

# CLIL – A WAY TOWARDS AUTONOMY IN EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

*CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) means teaching subjects through English, which provides a better preparation for professional life than teaching English as a subject empty of content. It motivates, makes lessons active and interesting. Learners in CLIL programmes are thus learning basic language skills, academic skills and new subject concepts at the same time. CLIL focuses on the subject content, it gives students a feeling of real achievements, closely connected with their career development, since in the future they will be expected to show "competences" and autonomy and an approach prioritising highly developed thinking skills and communication.*

**Keywords:** *integrated learning, motivation for studies, competences, communication.*

## CLIL – POT K AVTONOMIJI V IZOBRAŽEVANJU – POVZETEK

*CLIL (vsebinsko jezikovno integrirano učenje) pomeni učenje o izbranih vsebinskih temah prek učenja angleščine, kar omogoča boljše pripravo na poznejše poklicno življenje, kot če bi poučevali samo jezik ne glede na vsebine. Učence motivira ter naredi učenje aktivno in zanimivo. Učenci se pri modelu CLIL naučijo temeljnih jezikovnih spretnosti in akademskih veščin, obenem pa spoznajo še dodatne učne vsebine. CLIL je osredotočen na učne vsebine in daje učencem občutek resničnih dosežkov, ki se tesno povezujejo z razvojem njihove kariere, kajti prihodnost bo zahtevala od njih kompetenco, samostojnost in pristop, v katerem bodo poudarjene razvite miselne funkcije in komunikativnost.*

**Ključne besede:** *integrirano učenje, učna motivacija, kompetence, komunikacija.*

## WHAT IS CLIL?

The educational and social changes that have taken place since the development of the Internet and the parallel growth in globalisation have influenced the methods in educational process. Establishing and maintaining a learning environment that is conducive to effective learning has become a priority for science teachers, who often wonder how to improve lectures and increase students' interactivity by producing better materials and contents and making use of Information and Communication Technology (Carvalho, 2006). The ICT and CALL (Computer assisted-language learning), which may be defined as "using computer assisted learning programmes, which present some task to the learner or to a group of learners, which is consequently analysed and corrected while continuing in solving the task

in accordance with the results of analyses and correction" (Zilova, 2001: 25), has become an inseparable part of the teaching and learning process at all levels of education, proficiency based instruction included. The CALL programmes with different level of motivation are for example: gap-filling, partial deletion; partial reconstruction programmes, multiple-choice, sequencing, re-ordering, matching, total-deletion; text-reconstruction programmes, word-processing, database, communications, concordancer, adventure; case studies, simulation etc. Consequently, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has attracted a great interest in recent years, especially in Europe. These trends go hand in hand with the perception of English as the international language of choice for career development.

CLIL stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning. It refers to teaching subjects such as science, history, geography etc. to students through a foreign language. This can be done by the English teacher using cross-curricular content or the subject teacher using English as the language of instruction. Both methods result in the simultaneous learning of content and English. There is no single model but rather a range of different approaches depending on school and age of students and the situation in which the schools exist. The term CLIL was coined by David Marsh, University of Jyväskylä, Finland (2002): “CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language”.

CLIL *motivates*, it gives reasons for learning and improving the foreign language level, it focuses on and assesses the subject content, it gives students a feeling of real achievement because they are coping with the complex material in a foreign language. Learners in CLIL programmes are thus *learning basic language skills, academic language skills* and new subject concepts all at the same time. Owing to its effectiveness and ability to motivate learners, CLIL is identified as a priority area in the Action plan for Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity (Section 1 1.2). The European Symposium on “The Changing European Classroom – the Potential of Plurilingual Education“, held in March 2005 in cooperation with the Luxemburg Presidency, recalled the need to ensure that pupils and students receive CLIL provision at different levels at school education. It was also emphasized that teachers should receive special training in CLIL. The EU has also supported many CLIL projects including the development of a European network for Content and Language Integrated Classrooms, EuroCLIL (<http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/language-teaching/doc236.en.htm>).

The following principles, which can serve as a reference point for lesson planning, can be said to be the driving force of the CLIL model (Mehisto, P., Marsh, D., Frigols, M.J., p. 31): *cognition, community, content and communication*.

*Cognition* takes into the consideration the fact that content, language and learning skills

outcomes are articulated in co-operation with students, their existing knowledge, skills, attitudes, interests and experience. Students analyse their outcomes, they synthesize, evaluate and apply knowledge and skills acquired in several subjects.

Students feel that being members of a learning *community* is enriching, they have the self-confidence and skills to work within a group and the local community, balancing personal interests with those of others and teachers – partners. *Content* is substantive, content from various subjects is integrated and cultural content is integrated into all subjects, students apply new content and develop related skills through experiential activities. Students actively use the right to participate in activities and *communication*, in the classroom and in the community, communication skills are developed in all subjects and at the same time strategies for listening, speaking, reading and writing are supported.

### **HOW TO CREATE CLIL TEACHING MATERIALS FROM AUTHENTIC TEXTS**

Students are expected to do much more reading at university than at school or college. Though reading is often considered a passive skill, research in the field of psycholinguistics has demonstrated that it is actually a highly complex process of interaction between the reader and the text. Reading can, thus, be seen as *processing of information*.

In order to improve cognitive skills R.W. Wagner a R. J. Sternberg (1984: 179-223) emphasize the following approach which helps the students to process the information while reading the text:

M – *mood* to study

U – the goal of reading for *understanding*

R – to *recall* content without looking for the answers in the text

D – to *digest* the material by amplifying it

E – to use self-checking strategies to *expand* knowledge

R – to *review* mistakes as related exercises and activities are completed

The reader brings to the text his own store of general information deriving from his native culture, education, personal experience, and, normally, some specific knowledge of the topic of the written text. At the same time the reader also possesses a linguistic competence, including a knowledge of words (lexis), of how these words are deployed according to the linguistic system in order to form sentences (syntax), and of the linguistic conventions which characterize different types of text. (Haarman, L rhetorical patterns, Leech, P., Murray J., introduction).

Furthermore, the reader approaches a text with a genuine motivation to read and a reading purpose. The reader's capacity to apprehend the meaning of the text depends on his ability to decode the lexical and syntactic signals of the text, his knowledge of how these features combine to realize linguistic and rhetorical conventions, and his ability to make full and efficient use of reading skills and strategies.

Facilitating comprehension and fostering critical thinking is discussed predominantly. Facilitating comprehension means for example removing part of the text, inserting synonyms in brackets, having students analyse the context to guess the meaning of a word, highlighting key terms, words, ideas and facts, using different colours of the highlighter for different issues, aspects or categories, using graphic organizers etc. Fostering critical thinking me-

ans for example organising information under headings, using diagrams, analysing different perspectives, comparing statistics.

In this educational process the teacher and the students are partners. The teacher discusses the learning outcomes with the students who determine and articulate key issues and concerns from different perspectives, present their arguments clearly, choose the appropriate language for writing and propose realistic solutions. The

teacher explains the evaluation criteria, he has students brainstorm what they know about the issue, helps them categorize brainstorming outcomes, guides them in separating facts from

opinion, models agreement and disagreement statements (including reasoning), supports students in analysing the reasoning behind their agreement and disagreement statements, facilitates group work and guides writing activities.

The students read the article in groups, organize the information in the article using one or several of the graphic organizers presented above, analyse the problem from various perspectives, present their group's findings (facts, opinions, perspectives, possible solution) in writing, respond to other groups' presentations with agreement and disagreement statements (using evidence), analyse the learning process and outcomes, and draw conclusions (Mehisto, P, Marsh, D, Frigols, M.J., p. 227–229).

There are many articles and even several books discussing the theoretical foundations of CLIL, but there is a relative lack of books offering practical classroom ideas or ways to implement and enhance the CLIL approach. The following example aims to support CLIL teachers and suggest some solutions that make it possible to integrate content and language teaching. It provides significant added value for both language and content learning. In line with this philosophy the teachers are encouraged to choose some ideas and adapt them to suit their own specific circumstances.

*The teacher and students are partners.*

## Example

### Topic: LEADERSHIP

- Aims:
- A. Understanding textbook language
  - B. Recognizing and learning key expressions
  - C. Becoming familiar with classical and modern leadership styles

#### 1. Before you read

Discuss these questions with your partner:

Who is the leader?

Is leadership necessary? Can organisations be run without leaders?

Describe a situation where you consider there was an absence of leadership

#### Introduction to leadership

Increasing attention has been focused on the idea of leadership in recent years. This is because management theories have focused on ways of improving performance throughout an organisation by creating the right culture. Researchers in this field have linked this to the people in an organisation who have a key role to play in the creation of this culture: the leaders.

Examining leadership as a concept will take you, almost immediately, to a series of questions. Are leaders born or made? Are there certain traits that make a good leader? Can different styles of leadership be adopted? Can leadership skills be learnt?

As with many management ideas, the concept of leadership is also wrapped up with both politics and cultural history.

Public debate often centres on questioning 'how strong' the leader of a particular political party, company or trade union is. There is a list of unspoken assumptions about how this should be measured. The type of assumptions that are made is that a leader should make all decisions for him or her, dissent and sometimes even debate from subordinates should not be tolerated and a leader should not change direction or be swayed by outside influences. It is very seldom questioned whether this model of leadership is effective in fulfilling stated objectives.

Another result of the historical background to ideas on leadership is that stereotypes have emerged as to who is suitable for leadership. In the past, a common stereotype was that leaders were male, white, well educated and from the middle or upper classes.

#### Different theories on leadership

There have been four major research trends in leadership theory, which are shown in the table below:

Up to the late 1940s	Trait approach
Late 1940s to late 1960s	Style approach
Late 1960s to early 1980s	Contingency approach
Since early 1980s	Transformational leadership

Of course the dates are not exact but they do give a rough idea of the key stages in thinking. It is also important to remember that each trend was not completely ousted by its successor. You will now look at each of these trends in more detail.

#### Trait approach

The trait approach is based on the idea that leaders are born and not made, where a great emphasis is placed on finding and promoting natural leaders. Research of this period, therefore, concentrated on identifying characteristics or qualities of good leaders. A wide range of personal traits were considered, including physical characteristics, intelligence and abilities, task-related characteristics directly, such as achievement, drive, as well as social characteristics, such as cooperativeness, sociability and tact.

#### 2. Comprehension

Think of someone you consider to be a good leader. Write down 10 of his or her best qualities. Once you have completed the list, ask two people (colleagues, friends or family members) to do the same exercise, thinking of individuals they consider to be good leaders. Compare your lists.

#### Feedback

When completing this exercise, most people find that each list records different qualities. The activity is a rough and ready way of showing the types of findings resulting from research involving the trait approach. By 1950 there had been over 100 studies, which showed little consistency.

Only 5% of the traits identified were common throughout. Often one piece of research singled out one particular trait, however, this went unmentioned in another study. Most studies did identify three important traits:

- Intelligence, which should be above average but not that of a genius.
- Problem-solving ability, both in the practical and abstract sense, was seen as crucial.
- Taking the initiative.
- Self-assurance.

In light of the above-said, there are clearly problems with drawing firm conclusions from this strand of research. However, the research did seem to reveal that different leadership traits may be more successful in different situations.

## Style approach

The style approach put the emphasis on behaviour rather than on innate qualities. Researchers looked for the type of behaviour which led to greater effectiveness in subordinates. The implication was clearly that leadership could be learnt. There have been various theorists in this field and each had a different method. However, generally speaking, most tried to describe different styles of management. We are going to concentrate on three styles of management in this study unit: the autocratic, the laissez-faire and the participative. The research in this area actually describes style in a more complex and detailed way, but the examples will give you a feel for the style approach.

## Autocratic characteristics

Autocratic leaders will:

- rely on their power and position to get things done
- like people to acknowledge their status, for example, they will not allow subordinates to call them by their first name
- make a decision and rarely change their mind as they regard flexibility as a weakness
- do not consider others in decision-making and do not encourage participation – they decide what action to take and issue instructions, without consultation
- respect loyalty, will not tolerate dissent and discourage creative thinking as it is seen as a challenge to their authority
- keep information to them as a form of control
- rarely delegate responsibility, except to their ‘favourites’ who are usually similar to themselves and conform to the same standards
- prefer to deal with people individually, so they tend not to hold meetings
- a considerable amount of their communication will be by writing

## Laissez-faire characteristics

Laissez-faire leaders will:

- issue general rules and guidelines to the team but do not get personally involved
- provide no discipline for the team
- allow team members to choose who they work with, and priorities are usually decided collectively
- let the team define the problems and seek their own solutions
- avoid making decisions or being held accountable for the results
- permit poor performance to go unpunished; good performance to go unrewarded.

## Participative characteristics

Participative leaders will:

- understand the necessity of good communications and meet frequently with their team to create a strong team spirit
- communicate face-to-face most of the time
- involve the team in the decision-making process, but will not give up responsibility or control because they make the final decision themselves
- have good interpersonal and communication skills and share information readily.

## Contingency approach

Contingency theorists believed that there was no ideal management system; the appropriateness of the system depended on the environment in which an organisation found itself. It is, therefore, not surprising that they also believed that an effective leader was someone who successfully identified the factors which influenced a situation and adapted their leadership behaviour accordingly.

These types of factors include:

- The relationship between the leader and the group, in particular the degree of confidence of the group in the leader's abilities
- The nature of the tasks undertaken by subordinates: the degree of difficulty involved in the tasks, their importance and how often they are performed
- The degree of authority vested in the leader and how much control the leader has over the group. For example, whether it is in the leader's control to reward or sanction an individual's performance in the group
- The similarity or diversity of the group, whether individuals in the group have similar backgrounds and abilities.

For example, a manager may give a lot of guidance and instructions to someone who is inexperienced and unsure of themselves, while they may decide to give a relatively free hand to someone who has shown themselves to produce good results in this way and prefer this style of working. A leader may steer clear of anything like an autocratic approach in a situation where their real authority is limited and instead concentrate on persuading and influencing. One of the most important impacts of the contingency approach to leadership was the development of the concept of action-centred leadership by Professor John Adair. This concept is based on the assumption that the leader has three categories of equally important duties: achieving the task, building a team, and developing individuals.

On the whole, the contingency approach seemed to be a more fruitful line of research than either the trait or style approaches. Experts have wondered, however, about the viability of training managers to deal effectively with every new situation. As with the style approach, there are still some problems proving that the studies are concentrating on the cause rather than the effect. Do effective workers allow managers to adopt the contingency approach rather than the other way round? Finally, some commentators have pointed out that the contingency approach relegates the concept of leadership to one of rather mechanical management.

### Transformational leadership

The book that launched the idea of transformational leadership was *In Search of Excellence* by Thomas J Peters and Robert H Waterman which was published in 1982. In it the authors argue that leadership is distinct from management. A 'transforming leader' is someone who improves motivation and gets subordinates involved in their cause. A 'transactional leader' simply gets subordinates to do their will by accomplishing some sort of exchange. The most obvious case of this is when a leader rewards a member of staff with a pay rise. This may reward the worker for a piece of work well done but it does not bind the leader and follower together in a mutual and common pursuit. Peters and Waterman are therefore suggesting that leadership is on a different plane from everyday management of others.

Transformational leaders are seen by subordinates as having great qualities and inspiring loyalty. The determinants of charisma include subordinates' backgrounds and attitudes towards authority, relationships between the leader and the group, the particular situation and the extent to which the leader shares a common interest with group members. Other relevant factors include the trust of the group in the leader's competence; the leader's influencing skills and subordinates' prior commitment to the organisation.

In a way, some of the problems with earlier research have resurfaced with this approach. There is some argument about whether the transformational leader is born or made. Some experts insist that transformational leadership can be taught whilst other insist that it is based on personal traits. Finally, some commentators perceive connections between the transformational leader and the charismatic one. The concept of charisma is very difficult to define and leads to all sorts of subjective judgements being made.

### 3. Comprehension

Using the following table, identify whether each statement is referring to the trait approach, style approach, contingency approach or transformational leadership.

Statement	Trend of research (trait, style, contingency and transformational)
1 Leaders must convey a clear vision.	
2 Since you cannot train leaders, you must concentrate on being able to select them.	
3 Leaders are encouraged to suppress their natural tendencies, examine the situation at hand and select the best style to deal with that situation.	
4 Employees will work more effectively for those who employ given styles of leadership than those who employ other styles.	

### Feedback

You should have given the following answers:

1 Transformational leadership, 2 Trait approach, 3 Contingency approach, 4 Style approach

## CLOSING AND OUTCOMES

There are many ways of describing the characteristics attributed to CLIL. You may already be following a methodology listed below – in this case CLIL is suitable for you.

- Bilingual Integration of Languages and Disciplines (BILD)
- Content and Language Integration in Primary CLIP)
- Content-based Instruction (CBI)
- Content-based Language Instruction (CBLI)
- Content-based Language Teaching (CBLT)
- English Across the Curriculum (EAC)
- English as an Academic Language (EAL)
- English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)
- Foreign Language Immersion Program (FLIP)
- Foreign Languages as a Medium of Education (FLAME)
- Language Across the Curriculum (LAC)
- Teaching Content Through English
- Teaching English Through Content

This article highlights the need for both practical and theoretical resources and is closely connected with the following important priorities of the current educational system:

- to promote innovation
- to promote educational and professional mobility
- to develop language policy (European and national),
- to develop intercultural competences
- to promote plurilingualism
- to cooperate in international projects
- to implement educational and training programs
- to implement and evaluate the concrete language teaching project at all levels of education.

There are a number of claims made for the advantages of CLIL. One is that it can develop foreign language ability more effectively than

CLIL raises teachers and learners expectations, raises competence, confidence, creativity and autonomy. CLIL takes students beyond reductive topics, encourages linguistic spontaneity, and develops thinking skills. The methodology and resources enable students to learn effectively using subject-specific target language terminology. In addition, the fact that the content is analysed from different cultural perspectives offers opportunities for intercultural learning and makes education international.

conventional foreign language teaching. What it can certainly do, is to prepare students for future study and the workplace where they are likely to need to operate in English. An advantage for language teachers is that the content is ready-made. This takes away the need to spend a lot of time thinking up topics that work. It is also likely that the students are more motivated when they are learning English through something that is part of their school learning and thinking, rather than just learning a language.

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