



The implementation of CLIL in the Icelandic Educational System based on the fundamental pillars and key competences described in the National Curriculum Guide – A Proposal

Curriculum scenario for CLIL in the language classroom and in other subjects

What makes this scenario interesting?

- Based on the fundamental pillars and key competencies, described in the Icelandic National Curriculum Guide, the proposal for a CLIL LOTE curriculum development focuses on CLIL in third foreign languages (French, Spanish and Italian), and the transition from upper secondary (ISCED3) to tertiary education (ISCED6).
- The proposal bring into being horizontal coherence by establishing links between languages, which are taught within the school curriculum ([integrated didactic approach](#)) and taking students' home languages into account.
- The proposal builds on the [Guiding principles for CLIL](#).

General description of the existing curriculum:

According to the Eurydice report [Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe](#) (2023), Iceland is one of the few countries in Europe without CLIL provisions (p. 66).

There are no records of CLIL experiences and when in the past academics tried hard to introduce both the ideology and the implementation to teachers, they found resistance and were not successful.

However, the fundamental pillars and key competencies of education described in the [National Curriculum Guide](#) lay the foundations for developing and implementing CLIL methodology.

The **fundamental pillars** (p. 14) which aim is to prepare pupils for participation in a democratic society are:

- literacy in the widest sense
- education towards sustainability
- health and welfare
- democracy and human rights
- equality
- creativity

The **key competencies** (p. 31) are integrated into all subject areas. They concern the pupils' competence for:

- expression and communication,
- creative and critical thinking,
- independence and cooperation,
- use of media and information,
- responsibility for and evaluation of their studies.

Overall description of the further development to introduce and establish a CLIL LOTE transitions curriculum:

The proposed scenario is not implemented in the Icelandic school system; it is meant as a recommendation to introduce CLIL in upper secondary (ISCED3) and tertiary education (ISCED6), but can also be suitable for primary and lower secondary education. It draws from the National Curriculum guidelines, and builds on the fundamental pillars and key competences, in order to take into account the specific country context. This curriculum scenario conceptualizes CLIL as a pedagogy and not just as a tool to develop language competencies or subject knowledge separately. The CLIL approach offers the opportunity of strengthening cross-curricular learning and strategies and cooperative work.

The curriculum proposal establishes vertical coherence designing CLIL LOTE transitions from upper secondary (ISCED3) to tertiary education (ISCED6) in Iceland.

The aim is to develop curriculum guidelines for CLIL in French, Spanish and Italian (third foreign languages) for the transition from upper secondary education to the university. CLIL pedagogy can be an important resource to help students to enter university with critical thinking, problem-solving and collaboration skills they need to be successful at the university and outside of it.

Furthermore, the curriculum proposal establishes horizontal coherence by establishing links between languages, which are taught within the school curriculum (**integrated didactic approach**) and taking students' home languages into account.

Due to the schools' autonomy, the lack of specific information about third language competences in the national curriculum and the fact that CLIL has not been implemented in Iceland, it is not possible at this stage to clearly define and better concretize the actions that should be implemented. Therefore, the chart below includes recommendations for an introduction to CLIL implementation in Iceland, based on an analysis of the curriculum and on the country context.

Notes:

- Upper secondary education (ISCED 3) in Iceland lasts 3 years, from the age of 16 to 19.
- By the end of the last year of upper secondary school students should acquire at least a B1 competence level of the CEFR in the foreign language(s) they choose to study.
- The **language of schooling** is Icelandic. According to the National Curriculum a solid knowledge of the official language of Iceland is the principal foundation of a durable education. At the same time, reading is a powerful way for pupils to acquire knowledge, and the ability to express oneself, both orally and in writing, is one of the most important prerequisites for participation in society. In a democratic society it is of vital importance to be able to take part in discussions of various kinds, where the official language is a powerful means of communication.
- The **first foreign language** learned in school is English. The main objective of language studies is that pupils acquire general competence to use the language as a tool for diverse purposes and on varied occasions. Studying languages gives pupils an opportunity to enhance their understanding of the different living standards and social and cultural circumstances of other contexts. The studies are to make the students see themselves as participants and equals in the international community.
- Danish, or another Nordic language, is the **second foreign language** that students learn. Danish is generally the Nordic language that is taught in Icelandic schools, but pupils with special relations with Norway or Sweden are offered to study either Norwegian or Swedish. The Nordic languages are taught because of the relations and cultural links with the Nordic countries. Icelandic history is intertwined with their history and culture. The cultural heritage is common for all these countries and the languages are of the same branch. The social structure of these nations is based on the same values: democracy, cooperation and equality. It is important to nurture and strengthen the links with these countries.

	Aims of language learning	Aims of content learning	Approaches/methods
Secondary 2 (ISCED 3) Age: 16- 19	<p>Third foreign languages: French, Spanish, and Italian.</p> <p>The aim of language learning in CLIL encompasses a holistic and multifaceted approach. The primary objectives revolve around equipping students with</p>	<p>In this CLIL scenario, language learning and content learning work synergistically to produce well-rounded individuals who are not only proficient in multiple languages but also possess a deep understanding of academic subjects, critical thinking skills, and a</p>	<p>In upper secondary education, the key competences are integrated into the educational approaches and methods used to facilitate both language and content learning in CLIL lessons. Here's how different with approaches aligns with the key competence in ISCED 3 education.</p>

the necessary linguistic, cultural, and communicative skills to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world.

Here's a detailed description of the aims of language learning in this scenario proposal:

Multilingual Proficiency

Students aim to achieve a B1 level in at least one third foreign language. For instance, a student in this setting might become proficient in English and Italian, in addition to their home language.

Cultural Competence

Language learning is intertwined with the exploration of diverse cultures. The aim is not only to teach language as a set of grammar rules and vocabulary but also to provide insights into the rich tapestry of traditions, history, and values associated with each language. This approach promotes cultural sensitivity and global awareness.

Effective Communication

Language education prioritizes practical communication skills. Students are trained to use the languages they learn in simple real-life situations, such as travel or everyday interactions. Emphasis is placed on speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills,

strong sense of global citizenship. This integrated approach prepares students to excel academically, communicate effectively in diverse contexts, and actively contribute to addressing complex global challenges.

Content learning in lessons taught in French, or Spanish or Italian focuses on different fields, depending on the demands made by the context.

However, the general content learning aims of this proposal are:

Subject knowledge

Providing a general understanding of academic subjects such as mathematics, science, social studies, and the humanities, promoting literacy in the widest sense, including digital literacy.

Interdisciplinary integration

Emphasizing connections between subjects and encouraging students to apply knowledge across disciplines, fostering a holistic understanding of complex issues. For example, drawing from what they learn in other content lesson and/or in other language lessons.

Cultural and Historical Awareness

Language classes incorporate cultural competence, but content learning provides a broader perspective. Students not only appreciate the cultures associated with the languages they study but also gain a comprehensive

Expression and Communication:

- collaborative learning (e.g. group projects);
- debates and discussions;
- presentations.

Creative and Critical Thinking:

- Project-Based Learning;
- critical reading and writing;
- interdisciplinary integration (i.e. connecting ideas across different subjects).

Independence and cooperation:

- independent research;
- flipped classrooms;
- group projects;
- student-led initiatives;
- study abroad for a semester.

Use of Media and Information:

- media literacy (i.e. teaching students to critically evaluate and use media sources for research projects);
- use online resources and learning platforms.

Responsibility for and evaluation of their studies:

- Portfolio Assessment that showcase the students' progress and accomplishments in CLIL in Italian, French or Spanish;
- Student- led presentations (or seminars).

In general, it is important to offer a variety of approaches and methods, according to the needs of each specific context:

	<p>ensuring that students are competent in all aspects of language use.</p> <p>Critical Thinking and Problem Solving In language classes, students analyze and debate global issues in the target language. For instance, they could discuss the impact of climate change in Spanish, reading simple texts and proposing solutions in the same language.</p> <p>Global citizenship Language education is aligned with the promotion of global citizenship. Students are educated about global challenges, such as climate change, inequality, and social justice, using the language as a tool to engage in international dialogues and contribute to global solutions.</p> <p>Lifelong Learning The ultimate aim is to instill a lifelong love for languages and learning. Students are equipped with the skills and motivation to continue exploring languages and cultures throughout their lives, fostering a culture of continuous learning and intellectual curiosity.</p>	<p>understanding of world history, diverse cultures, and global perspectives. This integrated approach fosters cultural sensitivity and a deep appreciation for the complexities of human experiences across time and cultures.</p> <p>Environmental and sustainability education Educating students about environmental issues, sustainability, and solutions to global environmental challenges, fostering a sense of environmental responsibility.</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing Providing education on physical and mental well-being, nutrition, exercise, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, promoting overall welfare and well-being.</p> <p>Democracy and Human Rights Promoting democratic values, human rights, and an understanding of the principles of democracy, encouraging active citizenship and civic engagement.</p> <p>Equality Emphasizing the importance of equality, diversity, and inclusivity in society, and exploring issues related to gender equality, social justice, and anti-discrimination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - change settings, learn in the classroom and outside of it (e.g. outdoor education); - make use of virtual (learning) spaces; - take advantage of the online tools to keep students engaged; - involve the students, give them the possibility to choose a task instead of another; - prefer active learning techniques to long lectures; - take advantage of their language knowledge and bring the language of schooling, the first foreign language and a second foreign language together in the same lesson. Let them coexist as they do outside the classroom; - involve students' languages to recreate an authentic pluricultural and plurilingual environment.
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<p>Tertiary (ISCED 6)</p>	<p>The upper secondary school shall strive to communicate knowledge and train students in a way that provides them with skills to carry out specialized work and with solid foundations to pursue further education.</p> <p>Educational institutions are granted added authority to develop their study offer where school levels meet in order to increase flexibility and opportunities for students when graduating from one school level to the next.</p> <p><u>The aim of language learning in tertiary education is a continuation of the one in ISCED 3:</u></p> <p>Academic Proficiency Developing a high level of language proficiency in the target language(s) to enable students to understand, read, write, and speak fluently in academic contexts. This includes the ability to engage with complex academic texts and express ideas clearly and coherently.</p> <p>Research Preparing students to conduct research and scholarship in the target language, including reading and analyzing academic literature, writing research papers, and participating in academic discussions and conferences.</p> <p>Professional Communication</p>	<p>In tertiary education students are encouraged to deepen their knowledge in their field of choice in a third language.</p> <p>The fundamental pillar are kept as a reference to develop the content of the courses to further deepen the students' knowledge.</p> <p><u>In addition to the aims listed above for upper secondary education, at ISCED 6 level we find:</u></p> <p>Subject Mastery Providing a deep understanding and mastery of academic subjects.</p> <p>Critical Thinking and Analysis Developing critical thinking skills, analytical reasoning, and the ability to evaluate information critically.</p> <p>Research Skills Teaching research methodologies and inquiry-based learning techniques, enabling students to investigate topics comprehensively.</p> <p>Digital Literacy Emphasizing digital literacy for responsible use of technology, critical assessment of online information, and the development of digital citizenship.</p> <p>Ethical and Moral Education Exploring ethical dilemmas in various subjects, promoting democratic values, human rights, and social responsibility.</p> <p>Creativity</p>	<p>All the recommendations indicated for ISCED 3 are kept and further developed in tertiary education to foster an increased involvement of the students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - students involvement leads to the co-creation of the syllabus, to the co-design of the task; - learners are at the very center of their learning path; - there is transparency and explicitness about their progression in the language and in the subject. <p>Students are co-creators of the courses, they are more independent and they become more and more ready to actively participate in the democratic society.</p>
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<p>Equipping students with the language skills necessary for their chosen professions. This may involve specialized vocabulary and communication strategies for fields such as law, medicine, engineering, business, or the arts.</p> <p>Cross-Cultural Competence Developing cultural competence to facilitate effective communication and collaboration in international or multicultural environments. This includes an understanding of cultural norms, customs, and etiquette in both academic and professional settings.</p> <p>Language for Specific Purposes Tailoring language instruction to meet specific academic or professional needs.</p> <p>Language for Academic Writing Teaching academic writing skills, including proper citation techniques, structuring essays, and crafting research papers in accordance with academic conventions.</p> <p>Language for Presentation and Public Speaking Preparing students to deliver presentations and public speeches in the target language, focusing on effective communication and persuasive speaking.</p> <p>Language for Global Engagement</p>	<p>Encouraging creativity and innovation skills in all subjects, allowing students to express themselves creatively and think outside the box to solve problems.</p>	
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<p>Preparing students to engage with global issues, contribute to international dialogues, and address global challenges using the target language as a medium of communication.</p> <p>Preparation for Study Abroad Supporting students who plan to study abroad by enhancing their language proficiency and cultural readiness to ensure a successful academic experience in a foreign country.</p> <p>Lifelong learning Instilling a passion for language learning and the skills to continue improving language proficiency independently throughout one's career and life.</p>		
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Short description how the curriculum scenario establishes links between CLIL and plurilingual education:

The curriculum connects language learning to subject learning and to the fundamental pillars, which refer to social, cultural, environmental, and ecological literacy so that individuals may develop mentally and physically, thrive in society, and cooperate with others, in a plurilingual environment.

The proposal bring into being horizontal coherence by establishing links between languages, which are taught within the school curriculum (integrated didactic approach) and taking students' home languages into account. The teaching/learning of the students' third foreign languages (French, Spanish and Italian) should build on what they already have learned regarding the language of schooling (Icelandic), the first (English) and second (Danish or another Nordic language) foreign language, and their home language(s). Involving students' home languages creates an authentic pluricultural and plurilingual environment.

Author:

Caterina Poggi, University of Iceland, cp@hi.is