Pilot for introduction of Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in post-Primary schools to support the learning of MFL

Final Report

Prepared by Craig Neville (Post-Primary Languages Ireland)

Focus of report

This report is a final evaluation of the CLIL pilot (ACTION 1.E3 Languages Connect). The focus of the report is centred on the initial outcomes that were set at the start of the pilot. Although no specific success criteria were outlined, the areas of success and areas of improvement have been outlined as well as potential next steps from which to build. This report also includes student voice.

Structure of Report

The contents of the report are structured as follows:

1. Demographic Information
2. Final Evaluation of Outcomes
    a. What went well
    b. Even better if
    c. Moving Forward
3. Student Voice Analysis
4. Teacher Voice Summary (cited from Interim Report)
5. Moving Forward
    a. CLIL Awareness Raising Video
    b. CLIL Section of PPLI Website
    c. CLIL Instructional Design Introductory Module
    d. Resources for Italian and German
    e. Teacher-created CLIL resources
    f. CLIL Guidelines for schools
    g. CLIL 'Pedagogical Manual' Resources.
6. Conclusion

Throughout the report, EBIs or 'Even Better If' comments will appear after section where there are key changes that need to be implemented as a result of feedback from teachers and students.

Target Outline	Completion Date

Final Demographic Data of Participants

Languages: French and Spanish. No German teachers applied to the initial call; however, one of the teachers involved in the pilot also teaches German. We also had interest from an Italian teacher; however, when she received her new timetable in September 2019, she was not given any TY classes in which to trial the initiative.

Schools: There are 11 schools involved in the pilot in Cork, Kildare, Offaly, Tipperary, Dublin and Donegal.

School Backgrounds: 1xFee-paying + 7 mixture of non-fee-paying state schools. One Gaelcholáiste was involved in the initial stages and a DEIS school; however, due to circumstances involving timetable they had to withdraw from the pilot. Nonetheless, one of the schools that continues to be engaged in

the project is an ETSS with a very diverse, challenging cohort of students. A further teacher has gone on maternity leave.

No. of Teachers: The project began with 13 teachers and, at this mid-point, this has dropped to 10 for the reasons outlined above. We now have 8 teachers in Maynooth and 2 in Cork.

CPD Delivered: the Maynooth cohort received 2 days of training and Cork cohort received one longer day of training (this was to test which was more successful and the 2-day model is better because it gives space for discussion and to put theory into practice) in June 2019. Although we do not envisage face-to-face training as being a sustainable option for the delivery of CLIL, we do maintain that teachers wishing would pursue such a contrasting teaching approach should be provided with a forum in which to build dialogically an understanding of CLIL. Some teachers also indirectly received further support at the #ILoveMFL conference where the first keynote was dedicated to CLIL.

Virtual Community of Practice: The virtual community of practice was established after the first training session and had some initial success. We are using Slack, a professional communication tool, to establish and maintain the CoP. Dialogue between members was initially frequent and there was some sharing of resources; however, as the term progressed, the sharing and dialogue became less. Perhaps a reason for this was due to a lack of engagement from myself as the Education Officer due to other commitments. However, having observed some successful groups on Facebook that focus on CLIL, one strategy to encourage greater engagement could be through more targeted questioning on different themes related to CLIL pedagogy. This might encourage greater engagement from teachers.

CPD Day 2 in Maynooth and Cork (October 2019): Both days were successful according to feedback and responded to emerging needs that arose as a result of the training in June. During the training, teachers were taught a short CLIL lesson to illustrate the application of theory to practice, were given the opportunity to collaboratively plan a CLIL lesson in more unfamiliar subject areas (Maths and Geography) as well as to share their practice as a result of their experiences so far.

Observation: CLIL observation will be offered to teachers during the week of the 2nd-6th December 2019. It will not be obligatory for teachers but presented as a CPD opportunity. Details of this opportunity are outlined in section 5.

Review, research and focus groups: Céline Healy (CH) and I decided to adopt an Action Research approach to investigate several elements of the CLIL pilot. We adopted a collaborative approach with teachers; we discussed with them which aspects of the CLIL pilot they think should be investigated from the perspective of students. Areas that were discussed were motivation and engagement, planning, and lesson content. CH is currently putting together a proposal for focus group research to be undertaken during the second part of the pilot, the results of which will be presented at the final CPD day to inform future planning for CLIL.

Subjects and Resources: Resources produced by PowerLanguage and Richard Talleron are all being used by staff apart from in one school where the teacher had already produced a learning module based on a different topic. We felt that it would be useful if she taught her existing module (planned through an Erasmus+ opportunity) and then taught the new modules to enable her to make a comparison between the two.

Progress: Progress towards outcomes

Outcome	Progress	Next steps
To undertake research to assess the current CLIL landscape in Ireland with those teachers already practising the approach in their schools within the field of MFL to help inform next steps.	**PARTIAL**	**WWW** Focus groups were conducted with teachers during the first training session in July 2019 regarding the content, shape and feel of any resources that were externally developed. Teachers were keen for these resources to put the theoretical concepts that they were learning into practice (e.g. planning documentation should use the 4Cs) Teachers were involved in a research project led by Dr Celine Healy (MU) focusing on teachers' perceptions of CLIL at three points throughout the pilot. The rationale behind this research was to understand how MFL teachers develop as CLIL teachers in terms of their understanding of the approach. It also sought to understand what their concerns and anxieties were in terms of delivering such an approach in their school context. This research when completed will be invaluable for future planning in terms of how we might decide to deliver training on a wider scale. **EBI** The data from the teachers requires analysis and a summary of the results. This will be presented as a diachronic study to understand the development of teachers of CLIL in the Irish context over time to inform future planning of training (Feb 2020)
To provide training to these teachers (and PPLI associates) in the rudiments of CLIL to be delivered in conjunction with Maynooth supported by resources from ECML and Richard Tallaron.	**VERY GOOD**	**WWW** The training has been completed and the perceptions of training from the teachers were very positive in terms of the theoretical aspects of CLIL, planning for CLIL and assessment of CLIL. A CLIL video has also been produced with Gemma Kelly at Manor House School in Raheny, Dublin to help raise awareness of the importance of CLIL and its potential impact on students and MFL learning and teaching. **EBI** Teachers felt that there should be more exposure to good quality CLIL lessons where teachers are able to critique and reflect on the development of individual lessons.

		Introducing more training on how to implement the CLIL Matrix (balance between increasing language difficulty and cognitive difficulty) in lessons through the use of example activities to help activate, guide understanding, focus on language, focus on speaking and focusing on writing.
To create and support a CoP that will work in person/virtually to support teachers who are willing to participate to share experiences and best practice.	**PARTIAL**	**WWW** The virtual CoP initially worked very well for sharing the initial resources and discussing any initial problems that teachers were having. It also connected the two groups together from Cork and Maynooth. **EBI** The interaction through the CoP was not sustainable. More intervention is required in a top-down fashion to encourage discussion and dialogue. Teachers mentioned that by using Slack they were adding to their burden by having another platform that they had to use. They suggested that using a private Facebook group might have worked better because they use social media platforms on a regular basis. My own observations of established CLIL communities on Facebook show that they do require considerable top-down intervention. Group leaders often pose open questions to participants on a regular basis to get them to respond and gather ideas. This then, in turn, encourages other teachers to do the same thus encouraging the dialogue.
To target several schools where the CLIL pilot will be introduced endeavouring to target different school contexts.	**GOOD**	**WWW** Several different school contexts were invited to take part in the pilot including voluntary, ETB colleges (inc. DEIS), Educate Together, fee-paying and community comprehensive. **EBI** The DEIS, ET and Community Comprehensive schools were those who struggled to introduce the pilot either citing issues with student ability or timetabling. In the other contexts (potentially perceived as being more academic), there were fewer issues. New ways need to be found to encourage schools that might have a wider intake of students to try CLIL as a possible option for TY. Also, to perhaps develop a set of CLIL guidelines with teachers for the implementation of CLIL in a school.
To teach an 8-week CLIL module during TY in these schools with those teachers who participated in the training whilst also implementing a series of observations in those classes.	**PARTIAL**	**WWW** Both modules on Wellbeing and Fair Trade were taught in all schools fully or partially during the pilot. Where they were only taught partially this was due to timetabling of another event or due to the lack of engagement on the part of students. As you will see from the student feedback, students were indifferent-positive with regards to the topics themselves. This is potentially because they were being taught for the first time by teachers who were not used to following the CLIL approach. **EBI** Classes were not observed. This was due to two reasons. Firstly, observations were on a voluntary basis and no teachers opted for one due to the added pressure of having someone in the room to observe a lesson that was being taught for the first time. Secondly, there was very little capacity from PPLI or Maynooth to be able to do this. Perhaps next time, implementing a series of micro observation studies e.g. recording the observations and then discussing them with colleagues would have been more beneficial.

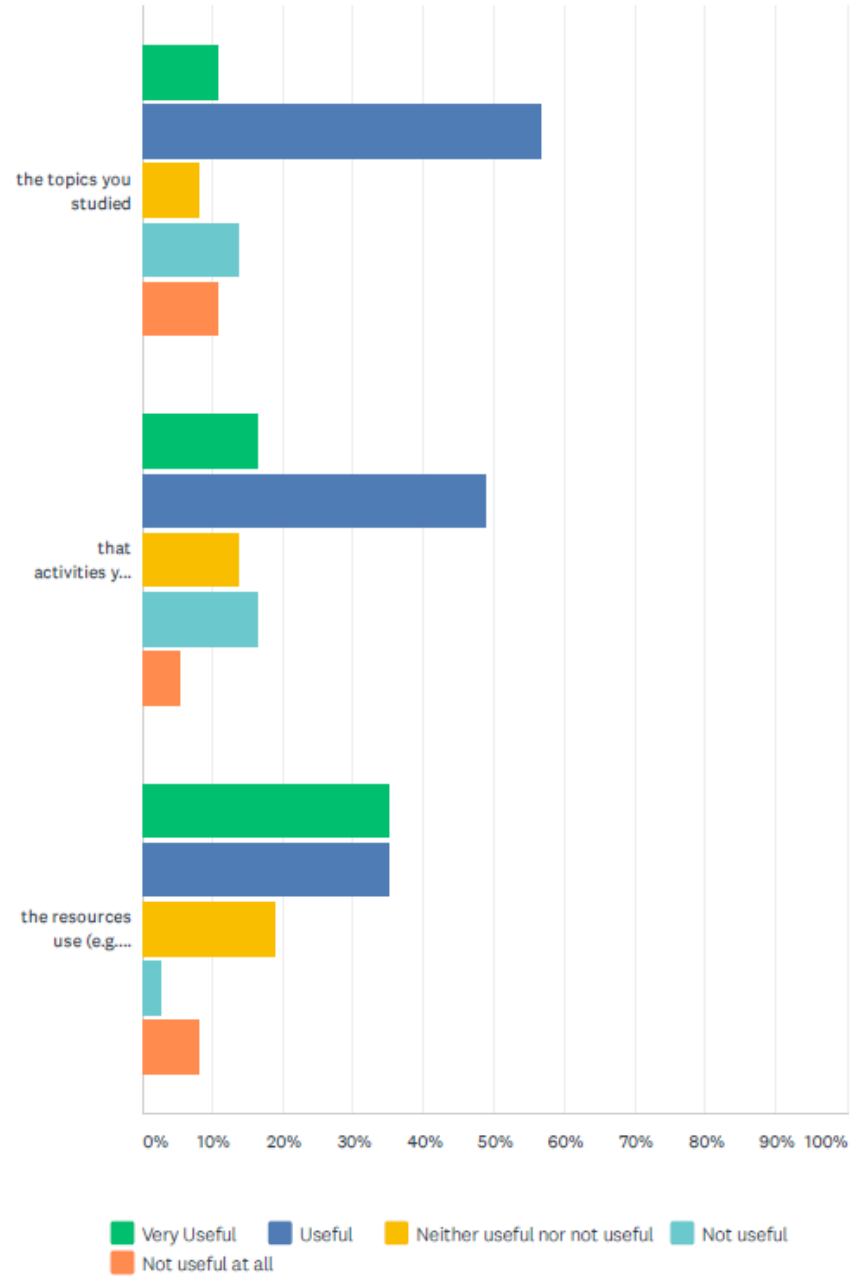|		
To survey students and teachers at the beginning and end of the course to establish what their strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities are going into the project and at the end to see what they have learnt/developed in terms of a skills base. *To evaluate the impact of the pilot and to adjust its implementation accordingly.*	**GOOD**	**WWW** Teachers formed a focus group in which several questions were asked of them (see interim report), which have given several new possibilities moving forward. Research was also undertaken by CH at Maynooth University and the data from this activity will be assessed in due course. Students were surveyed as to their perceptions of CLIL and these are included below. The most important finding was that students were more likely to take a language having experienced CLIL.

To engage more directly with the virtual CoP adopting the strategies used by online CLIL groups using targeted questioning	Now – ongoing (weekly)
To recruit more teachers from German and Italian from different contexts using from Irish-Medium education and those schools with DEIS status.	Ongoing
To include an example CLIL lesson in any initial training so that teachers can observe the 4Cs in action.	Jan 2020-Ongoing
To include collaborative planning of single lessons into the initial training as well as entire units of learning that take the CLIL matrix into account	Dec 2019 – Jan 2020
To complete teacher research and produce a list of recommendations for the training.	Jan 2020- Sept 2020
To undertake a SWOT analysis in the final CPD session looking retrospectively at the implementation of CLIL	Dec 2019

3. Student Voice Summary

The data for this survey was gathered using Survey Monkey in December 2019. The survey consisted of 8 short questions that were completed by students in their own time. All students participated in the lessons involved in the pilot. There were 59 responses out of a possible 200 students. This is a 29% response, which for an online survey is positive (usual response rates are between 10-12%). 3 students were offered a prize for completing the survey, drawn at random on the 6th January 2020.
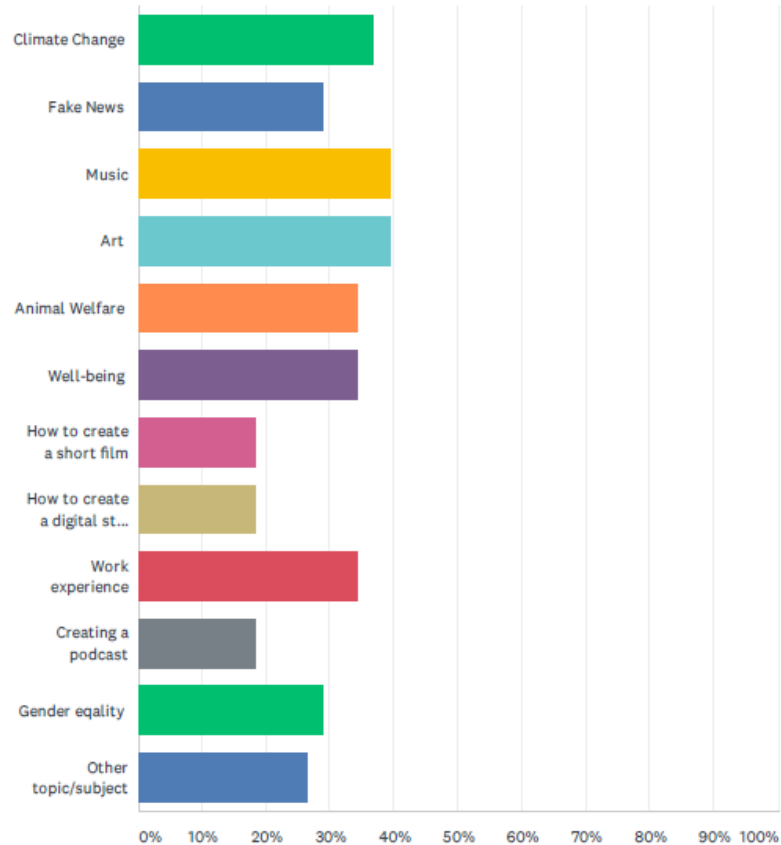
	Positives	**Negatives**
Q1 Name one or more differences between your usual language lessons and CLIL lessons	• Using technology more for research • You learn the basics about both languages [L1 and L2] • More of a cultural focus • More regular interaction between students • Contrast your knowledge about a subject in the L1 with the knowledge in L2 • Grammar doesn't matter/You can make mistakes	• CLIL is hard to understand • Harder to learn because of teacher using two languages (Translanguaging)

	- More relaxed/less stressful - You learn more advanced vocabulary than just the basics - Less-Written work
*Q2 Would you say that learning a subject like biology through a foreign language would make learning a language **more interesting or less interesting***	**X- Av Response** <--> **More interesting** **Less interesting**
*Q3 Would you say that learning a subject like biology through a foreign language would make learning a language **more or less difficult***	**X- Av Response** <--> **More difficult** **Less difficult**
*Q4 Would you say that learning a subject like biology through a foreign language would make learning a language **more fun or less fun***	**X- Av Response** <--> **More fun** **Less fun**
Q5 How would you rate… *the topics studied?* *The activities in class?* *The resources?*	

the topics you studied

that activities y...

the resources use (e.g....

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Very Useful ■ Useful ■ Neither useful nor not useful ■ Not useful
■ Not useful at all

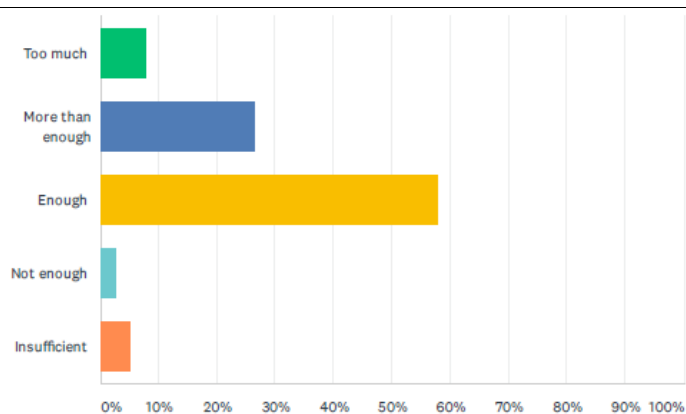|	
Q6 Which other subjects/topics would you like to learn through a foreign language? Tick as many that apply or add your own.	Answered: 38 Skipped: 8 Other options provided by students included: • LGBT rights • Gaming • Cooking • First Aid
Q7 Do you think that the amount of lessons that you have in your TY programme for these lessons has been:	

Q8 Having experienced CLIL lessons, has this experience motivated you to consider studying a language for Leaving Cert?	

Answered: 38   Skipped: 8

(Chart showing responses: Yes ~35%, a little ~42%, not really ~13%, not at all ~10%)
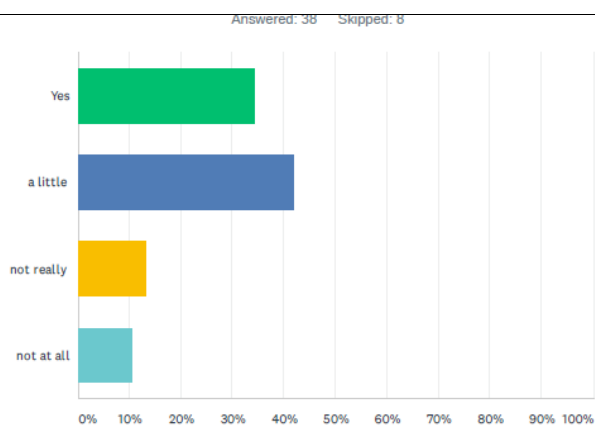
Main Observations

- Using technology for the teaching of CLIL plays a positive role
- The L1 and L2 support each other in the CLIL classroom and is of benefit to students. Teachers were taught about the successes of 'translanguaging' in Wales when Welsh was introduced into the curriculum and this approach appears to have been applied in CLIL lessons
- The focus on culture/content appears to have made some lessons more interesting
- Student understand that communication is more important than accuracy making lessons less stressful and more relaxed (although this may also be symptomatic of the typical TY experience). This is also supported by the observations that there is less written work.
- Students think that CLIL makes a subject slightly less interesting to learn, which could be due to the perceived difficulty. **We need to ensure that the content grabs the imagination and interest of students.**
- CLIL makes learning a subject more difficult but this is not necessarily a negative considering the positive comments that we received in the first question.
- Students found that learning a subject through CLIL was neither fun nor not fun. **Once again, we need to ensure that activities are designed so that students find the learning engaging.**
- Students were very positive about the activities and the topics under study and the resources that were used to teach them from PowerLanguage.
- Several future topics were of interest to students with the top ones being Music, Art, Climate Change, Work Experience and Fake News.
- Students felt that the number of lessons per work (typically a double period) was enough.
- **Most importantly, over 80% of students felt that studying a language through CLIL had motivated them a lot or a little to continue learning a language to Leaving Cert. This is a very positive outcome and should be cited when promoting the CLIL approach to teachers.**

To include students in the evaluation of potential materials as well as involve them in the co-planning process	Jan 2020
To facilitate the development of further topics in work experience, fake news, music and art in all curricular languages.	Feb 2020-Sept 2020
To encourage the use of ICT within the resources as suggestions of how the materials might be exploited.	Feb 2020-Sept 2020
When promoting the CLIL approach to teachers, cite the positive impact it could have on Leaving Cert uptake.	Aug 2020

4. Teacher Voice Summary (cited from Interim Report)

	To create a set of guidelines/recommendations for schools and teachers who wish to adopt a CLIL approach to ensure that their endeavours are successful.	Jan 2019
	To report feedback re materials to Richard Tallaron and PowerLanguage to inform their practice and future creation of materials	Now
	To include video a full exemplar CLIL lesson in the training so that teachers can see the application of theory to practice.	January-Sept 2020
	To explore the possibilities of co-planning with colleagues from across the education sector to create innovative CLIL modules	Feb-Sept 2020
	To provide more opportunities for collaborative planning during training to put CLIL theory into practice.	Feb-Sept 2020
	To establish accreditation for the CLIL module meaning that teachers can carry a qualification with them but can also become CLIL facilitators to help develop the practice.	Dec 2020
	To explore the possibility of developing three types of CLIL module: - Hard CLIL - Historical or Geographical study related to target culture - CLIL Project where students learn a skill	

7. Moving Forward

a. ***CLIL Awareness Raising Video*** – this video has been recorded but requires editing. This will be undertaken in January 2020. This will then be placed on the CLIL section of ppli.ie as an opener to draw teachers in to then explore the resources available.

b. ***CLIL Section of PPLI Website*** – this section of the website needs to be developed more now that the pilot is completed. The resources from PowerLanguage need to be uploaded and be password protected so that teachers can request access. Also, more resources need to be developed in the same format as the pedagogical manual for MFL to help teachers deliver CLIL lessons. Additionally, space needs to be made for future training materials and also to act as a repository of the pilot project.

c. ***CLIL Instructional Design Introductory Module*** – this needs to be developed during 2020 and ideally before Q3 so that teachers can begin the training and complete before Christmas 2020 and then, in Jan 2021 begin teaching modules.

d. ***Resources for Italian and German*** – this have been developed by Richard Tallaron and will be uploaded to the website. An awareness raising campaign needs to be launched to present the whole suite of materials to teachers.

e. ***Teacher-created CLIL resources*** – some of the teachers involved in the pilot have expressed an interest in being involved in the creation of materials in collaboration with others. This is something that I am going to explore around Work Experience. The reason for this is that PPLI have already developed resources for Work Experience, which could be incorporated into the planning.

f. ***CLIL Guidelines for schools*** – some of the teachers suggested that a set of CLIL guidelines be developed for schools. These can then be displayed on the website after the video to support teachers in the implementation of CLIL in their contexts.

g. ***CLIL 'Pedagogical Manual' Resources*** – as mentioned above, these resources would be like some of those in the pedagogical manual for general MFL that would help teachers to deliver CLIL lessons daily.

8. Conclusion

The evidence from teachers and from students suggests that the pilot has had a positive impact on the perception of MFL learning and teaching. The pilot has also allowed us to learn what approaches work in the Irish context and which require further development. The main development going forward in Q1 and Q2 will be the development of resources and the website as a point of information for all teachers wishing to introduce CLIL in their school context. It should be a 'onestop' starter kit where they can get all of the information that they need to deliver CLIL classes successfully in their school.

Craig Neville

January 2020