



# The National Andorran Curriculum

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

### Why is this scenario interesting?

The National Andorran Curriculum, that was implemented in 2010/2011, establishes *vertical coherence* designing CLIL LOTE transitions from pre-primary (ISCED0) to upper secondary education (ISCED3).

The curriculum establishes *horizontal coherence* building bridges between Catalan (the national language), French, Spanish and English.

### How does the scenario take transitions into account?

The curriculum of the Andorran educational system takes into account both vertical and horizontal transitions throughout the obligatory schooling.

## Description of the curriculum

### The context of Andorra

Andorran society is multicultural and multilingual, characterized by the diversity of means of communication, variety of linguistic uses and registers, thus language learning relates to the social use of language.

### Languages in Andorra from pre-primary to secondary education

In Andorran pre-primary to secondary education, the language is considered, above all, means of social communication, tool for representation, interpretation and understanding of reality, as well as an instrument/asset for construction, organization of ideas and concepts, transformation or diffusion of knowledge. Concurrently, language is employed with the purpose to enable and reinforce metacognition, self-regulation, including the awareness of one's own emotions and behaviour.

Language is therefore the fundamental tool, the channel that conveys not only the transmission of knowledge but also all the procedural interactions that involve it.

### Project-based learning and competence-based approach

Project-based learning is characteristic for the Andorran educational system. Use of language, metacognition and interpersonal skills development are crucial in the cooperative work employed systematically in the problem-solving projects (Global Situation classes).

The competence-based approach makes it possible to personalise the teaching process and take into account the pace of work, abilities, aptitudes and interests of each student. The official reference framework that is applied is the profile expected of the student at the end of each educational level, and the main objective of this competence-based approach is to lead the student to fully develop the skills that have been worked on, according to a predetermined timetable and compliance with the nationally standardised syllabus, itself derived from a class sequence with the most appropriate teaching and learning resources.

**Competence-based learning** has the following characteristics: It is **procedural or executive, functional, meaningful, situational and interdisciplinary**.

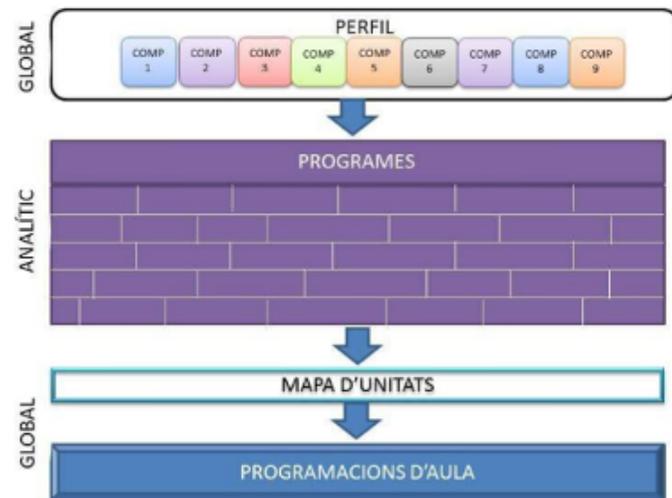


Figure 1. From the institutional profile to the implementation in the classroom

To develop the profile of students as expected at the end of each education stage, the official programs unified at national level contain the prescriptive reference. These are reflected and specified in the Map of Units which collects the learning expectations and the resources (conceptual, procedural and attitudinal) to implement them through the Teaching Units (*Programacions d'aula*) in the classroom.

The **general competences** (aimed at the pupil's overall education) are as follows: Social competence and democratic citizenship; Plurilingual communicative competence; Mathematical, scientific and technological competence; Digital competence; Cultural and artistic competence; Learning to learn competence; Personal autonomy and entrepreneurship competence.

The general competences are specified through a follow-up of **specific** and **cross-curricular competences** (which are differentiated according to the subjects established by the organisation of curricular resources).

Psycho-pedagogical principles define the methodological proposal of the Andorran Educational System through **project work**: a **complex global situation** gives rise to different cognitive conflicts that the students must resolve. This resolution process is achieved through **cooperative work** that encourages the acquisition and mobilisation of a series of **conceptual, procedural and attitudinal resources**, as well as **self-regulation and metacognition**.

### Vertical transitions – characteristics

The curriculum establishes *vertical coherence* designing CLIL LOTE transitions from Pre-primary (ISCED0) to upper secondary education (ISCED3).

The Andorran curriculum design establishes the vertical transition parameters for the completion of each cycle (1 cycle = 2 school years). The fact of not applying the vertical transitions between different educational levels only, but periodically every two school / academic years facilitates the adjustment of the transition parameters to customize them for every student. As the prescriptive reference remains the global profile of the student at the end of each educational stage.

*Figure 2* displays the different education stages with corresponding vertical transitions. It illustrates the structure of the Andorran educational system from pre-obligatory (Kindergarten, Year 2-5) to post-obligatory schooling (Year 16-20). The basic education takes place in Year 6-15.

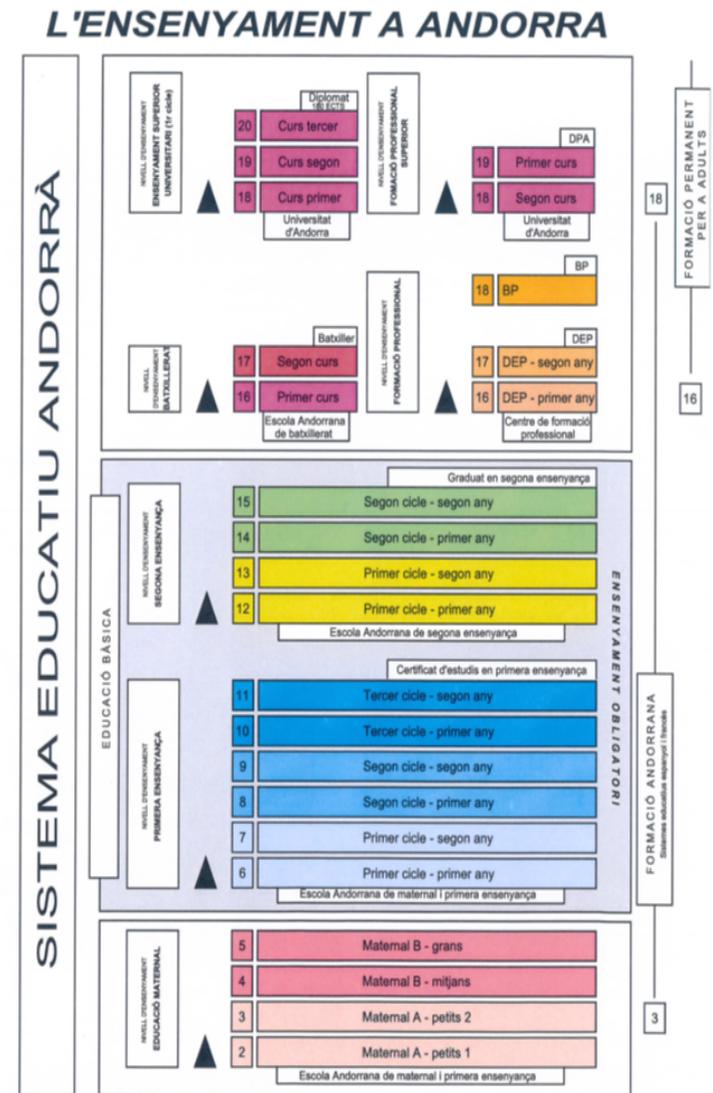


Figure 2. Structure of the Andorran educational system

### **Pre-primary education (ISCED0) (not obligatory schooling)**

1 cycle = 2-3 school years for pupils of 2,5 to 5 years of age

1<sup>st</sup> year: Maternal A - in **Catalan** language only

2<sup>nd</sup> year: Maternal B – **Bilingual** classes in **Catalan** and **French** language simultaneously, 2 teachers in the classroom, each carrying out communication in one target language.

The teaching approach is focused on the development of **oral communication skills** (comprehension and expression) within the context of common communicative situations related to everyday life, near personal and natural environments.

### **Primary education (ISCED1) (obligatory schooling)**

3 cycles = 6 school years for pupils of 6 to 12 years of age

During the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> school year): the target languages are **Catalan and French** that are distributed evenly according to the curriculum, where the teaching units (with corresponding sequences and resources) alternate the target language. **Project-based learning** is introduced strategically as well as basic **Cooperative learning**.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> school year), Project based learning expands through the **Global Situation** (problem solving) classes where **Cooperative learning** is encouraged. **English language** learning is introduced.

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> school year), **Project-based learning** is further developed in most of the subjects. **Global Situation** classes further promote **Cooperative learning**, problem solving and metacognition. **Spanish language** learning is introduced.

Target languages learning is supported by 1 ½ -3 hours scheduled per each language class per week.

Subjects taught in Catalan only: Music, Social science (History and Geography).

Subjects taught in French only: Technology, Art, Physical education.

Recommended learning expectation for the completion of primary education stage for language acquisition is the following: Catalan-B1, French- A2, English-A1, Spanish- A2.

### **Lower secondary education (ISCED2) (obligatory schooling)**

2 cycles for students from 12 to 16 years of age

**All the target languages** (Catalan, French, English and Spanish) are taught as specific school subjects. Target languages learning is supported by 2-3 hours scheduled per each language class per week.

Most of the general subjects are taught in Catalan, **Global Situation** classes alternate Catalan and French language. Some subjects like Art, Natural Science (Physics and Biology) are taught in French, others like Mathematics or Technology are taught in Spanish.

(The school administration distributes the languages used in different subjects according to the availability and qualification of the teachers.)

Recommended learning expectation for the completion of Lower secondary education stage for language acquisition is the following: Catalan – B2, French – B1, English-B1, Spanish-B1

### **Upper secondary education (Batxillerat) (ISCED3) (not obligatory)**

1 cycle for students from 16-18 years of age

This post obligatory education level offers **different modes** (scientific, linguistic, artistic, economic, IB.) and very flexible study ‘pathways’ so that the student can select from different subjects and **customize** his/her own **study plan**.

In general, most of the subjects are taught in Catalan, but each Bacalaureate mode includes some obligatory and optional subjects that are taught in languages other than Catalan. For example, Mathematics, Physics or Psychology are taught in Spanish, Art, Economy or Geography are taught in French.

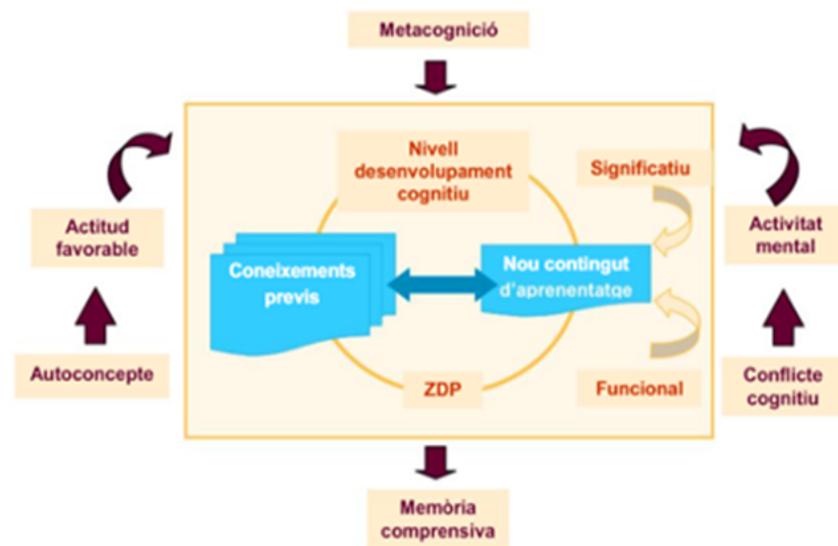
Recommended learning expectation for the completion of Upper secondary education level for language acquisition is the following: Catalan – C1, French – B2, English – B2, Spanish – B2.

### **Methodology**

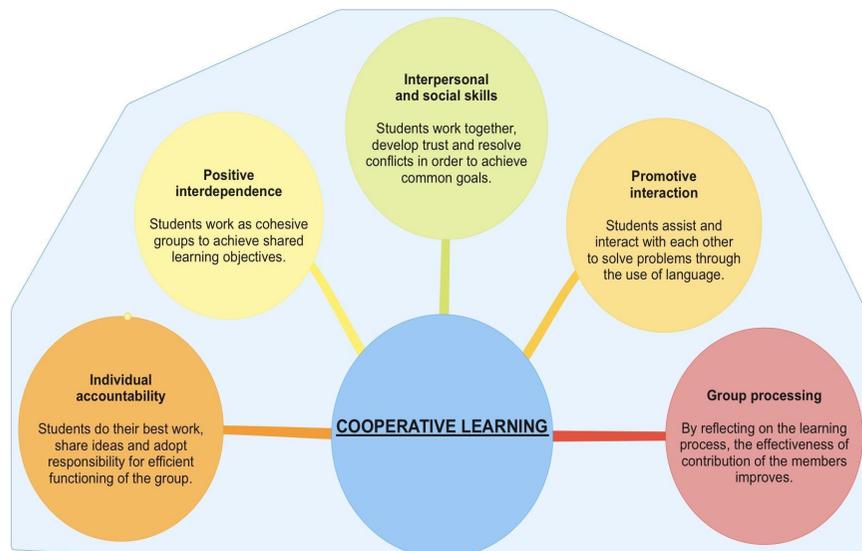
The Andorran curriculum defines four methodological corner stones for competence development: (1) the student is the main protagonist of his/her own learning process (*Figure 3*), (2) Cooperative learning (*Figure 4*), (3) the didactic unit phases/sequence in project-based teaching/learning (*Figure 5*) and (4) complex situation solving – global situations (*Figure 6*).

*Figure 3, The student is the main protagonist of his/her own*

**learning process**, illustrates the aspects that intervene in the learning process within the competence-based teaching approach, pursuing the goal of competent action performed by the student. The starting point for learning is determined by the previous knowledge of each student, putting in practice the Vygotsky's constructivist theory of ZPD. The teacher proposes a complex situation (challenge) that the students are expected to solve, thus being attainable in regards to their level of cognitive development. So, the students, to be able to conjecture a hypothesis of the problem solving/ project design, firstly need to establish relation between what they already know and what they need to know, action that evokes complex mental activity- Special emphasis is put on the intrinsic motivation of the students, often conditioned by the self-concept (personal and academic) of each student, and favourable environment for learning as necessary conditions.



*Figure 3. The student is the main protagonist of his/her own learning proces*



*Figure 4. Five basic steps in Cooperative learning*

**Cooperative learning**, as the foundation for active learning, is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. Cooperative Learning is based on the Structure-Process-Outcome theory and Social Interdependence theory and, based on these theories, five basic steps in Cooperative Learning are defined (see Figure 4): Interpersonal and social skills, Promotive interaction, Positive interdependence, Individual accountability and Group processing. Cooperative members put in practice different values such as self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, solidarity, honesty, caring for others, etc.

### Description of how the curriculum scenario establishes links between CLIL and plurilingual education:

One of the pillars of the education policy of the Ministry of Education of the Principality of Andorra is the systematic integration of the principles of an inclusive, **plurilingual** and **intercultural pedagogy**. Plurilingualism integrated into the learning process is the tool that encourages the constant development of pupils' plurilingual profile.

The curriculum establishes *horizontal coherence* integrating other languages than the target language by building bridges between Catalan (the national language), French, Spanish and English. In the Andorran education system, the four languages coexist from nursery to high school: Catalan (the national language), French, Spanish and English. Catalan, French and Spanish are also the vehicular languages, and English is considered a curricular language. Integrating languages and content is taken up in all subjects and in all languages. This form of teaching is in fact a social process by which pupils are introduced into a community of people who are able to talk about the subject in concrete terms.

Integrated didactics of curricular languages: the methodology is based on a collaborative and contrasting treatment of the various curricular languages integrating the specificities of each one of them. In this process of plurilingual integration in the Andorran educational system, the optimization of transfers between languages and the rationalization of resources have been applied, thus respecting the psycholinguistic bases of plurilingualism (Cummins 1979).

Students' home languages are not part of the plurilingual education approach described in the Andorran curriculum, but they are taken into account in specific activities prepared to build bridges between the schools and the students' families.

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