

Methodology module: CLIL



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Agustina Tocalli-Beller has been working in ELT since 1995. As well as a Masters in Applied Linguistics from York University, Agustina has a PhD in Second Language Education from the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. She then worked there with Dr Merrill Swain and Dr Jim Cummins in the Centre for Educational Research on Languages and Literacies as a research assistant. Agustina has presented papers at several academic conferences and written for journals and academic books on content-based pedagogy, linguistic creativity and sociocultural approaches to language learning. She now works as a consultant, teacher trainer and course developer.

Integration is, without a doubt, the essence of CLIL. CLIL promotes the integration of language and content, but good CLIL practice also requires the integration of learning skills, input and output, technology, media and the pupils' interests.

What is CLIL?

CLIL stands for **Content and Language Integrated Learning**. Integrating language and content is not a new concept in education and the term CLIL has actually become an umbrella term that covers other educational approaches. These include CBLT (Content-Based Language Teaching), EAL (English as an Additional Language) and LAC (Language Across the Curriculum).

CLIL is a **dual-focused** educational approach in which a foreign language is used for the simultaneous learning and teaching of both language and content. In the case of *English World*, English is the language of instruction for the Maths, Art, Science or Geography curriculum connection. Since CLIL is **pupil-centred and content-driven**, it extends the experience of language learning by providing an **active, safe and motivating environment** in which to learn. A CLIL approach prompts teachers to become skilled at presenting the language in more relevant ways through anticipating language problems that may make content hard to understand. This naturally results in **an input-rich and meaningful learning context**.

CLIL in *English World*

The CLIL focus in *English World* is designed to help:

- Increase learner motivation
- Improve overall and specific language competence according to areas of content
- Encourage pupils to expand their knowledge of their world and the wider world

Specifically, Levels 5 and 6 of *English World* support learning by presenting the English language in the three interrelated dimensions in which language is analysed in CLIL:

Language of learning, Language for learning and Language through learning. To make this distinction clear, we can look at Unit 3 of Level 5 Pupil's Book for examples.

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CLIL in English World

Language of learning is the language the pupils need to understand the basic concept of the topic.

In Unit 3 'Tunnels and bridges', the pupils are required to use the passive voice to describe machinery, bridge types and building processes. Pupils are exposed to the language through informative texts. This includes reading all parts of the text and understanding the diagrams and labels.

Language through learning refers to the principle that effective learning takes place if learners are encouraged to express what they know and have understood in a variety of ways.

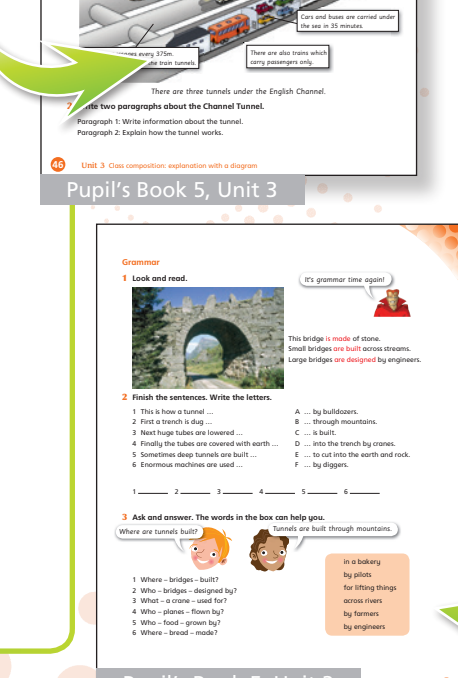
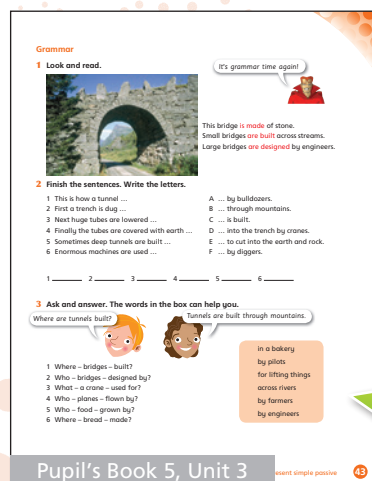
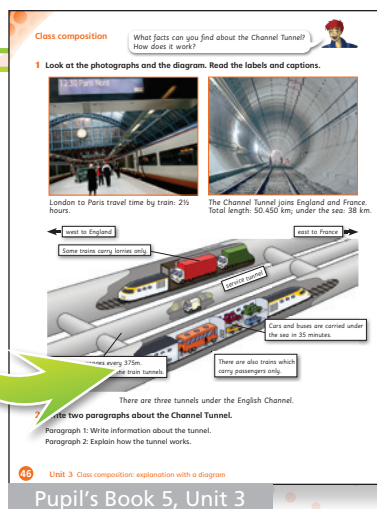
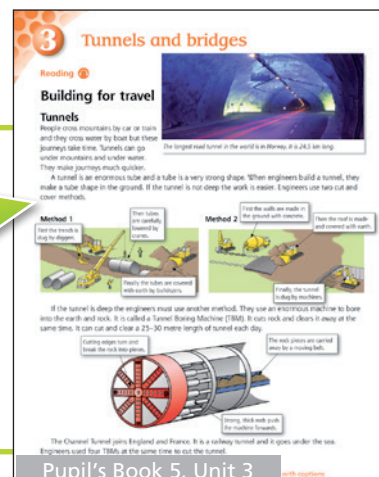
Pupils need to communicate with the teacher, their peers and the text to access content. The demands of different tasks require pupils to put into practice not only their own knowledge and concepts, but also apply skills and strategies. For example, in Unit 3, pupils analyse the structure of an informative text before they are set the task of labelling a diagram and writing an accompanying explanation later in the unit.

To sum up, in **English World**:

Language is taught through increased motivation as it is presented in context and real-life situations – **Language of learning**.

Language is used to accomplish concrete tasks – **Language for learning**.

Language knowledge becomes the means and the result of learning content by accessing, presenting and using content in different ways – **Language through learning**.

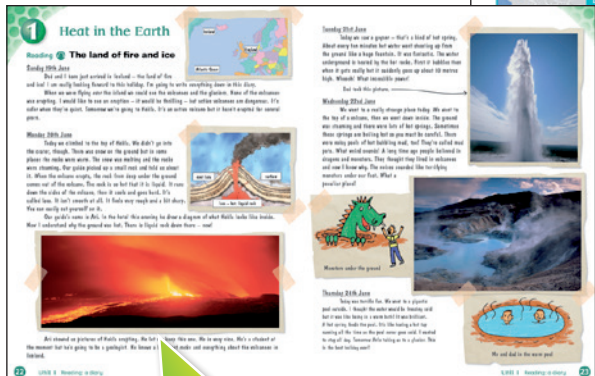


Language for learning is to do with the language used in the CLIL-learning classroom itself. The pupils need support in developing skills to work in pairs, debate, ask for information, make questions and hypotheses, etc.

In Unit 3, the pupils do activities which relate to the content, but which also involve classroom skills such as predicting, asking questions, providing descriptions and conclusions, etc. More importantly, they have to work collaboratively in a variety of ways by turn-taking and role-playing.

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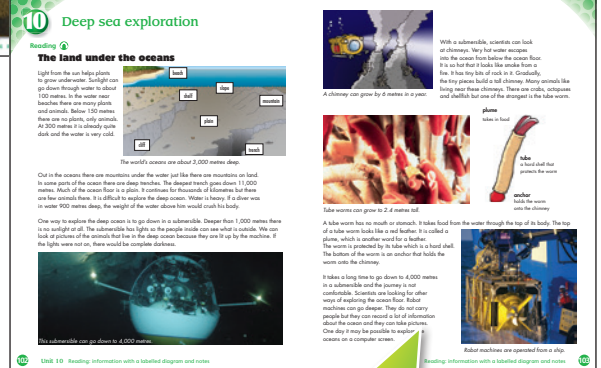
Pupil's Book 6: Science



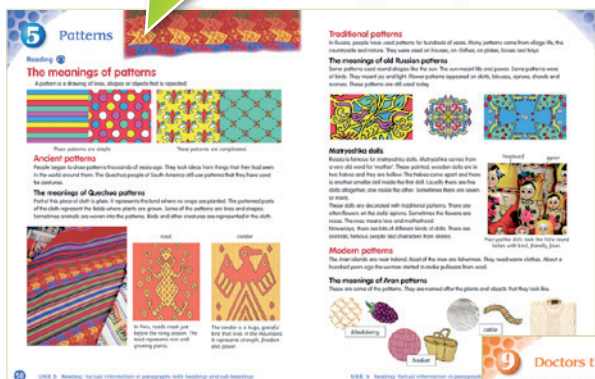
Pupil's Book 5: Geography



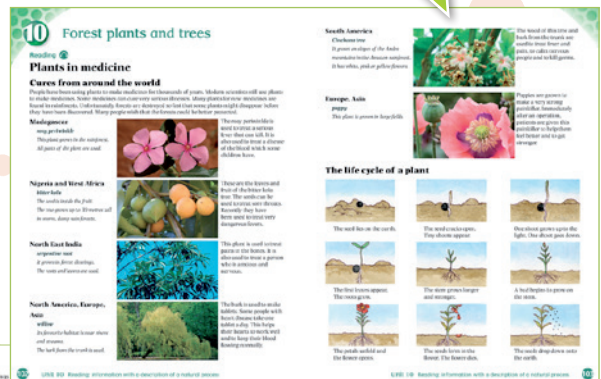
Pupil's Book 5: Science and Maths



In Levels 5 and 6, *English World* adopts a greater focus on the principles of CLIL by having specific CLIL pages which cover many areas of the curriculum including Science, Art, Maths, History and Geography. The cross-curricular content and themes are designed with learners' needs and interests in mind to support collaborative learning. The content and theme of each unit is introduced through reading material, visual elements, creative project work and investigative tasks. These help by developing skills and understanding that enhance pupils' performance in other areas of the curriculum.



Pupil's Book 6: Art



Pupil's Book 6: Science



Pupil's Book 6: History

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English World and the principles of CLIL

Levels 5 and 6 of *English World* follow the guiding principles of CLIL specifically through:



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The 4 Cs

A successful CLIL lesson should combine:



Content

Progressive knowledge, skills and understanding that are related to a specific topic



Communication

Acquisition of language through the use of language



Cognition

Powerful thinking skills that drive and enhance the learning process



Culture

Exposure to alternative perspectives and awareness of otherness and self

Connecting the **4Cs** or '**core features**' into an integrated whole is fundamental to a CLIL lesson. In effective CLIL teaching the 4Cs require connection with the guiding principles and dual-focused aim of CLIL. In the book *Uncovering CLIL* (Mehisto, Frigols & Marsh, 2008), the authors state that there are four '**fusion verbs**' that can help teachers make the necessary connections:

- **Connect**
- **Inspire**
- **Deliver**
- **Advance**

Now think of one of your typical classes, pick a particular lesson that you have recently or repeatedly taught, and answer the following questions to see if these verbs can be used to describe your teaching practice:

- Have my pupils connected? (not only with me, their peers, the textbook but most importantly with what they already know, have learnt and are interested in)
- Did everyone in the class look motivated and engaged to learn?
- Did the lesson and the pupils deliver on the language, content and learning skills?
- Was there proof of learning, advancing, developing? Were pupils able to work on their own task for which they initially needed support from the teacher, a peer, textbook, dictionary, internet, etc.?

If you have answered 'Yes' to these questions, you are well on the way to becoming a good CLIL teacher. However, these should not be 'after-the-fact' but 'as-I-go-along' reflective questions that can guide the course of a lesson.

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Teacher observation and reflection notes

It is important to train ourselves to teach CLIL effectively by setting the 4Cs in motion. With your Level 5 or 6 Pupil's Book opened at a unit of your choice, try to answer the following questions:

Content

- What is the choice of content of the unit theme?
- What will the pupils learn?
- What is the sequence of topics? For example, in Unit 3 'Tunnels and bridges' of Level 5 you first talk about the advantages and purposes of tunnels and bridges and then the methods of construction.

Connecting content to cognition

- What thinking skills are required? (remembering, analysing, evaluating, creating, etc.)
- What tasks encourage the development of these skills?
- Are pupils given the opportunity to discuss their new knowledge and understanding?

Communication – defining three types of language

Language of learning

- What genre is the focus of this theme or unit? (fiction, non-fiction, poetry, news article, etc.)
- What are the lexical and grammatical demands of the unit?
- How is the language of learning taught through the unit in terms of content, specific tasks and grammar focus?

Language for learning

- What language do pupils need to navigate this unit?
- What are the language demands of the activities? (group work, research, debating, etc.)
- Is or can 'scaffold-language' (to explain, check or repeat information) be taught?

Language through learning

- How is the language that the students have already acquired practised and expanded?
- What strategies can pupils use to access new language?
- What is the sequence of language learning?

Cultural awareness

- What cultural implications are there for development in this unit?
- Does the content need to be adapted to make it more culturally meaningful?
- How does culture impact on the other C-features?

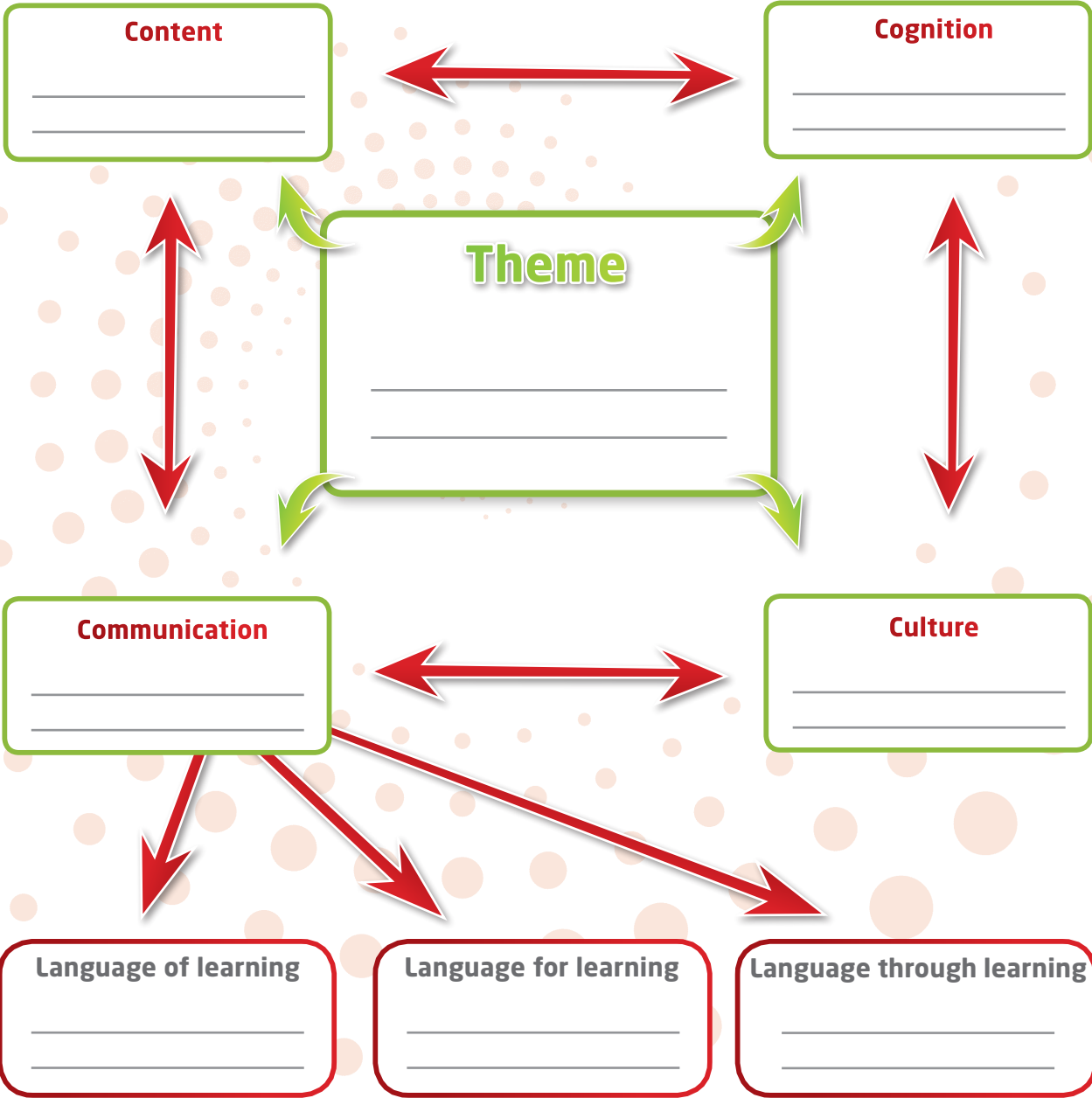
Talk to your colleagues to connect these ideas to your curriculum. Should you and your colleagues have similar questions about your teaching practice, you will naturally agree on the commonalities and unique features of CLIL. Most importantly you will build a common, coherent and integrated approach to CLIL in your classes.

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Teacher observation and reflection notes

Look at the following CLIL mind-map and any Level 5 or 6 Pupil's Book unit of your choice. Try to fill in the map with the unit-specific information to see how it can actually support your teaching plan. Once you can visualise and summarise any unit in this mind-map, you will see how the core features of CLIL can come into existence through your teaching.

By applying this mind-map in your lesson planning, not only will the 4Cs become second nature to you as a teacher, but you will naturally make CLIL come alive for you and your pupils!



Reflection notes

☐ Describe what you understand by the term CLIL.

☐ What do you see as the desired learning outcomes of a CLIL lesson?

☐ How do you exploit the material in the lessons? (group discussions/making posters/ individual presentations/other)

Action points

In order to adopt a CLIL approach it is key that you:

Support language through content and content through language:

Make learning attractive, meaningful, authentic and interactive, and provide a safe and motivating environment in which to learn.

Use the reflective questions to help you visualise and guide the course of a lesson.

Assess progress at various points during a lesson to make sure that you and the children are connecting, are inspired and are delivering to take a step forward.

