

CLIL

Content and Language Integrated Learning In-service teacher training course

Planning of course aims, content and delivery.

The course is planned to be mostly a **practical experience** for the teachers. It is designed to give them more confidence to start teaching through CLIL in the next semester. As such, the sessions mainly consist of demonstrations of classroom approaches we use in foreign language teaching applied to their specialist subjects. We will then analyse the stage progression and stage aim of each part of the lesson and establish a useful lesson shape for practical use. Repeated analysis of different teaching sequences by the teachers will lead them to a practical understanding of and feeling for how to make teaching effective in a foreign language. The teaching methods shown in the CLIL course are mostly aimed at **creating and maintaining clarity in class**. From this, we can assure comprehension and build participation from the students.

In considering the syllabus for the course, we have made certain assumptions about what the teachers would need and what they would be worried about.

Importance of the receptive skills

First, we realize that in a CLIL lesson, especially in the younger secondary school classes, the skills of reading and listening will be very important as these will largely carry the lesson content. Therefore, the course gives a lot of emphasis to these and is designed to give the teachers an abstract understanding of how these receptive skills lessons need to be planned and executed.

Particular sessions on **reading and listening** skills are included and most other sessions contain material in this form. There will be a good deal of variety in the kind of activities for reading and listening through the course to give a repertoire of techniques. However, in all sessions will emphasise the central necessity for gist/skim/scan reading or listening as a preparation for intensive, detailed comprehension. All sessions will also underline the idea of leading into a topic with some student involvement before seeing the text. The problem of dealing with possibly **problematic vocabulary** would also be covered thoroughly as this would be an obvious concern for the teachers.

Subject content vs. language practice

In most language courses these days the speaking skill has primacy. We believe that students mostly learn language by exposure and practice; using the language. However, in a CLIL course, subject content will be at least equal and probably more important than any language aim. Consequently, less emphasis was given to speaking activities as such. In this way, a CLIL training course would differ from a mainstream language teacher course. Certainly, **active participation in the learning process** aids memory and so, in all lessons, there would be frequent stages when the students spoke together but these were aimed at processing content rather than practising language (for example, discuss three things that you already know about the topic of a listening text we are about to hear). In most secondary classes, we would expect these stages to be done in the first language. A principal of CLIL is that there is no need for the whole of one session to be done in English. We anticipate that this would come as a relief to the participants on the course!

At top levels though, say 17 – 19 year olds, we could reasonably expect that students would have the fluency level to undertake more sustained interactions in English. Consequently, the course would include a session on **speaking activities** in which the teachers would experience 4 different speaking activity types of practical classroom use. We would also discuss what was necessary for a speaking activity to succeed.

Making the students do the work

We also assume that one of the prime worries for the teachers will be the idea that they would have to stand up and address their class at length in English. In fact, this is not true. One of the primary tenets of language teaching is to limit the amount of teacher talk and maximise the time devoted to practice by the students. To underline this idea to the teachers, the tutor will plan to execute all the sessions on the course in this way. We hope they would see that, with correct planning and a slight axiom shift, they would be able to let the materials and the students do most of the work.

As well as experiencing an extensive range of ‘demonstrate and analyse’ sessions, we have decided the teachers will need to be able to do two things themselves to achieve a more student-centred approach. First, they will need to be able to **grade language**. They would need to create teacher language and texts which consist mostly of comprehensible input for the students. This will involve an understanding of what constitutes linguistic difficulty and an ability to shorten, edit and change texts for classroom use so that they are graded for the level of the students. Their English teaching colleagues will hopefully be useful in advising them on this at first. Second, teachers will be well advised to plan, even to write down their English teacher talk in class and then think about how to make it clearer. This will give teachers more confidence, make their language less vague and help considerably in assuring comprehension. There is no specific session devoted to this language awareness

objective but we hope to use it as a thread through the course. Planned teacher talk will be a feature of their lesson planning at the end of the course.

Expectations in practice

We envision two levels of CLIL lessons. In **the first level**, students would process the material and information of a lesson in English: text, instructions, activities, questions. There would be no overt practice of language areas in the lesson apart from some vocabulary necessary for the activities to succeed. **The second level** would include this and also some practice of a specific language point or some fluency practice in English. We have decided that, in this course, in the time, it would be better to concentrate on level 1. However, there will also be a session on sensitising the teachers to what language they could extract from a text for active practice. Texts may have 3 or 4 ways to talk about increase and decrease, similarity and difference, sequence of events or contain a lot of useful topic vocabulary to focus on. The teachers would be exposed to ways of finding and practising useful language. Nevertheless, there would be no necessity or expectation that they operate level 2 CLIL.

Trying it out

In our opinion, no teacher-training course has done its job unless it allows the participants to do at least some **teaching practice**. To make this experience less daunting, we plan to have the teachers deliver their 25 minute lessons in subject teams. For example, the two maths teachers would deliver their lesson together. There will be a session devoted to planning this with the tutor available for consultation. The lessons will be delivered on the last day in the supportive environment of peer teaching. Two of the group are allocated to observe and give feedback on the lesson along with the tutor. It is important to point out that teachers will certainly make errors in English and they will need to accept this, from themselves and others, and realise that it would be extremely unlikely to impair communication. And communication is what language is all about.

Winning hearts and minds

The course would not be designed as an evangelical session on teaching with CLIL. We could certainly anticipate some scepticism among the teachers about the idea. We have planned to try to counteract this by having the teachers experience a range of enjoyable activities which are both **effective** and, in particular, **easy to prepare**. In this way, it is hoped to show them that they could adopt CLIL a lot more easily than they thought. There are some justifications and supporting statistics for CLIL learning which we have available to use on request.

Overall then, the course is aimed at giving the teachers a **practical introduction** to the classroom techniques involved in CLIL teaching. Emphasis will be on the text-based

teaching methods which constitute the bulk of CLIL teaching foreseeable in secondary school classes. Secondly, the teachers will be equipped with a range of easy-to-use activity types to help students process content in English. In this way, we would hope to demystify the CLIL approach, increase the teachers' **confidence** in using it and underline the joy of using a foreign language to communicate.

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