CLIL in a nutshell

Introduction

CLIL involves students learning subjects such as science or geography through the medium of a foreign language. Other related terms include 'Content-based instruction', 'English across the curriculum', and 'Bilingual education'. CLIL is sometimes referred to as dual-focused education as lessons have two main aims, one related to a particular subject or topic and one linked to language.

For a list of key terms in CLIL go to: http://courses.britishcouncil.org/teachertraining/mod/glossary/view.php?id=4561 (05/01/2016)

An increasing number of teachers and schools are introducing CLIL initiatives throughout the world. It is, for example, being applied in a growing number of countries in the expanding European Union. CLIL has been introduced in diverse contexts at both the primary and secondary level.

According to Do Coyle, an effective CLIL lesson combines elements of:

- **Content** - Progression in knowledge, skills and understanding related to specific elements of a defined curriculum
- **Communication** - Using language to learn whilst learning to use language
- **Cognition** - Developing thinking skills which link concept formation (abstract and concrete), understanding and language
- **Culture** - Exposure to alternative perspectives and shared understandings, which deepen awareness of otherness and self.

The perceived advantages of adopting a CLIL approach for learners include:

- Increasing motivation as language is used to fulfil real purposes
- Introducing learners to the wider cultural context
- Developing a positive 'can do' attitude towards learning languages
- Developing student multilingual interests and attitudes
- Preparing students for further studies and work

Some of the advantages for teachers adopting a CLIL approach may include:

- The use of innovative methods, materials and e-learning
- Individual and institutional networking opportunities and professional mobility
- The development of good practices through cooperation with teachers in other departments, schools and countries
- Higher levels of job satisfaction

For many teachers CLIL offers a number of challenges as it requires a rethink of the traditional skills and knowledge of the language teacher, classroom practices and resources. Some educational reformers may underestimate the difficulties involved in implementing CLIL, and may introduce innovations without ensuring that all of the necessary resources are in place. For example, teachers might not have a language level appropriate to the demands of the content. Teachers might not receive the necessary re-training to carry out their revised roles effectively and suitable classroom resources may not be available in all subjects at all levels. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the twin trends of Europeanization and globalisation are likely to lead to CLIL becoming a growing component of educational systems throughout the world.

Good practice in CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning)
Tim Herdon, adaptation Franz Mittendorfer

PREPARATION

- ☐ Identify clear content and language objectives. Define learning outcome in terms of added competence, i.e. what a learner can do as a consequence of the process.
- ☐ Use a comprehensive lesson plan.
- ☐ Ensure a balance between cognitive and linguistic difficulty.
- ☐ Create/Provide materials that guide and stimulate learning.

COMPREHENSIVE INPUT

- ☐ Provide texts the essential meaning of which is accessible to learners without undue strain.
- ☐ Pre-teach key vocabulary and check comprehension.
- ☐ Appeal to as many senses as possible. Use visual support.
- ☐ Use prediction/intelligent guessing activities.
- ☐ Use frames to guide input and focus on key lexis and key content.

INTERACTION

- ☐ Question and elicit; don't lecture.
- ☐ Have learners work and interact in a variety of groupings.
- ☐ Initiate visualisation of content/lexis (diagrams of thought).
- ☐ Set up communicative tasks in which learners can exchange, transfer and process information.
- ☐ Give learners a balance of skills work challenging both **receptive** (reading and listening), **productive** (speaking, writing) and **cognitive** (learning) skills.
- ☐ Allow time for reflection, note taking and documentation of process.

APPLICATION / PRACTICE

- ☐ Ensure that learners are able to apply their skills and knowledge in new contexts.
- ☐ Initiate individual research and reporting / presentation of results.

ASSESSMENT IN CLIL
Franz Mittendorfer

Like the very concept of CLIL, assessment is **objective-based**. It looks at a learning outcome that

- has been defined in terms of competences (can do's),
- has been communicated and agreed on,
- has determined a clear notion of what is "essential".

It is based on the **principle of learning contracts** (learner with him/herself, learner with teacher and learner with group) and it includes **assessment of processes as well as assessment of products.**

CLIL materialises as a process taken in steps, each of which results in one or more **intermediate products** which are documented. Students should be encouraged to create their own **portfolios**.

Assessment identifies evidence of

C	L	I	L
content-related competences	language development and language competences	integration and organisation of content and language	social, strategic and cognitive competences

N.B.

Assessment refers to a **process of gathering data** as a basis for learner appraisal and feedback. It consists of a bundle of measures and the data are varied and appreciate the learner's individuality.

Testing means employing **tools and procedures** designed to measure the degree to which an examinee succeeds or fails when doing specific tasks. They tend to be focussed, one-shot and to give a result that can be related to concrete learning targets.