

## 6 Higher secondary CLIL

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### Objectives

The aim of this chapter is to introduce a specific context of higher secondary CLIL in Slovakia and discuss some of the teaching techniques (with model activities) which are suitable for this level of CLIL.

### Specific characteristics of secondary CLIL

As mentioned before (in chapter 2 of this e-textbook), if compared to the situation in the primary CLIL, the secondary CLIL is not so wide-spread in Slovakia and so far it has attracted attention of only a few of researchers (Gondová, 2012a, 2012b; Škodová, 2011; Veselá, 2012). In the context of the Slovak secondary school, CLIL is applied mostly at grammar schools, health care schools and business academies. CLIL at Slovak vocational schools is very rare which may be caused by the schools' and teachers' worries that it may be a rather demanding method for vocational learners.

Considering the purposes of its application, the secondary CLIL in Slovakia is developed along two lines:

- a) in academic subjects (mostly at bilingual and mainstream grammar schools) with the intention to prepare students for further university study in a foreign language,
- b) in vocational subjects (mostly at business academies, health-care schools and other types of secondary vocational schools) to develop profession-oriented literacy and help learners become successful experts in their profession, as well as enable them to both communicate and cooperate in the international labour market (c.f. the document issued by the European Commission Languages for Jobs..., online). In this context, CLIL becomes one of the methods used in the vocationally-oriented language learning (VOLL) which combines developing work-related professional skills with foreign language education, as well as fosters key skills, such as communication, ICT, problem-solving and working with others (Sewell, 2004, p. 7).

As stated in many resources and proved by many projects, CLIL at a higher secondary level of education can bring many valuable benefits:

- learners can develop specific vocabulary and other language knowledge and skills which they will encounter later in their jobs,
- learners can acquire the strategies and tools that support specific text comprehension and production,
- learners can develop flexibility and adaptability which are qualities necessary for them to study or work in a different language area,
- learners (even those who are not necessarily amongst the most gifted) are motivated and make progress not only in the foreign language acquisition but also in the understanding of the vocationally related content,
- in addition to the development of their foreign language skills, learners can develop other skills they will need in their real jobs: to communicate and apply specialist knowledge, to work for and with their team, to complete an assignment under deadline pressure, consequently to present and promote their product (c.f. CLIL-LOTE Start, online; European Schoolnet, online, and many others).

Referring to Graddol's *English Next* (2006), Ball emphasizes that "the future is about 'competences', not about discussing the differences between the Past Simple and the Present Perfect. This is not to imply that CLIL does not work on, or that it is uninterested in accuracy.

What it does imply is that the development of competences is much more likely to occur within an approach that prioritises thinking skills and communication” (Ball, online 4).

### Secondary CLIL tips

- It is recommended to always start from the **learners’ perspective**. What are they interested in? What do they really need for their life?
- **Multiple sources** in a foreign language should be used.
- Learners need to be showed and taught **how to work with informative texts** in a foreign language, e.g. how to understand their structure, organisation, using outlining, rephrasing, etc.
- CLIL lessons should be directed to the creation of a **final product** which integrates language and content, e.g. a presentation, an advertisement, a documentary, a poster, an interview, a mind map, an experiment etc.
- To enhance learners’ motivation, these CLIL products need to be **presented or displayed** to classmates, teachers, parents or the general public (e.g. through a school website or exhibition).

### Teaching techniques for secondary CLIL

When Gondová (2012a) surveyed secondary CLIL learners she also asked them to give some suggestions to improve the CLIL lessons, they offered many ideas related to the choice of teaching techniques, e.g. they would wish to have more games and fun, use more group activities, more discussions, more multimedia and modern teaching aids, they would like to organize more out-door activities, and above everything – they would *replace theory by practice*.

In her conclusion of another work, Gondová (2012b, p. 13) explains: “...teachers are aware of the necessity to use learner-oriented methods and most of them try to do so in some of the lessons, but even if they decide to use a role-play, a discovery activity or a game, they usually choose one which is controlled or semi-controlled, which means it does not make the development of higher-order thinking skills of learners possible. It seems that teachers are not willing to lose control of what their learners do and avoid using analytical, evaluative or creative tasks enabling learners to work independently from the teacher. One of the reasons might be the long-standing culture of traditional, teacher-oriented teaching, another one the lack of knowledge of learner-oriented methods”.

Being aware of the previous research results, the next part of the chapter introduces the set of teaching methods suitable for secondary CLIL classes.

Ball (online 4) suggests that in CLIL, “there appear to be four basic types of activity that can help students to prosper, despite their relative lack of linguistic resources”. Those four types of activities are as follows with the addition of some examples:

1. **activities to enhance peer communication** (e.g. information gap activities, role plays, discussions, etc.);
2. **activities to help develop reading strategies** (e.g. outlining, activities to reorganise the informative text, mind-mapping, etc.);
3. **activities to guide student production, oral and written** (e.g. creating and presenting ppt presentation, movie making, blogging, etc.);
4. **activities to engage higher cognitive skills** (problem solving activities, projects, simulation and situation activities).

#### a. Information gap activities

CLIL emphasises learning a foreign language for the sake of meaningful communication. The meaningful communication means sharing information between communicating subjects. The basic condition for such sharing is the existence of an information gap, i.e. one of communicators seeks a piece of information from the other(s). Therefore, any teaching activities based on

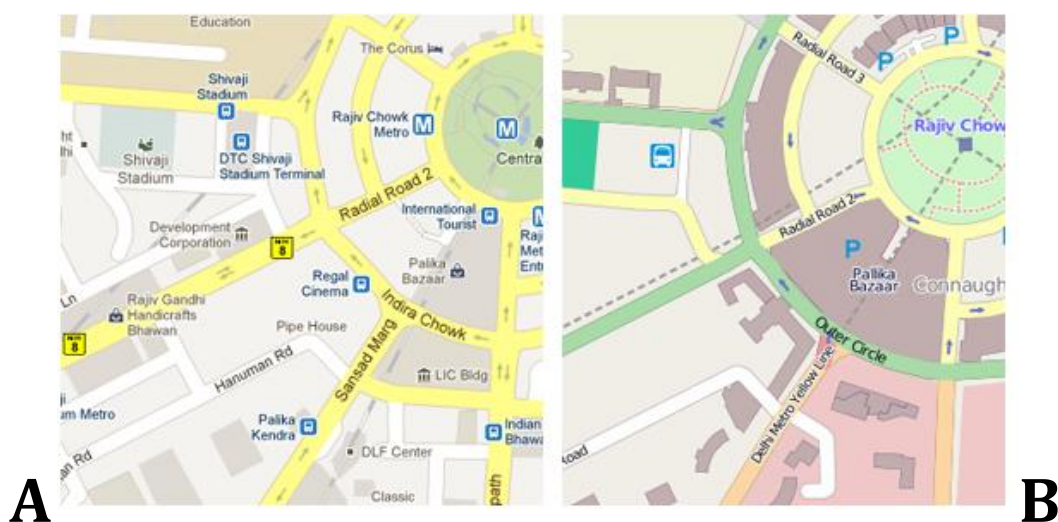
creating an information gap situation (role plays, discussions, questionnaires, etc.) are welcome in CLIL classrooms. Another bonus is that information gap activities are very close to real-life communication since to fulfil the task, learners have to interact, to create questions and answers and share information (for more consult Pokrivčáková, 2014, p. 54-56).

### Spot the difference

Learners work in pairs. Each of them is given one part of a pair of two very similar pictures (picture A and B) with only a few differences. It is important that they cannot see each other's picture. They take turns in describing their pictures and asking questions and together they try to find all differences. The teacher may find many ready-made commercial versions of this activity in magazines or puzzle books. Two examples of this activity are given below. In the first one, learners (students of car-technology programmes) need to discuss and find the differences in size, shape and type of two cars. In the second one which can be used in geography classes, learners look for differences in two versions of the GPS maps.



(source: Honda car parts, available at: <http://www.6two1.com/spot-the-difference/>)



(source: Offline maps and GPS navigation apps at <http://www.instantfundas.com/2011/10/offline-maps-and-gps-navigation-apps.html>)

Ball gives an inspirational example of an information-gap crossword about 'The accumulation of capital' (Ball, online3).

## b. Discussions

A **discussion** is a dialogic technique based on the existence of an information/opinion gap between communicating partners. Using discussions in a CLIL class requires a higher level of learners' foreign language speaking proficiency.

Discussions are frequently used as a motivation technique before reading or listening activities. However, "to discuss" does not mean to *ask and answer questions*. In reality, it is something else and more.

Three basic types of classroom discussions may be recognized (for more see Pokrivčáková, 2014, p. 32-33):

- a) small-group discussions,
- b) large-group discussions,
- c) debate.

### Small-group discussions

For this type of discussion the class is divided into several smaller groups where learners discuss freely and after some time they present their outcomes to the whole class.

#### *Recommended procedure*

1. Prepare the learners for discussion, e.g. introduce the key terms, frame structure, etc.).
2. Let learners choose from several topics or suggest their own topic, e.g. How to make our life more ecology-friendly?
3. Decide about the form for the outcome (a list of possible solutions, a final decision in a written form, individual reports on the topic, a poster, etc.).
4. Define timing for discussion (**not more than 5 minutes!**).
5. Divide learners into groups and let them discuss the topic.
6. After discussion ask the learners to present their outcomes (e.g. in front of the whole class).
7. After discussion is over (or during another lesson), summarise new information and/or new language (e.g. specific vocabulary).

#### **Example**

**Discuss in the group what can any institution (e.g. a school or a company) do to slow the spread of infection (e.g. flu). Below are some prompts. You may use them or forget them. After discussing the problem and finding the solution, prepare a poster with your conclusions in the form of recommendations.**

- Having an infection control plan.
- Providing clean hand washing facilities.
- Ask workers/learners to get the appropriate vaccine.
- Offering waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizers when regular facilities are not available (or to people on the road).
- Providing boxes of tissues and encouraging their use.
- Reminding staff to not share cups, glasses, dishes and cutlery. Ensuring dishes are washed in soap and water after use.
- Removing magazines and papers from waiting areas or common rooms (such as tea rooms and kitchens).
- Allowing employees/students to work/study from home to avoid crowding the workplace/school
- Considering cleaning a person's workstation or other areas where they have been if a person has suspected or identified influenza.
- Making sure ventilation systems are working properly.

### **Large-group discussion**

A large-group discussion requires a very well prepared chairman. He/she should be prepared to discuss any issue related to the discussion topic. The chairman may be a teacher or one of the learners. The chairman's tasks include:

- starting the discussion, e.g. with a provocative question, using visuals, etc.;
- facilitating the discussion by asking questions;
- dealing with disagreements and conflicts;
- reflecting on the discussion and providing a summary.

#### *Recommended procedure*

1. The learners are initially presented with a provocative question or a problem.
2. They are asked to present their own opinions, views and beliefs on the matter.
3. The chairman takes notes on the board as an outcome of the discussion.
4. The chairman concludes the discussion by stating a summary.

### **Debates**

The form of a debate is very close to that of a discussion. Students create two groups with conflicting views and their task is to come to an agreement/conclusion.

#### *Recommended procedure*

1. Introduce the topic. It must be controversial, e.g. Building atomic power stations, death sentence in contemporary legislation, etc.
2. Ask students to form two teams: "pros" and "cons".
3. Give students sufficient time for preparation of their arguments.
4. Ask both teams to appoint "a speaker".
5. Set a one-minute limit for presentations of both teams.
6. Allow teams to ask questions and answer them (5-minute limit). If the debate turns too loud, only speakers are allowed to speak.
7. After five minutes of discussion, stop the debate. Summarize both teams' points. Ask students to make notes.

### **c. Outlining**

In CLIL classes, both types of outlining can be used: a) outlining after reading an informative text in a foreign language, and b) outlining before writing their own texts.

Through practising both types of outlining learners learn about the organisation of the written text, and its structure. At the same time, they acquire the skills necessary to distinguish between the main ideas and their supporting details, as well as to identify their hierarchy.

#### *Recommended procedure for outlining after reading an informative text*

1. Prepare the learners for reading, e.g. provide them with necessary key vocabulary.
2. Let the learners read the text to get the general idea of the text. They can examine the length and genre of the text and think about the author.
3. Let them read the text again, now slower and in detail.
4. Ask them to preview introductory and conclusion paragraphs.
5. Ask them to identify the main idea or the purpose of the text (the topic sentence)? Usually it is expressed in the introductory paragraph. The title can help as well.
6. Learners should identify the main ideas of each paragraph (supporting sentences).
7. Ask the learners to formulate the concluding idea (usually stated in the concluding paragraph). What was the author's intention? What is the conclusion the author offers?
8. Learners should prepare some conclusion, e.g. in the form of brief written notes, a mind map, a short review, a poster, etc.

#### d. Mind maps (Conceptual maps)

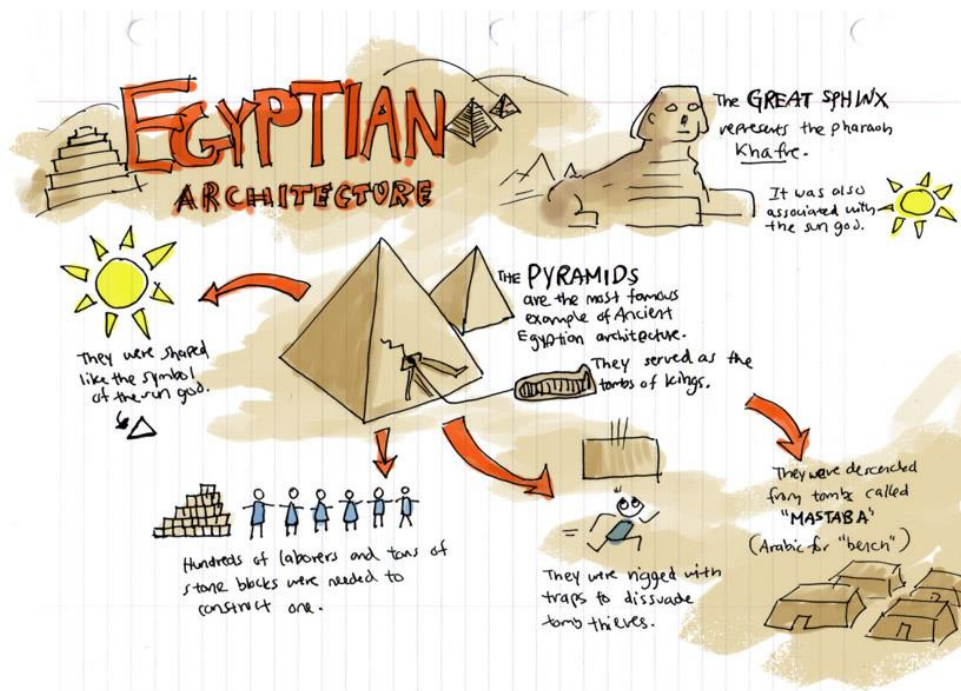
Mind mapping, originally a tool for organizing ideas that fuses together key words and pictures (Buzan & Buzan, 1996), is based on brainstorming the connections between facts and ideas (concepts, hence the synonymous name concept maps). When mind mapping, the learners are asked to draw their ideas and express the relationships between them by means of lines, arrows, overlapping areas or hierarchical orderings (hence mapping). Mind mapping has been proved as an effective tool in natural sciences classes, e.g. biology, geography, chemistry, but it can be used within any content subject. For examples of using mind mapping in history classes and their analysis see Reilly (online).

Mind mapping develops learners' logical thinking, creativity, and **imagination**. **Mind maps can be produced manually by drawing, or you can choose from several mind mapping software applications** (e.g. iMindMap).

##### *Recommended procedure*

- Take a large sheet of paper.
- Draw a central image (usually an ellipse) with the topic written in it.
- Draw at least **four thick** branches coming outwards from the central image (it is advised to use a different colour for each branch).
- Write key words along these branches.
- Draw additional branches that extend from your main branches and write more key words (sub-topics).
- Keep expanding the mind map outwards with additional branches and sub-topics.

#### Example of a completed simple mind map from history



(Source: <http://aghsandtheancientpast.weebly.com/plus-plan---locate---use.html>)

#### e. Project work

Project work (or simply a project) is a student-centred teaching technique when learners need to use their personal creativity and work independently to generate a final product (a report, a presentation, a lecture, a book, a magazine, etc.). It is a large-scale teaching technique

that involves research and provides students with opportunities to gain meaningful experience (for more see Pokrivčáková, 2014, p. 77-78).

**Project work** is organized in three stages:

- 1 planning,
- 2 implementation and end-product creating,
- 3 evaluating.

The teacher plays many roles when organizing project work: he/she is an organizer, coordinator, motivator, facilitator, a participant in project activities (to some extent) and a monitor. Despite all these roles, the irony of organizing project work lies in the fact that the more *passive* the teacher appears to be, the more successful the project is in terms of students' autonomy and independent learning (Fried-Booth, 2002, p. 18).

Project work is a great CLIL means of integrating knowledge from several school subjects or fields of human knowledge. As Byrne (1991, p. 96) has it, project work should help them fulfil broader educational objectives, such as: research skills (searching and categorizing various information), social skills (cooperating in the group), and developing digital literacy (using internet sources, using ICT when creating and publishing a final product). The later named aspect of the project work is emphasized by Cimermanová (2011) who introduced the collection of project work activities that integrate learning English as a foreign language and developing digital literacy skills, e.g. creating and publishing English calendar by means of MS Publisher, editing a movie clip via MS Movie Maker, etc.

#### *Recommended procedure*

1. Set general aims.
2. Define language aims (what language should be used, which language items, vocabulary, etc.).
3. Define an end-product.
4. Set a time frame (at least deadline).
5. Recommend information sources.
6. Set criteria of evaluation.
7. Let students work independently (with your monitoring from background).
8. Ask students to present their end-products.
9. Evaluate.

#### **Examples of CLIL projects assignments**

1. Create a short biographical documentary of a famous person born in your town/village.
2. Create an attractive English tourist guide of your town/village.
3. Create an English version of your school website.
4. Create an English website of your class.
5. Create a blog on the healthy lifestyle where you and your classmates will contribute individually with articles on diets, sport activities, games, etc. Each article should have a discussion/comment session.
6. Create a short movie documentary of a lab experiment conducted in your biology/chemistry/physics class.

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