

## **British Council ELT Conference, 5-6 March, 2004: Standards in Language Learning and the Common European Framework**

Summary of the presentation: "CLIL – The Zürich Teacher Training Course" by Martina Wider, Fachstelle Fremdsprachen, Mittelschul- und Berufsbildungsamt Zürich

### **Bilingual Projects in the Canton of Zürich**

The Zürich Mittelschul- und Berufsbildungsamt which is responsible for all high schools and vocational schools of the canton of Zürich has piloted two bilingual projects in the past five years. First it started the project *bi.li – bilingualer Sachfachunterricht an Berufsschulen* (bi.li – a bilingual program for vocational schools) which ran in several Swiss cantons from 1999 to 2003. And second it developed the project *Zweisprachige Maturität an Zürcher kantonalen Mittelschulen* (the bilingual high school diploma at Zürich high schools) which started in 2001 and will be finished in 2006.

### **The High School Pilot Project**

This high school pilot project involves ten of the 21 high schools in the canton of Zürich. They all volunteered to be part of the program. The languages of the program are German which is the standard language in high schools in Zürich and English as a second language. The program extends over the last four years of high school and leads to a bilingual final examination and thus to a bilingual high school diploma. The subjects offered in English are history, geography, biology, mathematics, physics, chemistry, economy and law, visual arts, music and physical education. Every school has to offer at least one subject from the humanities like history or geography in order to have their high school diplomas accepted Switzerland-wide. The subjects which are taught in English are taught exclusively in English from the moment the program starts and the final exam in those subjects is also exclusively done in English, while all the other subjects are done in German (which the exception of foreign language subjects which are taught in the respective foreign language).

In a first phase in 2001 three schools started with the program in one class each. In the second phase which started in 2002 another seven schools joined the project and started the program with one class per school each while the pioneer schools added a second class of students. Each school will add one more class of students every year until the project ends in 2006. The students involved in the program all volunteered to participate in it and were selected out of a large number of applications on the basis of their academic records. In a third phase the project might be extended to all high schools of the canton or it might be extended to include other foreign languages such as French. This phase will begin in 2006 once an external, scientific evaluation will have been carried out and will have given some insights into how successfully the program has been established in the ten pilot schools.

The teachers who teach in this program have to have a university degree in the subject they are going to teach in English and they have to have studied English at least as a minor subject or they have to have similar qualifications such as being a native speaker, having lived or worked in an English speaking country, having taken the proficiency exam etc. They also have to hold a Swiss teaching diploma. In addition to these qualifications they also have to attend a teacher training course offered by the Mittelschul- und Berufsbildungsamt.

## **The Zürich Teacher Training Course**

The teacher training course which is part of the pilot project is mandatory for all teachers teaching their subject in English. It consists of twelve half-day meetings (12x4 lessons) and introduces the teachers to the special methodology of teaching bilingually. The course is split into two parts, the first consisting of eight meetings, focuses on the theory of teaching bilingually and the second consisting of the remaining four meetings, concentrates on practical experiences made by the teachers when teaching bilingually. The teachers who have attended all twelve meetings are then given a certificate for the course.

Currently there are very few teacher training courses on bilingual teaching available for high school teachers in Switzerland. The Weiterbildungszentrale, an institution offering courses for high school teachers, has been offering some one-day courses introducing bilingual teaching as well as some one-day courses on bilingual teaching for teachers of one specific subject such as physics. Additionally, the Hochschule für Soziale Arbeit und Pädagogik beider Basel has been offering a post-degree course on bilingual teaching since December 2003. Another post-degree course is being planned by the Weiterbildungszentrale and SIBP (Schweizer Institut für Berufspädagogik) and might be started once the Zürich course is no longer offered when the pilot project ends in 2006. The Zürich course itself might then be continued by the University of Zürich (Höheres Lehramt Mittelschulen).

Vocational school teachers have been able to attend teacher training courses since 1999 when the pilot project *bi.li* started. Since 2002 this course has been offered by another institution (ILeB – Institut für Lehrerbildung und Berufspädagogik) as well and will be offered regularly from now on.

As such few opportunities exist for high school teachers in Switzerland to learn about bilingual teaching, also many teachers from other cantons than Zürich have been attending the Zürich course.

## **A New Methodology for Teaching CLIL**

Based on Wildhage and Otten's book "Praxis des Bilingualen Unterrichts" from 2003 (chapter 1: Content and Language Integrated Learning) we can say that CLIL is much more than teaching the subject in a foreign language. Rather it consists of teaching on the one hand, the subject and on the other hand, the language and to do so it is necessary to integrate the two and thus create a new methodology. Integration of content and language means, according to Wildhage and Otten

- 1) Using the foreign language as a tool
- 2) Including the dimension of intercultural learning
- 3) Basing the lessons on current knowledge of language acquisition
- 4) Supporting language elements systematically
- 5) Working towards functional multilingualism
- 6) Cooperating across the curriculum

In order to do so, teachers who want to teach bilingually should have the following qualifications according to Dieter Wolff ("Zur Ausbildung von Lehrerinnen und Lehrern für mehrsprachige Bildungsgänge" in Breidbach et al. 2002):

1. Native speaker competence
2. Flexibility in the use of different registers in the foreign language, particularly in the register of the subject
3. Knowledge of skills of productive and receptive language use
4. Comprehensive knowledge of theories on L2-acquisition and bilingualism
5. Knowledge of linguistics of subject register
6. Knowledge of the methodology of foreign language teaching and of teaching the subject
7. Knowledge of learning techniques and of the methodology of language and subject teaching
8. Knowledge of strategies for autonomous learning and knowledge how to foster them
9. Knowledge of how to foster productive and receptive language skills in the foreign language
10. Knowledge of techniques of describing cultural phenomena
11. Knowledge of the scientific approach to the subject in the target language culture
12. Knowledge of sources and materials of the subject in the target language culture
13. Ability to use modern technology for subject-related learning in the foreign language
14. Knowledge of the target language culture due to a prolonged stay abroad

### **The Concept of the Zürich Teacher Training Course**

Keeping this list in mind, we devised a concept for our course trying to integrate as many of those points as possible. We did not include points 1, 2, 5, 11, 13, and 14 as they were either explicitly not part of our project (point 1), or considered prerequisites to participate in the program ( points 2, 5, 11, 13, 14).

Thus we started out with a course concept that contained tuition on how to achieve:

- Knowledge of skills of productive and receptive language use
- Comprehensive knowledge of theories on L2-acquisition and bilingualism
- Knowledge of the methodology of foreign language teaching and of teaching the subject
- Knowledge of learning techniques and of the methodology of language and subject teaching
- Knowledge of how to foster productive and receptive language skills in the foreign language
- Knowledge of sources and materials of the subject in the target language culture

In addition, we considered the following points important as well and thus also included them into our concept:

- Knowledge of testing in the immersive classroom
- Experiences of immersive teaching in practise
- Strategies of cooperation across the curriculum

In our pilot project we are required to revise and improve the teacher training course continuously. Thus we request oral and written feedback after every one of the twelve sessions and we ask the course participants to fill in questionnaires about the first and the second half of the course every year. Due to responses we thus got we included two more of Wolff's elements into the current course concept. They are:

- Knowledge of strategies for autonomous learning and knowledge how to foster them
- Knowledge of techniques of describing cultural phenomena

Therefore all 14 points listed by Wolff are now part of our course concept or are left out of it for specific reasons (see above).

### **The Zürich Teacher Training Course Program**

The course program for the third course we organized, the one that took place in 2003/04 shows how we put this concept into practice:

*Course program 03/04 (12 meetings of 4 hours each):*

1. An introduction to immersive teaching / The four skills: Reading
2. Learner autonomy: The puzzle technique
3. The oral skills: Listening and speaking
4. Overview over research on immersive teaching / Report on teaching maths immersively in India
5. Immersive experience: Reading a text and answering questions in Romansh / Skill 4: Writing
6. Networking day: Report on immersive teaching in Geneva / Intercultural learning: Report on the project *Virtual classroom* / Report from the Liceo Artistico (Italian / German immersion) in Zürich / Report on organizing a stay abroad
7. Visit of an international school
8. How to deal with mistakes in immersive lessons and exams / The tandem method (lesson observation between immersion teachers or of immersion and English teachers)
9. Teaching across the curriculum: Cooperating with the English teachers / Using the European language portfolio / Case studies
10. Writing, correcting and grading immersive exams / Microteaching (demonstration of part of an immersive lesson and discussion) / Case study
11. Evaluating the Zürich pilot project / Microteaching / Case studies
12. Constructivist techniques in science education and language learning / Microteaching / Case studies

Additionally, in every meeting there is some time to exchange information and experiences in subject-specific groups.

As stated above, we have been changing and improving the course constantly according to the feedback we received from former course participants.

For the course of 2004/05 the following elements have been added:

- Discussion of articles on bilingual and immersive teaching
- Best practice in immersive teaching (former course participants talk about their experiences with teaching immersively)
- Subject-specific discourse functions
- Visit of an immersion school participating in the project

## Needs and Problems of the Immersion Teachers

When we ask the immersion teachers at the end of the teacher training course about their needs and problems we often get the following answers:

Needs:

- Affordable and useful materials in English (textbooks, articles, TV programs, etc.)
- Time to prepare (the lessons, the new worksheets, tests, etc.)
- Help with language problems (for example assessing material for the right level of English)

These needs are addressed in the pilot project by giving the schools which participate in it a certain amount of money which they can use to buy new English materials, to pay the immersion teachers extra for their added amount of work and to pay the English teachers to help the immersion teachers with the materials.

However, there are also other wishes listed by the teachers which are not paid for by the project's funds as they exceed the amount of money available. These wishes are for:

- Subject-specific courses on teaching immersively
- English courses geared specifically towards immersion teachers
- One institution organizing stays abroad (as opposed to every school doing so individually)

Typical problems immersion teachers face are dealt with in the second part of the course in the last four meetings when case studies are discussed. The participants all present one case each and then analyze the cases together to find certain answers to recurring problems. Here are some of the questions that have been asked:

- How to get the students to speak English during group and pair work activities?
- How to get the students to speak English to the teacher also outside the classroom?
- How to establish a personal relationship with the students in a foreign language?
- What to do with students who cannot express complex thoughts in the foreign language yet?
- How to deal with students who are native speakers?
- How to deal with academically weak students in the immersion classroom?
- How to make sure the students also know the terminology in German?

Immersion teachers also often express certain worries they have during those case study discussions.

Here are some of them:

*Frequently expressed worries:*

- Is the immersive program only appropriate for gifted students?
- Will the students still reach the required levels of the subjects taught immersively?
- Will immersion students be as proficient in the mother tongue as regular students?
- Will English become less interesting as a subject?
- Will the immersion students take over mistakes from their immersion teachers?
- Will the number of English lessons in the timetable be reduced?
- Will English become the predominant foreign language in Switzerland?

## **Implications for the Language Teachers**

Naturally there are also certain implications for the English teachers who are involved in the program. Mervyn Whittaker (in Wildhage and Otten 2003) mentions reading training, vocabulary work, dictionary training and project work that should be focused on by such English teachers. Here is a list of elements that he believes those teachers should take into consideration:

### *Reading training*

- Pre-reading tasks
- Global understanding
- Vocabulary understanding techniques
- Reading for gist and scanning
- Analysis of content
- Post-reading phase

### *Vocabulary work*

- Basic vocabulary
- Extended basic vocabulary
- Subject terminology
- Instrumental vocabulary

### *Dictionary training*

- Proficiency in the alphabetic system
- Using the layout of the page for orientation
- Getting an overview of one entry
- Understanding the different lexicographic pieces of information
- Choosing the right meaning
- Making use of the additional information given to use the word in a sentence

### *Project work*

- Research in the library and the internet
- Extensive, intensive and content-oriented reading
- Note-taking
- Using the dictionary
- Presenting information in written or oral form
- Oral skills for presentations
- Listening skills for presentations

In our project, we believe that cooperation between the immersion teachers and the English teachers is vital. Thus we encourage the English teachers to:

- help with level of materials
- check worksheets, texts, tests for mistakes
- advise on vocabulary work
- cover the same topic
- work together with immersion subject teachers in a project

In addition, the English teachers of immersion classes in our project are also responsible to introduce them to the European language portfolio which is a most valuable instrument for such programs. Thus they:

- introduce students to the ELP
- explain to students how to use the ELP
- supervise students' work with the ELP also in other subjects
- explain to students the process of language acquisition
- get students to take over the responsibility for their language acquisition and to work autonomously

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