

The rationale for cross-curricular integration in the context of teaching a modern language

In the context of the Irish Primary School Curriculum

One of the fifteen fundamental principles that inform the Irish *Primary School Curriculum* states that 'learning is most effective when it is integrated'. The curriculum elaborates this principle by saying that:

'For the child, the distinctions between subjects are not relevant: what is important is that he or she experiences a coherent learning process that accommodates a variety of elements. It is important, therefore, to make connections between learning in different subjects. As they mature, integration gives children's learning a broader and richer perspective, emphasises the interconnectedness of knowledge and ideas and reinforces the learning process' (Primary School Curriculum - Introduction p 16).

An integrated curriculum facilitates the implementation of other principles that characterise the primary school curriculum:

The developmental nature of learning

The primary school curriculum is essentially a spiral curriculum where knowledge and skills are built up at an increasing level of complexity over the child's time in primary school. The curriculum states that

'Conceptual development is not necessarily a linear process. It may take place on a number of planes simultaneously or through the making of an intuitive leap. Having dealt with particular knowledge, ideas and skills at a simple level, the child should have the opportunity to return to them at regular intervals in order to deepen his or her understanding' (Primary School Curriculum - Introduction p 14).

Integrated learning that presents and revisits the same knowledge, ideas and skills across different subjects in the curriculum helps the child to deepen and enrich their understanding of knowledge and concepts and to develop core skills.

The transfer of learning

Another principle that is linked to integrated learning is the transfer of learning. 'The acquisition of this ability to transfer learning is a central

feature of the curriculum' (Primary School Curriculum - Introduction P 16). Presenting the child with opportunities to explore the same knowledge, concepts and skills in different curriculum areas challenges the child to transfer the knowledge and skills previously gained, to new contexts. The child's ability to relate his or her learning to unfamiliar situations is a good measure of the effectiveness of the learning process.

The centrality of language

The general primary school curriculum acknowledges the centrality of language in the curriculum and emphasises how it is not a self-contained curriculum area but an aspect that interweaves all other areas of the curriculum. It is important to remember that in the context of the primary school curriculum 'Language' comprises Gaeilge, English and in the case of MLPSI schools another modern language. The curriculum states: 'Language is the principal means of human communication. Through it ideas and information are expressed and communicated, aspirations, attitudes and emotions are articulated, and imaginative possibilities are predicated (Primary School Curriculum p 43). It further states: Language has a vital role to play in children's development. Much learning takes place through the interaction of language and experience. Language helps the child to clarify and interpret experience, to acquire new concepts, and to add depth to concepts already grasped. In view of this crucial relationship between language and learning the curriculum incorporates the use of talk and discussion as a central learning strategy in every curriculum area. (Primary School Curriculum - Introduction p 15). The curriculum emphasises the contribution of all language learning to the child's language development in general.

In the context of the Draft Curriculum Guidelines for Modern Languages

The Draft Curriculum Guidelines states among the principles that it outlines for a language programme in primary school that 'The approach will be an integrated one where effective links can be made between language development, cultural awareness and communicative competence, and other areas of the curriculum.' The NCCA Teacher Guidelines for Modern Languages in Primary Schools state that: 'Because of the integrated nature of the primary curriculum, links should be made between the language lesson and other curricular areas. The language

learning experience should not be viewed in isolation' (Teacher Guidelines p 35).

The Teacher Guidelines also state that: 'All those teaching the language should be aware of the contents of the primary school curriculum. The curriculum at primary level is an integrated one, in which links are made between what is happening in one curricular area and aspects of other curricular areas. The same principles apply to the modern language curriculum. The child should be enabled to relate what is happening in the language classroom to what is happening at other times during the week' (Teacher Guidelines p 37).

Aspects of cross-curricular integration

Positive benefits

Cross-curricular integration in relation to the teaching of a modern language can have reciprocal benefits. The modern language class can facilitate or fulfil curriculum objectives of other subjects or vice versa. Cross-curricular linking by its nature will benefit from the collaboration of all teachers involved in teaching a particular class and such collaboration will impact positively on the teaching and learning situation. Cross-curricular linking becomes more of an instinctive way of thinking and operating the more it is practised by teachers. Likewise children who are taught in a cross-curricular fashion quickly learn to make links across the curriculum and to articulate such links, in the development of knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes.

Knowledge

In the past the primary education system placed a greater emphasis on building up the knowledge base of the children across all subject areas of the curriculum. This was perhaps to the detriment of the development of skills and concepts, attitudes and values. The revised curriculum places a strong emphasis on a more balanced approach. In particular greater emphasis is placed on the development of skills and concepts that facilitate life long learning.

Likewise the most traditional and widely practised cross-curricular work in relation to the modern language has been knowledge-focused work. This type of cross-curricular work focuses on building up children's knowledge base about the target country/ies and culture/s. There are many areas of content across the curriculum that will serve to increase the child's bank

of knowledge about the target culture. Obvious subjects where cross-curricular content links can be made in relation to the teaching of the modern language are Geography, where teachers focus on the strands of Human Environments and Natural Environments to teach about the target country/ies and the customs and way of life of the people and Music where teachers focus on songs from the target culture/s.

Concepts and skills

The development of concepts and skills is very important in the context of the revised Primary School Curriculum. In relation to cross-curricular work in the context of teaching a modern language this is probably an area that has been neglected somewhat. In all areas of the curriculum various concepts and skills are identified as being of central importance to that particular subject area. The strand units within the strands provide the context within which the skills and concepts are developed. In order to develop the higher order thinking that is stressed throughout the curriculum it is necessary to focus on the development of relevant skills and concepts. Throughout the curriculum the child is encouraged to observe, collate and evaluate evidence, to ask relevant questions, to identify essential information, to recognise the essence of a problem, to suggest solutions, and to make informed judgements. These activities help to foster higher order thinking skills such as summarising, analysing, making inferences and deductions, and interpreting figurative language and imagery. These activities also encourage the use of active methodologies. In dealing therefore with the target country/ies and culture/s the teacher/s should be aware, for example, of developing the appropriate geographical concepts and skills as well as developing the children's knowledge.

In relation to an arts subject, the teacher should also be aware that the development of concepts and skills related to the specific arts area is also important. For example musical concepts such as a sense of pulse and a sense of tempo can be taught when focusing on the strand unit of song singing in Music. The skill involved in playing percussion instruments, which forms another strand unit of the 'performing' strand can also be focused on in parallel to song singing.

Attitudes and values

One of the three general aims of the primary school curriculum is 'To enable the child to develop as a social being through living and cooperating

with others and so contribute to the good of society. (Primary School Curriculum - Introduction p 34). Developing intercultural awareness is central to the achievement of that aim. It is encompassed in the cultural awareness strand of the modern language curriculum and also forms part of the concepts and skills component of the SPHE and SESE curricula. It involves not only the acquisition of knowledge and the development of concepts and skills but also the development of attitudes and values. In dealing with the target country/ies and culture/cultures in the modern language classroom and in other subject areas teachers should foster in the child 'attitudes and behaviour that are characterised by understanding, empathy and mutual respect' (Primary School Curriculum - Introduction p 57). See Incareer Booklet 14 for a fuller discussion on Intercultural Awareness and how to develop it within the modern language classroom and on a whole school basis.

Transverse skills

In relation to language skills the teacher working on the Communicative Competence and Language Awareness strands of the Modern Language curriculum will also be developing literacy skills that transfer across all language areas of the curriculum and beyond that to languages encountered outside the classroom. Likewise teachers working on language awareness skills and literacy skills in the other language areas of the curriculum - Gaeilge and English - are developing skills and strategies that are transferable to the modern language experience and should be capitalised upon in the modern language classroom. See Incareer Booklet 13 for a fuller discussion on Language Awareness and how to develop it within the modern language classroom and across the curriculum.

Other examples of cross-curricular transferable skills are those which are developed within and between areas such as SPHE and SESE and across the subject areas which encompass the Arts Education curriculum.

Which language?

Cross-curricular integration is a two-way phenomenon. It can be carried out by the language teacher who is dealing with knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes that pertain not only to the modern language but are relevant to other subject areas. Equally, it can be carried out by a general class-teacher, who is not necessarily the language teacher but is dealing with curriculum aspects that also have relevance to the modern language

curriculum. Therefore it can be carried out in *Gaeilge*, English or in the modern language.

However, in relation to the context of the modern language classroom, the MLPSI encourage as much as possible the use of the target language as the language of instruction and the informal language of the classroom. Therefore in relation to dealing with aspects of cross-curricular integration the language teacher is encouraged to work as much as possible in the target language. Most teachers worry unnecessarily about the fact that children will not understand everything if they use the target language as the language of instruction. Cross-curricular work which is dealt with at a 'simpler' level through the target language during the language lesson, is usually dealt with in other areas of the curriculum through the main language of instruction, but from a different perspective.

Resources:

In the context of adopting a cross-curricular approach the language teacher must be aware that activity based methodologies and a hands-on approach is essential in the development of concepts and skills. Schools are now in possession of a lot of equipment, materials and resources that have been acquired in order to facilitate the implementation of the revised curriculum with its emphasis on the development of concepts and skills. Language teachers should familiarise themselves with such material and integrate it into their cross-curricular lessons.

Textbooks based on the revised Irish Primary school curriculum are good sources for ideas and inspiration for cross-curricular work. Teachers who have access to textbooks from the target country/ies might also find them useful in identifying the vocabulary of the classroom and of particular subject areas.

The chart on cross-curricular integration that is provided in the appendices of the booklet was originally printed in the MLPSI Handbook. It gives indications and suggestions as to how the modern language class can facilitate or fulfil curriculum objectives of other subjects and vice versa.

Collaboration

A cross-curricular approach necessitates collaboration if the language teacher is a visiting teacher or another staff teacher. The ways in which such collaboration can be facilitated needs to be negotiated between all

personnel involved - the Principal, class teachers and visiting teacher/s. Class teachers and visiting teacher/s need to take into account the possibilities for integrating the modern language with the general curriculum when planning on a yearly, termly and fortnightly basis. A list of strand and strand units might be identified where integration might be possible, at the beginning of the year and/or each term by both personnel involved. This could be the basis of a meeting at the beginning of the year and/or term where planning is made more concrete. Throughout the year class teachers and visiting teachers should then check with each other on the suitability of integration work based on issues such as appropriateness of content, timing, synchronisation, consolidation and revision issues.

ICT

The area of ICT in the primary school, although not a subject area in itself, is a vehicle for cross-curricular work. In the context of teaching a modern language there are many opportunities for integrating computer and video skills and for integrating with other subject areas also through language based ICT work.

CLIL - Content and Language Integrated Learning:

In relation to the modern language, cross-curricular integration, as already pointed out, can be carried out either by the modern language teacher or the class teacher not involved in teaching the language. The language of instruction can be either in the target language, or English or Irish. If the target language is used as the language of instruction to teach a subject or part of a subject other than the language the approach is referred to as CLIL (content and language integrated learning). CLIL, as a specific type of cross-curricular integration, is becoming increasingly popular across Europe in the context of language teaching.

- CLIL is 'Any educational situation in which an additional language and therefore not the most widely used language of the environment is used for the teaching and learning of subjects other than the language itself (Marsh and Langé, 2000).
- The term CLIL was adopted in 1996 as a generic umbrella term to refer to dual focused education where the focus is both on a subject content area and an additional language.
- The number of primary schools in Europe that have adopted CLIL is high. The time span lasts between exposure for several years (up to 10 in some countries) and only a few weeks.
- The CLIL approach can be adapted to all levels of language teaching.
- Even though research regarding CLIL is still in its infancy, all the evidence on the ground points to positive linguistic and general cognitive benefits in using CLIL.
- The motivation, interest and involvement of learners in the language class seem to increase in the CLIL situation. The separate roles of the learner as a foreign language learner and a content subject learner merge into one.
- The CLIL approach is a way of connecting the reality of the school with the reality of the world outside. The 'fictional' world of the language classroom is substituted by something more 'real'.

- In the past much of the discussion around CLIL was focused on the language aspect. The discussion now is focusing more on aspects of cognition. For example, when you integrate content with language is there an added on value which can be achieved in terms of cognition and thinking skills?
- Proponents of CLIL distinguish between *regular* CLIL where a substantial amount of the curriculum or certain subjects are taught through the foreign language and *modular* CLIL where the foreign language is used to teach part of a non-language subject or subjects over shorter periods of time. Some researchers distinguish between the two types of CLIL as high intensity CLIL versus low intensity CLIL.
- CLIL has proven particularly popular with boys, who sometimes are less attracted towards language subjects.
- CLIL can be seen as a creative way of dealing with the problem of a crowded curriculum and a lack of time. It is a 'two for the price of one' approach.

The MLPSI context

- CLIL can be viewed as a natural extension and merging of two methodological approaches which are recommended in the Draft Curriculum Guidelines and Teacher Guidelines of the MLPSI:
 1. Teaching through the target language
 2. Using a cross-curricular approach
- In the Irish context a modular or low intensity CLIL approach is feasible i.e. aspects of the general curriculum - strands and strand units - are focused on over a series of lessons which are taught in the modern language.
- The starting point for planning a CLIL approach is either the strand and strand unit in the primary school curriculum or a theme, which is then aligned with and explored through various strand and strand units of the curriculum. Focus areas in relation to language are decided on simultaneously.

- In deciding which subjects to focus on teachers might decide to choose a subject area that they are especially interested in. The decision might also be initially based on the level of 'student talk' that is necessary for various subjects. PE, Maths, Science and Computer classes depend on a lot of teacher talk and practical demonstration for example and can be achieved with a low level of pupil talk (High on Listening skills but low on Spoken Production). The amount of pupil talk can be increased by gradually involving the pupils more in leading demonstrations, experiments, games and activities.
- It is very important in using a CLIL approach that the subject content is age appropriate and taken from the appropriate level of the curriculum as much as possible. Because the level achievable in the modern language in 5th and 6th class will always be considerably lower than that of the mother tongue the teacher will be required to distil and simplify the language and to use appropriate resources to ensure understanding of the content being taught. The exercise is one of marrying age appropriate content to level appropriate language.
- Teachers need to plan their own language use as well as the language they wish to teach the children in CLIL lessons. The children will benefit from being immersed in the target language and do not need to fully understand everything being said by the teacher. However, core language structures and vocabulary need to be identified in the context of language teaching objectives.
- CLIL can be used to introduce new knowledge, concepts and skills. However, as the primary school curriculum is a spiral one CLIL can be used for revisiting and consolidating knowledge, concepts and skills as well as transferring knowledge, concepts and skills learned in another subject area to a new context. Most CLIL lessons in the MLPSI context will be a mixture of consolidation and new material and will be uneven in terms of age appropriate curriculum content. It will dip down to the curriculum content of 3rd and 4th intermittently or deal with 5th and 6th class material in a simpler way than it would be done in a lesson given in the mother tongue.
- Primary schools have recently invested in a lot of practical resources and materials in order to implement the revised

curriculum with its focus on developing practical skills in all areas. These resources would be a great help to any teachers wishing to adopt the CLIL cross- curricular approach.

- Visiting Teachers need to familiarise themselves with the primary curriculum and to collaborate with the Class Teacher to ensure success in using the CLIL approach. Consulting the Class Teacher's copy of the Primary School curriculum and the children's textbooks is a good starting point for inspiration and planning.

FAQs regarding CLIL

FAQ section compiled in collaboration with Frédérique Rantz

- **Does CLIL mean learning a subject through another language? What is the difference between CLIL and a cross-curricular approach? And between CLIL and immersion teaching?**

Yes, CLIL is in essence learning a subject or part of a subject through another language - a language other than the main language of instruction in the classroom.

CLIL is a particular type of cross-curricular integration. Integration of other subjects with a language area is not new and has been done in the past to a greater or lesser extent in different educational systems and at different levels. Because integration has always been a feature of the general Irish primary school curriculum, the MLPSI has in the past encouraged teachers to draw on aspects of other subjects in their language teaching. CLIL however is a more focused and structured approach to such integration. In the CLIL classroom the teaching of core concepts and skills as well as knowledge and attitudes contained in the general curriculum are addressed simultaneously with the teaching of language skills.

In immersion teaching the teacher does not focus on the teaching of language skills. He/she teaches through the chosen language as if it was the first language of the students. The thinking is that through the immersion experience the students absorb the language skills. Immersion teaching now comes under the general umbrella of CLIL.

- **How much CLIL in the MLPSI modern language classroom?**

The CLIL component in the modern language class may vary according to teachers and classes both in terms of scope across subject areas and within each subject area. It may be limited to one unit (3 or 4 classes/sessions) in one subject area as a starting point, to one unit in several subject areas to several units in several subject areas, depending on the success of the approach and the increasing level of teachers' confidence and satisfaction with the approach.

- **When is it suitable to introduce the CLIL approach?**

The CLIL approach can be introduced right from the beginning of 5th class. However the level of participation of the children in the class will not be as high as is possible in the CLIL classroom if the children have

not already got a grounding in the general language of the classroom. It is recommended therefore that right from the beginning of 5th class the teacher should teach in the target language, as has always been recommended by the MLPSI, and that the language of the classroom - asking permission, asking clarification, understanding general instructions etc. should be addressed systematically and simultaneously. By midterm in 5th class the children should then be comfortable with listening, following general orders, asking simple questions etc. in the target language. The CLIL lessons will therefore be more participatory at this stage.

➤ **What is a successful CLIL class? How is CLIL assessed?**

A successful CLIL class is one in which the knowledge, attitudes, concepts and skills of the subject other than the language subject are being seriously engaged with simultaneously with language learning. Clear objectives for both the content area and the language area should therefore be identified. Likewise the recommended methodologies of both the language subject and the other subject should also be embraced. These can in general be described as active methodologies where the children are learning by doing things, by participating and by communicating.

CLIL is assessed by looking at how both the general subject objectives as well as the language objectives have been achieved over a unit of lessons.

➤ **Does the content of a CLIL class necessarily match the level of what the class would cover in the subject area through their mother tongue?**

Whether the CLIL class matches the level of what the class would cover in the subject area through their mother tongue can vary. It depends on how well chosen and presented the particular aspect of the subject area has been, as well as how well the language has been distilled to enable the children to engage with the content of the class. In a straight comparison it is likely that if the class were given in the mother tongue then the level of language would be higher, with a greater level of participation by the children at discussion level. However research has shown that many cognitive gains are achieved in the CLIL class, pertaining to both language development and general cognitive development, that are not achieved when the class is given in the mother tongue. These are the added extra benefits that justify a CLIL approach.

FAQ section compiled in collaboration with Frédérique Rantz

In the MLPSI context a CLIL unit may include content normally associated with younger classes (such as 'my school' in Geography) but it can and should be addressed in an age appropriate way, at a conceptual level corresponding to 5th and 6th class pupils. This approach may allow for simpler language to be used but it is also compatible with the spiral curriculum. It is nonetheless important to link as much as possible with content covered in the 5th and 6th class curriculum.

➤ **What curriculum subject areas can be integrated with the modern language?**

All curriculum areas potentially can be integrated with the modern language class. Some subjects are easier from the point of view of being more demonstration based and of requiring less participatory discussion with the class e.g. PE and ICT. However with the greater emphasis in the revised curriculum on activity-based methodologies all subjects can be taught using active and discovery based approaches. What is important is that the language teacher makes a good choice as to which aspects of the subject areas lend themselves to the CLIL approach and plans for both teacher language as well as pupil language in the overall planning for the CLIL experience.

General planning guidelines for a CLIL approach

Compiled in collaboration with Frédérique Rantz

A guide to the structure of the Primary School Curriculum

The curriculum is presented in seven curriculum areas. Some of these are further subdivided into subjects. These are:

Language: Gaeilge, English and the Modern Language in MLPSI schools

Mathematics

Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE): History, Geography and Science

Arts Education: Visual Arts, Music and Drama

Physical Education

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

The development of curriculum for Religious Education remains the responsibility of the different church authorities.

There are two documents for each subject area - the curriculum statement and the teacher guidelines. Each curriculum statement has a similar structure and similar components. These include:

- Introduction
- Aims
- Broad objectives
- Overview tables
- Content
- Concepts and skills development
- Guidance on the selection of content
- Assessment statement

Overview tables present an outline of the content, while planning pages provide guidance on the sequence and progression of the objectives. The content of each curriculum statement is laid out at four levels - infant classes, first and second classes, third and fourth classes, and fifth and sixth classes - and articulates a progressive and developmental learning experience.

The principal division of content in each subject is the **strand**, and the number of strands varies with the nature of the content in a particular subject and curriculum area. The **strand unit** is a subdivision of the strand and focuses on the more specific areas of learning that will achieve the developmental goals of the strand. Each strand incorporates

detailed **content objectives**. These encompass the learning experiences and the activities that enable the child to acquire and develop the knowledge and understanding that the strand and strand units address. Summaries of the **skills and concepts** to be developed at the different class levels are also presented. The revised curriculum places an increased emphasis on the development of skills and concepts. The strand and strand units are not discrete areas of learning, as they overlap and interact to form a holistic learning experience for the child.

(Adapted from the Primary School Curriculum - Introduction p 40-42)

The Modern Language Teacher who is a staff teacher is already familiar with the primary curriculum and will instinctively see opportunities and possibilities for cross-curricular integration. This is an obvious advantage in planning for a CLIL approach. However, it is important to remember that a CLIL approach is possible also for the visiting teacher. Cross-curricular integration and the collaboration of the class teacher and visiting teacher will serve to enhance the position of the modern language in the curriculum and the school. Visiting Teachers should therefore familiarise themselves as much as possible with the NCCA curriculum documents. Another NCCA curriculum document that would also prove useful in cross-curricular planning is the Intercultural Guidelines document that is available in all schools.

Planning for a CLIL approach

Compiled by Frédérique Rantz

Best topics/subject areas for a CLIL approach with beginners

The best topics/subjects areas to choose for a CLIL approach with beginners are those which allow for:

- a lot of seeing, watching, observing (documents, photographs, objects, film, teacher and others)
- a lot of experiencing, handling, doing (i.e. performing real tasks with objects, realia)
- a lot of listening (teacher and others, tape, film)
- a rich visual environment, including written language (including both new and known language)
- aural language which is both rich and accessible to beginners in context (including both new and known language)

- the possibility of producing language in the modern language (both oral and simple writing)

In other words, all language skills are being developed within a real communication situation very different from 'practicing language' in a language class. Listening is supported by a rich environment of visual and physical clues. Reading is itself integrated in this rich visual context. Productive skills, both oral and written, are also developed in turn.

The performance of real tasks aimed at developing the concepts and skills linked with the subject area selected ensure that pupils discover both knowledge and language by themselves. They may discover new knowledge through context and known language and discover new language through context and known facts and concepts. They may both learn the modern language through Geography and learn Geography through the modern language.

10 steps to planning a CLIL unit - recommendations for good practice

Compiled by Frédérique Rantz

1. To identify a CLIL unit of work, start from a curriculum subject area rather than from content topic commonly included in modern language classes.
2. At a practical level, use the curriculum documentation (NCCA, PCSP) for the subject area in conjunction with the course book in use in the school before looking for additional resources.
3. Among all the potential choices present in any subject area, identify a theme or topic directly relevant to the plans for the subject area for the given class group. (Either your own planning as class teacher or, in the case of a visiting language teacher, planning established by the class teacher you are collaborating with. this).
4. Consider how the CLIL unit will relate to the topics covered in this subject area through English or Gaeilge in terms of concepts, skills, attitudes and knowledge of facts. (See recommended content area option in the section above)
5. Follow a thematic approach to defining your content objectives. Once the theme of the unit is chosen, identify the strand(s) and strand unit(s) and also most importantly the key concepts and skills to be developed through the CLIL unit. Identify the attitudes to be fostered and the knowledge to be discovered and explored...

6. Once the content objectives have been defined address the language objectives, including those relating to communicative competence - both the key language functions (which may also be phrased as 'can do statements') and the key structures and vocabulary- and to language awareness and cultural and intercultural awareness. Further distinguish between 'teacher language' and 'pupil language' and identify which language skills are referred to in each case (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Use the suggested planning template for the key language identified with an additional page for more detailed language which you plan to use or encourage the pupils to use.
7. After identifying the subject matter and language contents of the unit decide on your approach and activities and draw out the lesson plans for the three or four classes/sessions of this particular unit.
8. List the resources which you will draw from and gather for the purpose of each class.
9. Consider the possible integration of ICT in the unit as well as cross curricular integration with other subject areas which may be relevant to the theme chosen. The possibility of including an intercultural education dimension to the unit of work is also important.
10. Finally, include consideration on how learning will be assessed taking into account the dual focus of the CLIL approach - content learning and language learning.

Best topics section and 10 point plan compiled by Frédérique Rantz

Options for CLIL

The modern language teacher having collaborated with the class teacher and consulted both the curriculum documents and children's textbooks might decide to:

- Use a CLIL approach for consolidating and revising work done already in the content subject area in a similar or new context
- Use a CLIL approach to teach a new topic which might or might not have already been dealt with at a simpler level in the lower classes
- Use a CLIL approach which is a combination of the above.

All of the above are valid CLIL experiences.

The modern language teacher might also decide to:

- Use an immersion approach to CLIL where there is no particular focus on learning/practising specific language structures
- Use a more focused approach in relation to the language component

Both of these approaches are valid. In the immersion situation the children will learn from listening to the language structures being used repetitively over a period of time but should be encouraged to participate and use different structures. An immersion approach might be more suitable for some subject areas e.g. P.E. that do not require as much class discussion.

In the more focused approach to language teaching through CLIL the teacher will have identified specific vocabulary and structures at the planning stage and will provide opportunities for practising them either in the CLIL class or in parallel conventional classes.

How does the CLIL approach fit in with the three strands of the Modern Language curriculum?

The three strands of the Modern Language curriculum are still important and should be considered in planning.

The **communicative competence** strand should be planned for in planning the language structures and vocabulary that will be encountered or focused on in the CLIL lesson or unit. These will come under the headings of - listening, reading, spoken production, spoken interaction and writing. In some subjects the emphasis will focus more on one or two of the skills e.g. listening skills in P.E. In general however a balance should be sought and is possible in many subjects.

Language awareness

Within the CLIL class opportunities should be sought to draw the children's attention to grammatical and spelling patterns and to similarities and differences across languages. Opportunities should also be given to play with and use the language in a creative way. See In-career Booklet 13 for ideas on how to develop Language Awareness.

Cultural/Intercultural awareness is facilitated greatly in the CLIL classroom where opportunities for comparing and contrasting cultures will arise naturally in the context of the different subject areas. The content of some subject areas will encompass a particular intercultural focus e.g.

a comparison study between the local area and an area in the target country in Geography.

How does CLIL fit in with the three phase approach to teaching outlined in the Draft Curriculum Guidelines?

The Draft Curriculum Guidelines recommends a three phase approach in the Modern Language lesson.

The pre-communicative phase is carried out at the beginning of the lesson when the vocabulary is introduced/revised.

The communicative phase follows where the children are given opportunities to practise the vocabulary and structures being focused on.

The post communicative phase is a follow up to the communicative phase where activities can be organised that allow for further practice in the language in similar or new contexts and where some analysis of the learning experience can take place.

In the CLIL classroom the focus is on the communicative phase where the child has the opportunity to use the language in a real context. The child learns the language through listening to it being used and using it in a natural context. The use of the target language for teaching and for all incidental exchanges in the CLIL class is very important as the child is learning the language in 'real' circumstances. For this reason there is usually not an emphasis on a pre-communicative and post-communicative phase within the CLIL lesson. This does not mean that new vocabulary associated with the subject content cannot be focused on, as it would be sometimes, in the introductory part of a Science lesson for example, or that likewise the recap phase of a lesson cannot focus on revising specific vocabulary. However the emphasis is on the presentation of language in as 'natural' a way as possible. Conventional lessons that are running parallel to the CLIL lessons can be used to teach, give practice and consolidate language structures if deemed necessary or beneficial.

Resources for CLIL

- NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) curriculum documents:
 - Primary School Curriculum
 - Intercultural Guidelines
- Websites of the NCCA AND PCSP (Primary Curriculum Support Programme)
www.ncca.ie
www.pcsp.ie
- Children's textbooks
Textbooks written in keeping with the revised curriculum are in use in all schools. Text books from 3rd and 4th as well as 5th and 6th Class level should be consulted for ideas and inspiration.
- School resources for curriculum subject areas e.g. Maths equipment, P.E. equipment, Science equipment, Geography equipment etc.
- Textbooks from Italy
These textbooks are useful for familiarising the modern language teacher with the authentic language of the classroom and subject area. It is also a good idea again to look at the text books from lower levels as well as the equivalent to 5th and 6th class level.
- Textbooks used in Italy for international children who have recently immigrated into the country and whose first language is not English.
For a series called *Insieme* see the following websites and contact addresses.
www.lanuovaitalia.it/insiemeinclassa
Grimanalibri
Piazza Fortebraccio, 1/C
06123 Perugia
Tel. 075-5734650
E mail: book@grimalibri.com
<http://.grimalibri.com>

The internet:

There are many sites available in English and in Italian that could provide ideas and resources for CLIL teaching. Some are also suitable for children and have interactive activities.

Examples of websites:

<http://www.primaryscience.ie>

This is a science support website for schools and teachers.

<http://www.sci-spy.ie>

A website run by the National Centre for Technology in Education. They have also produced a DVD called Sci-Spy which explores the world of Science

<http://www.iamanartist.ie>

Produced by the National Centre for Technology in education. A DVD called I am an artist is also available.

<http://www.dienneti.it>

This is an excellent website that provides materials in many subject areas with interactive games etc. The art section provides information and examples of the work of all well known artists.

<http://www.kidlink.org>

Interactive activities suitable for intercultural education.

<http://www.tuttocitta.it>

For maps of Italian cities from various perspectives.

<http://www.globalgeografia.com>

Italian site for maps of various types and information on the countries of the world.

Websites of Italian schools:

http://it.dir.yahoo.com/Istruzione_e_Formazione/Scuole/Scuole/Elementari

This site links with the websites of many primary schools which give information about the school and projects they are involved in.

FAQ section compiled in collaboration with Frédérique Rantz

