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With respect to the English vocabulary that should develop as a consequence of such teaching, we may identify the following necessary categories.

- Vocabulary that facilitates the negotiation of meaning of previous experiences. This includes terminology for perceptions as well as interpretations of the perceptions in everyday language, and scientific terminology normally found in everyday language.
- Vocabulary that relates to general scientific processes, e.g., systematic observations, recording data, tabulating, making hypotheses, predicting, explaining, supporting and contradicting arguments, investigating, exploring, proving, formulating a principle, etc.
- Vocabulary that extends the conceptual world of the pupils. This vocabulary may be highly technical, but its primary purpose, as described above, is to provide the pupils with additional tools to handle new experiences. From a methodological point of view, it may also make theory-driven empirical work possible and place hypothetical situations within the reach of the pupils.

The time-scale of the development of an appropriate vocabulary is that of science teaching itself. Specific attention should, however, be given to the second category, which is in itself rather limited. This "core vocabulary" is largely necessary even in elementary science teaching.

## Teaching physical education through a foreign language

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*Thomas Friman & Jan-Erik Romar*

### 1. Introduction

Bilingual education and content-based foreign language instruction is becoming more and more common in Finland. The Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education aims at spreading foreign language content instruction all over the country. This increased internationalization at educational institutions will make it easier for students to participate in international exchange programmes and benefit from what other countries have to offer (in Räsänen & Marsh, 1994). The teaching of physical education (PE) can help learners develop skills and abilities such as personal and social development, and knowledge of other subjects. Subjects that can be integrated into the teaching of physical education are languages, mathematics, and science. In the project described in this article, English was used for providing instruction in PE lessons, but we will also look at movement and PE as a medium of instruction in learning a foreign language.

Movement in language teaching represents a way for the learner to transform something abstract, inert and verbal into something real, vital and visual. Gildenhuys and Orsmond (1996) conclude that

movement and language development are interrelated and that movement creates meaning and gives a context for using a language. In addition, movement is universal and removes stress from language acquisition. Movement also allows the learner to experience learning as an active whole.

Gildenhuis and Orsmond (1996) undertook an action research project in South Africa where 34 black children at the age of six to eight years participated in a combined language and activity class. They found that the movement approach for language acquisition was successful and created a non-threatening environment within the social context. The teachers' personal qualities, e.g. their empathy and adaptability, facilitated in creating the learning environment, which also lowered the anxiety levels of the learners. In the initial stage, however, copying was perceived as a problem in the open-ended movement environment, because it was difficult to recognize whether or not a child was merely copying behaviors and actions without understanding the language. Interestingly, boys and girls responded differently; while girls tried to use the language, boys often attempted to give a physical response.

The IB (International Baccalaureate) Section of the upper secondary school at Vasa övningsskola is one of many places in Finland where students can receive their education through a foreign language, English (see Jungner in this volume). This paper mainly concentrates on Thomas' own experiences of teaching IB students physical education through English.<sup>2</sup> He taught a class of first grade IB students on three different occasions, a total of six hours. The class was a mixed group of 28 students, the main part of which was girls. Most of the students had Swedish as their mother tongue but there were also a few who had Finnish as their mother tongue. The first double lesson was about skating and the other two dealt with street basket.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Friman was, at the time this study was undertaken, a teacher trainee at Åbo Akademi University, the Faculty of Education, and is one of the two authors of this article. Jan-Erik Romar was the ordinary teacher for the group of students that Thomas taught and, therefore, he supervised Thomas' teaching practices.

The students were able to reach the goals Thomas set up and they had fun at the same time. It was easy to teach this group because everyone was highly motivated and tried to do his best. In order to monitor what really happened, Thomas recorded his experiences in a diary before and after each lesson.

## 2. The lessons taught

Thomas describes the lessons he taught as follows:

My first lesson was a double lesson, which dealt with skating and bandy. Some students were allowed to go skiing instead, so the group was smaller than normal. I was a little nervous at first, since I had not spoken much English since last year, when I was an exchange student in the United States of America. On the other hand, I had planned my teaching well, so I knew that everything would work out. I did as I had planned and tried to be flexible and interact with the students. I think that the students enjoyed skating and that they learned some new things at the same time. The skating terminology is difficult, but I think they learned some new words as well.

In my second and third double lesson I taught street basket. As material I used a video made by the Finnish Basket Association (Suomen koripalloliitto). I found the terminology for basket in English books about the sport and on the Internet. The students had never played street basket before and, therefore, I could test whether or not they understood what I explained. The basics of street basket are that players play in teams 3-on-3 and only toward one basket. At the same time as I explained the rules, six students were demonstrating them to the others. This demonstration, I think, made it a lot easier for the students to understand the idea of triangle offence and court balance. Unfortunately, I forgot to explain one rule about going out to the starting line after taking the ball from the other team and, naturally, the students were a bit confused. But, overall they played very well. One factor

that made the teaching more difficult was that the gymnasium at Vasa övningsskola was occupied, so that we had to move to the gymnasium at the Faculty of Education, which is a lot smaller. Nevertheless, everything worked out pretty well and the students were highly motivated to improve their performance both technically and tactically. I used instruction sheets, which was a good idea, but I should have pointed out more clearly that everyone should read them before doing a task.

When planning my third lesson, I had a lot of help from the feedback my supervisor Jan-Erik Romar gave me after the second lesson. Together we had developed the exercises a little and they really worked out well. The improved exercises in addition to the fact that I was starting to get to know the group made the third lesson more successful than the other two. This time we had better facilities at our disposal, because we were able to use the gymnasium at Vasa övningsskola, which made it easier to differentiate for instance when we practised the lay-up shot. I am satisfied with what we accomplished together; the students played good street basket and their technique also improved a lot. When reflecting on my teaching, I realize that I could have been more active in play situations; I could have interrupted the game more often and given feedback on how they were playing.

### 3. Experiences from teaching physical education

In this part Thomas elaborates on his experiences from the lessons he taught.

#### *Planning*

The planning process before teaching something through a foreign language is more complicated than it usually is when you teach through your own mother tongue. You do not only

have the objectives of the subject to think about, you also have to think about the language objectives. Personally, I believe that physical education can make a great contribution to language development. But, good planning is often the main key to successful teaching.

When planning a lesson it is very important to know on what level the students are with regard to both physical education and language skills. Therefore it helps a lot if you can meet the group before your first lesson.

When you teach physical education, it is often very effective to give the students instructions and show them what to do at the same time. This is also true when the students are taught through a foreign language. Even if the students do not understand every word the teacher says, they can understand what they are supposed to do just by looking at what the teacher does. This means that the students do not have to have as large a vocabulary initially as in the theory subjects. Regardless of this fact, I thought a lot about how to explain the exercises so that the students would understand as much as possible on the basis of my instructions. Although my own English is pretty good and I do not have any problems speaking the language, the context specific terminology was new to me, so I had to plan carefully what to say.

#### *Giving instructions*

When giving instructions in a foreign language, the main thing you should think about is to use a simple language. If the instructions are too long and complicated, there is a much greater likelihood that the students do not know what to do. I tried to alternate between giving instructions only and giving both instructions and showing the students what to do. I found it more effective to give instructions and show the students what to do at the same time. In addition, I tried to speak clearly and not to say very much at a time.

By keeping eye contact with your students you can easily tell whether or not they understand what you say. In my lessons I tried to interact with the students as much as possible. Just by asking a few questions every now and then you can make sure that the students are listening to what you are saying. It is important, however, that you wait until all the students are close enough to hear what you are saying. The only time I found that they had some problems to understand me was when I taught them some tactics about how to play offence in street basket. There are two different kinds of drills, "give and go" and "the backdoor". These are, however, pretty advanced, so it is quite natural that they were difficult to understand. I even think that the students would have had problems, even if they had been taught the drills through their mother tongue. I tried to reduce the difficulties encountered by the students by providing instruction sheets at every work station, but some problems still remained.

### *Feedback*

It is very important to provide feedback when you are teaching. A few simple words from the teacher or a peer can be enough to motivate a student to continue with a task. I think that by giving a lot of positive and constructive feedback you can make a student try harder and also learn more. If a student does not know what he is doing wrong it is much harder to improve a performance. When planning a lesson it is also very important to consider what to evaluate. I tried to give a lot of feedback to the students both as individuals and as a group. The students of this group were on different levels and, therefore, I tried to give more individual feedback. The students reacted positively and wanted me to give feedback on their performance. To give feedback in a foreign language is hard, especially when it comes to specific feedback on different techniques. Therefore, it is very important that you as a teacher know the relevant vocabulary.

### *Organization*

The group I taught was quite large and, therefore, I had to plan carefully how to organize my teaching. Especially at the time of transition from one task to another I felt I could have saved a lot of time by adequate planning. Because of the size of the group, I found it best to divide the students into smaller groups. At the same time I tried to form homogeneous groups, since they make it more fun for everyone and gives every student an opportunity to learn something new. Organizing a group in a foreign language can also cause problems if you have not planned how to do it. Again, it is very important that you know the right terminology. In physical education, however, it is to some extent easier than in other subjects to organize a group, because you can use sign language and the whistle to attract the students' attention.

### **4. Summary**

Teaching physical education or movement through a foreign language is a good way to develop the language of the students. Even if they do not know all the context specific terminology, they can understand what to do by watching others or the teacher when he shows them what to do. In time, the students will learn the terminology and thereby improve their knowledge of the language. We have also noticed that it is rather easy for exchange students at the Faculty of Education to participate in teacher training classes if they can concentrate on practical subjects such as handicraft, art, or physical education.

In teaching content through a foreign language it is very important carefully to plan not only what to do but also what to say. This was one of strengths in the lessons Thomas taught. The Internet and WWW are a magnificent source of terminology and information about different sports in English. The planning takes a lot of time, but it feels good when you know what to do and Thomas succeeded pretty

well because he usually stuck to his lesson plans. The main accomplishments were achieved in the street basket sequence. The majority of the students learned how to play street basket, do the lay-up shot and some tactics about the game.

The class had no problems in understanding the instructions. We noticed, however, that they sometimes wanted to speak in their own mother tongue with their friends or when they asked Thomas something. This is understandable, but he always tried to answer them in English. The aim of this project was not to improve language skills, but rather to create a social non-threatening atmosphere where students could enjoy learning new PE skills through a foreign language.

We discovered that the students Thomas taught wanted a lot of feedback. This means that they wanted the teacher to be active and tell them how to improve their performance.

Thomas found it very useful to record his experiences in a diary before and after each lesson, because it made it easier to remember what he could improve from one lesson to the next. The integration of subjects has really only just started in the school system in Finland. We believe that the teachers of the future will be all-rounders to a higher degree than they are today. Even if the school system is pretty conservative, some changes will occur. Bilingual education and content-based foreign language instruction are only some of the changes that will take place.

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## Place-based learning in content-based language programs

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*Gregory Martin Imbur*

### 1. Introduction

As an English teacher working in Vasa övningsskola, I have been involved in two content-based language programs, where most of the pupils' learning occurs in a foreign language. Teaching Content through English (TCE) is a program offered in the elementary and junior high schools of Vasa övningsskola, while in the high school the International Baccalaureate (IB) program offers content-based learning almost entirely in English. For the last three years I have worked within these two programs, primarily as a course instructor, but also in related duties such as designing curricula, undertaking various projects, and striving to develop my own skills to teach within these programs. In the paper that follows, my primary aim is to examine the concept of place-based learning, especially with respect to content-based language programs.