

# CLIL and Cultural Diversity: A Winning Combination

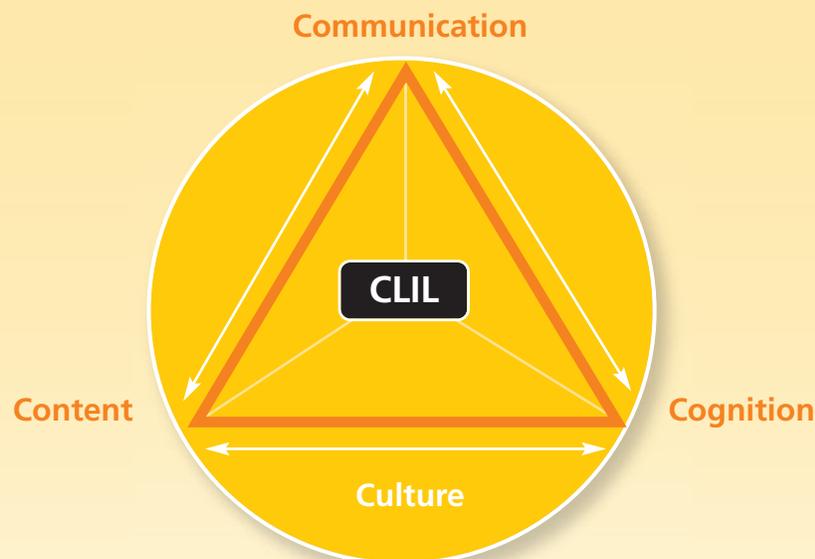
BY VICKY SAUMELL



Maria Victoria Saumell holds a degree in Literary and Technical Translation and a Diploma in the Theory and Methodology of TESOL (Distinction). She is the co-author of *Teacher Development Interactive: Preparation for the Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT)*, author of Meeting Point 3 and 4 for the *Storyline* coursebook series and series consultant for the *English in Common* coursebook series, all for Pearson. Saumell is currently the author and tutor of *New Learning Environments* for the Master's in ELT program at Universidad de La Sabana, Colombia. She is the overall coordinator of the EFL department at Instituto San Francisco de Asís, a private school in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Saumell is also a freelance materials writer and a presenter at professional development conferences, especially on the integration of ICT for language learning.

CLIL has often been mainly identified as a way to teach content through language. This time I will focus on how it can be the perfect springboard to dive into cultural issues.

CLIL incorporates four elements identified as the 4 Cs, where culture is the underlying concept for the other three aspects: content, communication and cognition.



Coyle, D., Hood, P., Marsh, D. (2010). *CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

# CLIL and Cultural Diversity: A Winning Combination

Culture, as the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution, organization, or group, is usually broken down in 11 aspects for the sake of organizing information. These aspects are:

- |               |                   |                 |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Food       | 5. Education      | 9. Economy      |
| 2. Clothing   | 6. Language       | 10. Environment |
| 3. Recreation | 7. Religion       | 11. Arts        |
| 4. Government | 8. Transportation |                 |

These aspects or topics are easily found in EFL materials. Therefore, it becomes evident that there are numerous opportunities for linking content to culture in order to achieve these clear benefits of CLIL:

- Build intercultural knowledge and understanding
- Develop intercultural communication skills
- Provide opportunities to study content through different perspectives

You can get started by following five easy steps:

## STEP 1

Select a topic or aspect of culture from the course book you are using.

For example, select foods from around the world.

Try different foods. | Values in Action

20 Listen. Look at the poster.

Peruvians love potatoes. Peru grows more than 2,300 types of potatoes. There are many different shapes, sizes, and colors!

Potatoes grow very well in the cool weather, high in the Andes Mountains.



The most famous dish is *papa a la huancaína*—potatoes in a spicy cheese sauce.

Another is *papa rellena*, or stuffed potato. This dish has meat, onions, and eggs stuffed inside a potato.

# CLIL and Cultural Diversity: A Winning Combination

## STEP 2

**Find a natural link between the material in the course book and real life.**

Try discussing food in different cultures, healthy and unhealthy eating habits, and various recipes.

## STEP 3

**Find authentic material that supports your choice and ideas.**

A) This is a beautiful photo essay about food in different cultures.:

[http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1626519\\_1373664,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1626519_1373664,00.html)

B) This is a collection of recipes from around the world.:

<http://www.epicurious.com/articlesguides/blogs/80dishes>

## STEP 4

**Design a meaningful task to be done with the authentic material found.**

A) Ask students to choose one of the pictures in the photo essay and do oral presentations where they can name the food they see, analyze healthy and unhealthy choices, and compare with their own typical diet.

B) Have students choose a country and try out a recipe.

## STEP 5

**Provide necessary scaffolding during task.**

General suggestions:

- Pre-teach necessary vocabulary through pictures, mindmaps, etc.
- Monitor students' work and provide language/grammar support as needed, either individually or for the whole class.
- Organize rehearsals for oral presentations and role plays.
- Suggest strategies to optimize learning and organization.

In this particular case, you can provide help with vocabulary related to food and cooking. The use of countable and uncountable nouns will surely come up, too, as will the use of imperatives in instructions for recipes.

# CLIL and Cultural Diversity: A Winning Combination

## Another example:

### STEP 1

#### Topic

Travel and geography

### STEP 2

#### Real life application

Planning a trip

### STEP 3

#### Authentic materials

<http://traveldk.com/>



### STEP 4

#### Task

Ask students to choose a country or their own country (in multicultural settings) and **plan a one-week trip** including the main sights and landmarks. You can limit their budget or the type of traveler (family, adventure, backpacker, luxury) to get them to think more critically.

### STEP 5

#### Scaffolding

In this particular case, you can provide help with vocabulary related to travel and geography, travel related verbs, and descriptive language.

# CLIL and Cultural Diversity: A Winning Combination

## References

---

- Coyle, D., Holmes, B., King, L. (2009). *Towards an integrated curriculum – CLIL National Statement and Guidelines*, The Languages Company.
- Coyle, D., Hood, P., Marsh, D. (2010). *CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Hawkes, R. (2010). *CLIL Presentation* retrieved from <http://www.rachelhawkes.com/PandT/CLIL/CLIL.php>.