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Collaboration between CLIL teachers

Abstract

This chapter addresses why collaboration between CLIL teachers is important and even necessary for the ongoing development of CLIL as an integrated form of educational innovation. This chapter outlines different forms of collaboration that have been developed in CLIL education in different contexts. The chapter then focuses on different ways encounters between teachers have been conceptualised in research to-date as well as different ways in which subject and language teachers have been characterized. Following on from this theoretical opening, the chapter continues by introducing a range of tools that can be used for negotiating and developing collaborative relationships as well as exemplary partnerships that can inspire collaboration between CLIL teachers. The penultimate section addresses indicators of successful collaboration, as well as needs that have to be considered for CLIL collaboration to be successful. The chapter closes by reflecting on the implications for research and practice with regard to collaboration between CLIL teachers and raises crucial areas for further development and consideration.

Keywords: collaboration, co-teaching, mutually beneficial relationships, creative co-construction, professional development, CLIL pie

Introduction

The integration of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) relies on careful negotiation between the priorities of subject learning and the requirements of language learning. Research suggests that CLIL can improve learning outcomes in both subject and language learning (Grandinetti, Langellotti & Ting, 2013; Escobar Urmeneta, 2020), yet this success often relies on collaboration between CLIL teachers. Collaboration between CLIL teachers can take place within and beyond classroom settings, within and across educational institutions. This chapter begins by addressing why collaboration between CLIL teachers is considered important and different forms of collaboration that can be developed between and by CLIL teachers. The chapter then focuses on different ways encounters between teachers have been conceptualised and characterisations of subject and language teachers, before outlining a range of tools that can be used for negotiating and developing collaborative relationships. The penultimate section addresses indicators of successful collaboration, as well as needs that have to be considered for collaboration between CLIL teachers to succeed. The chapter closes by reflecting on the implications for research and practice with regard to collaboration between CLIL teachers.

Considering collaboration

Current research outlines a range of benefits associated with collaboration between CLIL teachers, for example, collaboration is reported to be motivating and beneficial for students and teachers (Méndez García & Pavón Vázquez, 2012). When language and content experts collaborate, students should receive richer support and guidance, and literacy becomes a social practice rather than discrete skill development (Li, 2020). These collaborations can create richer learning environments with enhanced instruction (Bell & Baecher, 2012; Nguyen & Dang, 2020), improved student learning (Grandinetti, et al. 2013; Bauler & Kang, 2020) and greater student investment (Kim & Lee, 2020). For teachers, discussing their pedagogical understanding and decision-making together can help them to see from different perspectives (He & Lin, 2018). Trialling and collaboratively developing new approaches can

profoundly develop subject pedagogy (Valdés-Sánchez & Espinet, 2020) as well as empower and enable teachers (Grandinetti, Langellotti & Ting, 2013). Research also indicates that positive collegial relationships sustain CLIL as teachers share resources, challenges, hopes and concerns (Pappa, et al. 2019) laying the foundation for further collaboration. Based on these insights, it is perhaps easy to underestimate what is involved in collaboration and the commitment it requires.

Collaboration offers teachers a valuable opportunity for theorising practice (Banegas, 2020) and ensuring that everyday pedagogical practices are not limited to institutionalised routines or assumed ways of being and doing, but collaboration also requires investment by individuals and educational communities committed to shared goals (Zappa-Hollman, 2018). Investment is required because collaboration is more than chatting over the occasional cup of coffee and more than being a colleague; collaboration is ‘doing things together for job-related purposes’ (Keltchtermans, 2006, p.220). Collaboration cannot be reduced to ‘just a collection of meetings but [rather is] a way of life’ (Hargreaves, 2019, p.611) that involves the ‘push and pull’ of peer relationships with teachers ideally ‘pulling each other in by inspiration and motivation to engage in interesting work, and pushing each other on and up to ever higher standards of performance together’ (p 613).

For collaborations to be productive, they need to be founded on professional relationships that allow teachers to exercise their relational agency (Nguyen & Dang, 2020) and to ‘productively engage in conflict’ (Keltchtermans, 2006, p.231) ‘to overcome challenges and problems emerging from teaching’ (Valdés-Sánchez & Espinet, 2020 p.2430). These demanding professional relationships are dependent on collaborating individuals as well as the curricular and organizational structures that influence pedagogical activities, collegial relationships and collaborative potential (Zappa-Hollman, 2018). Time and space is needed for genuinely collaborative relationships to form, and although collaboration is a form of professional development, forcing teachers to collaborate can be counter-productive, undermining rather than promoting potential (Davison, 2006).

The dual focus of CLIL, however, encourages educators to carefully reappraise the *what*, *how* and *why* of practice arguably creating a space for collaboration (Grandinetti, et al. 2013; Pappa, 2018). When CLIL teachers collaborate they have to cross conventional and epistemological boundaries as pedagogical decision-making is made public and colleagues work to understand different perspectives (Li, 2020; Molle & Huang, 2021). While no single model for teacher collaboration is available (Bauler & Kang, 2020), over time and through the investments of different partners (Cortés & Alzate, 2015) approaches to and understanding of how content and language learning can be integrated have been expanded and enriched (Cortés & Alzate, 2015; Molle & Huang, 2021).

Approaches to collaboration in CLIL

Ideally collaboration is an opportunity for pooling resources, for teachers with different forms of expertise to share their insights and understanding, and to generate new expertise (Arkoudis, 2006; Nguyen & Dang, 2020). While in some settings, such as higher education, collaboration might be more feasible outside the classroom (Lasagabaster (2018), over time CLIL communities have developed a range of collaborative approaches, illustrated in Table 1.

Compliance	Cooperation	Collaboration	Convergence	Co-teaching	Creative co-construction
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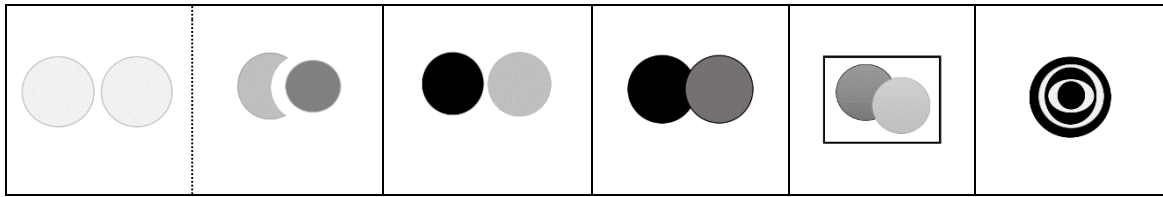


Table 1: Different approaches to collaboration

The six approaches represent a continuum from the least to most intensive (Li, 2020). Beginning with the leftmost column, *compliance* is represented by two light grey circles indicative of the teachers' minimal presence and reluctance to share their professional space, whether physical, epistemological or pedagogical. Even compliance, however, has the potential to be productive if teachers see improvement, for example, in student participation (Escobar Urmeneta, 2020). A more positive approach is *cooperation* represented by a crescent and circle illustrating the way teachers' accommodate each other's expertise. Cooperation can involve students being 'pulled out' of mainstream or content lessons or language teachers being 'pushed in' to subject classes to support students' language development (Bell & Baecher, 2012). Cooperation can also be approached as 'one teach, one drift', an approach which requires little preparation by the teachers (Méndez García & Pavón Vázquez, 2012), or can be facilitated through preparatory courses, such as English for Special Purposes (Kim & Lee, 2020). Neither of these approaches, however, require dialogue between the teachers as they are largely dependent on organizational, rather than interpersonal, arrangements.

A more intensive, or authentic, approach to *collaboration* is represented by two circles side-by-side this time in darker shades indicative of their greater presence. A collaborative approach needs to be an equal partnership with shared responsibilities, not just divided territory. As Escobar Urmenta's (2020) study illustrates collaboration can be arranged in different ways including 'one teach, one observe', parallel teaching, alternative teaching or station teaching. With these arrangements the teachers are aware that their work should complement each other (Kong, 2014) and provide a richer learning environment for students. *Convergence* is a more intensive approach to collaboration, as represented by the overlapping circles in Table 1. Convergence is facilitated by dialogue between teachers in which a shared vision is developed (Aguilar Cortés & Alzate, 2015). Convergence can take place outside of classrooms through the careful planning of teams and programmes, in separate yet complementary lessons with, for example, the language teacher introducing key vocabulary and structures prior to the subject lesson (Pavón Vázquez, et al. 2015) or in shared classrooms with the practice of 'one teach, one assist'. All of these practices involve good communication between teachers and benefit from mutual respect and understanding.

The most intensive approaches to collaboration are *co-teaching* and *creative co-construction*. When co-teaching teachers share the teaching space, either taking turns or co-constructing pedagogic action together. One teacher, for example, can explain to students as the other teacher makes notes on the board or paraphrases what is said (Escobar Urmeneta, 2020) or one teacher can model student language use helping students to actively participate in lessons (Turner & Fielding, 2020). *Creative co-construction*, however, goes beyond the initial or individual expertise of collaborating teachers. In this collaborative approach, teachers' pedagogical repertoires and potential are enriched as they learn from each other, adopting and modifying each other's practices (He & Lin, 2018; Giles & Yazan, 2020). Moreover, in creative co-construction the combined resources and investment of the teachers creates new pedagogical options in the planning (Nguyen & Dang, 2020) and realisation (Gardner, 2006) of CLIL lessons.

The more successful approaches to collaboration appear to benefit from both organizational and interpersonal investment (Zappa-Hollman, 2018). Regular opportunities for teachers to communicate with each other as well as appreciation for the investment in collaborations appears to create more sustainable and rewarding forms of collaboration (Bell & Baecher, 2012). Moreover, as the needs of students differ, as staffing arrangements and resources vary, and as the pedagogical repertoires of

teachers develop, so collaborative approaches can - and should - be modified and used flexibly (Escobar Urmeneta, 2020; Bauler & Kang, 2020). Moreover, careful consideration should be given to how encounters between teachers are conceptualized and the implications of these conceptualizations for the ongoing development of collaborative practices as well as how collaborations between CLIL teachers are researched.

Conceptualizing encounters between educators

While descriptions of the 'dual focus' of CLIL suggests an equal partnership, the conceptualisations of encounters between CLIL teachers in published research suggest a more complex relationship. One way to conceptualise the encounter is as a 'trading' or 'contact zone' (Wallace, Spiliotopoulos & Ilieva, 2020). This conceptualisation recognises the contrasting expertise of language teachers and content teachers, as well as the need to engage and to negotiate with one another across various boundaries that can be *institutional* such as the limits of conventional subject or language teaching or employment status, *linguistic* including notions of language and the role of language in education, and *epistemological*, who has authority and what foci are priority. Although 'trading zone' sounds like a pragmatic form of engagement, the issues to be addressed are clearly demanding. An alternative conceptualisation that brings the challenge of collaboration to the fore is collaboration as a 'struggle' (Arkoudis, 2006).

The struggle between CLIL collaborators has been defined 'as instances of frustration and uncertainty ... grappling with the authentic challenges' (Percy, Martin-Beltrán, Yazan and DeStefano, 2017, p.207) and 'shared opportunities to externalize learning ... not only for their students, but also for [teachers]' (p.214). To be able to benefit from such struggles requires time and investment, as well as the ability to verbalize and share tacit knowledge and pedagogical assumptions that are perhaps hidden beneath years of teaching practice. When teachers are able to share their understanding and to communicate well, contradictions can lead to development (Martin-Beltrán & Percy, 2014) with colleagues benefiting from each other's insights leading to 'rich opportunities' to reimagine and renegotiate practices (Gilles & Yazan, 2020). The significant potential highlighted in these descriptions accords with the Bakhtinian notion of a 'dialogic struggle' in which participants can witness their own words, ask questions and explore different answers, an intense activity that indicates the authenticity and value of the encounter between different perspectives (Moate, 2014a).

Another way of conceptualizing the encounter between collaborating CLIL teachers is as a 'third space', a space created, mediated and expanded by the relational agency of teachers (Nguyen & Dang, 2020). This third space can be illustrated by research with CLIL teachers collaborating across institutional boundaries. As early childhood, class and language teachers came together to explore the similarities and differences in their educational priorities and the changing conditions of the wider educational environment, a shared pathway can begin to take shape as an actual, rather than idealised, entity (Moate, 2011, 2014b). This third space can be considered a productive environment, a space that surpasses conventional boundaries and is created through collaborative encounters. Nevertheless, conceptualizing collaborations between CLIL teachers as 'boundary experiences' can also help discern what is involved in collaboration.

Conceptualising encounters between CLIL teachers as 'boundary experiences' in which colleagues work together with complex problems to generate shared understanding and create a space to benefit from different forms of expertise (Nguyen & Dang, 2020) usefully draws attention to the challenges and resources of collaboration. A boundary experience requires teachers to draw on and share their personal-professional resources, which in turn gives rise to potential resources that are not readily anticipated or envisaged prior to the encounter. This conceptualization highlights the relational resourcefulness and agency required of teachers to manage collaborations as they work on the edge of their existing expertise, pedagogical experience and perhaps linguistic competence. This conceptualisation is particularly useful when seeking understanding of encounters and collaborations between teachers coming from significantly different pedagogical paradigms, as well as when

teachers are *teaching* through an additional language, in addition to supporting students *learning* through an additional language(s). CLIL teachers collaborating under these conditions have to simultaneously manage multiple boundary experiences, as illustrated by the characterizations of CLIL teachers in the next section.

Characterizations of teachers

While the literature characterizes encounters between teachers in different ways, characterizations of subject teachers and language teachers are more consistently presented. Subject teachers are often characterized as having epistemological authority based on their subject knowledge with each discipline having its own way of making sense of the world and particular ways of expressing this knowledge (Paretti, 2012). As one science teacher explains, ‘REALLY content is something you must have an idea about otherwise you wouldn’t really be able to structure anything’ (Arkoudis, 2006, p. 420 emphasis in original). It is the central role of subject matter in structured pedagogical action which reinforces the use of referential and declarative language by subject teachers (Creese, 2006), which can be challenging for CLIL or additional language students to understand without support (Escobar Urmeneta, 2020). Nevertheless, research seems to affirm that a clear understanding of subject matter can enable CLIL subject teachers to more readily transform content goals into discrete objectives and realisable activities (Pavón Vázquez, et al. 2015) which also helps with the careful reappraisal of the role of language in subject-based activities (Grandinetti, et al., 2013).

In contrast to subject teachers, language teachers are often characterised as focusing on how language is and can be used in the exploration and demonstration of content knowledge. In response to the science teacher cited above, the collaborating language teacher responds by saying, ‘what ever topic in Science or ... History or is in whatever...I’m still enabled to teach the same linguistic structures and features and FUNCTIONS ...it’s very easy to adapt’ (Arkoudis, 2006, p.420). The ‘must have’ from the language perspective is awareness of how language is and can be used within the particular subject and context, as well as how language can be developed and used through different activities to enable student participation (Creese, 2010). By focusing on students, rather than subject matter per se, involves the greater use of interrogative language (Creese, 2006). For language teachers becoming part of the content curriculum, however, can be like ‘the holy grail’ (Zappa-Hollman, 2018) and a valued opportunity to transition from grammar-based to competence-based teaching (Escobar Urmeneta, 2020) and authentic language use (Aguilar Cortés & Alzate, 2015).

While the differing foci and priorities of language and content teachers can create imbalance between collaborators if one partner is assigned greater value than the other (Moore, Ploettner & Deal, 2015), these differences also offer rich resources for development. The contrasting language forms, the complementary roles and responsibilities, different ways of working and engaging with students can motivate and support participation. If content teachers use the target language for activities, consolidating learning on a textual level and for feedback, language teachers using the target language for feedback and evaluation focusing on the sentence level and language assistants maximize language use through conversation and immersion together they create a language-rich and learning-rich environment (Méndez García & Pavón Vázquez, 2012; Escobar Urmeneta, 2020), the challenge, however, is finding tools to effectively negotiate collaboration.

Tools for negotiating collaboration

Current research suggests that CLIL teachers benefit from having a range of tools that mediate their collaboration (Martin-Beltrán & Peercy, 2014), including a shared understanding of *language as a meaning-making tool* (Zappa-Hollman, 2018; Wallace, et al, 2020). When language is used as a meaning-making tool, students have to actively use, and not just ‘receive’, language or languaged content. This is where the integration of language and content is mutually beneficial with the focus on how to use language well. While on the one hand identifying key language features strengthens

students' engagement with content, on the other hand the authenticity of the content enhances the authenticity of language use. Moreover, language as a meaning-making tool requires greater space for student participation, in turn offering teachers better opportunities to observe how students participate and manage with language and content. When the 'working' language of CLIL is not part of students' or teachers' everyday language repertoires, teachers have to find new ways of working (Pavón Vázquez, 2014) and engaging students in educational activities with less resources (Moate, 2011; Escobar Urmeneta, 2020). Recognising language as a meaning-making tool provides a positive starting point for this process.

Another useful tool that can help teachers to coordinate and develop their collaboration is the *curriculum framework*. As the work of Martin-Beltrán and Percy (2012 & 2014) demonstrates, curriculum frameworks can be useful and multifaceted tools that help with the practical realisation of and reflection on collaborative efforts. Using a curriculum framework, teachers can define and share their goals to coordinate their activities and teaching priorities on, for example, a weekly basis. As an institutional document a curriculum framework creates a shared space for complementary expertise and the development of complementary tools that can coordinate collaboration across different classrooms and temporal frames. These complementary tools can include regular email updates, shared checklists and lesson plans, coplanned activities, shared assessment rubrics, instructional materials and classroom technology (Martin-Beltrán & Percy, 2012 & 2014). Notes made during a planning session, for example, can serve as an informal record of what has been done and shared to support and develop communication between teachers working with the same students and shared checklists can keep colleagues in sync and up-to-date with one another (Martin-Beltrán & Percy, 2014). These tools provide concrete ways for teachers to articulate and conceptualize their goals together as they co-construct their knowledge and transform their practices and materials to meet the particular needs of students. As part of these collaborative activities, teachers can decide on different configurations whether to co-teach or what roles best serve the overall aim of the lesson. Moreover, these activities create spaces for teachers to learn from and with each other (Turner & Fielding, 2020).

Whereas curriculum frameworks are often 'given' to teachers, *curriculum planning* places the responsibility for curriculum development in the hands of teachers. Pavón Vázquez, et al.'s (2015) work illustrates how a collaborative approach to curriculum planning can be beneficial for curriculum and teacher development. Curriculum planning can include deciding what themes and skills can be addressed in cumulative or complementary ways. Students, for example, can explore the key features of narrative or information report texts in target language lessons and then produce different kinds of text in mother tongue lessons or subject lessons can begin in the target language, transition to mother tongue-based instruction and back (Turner & Fielding, 2020). Curriculum planning offers opportunities for teachers to reflect on what kind of language is appropriate and whether bigger units of study should be divided into smaller units, how students can be actively involved in different activities, how progress can build on what has gone before and how to acknowledge positive change. As teachers collaborate through curriculum planning they can build their own pathway together. When engaging in any form of collaboration, however, it is worth being aware of indicators of success that can help sustain the partnership.

Indicators of successful collaborations

Research on CLIL teacher collaborations includes a number of features that are indicative of positive collaboration. One key indicator is the development of a *shared language* to talk about the collaboration (Arkoudis, 2006). Shared language develops as teachers begin to adopt the terminology and expressions of collaborators, using shared metaphors, as well as having more to say about individuals that are involved in the collaboration (Davison, 2006). The use of concrete, extended examples when talking about a collaborative partnership, as well as the use of more personal references, 'I' and 'we', suggest a positive working relationship (Davison, 2006). Positive relational indicators include planning together and a mutual valuing of the partnership, appreciating each other's

expertise and enjoying equal status within the collaboration (Bell & Baecher, 2012) to the extent that significant shifts can take place in CLIL teacher identity development (Valdés-Sánchez & Espinet, 2020).

Recent studies highlight the importance of CLIL collaborations not being dependent on the sustained efforts of single individuals, but for *roots to be established in the community* which sustain CLIL initiatives even as staff members change (Escobar Urmeneta, 2020). Other indicators of successful collaborations include the *provision of high quality teaching* with regard to both subject and language provision (Valdés-Sánchez & Espinet, 2020). The wide variety of approaches to collaboration, different teacher personalities, contrasting community arrangements and the (non)availability of resources can all make a significant difference to the practical realisation of collaboration in CLIL. On the other hand, lack of time to plan, lack of clarity regarding different roles and contributions, as well as being overwhelmed by curricular demands or an extensive workload suggest that collaborative efforts are neither fruitful nor beneficial for participating teachers (Bauler & Kang, 2020). While these indicators of successful collaborations are useful features to consider when reflecting on teacher collaborations, it can also be useful to be aware of the different ways in which exemplary partnerships can work in practice.

Exemplary partnerships

Research includes a number of collaborations which can be described as exemplary in that the collaborative efforts go beyond what an individual teacher could do alone, in effect modelling creative co-construction. The examples in this section appear to be born out of the committed actions of collaborating teachers and illustrate how effective partnerships are negotiated by teachers within the particular conditions of their environment. This means that these examples cannot be taken and immediately applied elsewhere, but they do provide useful insights into how successful collaborations can develop.

Martin-Beltrán and Percy (2014) provide various examples in their studies on teacher collaboration. In one example, Kathleen a language specialist and Gina a second grade teacher, coplan their lesson and negotiate how to model a ‘think aloud’ activity as this is a skill the teachers want the students to develop. Kathleen suggests modelling a ‘think aloud person’ and begins to enact what she could say in the classroom as she looked at the instructions given to the students, ‘Okay, let me think about, let me look at my word’ (p.728). Gina listens carefully and then checks she has understood, ‘We are partners. So, *different modelling partners?*’ (p.728). As these teachers discuss together their shared understanding and contributions take shape for this particular lesson as well as for future lessons in which they can re-use this modelling approach to support student participation.

Nguyen and Dang’s (2020) study also exemplifies how common understanding can develop through practical collaboration between a language and science teacher. The aim of the lesson was to help students write a scientific report and the teachers explain that they began by looking at the language of an experiment and focusing on verb forms. The teachers are delighted by the way this helps to focus student attention and prepares them for independently writing scientific texts in the past tense. The language teacher then comments that ‘then we had to change it to the third person as well’ (npg). The science teacher acknowledges, ‘Yes.... there was a lot involved in that’ (npg). While this comment refers to the amount of activity in the classroom, it can also be read as an expansion of pedagogical vision through the successful collaboration.

Creese’s (2010) study with a geography teacher and a language specialist illustrates the value of teacher collaboration in materials development. This is a useful example as it contrasts the priorities of the subject and language teachers and how this affects the language they use and texts that they produce for students. The geography teacher’s text on the use of land is quite short, but it includes long sentences to convey relationships between people’s actions and the effect on the environment. The language teacher uses shorter, simpler sentences and focuses on the meaning of keywords

(RESOURCE; RECREATION, ENVIRONMENT, ECOSYSTEM), but the revised version omits the cause-effect relationship between people and the use of land. While Text B is a good starting point, Text A is a more scientific text that goes beyond keywords to key concepts providing incremental steps towards the lexically dense language of school subjects.

Dealing with the lexical density of scientific language is a key focus of Grandinetti, et al.'s (2013) study with CLIL teachers and students in a challenging school environment. The collaborating teachers renegotiate the content and activities of lessons once language is recognised as a meaning-making tool and begin by breaking the overall aim down into cumulative 'micro-content-objectives'. The teacher collaborators agree on three questions that they can regularly use to develop and refine their CLIL lessons. The questions are: 1) *is the language of input comprehensible?*, 2) *can students use language to engage with the content?*, and 3) *is the language of the content comprehensible?*. Once the teachers have identified the micro-content-objectives for the lessons, they incrementally introduce the language and content through multimodal activities that encourage students to explore and work with the content and language in different ways. Through this collaboration, the teachers' pedagogical repertoires expand and lead to greater language- and content-awareness to the extent that the science teacher can continue with good CLIL practices when teaching alone.

Research suggests that collaborating CLIL teachers can learn from each other in a variety of ways. Fielding and Turner's (2020) research on CLIL partnerships in different schools using a variety of languages highlights how teachers can mentor one another as they collaborate and share expertise. In these examples, monolingual teachers learn the target language alongside the children and a shared unit planner ensures that teachers of subjects and languages can recycle and develop shared language features across different lessons. Over time, through in- and beyond classroom collaborations, teachers can better understand the expertise partners bring to the partnership to the extent that they can draw on their collaborator's expertise even when they are absent (Li, et al. 2019) or improvise when teaching together (Gardner, 2006). For collaborations to reach this degree of creative co-construction, however, means that certain conditions or needs have to be met.

Recognized needs

Recent studies highlight a wide range of needs that should be considered when seeking to develop collaboration between CLIL teachers. These needs range from institutional requirements to individual considerations. Although CLIL collaborations can succeed despite the limitations of the wider environment or the initial hesitancy of some teachers, the more the wider community is aware of and invested in CLIL collaboration, the greater the resilience of participating teachers and potential of the collaboration (Bauler & Kang, 2020).

At an *institutional level* a number of key considerations have been highlighted. For example, an institution that has *an established protocol for collaborative action* can greatly support CLIL collaborations and help to foster trust between collaborators (Zappa-Hollman, 2018). A culture of collaboration enables teachers to find time to work together (Martin-Beltrán & Peercy, 2014), as well as to spontaneously interact with one another and to exchange ideas (Kong, 2014). The formal coordination of CLIL within an educational community can significantly help teachers as they negotiate their different roles within and contributions to CLIL activities (Pavón Vázquez, 2014). Moreover, institutional involvement can help to overcome structural constraints and imbalances (Molle & Huang, 2021), for example, in the employment status of collaborating teachers or the authority ascribed to different subjects and roles. Institutional providers can also be aware of where CLIL initiatives are being placed in the overall curriculum of an institution and try to ensure that no teacher feels that their ascribed space is being reduced or undermined. And finally, institutional authorities can support CLIL collaborators by formally appreciating their efforts and investment as individuals and collaborators (Gilles & Yazan, 2020).

In addition to institutional considerations, CLIL collaboration is influenced by *interpersonal* considerations. These considerations include whether the vision or goal for the collaboration is shared by the different collaborators (Aguilar Cortés & Alzate, 2015). CLIL collaboration also benefits from good communication between teachers and a willingness to invest in the collaboration (Martin-Beltrán & Percy, 2014). Although institutional settings might formally place colleagues in hierarchical positions, collaborations work better if they are experienced as non-hierarchical (He & Lin, 2018), as an equal relationship to which both or all partners can contribute from their respective strengths (Pavón Vázquez, et al. 2015) and learn from each other (Bauler & Kang, 2020). The most positive CLIL collaborations appear to be underpinned by trust and the willingness to take risks (Gardner, 2006) with an ‘appreciation of each other’s contribution, equal status, and reliance on each other’s expertise’ (Nguyen and Dang, 2020, npg).

Pedagogical considerations closely connect with interpersonal considerations and are embedded within institutional relationships. Research suggests that ongoing investment in the development of the context and pedagogical practices teachers use helps to maintain effective collaborations (Martin-Beltrán-Percy, 2014; Pavón Vázquez, 2014). The integrated nature of CLIL means that all educators involved in the initiative are responsible for the pedagogical realisation and quality of CLIL (Bauler & Kang, 2020). When educators are able to identify key foci that foster integrated development this can benefit both subject and language goals (Bauler & Kang, 2020). Key foci can be the use of language as a tool for meaning-making, breaking overall objectives into smaller aims, as well as maximising opportunities for student participation (Grandinetti, et al. 2013).

While these considerations are relevant to CLIL collaborations in a wide variety of educational settings, CLIL collaborations are also affected by the *personal* beliefs and attitudes of teachers, as well as individual personalities and working styles (Zappa-Hollman, 2018). CLIL collaborators may well come together as experienced teacher practitioners, used to working alone and independently. It can take a significant amount of time for teachers to learn how to communicate with one another, as well as to get used to verbalising their pedagogical thinking (Pavón Vázquez, 2014). These considerations also point to the importance of pre- and in-service teacher education creating opportunities for teachers to work together, to practice and experience what it means to negotiate from different perspectives (Aalto, Tarnanen & Heikkinen, 2019; Fielding & Turner, 2020) and to see collaboration as an important part of expert practice. Moreover, it should be recognized that as teachers become used to collaborating, the form and approach to collaboration can also change and develop over time.

Conclusion and implications

Through different approaches and the use of a variety of tools, collaboration between CLIL teachers can help sensitize educators and educational authorities to the demands of CLIL and contribute to the significant development of pedagogical practice within (and beyond) CLIL classrooms. This chapter has outlined different approaches to collaboration between CLIL teachers, different conceptualisations of collaboration in CLIL, tools for negotiating collaboration and provided a number of exemplary partnerships. This final section reflects on issues that could be further addressed in CLIL research and practice in relation to teacher collaboration.

The key characteristics of collaboration between CLIL teachers presented in this chapter come from across the educational pathway with teachers working with younger children as well as colleagues in higher education. While it is hoped that these insights are useful to CLIL teachers and researchers working in different settings, it should be noted that teacher collaboration in CLIL does not, and likely cannot, conform to a particular model or approach. Escobar Urmeneta’s (2020) work highlights the value of fluid configurations as teachers respond to the changing needs of the students, institutional resources and pedagogical pathways. Nevertheless, it can be useful to have ways of recognising what kind of approach is being used and the sustainability of collaborations. One way of differentiating between options is to acknowledge the (in)frequency of the collaboration, as well as the (in)formality

of the relationship (Bell & Baecher, 2012). This frequency-formality matrix can help educational communities to discern whether the collaboration is rooted in the community or in interpersonal relationships. Although 'organic structures' that mould to teacher relationships can be beneficial, without institutional support collaborations are vulnerable and dependent on teacher commitment (Bauler & Kang, 2020).

Another, perhaps obvious but important, point is that CLIL research could benefit more from existing research on teacher collaboration. Although CLIL has particular challenges that need to be addressed regarding teacher collaboration (see below) the observation that, 'Setting aside time and space to meet is necessary, but it does not guarantee that teachers will collaborate or establish a learning community. Other conditions must be present...' (Shank, 2006, p.712) is likely to resonate with CLIL teachers commissioned to 'collaborate'. These other conditions include daring to share doubts (Shank, 2006) and being able to encourage one another when it requires hard work and investment (Nguyen & Ng, 2020). These points are important as they acknowledge the vulnerability teachers can experience when they are facing significant changes and challenges, as in CLIL contexts. Nguyen and Ng (2020) suggest a pragmatic approach to collaboration, for example, inviting teachers to share resources and practices, to create a low threshold for establishing a collaborative relationship. In their experience, once teachers have begun to share resources and practices, they are more willing to work together to improve their response to bigger educational issues. Moreover, they found that 'contributing constructive feedback, brainstorming collectively solutions to emergent issues, and trialling alternative implementation methods' (Nguyen & Ng, 2020, p.647) helped to sustain collaborations as collaborators became increasingly interdependent and experienced a co-equal relationship. While it might be that these activities are part of CLIL teacher collaboration already, the emphasis on existing expertise being integrated in CLIL can suggest that teachers have the answers if they can only appropriately express their understanding to their collaborators. The study of Nguyen and Ng (2020), however, usefully highlights the need for teachers to develop new, shared expertise through the collaboration that goes beyond the existing expertise of all CLIL collaborators.

To-date much CLIL research on teacher collaboration relies on interview and observation data, as well as recorded conversations between teachers. Using different designs, however, can provide novel insights. In He and Lin's (2018) study a teacher educator collaborates with an enthusiastic language teacher. To the dismay of the collaborators, the students find their approach and activities demotivating and unhelpful. This response challenged the collaborators to further refine their approach and taught the teacher educator and collaborating teacher more about the practical, pedagogical demands that CLIL has to consider and meet. Another creative method that is potentially useful in the research and practice of teacher collaboration is *story-telling*. Story-telling between teachers is 'a social practice; ... a means of helping teachers understand and navigate the social and cultural contexts in which they work... in the immediate context of school life as well as in the more abstract world of educational ideas... (Shank, 2006, p.714).

Story-telling as part of CLIL collaboration should help teachers to connect as well as develop professional identities that make sense to one another. Story-telling can include stories of unexpected success as well as disappointment, stories of significant change as well as obstinate problems. Sharing stories is one way of sharing one's professional self and pedagogical thinking, as well as an opportunity to explore one's practice from different perspectives and to generate new understanding. Feldman (1999) notes that as teachers tell 'brief stories of practice, listen, question, and tell other anecdotes. Knowledge and understanding ... grow and are shared in conversations, and they carry it back to their classrooms where they try out new ideas' (p.130). Sharing stories can be complemented with *honest questions* that further enrich individual and group reflections. Honest questions are questions without 'ready answers' or implied advice (Palmer, 2017). Honest questions in CLIL collaborations could explore whether and why different activities are important or feasible, how collaborators understand from different perspectives, whether language-awareness and content-awareness are complementary and what kind of new challenges CLIL has created for teachers.

Sharing stories and asking honest questions should lead to *sustained conversations*: ‘oral inquiry processes ... which include references to life and professional experiences, students’ work and other data’ (Feldman, 1999, p.128). Sustained conversations include research activities as part of the collaborative practice of educational communities. While conversations can be inspired by shared visions, for example, the desire to improve the school environment or CLIL learning experiences, for conversations to be sustained more investment is needed. In Feldman’s (1999) study ‘food, company, and conversation’ enticed teachers to meet together and as they experienced the group as ‘a place for them to talk about their teaching concerns without the risk of disempowering feedback, they shared and generated their understandings about teaching’ (p.129). Understanding and ideas, materials and activities generated through shared stories, honest questions and sustained conversations are important resources for individual teachers as well as teacher communities. Moreover, alternative approaches to researching teacher collaboration should yield rich data for CLIL researchers and useful insights into the complexity of CLIL.

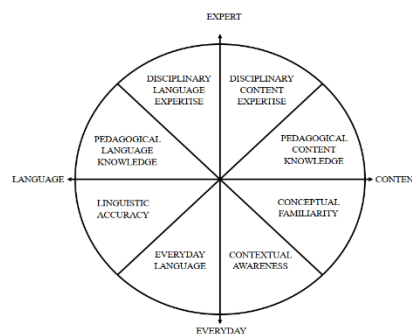


Figure 1: a CLIL pie

CLIL research could also benefit from careful scrutiny of the description of CLIL as a ‘dual focus’ approach. Arguably this description does not do justice to the significant reorientation and renegotiation required of teachers as they enter into new pedagogical practices at the edge of their existing repertoires. The everyday-expert CLIL pie presented in Figure 1 attempts to visualise the different considerations encapsulated within the dual focus. The vertical arrow indicates the presence of everyday as well as expert language and disciplinary understanding. The horizontal arrow differentiates between the focus on language and the focus on content. Each segment represents an aspect of CLIL with the uppermost segments representing language and content expertise and the lower segments representing everyday language and contextual awareness, that is awareness of how ideas and understandings can change in different settings. One mid-left segment represents understanding of language structures and appropriacy of use, and the other represents understanding of how language can be taught and used well in education. The mid-right segments recognise the difference between being familiar with a concept, such as gravity or the greenhouse effect, and knowing how to teach these concepts to students. CLIL teachers could use this kind of pie to consider how expertise is present in their community, how complex forms of knowledge can be shared and co-developed together. This CLIL-pie could also help collaborators to identify particular areas of expertise that need to be developed and this expertise needs to be strengthened from outside the community.

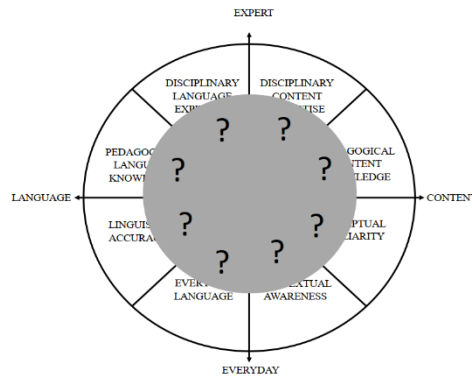


Figure 2: The CLIL challenge of foreign-language mediated teaching and learning

The final point to raise is the foreign-language mediated teaching and learning, a defining characteristic of CLIL. The CLIL umbrella usefully includes a wide-range of language-based innovations that can inform and inspire different kinds of research and development but asking ‘ordinary’ teachers to extend their responsibilities for students’ language development and subject understanding while their own resources are reduced deserves particular attention. In Figure 2, the CLIL pie is obscured and overlaid by the presence of an additional language. As existing expertise cannot be as readily assumed, important questions arise for both content and language teachers: what is the terminology for key concepts, are concepts in different languages equivalent, how can students draw on prior knowledge, where to begin? Hopefully as better understanding of the complex integration in CLIL continues to develop, CLIL teachers will be better prepared to meet these challenges. It is the integrated heart of CLIL, however, that highlights the genuine need for and value of CLIL teachers, teacher educators and researchers continuing to creatively engage in different collaborations.

Further Reading

Coyle, D., Hood, P. & Marsh, D. (2010) *Content and language integrated learning*. Cambridge University Press.

A useful publication for teachers outlining the background to CLIL as an educational innovation, key concepts that are useful for teachers to understand, as well as examples and guidelines for developing CLIL practice in different educational settings.

Nikula, T., Dafouz, E., Moore, P., & Smit, U. (Eds.). (2016). *Conceptualising integration in CLIL and multilingual education*. Multilingual Matters.

A comprehensive collection of chapters by CLIL researchers and teacher educators seeking a better understanding of the complex integration at the heart of CLIL.

Palmer, P. J. (2017). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. John Wiley & Sons.

This classic book is written for all teachers that are aware of the joys and challenges of being and teacher. Based on years of experience working with teachers, Parker J. Palmer provides useful tools and insights for collaborating in a variety of educational settings.

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