

# PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS for CLIL

## Content and Language Integrated Learning

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### PRE-LAUNCH ESSENTIALS

- needs
- considerations

#### STUDENTS

- recruitment /enrolment
- maintaining numbers

#### TEACHERS

- hiring
- preventing turnover
- adapting methodology

#### CURRICULUM

- curriculum development
- creating teaching materials, diversifying sources

#### SCHOOLS

- maintaining unity
- using space

#### PARTNERS

- stakeholder communication
- co-operation with other schools

#### PARENTS

- listening and involvement
- supporting learning

### PRE-LAUNCH ESSENTIALS

#### Needs

#### considerations

- the local government and/or board of education need(s) to support CLIL programming, as do the school's management team and a critical mass of other staff members and parents. Schools offering CLIL can become magnets resulting in declining enrolment for neighbouring schools. Neighbouring schools may begin to lobby against the programme, claiming that it draws too many students, requires too many resources or that it may hinder first language development or impede the learning of content.
- there are enough students to allow for a two-track system (CLIL and a regular programme) so that parents have a choice.
- there is enough space in the school to allow for increased enrolment.
- classrooms are large enough to allow for group and pair work.
- there are enough qualified teachers that understand CLIL methodology or are prepared to learn about it.
- there is a pool of qualified potential CLIL teachers to meet future needs.
- managers understand the implications of starting a CLIL programme. They have spoken to people who have managed a CLIL programme and have read about programme development.
- managers have an understanding of CLIL methodology and are aware of research on the achievement of CLIL students.
- managers are prepared to lead a multi-year change initiative.

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## STUDENTS

<p><b>Recruitment</b></p>	<p><b>Student enrolment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- enrolment is voluntary.</li> <li>- admission criteria are clearly stated and the requisite materials are also provided in writing. Usually admission is based on a first come, first served principle or on a lottery, and an interview to make certain that parents understand the long-term implications of programme enrolment.</li> <li>- the admission process is transparent and criteria are adhered to.</li> </ul> <p><b>Informing parents and students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- often more girls than boys apply to the programme. In particular, this is a case with delayed or late CLIL programmes that target students who are in middle or secondary school. It is helpful to have a strategy for ensuring a gender balance upon programme intake. Part of this strategy might include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- openly stating that 50% of the intake will consist of girls and 50% boys;</li> <li>- considering boys and girls as separate stakeholder groups ensuring that programme advertising/information takes into account each group's interests, learning styles and other academic needs;</li> <li>- exploring one's own attitudes, language and behaviour to make certain that the message reaching parents and students is free of gender bias.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- as parents and students sometimes consider CLIL programmes more cognitively demanding than they really are, CLIL can attract a disproportionately large number of academically successful students. It is helpful to work actively to dispel the misconception that the programme is not suited for the average student. An elitist programme that caters to students with high marks is likely to undermine both the CLIL and regular programmes, and deprive students, who need it the most, of this opportunity.</li> <li>- parents and students are invited to a meeting that includes information from the school principal or head teacher, vice-principal, the CLIL teacher(s) and non-CLIL teachers. It is helpful to invite a parent or two whose children have already experienced CLIL. Parents of CLIL students are usually listened to with particular interest. During the meeting:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a short overview is provided of programme goals and plans, as well as CLIL research;</li> <li>- each of the aforementioned people share their perspective on the programme;</li> <li>- the majority of time is given to questions from parents (and students, in particular, in the case of late CLIL). Attendees are encouraged to express their fears and concerns so that they can be addressed. Typical parental questions and concerns are listed in the final section of this article;</li> <li>- written materials including application forms are distributed.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Keeping students in the programme</b></p>	<p><b>Managing expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- with early CLIL, parents want to know when their children will begin to speak the CLIL language. Although students will quickly begin to use short phrases in the CLIL language, there is often a verbally passive phase that lasts about four months where children listen more than they speak. For some young children, this verbally passive phase can even last over a year, before they begin to feel comfortable enough to regularly speak in the CLIL language.</li> <li>- with early CLIL, parents want to know that in the long run their children will learn as much content as students in the regular programme.</li> <li>- with late CLIL, parents and students need to understand the initial difficulties that many students will face. For example, grades may initially drop and the students may need to spend more time doing homework.</li> </ul>

## STUDENTS

- with late CLIL, students need to know when they can expect that their hard work will pay off. Their grades and their facility in the CLIL language usually markedly improve by April of the first year in the programme.

### Other strategic considerations

- the learning environment needs to be psychologically safe so that students feel free to experiment with language without being afraid to make mistakes.
- students will benefit from support in developing learning skills including language learning and self-regulation skills.
- it is helpful if teachers are attuned to and check student feelings as learning through an additional language at times be stressful
- with late CLIL students, questionnaires given to students and parents can be an excellent vehicle for getting feedback about programme-related concerns, interests, needs and wishes, which in turn, can be taken into consideration in teaching. Typical questions might focus on something about how the student learns best, what is currently supporting and/or impeding learning, what are his or her worries and asking for suggestions.
- topics of interest to students need to be explored, as language related to student interests is most easily retained (See section on methodology.)
- in many countries, more boys than girls drop out of the programme. The opposite can also be true. Consequently, it is important for teachers to understand strategies that take into account both the learning needs of girls and boys. Statistics on the number of boys and girls leaving the programme and their reasons for doing so need to be documented and analysed.
- contact and communication with peers and adults that speak the CLIL language help to put learning to practical use and motivate students.

### Developing a support system for students

- with early CLIL , organise an extended day programme. This will allow students a greater opportunity to use the CLIL language and for teachers to support learning. Extended time is meant to be used differently from regular class time. Homework can also be done during the extended day programme, which can take considerable pressure off of parents and students.
- supporting others, needs to be a value enshrined in the school culture. Group and pair work need to be analysed and evaluated with this in mind.
- a buddy system, where older students help younger students, is beneficial to all. An entire class of senior students can help an entire class of junior students in an organised fashion.
- if the budget does not allow for the hiring of assistant teachers, senior students can be enlisted to help younger students after class. Students helping others need to be recognised for their work (e.g., reception in principal's or head teacher's office, letters of commendation, excursions).
- for senior students, in particular, it is helpful to have a teacher on call (in a classroom, on the phone, through e-mail) to help three days a week at a specific time such as 16:00-18:00.
- a homework club can be very helpful to students, and in the long run, make teaching easier.
- bilingual psychologists, speech therapists and social workers can be a big help.

### Withdrawal from the programme

#### Strategic considerations

- the criteria and process are established in writing. Often, withdrawal from the programme does not benefit the child. CLIL students with special needs should receive support. Withdrawal can lead to additional problems such as behavioural ones that are related to the unsuccessful CLIL experience.

## SCHOOL

### Maintaining unity

(Preventing the two-schools-in-one phenomenon)

#### The school's strategic plan

- the school's vision and mission should reflect a link with CLIL or language learning.
- involving the entire staff in the renewal of the school strategic plan helps to ensure that the school's internal stakeholder interests and needs are taken into account, and that the implementation of the plan is supported.
- to help stay on track, return to the mission, vision and strategic plans at planning meetings, school assemblies and other events.

#### Other planning considerations

- CLIL and non-CLIL teachers need time together to plan how to integrate programming, and would benefit from management support and training in assuming this new responsibility.
- plan entire-school activities that include both the regular and CLIL programme students such as Independence Day, Christmas or a special event to celebrate co-operation.
- create workshops where teachers from the CLIL and the regular programme can share experiences, teaching materials and strategies.

#### Budget

- share budgetary resources in a just way between the CLIL and regular programme.
- draw the school team into developing the budget.
- initially, the CLIL programme requires new learning materials (including for the library).

#### Principal/ head teacher as an example of good leadership

- give both the regular and the CLIL programme equal attention.
- conduct multicultural events.
- take guests to see both the regular and CLIL programme students. Many school visitors only wish to visit the CLIL programme. Attention given by visitors to CLIL students can feed a sense of inferiority in regular programme students.
- use several languages in speaking with students so they can see that multilingualism is valued.

#### School council

- CLIL and non-CLIL parents are represented equally on the council so that the interests of both programmes are respected.

#### Non-teaching staff

- ideally, as a programme matures support staff such as secretaries, cafeteria workers and cleaners speak both languages.
- bilingual librarians are helpful as are those who are prepared to take language courses.

#### Signage and displays

- signage should reflect the two or three languages used for instruction.
- a display near the school entrance can familiarise visitors, students and staff with both programmes.

#### Management

NB: The development of a CLIL programme is a complex task. It is not possible to effectively manage programme development without sharing power and responsibility.

**SCHOOL**

This requires a democratic management culture. It also assumes that the entire staff:

- understands CLIL methodology;
- understands the essentials of teamwork (productive and unproductive roles/behaviour, phases in group development) and have the skills needed for co-operation;
- share jointly agreed-upon values and goals.

Key players need to have an understanding of the basic tenets of:

- change and project management theory and practice;
- best practice in school management.

**Usage of Space**

**CLIL classes together**

- placing CLIL classes close together facilitates co-operation among CLIL teachers and the use of the CLIL language outside of the classroom.
- completely separating CLIL and regular programme classes can lead to the development of a gulf between CLIL and regular programme teachers and students.

**Involving others in decision-making**

- arbitrary assignment of space can cause resentment. Involving teachers in the decision-making process will help ensure that decisions are respected and accepted. It will also help avoid problems unforeseen by administrators.

**Special Needs**

- the CLIL classrooms should allow for group and pair work. It is helpful if it is possible to move desks simply and safely.
- walls, windows, hallways and even ceilings are used to exhibit vocabulary and subject content, as well as student work. Teachers would benefit from having their own classroom as it requires a lot of work to develop surface areas in several classrooms so that they support learning.

**TEACHERS**

## TEACHERS

### Hiring New Teachers

#### Teacher qualifications

Essential skills or traits include:

- a good command of the CLIL language. Principals that do not speak the CLIL language as a native tongue can end up hiring under-qualified people. It is helpful, but certainly not necessary, if at least one member of staff is a native speaker of the CLIL language;
- subject area qualifications. It is helpful if teachers are qualified to teach several subjects;
- knowledge of CLIL methodology or a willingness to learn;
- flexible, hard-working, team player;
- sufficient knowledge of the language of the community so they can speak with parents;
- willingness to work in a multicultural environment;
- tolerance of differences.

#### Strategic considerations

- finding subject area teachers for a few hours per week is a challenge. Teachers could be offered standard second language classes to increase teaching time. It may be worthwhile paying a teacher for some development work during the initial years until there are more classes on offer.
- address the fears of regular programme teachers who are worried about losing their jobs. In the long-term, CLIL can bring new students to the school and actually save jobs.
- plan staffing requirements five years in advance. This will help the school and staff to plan for the future. Uncertainty is the biggest enemy.

#### Where to Find Teachers

- co-operate with other schools. Teachers can often be shared. At a time of declining enrolment, teachers at other schools may become surplus.
- have student-teachers do their practice teaching at your school.
- work to ensure that student-teachers feel at home, valued and useful.
- have teachers encourage friends, acquaintances and colleagues to apply.
- advertise in newspapers.
- invite qualified teachers to spend a day at your school. Identify fears and prejudices that they may have vis-à-vis your school and address them.
- ask local government officials. They know about school closings and possible surplus staff.
- support teachers who speak the CLIL language in obtaining the required qualifications.



<b>TEACHERS</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to take into account individual student needs;</li> <li>- to take into account student interests;</li> <li>- to create opportunities for students to meet other speakers of the CLIL language including native speakers. Language camps can really help students to feel comfortable with learning through an additional language, as well as learn considerable amounts of new language.</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- non-language (i.e. maths, science, history) teachers often resist setting intended language learning outcomes. They need support in seeing the benefits of and acquiring strategies for facilitating language learning. A little investment of class time into language learning will greatly facilitate the teaching/learning of content.</li> <li>- students that are used to the CLIL programme's active learning approach may develop conflicts with regular programme teachers that use a teacher-centred approach.</li> </ul>
<b>In-service training needs</b>	<p><b>Strategic considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the establishment of a CLIL programme is a long-term change process. The change process can last for 5-12 years. People need training in managing that change.</li> <li>- the CLIL programme will affect the entire school. All teachers need training in preparation for the inevitable challenges. Non-CLIL teachers will need training in CLIL methodology.</li> <li>- schools have much to gain by developing a system and culture of sharing. People who participate in training sessions need to pass on what they learn to other staff.</li> <li>- the road from theory to practice is a long one. CLIL teachers will need support in applying in the classroom what they have been taught during in-service training. This is key, if the training is going to bring significant returns.</li> <li>- exit plans need to be created for staff who leave the programme so they pass on as much programme knowledge as possible.</li> <li>- all staff need to be aware of the primary conclusions of schools of excellence research and understand the dynamics of teamwork. This will facilitate the change process.</li> </ul>

<b>CURRICULUM</b>	
<b>Adapting the school curriculum</b>	<p><b>Strategic considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the school curriculum and course outlines are based on the national curriculum and take into account the goals of the CLIL programme and CLIL methodology, as well as the integration of different subjects such as civics, geography, language, maths, etc.</li> <li>- the school curriculum is developed through teamwork. This helps to ensure that the staff takes ownership for agreed-upon goals and teaching strategies.</li> <li>- among the various teams working on the curriculum, subject teachers (CLIL and non-CLIL) need to work together.</li> <li>- sample curricula and course outlines are considered particularly helpful.</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching/ learning materials</b>	<p><b>Strategic considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- this requires an important investment upfront.</li> <li>- there is still a shortage of materials even in nations where CLIL programmes</li> </ul>

## CURRICULUM

were launched decades ago.

- centrally producing materials or encouraging schools to participate in creating/sharing materials can be very helpful. It will improve programme delivery and help prevent teacher burn-out.
- an agreed on criteria for developing teaching materials can support teachers in creating high quality material.
- authors and artists can benefit from professional development in CLIL methodology and taking into account established criteria for the creation of teaching materials.
- materials need to be tested in a classroom setting before publication.
- teachers will benefit from training in using materials.
- agendas for school and interschool networking meetings are wise to include “sharing ideas and materials” as an agenda item. It takes time to develop a culture of sharing.
- teachers that share materials should be publicly recognised and rewarded.
- teaching materials for native speakers are often too difficult to use in the early years of a CLIL programme. Sometimes, support material such as scaffolds that help lay the groundwork for working with unfamiliar materials, vocabulary lists or simple work sheets can facilitate the use of texts meant for native speakers.
- teachers need support in finding speakers of the CLIL language, including native speakers, to serve as resource people and guests.
- use the existing language environment (community service staff and leaders, retired people, authentic texts from newspapers and the INTERNET, radio and TV, etc.).

### The library

- a significant investment needs to be made into purchasing books and other materials in the CLIL language.
- librarians receiving training in CLIL methodology are better able to help CLIL teachers.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Stakeholder communications

Creating a support network

### Strategic Considerations

- it is essential to determine the school’s internal and external stakeholders (e.g., internally: CLIL programme teachers, regular programme teachers, students, support staff – and externally: student teachers, parents, local government officials, media) and to describe co-operation with each stakeholder group in the school strategic plan.
- the principles upon which stakeholder expectations and needs are analysed and the frequency of that analysis should be reflected in the school strategic plan. (See five sample questions below.)
- stakeholders will want an overview of the school’s stakeholder analysis and appreciate being asked for feedback. It will be helpful to also discuss what the school believes it needs from stakeholders.
- conclusions based on the analysis of stakeholder expectations and needs will likely impact on the school strategic plan, work plan and future stakeholder relations.

### Five Key Questions

NB: Four questions are intended for the school’s external stakeholders (also suit

## PARTNERSHIPS

internal stakeholders) and one for the school as a whole. In answering the five following questions, stakeholders should be encouraged to take into account school climate, school values, language teaching, teaching of non-language subjects, extra-curricular activities, etc. It would also be wise to provide stakeholders with a one-page synopsis of the school's strategic plan.

1. What does each stakeholder group want or expect from the school?
2. How does the stakeholder group assess the school's performance?
3. From the stakeholder's perspective, how well is the school doing?
4. How would the stakeholder group like to work with the school?

As a final question, school staff should ask themselves:

5. What do we need from stakeholders to be successful?

### Co-operation with other schools

#### Needs

- new teachers will benefit from observing experienced CLIL teachers.
- teacher exchanges within the school or among schools for a day or a week can allow for some observation time, for the teaching of other students possibly using another teacher's lesson plans, and for contact and discussion with colleagues.
- teachers need opportunities for dialogue without managers being present. This helps create a sense of security, facilitates co-operation and professional development.
- principals and vice-principals need to visit other schools to exchange views and experience.
- schools that are new to CLIL can benefit by "buddying-up" with experienced schools. School managers, who mentor, should be recognised and rewarded publicly.

#### Strategic considerations

- CLIL teachers and school principals that unite can solve problems and lobby for resources.
- school inspectors and others assessing CLIL programme progress need help in understanding the methodology and the management implications of programme development.

## PARENTS

### Involvement & dialogue with a heavy dose of listening

#### Considerations:

- parents of CLIL students often take a very active part in their children's school life.
- parents are often very much interested in the results of independent programme research.
- CLIL parents usually wish to meet the school principal, vice-principal and teachers several times a year for, at least, the initial few years.
- parents often ask the same questions from one meeting to the next until they have achieved a sufficient comfort level.
- a letter home once a month that gives an overview of what will be taught and what extra-curricular activities are planned during the upcoming month will address many parental concerns.
- it is useful for the principal, vice-principal and teachers to inform parents of the office hours they have reserved for parents.
- local government materials can help to develop a clear and consistent message.

**Supporting Children**

The materials can provide an overview of CLIL and answer frequently asked questions. Typical questions include:

- What is the average school day like?
  - How are language and other subjects taught?
  - What will become of my child’s mother tongue?
  - Is the programme only meant for high achievers?
  - Can children return to the regular programme, if they can’t cope in CLIL?
  - How can I help my child, if I do not speak the CLIL language?
  - Will my child learn less maths and science?
  - How can one teach ‘hard’ subjects like maths and science in another languages?
  - What happens upon graduation (national exams, university, college)?
  - Why do students spend so much time playing and doing group work?
  - Can learning in a second language cause psychological problems?
- parents need information about how to support their child  
*(e.g., encourage the child to talk about what happened at school, attend CLIL language cultural or sports events, allow the child to watch TV in the CLIL language. It is essential to believe in the child. Often, the stronger the child’s home language, the stronger his or her CLIL language. )*
  - parents need to know what NOT do  
*(e.g., not to re-teach everything every evening in the home language, not asking their children to translate newspaper articles, not projecting their own fears onto their children).*
  - parents should know that it is preferable for a student to stay in CLIL for the full length of the programme *(Some parents feel a child has achieved functional bilingualism at the end of a few years of study and can now leave the programme. Students with difficulties in CLIL are likely to have difficulties in the regular programme. Parents need to understand how CLIL supports a child’s development in general.)*
  - often parents need help in understanding the typical learning cycle vis-à-vis language development and content acquisition so that their expectations are realistic. This will also help them recognise and celebrate their child’s short-term wins. *(e.g., initially, it is important for students to understand the gist of what the teachers says and later understand the details, and still later speak; the child’s achievements need to be recognised at each stage, such as when the child initially speaks no matter with how many mistakes, later for speaking with less mistakes and so on; in very intensive programmes CLIL students’ first language skills will, within a few years, be on par with peers or better than that of peers in the regular programme; maths and science knowledge is equivalent to that of regular programme students; (See “Managing Expectations” under the section “Keeping Students in the Programme”).*
  - parents need to understand and take into account the differences in how boys and girls learn *(In general, boys need to be able to move about more often than girls. Boys often have better developed spatial orientation. Girls need some extra practice in orienteering to catch up with boys. Girls often deal with emotions more effectively than boys. Boys have more difficulty expressing themselves when they are under stress. Learning seems to improve when both girls and boys can move about at some point during a lesson)<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>2</sup> Michael Gurian and Arlette C. Ballew, *Boys and Girls Learn Differently*, Jossey-Bass, 2003

