



Collaboration

Student agency in investigating secondary education CLIL LOTE as means of softening transitions

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

Why is this scenario interesting?

This scenario describes how students can take agency of their own CLIL LOTE transition, by collaborating with students and teachers of the school to which they will eventually transition

It involves active student participation and critical reflection, thus preparing students still in primary education for what they will encounter when transitioning into secondary education.

Short description:

This activity aims at smoothing the transition between primary and secondary education for pupils who have enjoyed CLIL-LOTE throughout primary education but will move onto a more traditional foreign language education system when entering their new secondary school.

According to previous research within the Frisian setting (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018), a regional minority language in the north of the Netherlands in which schools offer CLIL classes, pupils entering secondary education complain that their Frisian primary school CLIL classes were more advanced than the Frisian classes they started receiving in secondary education. In particular, pupils complain of low expectations in their secondary schools in relation to their Frisian proficiency, of the focus of classes being solely on language proficiency (grammar and spelling) but not on content-learning and that they have to wait at least half a year before learning something new. In order to soften this transition, and to give pupils agency in shaping their own language learning processes, this activity has been developed.

In the activity, students in their final year of primary education who are receiving CLIL classes in languages other than English will work with the secondary school that they will potentially be attending in the following school year. They will first work in groups to develop a research design that will allow them to visit their new school and conduct a research project on their language education. Next, they contact the school and organise a visit of two days, including interviews with pupils in grade 1 of secondary education, observing classes and a conversation with a language teacher. Then they return to their school and analyze the data from the different groups. They formulate a 'policy transition advice' that contains their own suggestions on how to soften their transition. This advice will be sent to their new teacher in the school and will be presented at their school.

This project was carried out in 2018/2019 in 5 primary schools in the province of Friesland, the Netherlands. For this project, here is further information:

Level of Frisian of pupils – B1 (also English, as the school was trilingual with Frisian, Dutch and English)

Teaching material – interview guides for students and observation guide (which they develop themselves) and also guidelines to make a policy transition advice

Duration: one week with two days at the secondary schools (two mornings).

Possibilities of differentiation: A shorter version of this activity could also involve one morning in a digital exchange (without observations).

How does this scenario support transitions?

The scenario takes both the vertical transitions between primary and secondary education and horizontal transitions through the focus on plurilingual repertoires into account.

	Description of the collaboration	Major objectives	Activities / Tools
Before	<p>Before the collaboration event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher of the last grade of primary education should contact the secondary school to which most of the students at the primary school usually go and establish a collaboration with one or two teachers of the first grade of secondary education (both subject and language teachers); The teacher should develop aims for the activity and inform parents of the fact that their children will go to their future secondary school. 	<p>Teachers and institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can become aware of the possible discontinuity in the language learning process of students attending CLIL LOTE classes. Can develop lasting collaborations to help students softening their transition into secondary education. <p>Can develop tools to stimulate student agency in relation to their plurilingual research.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Prepare contact with secondary school 2) Inform parents and teams 3) Prepare materials to introduce project to the students

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other teachers at the school should also be informed. 		
During	<p>During the collaboration event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils should learn the basics about conducting research, performing interviews and observations, recording interviews and asking participants for their informed consent. Working in groups, pupils develop an interview guide to use while interviewing their peers attending Grade 1 at their future school (e.g.: did you experience a big change between your CLIL LOTE classes in primary education and how languages are taught in content lessons at this school?). They also develop an observation tool. Students spend two mornings at their future school and in groups interview pupils in Grade 1, observe their language classes, organise a talk with their future teacher. 	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can acquire basic research skills and develop critical skills in relation to CLIL LOTE teaching. Can compare their CLIL experiences, transitions or expectations about the transition with that of older peers who can reflect on them retrospectively. Can critically reflect on their CLIL education and formulate ambitions in relation to their plurilingual repertoires. <p>Teachers in both primary and secondary schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can re-interpret students' CLIL and transition experiences and expectations in relation to the CLIL practices they develop in the classroom. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Introduce the project to the pupils 2) Divide the class in several work groups and support them in developing interview guides and observation tools for their visit to the secondary school 3) Accompany the students to the school 4) Organize the data analysis workshop with the students 5) Support students in writing and presenting their policy transition advice.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The data collected is then analysed: first in the work groups and then with the whole class. <p>A final discussion leads to the formulation of a 'policy transition advice' that will be presented to the current and future school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers in the secondary school can meet the expectations of their future pupils. 	
After	<p>After the collaboration event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy advice from the pupils should be discussed in the teams at both schools. A strategy to allow CLIL LOTE students to receive CLIL education also in secondary education will be developed. 	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can adjust their teaching to reduce the discontinuity of language learning between primary and secondary education. <p>Students:</p> <p>Can reflect on their plurilingual repertoires and what they need from education to foster them in a more adequate way.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Place the work of the students on the agendas of both schools Discuss possible adjustments to the current CLIL / language education Monitor situation over time.

Short description how the collaboration supports plurilingual education:

Taking ownership of their own transition into secondary education, students will gain both analytical skills, by engaging in research, and critical skills, by jointly discussing the results of their research in relation to their own linguistic repertoires. Engaging with pupils of diverse backgrounds that are attending their future school and interviewing them about their own language learning experiences and plurilingual repertoires will foster better overview of their own proficiency and ambitions in relation to language learning.

Products that could be added to a portfolio:

Guidelines for participatory methods and student agency in CLIL LOTE transitions.
The policy transition advice developed by the students.

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Sources:

Duarte, J., & van der Meij, M. (2018). Drietalige basisscholen in Friesland: een gouden greep in tijden van toenemende diversiteit? In O. Agirdag, & E-R. Kembel (Eds.), *Meertaligheid en onderwijs: Nederlands plus* (pp. 90-102). Boom.