Language Learning and Digital Literacy in a Multilingual Country

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Summary

Part I: The Swiss context

Part II: The AlpConnectar model

Part III: Experiences & outcomes
A multilingual and multicultural country
Switzerland is a multilingual country.

Four national languages: German, French, Italian and Romansh.

Many dialects in each linguistic region.

Many other languages brought by immigrants: Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Albanian, Serbian, Turkish, Kurdish, etc.

English: in banks, industry, exports, tourism.
Languages spoken in Switzerland (2010)
Inhabitants of 19 out of 26 cantons speak Swiss-German dialects.

Inhabitants of some regions of Romandie (French-Speaking Region) are bilingual.

Canton Graubünden is trilingual: German, Italian, Romansh.

Many foreigners now living in Switzerland continue to use their native language.
Part II: The AlpConnectar model

- Digital technologies and the internet as a learning resource

- Language learning
  - key topic in the public education discourse in Switzerland, a country with 4 national languages

- ICT (Information & Communication Technology) provides an effective environment for digital literacy development
• 7 primary school classes (age 9-12) from different linguistic regions

• Connected with each other → cloud and videoconferencing + data protection

• Language Learning in an **authentic situation**
Objectives

• Encourage L2 communication skills
  – reading, listening, writing and speaking
• Reduce inhibitions in L2 direct communication
• Enhance L2 learning motivation
• Increase awareness of cultural diversity and affinities among the different regions of Switzerland
• Enhance digital skills
Design
- First survey: Autumn 2015 (t1)
- Second survey: May/June 2016 (t2)
- Students and Teachers
- Interviews and Questionnaire

Sample
- 7 Teachers
- 123 Students
Part III: Experiences & outcomes

• Positive results for both children and teachers
  – Increase of L2 learning motivation
  – Reduction of inhibitions in L2 communication
  – Increase in awareness of cultural diversity
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scharans</th>
<th>Sonvico - Lugano</th>
<th>Monthey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canton:</td>
<td>Graubünden</td>
<td>Ticino</td>
<td>Valais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mountain village</td>
<td>Village close to the city</td>
<td>Industrial city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>820 inhabitants</td>
<td>1,945 inhabitants</td>
<td>17,644 inhabitants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language: German</td>
<td>Language: Italian</td>
<td>Language: French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalities</td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objectives and expected outcomes

Thanks to digital technologies

• Provide opportunities for authentic second language communication with pupils from other linguistic regions.

• Stimulate communication skills: oral and written production, oral and written comprehension.

• Dare to communicate with peers from other linguistic regions.

• Nurture the desire and pleasure of learning to communicate and share.

• Provide linguistic knowledge in the second language.

• Understanding cultural differences among Swiss regions.
The triangular model connects the three linguistic regions.

Pupils in 7th grade are aged 10-11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 7 (7H/7P)</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>L2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scharans GR</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonvico TI</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthey VS</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning topics

- Connected with the curriculum
- Connected with manuals and official learning materials
- Close to daily life

Your life - my life
Your heroes - my heroes
Your family - my family
Art and culture
A regional recipe
Your activities - my activities
Your favorite food - my favorite food
Popular traditions
Traditional holidays
Different media of expression (oral+written) to support: motivation, excitement, enthusiasm and an ideal learning atmosphere

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theatre</th>
<th>Poetry</th>
<th>Singing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mime</td>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>Photography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Video</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reportage</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Present project to parents and pupils</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choose topics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Start using digital devices</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Introduce yourself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce classmates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country of origin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Introduce my family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present our class daily schedule</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Present our class weekly schedule</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present monthly and yearly activities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Rehearse the Christmas carol (4 languages)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present your Canton and its features</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td></td>
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<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>My birthday: date, invitations, etc. Names, colours, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Introduce one person you know: artist, sports star, etc. Interview a personality from the region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Food and drink from my region My favourite food and drink</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Write one or more regional recipes Present the recipe to the two other classes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Interview a cook and make a video Prepare for meeting the other classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Face-to-face 3-day meeting. Sharing communication activities, games, sports and meals.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Travel

A face-to-face meeting

Spend time together

Do things together
Spend free time together

Share meals
Write a letter to parents with the help of peers
Work with care

Train together

Write a text

Stay focused
Overall results

• Positive results for both children and teachers
  – Increase of L2 learning motivation
  – Reduction of inhibitions in L2 communication
  – Increase of awareness of cultural diversity
• Ho imparato ad essere responsabile e ho imparato molto meglio il francese perché correggevano la pronuncia (Sofia)
• J’ai appris à communiquer avec les Tessinois malgré le peu de mots de vocabulaire. J’ai appris à mieux communiquer en langue 2 (Mariana)
• Ho imparato che le telecamere non fanno così tanta paura, inoltre ho migliorato il francese (Dorian)
• J’ai tout d’abord appris à vaincre ma timidité de parler avec nos correspondants (Mandon)
• Questa esperienza è stata bellissima perché è bello conoscere nuovi amici che vengono da città diverse e conoscere lingue che tu non conosci (Anastasia).
• En faisant comme ça, ça me redonne envie d’apprendre l’allemand (Océane)
• Ho imparato a farmi capire con i gesti e collaborare di più con i gruppi (Andrea)
Positive results on digital skills:

- Overall improvement of digital skills
- Differences regarding tasks
- Differences regarding gender (female greater improvement)

- Control over concurrent factors?
AlpConnectar 1+
• Focus on pedagogical/didactic aspects

AlpConnectar 2
• Development of a service for all interested schools
Thank you for your attention

www.alpconnectar.ch

René Wyssen

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