

## **Let's meet the Co-Editor of the NABE Journal of Research and Practice**

Virginia Vinuesa Benítez, Ph.D., is the Vice President of the NABE/Spain Affiliate and Professor in the Department of Financial Economics, Accounting and Modern Languages and head of the Bilingual Teacher Preparation Program at the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos of Madrid. Virginia was appointed as the Co-Editor of the NABE Journal of Research and Practice along with Dr. Josie Villamil Tinajero, Vice President of NABE, at the recent Annual International Bilingual Education Conference in Albuquerque, NM. Like many of the NABE scholars, Virginia is also a published author and has recently contributed to the body of research, originally credited to professor David Marsh of Finland, with her own publication that was launched at the NABE Conference entitled: **Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): An Effective Methodological Approach To Teach Foreign Languages In Mainstream Education.**

Dr. Vinuesa points out that the term CLIL emerged more than 20 years ago as a methodological trend in the field of bilingual education and today it is still an approach that brings great benefits to the learning of curricular contents through an additional language different from a student's mother tongue. The complexity of this approach, under which many different methodologies converge, makes it an instrument of multiple developments and applications, allowing each teacher to become an architect who can shape and tailor the knowledge to be imparted. She further asserts that teaching of foreign languages has always been at the forefront of debate. Within the European scenario, it has given rise to reflection, not only by teachers, but also by policy makers of the member states that have undertaken actions aimed at fostering the development of a multilingual society and especially at improving the linguistic level of their citizens. She further concludes that throughout history, there have been many methods and approaches used for the teaching of foreign languages. Despite the many changes they have undergone and the continual search by linguists, psychologists, pedagogues and experts in foreign languages to find the perfect method, it has not yet been found. Generally speaking, teachers working in the field of language teaching can observe that the communicative level that students acquire at the end of the different

stages of education is not at all satisfactory, which generates a constant concern that must lead us to reflect on the possible causes that have produced these results. Throughout primary and secondary education, foreign language is a compulsory subject in the Spanish education curriculum. This implies a minimum of twelve years of instruction, without considering that many have even started learning a language in pre-primary education.

**Bearing all this in mind, two questions need to be answered: What is happening in our educational system so that the results in foreign languages are not satisfactory enough? Would it be possible to obtain better results in languages if we used a different methodological approach? Virginia's book/manual is intended to give a clear overview of what CLIL is, how and why it was created, and where it has been used.** Above all, it aims to put forward a proposal that might have a positive impact in the field of language teaching. This approach, despite being applied in bilingual programs, where it has been demonstrated to obtain good results (both in immersion programs in Europe and in bilingual schools of the region of Madrid), could also be suitable for the teaching of English as a foreign language in mainstream education. When referring to the term CLIL, we cannot help thinking about bilingual education and consider it as the best-fit approach for language teaching and learning in the multilingual European context. CLIL embodies a valuable paradigm of teaching and learning and has proven to be effective. If teachers can provide students with meaningful, challenging and authentic input, and if teachers are also ready to put this approach into practice in English lessons, a significant contribution might be made to raising the standards of foreign language proficiency.

### **Special Note:**

Dr. Virginia Vinuesa Benítez welcomes comments and suggestions from NABE members and colleagues. For further discussion on CLIL and Bilingual Teacher Preparation Programs in Spain, or to acquire a copy of the book, please **contact Virginia at [Virginia.vinuesa@urjc.es](mailto:Virginia.vinuesa@urjc.es)**