

PEBI: Critical Success Criteria for implementing Bilingual Education in Portugal

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Abstract

A partnership between the Ministry of Education – Direção-Geral da Educação (DGE) and the British Council saw, in 2011, the beginning of a pilot bilingual schools project in a small number of state primary schools across mainland Portugal. Following an external evaluation study carried out in the fourth year of the project, the government gave approval to the Bilingual Schools Programme (PEBI) which could be implemented from pre-primary (*Educação Pré-escolar*) through to the end of lower secondary (*3.º Ciclo do Ensino Básico*). To date, there are now 38 school clusters/schools involved in delivering the programme to learners across those education levels. In this chapter, we outline how the project and programme developed over the first 10 years, and the rationale for some of the features, given the Portugal context. In the discussion we identify key factors that we consider critical to the successful implementation of the bilingual programme in schools and also make recommendations for the future of the programme.

Keywords

Bilingual education; CLIL; whole school ethos; early start; teacher training; staffing.

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Resumo

Uma parceria entre a Direção-Geral de Educação/Ministério da Educação (DGE/ME) e o British Council deu início, em 2011, a um projeto-piloto de ensino bilingue numa pequena amostra de escolas públicas do 1.º ciclo do ensino básico em Portugal continental. Na sequência de um estudo de avaliação externo realizado no quarto ano do projeto, foi aprovado pela tutela o Programa Escolas Bilingues em Inglês (PEBI), cuja implementação pode decorrer desde a Educação Pré-escolar até ao final do 3.º Ciclo do Ensino Básico. Até à data, têm sido beneficiários deste Programa crianças e alunos de 38 agrupamentos de escolas/escolas que frequentam esses níveis de educação e ensino. Neste capítulo, descrevemos como o projeto e o programa se desenvolveram ao longo dos primeiros 10 anos, bem como os pressupostos subjacentes e algumas das suas características, tendo por base o contexto de Portugal. Nesta discussão, identificamos aqueles que consideramos serem os preditores do sucesso da implementação do PEBI nas escolas e fazemos recomendações para o futuro do programa.

Palavras-chave

Educação/ensino bilingue; CLIL; mobilização da comunidade escolar; início precoce; formação de professores; distribuição de serviço docente.

1. Introduction

In this chapter we begin by describing the background to the development of the Programa do Ensino Bilingue em Inglês (PEBI), the Bilingual Schools Programme in English), developed by Direção-Geral da Educação/Ministério da Educação (DGE/ME) with the British Council in Portugal. A pilot project at lower primary, which began in 2011 and was evaluated through an independent study in 2014, was followed by ministerial approval for the bilingual programme. There are now a growing number of schools in mainland Portugal involved in the programme each year, including all education levels from pre-primary to lower secondary. The findings of the evaluation study as well as further observations and experiences of the project and programme have helped us identify a number of critical success criteria for the successful implementation of the programme in schools. These include aspects relating to stakeholder buy-in, curriculum, human resources, and teacher training and support. We describe and explain these criteria and also outline some recommendations for the future of the programme.

2. Context

Since the mid-nineties, there has been a growing interest in content and language integrated learning provisions in Europe supported by EU language policy recommendations. It has often been associated with educational innovation as a highly effective way of obtaining language-learning gains (Goris *et al.*, 2019) in many European countries, where it has either become part of mainstream school education or has developed in the scope of pilot projects and programmes (Eurydice, 2006).

The specific impetus for introducing an English-Portuguese bilingual programme to Portuguese state schools originally came from the successful bilingual project in Spain developed through a partnership between the Spanish Ministry of Education and the British Council, Spain. The Spanish Early Bilingual Education project started in 1996 with 44 schools across the country participating. By 2011, there were 120 primary and secondary schools involved, with 30,000 pupils between three and sixteen years old (Reilly, 2012). The results of a three year-long independent evaluation study, which collected evidence to explore whether the programme was achieving its objectives, were published in 2010 (Dobson, Perez Murillo & Johnstone, 2010). The findings pointed to high levels of achievement in both English and Spanish among the pupils in the bilingual programme, and also outlined key aspects of provision contributing to its overall success. The project has continued to grow with 147 schools and around 40,000 pupils in 2021, and it has also provided a model of good practice for other bilingual projects introduced at a regional level in Spain.

Representatives from the DGE/ME, the Câmara Municipal de Lisboa (Lisbon Town Council) and the British Council Portugal attended a Bilingual Schools study visit in Madrid in April 2009. This included informative sessions on bilingual education and the project in Spain as well as visits to schools implementing the programme. Following this, the Ministry of Education accepted the offer of a feasibility study on the introduction of bilingual education at primary level to be carried out in Portugal. Its results provided evidence that there was openness to educational innovation, strong leadership, experience in implementing foreign language projects and a good confidence level on the part of the teaching body who were willing to accept this challenge. Accordingly, there was high-level approval for trialling a small-scale pilot in the mainland regions (North, Centre, Lisbon, Alentejo and the Algarve).

This was entitled the Bilingual Schools Project and involved seven primary schools from 2011 to 2015. Part of the curriculum content of *Estudo do Meio* (a

combination of History, Geography, and Science) and *Expressões* (Self-Expression³) was taught through English, from a minimum of 20% (five hours) to 40% (ten hours) of the total weekly time of the primary curriculum at that time (22.5 to 25 hours). Lessons were taught by primary class teachers, supported by specialist English language teachers. To support language development, English was also taught as a foreign language, firstly as a curriculum enrichment activity and later as part of the curriculum structure. Support for learners, teachers and schools was provided throughout the four years of the pilot in the form of continuing professional development courses, pedagogical resources offered to schools, and monitoring visits to observe lessons and hold meetings with the pedagogical team and management which provided opportunities for reflection, feedback and improvement. Likewise, there were technical recommendations aimed at a quality implementation of the pilot both at pedagogical and administrative level.

An independent evaluation study (Almeida *et al.*, 2014) of the pilot project provided insights on the future of this type of provision at national level, a few of which will be subsequently addressed as they link to the success factors discussed in the following sections. These are, in broad terms, recommendations for good implementation/practice, and more specifically, staffing and teacher profile, as well as curriculum development and learning continuity. The recommendations (Almeida *et al.*, 2014, p. 6) chiefly focus on having the right conditions for gradual implementation and these would include factors such as:

- ensuring that all classes in a school cluster would gradually become bilingual
- teacher training and monitoring
- dissemination and recognition of the provision in the wider community
- curriculum adaptations and learning continuity
- teacher profile and stability

The results and the recommendations of this evaluation study provided evidence for approving the implementation of the Bilingual Schools Programme (*Programa Escolas Bilingues em Inglês*, henceforth referred to as PEBI) in 2016/2017 comprising not only lower primary (ISCED⁴ 1), but also pre-primary (ISCED 0) targeting 3-6 year-olds and lower secondary (ISCED 2) targeting 12-15 year-old learners. In 2022/2023 the programme comprised 38 schools (31 state school

³ Currently Educação Artística (Arts).

⁴ ISCED stands for International Standard Classification of Education.

clusters and 7 private schools). In terms of the public school sector, this represented approximately 4% of state school clusters in mainland Portugal.

Drawing on what has been described thus far, the following sections will discuss what we consider to be the success factors for good bilingual education implementation in Portugal. These have become the requirements for schools to join every year and are grouped into four categories:

- Information and stakeholder buy-in and whole school ethos
- Curriculum, early start and continuity
- Staffing
- Teacher training and follow-up

3. Insights into critical success factors that drive quality implementation

3.1 Information and stakeholder buy-in and whole school ethos

The first key factor involves laying the foundations for quality and long-term implementation at school level. This entails strong school leadership that will be able to project its vision towards a strategic and sustainable implementation of the programme. As such, turning bilingual education into one of the priorities of the educational project of the school is key, as it will contribute to the creation of a whole school *ethos*. This means that all staff, parents and learners are aware of and supportive of the programme even if they are not directly involved. In Spain, for example, a requirement of schools for participation in the programme at primary school level was that the whole school should participate in it, rather than have only one bilingual class each school year, or a bilingual section and a monolingual (Spanish) section. This was also the initial ambition in the pilot project in Portugal too but was then reconsidered (See section 3.2.1). This whole school *ethos* should foster a bilingual identity, for example using bilingual signage and encouraging school events that promote the “transnational environment” that Ramirez Verdugo (2011, p. 19) refers to.

Another way is through encouraging schools to take on language assistants to support primary class teachers and subject teachers in their classroom work in Portuguese schools. In addition to boosting teacher confidence to interact with the learners through the medium of English, the whole school ethos – learners, teachers and parents or legal guardians included – can benefit from the cultural exchange and

develop their intercultural awareness. This happened during the pilot project with Comenius Assistants from several European countries that were part of the Lifelong Learning Programme (current Erasmus+) and up until the pandemic through the Teach Abroad Programme organised by the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), in collaboration with the DGE. This involves volunteers from the USA or Canada, whose mother tongue is English, collaborating as Language and Culture Assistants in the PEBI school network in Portugal.

Moreover, prioritising bilingual education will need to involve planning for effective acceptance and dissemination in the wider community as it is imperative to ensure that all stakeholders are on board and supportive of bilingual education. As a point of fact, both learners' and parents' feedback from the pilot project was very positive as learners consider that bilingual education makes it easier to learn the English language. They feel particularly motivated by learning through the medium of Portuguese and English and getting to know more of other languages and cultures. Parents or guardians corroborate their children's views.

In this vein, learners, parents and teaching staff need to be well informed of and interested in the programme. Before joining the programme, schools are expected to consult with teaching staff and parents to ensure they understand and are on board with the introduction of a bilingual programme. Information on the school's web page, open days, education fairs, the development of curriculum projects involving the family and the local community, and/or sharing good practice are possible further actions to explore for the purpose of dissemination. For example, one bilingual school has worked collaboratively with the town council and the public library in providing storytelling in English to the local community. The evaluation study of the pilot project also referred to the importance of schools publicly promoting the project in the community as a key factor in effective implementation.

3.2. Early Start, Continuity and Curriculum

3.2.1 Early Start and Continuity

The guidelines for schools applying to join PEBI put forward requirements to ensure sustainability of the programme. These indicate that the programme should preferably be introduced in the pre-primary years (three to six year olds) and then implemented year by year as the children progress through primary education and further on. If it cannot be introduced at pre-primary, it should always be introduced at the beginning of an education level (i.e. in year one of lower primary, year five of upper primary, or year seven of lower secondary.) This is to facilitate teacher collaboration and ensure smooth transitions from year to

year. It is also stated that starting on a small scale is preferable, for example with initially one or two classes only, but with a view to bringing in more classes both at the same level and at higher levels to ensure continuity for the children's learning through English, and to further develop and embed the programme in the school.

In the Portugal pilot project, the ambition had initially been to follow the Spain model in which all classes in the school would participate as the programme was progressively introduced at each school year, starting in year one. However, in the Portugal pilot staffing a large number of classes with teachers with an appropriate level of English was not always possible. Unlike Spain, regular class teachers were teaching in the project rather than specially recruited ones. Although some schools initially overcame this by, for example, using one teacher to teach the content through English to different classes, we observed that schools implementing on a smaller scale were better able to develop the programme in its initial stages. Thereafter, with good teamwork among the teaching staff, experiences were built upon and shared more widely as more teachers joined the programme. The current recommendation to start at the beginning of a school education level (i.e. preferably in pre-primary but otherwise in year one, year five, or year seven) is more linked to the curriculum and to ensuring appropriate progression in the children's learning as they move through an education level.

In Spain, schools joining the bilingual programme had to commit to remaining throughout the nine years of pre-primary and primary education, and secondary schools receiving pupils from bilingual schools also had to commit to continuing to offer bilingual education. This has not been possible to ensure consistently in Portugal, but schools are made aware of the importance of this and asked to plan ahead. The ambition remains to offer the choice of bilingual education throughout all education levels to ensure continuity in the children's learning.

To ensure that children get sufficient exposure and opportunities to learn through English and that there is consistency across schools participating in the programme, the PEBI guidelines indicate the number of hours that should be studied through English at each education level.

TABLE 1. Curriculum time allocation through English per week within PEBl.

Education level (age range)	Hours to be taught through English per week	Percentage of school week
Pre-primary (5-6)	5	20%
Lower primary (9-10)	7-9	31-36%
Upper primary (11-12)	9-10	30-37%
Lower secondary (14-15)	11-12	33-40%

This is slightly less than the 40% of time allocated in the Spain project for early partial bilingual education, but it is more than may happen in many CLIL programmes (Dobson *et al.*, 2011). Length of time and continuity should also be considered as well as the quality of the education through English as these are also highly significant influences on the children's learning.

3.2.2. Curriculum

At the pilot stage, it was agreed that the Portuguese curriculum would remain in place for bilingual schools. This had also been the case in the Spain programme initially, although there, by 2000, special curricula were being drawn up for the Spanish bilingual schools.

In the pilot project in Portugal, *Estudo do Meio* curriculum (which includes Natural Sciences, Geography and History) for lower primary education (years one to four) was divided up into content areas that should be taught through English and those that should be taught through Portuguese. This was to ensure that the balance of time teaching through each language was appropriate (50% / 50%) and also to promote sharing ideas, materials and resources among the pilot schools. It also enabled training courses and workshops to focus on specific content areas that would be taught through English.

It was also important that cognitive challenge was equally present in both strands, while taking account of accessibility and relevance for the children. In year one, some of the areas selected were ones which, from the child's point of view, would be more easily accessible through English as they would already have come across many of the concepts by this age in their daily life and at preschool. In fact, many of the curriculum topics cross over with those that might be found in a standard Primary English course. For example, topics in the first curriculum block entitled *All about you* included introducing yourself, talking about likes and dislikes, free time activities, the body and physical characteristics, and good hygiene and keeping healthy. However, in the bilingual *Estudo do Meio* context the topics would be explored in more depth and incorporate a much wider range of language than in a standard English class. Topics in year one that were to be taught through Portuguese were those that might have been less familiar to the children already, and that they needed to know – for example in block four, *All about places*, it made sense to deal with the topic of the school through Portuguese but the topic of home through English. Personal safety was taught through Portuguese because of its immediate importance. The block entitled *All about materials and objects* was, however, divided so that the children carried out experiments in two of the areas through English and in the other two through Portuguese.

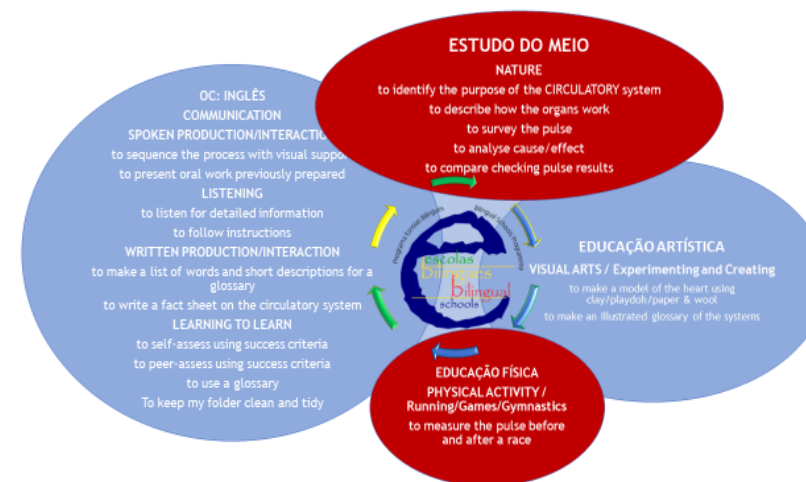
The topic areas in the curriculum are revisited but expanded upon and further developed each year. To ensure that children would learn key language and concepts relating to the topics in both languages, topics that were taught through English in year one were revisited in Portuguese the following year and vice versa. This principle continued throughout the four years of lower primary and is illustrated in the table below with the topic of personal safety. This topic was addressed through Portuguese in year one then reviewed and further developed through English in year two. In year three it was further developed in Portuguese then in year four through English.

TABLE 2. Example of a topic developed throughout the four years of lower primary.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
<p>A SEGURANÇA DO SEU CORPO</p> <p>Conhecer e aplicar normas de prevenção rodoviária (caminhar pela esquerda nas estradas, atravessar nas passeadeiras, respeitar os semáforos...).</p> <p>Conhecer e aplicar normas de prevenção de acidentes domésticos: — cuidados a ter com objetos e produtos perigosos (cortantes, contundentes, inflamáveis, corrosivos, tóxicos...); — cuidados a ter com a eletricidade; — sinalização relativa à segurança (venenos, eletricidade...).</p>	<p>KEEPING SAFE</p> <p>Know and apply road safety rules (everyday traffic signs: pedestrian and zebra crossings, bicycle lanes, railway crossings)</p> <p>Identify precautions in the use of: Public transport</p> <p>Railway crossings</p> <p>Know and apply beach, river and swimming pool safety measures.</p>	<p>A SEGURANÇA DO SEU CORPO</p> <p>Conhecer algumas regras de primeiros socorros: — mordeduras de animais; — hemorragias.</p>	<p>KEEPING SAFE</p> <p>Identify precautions to take when you are exposed to the sun</p> <p>Be aware of some first aid rules</p> <p>Know some basic steps to take in case of sunburn, fractures and muscle strains</p> <p>Be familiar with and be able to apply rules for preventing fires (at home, in public places, in the forest.)</p> <p>Know the safety rules in an earthquake (being prepared and knowing what to do during and after an earthquake)</p>

Source: ME & British Council, 2016.

With the recent revision of the national curriculum guidelines (2018), we adjusted the document accordingly, maintaining the suggested division between content to be studied through English and through Portuguese and ensuring that key topics developed over the four years were taught through both languages in different years. Feedback from teachers using this document will feed into further adjustments. Below is a diagram (Figure 1) taken from the current document which attempts to illustrate how to plan for the integration of several subject areas, namely *Estudo do Meio*, *Educação Artística*, *Educação Física*, and English as a Foreign Language.

FIGURE 1. Diagram taken from the 1.º CEB – ESTUDO DO MEIO Curriculum document.

Source: ME & British Council, 2022.

While the curriculum provides a basis from which to work and enables more effective sharing of materials, schools do of course have the freedom to make some changes if there are reasons why a topic may be more appropriately presented through the other language in their context. This allows teachers and schools to take some ownership of the curriculum which meets recommendations from the pilot evaluation study. As the programme has expanded, it has not been possible to follow this pattern with the curricula for other education levels and subjects. While the number of hours per week spent on children learning through English is specified, content is not, so here, teachers and schools have complete ownership.

At preschool, activities through English should be integrated naturally into the normal pre-primary routines and activities and adhere to the *Orientações Curriculares para a educação pré-escolar* (OCEPE, Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-primary Education 2016). The goal is to sensitise children to the foreign language; English is not taught separately but the educator will identify opportunities to incorporate English through the normal preschool activities. This can be in daily routines (for example the attendance register, the weather, hello songs, snack time), play areas (an area with English games), games including physical education, story time, and more extended projects on different themes that arise from the children's interests and questions which can incorporate a wide range of different routines, games and other activities.

At upper primary and lower secondary, schools can opt for teaching different subjects through English, depending on which subject teachers have an appropriate level of English. For example, schools have opted for Science subjects, History, Geography, Physical Education or Arts, according to the teaching staff they have who can and are willing to teach parts of their subject through the medium of English. As indicated above, it is for them to decide which topic areas within each subject are taught through English and which through Portuguese. As at lower primary, the same content should not be repeated in both languages in the same year, but would be further developed through the two languages in subsequent years.

English is an obligatory part of the curriculum in Portuguese schools from year three and throughout primary and lower secondary. Guidelines for schools joining PEBI state that in years 1 and 2, English should be provided to children, either through the *Oferta Complementar (Extra subject)* or through *Atividades de Enriquecimento Curricular (Curriculum Enrichment Activities)*. The English taught should be tied in with their learning through English in other areas of the curriculum (i.e. *Estudo do Meio, Educação Artística and Educação Física*).

In years three and four of primary, all children obligatorily study two hours of English per week. This may increase during upper primary and lower secondary education levels. Adaptations need to be made here for children in PEBI in terms of level of challenge and content. For example, in year three, the national curriculum topics for English are:

Greetings and simple introductions; identifying yourself; countries and nationalities; family, cardinal numbers up to 50; days of the week; months of the year and seasons; school and routines; games; transport; weather; colours and shapes; clothes; pets.

The English curriculum states that children would be expected to be at A1 level in year three, only progressing to A2 level in year six, and B1 by the end of year nine.

Clearly, if children have been studying in PEBI since pre-primary or year one of primary they will have already been dealing quite extensively with most of the topics indicated above for year three English through the preschool routines and activities, and the content taught through English in the first two years of primary. They will have had a lot more exposure to and the opportunity to use a broad range of language and should have developed some skills and confidence in using it.

The evaluation study carried out in 2014 placed most children in the middle of year four of the pilot programme as already at A1 or A2 level in terms of spoken interaction, reading and writing. The current goal is that children who have been in the programme throughout primary and possibly pre-primary previously

should reach A2, and those completing year seven should be at B1. It is important, therefore, that English language teachers in the bilingual programme work closely with the subject teachers to ensure that English lessons fully support the teaching of content through English and that they are pitched at an appropriate level. The guidelines for schools joining the programme (ME, 2022) indicate that schools need to deal flexibly with the English curriculum content from years three to nine to ensure that pupils are challenged and motivated to achieve higher levels of proficiency in the language.

Likewise, the study suggests that curricula can be adapted to the reality of learning in a bilingual context by enabling an interdisciplinary approach to content and continuing language development. This would entail linking the primary curriculum with that of subsequent education levels, to ensure the continuity of the teaching/learning process.

3.3. Staffing

Staffing is another key success factor as it needs to ensure the involvement of the right human resources in the programme. This requires defining a teacher profile, willingness to deploy staff according to needs, investment in continuing professional development and language proficiency level certification, creating opportunities for collaborative work and ensuring teacher continuity in the programme.

Some of these features are included as a requirement of the CLIL teachers' competence grid (Bertaux *et al.*, 2010, p.4 and p.8), which defines a set of areas of competence, competences and related ability descriptors, notably as regards, for example, Lifelong learning & Innovative teaching and learning approaches and Partnerships in supporting student learning. Indeed, the first is related to the need to be aware of personal professional development needs and be willing to take part in courses on a regular basis with a view to applying new techniques and improving teaching (see Section 4 for more on teacher training). The second relates to working with others including other teachers and school managers. Successful team working was also identified in the evaluation study of the pilot project as of key importance.

Within PEBI, the teacher profile states that educators and primary teachers are required to have a B1 minimum level of English in pre-primary and primary, whereas subject teachers teaching in upper primary and lower secondary levels need to have a B2. They should also be willing to continue to develop their language competence both through attending training offered within the programme or through other means such as language courses or self-access resources. To continue to develop as bilingual teachers, they are also expected to take part in

methodology courses and workshops initially offered through the programme and then to pursue other appropriate professional development opportunities. It is also a requirement that most bilingual teachers have a permanent post at a school cluster to ensure continuity at the same school.

With regards to the organisational level of the school, head teachers are required to deploy staff according to the programme's needs. For example, if a school is starting the programme in primary education, the head teacher is expected to deploy the teachers who have the language level required to teach the bilingual classes as from year one. Likewise, they should ensure that there is time allocated each week for collaborative work between class or subject teachers and English specialist teachers.

3.4. Teacher training and follow-up

As indicated above, a key requirement for schools joining PEBI is to ensure that teachers involved have training in CLIL / bilingual education or are willing to participate in training offered. Prior to and throughout the pilot programme, we offered a range of methodology training courses and workshops accredited by the *Conselho Científico-Pedagógico da Formação Contínua* (CCPFC) so that the training would be recognised in terms of teachers' career progression. The training was to help teachers develop a better understanding of bilingual education and provide them with practical ideas for implementing effective teaching through English. As Reilly (2012, p. 228) states in relation to the training offered to teachers in the Spain bilingual programme: "The courses are not a reflection on teachers' skills, focusing rather on an awareness that the bilingual classroom requires a different mental framework and methodological approach that complements their skills and helps overcome difficulties." From the beginning, our approach was to focus on methodology and not language improvement *per se*, as has been the case in many other bilingual programmes in Europe (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017). While we drew initially on some methodology training developed for the Spain project, once the pilot project had started we began to develop our own courses and workshops. These were very specifically tailored to the Portuguese context following our classroom observations, discussions with teachers and increasing awareness of teachers' needs.

All the training we have designed aims to meet criteria we consider as key in delivering effective continuing professional development (CPD). Referring to the 'INSPIRE' model described by Richardson and Díaz Maggioli (2018) our courses and workshops are designed to be impactful (enhancing children's learning), needs based (highly contextually relevant for the participants), sustained (through

consistency between workshop and course content and monitoring follow up after the training), peer collaborative (teachers from the same and different schools, along with the English language teachers supporting them, working on producing ideas and materials together), practical and classroom based (providing opportunities for the teachers to plan activities and carry them out in their classes), reflective (encouraging teachers to consistently reflect on and improve their own practice) and evaluated (seeking feedback from children and peers).

During the pilot, methodology workshops and courses were designed and accredited for teachers at each year of primary, thus providing practical and highly relevant examples of learning activities as well as principles for bilingual teaching. The training was given by British Council trainers through the medium of English so, as well as providing practical methodology training, the courses provided rich opportunities for language acquisition in areas directly related to the teaching context and curriculum content, and for building teacher confidence and skills in working in English. The primary class teachers as well as English language teachers and coordinators supporting them attended the methodology workshops.

In the evaluation study, it was reported that feedback on the training was generally very positive with an average score in terms of satisfaction of 3.7 out of 4. Particularly appreciated was the quality of the planning and methodology input, the focus on 'active' methodology which could also be transferred to the teaching of other subjects, the highly practical component, the demonstration lessons and activities, the variety and innovative nature of the materials and activities, the support offered to teachers, and opportunities for sharing of experiences among the participants.

The majority of teachers in the pilot project also attended CLIL courses in the UK under the Erasmus+ Programme giving them an opportunity to further broaden their understanding of CLIL and share experiences with colleagues from other countries.

When PEBI was introduced as a programme that could be implemented in pre-primary and across all the education levels of *Ensino Básico* (lower primary, upper primary, and lower secondary) in 2016, we developed further training courses and workshops, once again accredited by the CCPFC so that the training would be recognised in terms of teachers' career progression. As well as designing and offering methodology workshops for each education level, we added language courses. Currently we aim to offer each of these every year so that new schools or new teachers joining the programme have the opportunity to attend.

While we initially ran courses and workshops separately for pre-primary educators and primary teachers, we decided to merge these courses as it was felt participants could learn a lot from each other and get a better understanding of how to ensure appropriate transition and further challenge and development. It

also gave English language teachers who joined the methodology workshops a better overview of working with teachers at both education levels.

Currently upper primary and lower secondary teachers join the same methodology workshops which also helps with ensuring continuity between educational levels. It has been suggested that a further course may join lower primary and upper primary teachers, again to manage the transition better, ensuring progression in curricular learning goals, encouraging teamwork, and understanding and generally ensuring better continuity in the children's learning.

The general format for the methodology workshops has been based around identifying key concepts of bilingual teaching, trainer-led demonstrations of practical learning activities for the age groups and curriculum content and then practical tasks carried out in groups to put into practice the concepts and activities. The workshops include 25 hours of group sessions and another 25 hours of autonomous work. The latter normally focuses on participants producing schemes of work and teaching materials, which are then trialled, reflected upon and presented to the trainer and other course participants.

For the language courses, language input is chosen according to contextual relevance rather than traditional structural grading. For example, the focus of the sessions for pre-primary and primary teachers centres on routines and the classroom environment, maths and science, visual art, music and movement and story-telling. These areas naturally define the language items, both structural and lexical, to be explored and worked on in the course.

Feedback on training continues to be very positive and is considered crucial to effective implementation of the programme. In response to teacher demand and our own observations, we now need to develop further training workshops and courses to offer additional developmental opportunities for teachers who have more experience in the programme. For example, language courses for subject teachers in second and third cycle are currently under development as are further workshops for teachers of all education levels. In addition, we would like to promote more teacher-led professional development opportunities such as a symposium for ideas sharing at the end of the academic year. We are also looking at how shorter introductory training courses or workshops might be implemented at a local level.

Monitoring has been an integral part of support provided to schools, ensuring among other things that continuous professional development (CPD) is 'sustained' as referred to above in the INSPIRE model (Richardson & Diaz Maggioli, 2018). This has consisted of visits to schools, lesson observations and feedback with teachers as well as meetings with the school direction to discuss the implementation of the programme. A written summary is also provided after the visit. With the restrictions that came into place in the pandemic, monitoring has been carried out

differently. Schools are asked to submit 'evidence' from their classrooms – such as descriptions of tasks and plans, lesson materials, photos or recordings – that is then reviewed by trainers. A follow up online meeting and written report offers the teachers and schools feedback on their work. The two forms of monitoring – face-to-face and online – actually seem to complement each other, enabling us to focus on different aspects of implementation. Consequently, as we move out of the pandemic, we aim to have both kinds of monitoring in place.

As well as monitoring, schools can seek support from their local DGEstE bilingual support person, or DGE or the British Council. Meetings take place at the beginning of the academic year and schools produce a report at the end of the year reflecting on the implementation of the programme in their cluster.

4. Conclusions

The bilingual project in Portugal, in which we implemented bilingual education through the medium of English, started more than a decade ago and has resulted in much learning and reflection for all involved.

We should not underestimate the level of challenge for schools and teachers in joining the programme and the degree of dedication and commitment needed to make it work. Strong leadership has been identified as essential for success; the need to have the support of the whole school community, including teachers and parents and to promote the programme in the wider community are both crucially important in creating a positive bilingual school ethos. Gradual and systematic implementation of the bilingual programme and following guidelines about curriculum and teacher profiles have also been identified as success factors. Feedback on training provided through English which has largely focussed on methodology but also specific language development for bilingual teachers has been consistently positive and is considered another key factor for success.

We should bear in mind that the end goal for the introduction of the bilingual education programme in Portugal is to enhance children's learning and future life opportunities. Research has already demonstrated many benefits of bilingual education/CLIL and our evaluation study suggested that the pilot project had the potential for this. It is therefore important to continue to work on improving and extending the programme.

5. Recommendations for future developments

In the light of our reflection, shared through this chapter, we would highlight the following as recommendations for the future of the programme:

The interest in bilingual education has continued to grow over the years and as schools expand the programme and involve more learners and teachers, the need grows to increase institutional support at macro level and school ability to make implementation sustainable at micro level.

An ideal situation would involve making bilingual education an educational priority at policy level: in the long term, through the inclusion of bilingual education/CLIL modules at initial teacher training level, and, in the short term, the acknowledgement of bilingual schools in the Portuguese education system with a view to enabling the direct recruitment of professionals with the profile we see fit for the programme and the time to do it collaboratively. This would strategically cater for sustainability and quality at national level in the long run. In this vein, it is important to keep setting national targets every five years which currently stands at involving 7% of public schools by 2025.

Encouraging schools to learn from each other and share good practice is also key and can be done systematically by providing a central online resource bank with quality and well-organised, easily accessible resources.

Reaching out to the wider community so as to spread this kind of provision across several societal sectors could be done by organising regular symposia where opportunities for reflection and sharing best practice could be created.

Continuing professional development in methodology and language is a crucial support form that we feel should continue to be offered every year to ensure teachers can deliver high quality learner-centred education in line with the curriculum using effective CLIL methodology. This requires devising new courses that can cater for the needs of both experienced schools and those new to the programme, for more and less experienced staff. Preparing schools to build teacher training capacity with more teacher-led courses at regional and local levels is also key.

Hybrid monitoring systems also need to be adjusted every year which comprise online and face-to-face sessions that will enable lesson observation to ensure closer reflection and support. Schools also need to keep receiving clear guidelines through documentation and meetings to help them implement the programme. We know that the understanding, support and enthusiasm of head teachers and coordinators is crucial.

Finally, we believe bilingual education should ideally continue all the way up to the completion of upper secondary education which is a challenge we need to work on in the near future.

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