

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

Prepared by Craig Neville (Post-Primary Languages Initiative)

Rationale

Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has been defined as a dual focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010, p. 1). As many will be aware, this approach to the teaching and learning of language and content is not extraneous within the Irish education context. Indeed, the teaching of subjects as Gaeilge in *Irish medium schools* is indicative of this fact. The effectiveness of Irish-medium schools in producing students who are competent Irish speakers can be attributed, in part, to the fact that by adopting a CLIL approach these schools and their subject teachers are able to attribute an immediate relevance to gaeilge by modelling its use in a relevant context. The language in this context is seen as a communicative instrument to achieve learning outcomes rather than the subject itself.

In order to emulate the advantages of CLIL for the acquisition of speakers of Irish, this project proposes to introduce the CLIL approach to the Modern Foreign Languages context in the post-Primary sector with the principal aim of providing a context in which the foreign language is afforded an immediate relevance. Simultaneously, by using the foreign language as a communicative instrument, this will engender higher levels of engagement amongst students whose perception of the foreign language will change from being a subject in itself to a vehicle through which they can acquire knowledge.

Impetus for Introduction to the post-Primary Context

The implementation plan for Languages Connect cites in action 1.E.3 that the PPLI will “[p]ilot CLIL for TY where there is teacher capacity - for example Business/German, History/French” beginning in Q3 2019.

This implementation of this action forms part of Goal 1 of the strategy that seeks to “[e]xplore the potential of using Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to support and reinforce language learning” as well as “to improve language proficiency by creating a more engaging learning environment.”

Its inclusion in the strategy is also supported by the working document of the European Commission ([COM\(2018\) 272 final](#)) that supports the introduction of CLIL in the language learning content because:

- 1) It support authentic language use
- 2) It capitalises on a language they already know support interlinguistic awareness
- 3) It models to students how to communicate in the foreign language in different registers e.g. informally (e.g. daily interaction with teachers and peers) and formally (e.g. their academic work) in the classroom.
- 4) Greater focus on the subject rather than the language

Goal and outcomes of CLIL Pilot

Goal

“to deliver CLIL approach to teaching interdisciplinary subjects through curricular languages to students during Transition Year that is supported by training, a dedicated (virtual) Community of Practice, materials and Units of Learning and assessment materials.”

Expected Outcomes

- To undertake research will be undertaken 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.
- 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
- 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.
- To target a number of schools where the CLIL pilot will be introduced endeavouring to target different school contexts
- 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
- 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

Future Goals post-Pilot

Beyond the pilot, it is hoped that CLIL training, teaching and learning materials, and assessment materials can be developed for the dissemination of the approach nationally. PPLI associates will deliver training to teachers wishing to participate, materials will be fully downloadable from the PPLI website in an ‘Off-the-Shelf’ model where this approach can be delivered very quickly in schools. We hope that also the CoP will stimulate greater interest in producing Irish-based materials that gradually develop into the deliver of certain subjects through the target language.

The Post-Primary Context in Ireland

Before introducing the proposed implementation plan, it is important to describe the Post-Primary Context in terms of the availability of human resources to deliver the pilot and its general dissemination nationally. Firstly, the strategy suggests that Ireland should capitalise on the dual subject combinations of teachers in order to introduce CLIL e.g. a teacher of French and History could teach history through French.

However, this scenario presents a number of problems.

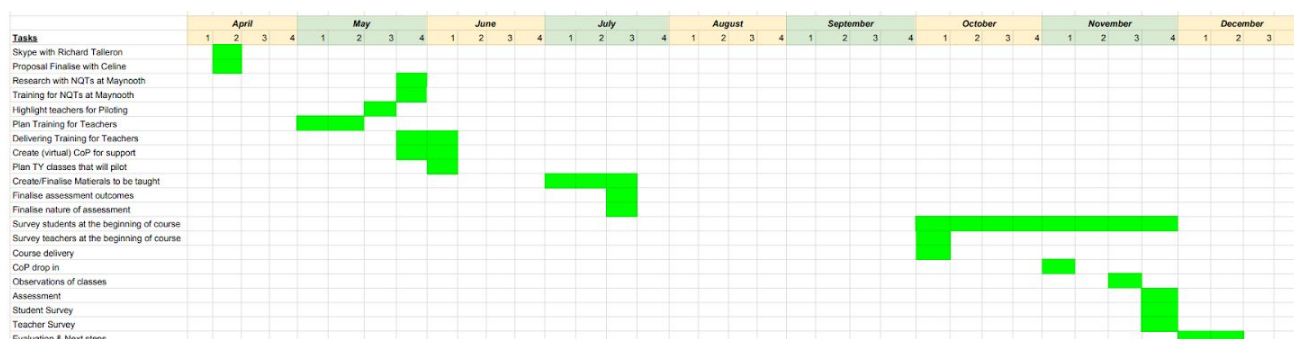
- 1) **Subject Choice:** the introduction of CLIL will not only provide a steep learning curve for teachers but also for students. In many European countries like Ireland, CLIL is introduced at an early age, often at primary level. Therefore, introducing CLIL in Transition Year poses a number of issues regarding student engagement with the subject because, at this stage, many students have already made a judgement about certain subjects. For example, if students have already taken a dislike to history, then they may not be willing to learn it through French. Also, students may not have opted for History at Leaving Certificate level and so may not have any interest in pursuing it.

- 2) **Student Language Level:** Because of the late stage at which CLIL will be introduced, the language level of students will be of a level where general, spontaneous communication will be a challenge. Therefore, the resources used to deliver the courses will have to take this into account in terms of the linguistic burden placed on students to communicate certain knowledge or ideas.
- 3) **Teacher Numbers:** Data from the Teaching Council, shows that dual subject combinations i.e. MFL + another subject are not as widespread as expected. For example, of the 2587 registered French teachers in Ireland, less than 25% (n=636) also teach History. For German, of the 1043 registered teachers, only 38 are registered to teach business (less than 3%). By far and above the most common dual subject combinations are English, another MFL or Irish. Therefore, if CLIL is to be adopted nationally, then it is important that it is a subject that MFL teachers can deliver such as those which are interdisciplinary e.g. wellbeing, environmental studies, citizenship etc.
- 4) **Language Level of Teachers:** the CLIL approach requires a high level of competency in the language (C1) and it is not clear whether the teachers registered to teach an MFL have this level of competency.

As a result of these issues, if CLIL is to be introduced it will have to:

- 1) Be deliverable by language teachers
- 2) Be acceptable to students who only begin language learning at the beginning of secondary school
- 3) Offer engaging subject content that is not dependent necessarily on subjects that they have learnt before and not opting to take for their Leaving Certificate.

Timeline



Distinction between CLIL and Immersion

It could be claimed that Ireland finds itself in an advantageous position with regards to the implementation of CLIL because of the immersive Irish-medium option that exists for students. However, Cenoz et al. (2014) warn against the confusion that arises around the interpretation of the CLIL and immersion. Immersion programmes are designed to deliver the entirety or the vast majority of schooling through another language that is not the typical language of instruction across the state. Here, the focus on content far outweighs the focus on language. Although language teaching for means of communication might occur (e.g. in the form of correction etc.), teachers do not focus necessarily on teaching students to communicate in a particular way e.g. using discourse markers etc. The CLIL approach integrates the language learning element into the subject content. While the main focus is on the content, language is interwoven into this approach beginning with easy language at word level reaching more complex levels of writing by the end of the module or course. The focus of this study will be latter and whilst expertise from the Irish-medium school context can act as a support, we should be wary of the differences between these two forms of language instruction.

As a result of this issue, if CLIL is to be introduced it will have to:

- 4) Make sure that the distinction is made between immersive education and CLIL and how this distinction also reflects in the identities, roles and responsibilities of the teachers and students involved.

Assumptions of CLIL

In Huttner and Smit (2014), the authors critique Bruton's article (2013), which outlines some of the reasons why the adoption of a CLIL approach can be advantageous for the purposes of language learning and reasons to support the opposing argument. Some of the points made are integral to this study and should be taken into consideration.

1. **CLIL being potentially discriminatory:** In some spheres, CLIL is adopted as a language learning option for the brightest of students. However, within the context of this pilot and moving forward, this is an approach that will not be advocated. And as such, the training modules will incorporate elements of universal design and differentiation to demonstrate to facilitators how CLIL can be used as an approach for all learners.
2. **CLIL assumes that students all have equal L1 levels:** It is becoming increasingly clear that this is not the case, as students' proficiency in their L1 varies as much as their proficiency in their L2. Consequently, in the training programme, facilitators will be made aware of the plurilingual nature of their classrooms and the supports that the L1 can give to the L2 and vice versa.
3. **CLIL replaces foreign language teaching:** The purpose of the CLIL approach is not to replace explicit language teaching. Indeed, students will be examined in their L2 as a discrete subject so it is important that their learning continues in this fashion. Here, CLIL should be seen as a complementary approach to language learning to not only increase engagement in foreign languages but to also teach students worthwhile subject content that develops their knowledge and skills.
4. **CLIL adopts a uniform pedagogy:** The training developed for the facilitators in the pilot takes into account the autonomy that Irish teachers have in their classrooms. Whilst the principles of CLIL will be advocated and materials will be provided, it is important that CLIL facilitators adopt approaches that are most appropriate for the students in their classrooms. Therefore, if kinaesthetic activities work particularly well with a class, then the teacher should use kinaesthetic activities to undertake this work.

As a result of this issue, if CLIL is to be introduced it will have to:

- 5) This pilot and associated training must advocate CLIL as an inclusive practice for all students and learning and teaching sequences should be modified in order to cater for their diverse needs
- 6) The training associated with the pilot will emphasise the fact that all teachers are language teachers to a certain degree and that a plurilingualistic classroom should be seen as advantageous to student development.
- 7) CLIL is a complementary approach to language learning and will not replace formal language learning whilst students are still assessed for their language competency
- 8) CLIL will not advocate particular methods. It will outline its principles and methods that complement the approach but if these methods are not necessarily ones that would work in a facilitator's classroom then they should be adapted.

Research

A number of MFL PME students who completed their training at Maynooth have been involved with small-scale CLIL projects before. Our first aim is to undertake research with these teachers in the form of focus groups to understand what the opportunities and challenges are at the current time for the CLIL approach in schools. The research will also focus on how we might mitigate these.

In order to thank these teachers for their time, we will also provide them with training in CLIL and invite them to take part in the Pilot in October 2019. As a part of this, teachers will also be invited to form a CoP virtually or in person facilitated by the PPLI in which they can discuss the materials that will be provided for the pilot, to support each other during the pilot and to help evaluate the pilot once completed.

Training

Training will be provided by the PPLI, Maynooth and Richard Talleron for those teachers involved in the research and subsequent pilot. This will be undertaken at Maynooth at the same time as data is being gathered for the research. Teachers that are involved in the training will also be required to undertake the piloting in their school. Also, other teachers who are not experienced in CLIL will be invited to the training to participate. These will be drawn from a small geographic area so that they can be supported at a local level by a PPLI Education Officer.

The European Framework for CLIL Teacher Education (EFCTE)

This document provides a framework of demonstrable competencies that are expected of CLIL professionals. These are enumerated [here](#). The competencies that are not highlighted are those that are common to Code of [Professional Conduct of teachers](#) in Ireland. Whilst these competencies will be developed during training, it is the CLIL-specific ones which will form the backbone of the training programme.

Also, the aforementioned document links the competencies to the [Cosán](#) Framework for Teachers' Learning developed by the Irish Teaching Council.

The training for the pilot (and for future provision) will be composed of three modules adapted from the EFCTE proposal. These are outlined below. It is envisaged that Module 1 and 2 would be delivered through the initial training at Maynooth. This training would focus on defining CLIL, exploring the general principles of CLIL and language level, how CLIL fits into the school context (Module 1) and designing curricula, classroom approaches and pedagogy, and the plurilingual classroom (Module 2). Furthermore external supports will then be provided for the creation of CoPs for national and international support whilst undertaking the pilot. Module 3, consolidating CLIL, will adopt a blended learning approach and use both peer-managed reflection (CoP) and online evaluation to help support the evaluation of the project.

Module 1: Approaching CLIL

EFCTE	Proposed Sessions
Situating CLIL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Competencies for the information age - Bi-, multi- and plurilingualism: overview - CLIL contexts, models and variants - CLIL objectives - CLIL aims and objectives within a regional/national and institutional infrastructure - Autonomy, authenticity and agency - Professionalism and personal profile 	<p>Session 1a: the role of language in the Irish classroom and autonomous learning, increased agency and authenticity (Andragogy) and the advantages and disadvantages of the plurilingual classroom (Get from CEFR)</p> <p>Session 1b: the aims and objectives of CLIL, how it fits into the local, national and institutional infrastructure as well as follow good educational practice.</p>
Examining good pedagogy framed within CEFR framework (Incorporated into Session 1b) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Socio-constructivist theories and (page 18) content/language teaching - Critical and creative thinking - Language learning/acquisition theories - Language awareness and knowledge about content learning 	<p>Session 2: The interplay between language awareness and subject content awareness in the CLIL classroom (pg 32) using CEFR, language acquisition (Page 27), skills from junior cycle (digital, key skills)</p> <p>BASELINE - Skills and Knowledge competencies</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language awareness and knowledge about language learning - Content-subject specific awareness - Awareness of language user profiles, identities, and affective factors - Integration of personal established practice and new approaches - Learning skills 	
Focusing on CLIL in the school context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student inclusion, exclusion and access - Tools for planning and cooperation - School ethos (i.e. beliefs, attitudes, work processes) 	School ethos Incorporated into session 1a/1b Student inclusion and tools incorporated into Session 3a and 3b.

Module 2: Implementing CLIL

Designing CLIL Classroom Curricula <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CLIL course construction - Objectives/targets of content learning - Course syllabus (including learner-teacher negotiation) - Cross-curricular linkages - Planned learning outcomes (content, language, learning skills and cognition) - Design of teaching and learning units/modules - CLIL Course scheduling (embedding CLIL in the curriculum, time allocation and teacher interaction and cooperation) 	Session 3a: designing CLIL Classroom Curricula <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to create a shared vision - to review the language progression, the 4cs framework, Bloom's Taxonomy and the Cognitive and Linguistic Demands of CLIL - to plan a unit of learning - to prepare a unit of learning - to monitor and evaluate CLIL in action
Anchoring CLIL in the classroom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General principles of educational practice applied to CLIL - CLIL core features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple focus - Safe and enriching learning environments - Authenticity - Active learning - Scaffolding - Cooperation - CLIL driving principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cognition - Community - Content - Communication 	Session 3b: CLIL methodology and pedagogy Zone of proximal development, creating materials

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interdisciplinarity and multimodality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blended modalities - Learning autonomy and agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benchmarking and self-assessment 	
Interweaving psychological and pedagogical aspects in the CLIL classroom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vehicular language threshold levels - Intercultural and plurilingual dynamics - Multicultural and multilingual issues - Student learning profiles and identities 	Incorporated into Session 1a
Accessing and adapting CLIL learning resources and environments. Networking locally, nationally and internationally. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEFR - Teacher cooperation through networking - Professional learning communities - Knowledge management - Linkages to local, national and international communities 	Creation of a CoPs and other groups that can support the implementation of CLIL including those working as gaeilge. CoP = goals of this

Module 3: Consolidating CLIL

Summative and formative evaluation of language and content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential problems: diagnosis and solutions 	Mid-delivery of course: data collected through observations and focus groups of teachers and students examining their perceptions and impact of CLIL lessons. LOCIT - final session where teachers come together after having observed each other (lesson plan, where does learning take place, describe where it took place and why - how do you
Practising CLIL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-management - The mentor-practice teacher relationship - Evaluation, assessment and analysis 	Post-pilot survey of teachers and students where both complete a skills/knowledge audit that is RAGged

Languages of Pilot

The pilot hopes to encourage teachers from a variety of MFL backgrounds to participate in the pilot; principally, those who teach However, in the interests of comparability, the learning outcomes and assessments will be the same.

Materials and Learning Outcomes

At this current time, it is envisaged that materials will be purchased from Richard Talleron in the UK. These CLIL materials are already being used in several schools in Scotland. We believe that these could also be used in the Irish Context. Once the teachers have been trained and the research undertaken, we hope to adapt the materials to suit the predicted needs of these teachers in the classroom. These will then be made available via the PPLI website.

At this time, the learning outcomes will also be delineated for evaluation purposes. These will be generic to all languages.

Community of Practice

The CoP will be established in order to provide support for teachers involved in the project. They will be encouraged to meet three times (virtually or in person).

- The first meeting will focus on analysing the materials and, in light of the training, predicting any challenges and how they might be overcome.
- The second meeting will take place during the pilot when teachers can feedback their experience and provide formative feedback to each other that can support the delivery of the second half of the pilot.
- The third CoP will take place at the end of the pilot when teachers can evaluate the process and outcomes.

Competency Portfolio

We will also provide teachers with a competency portfolio in which they will be able to regularly rate themselves with regards to the competencies for CLIL teaching and learning. This has also been aligned to the Cosán. This is a developmental process. Teachers will also be encouraged to collect resources, planning, student outcomes as part of this process to demonstrate their competencies. This will also form part of the discussion at CoP and

TY Pilot

The Pilot will take place in October either before the mid-term and after or between the mid-term and Christmas. This will provide enough time for the approach to become embedded in student routines and allow the development of enough language for assessment purposes.

Survey (teachers and students) at the beginning and end of the pilot

The purpose of surveying teachers and students at the beginning is to assess their fears and anxieties surrounding the teaching or CLIL and their own expected, personal outcomes. A similar survey will then be conducted at the end of the course to establish the value that teachers and students have drawn from the process as well as to consider how the process has challenged or supported language learning and motivation to learn.

Observation during pilot

We propose that there will be one round of observation during the pilot. The focus of the observation will be on the learning of the students. We recognise that teachers will approach the delivery of the learning in various different ways and that their professional decision making in this regard should be recognised. By observing the students, we are able to judge whether the CLIL approach in its current form is effective in supporting student learning.

We will also propose a modified version of the LOCIT approach. This approach traditionally involves the videoing of lessons to highlight the areas where learning is taking place. Where possible, we would like to simulate this via pairing up teachers to observe each other, lesson observation forms are provided outlining the minutes of a lesson and observers highlight where learning takes place on these grids and the nature of the learning. This can then form a discussion afterwards of how learning could be better approached to ensure that it is more embedded or more frequent in lessons.

Assessment

There will be an assessment at the end of the module that will be generic to all those taking part in the pilot but will not be language specific. This will enable teachers to judge the effectiveness of their teaching and the approach in supporting the learning outcomes as well as its effectiveness in supporting language learning and engagement.

Evaluation

The general evaluation will bring together evidence from the beginning of the pilot, the observations, the assessments of students and the final survey undertaken with teachers and students. During the process, students and teachers will be able to RAGged their skills and knowledge development for their own benefit. The main research questions that we will ask here are:

- Is CLIL deliverable in a post-Primary context?
 - Did the CLIL approach in this context support language learning?
 - How did it affect levels of motivation from the point of view of the teacher? From the point of view of the student?
 - Is CLIL sustainable for teachers? For students?
 - Could the CLIL approach be used over a longer period?
 - How effective were the materials used?
 - What are the next steps?
-

Sources consulted:

Bruton, A. (2013). CLIL: Some of the reasons why ... and why not. *System* 41 (2013): 587–597

Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (2010). *CLIL: Content and language integrated learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hüttner, J. & Smit, U. (2013). CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning): The bigger picture. A response to: A. Bruton. 2013. CLIL: Some of the reasons why ... and why not. *System* 41 (2013): 587–597

Jasone Cenoz, Fred Genesee, Durk Gorter, Critical Analysis of CLIL: Taking Stock and Looking Forward, *Applied Linguistics*, Volume 35, Issue 3, July 2014, Pages 243–262, <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amt011>