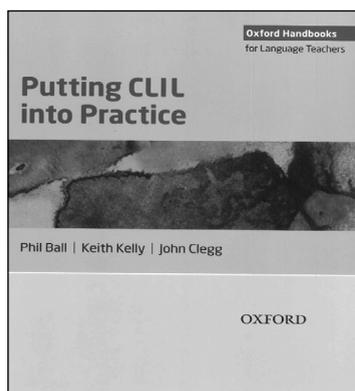


Making CLIL workable. A review of Ball, P., Kelly, K. and Clegg, J. (2015) *Putting CLIL into Practice*.

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Much can be said about this volume which, no doubt, will give plenty of food for thought for those interested in bilingual education and CLIL. The book is thought to provide “a new methodological framework for the CLIL classroom” covering key areas and concepts concerning the implementation of bilingual education from micro- and macro- perspectives.

This volume can be considered to be part of the growing book collection in this area, such as those written by Tanner and Dale (2013) or Llull et al. (in 2016) among others, which are thought to give teachers an overview about bilingual education theory, and provide

them with clear examples, ideas and resources which can guide their everyday practice.

The book is divided into ten chapters. The first one is focused on defining and clarifying what CLIL is. The second chapter goes in depth with CLIL and puts forward some parameters we need to consider to organise a CLIL classroom. Third, the volume emphasises the integrated dimension of this approach and invites us to consider how language and content are related to each other in an integrated classroom. In chapter 4, the authors present some principles and practice of language CLIL, and go in depth in chapter 5 and 6 to guide teachers further into supporting input and output in the classroom. Chapter 7 is thought to set guidelines to design materials in CLIL, and 8 deals with the tricky issues of assessing in a CLIL classroom. The last two chapters are devoted to observing CLIL from a macro-perspective, looking at how schools should be aware of structural and organisation needs, and how teacher training should be oriented towards success in delivering CLIL lessons.

One of the most revolutionary tenets supported in the book is the authors’ suggestion to consider CLIL as a methodology, and not as an approach. Their view is that of giving teachers a view of CLIL which can make it be workable in the classroom (p. 23). This idea is against the principles posed by the so-called ‘founders’ of CLIL, David Marsh and Do Coyle, who

prefer to keep CLIL as an approach, to give teachers more freedom to explore and apply different techniques to the classroom. In their view, a methodology runs the risk of providing practitioners with 'recipes' which may not work in practice, therefore, they prefer to envision CLIL as an approach with full didactic potential to take advantage of the many resources and techniques at hand. This is balanced in the book by presenting the concept of the mixing desk, which is the second idea we will be exploring in this review.

The 'mixing desk' is a visual notion aimed at explaining how the teacher should control the key variables interacting in a CLIL classroom. Authors consider that "teachers have 'three' volume controls which they can adjust" (p. 52), and these are concepts, procedures and language, also called 'the three dimensions of CLIL' in the book. Teachers should accordingly turn up the volume of procedures and language, making them more salient in the classroom, while concepts are given a lower priority.

The third important point is that they have devoted a single chapter to find out the principles and practice of language in CLIL. This is essential, as the idea of just needing the subject-specific vocabulary of the classroom is quite widespread. The authors thus peel off the different layers language has in a classroom context. This goes hand in hand with the language of, for and through learning presented by Coyle, but goes deeper in exploring language and communication needs in a more complex and realistic way, considering subject-related language and therefore enhancing students' and teachers' awareness of the language specific to the subject. This proposal runs parallel to latest research by the Graz Group (see Meyer et al. 2015) which calls for action in "progression in discipline learner's subject-specific literacies" (p. 52). This group, integrated by experts in bilingual education including Prof. Do Coyle, reviews research on CLIL and indicates that students are often neglected with the opportunity to explore modes, genres and purposes linked to the discourses used in different subjects. Even if Ball et al's attempt is just a starting point, it is the first time that the integration of content and language is explored in practice in such an illustrative manner.

All in all, I believe that many practitioners will find this volume a good teacher's bedside book. Among all because it explores a set of parameters which are, from their point of view, essential to ensure quality in CLIL. The parameters had been previously formulated by Mehisto (2012), but the authors have made them more specific and synthetic, encompassing the main ideas into 7 principles which may guide CLIL materials design: the primacy of task, prioritizing the three dimensions of content, guiding input and supporting output, scaffolding and embedding, making key language salient, the concept of difficulty in didactic materials and thinking in sequences. This set of principles, I believe, are not really against the notion of CLIL as an approach, what is more, they reinforce its inclusive and flexible nature.

Finally, the book includes an entire chapter devoted to exploring teacher training. Authors conclude that there is a clear need to improve initial training and/or provide training based

on looped courses, using CLIL as the methodological approach to deliver lessons. Initiatives like this have been started, see those launched in the Madrid region researched by Kells (2016), or get to know the CLIL-based programme in teacher education developed by Centro Universitario Cardenal Cisneros since 2010 (see Fernández, 2016; Fernández and Johnson, 2016).

Be an approach or a methodology, it is true that CLIL is often misunderstood in research and practice, and the time is ripe to reflect upon the results obtained so far, and refine the guidelines provided to practitioners to put CLIL into practice successfully. From my point of view, the notion of CLIL as an 'umbrella term' (Marsh, 2010) must be replaced for a well-built ladder to enrich bilingual classrooms with the potential integrated learning may bring to students' learning, and this volume contributes to start a path to reach this goal.

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