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Teacher Education for CLIL across Contexts

From Scaffolding Framework to
Teacher Portfolio
for Content and Language Integrated
Learning



This document is an outcome of a SOCRATES-COMENIUS 2.1 project:
CLIL across Contexts: A scaffolding framework for teacher education
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Further details, with translations of core documents into seven languages are available at:
<http://clil.uni.lu>

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Note on frequently used terms:

The term “teacher education” stands for all forms of academic, undergraduate and graduate studies, as well as for pre-service, initial and in-service teacher training. Other terms used are teacher development and teacher learning.

All those that participate in one of these forms of teacher education are called “student teachers” but occasionally they are also referred to as teachers or students or learners.

“Teacher educator” is used for all those in charge of teacher education. The term includes teacher trainers or mentors and tutors according to national or institutional context.

Some inconsistency in use is due to varying terminology in authors’ settings.

From scaffolding framework to portfolio

Despite its references to examples of practice, the conceptual framework for CLIL teacher development remains a predominantly abstract piece of work. The long lists of items can only make sense if they are studied in relation to direct experience. It is through personal appropriation of the underlying concepts and theories that the links between the juxtaposed columns can be established. Such work is facilitated by a portfolio approach in teacher education.

A developmental portfolio for CLIL teachers

Feedback from practitioners has confirmed that the complex issues and concepts involved in content and language integrated learning and teaching require flexible tools for implementation in the classroom. We believe that a developmental portfolio, based on active participation, reflection and dialogic exchange, is a very appropriate means to help teachers articulate and consolidate the links between theory and practice.

This portfolio is conceived as a **learning or working** tool for CLIL student teachers, either at undergraduate or graduate level or for teacher education programmes, including modules of in-service training.

The framework of **CLIL across Contexts** developed by an international team of partners is to be seen as the foundation on which training and study units as well as learning outcomes can be based.

It gives a conceptual overview of CLIL teacher practice. Above all, it is a reference tool and guide that should allow teacher educators and student teachers to choose their areas and specific foci for development according to their contextual requirements and needs.

The theoretical introductions with reading lists will facilitate further research and elaboration around key issues. Great emphasis has also been put on examples of practice. These activities for student teachers should inspire teacher educators and CLIL practitioners to adapt them to their own teaching and learning situations.

The aim of this portfolio is teacher growth, reflection and the development of teacher autonomy or teacher control as well as cooperation between language and subject teachers. It should be seen as an instrument for awareness raising and development of informed practice across national contexts and for exchange and interaction between student teachers and educators within an institution. It is thus not an instrument for teacher certification. Should particular institutions wish to use it for this purpose, they would need to define their own assessment criteria.

Work with this portfolio encourages an emphasis on the process of teacher development. The outcomes and productions (suggested in the right-hand column of the framework) show the importance given to reflective practice, to situated learning (also teacher learning), to interaction and innovative activities which integrate subject and language teaching methodologies.

Guidelines for users/teacher educators

The portfolio offers a step-by-step approach which is meant to facilitate a teacher educator's organization of work with a group of student teachers. However, the portfolio is intended to be a flexible tool and teacher educators will know what choices to make to suit their student teachers' needs.

A few points may need clarification:

Paper or digital portfolio?

Below a paper version is proposed. It is also available on the project website and can easily be used in electronic form or be adapted to different settings. Where a collaborative approach is required, a digital portfolio will be preferred.

A socio-cultural and dialogic perspective

The emphasis is put on a reflective and socio-cultural approach to teacher education. A dialogic process of learning is particularly important for a dual-focussed approach such as CLIL. The aim of dialogic exchanges is to give teachers an opportunity to present their experiences, to give explicit accounts of their experiences, justify choices as well as taking into account their listeners' perspectives so as to enhance and consolidate their reflective stance.

The seven stages of portfolio work

1. Preliminary questions and initial personal statements
2. Starting a glossary
3. Becoming familiar with the frameworks of 8 areas of CLIL teacher competence
4. Collecting documents for one or several areas
5. Setting up criteria for self-evaluation and assessment
6. Selecting documents for exchange with peers and mentor
7. Final statement

Initial personal statements

Views on CLIL; personal experiences or observations; language biography; selected areas or skills; for subject teachers: view on role of language in subject learning; for language teachers: role of significant content for language learning.

Glossary

Introducing student teachers to a CLIL approach involves using many terms linked to language learning and learning theories in general, which they may not be familiar with. However, the list of words to be defined is likely to vary greatly according to institutional or national contexts and to teachers' previous contact with educational terminology. For this reason we suggest student teachers, in cooperation with their teacher educator or mentor, establish their own lists. This work

could be done in small groups and the exchange and negotiation of meaning will contribute to the socio-cultural approach to portfolio development. In some cases it may also be helpful to have translations into L1 to compare meanings and use.

Collecting and selecting documents

Dysthe (2002) describes and analyses these important but distinctive phases of a portfolio approach in detail. They are characteristics of the personal and collaborative aspects of portfolio work in teacher education.

Examples of assessment rubrics

Assessment practices are likely to vary greatly from one institution to another. The grids and the proposed approach should enhance the student teachers' responsibility for self assessment and informed peer evaluation.

Final statement

In the final phase, teachers attempt to integrate what they have learned about their own developing practices in a more holistic vision of their CLIL competence. To experienced teachers the initial division into 8 distinctive areas may appear unfamiliar as a representation of their actual practices. However, the focus on one or more key areas, while it may appear contrived, allows for the development of a metalanguage with which to describe one's own practices. At the final stage, teachers will then have to re-integrate this reflection into a more holistic vision of their CLIL practices. At this stage, the focus will be less on pre-conceived areas of competence, but rather on the classroom and professional situations that CLIL teachers have to master. For short courses this stage may not be targeted but it is certainly an important aim in a lifelong learning perspective.

Further recommendations

This portfolio does not aim at student teachers' development of the target language. For teacher education that aims at language development, we recommend the documents and material developed by the Council of Europe (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* and the *European Language Portfolio*, available in many languages). The European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz has also published many useful documents and tools. For issues of language teaching based on a portfolio approach we particularly recommend the *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages* (EPOSTL).

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