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Oposicións

INGLÉS MESTRES

TEMA 20. The Foreign Language Area in the curriculum. Criteria to be included in the School Educative Project and in the Curricular School Project.

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0. INTRODUCTION

Elements to include:

- ★ Situation of the English language in Europe
- ★ Situation of the English language in Spain
- ★ Situation of the English language in Primary Education
- ★ Law (European guidelines, Spanish legal framework, Galician legal framework)

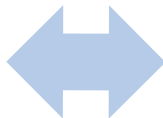
Situation in Europe: different countries with different languages



Multilingual and multicultural situation

Learning a foreign languages has become a necessity in this situation in order to communicate and integrate the different European countries, furthermore European linguistic policies aim for the learning of two foreign languages alongside the mother tongue.

Council of Europe



Common European Framework
of Reference for Languages



Overcome the linguistic and cultural barrier to stablish in Europe a plurilingual and pluricultural situation

In primary education, the elements of the curriculum are based on the language activities and competences established in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The Foreign Language area must contribute to the acquisition of those competences and in a direct way to the acquisition of the **Plurilingual Competence**, which implies the use of at least a foreign language in the stage of Primary Education.

Plurilingualism should be considered not just as an aspect of communication but also as an aspect of historical heritage and the cultural aspects conforming languages. This will help students to know, understand and respect different linguistic and cultural realities, developing **intercultural awareness**.

To sum up we can say that the main objective of the area in the stage of Primary Education is the acquisition of **communicative competence** and also the development of **intercultural awareness**.

In primary education, learning a foreign language not only improves students' command of their mother tongue but also fosters a deeper understanding and respect for diverse cultures, shaping a more enriched worldview.

It is important to underline the fact that the Foreign Language area allows students to enhance their digital competence, as **ICTs** have great potential to reinforce and support the learning of foreign languages and cultures.

1. GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE SPANISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

There are three stages:

- **INFANT EDUCATION:** From 0 to 3 and from 3 to 6.
- **PRIMARY EDUCATION:** From 6 to 12.
- **SECONDARY EDUCATION:**

1. Compulsory secondary education from 12 to 16. The compulsory graduate certificate permits access to Upper -non compulsory- education, to Intermediate Level Vocational Training, and to the Labour Market.

2. Upper -non compulsory- secondary education (2 academic years): the Baccalaureate certificate allows access to an Advanced Level Vocational Training and University studies.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

- It constitutes the first stage of compulsory education (children from 6 to 12).
- The students will start, in general terms, their first course of primary education the same year they are 6.
- It is divided into 6 courses or academic years, distributed with LOMLOE into 3 cycles of Primary Education: 1st cycle (first and second year), 2nd cycle (3rd and 4th years) and 3rd cycle (5th and 6th).
- The areas of primary education that are taught in all courses are the following:
 - a) **Natural Sciences.**
 - b) **Social Sciences.**
 - c) **Physical Education.**
 - d) **Plastic and Visual Education.**
 - e) **Spanish Language and Literature.**
 - f) **Foreign Language.**
 - g) **Galician Language and Literature.**
 - h) **Mathematics.**
 - i) **Music and Dance.**

To these areas, it will be added in the sixth year:

- **Education in Civic and Ethical Values.**
- **Religion** will be included in primary education in accordance with the second additional provision of Organic Law 2/2006, of May 3, on education.
- Students, who do not opt for taking religious studies, will receive appropriate educational attention. This attention will be planned and programmed by the teaching centres through the **Competence Project area.**

1.1. Aims of primary education

The purpose of primary education is to facilitate students' learning of expression and oral comprehension, reading, writing, calculation, logical and mathematical skills, the acquisition of basic notions of culture and the habit of living together, as well as the of study and work, the artistic sense, creativity and affectivity, in order to guarantee a comprehensive training that contributes to the full development of his personality, and to prepare him to take advantage of compulsory secondary education.

2. THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE CURRICULUM

2.1. Justification

The main goal in Foreign Language Area, is to make students learn to communicate in a foreign language as well as to develop their **communicative competence** (following Canale and Swain), consisting of:

There are many benefits for learning a foreign language: pupils may appreciate their own language and culture; they may be more tolerant towards other languages and cultures; learning a foreign language may help the students to reflect on their own language; the access to the working world will be easier and learning a new language may help students enjoy their free time.

The aim of a foreign language teaching is to teach and learn the ability of communicating through it. Besides, we try our pupils to achieve an integral formation to become responsible citizens who know about their rights and duties within a democratic society.

The inclusion of a foreign language in the curriculum is essential from two points of view.

First, it represents a new means of communication; and secondly, the educational component which helps to represent reality and also to have more open and balanced conception of the world.

The process of acquisition is parallel to the learning process, that is, progression in learning takes place in a global way, and errors are something necessary in the process of acquisition of a foreign language.

These are some reasons for initiating English at an early stage:

- To share programmes with the rest of the countries in the European Community.
- The learning of a new language opens new horizons in knowledge.
- We are helping to increase our students' capacity of audition and imitation.
- It is important to consider the foreign language as the basis for further studies.
- Foreign Language area will help promote empathy, develop curiosity for knowledge of other social and cultural realities, practice respect for differences, find points of connection and facilitate intercultural communicative competence based on the relationship of students with speakers of other languages.
- The Foreign Language area contributes to the acquisition of the key competences that make up the students' exit profile at the end of basic education and, directly, participates in the achievement of plurilingual competence, which implies, at this stage, the use of at least one language, in addition to familiar ones, in an appropriate way, for learning and communication.
- In addition, the Foreign Language area allows students to develop better in digital environments and get closer to cultures that it links, both as an engine for learning and as a source of information and an element of enjoyment.

2.2. European context

Considering the present-day reality of the European Union, the concept of plurilingualism has become more and more important for the Council of Europe as regards language learning. Plurilingualism means that, as the linguistic experience of a person expands, he/she does not keep this language in isolation, but makes them interrelate and interact with one another. In relation with that we have to mention these important documents:

- ***Horizon Europe***
- ***Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021–2030)***
- ***Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)***

The Framework is a document which describes in a comprehensible manner the competences necessary for communication, the related knowledge and skills and the situations and domains of communication.

This document facilitates a clear definition of teaching and learning objectives and methods and it also provides the necessary tools for assessment of proficiency. It is the result of extensive research and ongoing work on communicative objectives, as exemplified by the Threshold Level concept. It has become a key reference document and valuable tool for educational and professional mobility.

The levels of proficiency established are C2, C1, B2, B1, A2 and A1, being C2 the highest level and A1 the initial.

- ***European Language Portfolio (ELP)***

The portfolio is a personal document in which those who are learning or have learned a language (whether at school or outside school) can record and reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences. It contains a language passport which its owner regularly updates. It also contains a detailed language biography describing the owner's experiences in each language. Finally, there is a dossier where examples of personal work can be kept to illustrate one's language competences.

This document has two main functions:

- a) Pedagogical: motivate students and improve their ability to communicate in different languages.
- b) The documentation and reporting function.

2.3. National / Galician context

When adapting the European main guidelines to the reality of the Spanish and Galician educational systems, it is essential to mention and analyze the current legal framework in both Spain and Galicia.

Spain main documents:

- ✧ Organic Law 3/2020, 29th of December (LOMLOE) which modifies Organic Law 2/2006 3rd of May (LOE).
- ✧ Royal Decree 157/2022, 1st of March, which establishes and organises the minimum teaching aspects of primary education.

Galicia main documents:

- ✧ Decree 155/2022, 15th of September, which establishes the curriculum for Primary Education in our Autonomous community.
- ✧ Order from the 26th of May 2023, which develops Decree 155/2022, 15th of September which establishes and organises the curriculum and **evaluation in Primary Education in Galicia**.
- ✧ Order from the 8th of September 2021 which develops Decree 229/2011 7th of December which regulates **attention to diversity** in Primary Education in Galicia.
- ✧ Decree 79/2010, 20th of May, for **plurilingualism** in non-university education in Galicia.

It is also important to mention some extra measures the Galician administration has taken in order to improve the linguistic proficiency of students:

- Initial approach to the foreign language in the second cycle of Infant Education, (Decree 150/2022, 8th of September, which establishes the curriculum for Infant Education in Galicia)
- CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). A non-linguistic area is taught in a foreign language. Here there are two options:
 - Bilingual sections: With this option, the non-linguistic area is not necessary for the entire stage (it could be for one, two, three... levels). The foreign language is used in the classroom combined with the mother tongue (minimum 50% of foreign language).
 - Plurilingual schools: With this option, the non-linguistic area has to be established for the entire stage. Only the foreign language is used in the classroom. The school has to include the word "plurilingüe" in its name.
 - Language assistant programme: A native speaker collaborates with the teachers of CLIL areas and helps students in communicative competence in the foreign language.

2.4. Curriculum

The set of objectives, competences, contents, pedagogical methods, and evaluation criteria constitutes the curriculum of primary education.

1. **Stage Objectives:** achievements that it is expected students will reach upon completing the stage, and whose accomplishment is linked to the acquisition of the key competences.
 - a) Know and appreciate the values and rules of coexistence, learn to act in accordance with them in an empathetic way, prepare for the active exercise of citizenship and respect human rights, as well as the pluralism of a democratic society.
 - b) Develop habits of individual and teamwork, of effort and responsibility in the study, as well as attitudes of self-confidence, critical sense, personal initiative, curiosity, interest, and creativity in learning, and entrepreneurial spirit.
 - c) Acquire skills for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the prevention of violence, which allow them to develop with autonomy in the school and family environment, as well as in the social groups with which they relate.
 - d) Know, understand, and respect the different cultures and the differences between people, the equal rights and opportunities of men and women and the non-discrimination of people on the grounds of ethnicity, sexual orientation or identity, religion or beliefs, disability, or other conditions.
 - e) Know and use the Galician language and the Castilian language in an appropriate way and develop reading habits.
 - f) Acquire in at least one foreign language the basic communicative competence that allows them to express and understand simple messages and develop in everyday situations.
 - g) Develop basic mathematical skills and start solving problems that require elementary calculation operations, geometric knowledge, and estimations, as well as being able to apply them to situations in your everyday life.
 - h) Know the fundamental aspects of natural sciences, social sciences, geography, history and culture.
 - i) Develop the basic technological skills and start using them, for learning, developing a critical spirit towards their operation and the messages they receive and elaborate.
 - j) Use different representations and artistic expressions and start building visual and audio-visual proposals.
 - k) Valuing hygiene and health, accepting one's own body and that of other people, respecting differences and using physical education, sport and food as means to promote personal and social development.
 - l) Get to know and value the animals closest to humans and adopt ways of behaving that favour empathy and their care.
 - m) Develop their affective capacities in all areas of personality and in their relationships with others, as well as an attitude against violence, prejudices of any kind and sexist stereotypes.
 - n) Develop daily habits of healthy autonomous active mobility, promoting road education and attitudes of respect that affect the prevention of traffic accidents.

2. **Key Competences:** are defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes, where knowledge is composed of the facts and figures, concepts, ideas and theories which are already established and support the understanding of a certain area or subject and skills are defined as the ability and capacity to carry out processes and use the existing knowledge to achieve results. Attitudes describe the disposition and mind-sets to act or react to ideas, persons or situations. Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyle, successful life in peaceful societies, health-conscious life management and active citizenship.

- a) Competence in linguistic communication (CCL).
- b) Plurilingual competence (CP).
- c) Mathematical competence and competence in science and technology (STEM).
- d) Digital competence (CD).
- e) Personal, social and learning to learn competence (CPSAA).
- f) Civil competence (CC).
- g) Entrepreneurial competence (CE).
- h) Competence in cultural awareness and expression (CCEC).

3. **Area Objectives:** Performances that the students must be able to deploy in activities or in situations whose approach requires the learning associated with the contents of each area. The objectives of the area constitute a connecting element between, on the one hand, the exit profile of the students and, on the other, the evaluation criteria and the contents of the areas or areas.

OBJ1. Understand the general meaning and specific and predictable information of short and simple texts, expressed clearly and in standard language, using various strategies and resorting, when necessary, to the use of different types of support, to develop the linguistic repertoire and to respond to everyday communicative needs.

OBJ2. Produce simple texts in an understandable and structured way, by using strategies such as planning or compensation, to express short messages related to immediate needs and respond to everyday communicative purposes.

OBJ3. Interact with other people using everyday expressions, resorting to cooperation strategies and using analog and digital resources, to respond to immediate needs of their interest in communicative exchanges that respect the norms of courtesy.

OBJ4. Mediate in predictable situations, using strategies and knowledge to process and transmit basic and simple information, in order to facilitate communication.

OBJ5. Recognize and use personal linguistic repertoires between different languages, reflecting on their functioning and identifying their own strategies and knowledge, to improve the response to specific communicative needs in familiar situations.

OBJ6. Appreciate and respect linguistic, cultural and artistic diversity from the foreign language, identifying and valuing the differences and similarities between languages and cultures, in order to learn how to manage intercultural situations.

4. **Evaluation Criteria:** Referents that indicate the expected performance levels in students in the situations or activities to which the objectives of each area refer at a specific moment in their learning process. In this sense, they act as a bridge connecting the contents and objectives of the area, serving as the specific referent for evaluation. They describe what is to be assessed and what the student should achieve.
5. **Contents:** Knowledge, skills, and attitudes specific to an area, the learning of which is necessary to achieve the performance level indicated in the evaluation criteria and to accomplish the objectives of the area. They are stated in the form of basic knowledge.

The Contents and Evaluation Criteria in the **Foreign Language** area are structured into three blocks.

- ✓ **Communication:** includes knowledge necessary for the development of communicative activities such as comprehension, production, interaction, and mediation.
- ✓ **Plurilingualism:** involves knowledge related to the ability to reflect on the functioning of languages.
- ✓ **Interculturality:** encompasses knowledge about cultures associated with the foreign language and their appreciation as an opportunity for enrichment.

In order to fully understand and put into practice all the elements of the curriculum, it is essential to explain three more essential elements:

- **Pedagogical Orientations:** Guidelines to guide teachers in the design and planning of strategies, procedures, and teaching actions with the aim of enabling the achievement of objectives and the acquisition of key competencies.
- **Exit Profile:** Students' Exit Profile at the end of basic education is the tool that identifies and defines, in connection with the challenges of the 21st century, the key competences that students are expected to have developed on completing this stage within their educational itinerary. The exit profile includes orientations about the students level of achievement through the operational descriptors.
- **Operational Descriptors:** They constitute, together with the stage objectives, the reference framework for determining the specific competences in each area, field or subject. For each of the Key Competences, a set of operational descriptors has been defined. They are included in the Exit Profile. The link between operational descriptors and specific competences allows for the assessment of the degree of acquisition of the key competences based on the assessment of those specific competences.

3. THE SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL PROJECT AND THE GENERAL ANNUAL PROGRAMMING

The **educational project** is a school document in which we include our educational offer. It includes the following parts:

- Educational aims: which are specified by LOMLOE.
- Curricular concretion: previously called Curricular School Project; nowadays it is the part of the Educational Project in which each school adapts the elements of the curriculum to its own reality. We are going to deal with this in part 4.
- School interior regulations: It is about the organisation of the school. In relation with English, it is important to take into account the use of video rooms, the use of computers and the Internet and also the elaboration of a timetable where we can schedule the periods of teaching.
- Plans and projects:
 - **Linguistic project**
 - **Digital Plan ("creative hubs")**
 - **Reading Plan**
 - **Plan of physical activities and healthy habits**
 - **Plan of Coexistence**
 - **Plan of scholar orientation**
 - **Plan of tutorial function**
 - **Plan of attention to diversity**
 - **Improvement plan**

Other school documents:

The General Annual Programming: It is a document that is elaborated at the beginning of each school year. It includes the activities that should be carried out and the people in charge of them, timetables, pedagogical organization, attention to students with special needs, books and materials... Regarding the foreign language area, this could be the celebration of a national public holiday, or Christmas in the target language, performances and newspaper edition. The continuous training of the teachers, either here or abroad, will help learning as much as being in contact with new advances and methods is also included in the programming.

A final memory/report: It is a document that is elaborated at the end of each school year. It is a reflection as well as an evaluation of what has been done during the year. The conclusions will help to improve the results during the next year.

4. CURRICULAR CONCRETION

The curricular concretion is the part of the Educational Project in which each school adapts the elements of the curriculum to its own reality. The curricular concretion is a public document available for the entire educative community.

4.1. Elements to include in the curricular concretion

- a) The adaptation of the **stage objectives** to the context of the school.
- b) Contribution to the acquisition of **key competencies**.
- c) Criteria for developing **pedagogical principles** and incorporating **cross-curricular elements**.
- d) General criteria on **methodology**.
- e) General criteria on **materials and teaching resources**.
- f) Criteria for designing **complementary activities**.
- g) Criteria for designing specific **reinforcement plans** for students who need to remain in the same grade for one more year.
- h) General criteria for **evaluation and promotion**.
- i) Decisions and general criteria for the development and **evaluation of didactic syllabuses**.
- j) Criteria for the school's participation in **projects, plans, and programs**.
- k) The procedure for the **review, assessment, and modification of the curricular concretion**.

4.2. Methodology

Nowadays it is thought that there is no perfect method. Due to this, methodology has become **eclectic**. The learning of a foreign language is seen as a process of education and total growth. Helped by the teacher, the student controls this process, makes decisions, and negotiates objectives, contents and procedures to follow.

Anyway, there are some factors affecting successful language learning:

- Aptitude: although anyone can learn a language given sufficient motivation, intelligence and opportunity, the task will be easier if some characteristics are present in a person: good memory, be good at finding patterns in samples of data, ability to detect phonetic differences...
- "Learn how to learn" strategies: pupils can benefit from being taught them, such as silent rehearsal, techniques of memorisation and alternative ways of expressing what they want to say.
- Exposure to the foreign language should be regular: the objective should be taught little and often. We must remember that what is quickly learned is quickly forgotten.
- Exposure to authentic materials and native speakers is instrumental. An important dimension is the use of educational visits abroad.
- Teaching objectives must be carefully selected and graded to allow realistic progress with underachievers as well as with the gifted.
- Teaching methods should be flexible to suit the needs of the individual children and to make the best use of classroom design and resources.
- Motivation

➤ **Teaching-learning process based on the acquisition of competences:**

Our curriculum is based on the guidelines established by the Council of Europe, and it stresses the importance of the development of **Plurilingual and Intercultural competences** in language teaching and learning. The adaptation of this European guidelines to our curriculum evolves in a methodology based on the development of the **key competences** characterized by its cross-curricular nature (all areas must contribute to the acquisition of these key competences).

Another general principle to consider is the widespread use of ICTs in the stage, alongside. Always following the main principles established by the **“Universal Design for Learning”**

➤ **“Learning situations”:** situations and activities that involve students in carrying out performances associated with key competencies and specific competencies, contributing to their acquisition and development.

We should follow **an eclectic methodology**, but the **communicative approach** is essential in our lessons, because the general objective of the EFL teaching is to develop the students' communicative competence, which following **Canale and Swain, is formed by 5 general sub-competences:**

- Grammar Competence: the capacity to use the rules of language.
- Discourse Competence: capacity to use different kinds of discourse linked with cohesion and coherence.
- Socio linguistic Competence: capacity to adapt the language to a given situation.
- Strategic Competence: ability to use verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to compensate for breakdowns in communication or to improve it.
- Socio cultural Competence: learner's knowledge of the cultural aspect of the target language speaking countries.

Not only **Communicative language teaching (CLT)** and a **learner centred approach** but also other methods or techniques are going to be used in our practice such as Audiovisual method, suggestopedia, CALL, MALL, TPR...

When describing methodology, the role of the teacher is a key point.

Roles of the teacher:

During the lessons the teacher can develop different roles:

- Guide.
- Facilitator of the communicative process in the classroom.
- Participant in the activities.
- Needs analyst: the teacher assumes a responsibility for determining and responding to learner language needs. This can be done informally and personally in one-to-one sessions.
- Counsellor: in this case what the teacher has to do is to provide learners with translations when speaking, monitor what the learner says and help when it is necessary, advise with grammar...
- Controller: when the teacher is totally in charge of the class.

Activities:

The activities must be varied, motivating, flexible, creative and adapted to students' needs and interests, such as games, songs, simulations, role-plays, task-based activities, problem solving, etc.

For the development of the activities, we are going to use diverse types of groupings but fostering cooperative work as much as possible.

- Lockstep (all the class work together)
- Pair work
- Group/team work
- Individual study

Resources:

Apart from the most traditional, if we want to get the students' interest, maintain their attention, and facilitate the integration of all the students, paying attention to the different learning rhythms and styles (multiple intelligences, Gardner), we must offer varied and innovative material:

- ICT's (Information and Communication Technologies): computer, interactive whiteboard, cameras, electronic devices...
- Realia (material that has not been created for an educational objective: menus, maps, leaflets, tickets...)

Evaluation/assessment:

Evaluation will be global, continuous, and formative, establishing reinforcement measures if necessary, as well as employing diverse and adapted evaluation instruments for students. The referents for assessing the degree of acquisition of key competencies and the achievement of objectives in areas and the stage will be the evaluation criteria. The schools must ensure an objective assessment of students by making public and providing families with documentation that attests to this objectivity (evaluation criteria, promotion, etc.).

- Global: The assessment of learning should refer to the degree of acquisition of key competencies and the achievement of objectives.
- Continuous: Teachers should be aware of the progress and learning difficulties that each student presents throughout the entire educational process.
- Formative: Teachers should use information about the students' learning progress to redirect, adjust, and improve the learning process, adapting it to the personal characteristics of each student.

4.3. 3rd level of curricular concretion: syllabus

Since the academic year 2022-2023 the syllabus in Galicia must be developed with **Proens**.

The Proens application is presented as a tool designed to develop and monitor and supervise teaching programs, which must include the criteria and decisions established by the centre to ensure consistency in teaching.

The Proens application allows the elaboration of all the sections of the syllabus in a dynamic way through different screens since the information of the elements of the curriculum is presented at every precise moment; in addition, it supports a continuous revision and re-elaboration, allowing the information to be saved and validated until the final version proposed by the teacher is reached, to later start the validation phases by the cycle coordination/department heads, the teams managers and the educational inspection.

<http://www.edu.xunta.gal/proens>

The didactic programs of the areas or fields of primary education will include, the following **elements**:

- a) Introduction
- b) Objectives and their contribution to the acquisition of the key competences
- c) Relationship of didactic units with their sequencing and timing, including the curriculum part of the area and the list of evaluation instruments.
- d) Methodology
 - Methodological concretions
 - Materials and didactic resources
- e) Evaluation
 - Procedures for initial evaluation
 - Qualification criteria with an indication of the minimum level of achievement for area completion.
- f) Attention to diversity measures
- g) Cross-curricular elements
 - Cross-curricular elements concretion
 - Complementary activities
- h) Teaching practice
 - Procedures for evaluating the teaching process and teaching practice with their achievement indicators
 - Procedure for monitoring, evaluation, and improvement proposals for the area planning.

5. CONCLUSION

As we have explained, the learning of a foreign language is considered nowadays a basic necessity in the society in which we live.

Compulsory education includes English as one of the core subjects in the curriculum for Primary Education. The basic objective is to get communicative competence. It is a task of the teachers and schools to get this teaching-learning process to be successful. To get this, they have to take into account the elements included in the curriculum as well as the reality of the school.

It is important for any teacher to know the aims and objectives which are given by legislation to know how to help our pupils to develop not only the communicative competence but also transversal elements

Besides, any teacher must be familiar with the organization his/her school has to make most of the teaching process. It is also important to know the methodological principles that lie behind the teaching process in general to help the students as much as possible to overcome difficulties in the learning process.

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