1 Approaching CLIL

This book explains content and language integrated learning (CLIL). It uncovers the pieces of the puzzle that make up the essence of CLIL.

In short, CLIL is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language. For example, CLIL has involved Malaysian children learning maths and science in English. CLIL has been used for Norwegian students to do drama in German, Italian students to learn science in French, Japanese students to learn geography in English and Australians to learn maths in Chinese. The combinations of languages and subjects are almost limitless.

Pre-CLIL

The term CLIL (content and language integrated learning) was coined in 1994 in Europe. However, CLIL practice has a much longer history. The first known CLIL-type programme dates back some 5000 years to what is now modern-day Iraq. The Akkadians, who conquered the Sumerians, wanted to learn the local language. To this end, Sumerian was used as a medium of instruction to teach several subjects to the Akkadians, including theology, botany and zoology. If Sumerian instructors were true to the basic principles of CLIL, they supported the learning of Sumerian, as well as the learning of the content in theology, botany and zoology.

Another example from history of the use of a second language to teach content is the widespread use of Latin. For centuries, Latin was used as a language of instruction in European universities and became the primary language of law, medicine, theology, science and philosophy. Yet, despite having strong similarities with CLIL, the use of Latin cannot be considered, in the purest sense, an example of CLIL. Latin in academia left little room for the development of local languages. CLIL, by contrast, seeks to support second-language learning while also favouring first-language development.

In Europe, in more recent centuries, many people have understood the value of multilingualism. However, bilingual or multilingual education seemed, above all, a privilege belonging to the wealthy. The well-to-do hired governesses or tutors who spoke to their children in a foreign tongue with the express purpose of having them become fluent in another language. Some people sent their children abroad to study in private schools.

In other cases, geographic, demographic and economic realities have given rise to multilingual programmes. In 1965, a group of English-speaking parents living in the majority French-speaking Canadian province of Quebec had become worried that their children would be at a disadvantage later on in life if they did not achieve fluency in French. These English-speaking parents believed that standard second-language teaching would not lead to fluency in French, thus making it

more difficult later on in life for their children to compete in the local job market. The parents encouraged the local authorities to establish a language-immersion programme that would enable English-speaking children to study all of their subjects entirely in French.

Teachers in this immersion programme initially faced major challenges. Appropriate teaching and learning strategies had not been agreed upon. They were developed by trial and error. Teachers began by focusing on helping students to understand the second language and to develop oral communication skills. A more balanced approach that included all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) was introduced once the students' aural (listening) and oral (speaking) skills had developed sufficiently to allow for basic communication. As students progressed through school, some subjects were also taught in English. In general, the programme was highly successful. The use of immersion teaching began to spread throughout Canada and much of the rest of the world.

In the 1970s, with the expansion of language-immersion programmes, bilingual education became more easily accessible to children coming from a diversity of backgrounds. Similarly, work done on Languages Across the Curriculum in the 1970s (UK) helped raise awareness of the need for all teachers to help students improve their language skills, whether it be their first or second language. An increased understanding that content and language needed to be taught and learnt hand in hand was developing. At the same time, it was becoming apparent that standard second-language teaching alone was not achieving adequate results on a widespread scale.

The rise of CLIL

By the mid-1990s globalization was placing greater linguistic demands on mainstream education, from the primary level through to institutions of higher education. In Europe today, there is a desire to improve language-learning opportunities for all young people in order to increase European cohesion and competitiveness. In Asia, thanks in no small part to the exponential growth of China's economy, interest in improving lingua franca languages such as Mandarin Chinese and English is on the rise. These languages are of essential importance for the economies and societies of several Asian countries.

Globalization has made the world interconnected in ways not seen before. New technologies are facilitating the exchange of information and knowledge. This, in turn, is driving the integration of the world economy and change in all spheres of our lives. The world is rapidly becoming a very mixed global village. Mobility, both physical and virtual, is becoming an ever-increasing reality and this is having an impact on languages. The reality of life in a mixed global society is having an impact on how we teach and what we teach – and this concerns language education, as much as any other form of subject learning.

In an integrated world, integrated learning is increasingly viewed as a modern form of educational delivery designed to even better equip the learner with knowledge

and skills suitable for the global age. Moreover, the mindset of Generation Y (generally recognized as born anywhere between 1982 and 2001) is particularly focused on immediacy as in 'learn as you use, use as you learn' – not 'learn now, use later'. Those born into the Cyber Generation (born after 2001) will be even more influenced by their own early, personal, hands-on experience with integrated technologies. These are the generations now in classrooms across the world, and CLIL is one innovative methodology that has emerged to cater to this new age.

CLIL foundation pieces

The CLIL strategy, above all, involves using a language that is not a student's native language as a medium of instruction and learning for primary, secondary and/or vocational-level subjects such as maths, science, art or business. However, CLIL also calls on content teachers to teach some language. In particular, content teachers need to support the learning of those parts of language knowledge that students are missing and that may be preventing them mastering the content.

Language teachers in CLIL programmes play a unique role. In addition to teaching the standard curriculum, they work to support content teachers by helping students to gain the language needed to manipulate content from other subjects. In so doing they also help to reinforce the acquisition of content.

Thus, CLIL is a tool for the teaching and learning of content and language. The essence of CLIL is integration. This integration has a dual focus:

1) Language learning is included in content classes (eg, maths, history, geography, computer programming, science, civics, etc). This means repackaging information in a manner that facilitates understanding. Charts, diagrams, drawings, hands-on experiments and the drawing out of key concepts and terminology are all common CLIL strategies.

2) Content from subjects is used in language-learning classes. The language teacher, working together with teachers of other subjects, incorporates the vocabulary, terminology and texts from those other subjects into his or her classes. Students learn the language and discourse patterns they need to understand and use the content.

It is a student's desire to understand and use the content that motivates him or her to learn the language. Even in language classes, students are likely to learn more if they are not simply learning language for language's sake, but using language to accomplish concrete tasks and learn new content. The language teacher takes more time to help students improve the quality of their language than the content teacher. However, finding ways in the CLIL context to inject content into language classes will also help improve language learning. Thus, in CLIL, content goals are supported by language goals.

In addition to a focus on content and language, there is a third element that comes into play. The development of learning skills supports the achievement of content language goals. Learning skills goals constitute the third driver in the CLIL triad.
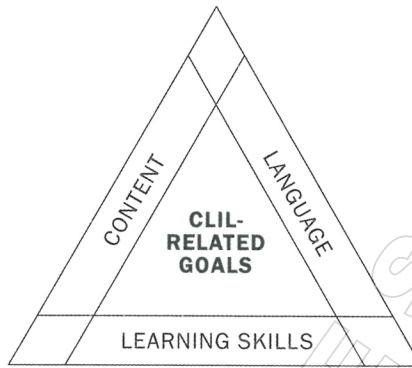
The three goals of content, language and learning skills need to fit into a larger context. Parents are most interested in having their children learn the CLIL language, continue to develop their first language and learn as much of the content as children who are not in CLIL programmes. Therefore, the ultimate goal of CLIL initiatives is to create conditions that support the achievement of the following:

- grade-appropriate levels of academic achievement in subjects taught through the CLIL language;
- grade-appropriate functional proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing in the CLIL language;
- age-appropriate levels of first-language competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- an understanding and appreciation of the cultures associated with the CLIL language and the student's first language;
- the cognitive and social skills and habits required for success in an ever-changing world.

The CLIL method can give young people the skills required to continue to study or work in the CLIL language. However, language maintenance and learning is a lifelong process requiring continued use and ongoing investment.

The many faces of CLIL

CLIL is an umbrella term covering a dozen or more educational approaches (eg, immersion, bilingual education, multilingual education, language showers and enriched language programmes). What is new about CLIL is that it synthesizes and provides a flexible way of applying the knowledge learnt from these various approaches. The flexibility of the approach is, above all, evident in the amount of time devoted to teaching or learning through the second language. CLIL allows for low- to high-intensity exposure to teaching/learning through a second language. The approach can also be used for short-term high-intensity exposure (see figure opposite).

THE MANY FACES OF CLIL
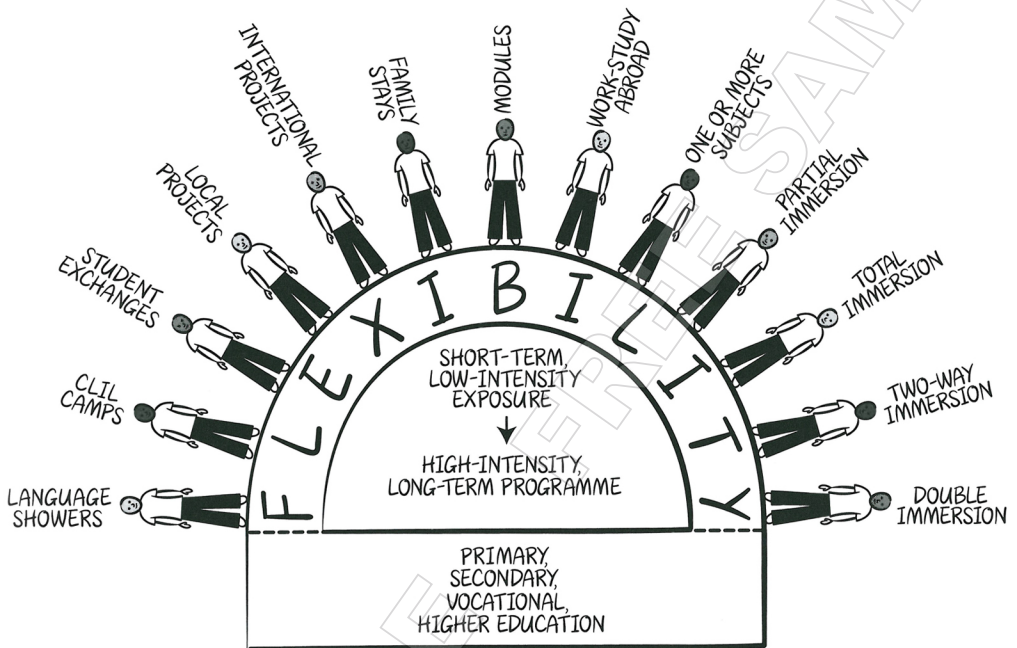
Here are four examples of the varying types of CLIL-style activities:

1 Language showers

Description

Language showers are primarily intended for students aged between four and ten years old, who receive between 30 minutes and one hour of exposure per day. This includes the use of games, songs, many visuals, realia, handling of objects and movement. Teachers usually speak almost entirely in the CLIL language. Routines are developed and considerable repetition is used so students know what to expect. This creates a sense of security, lowers anxiety and boosts learning.

Goals

Language showers aim to help students to:
· be aware of the existence of different languages;
· be prepared for language learning (positive attitude, familiarity with sounds and structures).

Suggested activities

Teachers focus on routine activities with which the students become comfortable. They set the stage by telling students what to expect and then switch to the CLIL language, for example:

- to manage breaks or lunchtime. Instructions are given in the CLIL language, vocabulary for foods is learnt and students answer questions about what they are eating. The teacher says: *Mmm, apples. Shelly has an apple. Who else has an apple? What is that, Paul? Yes, very good. That's right, it's an apple. What colour is the apple, red or green? Is it red like Igor's shirt or green like Chantal's skirt?* Simultaneously pointing to Igor's red shirt and Chantal's green skirt facilitates comprehension.

- to help students get dressed for breaks or for going home. Articles of clothing can be put on in various sequences while the students repeat the new words. Considerable gesturing/pointing is used to help students associate the object with its name in the CLIL language. The teacher may say: *What shall we put on first? Our gloves? Our hats? Our coats? Our boots? What colour is Shameem's hat? What colour is Penny's scarf? Today, let's put on our gloves first. Now let's put on our coats and try to button them. Is that difficult?* (said with a grimacing face) *Is that easy?* (said with a smiling face). Students answer with one word or in short phrases using the CLIL language.

- singing songs that include considerable movement and that help teach vocabulary (eg, the Shimmy Shimmy Shake or the Hokey Cokey: *I put my left hand in, my left hand out, my left hand in and I shake it all about …*). Using actions together with new vocabulary helps students to learn and more easily recall vocabulary. Also, words in songs are more easily retained than, for example, through lists and speaking.

2 One-week CLIL camp

Description

Camps can consist of groups ranging from fifteen to sixty students or more, coming from one school or from an entire school district. Students come together at a purpose-designed location, often an outdoor learning centre, during the school year, or holidays, for several days.

Some school districts may organize weekend camps and others five-day camps during the school week. Five days is long enough to have a profound impact and short enough for students to give it a try. Students are given a certain degree of choice in picking activities. The students are sub-divided into four teams of fifteen. Each group decides on its own name, motto and logo. The primary non-negotiable ground rule is that all participants use the CLIL language throughout the stay. Students are asked to develop strategies that will help ensure the use of the CLIL language. Students may agree on a system of tokens and fines. Students

themselves charge other students one token each time they hear someone speaking a language other than the camp language. In this way, students often begin to assume all responsibility for keeping everyone on track with CLIL language use. In this example, the team with the greatest number of tokens wins a prize at the end of the camp stay.

Goals

CLIL camps aim for students to:

- experience success in living in a second-language environment;
- have fun and associate the CLIL language with an enjoyable experience;
- motivate students to continue second-language study;
- inspire students to continue learning the CLIL language.

Suggested activities

a) Hiking and orienteering: brainstorming what participants already know about hiking and orienteering (vocabulary, safety issues, tips, etc), learning key vocabulary and phrases, pre-activity instructions from a facilitator and a language teacher indoors, testing learning outdoors, various hiking and orienteering activities, having some students photograph or film the activities, making presentations about the activities using the photos or films, discussing and celebrating the experience.

b) A final talent show: a general meeting to discuss the nature of the event, daily times set aside for preparation of presentations, roleplays or scenes, building up the event during dinner speeches and the big event itself.

c) Student teaching: students sign up to teach workshops for their fellow students. Preparatory meetings are held with teachers to plan and to provide language support. After the session, short debriefing sessions are held where the students discuss the experience and celebrate success. One of our colleague's students ran a belly-dancing workshop. She wrote the required expressions on a piece of paper and stuck it to the wall. The students learnt to isolate three different kinds of stomach muscles – the diaphragm, the pelvic muscles and the obliques. The students learnt to control each set of muscles separately and then contract them, in a rolling motion, one after the other. It was hard work but they really had fun with it. Students ended up incorporating belly-dancing as one of the steps in a relay race, and into the final talent show. One student gave an origami workshop, another did a *t'ai chi* workshop, and yet another showed slides and talked about a trip to South America. One of the most popular workshops was about how to set up your own blog. Providing language support required some serious advanced planning from staff.

NB: Camps work for all age ranges from the early years of school to the end of secondary school. With very young children the emphasis is more on instructor-led activities. Far more games and competitions are used. For example:

- a walkabout in the natural environment to learn about various plants, insects and animals;
- a scavenger hunt to find and possibly photograph various plants, stones, live insects, etc;

- planning, building and celebrating the creation of birdhouses, sandcastles, etc;
- doing competitive and non-competitive sports.

Instructors would reinforce vocabulary throughout the week. Many objects such as a table or an oak tree would have labels attached to them indicating [table] or [oak tree]. Also, students would be asked to pick their group names from the various species of trees or insects that are found in the area. Students might work with an instructor to stage a play about life in the forest.

3 International projects

Description

Special projects need to lead to concrete accomplishments and enable students to connect with new ideas, sources and/or people. Schools can either join existing projects or create a project of their own. A worldwide network such as Science Across the World* is easy and inexpensive to join. This Internet-based network allows classes of students from schools in several countries to study and discuss a host of science topics such as acid rain, biodiversity, food, diet, health, genetics, the environment and energy. Students exchange ideas and findings with peers abroad and students work as a class to try to reach a consensus about what they have learnt. The network provides some worksheets and teacher's guides.

Another option is to start a project of one's own. An example from a primary school including children from kindergarten right through to year six involves having a school adopt a village in Africa. This is done in co-operation with a major aid agency that has considerable experience in Africa. It can become a school-wide project that also includes parents and members of the local community.

Goals

International projects aim to:

- help students assume greater responsibility for their learning;
- motivate students;
- provide a framework for synthesizing learning from several subjects;
- create opportunities for contact and communication with other speakers of the CLIL language;
- develop skills in communication, information and communication technologies (ICT), teamwork and problem-solving;
- develop reasoning, enquiry, critical and creative thinking and evaluation skills.

Suggested activities

1) Science Across the World
- Introduction – students begin to consider what sort of and how much waste they create.
- Accessing prior knowledge and skills – teachers help students to articulate their prior knowledge of waste using a framework (ecosystems, percentages, categories of materials, measuring mass, reading thermometers, interpreting

* http://www.scienceacross.org

diagrams and tables, precautions to take when measuring waste).
- Pre-teaching language – draw out vocabulary and discourse patterns by reading a short introductory text or by working through instructions with the class.
- How much waste do you create? – students survey the solid domestic waste produced in their own home in the course of a week and categorize the waste.
- What happens to collected waste? – students investigate the ways that the local community deals with waste.
- Collating and exchanging information – the class collates information and exchanges it with schools in other countries.
- What happens to waste in other countries? – the class considers the information received from schools in other countries and discusses similarities and differences, problems and solutions and how countries can learn from one another.
- Information section – information about waste production and treatment across the world is summarized and presented.
- Planning, implementing and evaluating – developing an improved waste-management plan for the school and applying it.
- Celebrating success.

2) Adopting an African village
   Students:
- learn about international development agencies and programmes (eg, sponsoring a child, adopting a village);
- learn about Africa and the country in question (eg, write reports, produce an art show, run group projects on climate and/or lifestyle);
- determine costs and develop a plan for fundraising;
- organize a community fair (plan, advertise, manage the funds, run the activities);
- develop a display for the school foyer;
- begin corresponding with children in the village;
- summarize accomplishments and celebrate achievements with parents and the community.

4 Total early immersion

Description

Total early immersion programmes begin in kindergarten or during the first year of school. Total immersion programmes are only total immersion at the outset. As students progress through the programme from year to year, more and more of the curriculum is delivered through the medium of the first language. Often, after a few years of study, half of the curriculum is delivered through the immersion language and half through the students' first language. Many schools will offer the option of studying a third language.

The teacher usually speaks only the immersion language. Certainly a few months into the programme, it is considered good practice to speak only the immersion

language with the students. Many schools apply the approach of one teacher/one language. This means that teachers teach in one language only. Students learn to address one set of teachers in the immersion language, and the other set of teachers in the students' first language.

Teachers in immersion programmes try to create a climate favourable for language learning. Much stress is placed on communication skills. Teachers use a great deal of repetition and gestures. Language is presented both systematically in a logical step-by-step manner and unsystematically according to what language students want to learn so they can express what is important to them. Young children generally acquire the second language quickly. By the end of the first year, they understand most of what their teachers say and are capable of responding well in the immersion language.

Although immersion programmes are successful in helping students achieve functional proficiency in the immersion language, there are concerns associated with them. As the programmes, generally speaking, place greater emphasis on fluency than on accuracy of language, certain errors can become ingrained. There is also a tendency to plateau: Language development reaches a certain level or plateau and then slows down greatly or stops. There are strategies to counter these concerns (see page 170).

Goals

Total early immersion programmes aim to support students in achieving:
- functional fluency in a second language;
- development of their mother tongue on an equal level with that of students not studying through immersion;
- curriculum expectations in all subjects that is on an equal level with that of students not studying through immersion;
- an appreciation of their own culture(s) and the culture(s) related to the immersion language.

Suggested activities

Initially, teachers use lots of routine activities such as a morning circle where students can speak about what they did the night before, or over the weekend. As students search for words, the teacher provides them.

During the first year, students learn content that is typical in the first year of any programme, such as the seasons or the five senses. With the five senses one could begin with the teacher modelling the following text: *I love the smell of roses. I smell roses with my nose. I love the smell of roses. Do you love the smell of roses? I love the smell of roses.* Once the students have assimilated and are able to use this model, it can be expanded: *I love the smell of* … (student's own words). Students are likely to answer using the CLIL language for the first half of the sentence and their primary language for the end of the sentence. The teacher then recasts the sentence with the new word(s) in the CLIL language and then the student repeats the full sentence. Activities with the five senses could include:
- Students matching parts of the body to the senses (eg, *nose* = *smell*).

- The teacher introducing (in writing and orally) words that describe tastes, such as *sweet, sour* and *bitter*. Students name foods that match these tastes. These are listed on the board.
- Working in pairs, a blindfolded student tries to guess various foods such as honey, lemon or cinnamon, which have been placed in small jars. The student who is observing marks the results on an observation sheet. Students switch roles. (NB: To maintain the smell of a product, first line the jars with petroleum jelly.)
- The teacher presents (in writing and orally) words associated with touch such as *soft, rough* and *prickly*. Students brainstorm objects that are *soft, smooth*, etc.
- Students are given a handout with labelled pictures of objects such as a snowman or fire. Students write on each of these pictures: the word *hot* in red or the word *cold* in blue.
- Students are given a page divided into little squares containing words such as *pickle, honey, pine tree, rabbit* and so forth. They can be asked questions orally or be given them on paper or card, such as: *How many are soft? How many are rough?* Students answer the questions. If responding in writing, they can also cut out the squares and place them next to their answers.
- Students cut out pictures from magazines and place them on a table under headings such as *soft, rough, sticky, smooth* and *prickly*.
- Several students place their heads under a table that has been covered with a thick, dark blanket. Other students observe how the pupils of the students who were in the dark change when they come back into the light. Observations are written on the board and in students' notebooks.

NB: Double-immersion and two-way immersion programmes follow the same principles and use the same sort of activities as described above, but differ in the following ways:

In double-immersion programmes, for example in the United States, native speakers of Spanish sit in the same class as native speakers of English. About half of all instruction takes place in Spanish and half in English. Due to the high status enjoyed by English, some schools have had to find new strategies to help students value and improve their Spanish. One strategy has been to deliver 75 per cent of instruction through Spanish and 25 per cent through English.

There are double-immersion programmes in Canada that offer part of the day in Hebrew and part of the day in French. Students also have some hours of English-language instruction. Many students speak yet another language at home, such as Russian.

Students in both of the above programmes are, in general, learning the languages involved and acquiring subject content at age-appropriate levels on an equal level with students who study through one language.

Bumps in the road to good practice in CLIL

CLIL enthusiasts never seem to get tired of telling the willing listener about the benefits of CLIL. A considerable body of educational research attests to student success in CLIL initiatives. However, for the reader interested in starting up CLIL, it is wise to have some sense of the problems others have faced with CLIL programmes, and to learn how those problems were addressed. CLIL creates long-term expectations. Students and parents who have tasted the benefits of CLIL usually want to see programmes continued and often expanded. Thus, a useful first step is to analyse one's own long-term capacity and that of one's colleagues against some of the challenges others have faced with CLIL.

Some common potential barriers on the road to successful CLIL practice, coupled with strategies for addressing and possibly avoiding them, are listed below.

1. Grasping the concept and grappling with misconceptions

For many adults, CLIL is counterintuitive. It is hard for an English speaker to conceive of learning another language like German, or for a Spanish speaker to conceive of learning Mandarin Chinese, let alone science or some other subject in those foreign languages. In their early lives, these adults may have found language learning difficult. A major obstacle to CLIL is the attitude of the cynical Susans and doubting Thomases both inside and outside the education profession. After all, these people have usually come through an educational background where all subjects in the curriculum were neatly separated, and this personal experience influences their perception of how learning should be organized.

Common sense seems to say that students studying in a second language cannot possibly learn the same amount of content as students studying in their first language. Some people are even convinced that CLIL students will fall behind their peers academically and that their native-language skills will suffer.

In fact, CLIL students perform as well as or even outperform non-CLIL students in terms of learning content. Far from interfering with content acquisition, CLIL can actually facilitate it. Academic results reflecting testing in a wide variety of subjects show that students generally achieve the same or better results when studying in a second language. Unexpectedly, students in CLIL programmes often even outperform their peers in regular programmes on first-language reading, writing and listening tests. This is partly because CLIL students develop meta-linguistic awareness. This means that they are better able to compare languages and be more precise in their word choice and in passing on the content of their message. They learn to check whether their message was accurately received by the listener. They also learn to draw out meaning from context. They become more skilled at using languages in general.

Another big misconception surrounding CLIL is that it is suitable only for the brightest, most academically inclined students. There are several nations from Luxembourg to Singapore that have multilingualism as a nationally established aim and where students undergo their education in several languages.

We are also seeing a wide spectrum of learners benefiting from CLIL in a variety of very different countries. The results are excellent. Research shows that average C-grade students do well in CLIL programmes. They still have a C-grade average, but they learn to speak another language and gain many socio-cultural skills that will enrich their professional and personal lives.

CLIL is a just-in-time approach as opposed to a just-in-case approach. CLIL students are not learning a language simply for the sake of language learning and future use, but are putting just-learnt language to immediate use while learning and manipulating content that is relevant to their lives. For certain students, learning content in a CLIL class can be more motivating than in regular programming. They like the hands-on and participatory nature of the CLIL classroom, finding learning through CLIL to be fun and challenging. In fact, CLIL appears to suit a broad range of preferred learning styles found within any classroom.

However, giving people the facts about CLIL is only part of the solution. People need to be engaged in an open and frank dialogue, which allows those attending school staff meetings and home and school meetings to express their concerns. Concerns are best addressed directly during those meetings. Responding to each concern with research facts of the kind listed above is an important practice. Inviting parents whose children have been in CLIL for years to these meetings is also very helpful, even if their children go to another school. Hearing from and questioning higher education experts who have studied CLIL student performance can also help create a sense of confidence, as will being able to speak to local government education experts. These experts can refer to relevant research and give evidence-based insight into CLIL's potential. Furthermore, visits to schools with successful CLIL programmes are particularly effective at convincing those who doubt CLIL's viability to reconsider their position.

2. The shortage of CLIL teachers

This is a typical, universal problem when educational innovation outpaces teacher education provision. As a programme expands from primary into middle school or secondary school, an increasing number of teachers are required. Teacher training institutions in many countries do not yet specifically prepare teachers for CLIL. The number of individuals who speak a given CLIL language and have subject-area qualifications is limited. Moreover, even if they have the prerequisite skills, not all teachers are prepared to focus on content and language goals.

A multi-faceted approach is required to address this issue. There are often a few people in a school who speak the CLIL language. The first step is to do an audit of the staff's language skills. Some people may never have considered the CLIL option or may be too critical in assessing their own language skills. They might simply require a language refresher course. It is also helpful to encourage university students who speak the CLIL language to do their teaching practice at your school. This can be facilitated by developing ties with local or regional universities.

Thinking in the long term, some teachers who already have relatively good skills in the CLIL language may consider doing a teacher exchange. This could allow a

native speaker of the CLIL language to come to your school and for your colleague to go abroad and develop his or her language skills. It is also important to involve local authorities and universities so that they understand future staffing needs and so that they can support you. National organizations that represent teachers or head teachers/principals can lobby for increased training or for policies and funding that support CLIL programme implementation.

Networking is important. Teachers who speak the CLIL language are likely to know other bilingual people in the profession. Because CLIL programmes require considerable teamwork, and because they constitute a professional challenge, CLIL schools can become magnets for like-minded teachers who want to try something new.

The staffing issue is not only tied to finding suitable teachers, but to keeping them. Teachers need training and support for programme implementation. These issues are addressed under the following points.

3. Greater workload for teachers; shortage of materials

Teaching in CLIL requires more preparation time and greater co-operation among teachers. It takes a conscious effort to set content, language and learning skills goals for every lesson and to develop activities that involve a maximum number of students at a given time. Since off-the-shelf CLIL materials are in short supply, teachers often spend considerable time developing and/or adapting existing learning resources. It also takes time to arrange contact and communication with speakers of the CLIL language. Moreover, as well as all of the above, student interests need to be assessed and taken into account, and, with younger learners, co-operation with parents increased.

Some people are not prepared to invest the time required for preparation and follow-up. As teachers become adept at co-operating in the delivery of CLIL programming, they actually find that this co-operation can relieve stress, save time and bring considerable personal and professional rewards. After all, there is no need to reinvent the wheel when reciprocal relationships have been established and experience can be readily shared. Moreover, co-operation among teachers will contribute to improved student learning. However, at the outset, the task of working in a coordinated manner can be overwhelming. School leaders have a particular role to play here, by setting aside time for and embedding co-operation into the school ethos.

With CLIL modules or programmes that begin in late primary, secondary or vocational schools, finding appropriate materials is a particular challenge. The language input needs to be simple enough and presented in a reader-friendly manner so as to facilitate comprehension, while at the same time being sufficiently content-rich and cognitively challenging to capture students' interest. This book provides ideas on how to adapt materials intended for native speakers, and includes sample materials.

4. School administrators understanding the implications of CLIL programming

CLIL programmes that admit students based on marks or testing often take the high achievers. If a programme is made up of the school's strongest students it is likely to be viewed as elitist and cause resentment. Since research clearly shows that CLIL is suitable for students of varying levels of ability, it is suggested that entry to the programme be granted on a first come, first served basis. In some countries demand outstrips availability and a lottery system is used. Students and/or parents are also made aware of the long-term nature of committing to CLIL.

Head teachers or other administrators may not speak the CLIL language and may not feel equipped to support teachers. Consequently, it is important for administrators to become versed in CLIL methodology. It would also be advisable for the administrators to learn, at least, the basics of the CLIL language.

From a management perspective, there are several strategic implications associated with implementing CLIL programmes that are worthy of consideration. New programmes are initially likely to receive additional attention and resources, which can lead to jealousy and tension within a school. Large budgets for CLIL may do more harm than good, as they create resentment. The CLIL programme and the standard programme are deserving of equal attention. Official visitors to the school need to visit both CLIL and standard classes. Achievements of students and teachers in both programmes need to be highlighted. All languages used to teach in a school are deserving of high status.

Since CLIL teachers usually have a heavier workload at the start of the programme than regular teachers, head teachers need to find ways to support them. For example, head teachers can timetable preparation periods so that several CLIL teachers are free at the same time. A head teacher can on occasion take students from three or four classes and show them a film and lead a follow-up discussion, thus freeing up three or four CLIL and non-CLIL teachers for a lengthy planning session. Moreover, it is important to ensure that CLIL teachers have space to meet.

Sometimes schools with CLIL programmes face a two-schools-in-one phenomenon, where the CLIL teachers and the regular programme teachers form two separate teams that are not in the habit of co-operating. Cross-curricular projects based on themes such as the environment or Independence Day can foster co-operation. When CLIL teachers and non-CLIL teachers co-operate, not only do they help avoid the two-schools-in-one phenomenon, but they are better placed to enrich their own professional lives and to build a better learning environment for students. Above all, it is important for school managers to model, support and manage co-operation.

View from the field

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A bumpy start

After learning about CLIL, our English department wanted to pilot a CLIL programme. We explained the concept to the entire staff and tried to identify interested teachers.

The reactions from the staff were varied. Some of them were very interested, others referred to it as 'science-fiction' and there were even people who laughed out loud! Taking into account that in our school, part of the programme is taught in Valencian and part in Spanish, some people's negative reactions were surprising.

Nevertheless, we decided to forge ahead. We had four teachers whose English was good enough to teach through English, and who wanted to participate. One taught heating and cooling, one maths, one technology and another Spanish. We paired each teacher with an English teacher who was to help with language. Teachers prepared and delivered a sample lesson. The sample lessons went well. However, in the long term the results and feelings about the experience differed greatly.

The cooling and heating teacher was eager to carry out his CLIL lesson. He taught a group of seventeen to eighteen year olds about removable energies using a computer presentation. Most of the students could follow the lesson, which was taught entirely in English, and were satisfied with the experience. The teacher wanted to continue to teach in English. In fact, his idea was to start the next year with a whole group whose subjects would all be taught in English. There were several problems with this idea. It was difficult to find enough qualified teachers who were willing to take this on. There was also a shortage of teaching materials and there were some certification issues. The teacher in question was not certified to teach senior students. As for the shortage of teaching materials, this teacher felt he could do rough translations from Spanish. My English department colleagues and I felt that rough translations would not be of sufficient quality. We felt that the written materials for CLIL classes had

to be accurate and use high-quality language. The teacher was tempted to drop out of the CLIL working group, but in the end, he decided to stay. He has become one of the most active members of the team and his students are doing well.

Things did not go so well with the Spanish teacher, who was to teach theatre arts in English. Upon further reflection, my English department colleagues and I realized that we could only properly prepare the materials for one course for the upcoming year. We picked technology. The Spanish teacher was very disappointed and dropped out of the CLIL team.

The technology course was taught in English by our technology teacher and a maths teacher. The maths teacher felt comfortable teaching technology despite the fact that it was not his area of expertise. Both teachers are very satisfied with the experience and want to continue. They feel that student results are good. Teaching materials continue to be a concern. The teachers would like to translate materials. However, they do not fully grasp the challenges of producing quality translations.

In general, one could say that the certification issue has been the single greatest problem. Initially, we did not fully understand what the regulations permitted us to do or not to do. Moreover, our region is officially bilingual and we needed to be careful not to interfere with the teaching and learning of the two official languages – Valencian and Spanish.

Finally, I would like to add that it seems that the English teachers have had to take on a lot of responsibility. We have helped to prepare materials and have coordinated the programme implementation with other staff. Someone needs to take the lead!

In conclusion, it has been a lot of hard work, but we still feel that it has been worth doing it. The teachers in the CLIL team feel it has been professionally rewarding. The multidisciplinary team that was created has become a model for others in the school. There is no shortage of CLIL students as they all seem convinced that CLIL will give them an edge in the labour market.

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