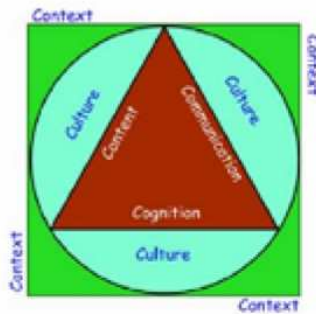


PLAYING WITH CONTENT

A pan-European team offers the prospect of content-and-language-integrated learning inspired by drama pedagogy

WHAT IS CLIL?

CLIL stands for "Content and Language Integrated Learning." When a school subject (e.g., history) is taught in a foreign language, we are talking about CLIL. Across Europe, CLIL is considered an extremely promising method to promote the learning of languages. There are some fundamental principles in CLIL which we think of as pillars that support our understanding of this approach. Coyle et al. present a framework formed by what they consider the four main components of CLIL: content (subject matter), communication (language learning and use), cognition (thinking processes), and culture (intercultural understanding and global citizenship).



The 4 Cs Framework by Coyle et al. (2010)² These four elements are tightly intertwined and appear in specific context. Learning the content contributes to language development (Gajo), unless the content is both unfamiliar and difficult to the learner, in which case the influence can be negative. Content learning also involves the development of thinking skills, both high-order (HOTS) and low-order (LOTS) thinking skills (Krathwohl). Likewise, CLIL, a method which aims at developing people's subject-related literacies by introducing them to the discourse of subjects and their typical ways of creating knowledge—albeit in a foreign language—also has a societal and cultural dimension. Addressing this dimension should be a given of each CLIL pedagogy. Regarding communication, we can distinguish three different types of language which come into play when we develop a CLIL lesson:

1. The language of learning is the type of language that learners have to acquire in order to be able to access the content of the subject.
2. The language for learning is the language that learners will need to use during the lessons, so that they can do the activities efficiently.
3. The language through learning is the new language that learners acquire through the new knowledge that they gain (Mohan and van Naerssen).

CLIL teachers need to balance cognitive and linguistic demands so that the learning of both content and language may be effective. Learners have to be cognitively and linguistically challenged, and for this, we make use of scaffolds which support the learning process. These scaffolds are designed to provide just enough support for learners to succeed at a task when without this support they might fail. Scaffolds can be used when learners are ready for a new challenge but not yet able to master its complexity independently.

When providing scaffolding, teachers characteristically aim for handling over performance on a given task to the learners, as their skills at problem solving are growing. What is important for CLIL teachers is involving learners in subject-related activities in a meaningful way, through the medium of a language in which the learners are not fully proficient. Therefore, there are three dimensions which need to be supported through scaffolding: language, content, and interaction (Bonnet).⁴

Learners' abilities in interaction are a factor which must be taken into account in the CLIL approach. Interaction is a field of competence which is often insufficiently highlighted in CLIL-methodology handbooks, and which we believe playingCLIL addresses in a way which is rather unique.

CLIL is an educational method for learners of all ages in which subjects are partially or entirely taught in a foreign language. Its aim is to ensure that the new language is acquired in a natural way and parallel to the subject content. CLIL learners are exposed to linguistic input, which they gradually internalize, since their conscious learning goal is to acquire the skills and content needed for every subject. At the same time, learners actively use the new language on a daily basis through interaction, verbal expression activities, and writing tasks while dealing with authentic content and materials from a nonlinguistic subject. What best describes the CLIL method are the four pillars it is based upon, also known as the 4 Cs—a cognitively challenging learning process in which new content is acquired through communication in a culturally enriched setting.

creativity + content + innovation + language + inspiration + learning + challenge = playingCLIL





A GAME - Alphabet Islands

Introduction	A game that gets players moving around the classroom while having to form instant opinions. It encourages mind and body coordination.				
Age	5+	Level	A1*	Time	5–10 min
Space	Open space				
Content and language	When the game is played based on preferences, players have to be creative in their justification of their answers. In the variation of the game where there is only one acceptable answer, players need to quickly remember and apply their knowledge of the content so as to get to their islands quickly.				

Getting ready

The teacher prepares sheets of paper (preferably laminated) with all the letters of the alphabet, one on each sheet. The sheets are then spread out across open space, making sure that they are not very close to one another. The teacher explains that each letter represents an island. Between the islands naturally is the sea, so if players are not on an island they have to be swimming. Players are asked to swim around the islands miming a swimming stroke (freestyle, breaststroke, backstroke, the butterfly), or to get creative and take another form of sea-bound transport. On an established signal, players are to make their way to the islands of their choice. If they find themselves alone on an island, then they should reach out and form a bridge to another island with inhabitants. No one should be alone on an island, as the whole point is that conversation takes place.

Playing

As players are traveling around the islands, the teacher calls out a category with instructions as to what to do on arrival. On the given signal, players make their way to an island that represents the first letter of their choice. For example, if the teacher asks "What is your favorite fruit?", players then swim to the island beginning with the first letter of their favorite fruit. When they get to their destinations, they are to reveal their choices to the other people on the island and to state things they know about the fruit, such as: What color is it? Does it grow on a tree or on the ground? Does it have a skin? How do you eat it? The teacher may move around the islands asking players to share their answers. The same routine is repeated as many times as desired, adapting questions to the category. Sometimes it is not necessary for the teacher to visit all the islands and the answers can stay with the cluster on the island.

playingCLIL examples

Alphabet Islands can be adapted in various ways in order to either consolidate content by asking players for opinions/preferences or to test them on their knowledge of a topic. The alphabet format can be maintained or replaced by a set of concepts related to content (place names, historical figures, natural habitats, etc.).

Geography: Think of a country/city/mountain/river in Asia. A place in the world where you can find active volcanoes/glaciers/rain forests... Replacing letters with the names of the continents: Where is the city of...? Where is the river X? In these cases only one answer is correct, so everyone is supposed to swim to the same island. A variation of the game could include asking players to race towards the correct answer, in which case, the last one to get there would have to abandon the game.

Literature: Your favorite book/poem/story written by X. Your favorite character from the book we have read. An adjective to describe the main character. In each of these cases, players would then have to justify their answers.

PLAYING AND LEARNING

We all know how motivation and fun can really make a difference in learning, and this applies

feelings, and experiences. They set goals and therefore motivate learners to use their skills, put their knowledge into action, and cooper-

playingCLIL is an attempt to bring the benefits of educational games into the CLIL teaching method. It proposes a series of games

"Involve learners in subject-related activities in a meaningful way, through the medium of a language in which the learners are not fully proficient."

in which learners are encouraged to act, interact, collaborate, and compete using all their senses towards a common goal. Language skills are built and put into practice to reinforce content learning in a variety of fun and challenging activities. Following an extensive pe-

riod of trials and feedback from teachers and learners in real classroom situations, the final versions of the games have been designed in such a way as to be easily adaptable to any subject, age group, and language level.

to all students regardless of their age or their educational level. This is where games "come into play." Playing is an essential part of our lives. Educational games take words on paper and transform them into images, actions,

ate. Each game turns into a memorable experience in which knowledge is anchored to the positive feelings of entertainment.

WHAT IS playingCLIL?

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the project are to:

- Offer teachers a new methodology with tools and materials;
- Bring inspiring games and challenges into the classroom;
- Allow students to learn in a more enjoyable context;
- Enable students to take ownership of their learning;
- Promote interaction and collaboration in the classroom;
- Develop students' self-confidence and presentation skills;
- Generate energy, enthusiasm, and motivation;
- Motivate students by engaging all their senses in energetic learning activities;
- Develop students' emotional maturity and skills to cope with both success and failure;
- Encourage students to act, interact, cooperate, and compete.

playingCLIL games are selected and tested to be easily adaptable to any subject, age group, and language level. The main and final result of the project will be a compilation of all these games in a handbook (paper version and e-book).

Outcomes from using the games include:

- Improved learning;
- Improved achievement;
- Improved relationships amongst students;
- Improved relationships between teachers and students;
- Improved motivation;



- Enjoyable and friendly competition;
- Improved self-confidence;
- More enthusiasm for the subject;
- More rewarding teaching;
- More effective cooperation between students, creating a perfect working atmosphere in the classroom;
- Bringing innovation and creativity to the CLIL classroom and beyond. **IX**

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