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Do-It-Yourself CLIL: Designing Materials and Lessons
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Since the content and language integrated learning approach (CLIL) was introduced in language/subject teaching in the 1990s (Ball et al., 2015), CLIL learning materials have been in high demand. CLIL is the teaching of content through an additional language, which means students learn both content and language simultaneously. Various ways to address the demand for CLIL materials have been in use:

- taking subject-based books written in the target language from their country of origin,
- translating subject-based books from a country's national curriculum into the target language,
- developing and publishing CLIL course books made for each specific country's national curriculum, and
- teachers making their own CLIL materials tailored to their specific teaching context (national curriculum, course syllabus, students' needs).
  (Ball et al., 2015)

This article is concerned with educators who wish to create their own CLIL materials to address their specific students' learning needs. To be considered high quality for CLIL purposes, such materials should follow certain criteria regarding their structure and content.

Creating High-Quality CLIL Materials

Various CLIL researchers have created checklists that outline the important characteristics of high-quality CLIL materials. Following are a few of those characteristics.

According to Mehisto (2012), high-quality CLIL materials
- make the learning objectives and process clear and meaningful to students.
- systematically develop academic language proficiency, critical thinking, cognitive fluency, learner autonomy, and learning skills.
- include cooperative learning activities, authentic language, and authentic language use.
- include self-, peer-, and other types of formative assessment.
- scaffold content, language, and learning skills development.
- help students progress faster than they would on their own.

Ball et al. (2015) suggest that it is important

- to build learning around specific tasks (i.e., the text is subservient to the task), which should address three dimensions of content (concept, procedure, language) and make key language visible.
- that students' understanding of input and production of output should be supported with scaffolding (i.e., explicit language support) and embedding (i.e., systematic inclusion of key language in activities for students to pick it up naturally).
- that learning activities are logically sequenced and integrated (e.g., before, during, and after activities; orientation, complication, and resolution activities).
- that the materials are of appropriate difficulty, which is achieved by manipulating the three dimensions of content to make the topic accessible to students.

Developing a CLIL Lesson Plan

With these materials design fundamentals in mind, in this article we suggest a 5-step procedure for developing a CLIL lesson plan with embedded learning materials. Coyle et al. (2010) recommend using the 4Cs (content, communication, cognition, and culture) framework in CLIL lesson planning and materials design, which means that learning outcomes and activities of a CLIL lesson should target the development of students' subject knowledge, language skills, cognitive abilities, and intercultural awareness.

Step 1: Define the Language Level and Subject Area/Topic

To begin the designing of a CLIL lesson plan, it is important to proceed from your teaching context, which includes the national/school curriculum, the level of the target language, students' grade, subject areas, and topics to be covered. For example, in our educational context in Estonia, we can take Natural Science as one of the subject areas listed in the Estonian National Curriculum for Basic Schools (see the English version here) and Habitats as one of the suggested topics, with Temperate Forests as a specific lesson topic. The lesson will target primary schoolers, with Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) Level A2 English language proficiency.

Step 2: Choose the Input

Now, select appropriate authentic input (i.e., content meant for native speakers of that language and not adapted for language learners) on the chosen topic. The input can be textual, audio-visual, or multimodal. (It can be, e.g., an infographic, encyclopedia entry, newspaper/magazine article, radio/TV program, podcast, and/or video clip).

Evaluate the chosen authentic input in terms of its age and level appropriacy. In our example, for the topic of Temperate Forest Habitat, we can take a text titled "Temperate Forest Habitat" with multimodal input from the National Geographic Kids website.

Step 3: Write 4Cs Learning Outcomes for the Lesson

CLIL lessons should cover four areas of learning to enable students to reach learning outcomes: communication, content, cognition, and culture.

> *Communicative learning outcomes* might focus on grammar and vocabulary (e.g., comparison of adjectives, new words/terms) and language subskills (e.g., skimming and scanning a text, expressing opinion, agreeing and disagreeing).

- ➢ *Content learning outcomes* entail the development of subject knowledge (e.g., facts, data, terms, concepts, processes, procedures, formulas).
- ➢ *Cognitive learning outcomes* should target the development of students' thinking skills (e.g., using Bloom's Taxonomy).
- ➢ *Culture learning outcomes* focus on the development of cultural knowledge, intercultural competence, and global citizenship.

For example, we might suggest the following 4Cs learning outcomes for our lesson on temperate forest habitats:

- ➢ *Communication*: Students name different types of trees and animals in temperate forests.
- ➢ *Content*: Students describe the habitat of temperate forests.
- ➢ *Cognition*: Students create a set of criteria to define a temperate forest habitat.
- ➢ *Culture*: Students determine whether their surrounding environment includes a temperate forest habitat and in which other countries it can be found.

Step 4: Adapt the Text for Your Target Group to Make It Learner Friendly

Utilize various text adaptation techniques to make it learner friendly, including simplifying the language, excluding difficult vocabulary, reducing the amount of text, and breaking the text down into shorter pieces. Add headings, subtitles, visuals, and graphic organizers of various types (e.g., dot point lists, tables, charts, mind maps, graphics) to make authentic content more learner appropriate. In our example lesson, we would add pictures of trees and animals, create a glossary, include a video about temperate forests and its inhabitants, highlight key ideas in the text, and so on.

Step 5: Devise Lesson Activities

The final step is to devise activating (lead-in), input processing, output, and assessment activities that will help achieve the learning outcomes of the lesson. It is important to write simple and clear instructions (rubrics) before each activity and add the answers to each activity (answer keys) at the end of the lesson (in teacher's notes).

The activities should also be arranged and formatted appropriately and attractively on the page to increase learner engagement and interest by using various design tools and visuals. The Appendix gives a selection of activities to use for different stages of the CLIL lesson, which teachers can choose from to design their own lesson.

Conclusion

Many practicing teachers consider materials design to be a time-consuming and challenging process. And yet, with the increasing need of CLIL learning materials for particular learning contexts, CLIL teachers can write their own learner-tailored materials—rather than wait for and rely on publishers and expert teams in CLIL materials design. Hopefully, the suggested 5-step procedure will serve you in this creative process.

References

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