

CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning

Summary of Young Learners Special Interest Group e-discussion

(January 2005)

Issues Discussed

1. Training

John Clegg offered a list of suggestions for TEFL teachers who want to teach CLIL.

Teachers should

- a. like subjects – for example, geography, science
- b. withdraw from the idea of controlled input and practice teaching. Replace this with the idea of running a lesson as a good subject lesson but check the language demands of the unit of work when planning then provide simple language support activities at the point of need.
- c. use all the familiar language teacher strategies to provide support e.g. visuals, supportive teacher talk, group work etc.
- d. bring the learners' L1 into the classroom on a considered basis e.g. group work on key subject matter concepts
- e. raise the status of learner strategies
- f. talk to subject teachers about language –rich ideas for teaching the subject and in state schools, coordinate content based FL teaching of the subject with L1 teaching of it.
- g. look at CLIL base materials e.g. on websites
- h. hold a teachers' development group on CLIL

Jean Brewster invited colleagues to make specific requests for a content-based approach to training opportunities they are offered.

Sandie Mourão pointed out that content teachers know their subjects and have the appropriate pedagogy but often the language skills are lacking. Language teachers have the language but often lack the subject knowledge and sometimes the appropriate primary pedagogy too. Teachers are rarely language and content experts. Training must incorporate both areas.

2. The content / the language

John Clegg said that Social Science subjects are a common starting point in some countries such as Germany, Spain and Italy because these subjects are inherently about discussion of issues, phenomena and evidence and Social Science teachers tend to associate language learning predominantly with talking. However, the language of Social Science is by no means 'easy'. The language of Science subjects on the other hand, may lend itself to restricting/ controlling the language input in a CLIL curriculum. This language is about systems, processes, characteristics, functions, and locations so core content can be expressed in non-complex linguistic terms.

To summarise, John added that rather than selecting one subject over another, the key is investigating a subject with the aim of finding manageable content and language.

Jean Brewster spoke of the context as being the guiding factor for the language. Content can provide a host of excellent contexts. She illustrated this with an example from contextualised science materials in Primary school. Pupils were supported in using 'will' and 'going to' in predicting whether objects would 'stick' to magnets.

Bego Iturgaitz responded to the question about whether or not concepts should be dealt with only in the FL when they had already been covered in the L1. She felt that FL CLIL shouldn't be left until after the material was done in the L1. Identify new concepts that lend themselves to being taught in the FL rather than cover old ground. She observed that pupils feel comfortable dealing with units on

previously learned topics but they don't find them as challenging as completely new content. She emphasised the importance of analysing content and language thoroughly and the importance of planning in order to offer new language in advance. Bego also mentioned useful books for starting CLIL:

Chapter 11 from Curtain, H and Dahlberg, C.A. (2003) *Language and Children- Making the Match: New Languages for Young Learners* 3rd ed. Allyn and Bacon.

Met. M. Curriculum Decision-making in Content-based Language Teaching in Cenoz, J and Genesse, F. (ed.) (1998) *Beyond Bilingualism*. Clevedon. Multilingual Matters.

The Guardian Weekly for March and April 2005 also discusses these issues in detail.

3. Materials and Resources

John Clegg provided a comprehensive list of websites and useful materials:

- www.primaryresources.co.uk: Primary
- www.enchantedlearning.com: Primary
- www.naturegrid.org: a UK local education site
- www.innerbody.com:
- www.collaborativelearning.org: Primary and Secondary EAL materials (English as an Additional Language)
- www.cernet.at Vienna bilingual project
- www.ipl.org (for listings to other sites)
- www.e4s.org.uk: educational material
- www.scienceacross.org: UK Association for science educators
- www.factworld.org: Forum for Across Curriculum Teaching
- www.gipuztik.net/inglesa: Basque network
- www.topical-resources.co.uk The Primary School Curriculum 2000

Vicki Clark supplements 'Zoom' course book with sections taken from *New Science* for 6- 12 year olds using English as the medium.

- www.sanyillanauusa.com

Wendy Arnold mentioned the importance of sharing materials by making them available to networks of teachers. She said that one place to meet was:

- www.yahogroups.com factworld

Carol Read commented that materials' writing in a context of systematic integration of content is increasingly becoming far more part of mainstream language teaching practice in many countries.

Some teachers and governments import native speaker books to use in the classrooms while others, such as in Malaysia, write their own syllabus and curriculum guidelines to suit their own needs.

Ana Artigas wrote about materials creation by teachers themselves and said that teachers were not the only ones responsible for constructing and developing materials.

Jean Brewster warned teachers about the dangers of badly prepared materials.

Susan Holden pointed out the value of materials preparation in focusing teachers very closely on the demands of their lessons.

John Clegg summarised that in general, subject materials not written with L2 users in mind, have facilitative features which decrease as the pupils' age range goes up. FL educators would like these features for CLIL purposes.

4. Assessment

Keith Kelly remarked that the area of assessment is a contentious one in CLIL given the scope of linguistic and content knowledge. CLIL assessment is considered a problem even in the Basque

context where there are test materials for self-assessment, peer assessment and teacher observation. The reason is that they are time-consuming and involve a heavy load on the teacher.

Bego Iturgaitz, a teacher involved in the Basque project, agreed that this is true and added that a decision to be made is how to balance subject and language learning.

A colleague in Turin explained two strands of assessment for CLIL, one for content and one for language. The former began with an investigation of the objectives of the curriculum guidelines for the subjects they reflect. This was followed by mapping these objectives onto language descriptors such as those in the Common European Framework.

An example from the Basque curriculum guidelines on European History and Geography

Objectives:

1. To become aware of the geographical background of Europe
2. To learn some geographical facts concerning physical and political geography and to be able to interpret graphs, maps etc..
3. To be able to get information about the geographical facts from English sources, both written and audiovisual and /or on-line
4. To be able to represent geographical data by means of graphs, maps, fact files etc.using the required language.
5. To be able to carry out instructions in English, leading to the completion of the required tasks.
6. To present orally the outcomes of the final products assigned.
7. To be able to evaluate and self-evaluate the learning process and outcomes

We think of language achievement in terms of achievement of content task.

5. Research into CLIL

Keith Kelly reported that Phil Ball, who works for the Ikastolas network of schools in the Basque country (www.ikastola.net), spoke of research carried out which showed that children working in English, Basque and Spanish outscored children from a traditional FL background i.e. not learning CLIL.

Contributors to the discussion gave the following as suggested reading:

Burton, M.& Heidema, C. (2000). *Teaching Reading in Mathematics*. Aurora, Colorado

Clegg, J. (1996) *Mainstreaming ESL*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Conley, M. (1995) *Content Reading Instruction*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Echevarria, J. Vogt, M.& Short, D. (2004) *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners*. New York: Pearson

Grenfell, M. Kelly, M. & Jones, D. (2003). *The Training of Teachers of a Foreign Language: Developments in Europe*.

Lang,P. *The European Language Teacher: Recent Trends and Future Developments in Teacher Education*: Bern.

Manzo, A. Manzo, U. and Estes, T. (2001) *Content Area Literacy*: New York: John Wiley

The European Profile for Language teacher Education – A Frame of Reference

(full report on www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/key/studies)

Snow, M. & Brinton, D. (1997) *The Content-Based Classroom*. White Plains, N.Y: Longman
Supporting Second Language Children's Content Learning and Language Development in K-5 (in Celce-Murcia, 2001)

Unsworth, L. (2000) 'Investigating subject-specific literacies in schoollearning'. In *Researching Language in Schools and Communities*. London: Cassell.

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Attend our YL SIG PCE in Harrogate on Saturday, 8th April.
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