CHAPTER TEN

PRE-SERVICE CLIL TEACHER-EDUCATION IN CATALONIA: EXPERT AND NOVICE PRACTITIONERS TEACHING AND REFLECTING TOGETHER

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Introduction

This paper aims to present the model of pre-service Teacher-Education for Content and Language Integrated Learning (TED for CLIL, hereafter) developed at the Bellaterra Campus of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) over the last four years. This model is the result of an on-going process of design, experimentation and discussion among all stakeholders: student-teachers, school mentors, university tutors and researchers. The TED for CLIL Component aims at endowing student-teachers (STs, hereafter) with the basic skills needed for subject-matter teaching, while simultaneously developing collaboration strategies between English teachers and content-subject teachers (i.e. Teachers of Science, History, etc.) for the development and implementation of CLIL in inclusive classrooms.

Section one of this chapter presents the national and specific sociolinguistic and educational contexts in which the course has been created. Section two outlines the type of collaborative research through university-school partnership projects that has served as a breeding ground for the model. Section three puts forward the theoretical foundations that sustain the proposal. Section four presents the resulting TED for CLIL Component together with data that illustrate and support the claims made and final decisions made as a consequence of the on-going process of experimentation and discussion. Finally, section five summarizes the main
conclusions drawn from the whole process and sketches out areas for further study.

**Context**

In Catalonia teachers exercise their profession in its completely bilingualised school system, where English is steadily gaining ground as the third language of instruction. A very large proportion of all education implemented in Catalonia is technically considered as CLIL, due to the fact that immersion in the minority language (Catalan) has been one of the major features characterising the Catalan education system since the eighties (Pérez-Vidal, 2001). Nonetheless, in this chapter, second language immersion will be left aside and the term CLIL will be used exclusively to refer to education through a foreign language of international use.

Until 2009 the requirements for accessing the teaching profession in Spain limited to the possession of a four-year university degree in one single area of specialization plus the completion of a two-month part-time Mickey Mouse teacher training course called CAP². Nonetheless, in the last ten years some universities have been offering optional one-year TED master courses inspired in curricula produced by the state³. One of them is the 60 ECTS Master Course run since 1998 by the UAB at its Bellaterra Campus which offered courses in the branches of Science, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Catalan, Spanish and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The course is organized into four modules: 1. Psycho-Socio-Pedagogy; 2. Subject-Specific Pedagogy⁴; 3. Practicum; and 4. Master Dissertation.

It is within this context that a team of university teachers specialized in the teaching of English, Science, Social Sciences and Mathematics, in collaboration with School Mentors in the aforementioned branches developed a set of TED activities and strategies, the distinctive aim of which is to develop awareness of the specific challenges that CLIL programmes pose for teachers and learners, and to equip STs with the basic skills for competent teaching in those contexts.

**Collaborative research in TED for CLIL**

For many years, the Practicum has been at the heart of all teacher education at Bellaterra (Anton and Oller, 2007; González et al., 2008; Milian and Ribas, 2009; Nussbaum, 2008; Sammarti, 2007) and its Faculty of Education runs numerous collaborative projects with Professional Development Schools (PDS hereafter)⁵. The role that PDS were to play in
the process of design and piloting of the Component is well described by Edwards et al. (2009:5):

Professional Development School is conceived as a site where initial teacher education, professional development of teachers, improvement of teaching and learning and educational research are integrated.

Within this framework, university tutors and school mentors followed their own action-oriented research programme on CLIL and on Pre-service TED for CLIL. The procedure followed the standard cycles of action-research (Carr and Kemmis 1986; Strickland, 1988), namely, drafting a plan for TED for CLIL, implementing it, gathering and analyzing qualitative data during the experimentation, drawing conclusions and amending the initial plan, at which point the cycle starts again.

The succession of cycles of action and reflection, as will be stated later, is the main pedagogical option in our model of TED for CLIL. Therefore, the introspective approach followed by mentors and tutors mirrors the inquiry approach followed by STs in their learning-to-teach process. The quote “In PDS, schools’ novice teachers learn to teach, university and school teaching staff investigate questions of teaching and learning together …” (Edwards et al., 2009:5) captures the essence of the process conducted at Bellaterra.

The experimentation of the model carried out with volunteer STs began in 2006 and it is still an on-going process. In all cases, STs’ level of competence in English ranged between the Council of Europe’s (COE) B2 and C2. The natural qualitative data gathered throughout the cycles of experimentation comprises conversational as well as textual or visual data. Table 10-1 summarizes the variety informants’ data handled during the process.

The detailed examination of data seeks to help build up an overall portrait of the outcomes of the experience through a process of interpretation, where inferences, implications and conclusions are continually checked against the stakeholders, following the principle of Authenticity in interpretative research (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). The variety of informants and data types, together with the process of continuous triangulation, guarantee that multiple perspectives on the same events are taken into account and weighed up in the final design of the CLIL Component, as well as in the other studies that derive from them.

The data gathered has also allowed for detailed focused studies on particular issues that have proved key to the success of TED for CLIL. Some of these studies are quoted in this chapter, the main goal of which is to provide an overall view of the outcomes of the project.