

## The Bilingual Project - 25 Years

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The most pertinent evaluation of the bilingual project in our school is the excellent success in Lengua and Mathematics, especially when we consider that the objective of the bilingual project was to raise achievement in those two subjects. However, we cannot ignore the fantastic attitude, behaviour, confidence and maturity displayed by all our students.

Before I go any further I must pay homage, not only to the pupils themselves, but to the organisation and dedication of the team of staff at CP Ventanielles, who have provided us with the perfect raw materials for us to nurture. I remember stating this when I did a presentation about our project at the TESOL Spain convention a few years ago, at the request of The British Council. I told all those present how I felt like the luckiest teacher in the world.

I remember how the staff told me of the reputation of the Ventanielles pupils when I first started in the school. The turnaround was immediate, a new wave started to sweep through the school. In the third year of the project in our school it was decided, very forcefully by claustro, that the bilingüe students were no longer to be put into “grupos puros”, it became essential that they were divided up into mixed groups to facilitate the teaching of all the pupils.

I've had the pleasure of seeing our pupils holding their own in Comenius European English speaking projects and amaze British pupils and teachers with their English speaking prowess. Perhaps this is the most satisfying aspect of their development, the by-product of our project. These days it is extremely rare to find ESO students who can not only pass grammar tests, but learn about, and express their opinions on the world around them, with ease and efficiency in English. These children do not suffer from the dreaded “miedo de hacer el ridículo” so common amongst English Language scholars. Also, I'm constantly shown examples of how these children develop their English speaking abilities beyond the school environment. The extent of the information on the internet in the English language is clearly accessible for our students.