

Plenary Speakers



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Cognitive Discourse Functions: an interdisciplinary construct for language and content integration

Abstract

Designing and implementing a truly integrated pedagogical approach in contexts where second languages and content subjects are learned simultaneously is difficult. One particular challenge is the fact that content subject pedagogies and language pedagogies form their own largely independent universes of discourse, both in the daily life of educational institutions and in the world of academic research. In search of potential bridging concepts, I have proposed a construct of Cognitive Discourse Functions (CDFs) that seeks to relate learning goals and competences defined by content subjects like science or history with the verbalizations required from teachers and learners during classroom interaction, in test situations or work on assignments. My presentation will introduce this CDF construct with its seven core functions Classify, Define, Describe, Evaluate, Explain, Explore, Report, showing the construct's connections with the discourses of education and applied linguistics. Examples from European CLIL classrooms will illustrate the use and usefulness of CDFs in the daily work of teachers and learners as they interact with the material and with each other.