

## AN INTERVIEW WITH DO COYLE

Prof. Do Coyle antwortet im Interview auf die Fragen, wofür die 4 C's stehen und welche Bedeutung sie im (Fremd-)Sprachenunterricht haben, welche sprachlichen und didaktischen Kompetenzen CLIL an die Lehrpersonen stellt, warum auf Deeper-Learning-Methoden zu setzen ist und was aus jungen Menschen "Weltbürger" macht.

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Prof. Do Coyle ist international *die* CLIL-Expertin: Sie antwortet im Interview auf die Fragen, wofür die 4 C's stehen und welche

Bedeutung sie im (Fremd-)Sprachenunterricht haben, welche sprachlichen und didaktischen Kompetenzen CLIL an die Lehrpersonen stellt, warum auf Deeper-Learning-Methoden zu setzen ist und was aus jungen Menschen "Weltbürger" macht.

Do you think the four Cs are specific to CLIL-Teaching? Or any language teaching?

**Do Coyle:** The 4 Cs provide a reminder of the key elements we really need to take into consideration when planning CLIL activities. They provide the teacher (and learner) with an accessible reminder of the need to interlink each of the Cs in the planning (or I prefer the concept of designing) of topics, themes or learning events. But we should consider that these strands are fundamental to any kind of learning or meaning-making in which each individual needs to engage.

Meaning-making involves knowing (**content**) and thinking (**cognition**) articulated (**communication**) in ways which demonstrate intercultural awareness and subject appropriate discourse (**culture**). These processes are all about developing subject literacies.

However, the C for communication surpasses different languages since argua-

bly the way in which different meaning-making is articulated will depend to an extent on the subject itself. Since our classrooms are becoming increasingly multilingual, multicultural spaces, no longer do learners share the first language, then it is increasingly evident that the 4Cs are as applicable to L1 teaching as they are to L2, L3 and so on. Therefore, I would argue that the 4Cs are a good starting point for any good practice (any age, stage or language) and are not specific to CLIL.

What do you think are the most urgent demands for CLIL teacher training?

I presume here you are referring to initial teacher education (ITE) in CLIL. The most urgent demands fall into two distinct categories:

The first focuses on developing the linguistic competence of the teachers. I suggest that in order to have dialogic talk-oriented classrooms teachers need confidence in their own language competence.

The often-reported problem here is that tailor made CLIL language courses for potential CLIL teachers do not exist – by bespoke I mean that the way in which the language is taught to the teachers is indeed modelling CLIL practices. Depending on the language program they follow, it may be a very traditional grammar-based approach which is potentially tedious and boring with irrelevant content which makes teachers frustrated and demotivated. It does not build confidence. This is a very negative picture but I have heard lots of stories in this vein.

The second is raising pedagogic/didactic awareness and understanding of different aspects of an integrated approach to learning and the crucial role that language plays not only in communication but in learning itself – starting with concept formation, development and growth. These skills often do not lie in the repertoire of either language teachers or subject specialists so they need to be acquired and practised. However, in order to make the didactic approach accessible and desirable for teachers to spend time planning, they must define and share some key principles (which emerge from theoretical underpinning but can be short-cut here in terms of defining principles). Once the principles are in place, planning 'backwards' ensures that over a period of time those principles become 'translated' into practice through tasks design and sequencing. I call this a *theory of practice* and I would expect all stagiaires to develop a Portfolio in two parts which lasts throughout their training. One part documents their own language histories and the language experiences they bring with them and the other part is the development of their own practical tool kit based on the very principles they have articulated (with support from their trainers) and which they own.

The priority lies in enabling them, with support, to experiment CLIL lessons with real learners.

**Lately, CLIL settings have been criticized because they might not be as innovative as they pretend to be. What is your opinion? What do you observe?**

As far as I am concerned, innovative is a problematic word – it suggests newness and something that has not happened before. Others expect innovation to be

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all singing and dancing where everyone is happy and successful – i.e. the 'wow' factor.

I think if/when CLIL is truly integrated and if tasks are planned and sequenced so that deep learning occurs, then this is exceedingly but 'quietly' innovative yet it may not necessarily appear as such to an onlooker. Deep learning doesn't happen in a 'show' lesson but happens over time (i.e. in true ecological fashion). If it is successful and when learners engage in the experiences and develop the skills which evolve into them becoming plurilingual pluricultural citizens, then this is 'innovative'. Moreover, there are many approaches (e.g. task-based learning, flipped learning, dialogic learning) which can be fused together to make a powerful repertoire of learning experiences. What CLIL insists on is that explicit attention is paid to developing and extending (deepening) both content and the language. In a temporal sequence (usually over several lessons) learners may experience a wide range of approaches (some more traditional than others) but which altogether provide an extremely rich and positive experience. I observe such lessons as enabling learners to move in the direction of being self-regulated and language-aware learners, culturally sensitive to the real world.

The problem lies when teachers are not supported adequately to develop their language and pedagogic skills. In such cases I observe a lot of translation and teacher question-and-answer sequences. This practice cannot be critiqued as being poor non-innovative CLIL, because quite simply it is NOT CLIL.

**Many people think CLIL-settings are an ideal playground for "strong learners" - what is your view?**

**Is it possible for learners with a lower level of the CLIL language to be successful learners? The answer quite simply is yes (over time) but it also depends on the subject. Whatever the subject, this will require the application of confident and experimental self-evaluated pedagogic skills by the teacher to enable the learning to take place and an atmosphere of 'can-do' and 'let's get it better'.**

This premise is built on the notion that in order to do well, CLIL students need a high level of language. I would argue that even when students are advanced in the CLIL language, they still need (as indeed all learners even in L1) support to develop their linguistic skills and related cultural, creative competences. Why? Because these skills and practices are linked to concept development and deeper learning and as we advance learning we, in theory, deepen our conceptual understanding and skills.

In terms of your question – is it possible for learners with a lower level of the CLIL language to be successful learners? The answer quite simply is yes (over time) but it also depends on the subject (e.g. some subjects are more practical and visual than others). Whatever the subject, this will require the application of confident and experimental self-evaluated pedagogic skills by the teacher to enable the learning to take place and an atmosphere of 'can-do' and 'let's get it better'. Very explicit metatalk around the learning demands of CLIL needs to be transparent and worked on openly by the teachers and learners together with clear rubrics and goals. The type of tasks will need to be carefully designed to enable access, build linguistic understanding and confidence in the learners. Materials will need to be selected or designed in a more bespoke way.

When the general level of language is not very high, I also think a CLIL approach provides possibilities for less able learners to engage since making the content accessible (regardless of the language) is a prime goal. Indeed, I have seen some examples of successful CLIL with students with learning difficulties because in one sense CLIL provides added and accessible support for learning and we must stop seeing the language as a barrier.

As with any learning, the abilities, circumstances and prior experiences of the students have to be factored in but I firmly believe that CLIL is for anyone and everyone – we have as always to adjust what we do in the classroom accordingly.

**When you talk about pluri-literacies, could you please put the concept into "language for everybody"?**

Education is about preparing young people for their future lives. Because socio-economic changes are impacting our lives it is likely that our young people will (in an ideal world) need to have the skills, competences and experiences to enable them to operate and live their lives as 'global citizens'. A global citizen will need to use more than one language since multilingualism is closely related to multiculturalism, the process through which we know ourselves better through intercultural understanding learning and using other language in authentic settings. Therefore, if in our education systems we are enabling young people to become plurilingual (i.e. to use more than one language effectively – NOTE this does not mean to be trilingual or bilingual) this is already important. Using languages effectively for communicating, working and learning involves being literate in more than one language. A literate citizen is someone who can not only read and write in their first or second language but can also appreciate the power of language, the critical nature of its use in different settings and the social-cultural nuances through which to interpret and gain meaning from text (used here in the broadest sense). When this happens in more than one language (and therefore across cultures – whether these are social cultures or academic ones), this means that an individual is developing pluriliterate skills. Put simply, in our complex world, young people will need to be pluriliterate in order to become confident global citizens. As I have already emphasised, we must enable our young people to construct, interpret, critique and negotiate meaning in context-specific ways across linguistic and cultural boundaries through any written or spoken means. This is challenging but essential.