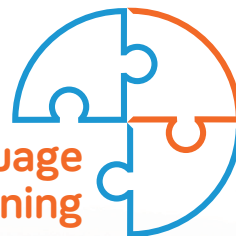


Content and Language Integrated Learning



FAQs: Content and Language Integrated Learning



Teangacha
Iar-bhunscoile Éireann
Post-Primary
Languages Ireland

ppli.ie

FAQs

Where do I start?

Why not apply to try the CPD course that PPLI are offering from July to December? If you do not feel that you are in a position to join this year, why not come to one of the Communities of Practice that will be held across the country? Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for more information and to hear about when these will be. You'll find out more information in the sections below about the CPD and on this webpage.

Logistics

How many classes a week do you recommend devoting to teaching CLIL?

The number of classes required to teach CLIL is flexible. The learning outcomes and assessments of each of the CLIL modules offered by PPLI are not fixed and should be adapted to your context. However, a recommendation would be two 40-minute lessons per week.

Do CLIL lessons replace your normal language classes in TY?

This depends on your context. Depending on the flexibility of your TY programme, it can replace your classes, it can be delivered in addition to normal language classes or it can be a mixture of both. Our recommendation is two 40-minute classes per week.

How do you convince your TY coordinator/principal to try CLIL?

The first step is to outline some of the benefits of CLIL to them. For example, research shows that students are far more engaged and motivated by language learning when it is delivered in a CLIL context. It can also reinforce other learning taking place in the curriculum through cross-curricular links between MFL and other subjects as it fosters interdepartmental collaboration between teachers. The CLIL modules supplied by PPLI also provide a foundation for those wishing to take a language for Leaving Certificate. .

Do you need to produce lots of new resources?

No. PPLI has created two modules each for French, Spanish, German and Italian that contain all the materials required to deliver modules of Wellbeing and Fair Trade. If you would like to co-plan your own modules, then this will require more resourcing. However, if you are interested in pursuing this then PPLI can support you in various ways. Why not 'Contact Us' via the website to tell us your ideas.

Is CLIL only for TY students or can you try a CLIL lesson with any year group?

If you are undertaking the training and have never taught CLIL lessons before, we recommend that you begin with TY. However, the resources that we have would also be suitable for 3rd Year and 5th Year with appropriate differentiation.

Are CLIL lessons to be taught during timetabled classes? Is there an option to do them outside of your normal teaching hours and get paid a substitution rate?

We recommend that your CLIL lessons are taught during your own timetable. In our experience, this usually has the best outcomes. Please be aware that PPLI is not able to pay substitution rates at this time.

How much collaboration is needed with teachers of other subjects? What if my learning outcomes do not align with those of another subject's curriculum?

The CPD does not require any collaboration with another subject teacher. However, if you do decide to collaborate with a subject teacher in the future, because CLIL in the Irish context is not examined at TY at state level, we would envisage that you would develop your own learning outcomes. These could be negotiated between you and the subject teacher based on what you want the language and content learning to be in your unit of learning.

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When is the best time of year to start?

We recommend that you begin teaching CLIL in either September or January. The units of learning that we can offer are flexible but can last anything from 6-12 weeks depending on the way in which you sequence the activities. We would also recommend that if you are undertaking the CPD with PPLI from September to December, that you teach the CLIL modules at the same time so that you are able to reflect on your practice in our training sessions.

CLIL CPD delivered by PPLI

Where can I get support to help me plan? I would not know where to start.

If you are not familiar with CLIL approaches and methodologies, then the CPD opportunity offered by PPLI will develop your skills to prepare and plan individual lessons. You will also have the opportunity to assess your CLIL competencies at the beginning and end of the CPD. What many MFL teachers do not realise is that they already possess many of the competencies required to be an effective CLIL teacher and the CPD will help you to view your current practice in a different way.

PPLI also has a dedicated Facebook group of CLIL teachers based in Ireland with a mixture of experience. If you'd like to join, then please 'Contact us' and we'll send you the details. We also host three communities of practice dedicated to CLIL teaching.

Is this open to all languages?

We welcome teachers from any curricular or heritage language to participate in the training. Resources are currently provided in French, Spanish, German and Italian. However, PPLI are keen to develop other materials with interested teachers.

If I want to get involved, how much commitment is required?

If you already have some knowledge of CLIL, you can start straight away with the resources below. If you have any questions, then please contact PPLI and we will be in touch with advice.

If you are a CLIL novice, consider applying for our CPD course that runs from July to December. Training is delivered via two webinars in June and two face-to-face sessions in education centres local to you, one at the start of July and another in December. There will also be opportunities to attend two CLIL communities of practice hosted in September and November in the evening where you will be able to meet with more experienced CLIL teachers. Finally, we also have a closed Facebook group that we invite teachers to join where you can share resources, ask questions and engage with PPLI and other CLIL practitioners.

Can I visit a CLIL classroom to see what it looks like?

If you enroll in the CPD course, you will have the opportunity to take part in a CLIL lesson and to observe one as well.

In the coming months, we will be adding videos of lessons to ppli.ie in order to give you as much exposure as possible to CLIL in practice.

Do you have units of learning that anyone who is involved in the CPD delivered by PPLI can use?

Yes – we have two units of learning currently focusing on Fair Trade and Wellbeing in French, Spanish, German and Italian. These include all the resources and a unit overview. We will shortly be including a more detailed teacher's guide as well.

I am interested in the concept but would not feel confident in doing a CLIL lesson with my class. I am unfamiliar with a lot of content from other subjects and afraid that my language skills would not be advanced enough. What advice would you offer me?

As you will experience in the training, CLIL pedagogy is not absolute. It is very flexible, and your use of the target language can be equally so. There is even a place for first (and other) language(s) in the CLIL classroom. As well as this, the teaching and learning content that has been designed to be delivered during the training has been created with language teachers in mind. There are lots of overlaps between content that you would normally teach in language lessons and the two units of learning available to you.

How do I choose the content? What is the best subject for me?

For the purposes of the CPD, we recommend that you use the units of learning that we provide for you. If you then decide to develop your own units of learning in another area, we recommend that you choose a subject that you have taught before or a humanity such as Geography, History or Religion. Start small, focusing on only teaching a really basic concept. For example, teaching the water cycle is a good place to start because it contains lots of vocabulary and ideas related to the weather that language teachers already know.

Is CLIL suitable for mixed-ability groups?

The approaches and methodologies associated with CLIL are active in nature and lend themselves to task-based learning. CLIL learning also requires the scaffolding of language to support student communication. All of these elements allow for differentiation both by task and by outcome. Furthermore, assessment criteria are defined by the teacher for the context in which they are operating and so can focus on a range of elements including soft skills such as teamwork, critical thinking and resilience.

Do you have to work with another subject specialist if you do not have the knowledge?

If you are opting to teach the modules offered by PPLI, these do not require significant specialist knowledge. If you decide to co-plan a module with another non-language teacher, this will require more specialist knowledge. However, as a TY module, what you develop together with the other teacher would still be fairly basic even in this case.

How do you go about choosing the other subject (e.g. science or history)?

PPLI provides two ready-made modules on Wellbeing and Fair Trade, which can be taught by MFL teachers with very little specialist knowledge. If teachers wish to create their own units of learning, any subject is possible as long as the module's learning outcomes are achievable within the time. PPLI has created a specific tool for MFL teachers to use to co-plan modules with teachers of other subjects.

How can we use the textbook to augment CLIL lessons especially when students have paid for their textbook? Are there specific CLIL textbooks?

A good MFL textbook can be an asset to a CLIL class where it can be used to illustrate language structures required to communicate content. As well as this, some higher-level textbooks provide authentic resources that can be used to support content.

There is no CLIL-specific textbook for Ireland. To teach CLIL in its strictest form you would require, for example, a geography textbook from Germany. If you would like to develop your own unit of learning, PPLI are able to facilitate access to these resources to help you with your planning.

If I am teaching content related to other subjects like music, for example, should the music teacher also be trying to teach the language to some degree in their class?

No, this is not necessary. If you choose to adopt the model of using TY CLIL lessons to complement another subject, then the music teacher would continue to teach the conceptual content. The CLIL teacher would develop learning opportunities that apply that conceptual knowledge to a slightly different context.

However, if you are a CLIL novice, we recommend that you start with the TY resources produced by PPLI to develop your competencies before developing these areas of your practice.

Curriculum and Assessment

How do you assess CLIL?

Assessment in CLIL is very flexible and should be multifaceted. Evidently, features of content knowledge and language use should be assessed but the weighting of these is dependent on the context. For example, if you are more interested in your students knowing and communicating a subject-specific fact (the content) rather than the way in which it is communicated (the language) then this can feature in your success criteria. One of the reasons why students engage with CLIL lessons is because the focus is not on linguistic accuracy but more on communicative fluency.

Is CLIL examined at state level? Can the students participate in state exams if they have not covered the specified coursework?

CLIL is not examined in the MFL context. It is envisaged as a bridge between junior cycle and senior cycle to engage and motivate students to use their language skills in a more authentic, low-stakes context.

How does CLIL integrate into the JC specifications for MFL? Class contact time is already quite limited at Junior level.

The CPD delivered by PPLI focuses on TY. However, if you choose to use CLIL at JC, it can be used to deliver units of learning on cultural topics. The important thing to remember is that in CLIL, you are not only assessing their language skills, but also their content knowledge. This would align with intercultural awareness learning outcomes.

At JC we are told to work as a whole MFL department, so how can CLIL fit in if only being taught in one language? Would you recommend it for TY or 5th year only?

We recommend that if you decide to join the CPD delivered by PPLI that you focus on TY. However, CLIL also offers opportunities to MFL departments to deliver co-developed units on the same topic but in different languages. Where this might pose a challenge in the MFL classroom, CLIL approaches make this process easier because the content will be the same in all languages. For example, if you chose to teach the water cycle, this could be achieved in the same way in all languages. The linguistic features of the language may differ, but this is not a concern for CLIL lessons.

