

**HANDS ON CLIL**  
**(AT PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL)**

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*Publié en collaboration avec*

**L'école valdôtaine**

Cahier pédagogique  
Anno IV, 2017

Publication de l'Assessorat de l'Éducation et de la Culture de la Région autonome Vallée d'Aoste  
Politiques de l'Éducation  
250, Rue Saint-Martin-de-Corléans  
11100 Aoste

ISBN 979-12-200-2665-9

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## FOREWORD

On the one hand, this volume is the result of the editor's experience as a member of an appointed group of experts who aimed to maximize the efforts required to implement CLIL at the elementary school level in Aosta Valley. On the other hand the volume is the outcome of the editor's research on CLIL methodology. She has had the opportunity to present some of her research findings at the Clavier Workshop hosted by the University of Milan in November 2014. Details of previous research are provided in the bibliographic references and discussed at various points throughout the book.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first of all like to thank the members of the technical committee for providing a stimulating and supporting environment throughout the months this project took to come to life: the coordinator, Gabriella Vernetto, Claudia Fisanotti, Maria Teresa Vigon, and Giovanna Zanchi.

I special thank to Fabrizio Gentile, Superintendent of Schools of the Autonomous Region of the Aosta Valley, a keen CLIL supporter from the very beginning. Part of this research project has been funded by the office of the Regional Councilor for Education and Culture, in the person of Emily Rini, and I feel grateful for this opportunity.

I am also greatly indebted to those primary school teachers who contributed with comments and suggestions to the revised versions of the lesson plans included in this volume. Those teachers met the challenge of changing teaching praxis and generously helped to update the teaching community.

## ***PART I: OVERWIEV***

## 1. FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND CLIL IN ITALY

The emphasis on foreign language (especially English) learning as a pillar of modern education is not new. One of the most important implications of the Lisbon Strategy outlined in 2000 by the European Union Parliament has been the new role gained by education. Being the strategy's aim to make the EU «the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion»<sup>1</sup>, by 2010, education-related national policies have become pivotal. It is in this perspective that EU member states coordinated their action more affectively, e.g. setting out indicators to monitor progress, using benchmarks, and disseminating good practices.

In Italy, English was established as a compulsory subject from year one in primary school in 2003 (Law 53/2003). However, since then standard foreign language teaching has not led, despite expectations, to major improvements in foreign language proficiency. It is probably also as a consequence of the less-than-exciting results of the introduction of early language teaching that new approaches have been sought. Among these approaches, CLIL gained a prominent role.

Pilot studies centered on CLIL were implemented starting from the late 1990s (Langè 2011), especially in Northern Italy, but previous experimentation can be dated back to 1975/1976 with the ILSSE project (*Insegnamento Lingue Straniere nella Scuola Elementare* – Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools). While CLIL projects have been implemented in various schools across the country, some of the most influential ones have been carried out in Northern regions. Examples of these are the “Lingua, Cultura e Scienze in lingua straniera” (Piedmont, 2001-2004); “Progetto Tutor Europeo” (Emilia Romagna, 2003 onwards; “Apprendo in Lingua 2” (Veneto, 2002 al 2004). Presidential Decree n. 275 of March 8<sup>th</sup>, 1999, provided the regulatory framework upon which CLIL implementation was based on, and further CLIL experimentation at both secondary and primary school level have since been supported. In Lombardy, for instance, a widely publicized project was funded in 2000 (<http://old.istruzione.lombardia.it/progetti/lingue/aliclil.htm>), which involved the introduction of CLIL (also known in Italian “ALI” - Apprendimento Linguistico Integrato – integrated language learning) in both primary and secondary schools, with attendant training programmes and initiatives. In 2007, a report was published on the outcomes of the project<sup>2</sup> highlighting its benefits and generalized appeal for all stakeholders involved.

Italy was the first among “big” European countries to make foreign language education mandatory in primary school. The CLIL approach was given new momentum, albeit not in respect of early education, in 2010, when the Ministry for Education, University and Research mandated that as for the 2014-15 school year CLIL-based approaches must be used to teach at least one of the subjects in the last year of high school (see MIUR 2010). In 2014 a new initiative - “La Buona Scuola” was launched, in which CLIL was presented as the pivotal methodology in a new age of learning. In the official website of the Ministry of Education, University and Research ([www.labuonascuola.gov.it](http://www.labuonascuola.gov.it)) emphasis is put on the fact that it is essential that a part of what children learn is conveyed directly in foreign languages, enhancing their learning at primary school ([https://labuonascuola.gov.it/documenti/lbs\\_web.pdf](https://labuonascuola.gov.it/documenti/lbs_web.pdf) : 94).

Foreign languages, and especially English, have been high on the agenda of Italian Education ministers for over 15 years, and have been deemed essential for

<sup>1</sup> *Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March Presidency Conclusion*, European Union Parliament Website ([http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm))

<sup>2</sup> Retrievable at: <http://www.progettolingue.net/aliclil/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/rapporto-monitoraggio-clil-20075.pdf>

academic and professional success for considerably longer, as testified by the flourishing language school market in the country. CLIL is the methodology which has been presented, both by policy makers and by many members of the education community, as the potential problem solver for the nation's low language proficiency, thus fostering enthusiasm among the whole community.

However, it is one thing to acknowledge the potential of the approach and another to apply it.

While the enthusiasm harbored by legislators and much of the public - though not equally shared by teachers and school principals - may appear excessive, the results of the pilot studies conducted in Italian primary schools over the last fifteen years suggest that it is not misplaced, and that indeed there may be much to be gained (not least in terms of students' motivation and active participation) from broadening the experiment. This new deal for primary level foreign language teaching, however, can only be successfully implemented if qualified teachers are involved - or/and existing teachers are (re)trained - in CLIL- specific methodologies.

The interest for CLIL has grown exponentially since the turn of the millennium, especially in Europe, where a number of actions were taken by the European Commission to promote multilingualism through a variety of means which included - though were by no means limited to - CLIL (see Marsch 2012 for an overview). The attractiveness of the CLIL proposition is testified by the exponential increase, during the same years, in both teaching projects involving CLIL and in scholarly research on the topic. The latter has mainly focused on classroom observation, with the primary aim of clarifying the underlying principles of CLIL and identifying best practices; mostly, such research has insisted on the benefits of the approach, with critiques having been few and far between, often (though not always) only passingly mentioned in broader, generally positive, accounts of CLIL practices (cf. Dalton-Puffer 2007; Seikkula-Leino 2007; Lasagabaster / Sierra 2009; Marsh et al. 2000; Bruton 2011). Much CLIL-related literature, especially in the early days of CLIL, focused on high-school pupils, with considerable less attention being devoted to pre-school and primary school teaching. Soon, however, the potential of CLIL for young learners started to be explored. An early example of research on CLIL in primary schools was reported in Crandall (1998), to be followed a few years later by Kaufman and Crandall (2005). Several other works followed suit (see, amongst others, Serra 2007; Dafouz / Guerrini 2009; Grieveson / Superfine 2012; Yamano 2013; Pladevall-Ballester 2015) as early language learning programmes became established in several countries.

CLIL underlying principles have been variously defined in the literature, but there is fairly widespread consensus upon them. A frequently quoted definition is the following one by Marsch (1994):

CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content, and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language.

Recent research about young learners' foreign language acquisition showed children can improve their foreign language level with no negative effects neither on their native language nor on their acquisition of contents. At the same time, second language learning seems to have positive impact on learners from an intercultural, social, and cognitive point of view (Langè 2014 :15).

CLIL has fostered expectations in stakeholders (policymakers, parents and even children), with the significant exception of many teachers. Most of the expectations are centered on students improving significantly their foreign language competence - subject knowledge becoming somewhat secondary to this primary aim (cf. Pladevall-

Ballesteria2015). Expectations associated with CLIL appear to be fueled by a widespread dissatisfaction with the outcomes of school-based foreign language learning and a stereotypical view of foreign language lessons as a series of mechanistic grammar drills. CLIL is regularly referred to as an educational environment where naturalistic language learning can take place, implying that the best kind of language learning proceeds without formal instruction (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, Smit 2010: 16).

In the official report of one of the most recent and extensive CLIL-based projects in Lombardy, the BEI project (cf. Cavalieri / Sternieri: 2016,)), the words of a 3-grader are worth quoting: "If I go on like this, by the time I am 16 I am going to be a bilingual" (Bondi 2014:12). Generally speaking, students involved in CLIL-based projects are typically aware of the innovative educational context they find themselves in, and most of the times they are proud to be the receivers of a cutting edge methodology; the same can be said for schools administrators. At the other end of the scale, teachers' attitudes ranges from prudent enthusiasm to criticism, mainly in consideration of two factors: the greater workload a CLIL-based syllabus means for them, and their feeling of inadequacy due to their tendency to be critical in assessing their own language skills

## 2. CLIL TEACHERS

### 2.1 COMPETENCES AND NEEDS

To date, the CLIL methodology in Italy has been introduced in primary school on an experimental and voluntary basis and it has not been framed in a specific legislation yet. It has implied extremely varied typologies of intervention on a large-scale scenario (i.e. national). Together with what seems to be a widespread consensus about the methodology, there are undoubtedly criticism and problems still to be solved.

According to a publication by Eurydice (2012), *Keydata on Languages at school in Europe*, Italy is aligned with other European countries in terms of foreign language teaching at all school levels. Nevertheless, up to date CLIL piloting has typically been carried out by volunteer teachers who – ideally - already possessed the required language level. With the upcoming changes which the latest school reform will introduce over the next few years, all teachers will need to be able, at least in principle, to contribute to CLIL-based programmes. This means that they must be provided with the necessary skills and competences prior to their taking up service – i.e., presumably, in the course of their training. This is where universities have a crucial role to play. University syllabi for prospective primary school teachers must ensure that students receive adequate language instruction as a pre-requisite for CLIL implementation. Changes in university syllabi, however, take time, and the number of variables involved is very high. While it is to be hoped that strengthening primary school students' foreign language competences will eventually lead to a general improvement, suitable strategies must be found to ensure that CLIL teaching is successful (Catenaccio/Gigliani 2016: 207).

The challenge of conveying both language and content instruction to young learners is undoubtedly considerable. The multiple types of expertise required are rarely all mastered by teachers, nor are they easily acquired (see Pavesi 2002; Serragiotto 2008). Moreover, if some demand specific negotiating abilities, or require considerable professional experience and metatheoretical awareness, others – namely, expertise in the content subject and in a language – are in fact essential pre-requisites.

The possession of adequate language skills on the part of teachers seems to be essential whatever intensity (see Cummins 2000: 68), length of exposure and specific syllabus organization (see Barbero and Clegg 2005: 56) is chosen for a CLIL-based project. This fact was already evident back in the Seventies', when a systematic experimentation was carried out in Britain: the Nuffield French Pilot Scheme<sup>1</sup>. The experimentation was aimed at boosting foreign (French) language learning. Then at is now, one of the main reasons for giving up the implementation of the project was related to poor language skills possessed by primary school teachers. This fact was paired with insufficient financial resources and quickly brought the dismissal of the project.

According to Italian Ministry Decree (Decreto Direttoriale) dated 2012 (from DM n. 249 2010 issued on 10.09.2010) C1 English Level was supposed to be a prerequisite for secondary school CLIL teachers<sup>3</sup>. One year later, in 2013, the decree operating notes downgraded teachers' language level to B1 (or, in the words of the notes, *assimilabile* - "equal to", presumably lacking an official certification of the same). This downgrading suggests that also at secondary school level teacher language competence is one of the main issues, and policy makers and academia, as well as practicing and prospective teachers, have so far had to make do with the (currently limited) resources they have. This is a typical problem when educational innovation outpaces teacher education provision. But if the problem is hard felt among high-school teachers, is even more pressing at primary school level. As CLIL programmes in Italy have expanded from secondary to junior and primary school, the number of teachers with suitable language proficiency (B2) has been found to be extremely limited.

Among the widest experimentations in recent years, the above mentioned IBI/BEI (Insegnamento Bilingue Italia/Bilingual Education Italy) project deserves a few words, particularly as far as it regard teachers' language proficiency. IBI/BEI was organized by Direzione generale per gli Ordinamenti scolastici e la valutazione del Sistema nazionale dell'Istruzione, in collaboration with the British Council and the Lombardy USR (Ufficio scolastico regionale). It started in 2010 with a preliminary survey of teachers' language level and in the school year 2014-15 it involved 111 classes, 2479 pupils e 60 teachers of six elementary schools (Langè 2014: 15). The Modena and Reggio Emilia University was appointed to monitor the project and present results (the detailed report is downloadable at [http://www.istruzione.it/allegati/2014/sintesi\\_rapporto\\_ibi.pdf](http://www.istruzione.it/allegati/2014/sintesi_rapporto_ibi.pdf)).

One of the prerequisites for the schools to be part of the project (6 schools out of 42 were eventually selected) was the fact that they had teachers working for them with at least a B2 English level, and this was true for 62% of the teachers. It needs to be noted that this percentage is exceptionally high if compared to other context across the nation.

Language proficiency issues not only concern long-serving teachers but also prospective teachers. A survey (Catenaccio/Gigliani 2016: 203) carried out among students enrolled in the Primary Education Degree offered by the University of Aosta would appear to suggest that the competences of prospective primary school teachers are indeed fairly low when they begin university, and have only marginally improved after completing the course offered by their institution. The data were obtained by administering a DIALANG test<sup>4</sup> to 58 students. The data – which are only partial, and

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<sup>3</sup> Presidential Decree (DPR) 81/2009 established that primary school teachers involved in CLIL activities need to possess a B1 language level (<http://www.cfiscuola.it/blog/insegnare-alla-primaria-col-b1-e-clil-nella-secondaria-col-b2/>).

<sup>4</sup> DIALANG is a free-to-use language diagnosis system developed by many European higher education institutions which reports students' competences in reading, writing, listening, grammar and vocabulary against the Common European Framework for language learning.

should therefore be taken with caution – suggest that while about a third of the students tested have B1-level competences (approx. 34%), many are placed below this threshold (over 40%) , and only 3% have a C1 language level. The limited size of the sample makes generalizations impossible. However, it does indicate that it is difficult to make assumptions about the starting level of English of prospective teachers and, therefore, to envisage an exit level adequate to the demands of CLIL-based teaching.

The BEI report quoted above (Bondi 2014) contains crucial information about the perceived needs of the primary school teachers involved in the project. Among them, language courses are short listed, particularly in consideration of the teachers' self-reported general language competences. On the occasion of qualitative interviews with practicing teachers conducted for the purpose of the present research, a sense of incapacity in handling the challenge prevailed – even when enthusiasm was shown – and calls for further language training were voiced with an emphasis on general English rather than on the domain specific features of the language required to teach. In fact, so consistent appears to be the mention of a need for enhanced language competences in the existing reports on previous projects, that language training cannot but be defined as a key priority for teachers – and as such should also be considered by providers of teacher education.

Teachers' language competence may therefore be pointed to as the main reason, despite reportedly positive results, for CLIL projects to have remained limited in scope and not have resulted in increased, albeit voluntary, implementation of the methodology across the curriculum. However, following the pilot projects, a number of elementary schools in Italy have continued to implement CLIL-based policies<sup>5</sup>, spearheading a small but highly motivated group of teachers/headmasters favoring the early introduction of foreign-medium instruction in education.

The enthusiasm for CLIL notwithstanding (see Crandall 1998; Coonan 2005), teacher training remains an issue (Di Martino / Di Sabato 2012), especially at the lower levels of schooling (Ludbrooke 2008). Training programmes - to be delivered by universities - have been recently designed for high school teachers pursuant to DM 139/11. Though other orders of schooling will eventually be involved and research is starting to address the issue (Aiello/Di Martino/Di Sabato 2015), it remains unclear what skills - language-related as well as methodology-based- teachers should possess to be put in charge of CLIL projects. In particular, on a national level, primary education seems to have been especially neglected, not only for what concerns CLIL, but more in general in respect of English teaching, which is no longer entrusted to "specialized" teachers (i.e., teachers especially appointed to teach English) but rather to teachers of other subjects who have indeed received additional language training, thereby becoming qualified to teach English in addition to their regular specialties, but whose primary teaching subject is not English. Moreover, while English has indeed been included among the subjects to be studied by all prospective primary school teachers as part of their academic curriculum, which would seem to offer a solution to the issue to be enjoyed in the near future, not enough appears to have been done to encourage the development of skills that can serve as a stepping stone for more specific further training.

If on the one hand, as CLIL approaches have become more popular worldwide, the number of CLIL teacher training courses has increased and traditional providers of EFL teacher training – ranging from the British Council, which has been actively involved in a number of projects in different countries from their very onset, to many universities and colleges – have broadened their offer to include CLIL-specific options,

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<sup>5</sup> The five-year BEI project ended in 2016 but most of the schools involved have prolonged the experimentation also for the present school year.

on the other hand budgetary constraints cause institutional reluctance to provide suitable training for English teaching. Nevertheless, English remains a priority in education, at least ideally. Among the possible measures illustrated by the author of this introduction in previous stages of her research (Catenaccio/Giglioni 2016: 205-206) and presented during the Clavier<sup>6</sup> workshop (LSP Research, Teaching and Translation across Languages and Cultures) in November 2014, focus on materials designed for teachers might play a crucial role as it is believed high-quality materials can provide a, temporary, "relief" for those teachers who may have been intimidated by the high expectations they have been more and more insistently asked to meet.

## 2.2 FOCUS ON MATERIALS

In light of the Lisbon Strategy, the European Commission issued several reports about countries' progress in education (e.g. "progress towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training. Indicators and benchmarks, 2008). In these official documents, relatively low achievements, though considering differences among nations, are usually underlined, and solicitation for further investments in initial teacher as well as in-service teachers' training is made. The role of teachers, their motivation and their competences, are presented as pivotal to reach educational targets, i.e. foreign language proficiency. In this section attention is devoted to the importance of materials in the light of the role they can play in sustaining and inspiring teachers involved in CLIL programmes.

The availability of suitable ready-made lesson plans has always been critical. Italian teachers have been involved in updating training courses from 1975 to 1995<sup>7</sup> (Progetto Speciale Lingue Straniere (PSLS). During the 1975/76 school year (Progetto ILSSE - Insegnamento Lingue Straniere nella Scuola Elementare) the challenges faced by actors involved in the project were already related on the one hand to the identification of teachers' competences (language, teaching and methodological competences), and on the other hand to the general lack of ad hoc materials to be used by teachers themselves. More than thirty years later, in the already mentioned BEI's final report, some meaningful percentages seem to deserve attention: 25% of teachers prepare materials all by themselves, 23% of them adapt pre-existing materials, and only 18% collaborate with their colleagues for assembling materials. Interestingly enough, only 7% of materials are the result of regional project group members' collaboration. Finally, sharing materials is very rare (2%) for teachers who do not work in the same school. The above mentioned points were taken in consideration when outlining an action plan for the Aosta Valley CLIL project (see §3 for more details).

Participants in CLIL-based pilot projects and institutional informants both in Lombardy and Valle d'Aosta have repeatedly referred to the need for adequate material for primary school teachers. Meeting this need appears to be the pivot of the question for both prospective and longer-serving teachers, a top priority for academic courses on the one hand, and for professional training courses on the other. In times of budgetary restrictions, providing teachers with ad hoc resources might be the answer for CLIL main stakeholders: students and teachers. Customized materials, targeted to students' age and interests, and designed for non-specialized teachers,

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<sup>6</sup> CLAVIER is a research group based in Modena and including a network of Italian universities (Bergamo, Florence, Milan State, Rome "La Sapienza", Siena and Trieste) with an interest in combining two complementary strands of linguistic investigation - corpus analysis and discourse analysis - for a quantitative and qualitative study of language variation in English in terms of diachronic, geographic and socio-cultural dimensions.

<sup>7</sup> Since 2000 another project was launched (Progetto Lingue 2000) and in recent years the QCER guidelines have been adopted.

would also provide language training for those teachers. At the moment, primary school teachers are involved in CLIL activities on a voluntary basis. User-friendly resources and ready-made materials might result not only in effective foreign language teaching but also in teachers' language improvement, therefore reinforcing their motivation and participation.

Previous stage of the research suggested materials should have specific characteristics to underpin successful CLIL teaching. As also exemplified in Tavani (2016), CLIL materials for Italian teachers do not seem to be adequate for the CLIL methodology challenge. In order to be in line with their didactic purposes - i.e. their dual goal of integrating content and language - CLIL materials need specific characteristics that may be described using what we can name as the 4Rs method (Catenaccio/Giglioni 2016: 205): they need to be reliable, ready-made, recitable and rewarding. Reliability involves reputation of the institution and people responsible for quality control process, and at the same time it involves website stability: teachers need to know they can access the materials when in need. Ready-made materials, possibly supported by audio tracks, are likely to be first chosen on the part of busy teachers who will simply be in charge of reciting them following detailed teachers' notes and providing handouts to students. Eventually, such a structured path will be perceived as rewarding by both actors involved in the educational process: education providers get extra language training, while education receivers obtain good quality teaching.

The 4 Rs are believed to represent guidelines when designing, assembling and circulating resources for CLIL courses, and they are supposed to lead to standardization of the above mentioned resources, providing a steady guide even for the most hesitant teacher and therefore boosting their confidence in class. It is believed by the author of the present volume that the 4 Rs could make a comprehensive difference for effective primary school foreign language teaching, compensating for a four-decade history of poor results and for teachers' - in their own words sometimes "inadequate"- foreign language level. Therefore, they represent the inspiring principles underlying the lesson plans presented in the second part of this volume.

### 2.3 CLIL LESSON PLANS

The provision of foreign language skills for teachers has proven to be expensive, difficult to monitor, and time consuming to improve on a national scale. Institutions, on their part, seem to remain vague when it comes to foreign language pre-requisites description for educators involved in CLIL projects. Focus on resources might provide twofold result: more effective CLIL teaching for students and better trained teachers in primary school scenario. When interviewed by Cambridge University Press in November 2010<sup>8</sup>, David Marsh claimed that "CLIL teachers need to be supported". It is in this spirit that the author of the present volume conceived and delivered training courses for updating primary school teachers in Aosta and then assembled, revised or also authored the lesson plans herewith included (see Part II). As an established scholar on the topic puts it

successful CLIL requires teachers to engage in alternative ways of planning their teaching for effective learning. CLIL is not language teaching enhanced by a wider range of content. Neither is it content teaching translated in a different language

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Czdg8-6mJA>

from the mother tongue. However, in adopting a CLIL approach, there will be elements of both language and subject teaching and learning which are specific to the CLIL classroom as well as emerging CLIL methodologies (Coyle 2005: 54).

There is no single model for CLIL lesson planning. Different models<sup>9</sup> all share the common founding principle that in some way the content and the language learning are integrated. Whatever type of model it is fundamental to CLIL that the content of the topic, the syllabus, leads the way. In other words, the content is the starting point of the planning process (cf. Coyle, Hood, Marsh 2010).

A quick research on materials available online soon led to the conclusion that most of them, with a few exceptions, are not user-friendly. This means that most of the times, for example, they do not guide the teacher step by step throughout the lesson using detailed teacher's notes. Furthermore, target audience is often not indicated or is vaguely indicated (e.g. the lesson is targeted at primary school children with no reference to a specific year). Sometimes lesson plans contain links to documents that are not online any more, or they have heavy attachments that would not be of great help to the busy teacher.

The rationale underpinning the present volume is to shift attention from the theoretical debate around CLIL to user-friendly materials. With reference to CLIL training courses run by the office of the Regional Councilor for Education and Culture of the Aosta Valley in April 2016 and in February 2017, a few observations need to be made. Generally speaking, participants were well informed about CLIL as a methodology and they mastered the relevant vocabulary. Nevertheless, the lesson plans they handed in to conclude their training course turned out, in many cases, to be hardly usable by other teachers. In other words, even original and brilliant lesson plans would have been difficult to put in circulation. Therefore major revisions were needed to actually achieve satisfying results - i.e. accessible lesson plans - even in less-than-optimal conditions, as it may happen with teachers with low foreign language level.

CLIL has evolved from simply a way to increase foreign language exposure, *ergo* foreign language learning, into a pragmatic approach to renovating classroom practice (D. Lasagabaster, and Y. Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010). It is worth noting that language awareness on the part of teachers automatically shifts classroom dynamics from one that is teaching focused to one that is learner centered. Not only. Language-aware, learner-centered learning catalyzes 'content-aware' instruction whereby teachers quite naturally also wonder if the input content is comprehensible.

CLIL is therefore not simply 'doing it in a foreign language', it strongly influences the way teachers work favoring a "more practical and more communicative"<sup>10</sup> approach to subject content. In European Commission Recommendation *Rethinking Education* (2012) CLIL is described as the engine for innovation. In this perspective, lesson plans are the ultimate tool of a highly promising methodology and it is in this perspective that the collection of lesson plans presented in this volume has been conceived.

Having placed some constraints to the focus of this volume, since its approach is primarily practical as its very title intends to suggest, only a few words will be now spent on CLIL lesson planning theoretical framework. There are four guiding principles upon which a CLIL lesson can be built (cf. Coyle 2005): the 4Cs framework

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<sup>9</sup> By way of example: Subject topic/syllabus adapted for teaching in the target language to explore the subject from a different perspective whilst improving foreign language skills; cross curricular project which involves both language teachers and subject teachers planning together; language teachers developing a more content type approach to a theme (cf. Coyle 2005).

<sup>10</sup> As stated by teachers involved in the BEI project in their final questionnaires (Cavalieri and Sternieri: 2016)

seeks to assure quality in terms of guidance for content, cognition, culture, communication (4Cs planning grid). Whilst the 4Cs curriculum provides a useful guide for the overall planning of a unit of work, the 3As tool can be used for more detailed lesson planning. Whilst there is clearly some overlap between the tools, their suggested use is significantly different. The 3As tool operates in 3 stages (stage 1: analyze content for the language of learning ; stage 2: add to content language for learning; stage 3: apply to content language through learning) and can be used for more detailed lesson planning, while the 4Cs curriculum provides a useful guide for the overall planning of a unit of work. This second tool is the one that was chosen for the lesson plans included in this volume.

The relationship between language and cognition is complex. However what we do know is that effective learning involves cognitive challenge and feedback (assessment for learning). In CLIL settings it is essential to ensure that the language does not get in the way of understanding whilst at the same time it can itself be cognitively demanding. Cummins (1984) developed a matrix for exploring the relationship between cognition and language. This has been adapted for CLIL settings and can be a useful tool to audit teaching materials. Cognitively undemanding materials are difficult to justify. Cognitively demanding materials are fundamental to learning. The greatest challenge for CLIL teachers is to develop materials and tasks which are linguistically accessible whilst being cognitively demanding.

The above described tools are meant as a guide to planning and monitoring processes in CLIL. They are not meant to be formula that are rigidly applied (Coyle 2005). Instead they are meant to be used, explored, adapted and reformulated according to different contexts.

### 3. CLIL AT PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL: THE AOSTA VALLEY EXPERIENCE

In December 2010 Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR) issued a circular which directed the commencement of CLIL teacher training courses. The circular established blended methodology for the courses, and B1 language level as a pre-requisite for teachers willing to participate. It took almost three years for the courses to start (Langè 2014: 18) However, primary school teachers were not the target public for those training courses and future needs of CLIL programmes demanded a more planned course of action concerning both teacher formation and in-service teacher support (Lasagabaster and Sierra 2009: 371). The different regional educational authorities endeavored to make up for this lack of training among in-service teachers through specific measures, such as methodology courses, language courses in English-speaking countries, or seminars and conferences in which experts participate.

The Regional Councilor responsible for Education and Culture of the autonomous region of Aosta Valley took action and planned language training for school years 2014/2015 and 2015/2016, methodology courses from April 2016 to June 2017. In February 2017 they expanded the program also to newly employed teachers. The author of the present volume contributed as an expert advisor for intensive<sup>11</sup> CLIL courses (*Il CLIL in inglese alla scuola primaria: metodologia, formazione linguistica e progettazione di unità di apprendimento/CLIL at primary school level: methodology, language training and unit of work planning/*) for school years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017. Even if a preliminary – theoretical - introduction to CLIL methodology was part of the courses, their main focus was on unit of work

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<sup>11</sup> A twelve-week course from April 2016 to June 2016. Participants were requested a studying load of 4.5 hours/per week.

planning. Additionally teaching tools and resources<sup>12</sup>, as well as previous experiences in Lombardy, were presented to participants, who were in-serving primary school teachers with a B1 language level. As described in the course introduction, (long)in-serving teachers' daily experience would be valued to make the most out of it, thus trying to overcome reluctance typically arising from changes in *praxis*.

An appointed group of experts, among whom the editor of this volume, organized planning meetings to maximize the effort required to implement CLIL and brainstormed on course organization and possible outcomes. The training course for teachers course was a 55-hour course organized in a one-day conference with plenary lecture and parallel workshops (6 hours), online training (9 hours, three modules), and self-study (40 hours). Relevant information and materials were published in an online platform accessible to teachers, organizers, and other stakeholders to share information and/or be updated about the project.

Expected outcomes were ready-to-use CLIL lesson plans designed by teachers. Participants were also required to get the TKT CLIL Cambridge Certification and to conduct self- assessment within a CLIL educational environment.

The editor of this volume homogenized materials produced by teachers and carried out an accurate language revision. Most of the times original materials were completely modified in terms of lesson organization, input in L2, target students' age, worksheets for students, visuals. Some of the lesson plans have been created by the editor *ex novo*. The table here below shows lesson plans' topics and the correspondent subjects.

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>LP TITLE</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>
4	The Butterfly Life Cycle	Science
2	The Four Seasons	Science
1	Geometric Shapes	Mathematics
2	Hopscotch	Physical Education
3	The Seed Cycle	Science
2	Animal Habitats	Science
2	Bees and Honey	Science
5	Sun Salutation	Physical Education
5	Ireland	Geography
4	Volcanoes	Science

The lesson plans included in the present volume are the result a revision process (see part 2.3, § 5) which also relied on expert informants (primary school teachers in bilingual schools). The approach adopted is a soft CLIL approach, i.e. teaching and learning is focused mainly on language and so is language-driven, as opposed to hard CLIL approach, when the main focus is on the subject and is therefore content-driven.

Most of the designed tasks included in the lesson plans are cognitively undemanding and are linked to BICS<sup>13</sup>, as it is the case with matching activities, sorting objects into sets, and naming. The Carrol diagram is used to classify information according to four criteria, concept maps to help learners to organize information. Maps can include the use of grids of similarities and differences to compare and contrast, or lines and arrows to indicate cause-effect relationship (process diagrams), or also time-sequence diagrams to display events in a chronological order. Visual organizers are aids which help learners to understand and remember new information by making it visible. The language/symbol combination

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Appendix I.

<sup>13</sup> Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (Cummins, 1984)

fits primary school students - especially in first years - whose reading proficiency is not fully developed.

Recycling or revising language, namely practicing language that learners have seen previously, is crucial when subject-specific language which contains lexical items which are infrequent in everyday language and only used within the subject (e.g. chrysalis) is presented. It needs to be noted that in the lesson plans included in this volume, language revision is frequently used also for common, English, words whose understanding on the part of all pupils is doubted by teachers. Recourse to L1 (Italian) is sometimes suggested to provide temporary support for students and to assist them in moving toward new skills, concepts or levels of understanding. CLIL learners need the language to be carefully scaffolded so that they can express what they know through English.

As far as it regards the original lesson plans designed by teachers, some of them may have lacked (CLIL) methodological savviness or, more generally, they may have been difficult to be replicated by teachers other than the authors themselves. Nevertheless, they provided valuable insight into classroom practice and primary school learners. Most of the revision process actually implied turning the teachers' input into ready-made, user-friendly, and hopefully precious resources.

As mentioned before, it is in the hope that focus on resources can provide twofold result that this volume was conceived: more effective CLIL teaching for students and better trained teachers in primary school scenario, a still relatively unexplored area in which there's the opportunity to provide a model of good practice.

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[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1\\_en.htm?textMode=on](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm?textMode=on)

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## ***APPENDIX I: RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS***

## FOREWORD

Using, adapting, and recycling native-speaker materials is deemed to be essential to pursue the principles underlying CLIL methodology. The author's experience both as a CLIL lesson plan creator and as lesson plan reviser confirmed that translating (in L2 ) materials which were originally in L1, not only increases the risk of language inaccuracy, but largely endangers the intercultural perspective, therefore betraying the idea of CLIL as a means of intercultural teaching.

## WEBSITES

**<http://www.macmillanyounglearners.com/readers/>**

MacMillan Factual Readers, with downloadable audio, teacher's notes and exercises.

**[www.onestopenglish.com/clil](http://www.onestopenglish.com/clil)**

Cross-curriculum methodology, lesson plans, worksheets (subscription needed)

**[www.oup.com/elt/teacher/readanddiscover](http://www.oup.com/elt/teacher/readanddiscover)**

Oxford Readers with audio CD and online teacher's notes.

**<http://primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/>**

Topics similar to those in the Italian syllabus.

**<https://www.youtube.com/user/scishow>**

A series of science-related videos on YouTube.

**[www.eschooltoday.com/](http://www.eschooltoday.com/)**

From environmental lessons, health, class revision and global matters, selected topics explained in a fun illustrative way

**<http://www.childrensuniversity.manchester.ac.uk/>**

Resources include many different online interactive learning materials for use on whiteboards or PCs, tablets and other mobile devices.

**<http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/>**

Although it's copyright, it is freely available for classroom use an teaching purposes.

**[www.activityvillage.co.uk](http://www.activityvillage.co.uk)**

Printable: posters, games, craft, coloring, flash cards, templates, awards.

**[www.education.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.education.nationalgeographic.com)**

Geography, social studies and science with plenty of videos.

**[www.sciencekids.co.nz](http://www.sciencekids.co.nz)**

Fun science games, science experiments, fun science facts.

**<http://geography.org.uk/resources/fieldwork/>**

The subject association for teaches of geography. Activity ideas and teaching resources for primary and secondary teachers.

**<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/schools>**

Primary schools materials separated from secondary school materials.

**[www.teachitprimary.co.uk](http://www.teachitprimary.co.uk)**

Free with subscription (with lesson plans).

**[www.readytoteach.it](http://www.readytoteach.it)**

With a section dedicated to CLIL.

**<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/teachers/teacherspacks/>**

Teacher's packs including lesson plans & printable resources for all ages.

**<http://www.mrdowling.com/>**

Assignments, lesson plans, and audio files for history, science and geography

**[www.isabelperez.com/clil](http://www.isabelperez.com/clil)**

Methodology, materials, selected links.