

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

## Mid-Pilot Report

Prepared by Craig Neville (Post-Primary Languages Ireland)

---

### Focus of report

This report provides an update on progress made to date. As the following timeline illustrates, the pilot has reached its mid-point and, therefore, affording us the opportunity to take stock of the progress made so far towards the outcomes established in the initial proposal as well as to consider the opinions of teachers and students involved in the pilot.

### Structure of Report

The contents of the report are structured as follows:

1. Progress
  - a. Summary of Progress to date
  - b. Progress towards outcomes
2. Teacher Voice Summary
3. Research: Student Voice (Maynooth University)
4. Moving Forward
  - a. Observation Schedule
  - b. CLIL Video
  - c. CLIL Training Module
  - d. CLIL Teachers Meeting 3 in Maynooth
  - e. Post-Pilot Projects: January 2020 onwards
5. 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

### Progress: Summary of Progress to date

**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:** 1x Fee-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 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> 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.	<b>PARTIAL</b>	The current state of CLIL in post-Primary has been assessed through conversations we're having with teachers in the pilot but a more comprehensive survey (perhaps through the PPLI website) is required from January 2020 to understand what expertise exists across the country already.
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 Talleron.	<b>VERY GOOD</b>	Training resources need to be designed so that CPD can be self-directed by teachers but also accredited in some way.
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.	<b>GOOD</b>	More interventions are required in the form of questioning (as per the strategies used by Facebook groups) to engage teachers more fully.
To target a number of schools where the CLIL pilot will be introduced endeavouring to target different school contexts.	<b>PARTIAL</b>	In January 2020, target schools that teach German and Italian as well as Irish-medium and DEIS schools.
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.	<b>GOOD</b>	All schools involved are teaching modules but they are not all of 8 weeks due to timetabling. However, this is advantageous for research purposes as it will guide our recommendations to schools for the success of CLIL.
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.	<b>PARTIAL</b>	Little progress was made here because it was decided that surveys were not the best way to evaluate the project and an Action Research approach would be more appropriate. A SWOT analysis will be undertaken in the final CPD session for teacher training, implementation of CLIL and for the engagement and perception of students.



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.	January 2020
To include an example CLIL lesson in any initial training so that teachers can observe the 4Cs in action.	Dec 2019-Jan 2020
To include collaborative planning of single lessons into the initial training as well as entire units of learning.	Dec 2019 – Jan 2020
To distribute Action Research Project to CLIL teachers and to monitor the research and data collection between now and CPD 3	Now-16 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2019
To undertake a SWOT analysis in the final CPD session looking retrospectively at the implementation of CLIL	Dec 2019

## Teacher Voice Summary

Questions	Learnings
<p><i>How are your CLIL classes timetabled? When? How many?</i></p> <p><i>What opportunities/challenges does this present?</i></p> <p><i>What solutions do you have?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Context 1:</b> 2x1-hour classes per week, last lesson on both occasions, don't work due to lack of engagement, ability groups mixed, many other activities take place during these times. Only had 4 full classes in term 1. However, if MFL teacher was timetabled with a subject teacher for co-teaching purposes to deliver subject content through the TL this would be supported by principal BUT "Every subject in our school has team teaching incorporated in the table except Languages because of the supply of teachers". (MIXED, ETSS)</li> <li>• <b>Context 2:</b> 1xTY group, 3x40 minutes each, Mon-Wed, works well for consistency because I'm seeing them every day, all in the morning and one after lunch. (ALL GIRLS)</li> <li>• <b>Context 3:</b> 1xTY group, 31 in group which is too big, really difficult to organise group work which is key to CLIL, taken for many activities, solution would be to have a specific CLIL class/period and a smaller group even if it was just one period week but it is protected, potential to occupy one of the TY subject lessons (e.g. Maths) with a foreign language classes to teach maths content and this would be supported by some principals, teacher would not teach MFL TY but would be attached to another subject TY class. (ALL BOYS)</li> <li>• <b>Context 4:</b> CLIL Module introduced in school, every TY student will experience CLIL, 2 TY groups, 24 in both, 2 periods (last period Fri and 1<sup>st</sup> period Mon), continuity is really good and a double period with the other group. Activities in school are on a Tuesday/Wednesday so there has been no time lost (MIXED)</li> <li>• <b>Context 5:</b> Fairtrade topic was viewed very positively because it is new and different. I have 4 x classes or 40 mins but will only dedicate 2 of these classes to CLIL because they don't feel that they are making progress in the language or content.</li> <li>• <b>Context 6:</b> 1 class per week on a Wed P3. This class is on the half day during the week so often it is affected by many other things. Time is a really difficult challenge to overcome because of classes being taken for other things beyond the control of teachers. We need more than 1 or 2 classes per week.</li> </ul>

<p>What are the challenges you are experiencing currently?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding supplementary material: time and ability to find something that is appropriate.</li> <li>Engagement varies across the schools. Most students are motivated more by the language than the content and some being motivated more by the fact that it is different. It is important that the content provides students to an actual purpose.</li> <li>Planning and creating resources to go with input, you would require more lessons to plan it properly. Therefore, in the training, there needs to be a much greater focus on getting teachers to manipulate input in different ways.</li> <li><b>“In my school I am teaching French and Spanish. One thing I am noticing is that in the CLIL classes I am seeing students using a greater variety of skills and producing more in written and spoken production whereas in my TY language classes what they produce is often considerably less.”</b></li> </ul>
<p>What changes would you make to the training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Living a CLIL lesson is the best way to then help teachers to reflect on the theory because when teaching it in this way, it is a little abstract. This needs to be included in the training.</li> </ul>
<p>What do you think of the materials that you are using from PowerLanguage?</p>	<p><b>Positives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plenty of vocabulary provided in language of learning</li> <li>The materials allow for supplementing and are adaptable to the differing contexts in which we teach but it would be good if there were further recommendations of ways in which activities could be adapted.</li> <li>Provides a great ‘basis’ on which to build beyond and any teaching that occurs in CLIL should provide some sort of base pack.</li> </ul> <p><b>Negatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Too many matching activities, need to more varied ways of exposing students to vocabulary</li> <li>Doesn’t support students enough in the language <i>for</i> learning. More structures and scaffolding required to support spoken production and interaction</li> <li>The target language use in the videos is too slow. Students are 16-17 and have had 4-5 years of language teaching and the speed of audio content that they are used to is much faster.</li> <li>There needs to be more content that can be drawn on in the packs that is perhaps differentiated in some way so that you can use a variety of different resources for the students that you have.</li> <li>Feel that the resources are often missing a step, which teachers are currently filling. So, for example, when looking at the matrix (see below), the activities deal well with Task A and Task D but don’t always address B and C. This group are competent teachers but a teacher who isn’t as competent might find planning this step difficult unless there are examples included.</li> </ul>
<p>How do we feel about the topics that are being taught?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With regards to Well-being the students are really enjoying this but finding the Fair Trade more difficult because it is not something that they cannot relate to it.</li> <li>Climate and environment</li> <li>Instagram, social media etc. or perhaps Digital Citizenship</li> <li>Music and art</li> <li>Animal Welfare</li> <li>Film: producing your own film</li> <li>Work experience module using CLIL incorporating the resources that we have produced – this would really support the community and culture side</li> <li>Skill-based topic so that they learn a new skills through the teaching e.g. how to create a digital story, how to use a computer programme, robotics.</li> </ul>

<p><i>What is your opinion of the starter lesson that was produced?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students found the starter lesson difficult that were EAL so perhaps needs more differentiation.</li> <li>• Do they need this introduction? Can they learn this from going straight into CLIL?</li> <li>• Some teachers would use it again. Objectives were very clear about what they were going to do and it made students want to ask questions about what they were going to be asked to do in this CLIL module. It allowed me to get their concerns to help inform my planning going forward.</li> <li>• The starter really helped students to buy into CLIL and teachers said that they would use some of these resources in other classes.</li> </ul>
<p><i>What are your thoughts on being given the opportunity to co-plan with another subject teacher in the same format as Erasmus+?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starting off with something small-scale, not even a term, perhaps a Unit of Learning for a month or a couple of weeks.</li> <li>• Logistically this could be achieved in schools and there certainly would be willingness with colleagues because team teaching is becoming more and more popular.</li> <li>• “No idea how long something like this would take to teach.”</li> <li>• One of the schools represented did do something similar before where they wrote poems in the target language. She worked with an English teacher to support the pedagogy of how you would introduce this in the classroom, the teacher came and taught the lesson with the Spanish teacher, and the students produced the poems. It was extremely successful. This whole project took about a month to achieve.</li> </ul>
<p><i>After the pilot, how do you envisage this project moving forward?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-planning and experimenting with Hard-CLIL working with a colleague or the MFL teacher working with another MFL teacher on their other subject area. This was viewed very positively but would have to be facilitated from above in some way.</li> <li>• The idea of collaborating more with native speakers from Universities and Language Assistance would be a good way to find opportunities for co-planning and, in particular, cultural topics. This would be really useful for teaching historical or geographical topics related to the target culture e.g. Spanish Civil War</li> <li>• The training module was seen very positively but it was important that it had some kind of recognition attached to it and that it also facilitated to opportunity to work with colleagues in a community of practice to put the theoretical into practice (Blended approach).</li> <li>• One participant gave the anecdote of a TEFL certificate they did where they learnt online, delivered a lesson that was observed by colleagues and then critiqued by colleagues.</li> <li>• Videos: teachers were positive about the idea of having a video to promote CLIL and thought that it would be good to record this when all the teachers are in Maynooth next, as well as recording in a school to combine the two. We agreed that the questions would be sent out to teachers to comment on that would be asked in the CLIL video to teachers to be rehearsed.</li> </ul>



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.

Dec 2019

To report feedback re materials to Richard Talleron 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 2020

To explore the possibilities of co-planning with colleagues from across the education sector to create innovative CLIL modules

January 2020



To provide more opportunities for collaborative planning during training to put CLIL theory into practice. January 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. January 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
- January 2020

## 6. Research (Maynooth University)

As previously mentioned, CH is collaborating with the PPLI and undertaking research related to the CLIL to help establish what teacher needs are related to CLIL and what their perceptions of CLIL. This is being evaluated over time to see how adopting the approach is changing their attitudes or practice. This is an important part of the pilot because it will help us to understand not only how future training will be designed and promoted but also the potential impacts of such training over time.

Also, CH is working closely with the CLIL teachers to produce some collaborative Action Research, which will focus on the impact of CLIL from the student perspective; in particular, we are interested in the impact of CLIL on student engagement and motivation levels with regards to languages. This research will be undertaken through a simple survey and focus groups, the results of which will be collated for the final CPD session and for the final evaluation of the pilot.

## 7. Moving Forward

### a. Observations & Schedule

9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> December 2019 will be the week advertised to teachers when they can avail of observation of their CLIL classes. It is not envisaged that every teacher will want to be observed and so this will be advertised as an optional support. Observations will be conducted in strictest confidence. Observation foci will be agreed before the observation with CN (e.g. focus on scaffolding of production) and the observation will focus solely on these areas. Oral feedback will then be provided to the teachers. Teachers will be consulted as to whether the contents of the observation can be used to inform future training.

LOCIT observations will also be encouraged by teachers but they record their own lessons in their own contexts. Watch their lessons back and comment on areas in their lesson where successful learning took place and why it was successful. With the permission of teachers, these will then be shared with teachers in CPD 3.

### b. CLIL Video

In conjunction with PPLI's preferred video producers, CN will coordinate the creation of a video to promote CLIL as a teaching approach and the online module to be created. The video will appear on the CLIL webpage and be the first thing to be seen by interested teachers to draw them into the approach. The subjects for the videos will be the CLIL teachers involved in the pilot and it is envisaged that the video will contain:

- 1) Interviews with teachers answering directed questions
- 2) Videos of CLIL teaching
- 3) Interviews with students (particularly boys) questioning them on motivation and engagement
- 4) Advertising for the CLIL module.

The completion of the video is by Dec 2019.

*c. CLIL Training Module*

This will be planned with instructional designers before December and will include not only much of the theoretical background to CLIL but also a video of a CLIL lesson that can be critiqued by teachers engaged in the module. We will explore the potentials of offering the module as a stand-alone self-directed module that can be taken at any point in the year and a blended model that combines with a CoP.

*d. CLIL Teachers Meeting 3 in Maynooth*

At this meeting, all CLIL teachers from Cork and Maynooth will meet together for the first time in late December. We will explore the research findings and use the opportunity to plan collaboratively with teachers using their alternate subjects to create Hard CLIL lessons. We will also undertake a SWOT analysis of the pilot, undertake the research with Maynooth and discuss the possible next steps and involvement. We will also create a set of guidelines or recommendations for schools wishing to adopt a CLIL approach and the links that can be made with the establishment of a European stream in a school.

*e. Post-Pilot Projects: January 2020 onwards*

The main projects to be explored in January 2020 onwards are the evaluation of the teaching module, facilitating the co-planning of new modules with:

- Other subject teachers in schools
- University subject specialists
- Each other through the CoP model.

## 8. Conclusion

Hitherto, the CLIL pilot has been a positive experience for teachers and trainers involved. Many positive points for consideration have arisen from our face-to-face meetings that will inform our future decisions regarding the wider promotion of CLIL across the country. A final report will be produced in January 2020 when all the final research and teacher/student voice will be triangulated to help move the CLIL pilot into its next phase.

Craig Neville

October 2019