CLIL: A Definition
In the last few years, there has been increasing interest in the instructional approach known as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). The acronym itself was first used by David Marsh, University of Jyväskylä, Finland, in 1994, and explained as follows: “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: Dimensions and Focus
CLIL Compendium contributors (A. Maljers, D. Marsh, D. Coyle, A. K. Hartiala, B. Marsland, C. Pérez-Vidal, and D. Wolff), informed by a research-driven project with support from the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission, identified several important dimensions that relate to core principles of this educational approach as it is practiced in Europe. The five dimensions are as follows:

- **The cultural dimension**
  - build intercultural knowledge and understanding
  - develop intercultural communication skills
  - learn about specific neighboring countries, regions, and/or minority groups
  - introduce the wider cultural context

- **The environmental dimension**
  - prepare for internationalization (as in EU integration)
  - access international certification
  - enhance school profile
The language dimension
- improve overall target language competence
- develop oral communication skills
- deepen awareness of both the native language and the target language
- develop multilingual interests and attitudes
- introduce the target language

The content dimension
- provide opportunities to study content through different perspectives
- access subject-specific target language terminology
- prepare for future studies and/or working life

The learning dimension
- complement individual learning strategies
- diversify methods and forms of classroom practice
- increase learner motivation

Student Benefits
Based on the dimensions outlined above, proponents of CLIL list several key benefits for students: increased motivation; meaningful use of English to reach immediate, real-life goals; development of multicultural awareness; and preparation for future studies and work in a global context. In addition, as Berton (2008) states, “learners will develop linguistic and communicative competencies by using language as a tool in a natural and innovative way.”

Teaching Implications
Teachers from subject-area backgrounds and teachers from language backgrounds face different challenges in the CLIL classroom, particularly in the area of methodology. In the typical subject-area classroom, teachers are responsible for covering a large quantity of facts and information required by the school curriculum. Often, the most efficient delivery system involves a lot of lecture and explanation from the front of the class. Students may ask questions from time to time and answer questions from the teacher, but interaction is limited. Teachers usually do not have time to scaffold student learning through modeling, focused vocabulary work, visuals, writing frameworks, or graphic organizers.

In the language classroom, on the other hand, teachers make student interaction a priority through pair and group work and deliberately try to reduce their own “teacher talk” in order to provide maximum production opportunities for students. They sometimes focus on fluency of expression rather than on accuracy and see mistakes as a learning opportunity rather than as a lack of effort on the students’ part to master material. They take the time to scaffold their students’ learning in a variety of ways and provide as much context as possible to help students understand and use their English by supplying many opportunities for repetition and extended practice.

Another challenge for potential CLIL teachers centers on their own degree of familiarity and knowledge in two areas—school subjects and the English language. Subject-area teachers are confident in their command of facts and depth of knowledge, but they may feel their own English language skills aren’t sufficiently developed to teach in the language, and they may have little understanding of second language acquisition or the types of activities that foster it. Language teachers understand how students acquire a second language, have realistic expectations about the length of time and the amount of practice needed, and draw on a repertoire of activities that encourage interaction. They may lack confidence, however, in their command of content areas such as history or science and how to teach them. Clearly, for best results, both sets of teachers will benefit from rethinking their usual practices to some degree in order to adjust to the specific requirements of the CLIL classroom.
CLIL: Effective Teaching Behaviors

According to de Graaff, Koopman, and Westhoff (2007), effective CLIL teachers attend to functional communication, form and meaning, and corrective feedback:

(1) Teachers facilitate exposure to lesson content (input) at a level of challenge just beyond the learners’ current abilities. They carefully select and adapt their texts in advance and provide needed scaffolding.

(2) They facilitate meaning-focused processing through assignment of tasks that involve learners in constructing meaning, check for accuracy of meaning, and provide support and feedback if meaning has been insufficiently understood.

(3) They facilitate form-focused processing by raising learners’ awareness of certain language features and by employing implicit techniques such as clarification requests or recasts, or explicit techniques such as direct teacher correction or peer correction.

(4) Teachers facilitate student response (output) by encouraging peer interaction in the target language, by asking for reactions, and by assigning written practice.

(5) They facilitate the use of receptive and productive compensation strategies to solve problems with language, content, or communication.

Similarly, Coyle (1999) emphasizes the importance of teachers’ inclusion of the following elements in CLIL lessons:

(1) Content—teachers need to facilitate progression in knowledge, skills, and understanding related to specific curriculum targets.

(2) Communication—teachers need to facilitate students’ use of language for content while learning to use language.

(3) Cognition—teachers need to develop students’ thinking skills that link concept formation (abstract and concrete), comprehension, and language.

(4) Culture—teachers need to provide exposure to alternative perspectives and shared understandings, thus deepening awareness of otherness and self.

A CLIL Lesson Framework

Darn (2006) outlines a four-stage framework for CLIL lessons:

(1) Processing the text—the use of texts that include visuals and text structure markers such as headings, subheadings, and features such as bold or italic text for emphasis

(2) Identification and organization of knowledge—the use of graphic organizers such as tree diagrams, timelines, flow charts, and tables

(3) Language identification—the use of language features that help students to reproduce core content knowledge in their own words such as the language of comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and speculation; as well as features such as collocations, subject-specific vocabulary, and academic vocabulary

(4) Tasks for students—the use of a variety of learner-appropriate tasks, both receptive and productive, such as those that follow
**CLIL-Appropriate Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Tasks (receptive)</th>
<th>Speaking Tasks (productive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. listen and label a picture, map, diagram, chart</td>
<td>1. present information from a visual with the use of a language support handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. listen and fill in a table</td>
<td>2. work with a partner or group using information gap activities with a sheet of questions for support</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. listen and reorder information</td>
<td>3. class surveys using questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. listen and identify locations, speakers, places</td>
<td>4. question loops—terms and definitions, halves of sentences, questions and answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. listen and fill in the blanks in a text (cloze)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. listen and label the stages of a process</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. listen and follow instructions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. listen and take notes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In addition to listening and speaking practice, students need meaningful activities that provide support for reading and writing about content in the target language, such as the following:

- **Anticipation guides**: six to eight short statements related to the content students will study, about which students write A (agree)/D (disagree) or T (true)/F (false) before reading (e.g. *An asteroid struck Earth and killed the dinosaurs.*).

- **Blind sequencing**: students in groups receive cards that each have one step or stage of a sequence or process; without looking at each other’s cards, they orally negotiate what they believe the correct order is and lay their cards face down; then they turn over their cards to check the sequence, or read a text and then check their sequence (e.g. *the life cycle of a frog*).

- **Clustering in context**: students see a passage with key words blanked out and call out words they think might fit the context; the teacher writes their words on the board in a circle around an empty central space; finally the proper word is written in the center (e.g. *description and function of the abacus*).

- **DR-TA (Directed Reading-Thinking Activity)**: using a transparency with a title and part of a text at a time, the teacher elicits predictions about the text; students silently read the uncovered portion of the text to confirm their predictions (e.g. *Aesop’s fables*).

- **Expository paragraph frames**: partial paragraph writing guides for students to complete, based on specific content and the text structure/genre used, such as cause & effect, classification, description, exemplification, or process description (e.g. *the reasons why some animals are endangered and may die out*).

- **Graphic organizers**: students may use different types for during-reading and after-reading activities to organize information in the text; students may use other types for prewriting activities to organize ideas for writing (e.g. *solar eclipses*).

- **Jigsaw**: each member of a group (A, B, C, D) is assigned one part of a learning task; class members from other groups get together to study, extend their knowledge, and rehearse (all student As together, all student Bs, all student Cs, all student Ds); original groups of A, B, C, D reunite; each “expert” teaches his/her part of the information to the rest of the group; the learning picture is complete after all members have shared their portions; students may then take a group quiz to test their knowledge and understanding or write a summary of the full content shared and learned (e.g. *the Aztec civilization*).

- **KWHL** (what I Know, what I Want to know, How I can find out, what I Learned): students fill in the first three parts of a chart before reading a text; students summarize what they learned in the chart after reading (e.g. *formation and types of earthquakes*).

- **Think-Pair-Share**: the teacher asks a question, allows individual students to think about it for a few minutes, and then has students form pairs and share their ideas (e.g. *ways to protect the environment*).
## Science Content Objectives
- to understand magnification and distortion
- to describe properties of mirrors and water
- to understand the role of light in magnification and distortion

## Science Process Skills
- to compare and contrast properties of mirrors and water
- to develop a hypothesis
- to observe an experiment to see if water can act like a fun house mirror
- to describe a sequence of events
- to determine cause and effect
- to take notes and record data

## Language Objectives
- to ask and answer questions
- to use content-related and scientific vocabulary
- to use the language of speculation and cause & effect

## Learning Strategies
- to access prior knowledge
- to ask for clarification
- to predict
- to collaborate cooperatively
- to draw conclusions

## Vocabulary
- act like
- distort
- newspaper
- smaller
- bend
- distortion
- outwards
- spoon
- big
- drop
- plastic
- step(s)
- bigger
- enter
- procedure
- stick
- cause
- experiment
- reflect
- surface
- change
- fishbowl
- report
- tall
- clear
- fun house
- short
- text
- curve(d)
- light
- size
- water
- direction
- magnification
- slow down
- distance
- mirror
- small

Can water act like a fun house mirror? If so, why?
What will happen?
I think ________ will happen because ________.
The teacher begins by reminding students of a rhyming poem they read yesterday about a trip to the Fun House and the different mirrors there. She holds up illustrations and repeats the poem as students listen. Then she has them repeat the poem with her as she points to the corresponding pictures. She asks questions about the mirrors: How many mirrors are in the Fun House? Are they all the same? How are they different? What effect do the mirrors have? The class discusses the poem, illustrations, and answers questions.

The teacher passes around a large, shiny metal spoon. Students look at their reflections in the back of the spoon. The teacher encourages the children to say how the spoon is like the Fun House mirrors in the poem: the children's reflections are distorted, just like the reflections in the mirrors.

Next, the teacher poses the research question: Can water act like a fun house mirror? If so, why? She has the children gather around as she conducts an experiment. A page from a newspaper is covered in transparent plastic. She carefully drops ONE large drop of water in the center of the clear plastic. (The curved drop acts as a lens.)

Holding the drop of water on the plastic about an inch or so above the newspaper, she invites the children to look down through it. What do they think they will see? What do they see?

The teacher allows students to experiment with single drops of water of different sizes held at different distances from the newspaper. What do they observe? How does the text change each time? Students report their observations in small groups.

Next the teacher holds up a clear fishbowl full of water. She invites the children to predict what will happen when a student holds the fishbowl in front of his face. The students call out their predictions and then they watch as the student holds the fishbowl in front of his face. The teacher asks if the boy's face is bigger or smaller, and explains that the water has magnified and distorted his face. All the students take turns holding the fishbowl up to their faces and describing the results.

Last, the teacher puts the fishbowl about half full of water on the desk and puts a stick at an angle into the water. Students look down into the bowl. The teacher asks if the stick looks different, and if so, how and why. Students in pairs work out their ideas and then share them with other pairs.

The teacher writes any of their ideas that have relevance on the board, and then explains, using gestures and board drawings to scaffold her explanation: As light enters the water, it slows down. If the surface of the water is curved, it bends the light in a new direction. The curve of the water sends the light outwards, and as it gets bigger, it causes magnification. Students listen to the explanation again, repeating the key ideas out loud. Then they retell what happened in pairs, and finally, write a summary report using sentence frames the teacher writes on the board.

For reinforcement and family involvement, the teacher assigns replication of the experiment with a spoon and a glass of water at home, followed by a written report.

Through content-rich instruction such as the science lesson above, students learn and use language in an immediate and meaningful way. The target language is the vehicle through which they meet social and academic needs, employ learning strategies and critical thinking skills, and expand and display their knowledge of curricular content.
References and Resources


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Diane Pinkley is the former Director of the TC TESOL Certificate Program and full-time faculty member in the TESOL Program and the Department of Arts and Humanities at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York. A well-known teacher trainer, educational consultant, and author in ESL/EFL, she has trained teachers and presented papers at conferences around the world. In addition, she has made major contributions to several bestselling ESL and EFL textbook programs for both children and adults. Formerly the Director of the Institute of North American Studies in Badalona, Spain, and Curriculum Coordinator at the Michigan Language Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan, she has taught all levels of ESL/EFL from kindergarten through college, in addition to American culture and American and British literature.