

**THE CLIL TOOL KIT FOR TEACHERS**  
**TRANSFORMING THEORY INTO PRACTICE**  
(adapted from: D. Coyle, P. Hood, D. Marsh, CLIL, 2010, C.U.P.)

A strong need for a concrete way and for practical tools to use in the classroom has been felt by all teachers around the world: the three researchers mentioned above have suggested processes and tools which can be changed or adapted to suit any context without compromising the need to address fundamental issues of effective and appropriate integration of content and language learning. Everything is built on the theoretical issues raised about methodology and provides a tool kit for teachers to map CLIL practice for their own context and learners.

It is based on two core principles: that all learners have an entitlement to quality teaching and learning environments, and that CLIL has a contribution to make in achieving this.

**Successful CLIL practice** is likely to require teachers to engage in alternative ways of **planning for effective learning**. This is challenge, of course, as teachers are very busy with their school work.

Keeping in mind that there is neither one preferred CLIL model, nor one CLIL methodology, creating a **shared vision for CLIL** has benefits which go beyond CLIL. The CLIL approach is flexible in order to take account of a wide range of contexts: however, for CLIL to be effective, certain fundamental principles must be recognized as essential – it is not the case that any kind of teaching or learning *in another language* is CLIL. Teachers need a common plan: those involved with planning and delivering the CLIL curriculum should have the means to define and support a contextualized interpretation of CLIL, to make explicit the fundamental principles upon which it is based and to put in place rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes.

In other words, there is both the need and the opportunity for teachers to develop professional confidence and to 'own' their practice.

The Tool Kit presented in this article is process-oriented. It describes six stages for creating a personalized Tool Kit. These stages are based on a class-based inquiry approach which stems from the widely used “plan-do-review” cycle.

The Tool Kit starts with the construction of a **SHARED CLIL VISION**. Subsequent stages (analysing and personalizing the context, planning a unit, preparing a unit, monitoring and evaluating CLIL, reflection and inquiry) lead towards the creation of or contribution to collaborative learning communities. In these professional communities, class-based inquiry further informs the development and transformation of CLIL according to context-specific agendas. The need for a continuing quality audit to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the CLIL programme is fundamental to successful classroom teaching and learning: flexibility is not to be mistaken for an “anything goes” approach.

**THE CLIL TOOL KIT**

- **STAGE 1: a shared vision for CLIL**
- **STAGE 2: analysing and personalizing the CLIL context**
- **STAGE 3: planning a unit**
- **STAGE 4: preparing the unit**
- **STAGE 5: monitoring and evaluating CLIL in action**
- **STAGE 6: towards inquiry-based professional learning communities**

## **STAGE 1: A shared vision for CLIL**

The first stage involves those interested in CLIL (language teachers, subject teachers, primary teachers, programme managers and so on) engaging in the construction of a shared vision for CLIL. If there is no tradition of CLIL in a school, the first challenge for pioneers is to bring together a group to share ideas and explore how CLIL might operate in their school. This “starting small” approach may consist, for ex., of one subject teacher and one language teacher or a class teacher working together with a colleague as a critical friend.

As already said above, creating a shared vision has benefits which go beyond CLIL:

*“Vision allows us to look beyond the problems that beset us today, giving direction to our passage into the future. Even more important, vision energizes that passage by inspiring and guiding us into action”*

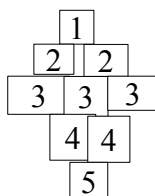
(Papert and Caperton, 1999)

The following ideas are suggestions for supporting dialogue using whichever language seems most appropriate:

- what is our ideal CLIL classroom and what goes on there?
- In an ideal world, what do we want our CLIL learners and teachers to be able to achieve?

A range of brainstorming and discussion techniques for building an ideas bank provides the basis for vision sharing and prioritizing, so that relevant overarching goals can be constructed. These goals will be referred to as “global goals” to describe the longer-term vision for any CLIL programme.

It is extremely important that global goals are owned by the professionals involved. A “diamond 9” activity, for ex., may provide a useful catalyst for identifying and sharing these goals in a reflective and supportive way. Teachers discuss what they want from their CLIL project, discuss each proposal and desire and create a consensual diamond shape which priorities individual statements in order to arrive at a share vision:



While global goals may change over time, nonetheless, it is the initial identification of these goals which provides a collective CLIL vision and which will steer the remaining stages. If, for ex., one of the goals is to encourage learners to talk and use the CLIL vehicular language for learning, then this will not happen by osmosis. Instead, analysing what enables learners to talk is not a theoretical consideration but a pragmatic one which permeates ethos-building, lesson planning, task types and assessment processes:

- what kind of L do learners need in this unit?
- What are the “talk demands” of the task?
- What kind of tasks do we need in order to encourage “talk progression”?
- If we ask learners to discuss or debate, do they have the necessary linguistic support to enable them to do this? If not, what kind of scaffolding will help them?
- Are “talk demands” at an appropriate level for their age and cognitive level of ability?
- Do learners really have to interact to complete these tasks? (and so on)

Such questions will dominate subsequent stages and will act as a planning tool created by teachers for teachers.

*“If you want to improve the quality of teaching, the most effective place to do so is the context of the classroom lesson...the challenge now becomes that of identifying the kinds of changes that will improve student learning ..... of sharing this knowledge with other teachers...”*

(Stigler and Hiebert, 1999)

### **REFLECTION POINTS**

- who are the key players needed to form a CLIL teaching team?
- How can we communicate and share our ideas?
- Do we have a shared vision for CLIL? If so, what is it? If not, how shall we construct one?
- What is our ideal classroom and what goes on there?
- In an ideal setting, what do we want our CLIL learners and teachers to be able to achieve?
- Have we achieved a vision of CLIL which is owned by the group and which prioritizes different elements of our vision? (i.e. What are our global goals?)

As practice develops, visions can and do change over time. It is desirable that the CLIL vision is seen as a dynamic and iterative process which might change as the stages lead to reflection and review.

### **STAGE 2: Analysing and personalizing the CLIL context**

This stage requires those responsible for the CLIL programme to construct a model for CLIL which not only grows from the vision created in Stage 1 but which also reflects the local situation: school type and size, environment, teacher supply, regional as well as national policies, all have a role to play in determining the type of CLIL appropriate for different contexts. Different variants of CLIL are best seen on a continuum where the learning focus and outcomes differ according to the context in which a model is adopted.

While each CLIL model will have its own global goals, different models all share a common founding belief: that CLIL has a valid contribution to make to personal development and preparation for working in a plurilingual world through the integration, in some way, of content learning and language learning.

## REFLECTION POINTS

- how can we as teachers share our ideas and skills?
- Is there a leadership support for CLIL? What are the implications of the support?
- Who is involved in the teaching and the learning? Subject teachers? Language teachers? General teachers? Assistants? All of these?
- What are the implications of the above for constructing an own CLIL model? (e.g. Which subjects, themes, topics and languages? Which learners, classes?)
- which are the implications of the above for less capable learners?
- Does our CLIL programme have a dominant language, subject or citizenship orientation or are these integrated? What are the implications?
- How do our global goals impact on our CLIL model?
- How do we involve the wider community, such as parents, carers and significant others?
- Have we agreed on contextual opportunities and constraints?

### **STAGE 3: Planning a unit**

Stage 3 provides a planning map for CLIL. It consists of four different planning steps using the 4Cs Framework and other conceptual tools which form part of the Tool Kit.

Let's briefly revisit the 4Cs framework:

#### **CONTENT : progression in new knowledge, skills and understanding**

Content is the subject or the CLIL theme. It does not have to be part of a discrete curriculum discipline such as maths or history, it can be drawn from alternative approaches to a curriculum involving cross-curricular and integrated studies. It is useful to think of content in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding we wish our learners to access, rather than simply knowledge acquisition.

#### **COMMUNICATION: interaction, progression in language using and learning**

Language is a means for communication and for learning which can be described as *learning to use language and using language to learn*. Communication in this sense goes beyond the grammar system, but at the same time does not reject the essential role of grammar and lexis in language learning. It involves the learners in using language in a way which is often different from more traditional language lessons.

It is perhaps useful to differentiate between **language learning** (often with an emphasis on grammatical progression) and **language using** (with an emphasis on the communication and learning demands of the moment).

CLIL integrates content learning and language learning so that both are important.

**COGNITION: engagement in higher-order thinking and understanding, problem solving, and accepting challenges and reflecting on them**

For CLIL to be effective, it must challenge learners to create new knowledge and develop new skills through reflection and engagement in higher-order as well as lower-order thinking .

**CLIL is not about the transfer of knowledge from an expert to a novice. CLIL is about allowing individuals to construct their own understanding and be challenged – whatever their age or ability.**

A useful taxonomy to guide planning for cognitive challenge is that of Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), since it explores the relationship between cognitive processing (learning) and knowledge acquisition (of content) particularly relevant to CLIL. It is not suggested that taxonomies are rigidly followed, but rather that they serve as a stimulus and reference for planning, discussion and evaluating practice.

**CULTURE (also called intercultural understanding or global citizenship): “self” and “other” awareness, identity, citizenship, and progression towards pluricultural understanding**

Culture is not a postscript. It is a thread which weaves its way throughout any topic or theme. Sometimes referred to as the “forgotten C”, it adds learning value to CLIL contexts, yet demands careful consideration. For our pluricultural and plurilingual world to be celebrated and its potential realized, this demands tolerance and understanding.

Studying through a different language is fundamental to fostering international understanding. If learners understand the concept of “otherness” then this is likely to lead to a deeper understanding of “self”. It could be argued that in the CLIL classroom the use of appropriate authentic materials and intercultural curricular linking can contribute to a deeper understanding of difference and similarities between cultures, which in turn impacts on discovering “self”. CLIL offers rich potential for developing notions of pluricultural citizenship and global understanding but these need to be planned and transparent.

Extending CLIL content to include intercultural understanding is not always obvious. It needs to be thought through to ensure meaningful connections rather than tokenistic reference. In CLIL, culture can include extending the content (for ex., “the bicycle as a means of transport across the world” as a topic in a technology class), setting the context of the content in different cultures (for ex., investigating patterns in Asian and European architecture in a mathematic or design class), discussing how learners in different cultures might approach the same content topic (for ex., attitudes to recycling) or exploring and interpreting the curriculum as a global citizen.

Whilst the 4Cs can be outlined individually, they do not exist as separate elements. **Connecting the 4Cs into an integrated whole is fundamental to planning.** For ex., exploring how cognitive elements interconnect with content will determine the type of tasks which will be planned. Similarly, relating cognition to communication will demand careful consideration of classroom activities to ensure that learners not only have access to the content language, but also to the classroom language needed to carry out the tasks.

However, it is CONTENT which initially guides the overall planning along the learning route. This is to avoid limiting or reducing the content to match the linguistic level of the learners. The learners will probably need to access some linguistic forms in CLIL lessons before they have met them “formally” in a second or additional language grammar lesson.

For example, in a science experiment, the context demands that learners use the past tense to give an explanation of what happens when chemicals react. Moreover, this explanation will have to follow the “norms” of reporting a science experiment. In other words, the CLIL lessons will have to enable the learners to use the past tense appropriately and follow the discourse norms of the subject, thereby using the CLIL language in alternative ways. It is unlikely, however, that learners will have linguistic levels in the CLIL language which match their cognitive levels. It is not pedagogically acceptable for learners to be reduced either to using inappropriate tenses or to using language phrases which are cognitively undemanding (the “I like it because I like it” syndrome) unless justified as confidence-building and using the familiar as a springboard at the start of a unit.

Moreover, trying to progress the language too quickly without remedial work, practice and recycling linguistic functions and notions may result in confusion, error and demotivation.

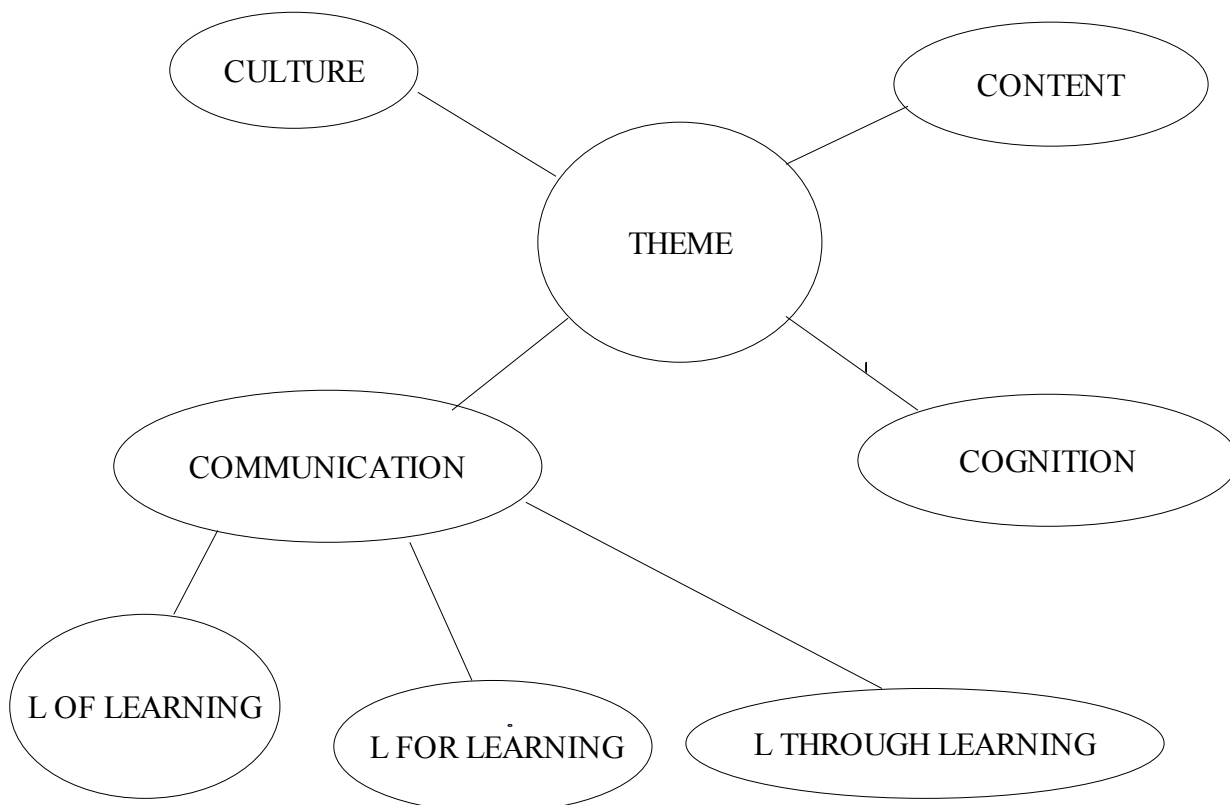
CLIL integrates language learning and content learning at cognitive and cultural levels appropriate to the learners. It is this integration which results in new learning scenarios which are different from regular language and content lessons.

CLIL demands careful progression in all Cs, and the Cs may progress at different rates depending on the context. This enables teachers to adopt a more holistic and inclusive approach to classroom practice. Global goals may be a useful starting point but more detailed planning may be facilitated by using the 4Cs Framework.

Stage 3 is the most detailed stage in the planning process. It involves careful analysis of different elements of CLIL as suggested in the 4Cs Framework. It is heartily recommended to use a mind map or similar visual organizer to create a unit of work. A unit might consist of a series of lessons over a specified period of time or a theme.

Planners must have an overview of a unit, consisting of key elements and prioritized aspects for teaching and learning.

The following illustration can be used as a starting point :



## Mind Map template

- **Global Goal** : .....
- **Unit Title** : .....

Throughout the four steps we construct a mind map using the template to build up an overview of an example unit, concluding with the complete mind map you will see later in this article (pag.19 ). This process does not go into the detail of an individual lesson planning. Lesson plans require the completed map to provide the stimulus for task design and sequencing across different lessons of a unit. The mind map presented here draws on a similar one created by a team of CLIL teachers in a planning workshop. The theme of their unit is *Habitats*. The teachers explored each step in depth, selecting questions, discussing them and adding points to their mind map. The teachers were working with learners at lower-secondary level.

The global goal was to encourage more spontaneous talk among the learners.

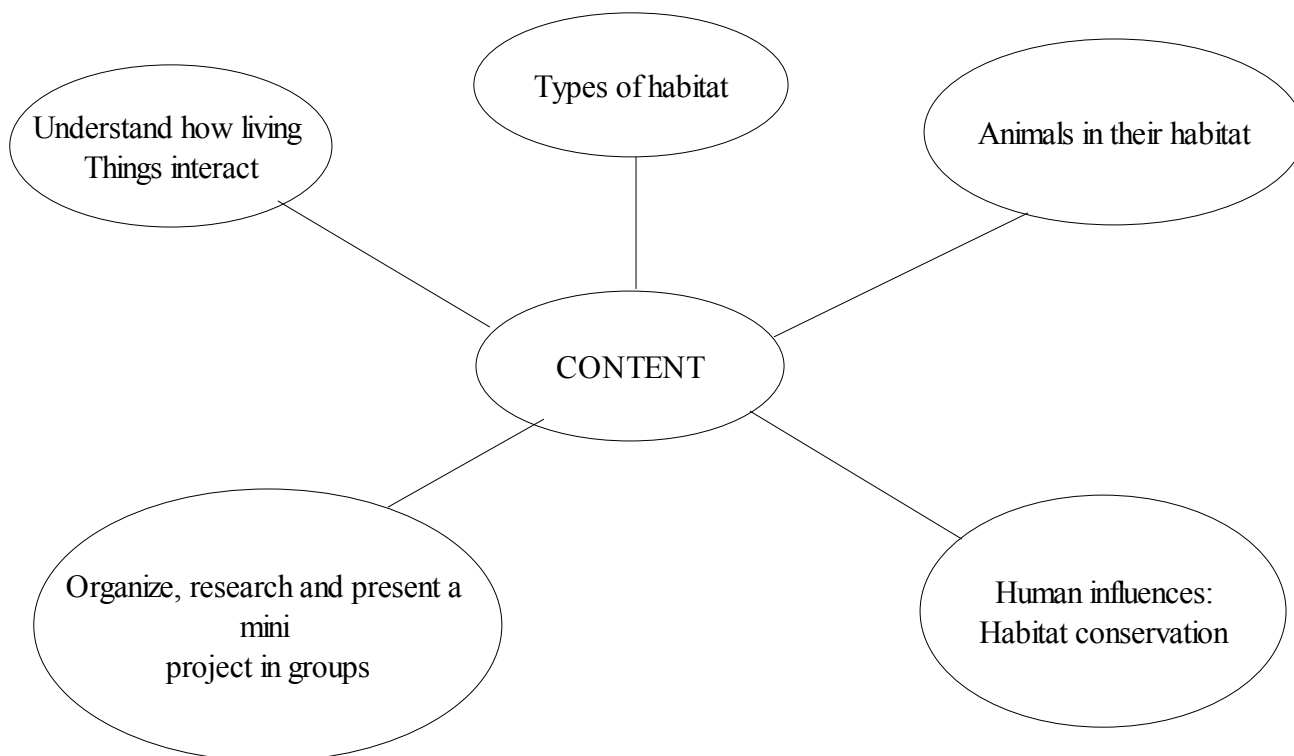
- **Global Goal** : **encourage learners to talk more confidently**
- **Unit Title** : **Habitats**

## FOUR STEPS FOR UNIT PLANNING

### STEP 1: considering content

#### Reflection points:

- is there a choice of content? If so, which is the most appropriate for our CLIL setting?
- Do we have to use an existing syllabus or curriculum?
- How will we select new knowledge, skills and understanding of the theme we teach?
- What will the students learn? (i.e. What are the learning outcomes?)
- is progression in learning taken into account?
- Do we have to prioritize the content to be included?
- How does the content develop our global goal(s)?

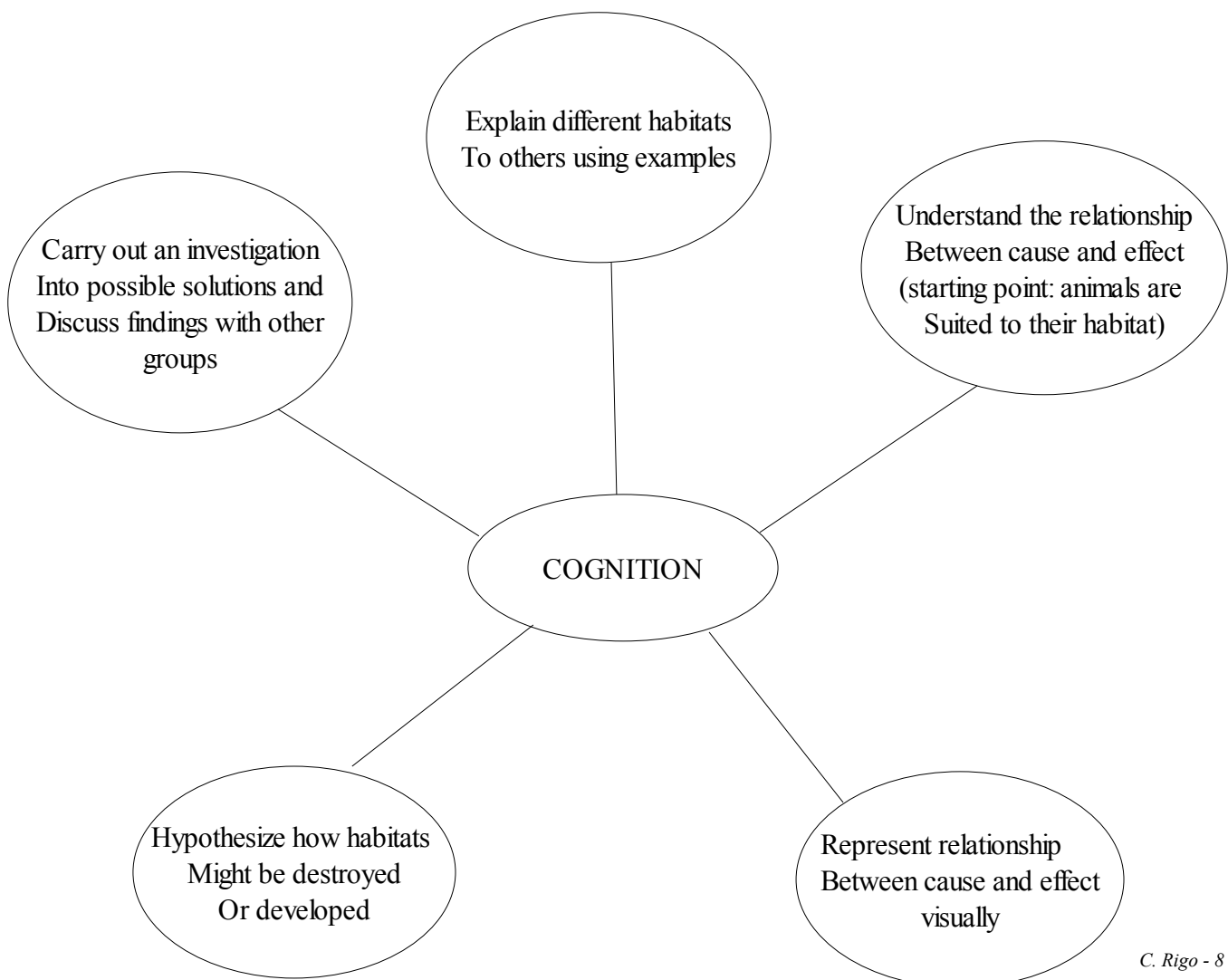


## **STEP 2: connecting content and cognition**

Given and outline of the content, the next step is to analyse and select the thinking skills, problem solving and creativity which connect with the content. This process ensures that the cognitive level of the CLIL unit relates to the learners' own levels of development.

### **Reflection points:**

- use a taxonomy of thinking skills such as Bloom's (1956) or Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) for reference. Which cognitive skills seem to be most appropriate for developments in terms of the content?
- Are we encouraging the use of higher-order thinking such as hypothesizing and problem solving as well as lower-order thinking such as remembering, understanding and applying new knowledge?
- Which activities or task types are likely to encourage the development of these skills?
- How do we deal with the linguistic demands of these tasks to ensure linguistic progression?
- What kind of questions must we ask in order to go beyond “display” questions and present students with challenging problem-solving, hypothesizing, analysing and evaluation tasks?
- What kind of questions do we want our learners to ask?
- Have students been given opportunities to discuss their new knowledge and understanding?
- How do we know what the students have learned? How are our formative assessment tasks used to inform further learning?
- How does/do our global goal(s) fit with developing cognition?



### **STEP 3: communication: defining language learning and using**

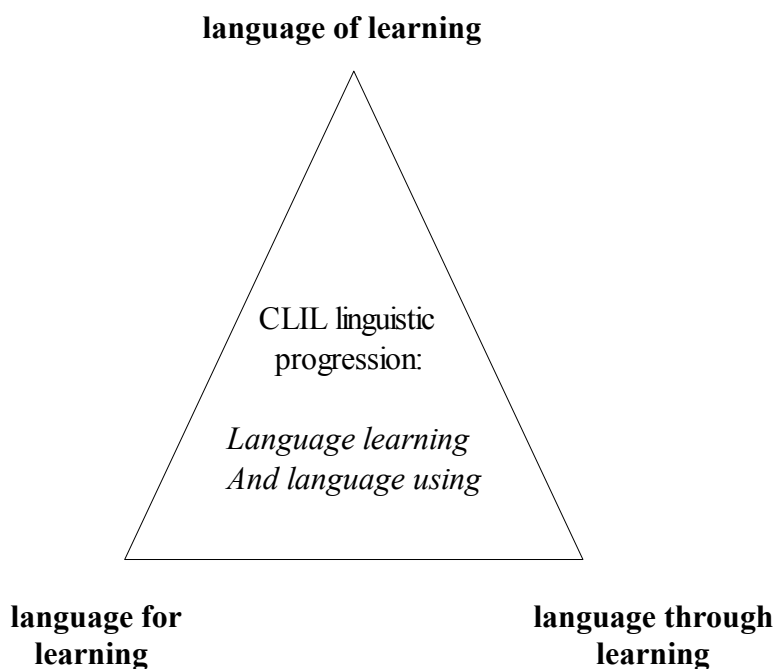
The next step links the content and cognitive demands with communication, using the Language Triptych (language *of, for* and *through* learning).

This step is perhaps the most challenging: for subject teachers it demands an awareness of different types of language used for different purposes; for language teachers it requires an alternative approach to language learning and language using without rejecting successful classroom practice. It uses a pragmatic as well as a linguistic approach to developing language through use. It is not built on a grammatical model where progression focuses on a gradation of grammatical concepts but incorporates grammatical progression from different perspectives. It relates language learning to progression through the conceptual understanding of the content, rather than progression in grammatical awareness typified by learning present tense before past tense and so on.

The Triptych does not reject grammar learning but instead approaches it initially through content demands.

Identifying the language needed to learn in a CLIL classroom demands systematic analysis at the planning stage. The analysis reaches far beyond key words and phrases and other grammatical functions. It addresses progression in form and function, process and outcomes, and encourages the creative use of spontaneous language by learners.

#### ***THE LANGUAGE TRIPTYCH***

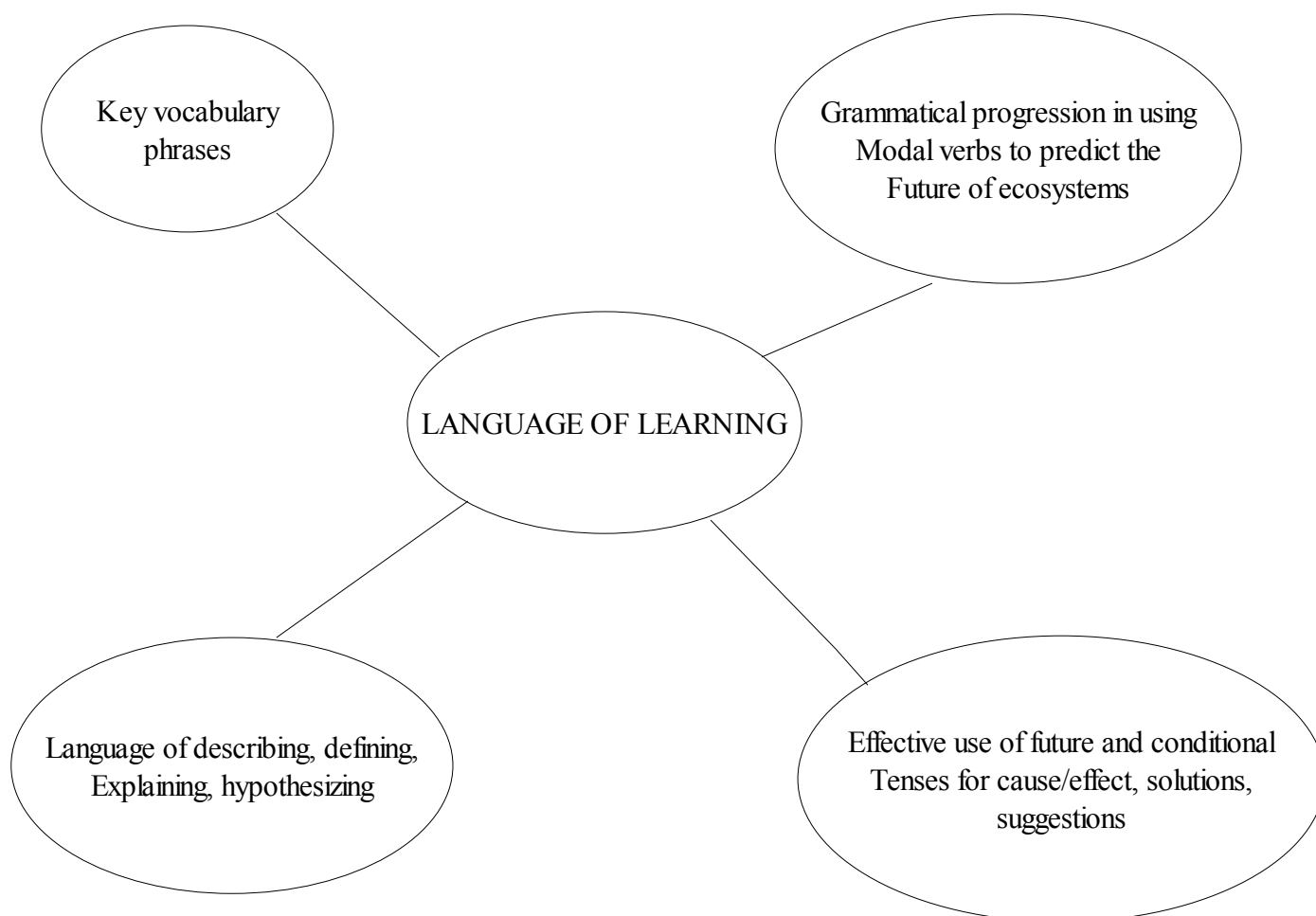


The term “triptych” is used to identify an image consisting of three linked parts. It is advisable to familiarizing the CLIL planning team with these elements before planning.

***Language of learning:*** this aspect explores what language learners will need to access new knowledge and understanding when dealing with the content. In the case of the *HABITATS* example, the language *of* learning consists of the key vocabulary and phrases related to habitats, deforestation, human influences, and so on. However, it goes beyond a list of key phrases. If the learners are required to define habitats, they will need to embed the lexis into “defining” language. It is not enough to simply identify key words and phrases without considering *how* learners will need to use them in order to learn.

### Reflection points:

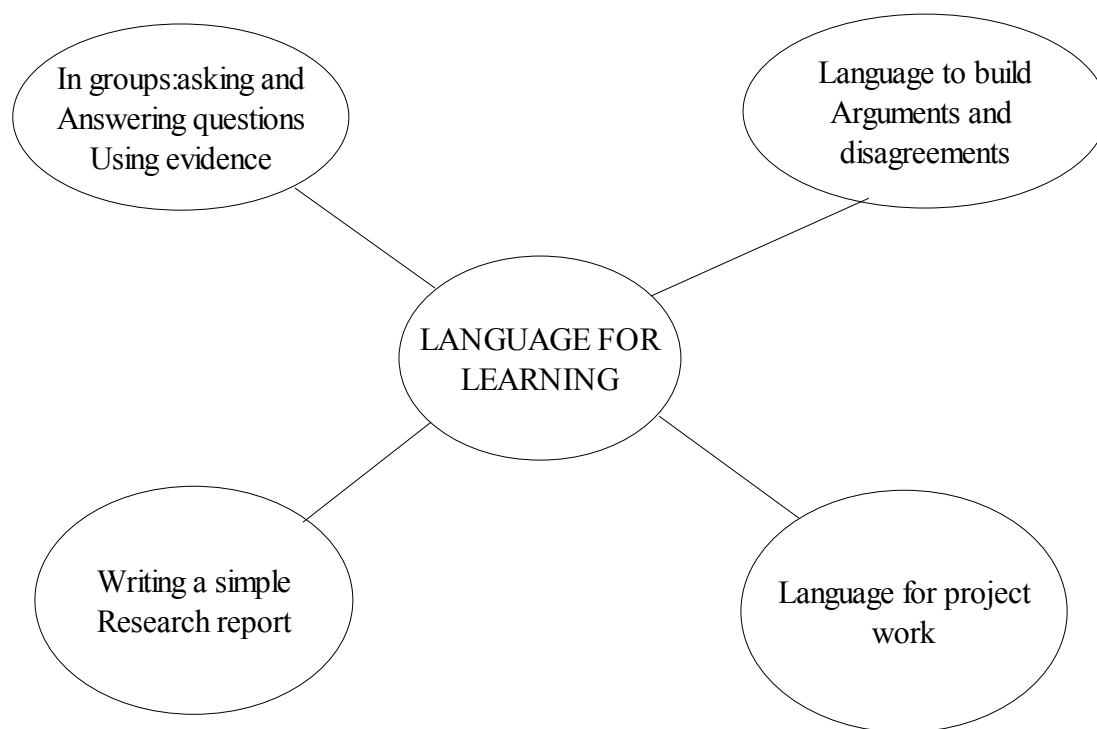
- what type of language (genre) does this subject or theme use? How shall we ensure learners have access to this?
- Define the content-obligatory language, such as key words, phrase and grammatical demands of the unit (e.g. The language of discussing, hypothesizing, analysing). How is this introduced and practiced?
- What kind of talk do learners need to engage in and how do we build in progression over time? (e.g. The extension of the language of discussion over several lessons)
- what is the most effective way of teaching the language of learning? (e.g. Specific tasks, content-embedded practice, grammar rules)
- which of the identified language and skills shall we target for development in this particular unit?



**Language for learning:** the language for learning is the most crucial element for successful CLIL, as it makes transparent the language needed by learners to operate in a learning environment where the medium is not their first language.. In the *Habitats* project, language **for** learning is linked to the language students will need during lessons to carry out the planned activities effectively. For example, if the students are required to organize, research and present a mini-project, then they will need language which will enable them to work successfully in groups, carry out their research and present their work without reading from a sheet.

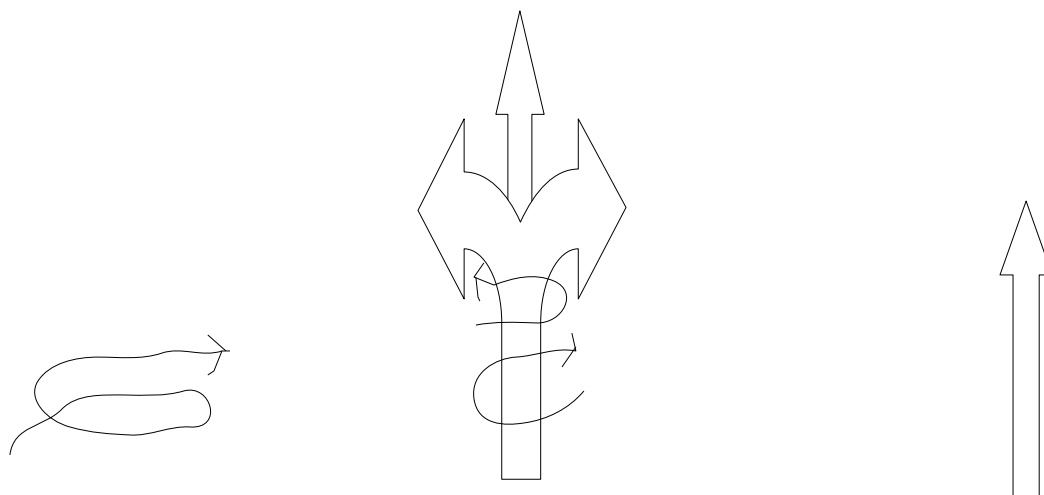
### Reflection points:

- What kind of language do learners need to operate effectively in this CLIL unit?
- What are the possible language demands of typical tasks and classroom activities? (e.g. How to work in groups, organize research)
- How will this be taught?
- Which language skills will need to be developed? (e.g. Discussion skills)
- How are we developing metacognitive strategies? (learning how to learn, e.g. Reading strategies, comprehension strategies)
- How can learning be scaffolded (supported) by the teaching and learning of specific language? (e.g. Language used to seek additional information, assistance, explanation and access to other sources)
- How do students practise their new language and recycle familiar language?
- Have we prioritized the language for learning in this unit in relation to the content? (i.e. What students need to know at which stage of the content, e.g. Focus on developing reasoning, making a case)
- Is the language which is used to assess the learning accessible to the learners?



**Language through learning:** new language will emerge *through* learning. Not all the CLIL language needed can be planned for. As new knowledge, skills and understanding develop, then so will new language. Moreover, as language is linked to cognitive processing, it is important to make use of opportunities (both spontaneous and planned) to advance learning, to encourage learners to articulate their understanding, which in turn advances new learning. The challenge for teachers is how to capitalize on, recycle and extend new language so that it becomes embedded in the learners' repertoire. Language progression in this sense can be defined as the systematic development of emerging language from specific contexts, supported by structured grammatical awareness, using language in new ways.

Thinking of these processes as a spiral is helpful:



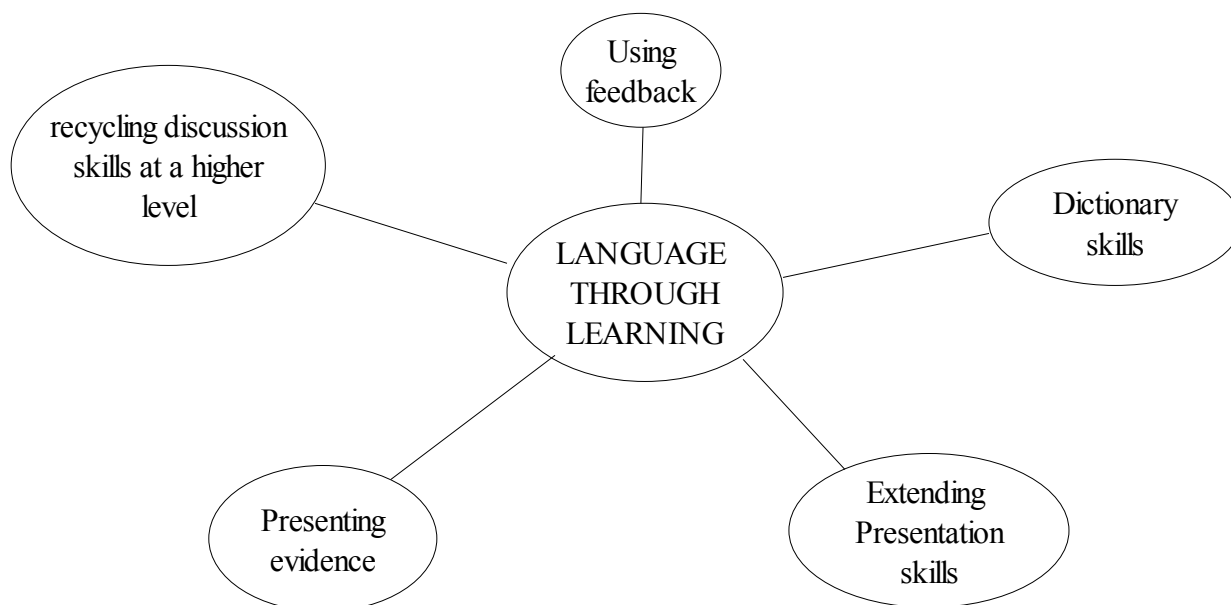
**communication**  
language using

**grammar gains**  
language learning

It also provides an alternative approach to a transmission model where either much of the language input is pre-determined or translated from the first L. In the *Habitats* project, language *through* learning may emerge if, for ex., during the mini-project preparation, students working in groups need language to express a new idea which they have constructed and which is not in their resources – this might involve dictionary work and teacher support.

**Reflection points:**

- what necessary language functions and notions do the students know already? How can these be practised and extended?
- What strategies can our learners use to access new language for themselves?
- When new language emerges, how shall we capture and select language for further development?
- How can we define language progression in this unit?

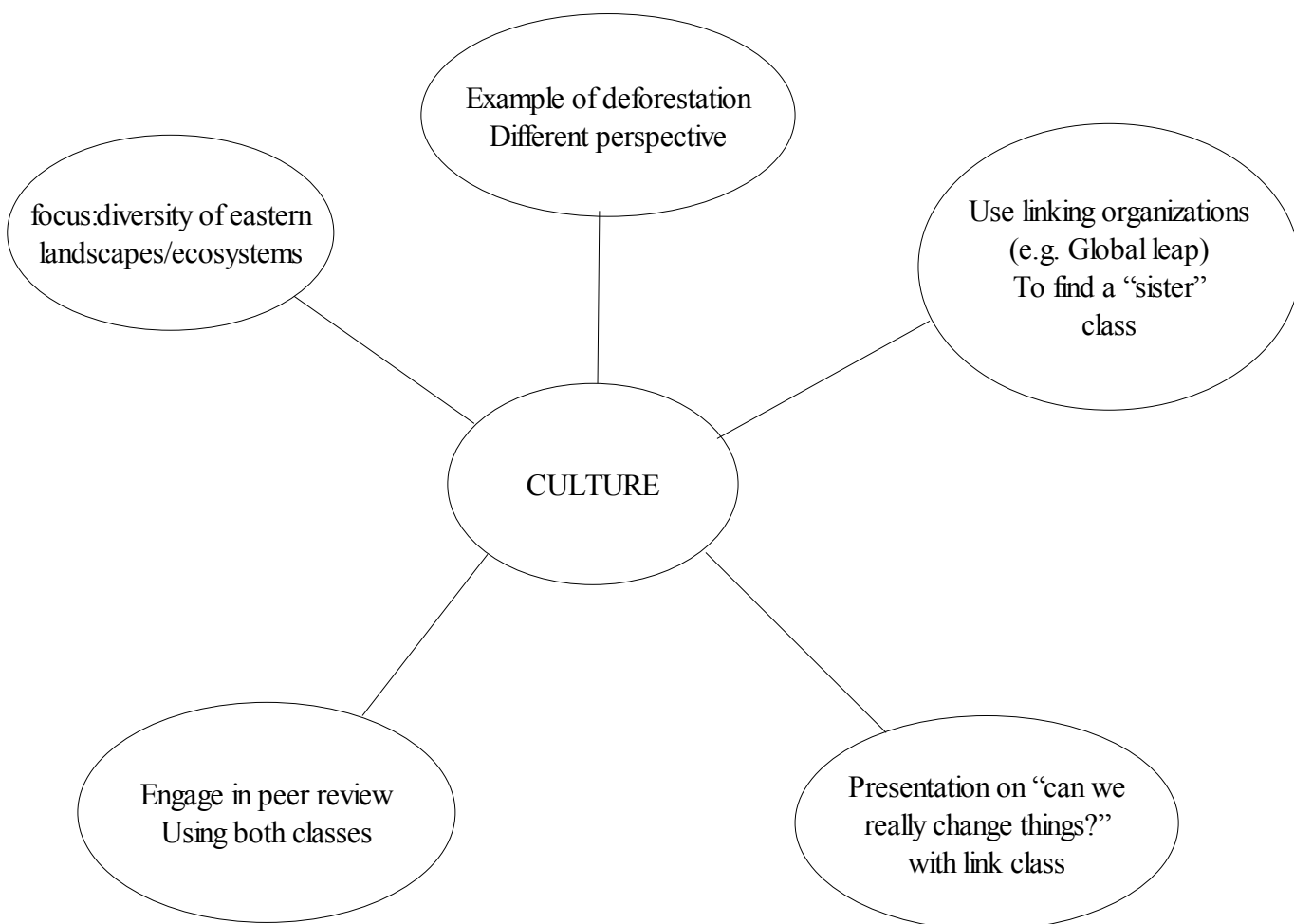


#### **STEP 4: developing cultural awareness and opportunities**

Integrating cultural opportunities into the CLIL classroom is not an option, it is a necessity. Intercultural experiences can be developed from different perspectives to make CLIL a “lived-through” experience: for ex., through the ethos of the classroom, through curriculum linking with other classes, through the content of the unit or through connections made with the wider world. As technology becomes more readily available and a feasible option for many schools, it is likely that such links may well involve a range of technologies.

#### **Reflection points:**

- what different types of cultural implications are there for development in this topic?
- Can the content be adapted to make the cultural agenda more accessible?
- How do we actively involve the learners in developing their pluricultural understanding?
- What is the approach to CLIL culture in our school and beyond?
- What kind of curriculum links are available with other schools (regional, national, global)?  
How can these be best used?
- Where is the added value of studying this topic through the medium of another language?  
What opportunities arise?
- How does culture impact on the other Cs?



By constructing these maps, teachers “own” the process. The time invested in such rigorous planning embeds CLIL pedagogies in classroom practice. The questions seek to move professional thinking forwards in a collaborative and supportive way. In other words, the mind-mapping process involves CLIL teachers in selecting and prioritizing *what* will be taught and *how* within the context of their own schools or institutions. A sharp focus on which elements of the 4Cs most appropriately fit in the global goals, the aims and objectives of the unit and the context in which it will be taught is crucial for overall effective planning and to ensure that learners progression over time is systematically reviewed.

The 4Cs Framework can be adapted, changed and re-worked according to different contextual priorities. It is not a set formula.

#### **STAGE 4: Preparing the unit**

At the fourth stage, the mind map is transformed into materials, resources, tasks and activities. It involves bringing together good practice in non-CLIL settings with alternative approaches in order to match the demands of the teaching aims and outcomes determined by the unit. It involves the careful analysis of the map into a series of lessons based on the identified key elements.

In some countries, the textbook is the determinant of classroom practice. This is not in CLIL. Since innovation and change make demands on the people involved, developing professional learning communities within and between institutions for sharing resources and ideas is a practical way forward. More CLIL digital networks are emerging and with them teacher support, material banks and repositories.

It is also worth revisiting the role of what is arguably a teacher's most important resource: **the use of questions**. In CLIL environments, where cognition is integrated with learning and communication, teacher questioning, which encourages learner questioning, is fundamental to higher-order thinking skills, creativity and linguistic progression. Giving answers to learners such as “good”, “right”, “no” limits communication. So, working with a range of question types for opening up communication in line with the subject demands reminds us that CLIL is about effective classroom practice. However, the more demanding the questions, the more attention will be needed to ensure that learners can access the language needed to respond to and develop them. Perhaps the “richest” tool for any CLIL teacher is asking learners the question “why?”, since a response activates a thread of simultaneous and integrated learning demands embedded in the 4Cs.

#### **Reflection points:**

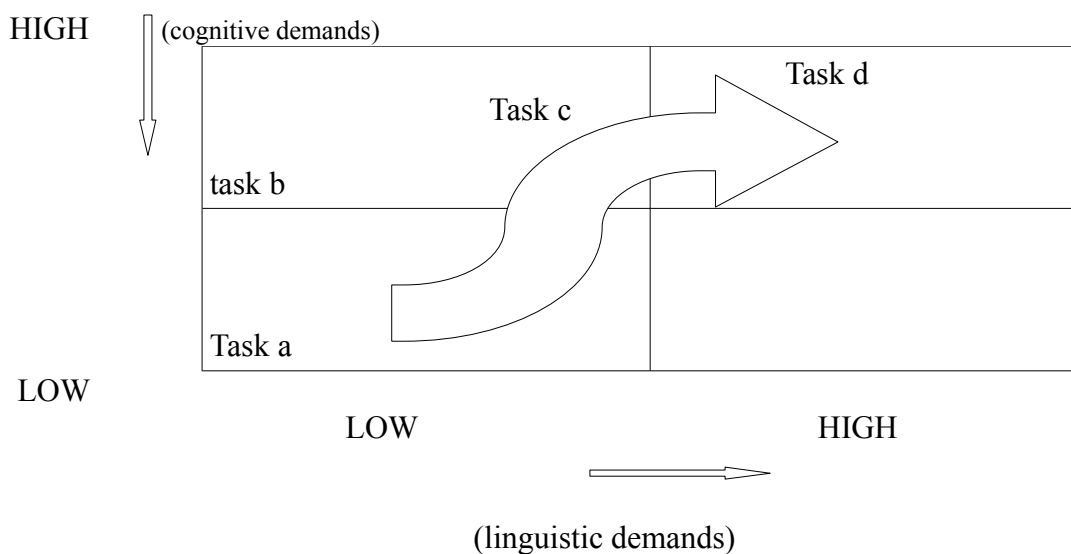
- which materials/units are already available? How appropriate are they?
- Which resources need adapting and how?
- Which resources can be accessed via the Internet?
- Are there CLIL materials banks in our region? If not, how can we create them?
- How do we extend our repertoire of tasks and activities?
- Can we share lesson plan templates across institutions and contexts?
- What makes a good CLIL lesson?
- How can we ensure cohesion between our teaching aims and the learning outcomes?
- How can we plan for learners progression noting that, from a holistic view, students are not expected to develop across the 4Cs at the same rate (does this depend on the type of unit)?

## **STAGE 5: monitoring and evaluating CLIL in action**

Monitoring the development of a unit and evaluating the processes and outcomes are integral to the teaching and learning process. This stage, however, is not about assessing student learning. By contrast, it focuses on understanding classroom processes as they evolve to gain insights which inform future planning.

One of the greatest challenges for CLIL teachers is to develop a learning environment which is linguistically accessible whilst being cognitively demanding: one in which progression in both language and content learning develops systematically.

The CLIL Matrix (adapted from Cummins, 1984) is a tool which CLIL teachers find useful for “measuring” and analysing the interconnectedness of cognitive and linguistic levels of tasks and materials used during a unit.



Positioning tasks in appropriate quadrants illustrates how the CLIL Matrix can be used to monitor, sequence and scaffold learning. When tasks and activities are selected across a CLIL unit, a detailed picture emerges. The results provide CLIL teachers with a means to audit tasks and activities, to match these to their learners' needs and to monitor learning progression in terms of linguistic and cognitive development. The tasks follow a route from low linguistic and cognitive demands to high linguistic and cognitive demands.

Task (a) is aimed at instilling confidence in the learners by starting with familiar work as a point of reference. Task (b) uses recycled language but this task makes cognitive demands on the learners by introducing abstract concepts whilst using visuals to scaffold the new knowledge. Task (c) continues to develop new knowledge, but this time the language demands involve extending familiar language into more complex structures required to carry out the activity. The final task (d) incorporates new language and new content where the learners are engaged in cooperative group work supported by technological and teacher mediation. The new language is practised in different ways.

The CLIL Matrix of course raises issues for discussion among teachers, such as what is meant by “cognitively demanding” and “linguistically accessible” in specific contexts. Teachers have reported that the CLIL Matrix can reveal challenging information and unexpected gaps in support for learners progression.

### REFLECTION POINTS:

- how can we monitor students progression in their learning?
- what kind of formative and summative feedback tasks are built in?
- have we used the CLIL Matrix for a materials and task audit? Which quadrant and why?
- have we consulted learners about their progress and made it visible?
- have we built in times to revisit the unit mind map?

### **STAGE 6: Towards inquiry-based professional learning communities**

To develop as CLIL professionals, to gain confidence, to explore the CLIL agenda, to take risks and move beyond the familiar, it is desirable that teachers belong to or build a professional learning community where everyone considers themselves learners as well as teachers. This involves teachers sharing their own understanding of what is to be taught and learned, transforming ideas into “teachable” and “learnable” activities, connecting these with decisions about the optimal organization of the learning environment, followed by evaluation, reflection and new understandings for classroom teaching and learning. This mirrors the classroom learning cycle and supports teachers in asking questions about their own practice: **ISOLATED PROFESSIONALS RARELY HAVE THESE OPPORTUNITIES.**

For professional communities to be organic, they need to have a sense of purpose and involve a wide range of professionals in collaborative and innovative projects, as well as supporting each other in a “safe” environment:

*“One of the most powerful resources that people in any organisation have for learning and improving is each other. Knowledge economies depend on collective intelligence and social capital . Including ways of sharing and developing knowledge among fellow professionals. Sharing ideas and expertise, providing moral support when dealing with new and difficult challenges, discussing complex individual cases together: this is the essence of strong collegiality and the basis for professional communities.*

(Hargreaves, 2003, *Teaching in the knowledge society*)

The following section gives an example of how a particular approach, LOCIT, has been successfully used by a range of teachers to provide a concrete way to share and discuss their classroom practice.

### **LOCIT: Lesson Observation and Critical Incident Techniques**

Sharing classroom practice in a forum which goes beyond materials preparation and learning outcomes involves CLIL teachers in constructing their own theories of practice. Over 30 years ago, Stenhouse noted: “It is not enough that teachers' work should be studied: they need to study it themselves”.

The idea of “owning” their practice is particularly important for teachers: they need to share reflections on CLIL practice in order to move towards sharing inquiry-based practice. Teachers' awareness-raising collaboration turns the classroom from a field of activity into a subject of enquiry which can promote deep and lasting changes in educational practice.

In conjunction with the classroom research cycle (the “plan-do.review cycle”) a more recent contribution to the development of professional learning which involves inquiry-based practice is

the Lesson Observation and Critical Incident Technique process (Coyle, 2005, *Developing CLIL: towards a theory of Practice*).

Used extensively with groups of CLIL teachers, LOCIT's overarching goal is **to provide a framework for professional collaboration, confidence-building and theory development** from a “bottom-up” or practical perspective **The LOCIT process encourages teachers to work closely with each other to act as a supportive “critical friend”**: someone who is trusted to provide constructive feedback. LOCIT colleagues are “buddies”: professionals who support and trust other professionals, who engage in supportive yet analytical dialogue.

### **So, what is LOCIT?**

The LOCIT process involves filming a whole lesson or series of lessons, editing the key “learning moments” and comparing edited clips with learners and colleagues. The lesson selected for analysis is one chosen by the teachers or learners. When classroom learning is captured and discussed by teachers and learners together, it leads to shared understandings of learning which impact on practice. In other words, lessons are reviewed and analysed using the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) for reflection and in-depth, focused discussion. LOCIT involves listening to and working with learners and aims to give them a “voice” to articulate their own learning. It defines and compares different “learning moments” and above all it is positive and constructive.

In the early stages of LOCIT, teachers often choose to record a lesson where they are confident that some good practice will be captured. In some cases a colleague observes the lesson, or the observation is carried out by a “buddy” from a CLIL network school using video conferencing. It is also usual that the CLIL teacher will have an identified focus for developing CLIL learning in the classroom, such as exploring question techniques or encouraging learner talk.

Once a CLIL lesson has been recorded (LO), the next step is for participants to review, analyse and edit the film. The edited version of selected video clips must be no longer than 10-15 minutes. The objective of the analysis is to capture moments in a lesson when the teachers, colleagues and learners consider that learning has taken place. The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) therefore guides the editing process of a particular lesson and first requires the editors (teacher, colleagues and/or students) to select small clips which in their view represent “learning moments” in the lesson, often using agreed questions such as “when did new learning occur in the lesson?”, “How did it happen?”, “why did it happen?”.

The CIT analysis demands reflection and discussion. For ex., reviewing the lesson in small groups and describing the learning moments in a variety of ways, such as written descriptors, grids or oral reports, is feasible. Those involved in the LOCIT process need to select retrospective learning moments. In so doing, learners engage in shared reflections on what enables them to learn.

The final stage is to compare the edited versions – either in class with students to encourage reflection and discussion about CLIL learning, or between colleagues/researchers, which tends to focus more on teaching. The edits act as a catalyst for deep discussion, comparisons and reflections on different aspects of CLIL practice. These discussions provide feedback which guides future planning and provides a forum for prioritizing classroom practice. In effect, these “learning conversations” form the basis of an organic theory of practice, owned by teachers, learners and colleagues:

*“Since all teachers have a theory of teaching, at least an implicit one, the first task of curricular renewal is to invite interested teachers to examine their own theory, making it explicit... and determine options for pedagogical action on its basis”*

(Van Lier, 1996, *Interaction in the language curriculum: Awareness, Autonomy and Authenticity*)

### REFLECTION POINTS

- what methods can we use to evaluate what we have done and identify lessons learned?
- how can we feed into the next cycle what was successful and change what was not?
  - can we review progress with colleagues using LOCIT?
  - How can we network and share materials with others?
- how can we network with other teachers and students outside our school?
  - Where can we find more good ideas?
- how does this experience enable us to reflect on our professional learning? What works well? What doesn't , and what must we do as a result?
- are we constructing our own theory of practice? If so, can we talk it through?

To sum up, what is presented here is a series of tools which can be used and adapted for guiding CLIL practice: from the initial steps of **sharing a vision** to the **planning, teaching and monitoring of learning** and, to complete the cycle, a **reflection of classroom events**.

However, is the **collaboration with other CLIL colleagues which feeds and supports our professional thinking and ideas** . Professional learning communities where teachers can work together are fundamental to our work.

The LOCIT process serves as a useful starting point for community building since sharing video clips is a tangible event. This sharing process starts well within an institution but begins to gain momentum when it connects teachers from a range of institutions, at different levels and from different subject orientations. CLIL science teachers have something to share with CLIL geography teachers or primary language teachers since the LOCIT clips do not focus on the subject itself, but at a deeper level on CLIL learning.

Sharing ideas with evidence about how students of any age think they learn enables teachers to construct their own theories of practice, based on professional beliefs and practiced-based evidence about how and why their students learn.

Bringing CLIL teachers together in this way can lead to a deeper understanding of shared and individual practice, articulating what works and what doesn't in classrooms and why.

As a postscript, we would like to reiterate that ideas and suggestions are not meant to be interpreted as formulaic prescriptions for CLIL practice: instead, they should stimulate debate and trigger ideas for individuals and groups to make sense of effective CLIL practice in their own settings, yet shared across CLIL communities and with other professionals. The focus is always on effective teaching and learning.

**CLIL : Lesson plan****GLOBAL GOAL: develop spontaneous talk****UNIT: What are ecosystems?****LEVEL: 4<sup>th</sup> grade****TIMING: 2 lessons**

<b>AIMS</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to present the content of the unit</li> <li>- to introduce the concept of <i>Ecosystem</i> and its main features</li> <li>- to make learners aware of and build on prior knowledge of ecosystems and living things</li> <li>- to help learners understand that learning can be achieved in a second language</li> <li>- to help learners understand that keeping a record of new words is important (their very own “top ten word chart”)</li> </ul>		
<b>CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT</b>		
<p>Teacher, peer- and self-assessment processes will be used to assess how well learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand ecosystems</li> <li>- distinguish between different types of ecosystems</li> <li>- recognize and classify living things</li> <li>- identify how animals adapt</li> <li>- construct and use a KWL chart (what I <b>know</b>, what I <b>want</b> to know, what I <b>learned</b>)</li> <li>- contribute to and use the classroom vocabulary chart</li> </ul>		
<b>TEACHING OBJECTIVES (what I plan to teach)</b>		
<b>Content</b>		<b>Cognition</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- introduction of the topic</li> <li>- what ecosystems are</li> <li>- features of ecosystems</li> <li>- animal adaptation</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provide learners with opportunities to understand the key concepts and apply them in different contexts</li> <li>- enable learners to identify living things in specific ecosystems</li> <li>- encourage knowledge transfer about living things and predictions using visual images</li> <li>- vocabulary building, learning and using</li> <li>- arouse learner curiosity – creative use of language and learner questions</li> </ul>
<b>Culture</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identify living and non-living things from the ecosystems of their own country and other countries</li> <li>- become aware of the importance of respecting the environment (especially the fact of wasting too much water)</li> <li>- understand that they can learn, no matter which language they are using</li> </ul>		
<b>Communication</b>		
<b>Language of learning</b>	<b>Language for learning</b>	<b>Language through learning</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- key vocabulary: <i>plants, ecosystems, living things,</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- asking each other questions: <i>what do you know about...?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- distinguish language needed to carry out</li> </ul>

*non-living things, pond, savannah, grass, bushes, dry places, wet places, animal adaptation.....*

*Can you tell me something about...?*

- classifying: *The different elements/animals in an ecosystem are.....*
- comparing and contrasting: *The animals living in a savannah are bigger than the ones living in a pond*
- Other:  
*How do you spell.....?*  
*What does..... mean?*

- activities
- retain language revised by both the teachers and the learners
  - make use of peer explanations
  - record, predict and learn new words which arise from activities

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**(What learners will be able to do by the end of the lesson)**

By the end of the unit learners will be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of the concept of ecosystems and its related features
- distinguish between living things and non-living things
- demonstrate that ecosystems include the places and the living things that inhabit them
- describe how and why animals adapt
- classify information
- successfully engage in visual matching between concepts and images
- interpret visual information
- use language creatively
- ask and respond to *wh*- questions about their work
- use a class vocabulary record of new words

**CLIL: Lesson plan – Teacher's notes****Unit: What are ecosystems?****Lessons 1 and 2****TEACHING/LEARNING ACTIVITIES****Lesson 1**

- **warm up:** let's think (power point). General overview of the unit
- **previous knowledge:** starting a KWL chart. Learners see and listen to different features of animals
- **game:** in order to check their comprehension, learners play a challenging game called “*I bet it's true*”
- **ending the lesson:** learners think about new words which students don't know. One of the learners writes down (on a poster) which words they decide to choose

**Lesson 2**

- **starting routine:** what can you remember? Questions:  
     “*Does an elephant live in the same place as a polar bear?*”  
     “*Can a red rose live in a desert?*”  
     “*Do all animals eat the same things?*”
- **Whole class:** Ecosystems
- **Handout:** classify living and non-living things. Handout (speaking and writing activities) + pair work
- **thinking activity:** big and small ecosystems. Learners have to decide (with the help of a hand= out) where some animals live. They speak to a partner, and then they classify habitats and pictures. After that, the teacher checks their compre= hension.
- **thinking activity:** the teacher asks “*how do you think animals adapt to their ecosystems?*” Learners play a matching game. Then the teacher writes down the correct matches. Learners copy them into their notebook.
- **ending the lesson. Glossary:** time to think about new words which learners don't know. One of the learners writes down (on a poster) which words they chose.
- **self-assessment**

**INSTRUMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT**

- teacher monitors group for individual activities
- learners successfully play a matching game
- learners' interaction with a partner (speaking creatively)
- learners' participation in all tasks and activities
- learners complete information gaps
- learners complete a self-assessment sheet

**SCAFFOLDING TIPS**

The focus of the unit is on language:

**Language for the teacher**

- *settle down quickly please, let's get started*
- *let's just recap on what we did the other day*
- *what do you know about...?*
- *can you tell me something about ....?*
- *read out loud*
- *don't forget to write a note about the information*

**Language for the learners**

- *I think they can live in the same ecosystem because .....*
- *I don't think so because ....*
- *I don't know*
- *can you help us?*
- *In an ecosystem, there are living things*



## CONCLUSION

CLIL has come a long way in the past two decades. Unprecedented developments in technology and global communication have radically altered the way people learn and behave.

CLIL is deeply implicated in social, cultural and economic developments across the globe as it becomes inextricably linked – directly and indirectly – with a range of national and international policy implementations.

However, whilst we believe that CLIL teachers need to be aware of the “big picture” (including global thinking, transnational innovation and networking opportunities), we have tried throughout these pages to focus on what really matters (that is, teachers and learners, classrooms and schools, and especially the principles and practice which have the potential to provide more learners with high-quality, accessible, motivating and challenging plurilingual and pluricultural learning experiences.

Therein lies our collective challenge – practitioners, teacher educators, researchers and policy makers: **to transform this potential into classroom practice over the coming decades and beyond.**

If these are the opinions of Mr Coyle, Mr Hood and Mr Marsh (three excellent writers and speakers in explaining the CLIL project and methodology smoothly and easily), what are the students' opinions? What do they think about studying a school subject in English? What do they think about their non-English teachers using English during their lessons?

Recently in Trieste some teachers and researchers have met (among them Mr David Marsh himself with all his British charm) at Liceo Scientifico “Galileo Galilei” and, probably for the first time, the protagonists of the International Meeting were the students with CLIL experience in class.

The two boys and the girl (whose level of English was pretty excellent, not to say perfect) shew great enthusiasm for History, Maths and Science lessons in English. Why? Here below some of their opinions:

- using English in class with non-English teachers helps to break the wall between teacher and students just because of the language: the teacher, not being proficient in English nor being a teacher of English listening carefully to the students' mistakes, is not felt as a “superior entity”, so the students feel at ease;
- the attitude of the class is different: the students are less inhibited because they feel that their teacher has put him/herself in a challenging situation and they appreciate him/her even more;
- the students pay more attention to the teacher's explanations and also the teachers cares more about what he/she is saying. Everybody is more concentrated.
- as the CLIL approach is different from the traditional one, the students speak more, they are more active and so they learn more;
- what is important, the students say they had a lot of fun as it was a different experience, something new;
- so the relationship between teacher and students improves because they are on the same level regarding the language used (nobody is there to correct their mistakes). This is also an important goal for the teacher of English: the students are more willing to speak and make mistakes because the teacher him/herself makes mistakes.

And what about the teachers' opinions on their students?

They were enthusiastic as well: many of them agreed about saying that the students' attention was very high during CLIL lessons and both teachers and students had real fun. They realized that CLIL works, although it should be used for short periods of time. It is undeniable that the collaboration

with the teacher of English is essential, that the CLIL teacher has to work a lot in preparing well-structured lessons and that he/she needs specific training. And this what a great number of enthusiastic teachers are waiting for: specific training because many of them think that CLIL is our future, using the same language to join people together.

In conclusion, if we think that CLIL is our future, it should take place earlier in the syllabus: the sooner the better.

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