

UNIT 2 LEARNING AND TEACHING MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS

2.5 DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS

It is always a challenge for teachers to get students to speak. Especially in a CLIL classroom they might find hard to speak about topics which are unfamiliar to them or not related to their own interests. For this reason teachers have to consider that, before asking students to speak about a specific topic, a series of activities must be developed and that students must be given enough time to prepare and focus on the content.

Some students find particularly hard to speak in a foreign language in front of the class because of their shyness or because they are afraid of making mistakes. Group and pair working can reduce students' reluctance to speak and will encourage also the weakest ones.

A very relevant point is the aspect of formal, grammar accuracy. In a CLIL classroom attention must be paid to the content so that, despite the grammar accuracy, teachers should concentrate on how students are able to convey the message and make it intelligible.

Speaking, like all the other skills, cannot be taught as an isolated skill consequently most of the activities must involve the integration of skills. During a lesson, aimed at practising speaking, we can identify three main stages:

PRESENTATION: In this stage the teacher introduces something new to be learned or something to be revised.

PRACTICE: In this stage the teacher allows students to work under his directions and whole class and pair work activities will be provided to develop vocabulary and phonology.

PRODUCTION: In this stage the teacher gives students opportunities to work on their own. Pair work and group work activities are meant here to focus on the content and, at the same time, to develop communicative abilities and improve fluency.