

# A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO BILINGUAL SECTIONS



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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Programme of Bilingual Sections started in Asturias seven years ago. Just four schools were chosen as Pilot centres to verify the validity of the project. We submitted a detailed report and were lucky enough to be one of the first four ones: the other schools were IES Monte Naranco and IES Severo Ochoa (French Bilingual Streams) and IES Escultor Juan Villanueva (English).

The teachers involved at the time (4 people) took part in an In Service training course in Oviedo to get the 'basics'. At that stage it was clear that the main goals of the 'Sections' were different: enhance plurilinguism, in the case of French Bilingual streams, and improve linguistic competence in the case of the English ones.

We knew very little about Content and Language Integrated Learning at that stage, but it was obvious that the constant increase in the amount of time devoted to Foreign Language Teaching wasn't producing in itself the expected results.

After six years we can now state clearly that the CLIL approach works under certain conditions, and our school has luckily got many of them.

## **BILINGUAL?**

It's very important to notice that telling parents their children are going to study in a 'Sección Bilingüe' can lead them to confusion (the name 'European Sections/Classes used in other countries would be probably less controversial) . None of our students will become bilingual if they haven't got a bilingual background: we explain parents that the term 'bilingual' refers to the fact that students are going to get education in two languages. This is important because, so far, education has been completely monolingual: students had formal instruction of Foreign Language as a subject, but there was no teaching of content through English.

Students are going to get a very high level of linguistic competence in the Foreign Language if they work hard, and they will also benefit from other skills CLIL favours.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

In order to implement a Bilingual Programme a school needs to get approval from our Regional Ministry of Education. At Secondary level, these are the basic requirements:

	<b>English</b>	<b>CLIL subjects</b>	<b>Linguistic Level</b>
ESO	5 hours (1 every day)	At least 1	B2
BACHILLERATO	3	1	B2

Teachers have to get any of the certificates admitted officially to prove their B2 level of proficiency.

From the very beginning, we thought that we needed to enhance the programme, and we took several decisions:

-We don't teach the 'extra' lesson(s) in the morning. We respect other schools schedules, but we sincerely believe that, from a pedagogic point of view, having seven lessons in the morning is not the best of the choices. For this reason we offered the families the possibility of having two extra lessons on Thursdays: in first and second of ESO we planned a socio-cultural workshop; in third of ESO a Health and Nutrition one.

-We also believed that a Bilingual Stream needed to be 'supported' by other school activities. We applied for a Multilateral Comenius Association and coordinated a European project from 2006 to 2009: we started a 'Comenius Club' on Tuesday afternoons, and organized three students' meetings in France; Poland and Mieres.

In 2010 a Bilateral Programme with our current Dutch partner started: students from Holland visited Mieres in May. Our students will be staying in Holland for 10 days in October.

-The design of relevant extra-curricular activities was also regarded from the very beginning as a very important challenge: our students attended the first Camp in 2005. We 'completed' a whole schedule of activities last June when the first group of students who joined the Stream completed their studies at school.

-The role of the Language Assistant was also regarded as fundamental: rather than 'teaching' a single lesson to lots of groups every week, we thought it was essential to make him one of the key elements of the Stream, playing a role in teacher training; materials design; and school projects development.

### WHAT WE HAVE

YEAR	CLIL SUBJECTS	EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES/OTHER PROGRAMMES
1st ESO (36 students)	P.E./Art	Camp
2nd ESO (20 students)	Maths/Technology*	Camp/ARCE Programme
3rd ESO (26 students)	Art/Biology/Citizenship	Trip to London
4th ESO (26 students)	P.E./Social Science	Comenius Bilateral Programme
1 <sup>st</sup> BACHILLERATO	Science for the Contemporary World/Philosophy	Portsmouth College visit
2 <sup>nd</sup> BACHILLERATO	Philosophy	Trip to Dublin

## SOME CLIL BASIC PRINCIPLES

The term CLIL was coined by David Marsh and is used to refer to any programme where content is taught through an 'additional language', emphasizing the joint role of content and language teachers. The term is too versatile and some 'experts' are trying to rename the different types of projects, but no consensus has been achieved yet.

Do Coyle, one of the most respected CLIL experts, defines what CLIL is/is not:

### CLIL is not:

- Replicating models successful in very different environments (eg the Canadian model) but rather a flexible European approach with a range of models responding to situational & contextual demands. *In Spain most of the articles published deal with educational experiences in Cataluña or the Basque country: these models are useless for a region as Asturias.*
- 'Backdoor' language teaching or additional subject, or favouring languages at the expense of the non-language subjects. *This is a more common complaint in Primary Education.*
- A threat to subject specialisms at any level.
- Teaching what students already know but in a different code (ie the foreign language)
- A fashionable trend - it's been around a long time. *And its popularity is increasing exponentially.*
- Aiming to make students 'bilingual' in the traditional sense.
- Elitist and therefore only for more able students. *We don't exclude any student whom we regard as able to pass Compulsory Secondary Education.*
- Dependent on 'buying in' foreign national teachers.

### CLIL is:

- CLIL is a developing, flexible concept where content (eg non-language subject/s, cross-curricular themes) and foreign languages - are integrated in some kind of mutually beneficial way so as to provide motivating, value-added experiences to educational outcomes for a wide range of students.
- An approach which suggests that students can learn a language by studying other topics such as science, mathematics, geography, history etc in that language. This means that we will not deal with a grammar-based syllabus any longer. We need to start with a topic-based syllabus and deal with the grammar and vocabulary as the need for it arises.
- A Model that includes Content; Communication; Cognition and Culture.

### Content

This refers to the topic of a particular lesson or course which might include history, geography, art, sciences etc

### Communication

One of the aims of CLIL is to make students use the target language to communicate (both in spoken and written forms) their thoughts, opinions, attitudes and findings on the lesson topic or content; in other words the students engage in meaningful interaction rather than parroting phrases modelled by the teacher.

### Cognition

Creative thinking, reasoning, comparing, contrasting and defining are some cognitive skills. Since the student is engaged in such things as discovery tasks and explaining why they have a certain opinion or attitude about a given topic or problem, they are supposed to develop these skills. It's very important to analyse our curriculum cognitive demands to make sure our students will be able to cope with them. Otherwise, we will need to develop some scaffolding strategies.

### Culture (also known as Citizenship and Community)

In CLIL students are encouraged to consider themselves as part of a larger social group and to find out and respect the ways of life, beliefs and attitudes of other social groups in the world.

There is a wide range of studies about the CLIL approach. I've tried to summarize the main facts:

- 'Integration' is the key word: too frequently, this works in a single direction. Sometimes, content teachers use a Foreign Language to teach their subject, but are not aware of the need to focus on some linguistic objective. In other cases, FL teachers do not introduce relevant content in their lessons.

- 'Cooperation' is a real challenge for secondary teachers whose educational philosophy is fundamentally individualistic: no CLIL programme can succeed without planned, systematic cooperation between Content and Language Teachers.

- 'Scaffolding' is a 'must' for any teacher; even more if you want to work within a Bilingual Stream. Content and Language teachers should work together in order to limit the complexity of the context and adapt it so that learners manage to get the skills and the confidence they need to cope with the subjects they have to study.

- A 'Task-based approach' is essential to move forward: students need to feel they are 'learning by doing'. Designing relevant tasks which help them develop basic skills is an important part of teachers' work: Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) Projects; Extra-Curricular activities or Teaching Units can be useful. Content teachers shouldn't be expected to change their teaching programmes, while language teachers should focus on 'making content comprehensible' for students.

-Project work has been very popular in the FL classes. In project work the focus is on the creation of the project (which might be on a theme of sport, sciences, geography or just about anything) rather than on language itself.

Some strategies:

-Adapting the text: it's dangerous to make it too simple, because we run the risk of exposing students to the same simple structures all the time. Sometimes we forget the most relevant difficulty is related to 'cognition', not to 'grammar': what are you demanding from your students? Are they ready to do it in a Foreign Language?

-Display visuals; diagrams; conceptual maps; glossaries...Any resource we might think that will help our students to understand those concepts that we think which could be too complex.

### **HOW WE WORK**

-You'll get a Planning for the school year: this is just a summary of the most important aspects of the Programme.

-As soon as we get our personal schedule at school, we'll fix the times for the weekly meetings. Don't panic (yet): meetings will be weekly when necessary; there will be a few at the beginning in order to coordinate our work; later, each CLIL teacher will get an English partner and you will be able to work together at this time. Nevertheless, we'll have, at least, a plenary meeting each term.

-CLIL teachers will be split into two groups and will have the chance to get a weekly hour with the Language Assistant in order to improve language skills and/or revise materials.

-At this point, we have got a fair amount of materials: we need to start revising/using them rather than produce new ones. This is not applicable to Social Science, which has just been incorporated to the Bilingual Stream.

-Remember that Content teachers are not supposed to be linguistic experts: refer students to their FL teacher if they have doubts concerning grammar; phonetics or any other topic you don't feel comfortable with.

-Also, FL teachers don't have to be experts in Content: don't feel embarrassed to tell your students you are not the Maths; Art or Technology teacher.

What you are expected to do:

Content teachers	-Carry on with your linguistic training -Search/Adapt/Elaborate Materials in English -Take part in Extra-Curricular activities
English teachers	-Help Content teachers to elaborate Materials -Produce activities which will help students to understand

	Content in English. - Take part in Extra-Curricular activities
Coordinator	-Organize students' admission/programme structure -Set realistic goals/activities for each year -Strengthen teachers' cooperation

### OUTCOMES

After 6 years working together, our main conclusions are the following:

IMPROVE A LOT	IMPROVE	UNALTERED
-Fluency	-Accuracy	-Morphology
-Reading Comprehension	-Socio-cultural knowledge	-Syntax
-Listening skills	-Writing skills	-Non-specific vocabulary
-Specific vocabulary		
-Motivation		

### RESOURCES

The Programme gets a yearly budget for bilingual material: if you need any, tell the coordinator so that he can contact the school administrator.

Don't hesitate to borrow resources from the English department if you need them: this is a joint project, and we are expected to share.

It's important to give 'visibility' to the Bilingual Stream: use the school web; our Blog or the Newsletter to show other people what we are doing.

### CLIL GLOSSARY

**Additional language:** used to refer to any language other than the first language

**BICS:** Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills. Language development for social intercourse. In Jim Cummins' research with immigrant pupils in Canada, most students were found to achieve BICS after two or three years of education in the majority language. Language events are context-embedded (those which are used in everyday conversation with visual contextual support). Tasks associated with BICS are usually comprehensible and less demanding.

Cognitive processes are linked to BICS – identify specific information, name, match and sort objects into sets.

**CALP:** Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency: Language development for academic learning. Cummins observed that it takes seven to eight years for L2 students to attain a level of English suitable for academic school study. Language events are context reduced (little support) and cognitively demanding. Meaning is accessed primarily through the language e.g. listening to lectures on abstract topics, writing essays and learners require control over the use of grammar and vocabulary. Language is more abstract and less personal. Cognitive processes linked to CALP are identify criteria, justify opinions, form hypotheses and interpret evidence.

**Exposure:** the percentage of CLIL teaching in a curriculum in a school year

Low = 5-15% Medium = 15-50% High = 50%+

**Home language:** (Main) language used in the home. Sometimes referred to as 'primary' language

**Immersion:** programmes where most or all of subject content is taught through a second language (originating and often associated with Canada). Common to all models of immersion are key factors: intensity, time and exposure.

**LAC:** Languages Across the Curriculum refers to the study and use of languages throughout the curriculum. Its purpose is to prepare students for the cross-cultural and multilingual demands of a global society. LAC is appropriate at all levels of education.

**Language demands:** the language abilities which a learner needs in order to be able to use a language for learning in a given subject, subject lesson or using a given subject textbook. Lessons, subjects, textbooks, information technology therefore make language demands on learners.

**Language demands analysis:** The analysis which a subject (or language) teacher makes of the language demands which a given subject lesson or textbook etc will make on a class. Part of lesson planning in CLIL.

**Language needs:** the language needs which specific learners in any group have with respect to a given subject, lesson, textbook or website. A subject lesson therefore makes language demands on a whole class; whereas individuals in the class have individual language needs with respect to those demands.

**Language showers:** Regular, short, continuous exposure to CLIL delivered in the target language for 15 or 30 minutes several times a week. They are associated with Primary schools and usually taught in one subject area.

**Learners:** CLIL covers primary, secondary and tertiary contexts. Learners, rather than students or pupils, best describes this age range.

**Majority language:** the main language used in the surrounding social environment. This is usually the national language.

**Medium of instruction:** language used as medium for school learning

	<b>Teacher Training</b>	<b>Materials</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Extra-curricular Activities</b>
First Term	Conversation Regional Course Comenius	Revision Unit 1		European Day of Languages Christmas Contest (1º/2º ESO) Comenius visit to Holland (4º ESO)
Second	Conversation	Revision Unit 2		Storytelling (1º ESO) 24 JAN

**Partial immersion:** usually 50 -60% of curriculum subjects taught in target language (regions of Spain, The Netherlands, Gaelic in Scotland)

**Target language:** Language used in CLIL. This could be a second, third, fourth or even fifth language for some learners.

*Taken from University of Cambridge/TKT-CLIL 2008*

**IES SÁNCHEZ LASTRA-BILINGUAL STREAM PLANNING 2010/11**

Term	PALE			Week Camp (1º/2º ESO) Trip to London (3º ESO) Visit from Portsmouth College (1º Bachillerato) Theatre (3º/4º ESO) 31 JAN
Third Term	Conversation Comenius	Revision Unit 3		Graduation (4º ESO) ARCE Visit (1º ESO) Trip to Dublin (2º Bachillerato)

**TERM PROJECTS**

	ART	BIOLOGY	MATHS	PHILOSOPHY	P.E.	SOCIAL SCIENCE	TECHNOLOGY
First term							
Second Term							
Third Term							

**IES SÁNCHEZ LASTRA-BILINGUAL SECTION-TERM ASESMENT**

		ENGLISH	CLIL SUBJECT 1	CLIL SUBJECT 2	WORKSHOP
LANGUAGE SKILLS	LISTENING				
	SPEAKING				

	READING				
	WRITING				
CONTENT/FORMAL INSTRUCTION					
LANGUAGE ASSISTANT ROLE					
SOCIOCULTURAL CONTENT					

1-SKILLS:

-Assess students' progress using the following indicators.

-Include any suggestions you have.

A	VERY GOOD
B	GOOD
C	ACCEPTABLE

D	POOR
E	DEFICIENT

### 2-CONTENT/FORMAL INSTRUCTION:

-Has CLIL language delayed Content Teaching?

If so: to what extent?

-Have students improved accuracy?

-Is Content being introduced in Language lessons?

### 3-LANGUAGE ASSISTANT ROLE

-How has the Language assistant contributed to the development of the Programme?

### 4-SOCIOCULTURAL CONTENTS

-Reflect any socio-cultural aspect covered.

### 5-EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES .

### 6-LIST THE MAIN MATERIALS USED (ICT RESOURCES; REAL MATERIAL...)