their teaching methods.

Furthermore, the project aims to empower teachers with creative strategies and digital resources to introduce and expand the CLIL method successfully in primary education. By integrating foreign languages, music, and arts into the curriculum, the project promotes cultural understanding and language acquisition among children. It encourages the use of innovative teaching methods such as project-based learning and online collaboration, providing a well-rounded, interdisciplinary approach. The CAMPS project meets the current educational needs effectively, fostering the development of language skills through subject-specific content and enhancing the overall learning experience for both teachers and students.

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