



## CLIL: HOW SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM IT

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**Abstract:** *Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a pedagogy in which the teacher's medium of instruction is a subject that uses a foreign language. This approach, which targets both subject and language focus areas, has been popular in secondary schools worldwide because of its ability to provide added value to students' language and subject comprehension. This article explores how it is effective in improving the knowledge, skill, understanding, and interest of students in CLIL secondary schools, with a specific focus on language skills, thinking abilities, cultures, and concern in class. CLIL enhances the acquisition of skills that the learner is required to develop to successfully participate in an ever-increasing and complex global society.*

**Key words:** *Content, acquisition, language, cognitive, cross-national, interlanguage, subject-specific, substantive, scaffolding, teacher proficiency.*

### Introduction

The world has become interdependent due to globalization, and this makes multilingualism not as a value added but as a requirement. In this context, teaching methods such as content and language integrated learning (CLIL) have been quite common since they help learners to enhance their mastery of the content as well as the mastery of the second language. Originally starting in the 1990s, CLIL has expanded and mainly kicked off in Europe, wherein the teaching of different subjects, such as history, science, and mathematics, is delivered in a foreign language. In this article, the authors present the main features of CLIL to support secondary school students and the most important phase that forms the basis of subsequent learning and work.

### What is CLIL?

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an instructional approach in which one of the content subjects is taught or supported through a second or foreign language. The objective is to facilitate students' progress in their interlanguage development while simultaneously enhancing their knowledge of the specific subject content. CLIL differs from conventional language teaching approaches in which the language in question is the primary focus. In a CLIL classroom, the language serves as a medium for conveying subject matter, thereby facilitating both second language development and the enhancement of children's learning abilities (Dalton-Puffer, 2011).



## Improvements in CLIL for High School Learners

### 1. Strengthened Language Skills

Secondary education is expected to foster advanced language usage and growth. CLIL facilitates this objective by exposing students to the target language in substantive, content-driven environments.

**Language in Practice:** CLIL environments require students to learn and apply subject-specific vocabulary and linguistic patterns for both understanding and communicating content. This promotes practical language use, contrasting with the theoretical approach typically found in language classes (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010). For instance, a French-speaking student studying geography will integrate geographical terminology while learning the subject, rather than memorizing isolated word lists.

**Enhanced Fluency:** Integrating a foreign language across core subjects provides learners with frequent and diverse opportunities for practice. Furthermore, writing enhances students' fluency, pronunciation, and comprehension due to increased language exposure, particularly in genuine academic settings (Dalton-Puffer, 2011, p.258).

### 2. Cognitive Benefits

CLIL enhances cognitive processes by requiring students to simultaneously analyze and retrieve information related to both the subject matter and the foreign language. **Multitasking and Cognitive Flexibility:** Secondary school students benefit from the increased cognitive demands of processing both language and content simultaneously. It should be noted that this kind of a multitasking promotes cognitive flexibility that in turn is linked with problem-solving and abstract reason. Comparative results of effective teaching with three groups of students: monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual revealed that latter two types of learners perform better than the former one in tasks that involve cognitive flexibility and the executive function (Mehisto, Marsh, & Frigols, 2008).

**Deeper Content Understanding:** In CLIL classes the students' participation is generally enhanced since in order to acquire content knowledge and demonstrate it as well, they must employ their foreign language knowledge and understanding. This way of learning ensures a student gets engaged with two different concepts or ways of learning which enhances critical thinking and understanding of topics. For instance, in a history lesson taught in Spanish, students would analyze historical events and their implications, thereby enhancing their thought processes through the





integration of content knowledge and language skills. This approach is supported by Llinares, Morton, and Whittaker (2012).

**3. Increased Motivation and Engagement** Incentive is a crucial element that has Influence learner's performance and CLIL is known to increase student's motivation since it enhances learning environment to be more vibrant. Real-World Application: CLIL combines language learning with subject matter and as such the students learn the foreign language with an obvious and well-defined need for using it. Through the contextualization of the language being taught, the chances of enhancing the students' motivation in learning are also increased. In this respect, the students particularly the secondary school students get engaged more in the learning activities when they understand that the content being taught they are going to use in their day to day life (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). For example, learning English through science may entail writing and speaking about some scientific discoveries taking place across the world, therefore enabling the students to relate with what is happening in the world. Sense of Achievement: Achievement is the second reason for learning both a foreign language and difficult subject matter: a student will feel confident after mastering the language as well as complicated material. That is, constraint of learning in a second language fosters problem solving and growth mind-set where students become more ready to unlock challenges and even when they fail they learn from it (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). Such confidence is likely to reflect in their language usage hence, their participation and interaction in the classroom.

#### **4. Cultural intelligence and cross-national effectiveness**

Secondary school is one of the most critical stages in the students' life where they are supposed to nurture their cultural sensitivity and an encompassing outlook to the society. CLIL supports this by enabling the child to develop another angle of perception of culture as well as learning content in another language. Intercultural Competence: It is common that when a student is being taught certain subjects using a foreign language they are also taught so much about the culture and background of that language. This exposure helps students to gain improved intercultural sensitivity, an important commodity and asset in the global society. For instance, in a CLIL history class conducted in German, the students could understand European history from the aspect of Germans and thus learn other cultures that fosters tolerance and empathy among them. Global Awareness: CLIL enables the students work towards realizing that information is not restricted to their language or in any country they may be from. Such a broad approach is useful especially in such disciplines as geography and history, economics and social sciences where students





study global problems. In another way, the knowledge encompassed in is more efficient in handling global issues in terms of identification of solutions, since it is studied in a foreign language that makes student think in an international level (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009). **5. Improved Communication Skills** In all spheres of life, communication is one of the essential skills; CLIL enhances students' capacity to explain concepts and ideas in as many languages as possible. Academic Language Proficiency: CLIL also familiarises the students with the academic writing of the target language, which encompasses the capabilities of writing essays, presentations, and also performing discussions and debates at a certain degree (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). This is particularly so given the fact that most of the secondary school students are preparing to join the universities or professional world whereby good communication is preferably irreplaceable.

**Collaborative Learning:** Thus, CLIL classrooms require that students work together in groups, engage in a co-operative mode of learning, in the foreign language. Besides, it also has the advantage of helping them attain the spirit of teamwork and negotiation skills in addition to language practice in the second language which is beneficial (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). Activities in CLIL classes require the students to express themselves, elaborate and argue and as a result, there is enhanced communicative competence. **Challenges and Prospects of CLIL in Secondary Settings**

Although, there are many advantages of CLIL, this approach does not come without difficulties observed particularly in secondary education where learning content and language complexities are more complex. Teachers and students can get confused between content and language and as such require preparation from the teachers for them to succeed. **Teacher Proficiency:** As a result, making teachers multilingual, expert in the content subject matter as well as the foreign language used for teaching the content subject is essential for the effectiveness of CLIL. This is a great challenge that can be rectified by offering professional development for the teachers, especially the languages training and the CLIL specific teaching and learning methods (Coyle et al., 2010). **Support for Students:** To prevent the students from getting overwhelmed by the process of mastering both, content and language the teachers can employ techniques of scaffolding. These include use of pictures, use of simple language, use of terms' dictionaries and permitting learners to work in pairs in order to have a better grasp of what is being taught (Mehisto, Marsh, & Frigols, 2008).

## Conclusion



CLIL offers secondary school students a wide array of benefits, from enhanced language proficiency and cognitive development to increased motivation, cultural awareness, and improved communication skills. By integrating content and language learning, CLIL provides a rich, immersive educational experience that prepares students for the demands of the globalized world. Although there are challenges in implementing CLIL, particularly in ensuring teachers are well-prepared and students are adequately supported, the potential rewards make it a worthwhile endeavor. As secondary school students prepare for higher education and careers, CLIL equips them with the linguistic and cognitive tools needed to succeed in an increasingly interconnected and multilingual world.

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