5 CLIL at lower secondary level

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Content and language integrated learning (CLIL), as it was mentioned earlier, highlights meaningful context as the core workplace for learners. Even though general textbooks for English learning try to provide the context for language practice, this is often too structured, too diverse or skill focused. This is why CLIL comes as a vital opportunity for teachers to widen the scopes of contextual learning via integrating content subjects and language learning.

Profile of the learners

Lower secondary level offers more opportunities to use English in CLIL lessons because learners are more fluent in the target language in comparison with the primary learners.

Learners at lower secondary level are ready to work with easier abstract concepts and are ready to understand most grammar principles or use analytical thinking. This age – from 10 to 15 years – is generally considered by psychologists as the best age for starting with learning a foreign language. They are well equipped with their mother tongue; they can understand the basic principles of language functions and rules within.

They become more critical of teachers and want to express their opinion. Especially higher grades of lower secondary level can be rather challenging for teachers to keep learners active. They can be very eloquent in expressing what they like and dislike. They are also very sensitive to keeping the rules of fair play and require some form of justification of teacher’s decisions. They use logical memory and start to avoid pure memorisation. We can frequently see them daydreaming, but they can become very enthusiastic as well. They can work effectively with other learners in class which means that the pair or group work will be of much higher quality as in the period before.

We still need to provide a lot of input and exposure to the target language and let learners work out the meanings for themselves. Although they are able to understand simple explanations of grammar principles, we should encourage them to come up with their own conclusions. Activities that we plan need a cognitive challenge so that the learners can work at the level of acquisition rather than learning. Examples of such activities can be reading stories, or comics. They do not need to have every word translated since they can understand the situation very quickly and their tolerance of ambiguity is still very high. It means that teachers do not need to fear using the target language with learners or use other sources that would involve learners in the perception of the target language.

Teaching context for CLIL implementation at lower secondary level

Applying CLIL at lower secondary level will require a higher level of teacher cooperation since at this level there are usually different teachers teaching language and content subjects. An English teacher who is qualified also for a content subject is rather an exception so at the beginning of the CLIL route at any lower secondary level there must be a clear and strong commitment on the part of teachers willing to participate in this cooperative mode of work. Their cooperation involves finding overlaps in the syllabus between English and the content subject, identifying suitable time for integration, identifying the width and depth of immersion within both content subject matter as well as language use.

A common practice is that CLIL is applied either in the English lesson or in a content lesson sporadically throughout the school year. However, some schools, especially if their teachers are fully qualified and experienced in using CLIL, opt for a separate school subject where CLIL is taught during the whole school year. It is usually taught by a teacher with dual qualification or by a team of co-operating teachers.
Whichever approach is adopted by the school, in order to ensure that learners benefit from the CLIL approach, the teacher must be absolutely clear on what is to be taught within both areas at the planning stage. By stating clearly the aims at this stage the teacher is focused on both areas and their interconnection in the entire lesson (see below).

It is necessary to mention that the experience with CLIL implementation has brought clear evidence that CLIL approach has a strong influence on the school curriculum in those areas where English language was integrated. That happens because the integration does not limit itself only to the content transfer but it involves also the transfer of EFL methodology into the content class. It means that integrated classes are guided by the principles of EFL methodology rather than the traditional one. CLIL teachers try to avoid a pure “jug-and-mug” principle and instead they opt for **experiential, discovery and multisensory learning** where learners are actively involved in the lesson and expected to learn new things by discovering, experimenting, and hypothesizing rather than memorizing foreign language texts. CLIL teaching cannot be narrowed only to the presentation of the content knowledge (facts) in English. It would be viewed as a burden by the learners if instead of their mother tongue they would have to use a foreign language to memorize new facts. And young teenagers themselves will not respond positively to long periods of being devoted to presentation of the subject matter (even if the teacher uses technology, e.g. PPT presentation) where their role is to passively perceive and process the information provided. A cognitive challenge which is not focused on linguistic aims might help develop learners’ thinking skills while solving problems and logical puzzles, or inventing something unusual, etc.

Learners at the lower secondary level can in comparison with primary learners apply more extensively **higher-order thinking skills** (according to the Bloom’s revised taxonomy: analyse, evaluate, create) and need not focus only on lower-order thinking skills (remember, understand, apply). Mayer (2002, p. 226) states that “two of the most important educational goals are to promote retention and to promote transfer (which, when it occurs, indicates meaningful learning). Retention is the ability to remember material at some later time in much the same way it was presented during instruction. Transfer is the ability to use what was learned to solve new problems, answer new questions, or facilitate learning new subject matter.” Transfer involves mainly higher-order thinking skills and CLIL allows for the meaningful connection of the knowledge and using the knowledge for some meaningful purpose.

They already have some basic knowledge of the content subject which they learnt and acquired at lower grades and have something to build on. This involves also the **prior life experience** as well as **learning experience** because some of the learners at lower secondary level might have experienced CLIL lessons as primary learners. Students at this level respond well to challenges and CLIL lessons allow for presenting the subject matter in the form of a challenge. However, it is still advisable to prepare students well for coping with ambiguous situations applying learning strategies, especially compensation strategies and social strategies (e.g. Oxford, 1990), so that they can handle moments of confusion and uncertainty. Young teenagers have a tendency to give up easily in times of trouble so the teachers should anticipate that in advance.

On the other hand, they are able to carry out **collaborative work** and organization of their work in a group can be sufficiently effective. They are much better at delegating a task on group members and thus function more efficiently as a team. This opens possibilities for learning from each other while carrying out experiments or solving problems whether in the content or language area.

Lower secondary level also creates conditions for involving much wider repertoire of **resources** that learners can use for searching for information about the content knowledge or for their outcomes since these learners are able to use technological devices and need only some educational guidance from the teacher.
Planning CLIL lesson at lower secondary level

The process of planning a CLIL lesson is more complex and demanding especially in the cases when two teachers cooperate (Sepěšiová, 2011) and they both apply different principles in their own classes. The process of building a lesson together can become a developmental experience since reasoning why certain activities could be included might influence a common practice of both teachers in their own classrooms.

There are certain steps which teachers planning a CLIL lesson will probably follow:

1. **Content areas analysis** and identification of possible matches with the language learning areas: teachers will need to carefully analyse the content of both language and content subjects in order to find out and select the areas for integration. Some areas might be too difficult for students to understand in the foreign language, some might not carry the potential for experiential or discovery learning. This is why science subjects or such content subjects where students are able to grasp the key concepts through their own discovery are the most suitable. While selecting the suitable areas teachers should also realize that the selected areas should not widen the scopes of knowledge too much in comparison with the standards. The aim of CLIL teaching should not necessarily be putting more burdens on learners by asking them to learn more facts.

2. **Theme selection** – once teachers agree on the area they want to use for integration they need to identify a specific theme. It is, however, important to realize that the integration of a certain theme might require more time than just one 45 minute lesson. It, therefore, is more advisable to plan sufficient time even though it will take more lessons to teach (whether during language lessons or the content lesson time) in order to allow for the mastering of key concepts through discovery techniques.

3. **Content materials analysis** is the next step that teachers will be involved in after they have agreed on the theme. They will have to identify which parts of the theme selected can be covered by integration and which will be left for content lesson only. It should be selected carefully since not every term is necessary to use in the integrated part of teaching, some parts might be left to be the focus of regular content classes because it might be too difficult for learners. Another aspect that the teacher should consider is the language skill or performance focus and whether the material supports it.

4. **Stating clear aims** for each lesson – both content and linguistic objectives – is the next step. It is important to keep in mind that CLIL lesson has dual aims, thus teachers must be absolutely clear on what students are supposed to achieve by the end of each lesson. As Gondová (2013, p. 22) states they need to be interlinked with 4 Cs - content, communication, cognition, culture (see the previous chapter).

5. **Key vocabulary and language** identification will be the next focus after the teachers have decided about the lesson aims. Selecting key terms will help them plan the lesson in such a way that these terms will be repeated and reinforced throughout the whole lesson. It is important to build on what learners already know (revision and repetition of already learnt structures). When planning the work with key vocabulary it is also crucial to realize that learners need a careful and in-depth approach to vocabulary presentation and practice since some terminology might be difficult to remember for learners at this stage. It is important to pay enough attention to techniques which will help learners to understand and remember specific key vocabulary. Mind maps help learners to see the relations between words, support visualisation of certain categories and brain-friendly learning. Students can create their own mind maps during presentation or practice stage, or add new terms to already existing mind maps which will stimulate their thinking skills and activated the retrieval process. In the following example the learners focus on understanding definitions translating them into mother tongue, using the kinaesthetic and interpersonal intelligences; as well as cooperative learning.
Example: The teacher chooses about ten key words the students are to understand and learn and writes a definition for each leaving a gap for the key word. The teacher copies the definitions and the key words so that each student has a copy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>exhibition</th>
<th>landscape</th>
<th>portrait</th>
<th>abstract</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>frieze</td>
<td>gallery</td>
<td>perspective</td>
<td>collage</td>
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</table>

1 ___ art does not represent people or objects in a realistic way.
2 One way for artists to sell their work is to put on an ___
3 Some exhibitions are held in a ___
4 A life-like picture of a person is called a ___
5 A picture showing a view of the countryside is called a ___
6 ___ is the technique of representing three-dimensional forms on a flat surface.
7 A ___ is a picture on which pieces of paper, cloth, photographs, etc. are arranged and stuck.
8 A ___ is a band of painted or carved decoration round the top of a wall or building.

Procedure: The teacher gives out the definitions and asks the students to fill in the gaps. Students check the answers with partners or in groups. The teacher checks students’ pronunciation and then asks them to give the translation of each key word in their language. Then the teacher goes round the class giving each student a slip of paper and one of the key words. Students write the key word they were given on one side of the paper and the translation in their language on the other side. Teacher checks their translations. Students mingle around the class and read out their words in either English or their language to random partners who give them the translation. If the student doesn't know the translation student A tells them and makes them repeat it three times. Then student B reads their word and follows the same process. Each time they are with a new partner they can choose whether to start with the key word in English or in the mother tongue. After they have had a chance to hear most of the words the teacher asks them to write down from memory all the words they heard plus the translations. (Adapted from Deller, Price 2007, p. 57-58) Similar activity in which students do not work with texts but visual clues can be found here and it is called Art Gallery.

6. Selection of appropriate text materials - Teachers will have a wide repertoire of materials especially in English available at their disposal, however, they will need to analyse them carefully since most of especially online material has probably been produced for native speakers (e.g. Science A-Z, Science Kids, Time for Kids, Kids.gov, Adventures in Chemistry, DOGO News, Popular Science, SID the Science Kid). Thus it needs to be adapted to suit the needs and the language level of the learners. It is necessary to analyse in detail what the teacher is supposed to cover from the given theme e.g., how complex the material is, etc. There are a great many ready-made materials aimed at CLIL classes as well, which teachers or publishers share online or in printed form. Some textbook sets already have either several pages devoted to CLIL or there are even entire courses focusing on CLIL. In these courses CLIL implementation is the core principle and the whole learning material is based on integration of certain parts of content subjects and the English language (e.g. Oxford Discover, p. 110-111 in Appendix A1, A2). There are also many supplementary materials which can be used as a complement to any regular textbook, such as CLIL readers, or CLIL specific topic worksheets, picture content-areas dictionaries, or even specific websites where teachers find
not only tips for teaching, sample material but entire lesson plans for CLIL implementation (e.g. onestopenglish).

7. **Adaptation or design of new materials** to suit the needs of learners so that they can meet the lesson aims with ease. Especially when teachers use downloaded material which was meant for native speakers, it needs to be revised carefully since the language difficulty level might create obstructions in getting towards the aim.

8. **Planning individual lesson parts**: teachers who have identified aims and selected appropriate material can start building up individual lesson stages starting with lead-in activities, continuing with the main part activities where all aim-connected activities should be covered and ending with reflection on what has been learnt, summarizing the main points or highlighting possible new aims. Reflection part is very important since it leads learners to identify the important parts, to personalize these parts and remember better the main message of the lesson. It also leads to good learning habits since reflection and self-evaluation are the key aspects of metacognitive learning strategies, which are necessary important for independent learners.

**Integrating science and English language**

At lower secondary level the content of science subjects will differ to high extent since the ten-year olds and fifteen-year olds do differ in their capacity of learning, abstract thinking, or the content knowledge. Students have wider space for using the target language as a tool for learning new facts in the content subject since their language proficiency is higher. However, the teacher still must be clear on what exactly they should learn (structures, vocabulary, functions) and design the activity in such a way that the language is used naturally for the selected purpose (see sample lesson plan 1).

**Stop and think**

1. What other content and language aims can you think of for the theme Animals? Specify this theme and present at least two content and two lesson aims.

2. Can you think of a different warm-up activity for this lesson? Discuss it with a partner and present it to the class.

**Integrating art and language**

The most frequent content subjects selected for integration are science subjects such as geography, biology, maths, and physics. However, it is very useful to pay attention also to such school subjects as arts since it not only creates a unique opportunity to integrate the content and language but it also supports brain-friendly learning through the stimulation of the right hemisphere. Moreover, using art in teaching another subject represents an added value in developing aesthetic feelings of the learners leading them towards recognition of fine art masterpieces as well as stirring their creativity.

Using art in teaching is certainly not a new phenomenon and it has been used by some practitioners with a variety of outcomes. Even some authors of EFL textbooks acknowledge the importance of including the links towards art in their textbooks. However, the good practice examples are rather sparse since classroom teachers often do not feel confident enough to work with arts if they are not qualified art teachers. Their worries include uncertainty whether students might be interested in fine art in general, if they as teachers will be able to provide enough information about the individual pieces of art, or if they should bother at all since there are so many exercises in their textbook which need to be covered.
### Sample lesson plan 1: Animals in the world
(2 lessons), year 5, lower secondary level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content aims:</th>
<th>Language of instruction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- to classify animals according to their similarities and differences</td>
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<tr>
<td>- to learn and revise what they know about vertebrates and invertebrates</td>
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<td>- to make comparisons based on certain criteria</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language aims:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- to develop listening skills – listening for details</td>
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<tr>
<td>- to describe animals’ bodies</td>
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<td>- to identify how animals move</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary and structures:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- vertebrates, invertebrates, backbone, slither, crawl, scales, shell, wool,</td>
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<tr>
<td>- it can/can’t... It’s got ... Yes, it is/can/has... No, it isn’t/hasn’t/can’t...</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Language of instruction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead-in:</strong></td>
<td>L2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students discuss the main points from the previous lesson about the climate in various parts of the world. We can use a map of the world and point to different parts of the world, continents, and countries.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Warm-up (in groups):</strong></th>
<th>L2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Odd one out</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teacher calls out groups of animals and the task is to identify the animal which does not belong to the group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Jungle: snake, monkey, <strong>penguin</strong>, tiger</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Arctic: polar bear, seal, <strong>elephant</strong>, polar fox</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Desert: scorpion, snake, camel, <strong>panda</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Sorting:</strong></th>
<th>L2/L1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Pair work:</strong> Flash cards are put on the board, children name them. Their task is to discuss with a partner how they would divide the animals into two groups. They need to first discuss the criteria which they could apply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The teacher draws two circles on the board and invites the children to present their conclusions. Students start dividing animals and if some animals are in the wrong circle, the teacher makes the correction. After all the animals have been placed correctly the teacher asks the students to think what criteria have been applied for this division. Students need to find out what these animals have in common and what distinguishes them from the other group. If they have a problem with this, the teacher writes “backbone” on the board and explains that depending on whether animals have/don’t have a backbone we call them Vertebrates/Invertebrates (pronunciation check). The circles are labelled.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Exercise book entry:</strong></th>
<th>L2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students take notes of the new facts.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Subcategorising:</strong></th>
<th>L2/L1</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group work:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Students work with a worksheet (Appendix B) and their task is to notice how they could subcategorize the animals. They need to search for common and distinguishing features. They cut out the animals and stick them to the groups where they belong to.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Students present their result to other groups.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Communication activity:</strong></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guess my animal:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>One student thinks of an animal from the worksheet. The other students need to find out what animal it is asking yes/no questions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Does it live in a hot/cold place?
Has it got a backbone?
Can it fly?
Is it a mammal?...

**After the break**

**Game: How many legs?**
Students look at the flash cards on the board and have to answer quickly the questions the teacher asks:
- How many animals have no legs?
- How many animals have two legs?
- How many animals have four legs?
- How many animals have more than four legs?
- How many animals have three legs? (for fun)

**Mind map: How do animals move?**
A mind map is created on the board. The central idea: How do animals move?
Students identify how animals can move. If they cannot find the proper word in the target language, the teacher helps: run, fly, crawl, jump, hop, swim, slide, slither. Children can work with a dictionary.

**Chain activity:**
The teacher starts a chain by asking: How can a butterfly move? The student answers: It can fly. After that the same student asks another student: How can a frog move? And the chain continues.

**Body coverings**
**Pair work:** Students fill in a worksheet (Appendix C) about animal body coverings. They check it with another pair.
The teacher checks the correct answers through questions: How many animals have fur/feathers/a shell?

**Animal description:** The teacher revises what students already know about animals:
- where it lives
- vertebrates/invertebrates
- how many legs...
- how it moves
- body description/coverings

**Pair work:** students prepare a description of an animal. They read it aloud and the class should guess the name of the animal.

**Conclusion**
The summary of what students have learnt in the lesson. Revision of what students remember, summary of key points and discussion of what they personally take away from the lesson.

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Another worry might be connected to language proficiency level of students. Teachers might be concerned whether their students are able to describe or to discuss the fine art work or whether they should wait until they master the language at higher level. Grundy et al. (2011, p.10) claim that “one of the most significant methodological issues in language teaching is the issue whether we learn language in order to use it or whether we learn a language through using it.” While working with a textbook usually directs the learner towards one expected outcome, involving art in teaching means opening the gates for freer use of the language by using it and for attempts to succeed with whatever is at learner’s disposal at the moment. Most of the times the students are focused on real cognitive processes – thinking about the piece of art, receiving...
messages, creating an opinion, expressing that opinion – rather than rehearsing, practising those processes and looking for the correct answer.

New technologies can support the intentions of the teacher to involve fine art masterpieces in the teaching process and bring them closer to the learners. We no longer need to take the class to the gallery – unless we want the real feeling – in order to introduce the fine art to our students. That makes it easier even for the language teachers who otherwise would find it difficult to excuse the entire class from the lessons to take them to the gallery.

A good example of using famous paintings is described by Reilly and Reilly (2005). They suggest a nice activity, which can be used with e.g. grade 5 of lower secondary level using Van Gogh’s painting My Bedroom. This activity focuses on systematic use of language learners practise picture description and use of There is/There are:

- Show the children the Van Gogh picture. Tell them that the artist was called Vincent Van Gogh and although he is very famous now, he was very poor when he was alive. Tell them how much this painting is worth now.
- Elicit the vocabulary they can see: window, chairs, bed, pictures, mirror, table, walls, floor. You could also teach blanket, sheets, pillows, coat hook, if they are useful words for your class.
- Draw a table on the board similar to the one below and write in the nouns in column 5.

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>chair window pictures bed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Elicit the colours they can see in the painting and encourage them to make pairs with the nouns, for example, blue walls, a red blanket, and write the colours in column 4 next to the correct noun.
- Remind the children that when we want to describe the existence of something, we can say: There is (there’s)/There are. Write There in column 1 and is/are in column 2.
- Add a/an in column 3 if the noun is singular or some if it is plural. Alternatively, you may wish to add numbers in this column, e.g. There are two brown chairs.
- Now ask the children to think of their own bedroom and to write sentences about it, referring to the table above.

Reilly & Reilly, 2005, p.103-104

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**Stop and think**

1. How can you develop this activity so that it can be characterized as a CLIL activity? Give examples.

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However, CLIL allows for more dimensions to be taken into account than the above activity suggests. The following example presents the unit where the following content and language aims were stated:

- students will be able to recognize the famous fine art masterpieces;
- students will recognize selected famous painters;
• students will be able to characterize how the painting style has changed over the centuries;
• students will be able to express their feeling towards selected paintings;
• students will be able to describe a painting.

The entire CLIL unit can consist of more than one part. The lead-in part represents introduction into the theme Art in our life and can be supported by a textbook, e.g. Project Third Edition 1, p. 73, presents a painting by Peter Bruegel Children’s Games. It can be a good starting point for the entire theme where learners not only linguistically describe what they can see in the painting but also express their attitude towards the painting and emotions they feel while looking at it.

The lesson can start with an introduction in which learners are first confronted with the title Art in our Life and can talk about it in their mother tongue. The main focus of questions is about their experience with art, artists, displays, galleries, etc. After that they can be shown four names of famous artists (e.g. Pablo Picasso, Vincent van Gogh, Leonardo da Vinci, Peter Bruegel) and the teacher can ask whether they recognise some of them. Some of the names may sound familiar to students but they will probably not be able to identify all. This creates a strong learning point in this lesson. After disclosing they are all painters students can guess which one is the oldest and the youngest and try to match their names and portraits. Then are shown their paintings and they again try to match paintings and the painters. One of the paintings (by Bruegel) is identical with the picture in their textbook so the students can at this point focus on some language work based on textbook exercises. At the end of the lead-in part the students should be able to describe the selected painting and express whether they like it or not and why.

Next part can focus on the language production and the main aim can be to lead learners towards expressing their preference by the selection of one painting, describing it using the language they have at their disposal.

The learners are given a set of famous paintings with the name of the author at the back side, printed in colour and laminated. They look through them a talk with the teacher about painters, paintings, whether they know or seen them and after a while they choose one painting they like. Once each learner has selected one painting their task is to prepare the introduction of this painting for their class gallery. Learners are presented the idea of designing a class gallery in their classroom. Lower levels might still need some linguistic guidance such as a simple structure to follow, e.g.:
• introduce the painting (its name)
• give the name of the author (and some details)
• say what we can see there:
  o there’s somebody/something (what it looks like, what colour it is; what people are wearing, etc.)
  o somebody is doing something - What is it?
  o something is happening – What is it?
• express whether you like this picture or not and why

The first drafts can be edited and placed on the coloured paper with the laminated painting above it. Adding a string to each paper will enable hanging the painting on the class wall as in a class gallery:
Then learners can present their painting to the rest of the class and the paintings can be organised in a display from the oldest so that children can realise also how art and the style of painting has changed over the time. The teacher can highlight the most important features. Higher-level students can focus on more complex language points or language structures, e.g. as Deller and Price (2007, p. 18) suggest question forms, wh-questions and past tense:

The teacher can choose one of the painters as a topic (e.g. Pablo Picasso) and writes his name on the board. Students work in pairs and write down all questions they would like to ask about the famous painter, e.g.:

- What nationality was he?
- Did he have children?
- When did he live?
- Where did he live?
- What materials did he use?
- What is the name of his most famous painting?

The students write their questions on the board and copy them all into their notebooks. Students who wrote a question read them aloud to the class and their classmates try to predict the answers. The teacher can afterwards give a talk/play a short video about the painter, or students can be given a text about him. Students are supposed to tick the questions that they think were answered. Students can discuss the answers they have heard, if their answers are supported by others or by the teacher, the question can be removed from the board. After they have gone through all questions that they thought were answered, they should search for the answers to those which are left on the board as a home task. They can be suggested resources they can use in order to find the missing information.

**Stop and Think**

1. Think of one more modification of the above activity which you could use with higher level students. Discuss it with a partner.
History in integration with the language classes offers a unique context for practising the language of the past events. Language practice where students repeat one sentence using present simple, or past simple tense makes hardly any sense to the learners and it stays a depersonalized grammar exercise. However, when students start speaking about an event or a personality from the past, they naturally and unavoidably start using past tense.

Sample lesson plan: Famous explorers – Christopher Columbus  
(inspired by www.onestopenglish.com)

**Aim:** to put events from the life of Christopher Columbus on a timeline; to reconstruct the discovery of America; to identify the important benefits of Columbus’ voyage  
**Language focus:** to be able to use past tense for description of past events; ask questions in the past; express possibility in the past; understand the gapped text  
**Key vocabulary:** depart, sail, route, silk, spices, king, queen, trip, land, arrive, island, journey

**Procedure**

Teacher writes the following foods on the board: potato, corn, peanut, tomato, papaya, pineapple, avocado, chilli pepper, cocoa, and asks the pupils what these foods have in common. Teacher explains that these are some of the foods that Spanish conquistadores brought from America when they discovered it in 1492 and on the other hand Spanish people took rice, olives, wheat and weapons to America. 

Teacher elicits the prior knowledge about the explorers and elicits name Christopher Columbus. After that students play a quiz. They are divided in groups of three or four. Each group receives two cards with letters T (true) and F (false). Teacher reads the statements about the life of Christopher Columbus and students must decide whether the statement is true or false and raise the appropriate card. It is important that all groups raise their cards at the same time. The teacher records the answers on the board and continues with another statement. After all statements have been read, the teacher reads them again, this time announcing which group answered correctly. 

After this introduction the students are given a worksheet about the life of Christopher Columbus and their task is to number the events and put them on a timeline.

**Task 1: Read the sentences and number them.**

a. Columbus died in Valladolid. □

b. Columbus discovered America. □

c. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella helped Columbus with the trip. □

d. Columbus departed from Palos de la Frontera. □

e. Christopher Columbus was born in 1451, probably in Genoa, Italy. □

f. Columbus wanted to sail to Asia. He needed a lot of money for this trip. □

Key: 1-e; 2-f; 3-c; 4-d; 5-b; 6-a

Teacher gives out the gapped text about Christopher Columbus and asks students to fold the paper so that they do not see the options first. After they have read through the text and tried to fill in the gaps on their own, they can check whether their answers correspond to three options offered below the text.
Task 2: Read the text and fill in the gaps without looking at the options.

Christopher Columbus was born in 1451, probably in Genoa. Columbus wanted to find a new route to India and China. He wanted to bring back silk and spices. Columbus wanted to find a quicker and easier route to Asia sailing (1) ________________ . It was a dangerous journey and he needed Money. He visited the courts of the kings and queens asking for help and Money. Ferdinand and Isabella, the king and queen of (2) ________________ , decided to help him. In 1492 Columbus departed from Palos de la Frontera, in (3) ________________ , Spain, with three ships: the Pinta, the Niña and the Santa María. The ships were small, between 15 and 36 metres long. In the three ships they carried about (4) ________________ men. After sailing across the (5) ________________ Ocean for ten weeks, on 12th October 1492 Columbus saw (6) ________________ . He arrived at a small Island in the Bahamas. Columbus named the Island San Salvador. The people living on the islands were Arawaksa and Caribs. Columbus called all the people he met in the islands (7) ________________ because he thought he was in India. When Columbus arrived in Cuba, he thought it was Japan. Columbus came back to Spain in March 1493. Columbus sailed to America (8) ________________ more times. He received new titles: Admiral of the Ocean Sea and Governor of the Indies. Columbus died in (9) ________________ .

1. a/ east b/ north c/ west
2. a/ Spain b/ Portugal c/ Italy
3. a/ Huelva b/ Valencia c/ Italy
4. a/ 9 b/ 90 c/ 900
5. a/ Pacific b/ Indian c/ Atlantic
6. a/ a cloud b/ a ship c/ land
7. a/ Indians c/ pirates c/ aborigines
8. a/ two b/ three c/ five
9. a/ 1506 b/ 1526 c/ 1530

Key: 1-west; 2-Spain; 3-Huelva; 4-90; 5-Atlantic; 6-land; 7-Indians; 8-three; 9-1506.

After they have finished reading, the whole class checks the answers together. Then the groups look back at their timelines and correct any mistakes they made. After that the groups can swap their timelines and check their classmates’ timeline. If there is any misplacement they can discuss it with the teacher.

Teacher asks the groups to think about the route Christopher Columbus followed on a world map. They can think about it in groups and then present it to the class. They may suggest which route they would take if they were to take to voyage. The teacher shows the route and says which group was the closest the real route.

At the end of the lesson the students create the mind map with the key terminology they have learnt in the lesson. They express why they personally think the Columbus´ voyage was important from today’s perspective. As a home task students can prepare several quiz questions for their classmates for next lesson.

Stop and think

With a partner discuss other possibilities for teaching a CLIL history lesson. What topics would you choose? What aims would you state?
Conclusion

Implementing CLIL at a lower secondary level differs from the primary level since learners are able to communicate at a higher level and approach the content more thoroughly. In comparison with the higher secondary level, however, they will need careful consideration of the content they are to cover since their prior life and learning experience is still limited. Learners at this level need a lot of teacher’s support especially because they move from the reproductive level to productive level, so at the lower levels they will need a lot of examples of what is expected from them. On the other hand the lower secondary level students are still open to experimenting and hands-on learning. This enables the use of experiential learning which is crucial for CLIL.

References


Useful online resources for lower secondary CLIL:
http://www.pieter-bruegel-the-elder.org/Children’s-Games-1559-60.html
https://www.sciencea-z.com/
http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/
http://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/education/whatischemistry/adventures-in-chemistry.html
https://www.dogonews.com/category/science
http://www.popsci.com/tags/kids
http://www.pbs.org/parents/sid/
Appendices

Appendix A1 (Source: Oxford Discover, p. 110)
Taking Care of Our Natural Resources

We can all take care of the Earth’s resources. Here are some ideas:

- Use things until you can’t use them anymore.
- Don’t throw things away. **Reuse** them. Refill plastic drink bottles. Make toys from old things.
- **Reduce** the natural resources you use. Take your own bag to the store.

**Think**

Find one detail of the main idea.

What can you do today to help take care of our natural resources?

Appendix A2 (Source: [Oxford Discover](https://www.oxforddiscover.com), p. 111)
Appendix B (Source: Calabrese & Rampone, 2007).
### Body coverings

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Hair/fur</th>
<th>Wool</th>
<th>Shell</th>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Feathers</th>
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Put a cross (x) in the right square.

Appendix C (Source: Calabrese & Rampone, 2007)