

Book Review

CLIL: Bridging the Gap Between Language and Content

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Bibliography of the reviewed book: Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D (2010). *CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Introduction

“CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning” is co-authored by Do Coyle, Philip Hood, and David Marsh and it was published in 2010 by Cambridge University Press. The book is a thorough guide to CLIL which is a method of teaching academic content in a second language. The title correctly reflects the book’s content since it gives a full examination of CLIL theory and practice alongside practical instructions on how to effectively use CLIL in various educational environments. The book is organized into eight parts; each part covers a distinct component of CLIL such as its theoretical foundations, instructional concepts, and assessment and evaluation. The book contributes significantly to the field of language education in terms of providing a detailed introduction of CLIL and its potential benefits for language and content acquisition. It is especially useful for language teachers, teacher educators, and school leaders who want to integrate CLIL into their teaching and learning practices.

Review

There are eight chapters in the book. I will convey the main themes and underline what I believe is important. The book begins with a thorough introduction to the concept of CLIL and its theoretical underpinnings. CLIL is defined by the authors as:

“CLIL is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010, p. 3).

CLIL, they explain, is built on the notion of integrating language and subject instruction rather than treating them as distinct entities. The first chapter, then, discusses the theoretical foundations of CLIL, focusing on studies from second language acquisition, bilingual education, and cognitive psychology. The authors suggest that CLIL is based on a constructivist perspective of learning that emphasizes active learning and the learner’s creation of knowledge. They also emphasize the importance of language in learning, claiming that language is more than just a tool for communication; it is also an essential component of cognition and learning. The chapter also discusses the benefits of CLIL; the authors provide research to support CLIL’s cognitive, linguistic, and academic benefits, citing studies that suggest CLIL can promote language learning, subject learning, and critical thinking skills. They reference, for example, a study conducted by Lasagabaster and Sierra (2009) which discovered that students in CLIL programs outperformed their classmates in traditional language programs in terms of language competency and topic understanding. Essentially, this chapter provides a solid theoretical framework for CLIL through which it provides data to support the benefits of CLIL and a clear and short explanation of the core concepts and principles thereof. It is a must-read for any CLIL enthusiast, whether they are teachers, teacher educators, or researchers.

The second chapter of the book delves into the pedagogical ideas that support CLIL practice. The authors stress the need for providing proper help to students when they engage in CLIL tasks, and they offer advice on

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how to scaffold effectively. This chapter's examination of the importance of tasks in CLIL is one of its strongest points. According to the authors, tasks should be constructed to support both language and subject learning, and they give examples of kinds of CLIL tasks. (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010, p. 24). The authors also reference studies that suggest task-based learning that can be effective techniques for language learning, some instances are papers of Ellis (2003) and Nunan (2004). This chapter also discusses the role of assessment in CLIL which is a crucial feature. The authors propose that assessment should be integrated into the CLIL curriculum and offer suggestions for designing and implementing successful assessment processes. They underline the need for measuring both language and topic knowledge and present examples of CLIL-appropriate assessment activities. Overall, chapter two is a good resource for CLIL-interested teachers and teacher educators. The chapter probes the pedagogical ideas that underpin CLIL practice and makes available practical advice on how to plan and deliver CLIL courses that are engaging, relevant, and effective for both language and content learning.

Then, chapter three focuses on the language learning aspects of CLIL. The authors claim that language learning is an essential component of CLIL and that students must gain the language skills required to understand the subject matter and participate in class. The chapter begins with a study of the concept of communicative competence, which draws on the work of the linguists Hymes (1971) and Halliday (1993). The authors argue that not only does communicative competence require grammatical and lexical knowledge, but also an understanding of how language is used in context. (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010, p. 36). They underline the necessity of improving students' communicative competence in both the target language and the subject area, and they provide examples of how to do so through CLIL exercises. In addition, the writers address the function of input and output in language learning, based on Swain's work (1985). They contend that in order for kids to develop their language abilities, they require both intelligible input and chances for production. They demonstrate how teachers can provide adequate input as well as chances for output in CLIL lessons. Another essential component of this chapter is its consideration of the difficulties that learners may face in CLIL, particularly those who do not speak the target language fluently. The authors offer suggestions about how to help these learners, emphasizing the significance of scaffolding and delivering appropriate feedback. Therefore, this chapter is a good resource for teachers and teacher educators interested in the language learning aspects of CLIL where the chapter goes into detail about the communicative competence and input/output principles that support language learning, as well as practical advice on how to help learners build the language skills they need to succeed in CLIL tasks.

Chapter four explores the role of content in CLIL. The authors argue that content should not be seen as a means to an end, but rather it is an essential part of the learning process. They suggest that content is not just a vehicle for language learning but a source of knowledge and understanding in its own right. They suggest that incorporating cultural material into CLIL studies can assist students in developing intercultural competence, or the capacity to communicate successfully and appropriately with people from various cultural backgrounds. (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010, p. 51). They show how teachers can incorporate cultural content into their courses by using real materials that reflect many cultural perspectives, enabling students to reflect on their own cultural backgrounds and experiences. However, the authors admit that adding cultural information into CLIL classes can be difficult. They highlight the dangers of cultural stereotyping and cultural appropriation and offer advice on how to approach cultural topics with sensitivity and respect. This part of the book is an excellent resource for teachers and teacher educators looking to include cultural content into their CLIL classes. The chapter discusses the benefits and problems of incorporating culture into CLIL in depth, as well as practical advice on how to handle cultural topics in a polite and appropriate manner.

The fifth chapter investigates the role of technology in CLIL. According to the authors, technology can improve CLIL by allowing students to access and create authentic content, collaborate with others, and gain digital literacies. The chapter opens by outlining the advantages of integrating technology in CLIL, such as providing students with access to real information and resources and allowing them to collaborate with others online. The authors also explore the difficulties associated with using technology in CLIL, such as the necessity for sufficient technical support and the risk of distraction. The authors show how technology can be used in CLIL by leveraging online resources to promote subject learning and by giving students opportunity to generate digital content. They also offer advice on how to handle technology in a meaningful and effective way, such as by establishing clear learning objectives and effectively scaffolding activities. Basically, the chapter discusses in detail the benefits and challenges of employing technology in CLIL, as well as practical advice on how to approach technology in a meaningful and effective way.

Chapter six, then, goes to discuss the role of assessment in CLIL. The authors argue that assessment is an important component of CLIL since it ensures that students are accomplishing the targeted learning outcomes and can provide valuable feedback to both students and teachers. The chapter opens by examining the advantages and disadvantages of CLIL assessment. According to them, assessment can help to enhance language development and content acquisition, but it can also be difficult due to the complexity of CLIL and the necessity to balance language and content objectives. The writers next go into how to approach assessment in a meaningful and successful way. They argue that realistic assessment tasks that mimic real-world situations can be very useful in CLIL since they promote both language and content learning. (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010, p. 82). They also stress the need of providing adequate language acquisition support, such as explicit language training and feedback. The chapter provides a full scrutiny of the benefits and problems of assessment in CLIL, as well as practical advice on how to approach evaluation in a meaningful and successful manner.

The authors then address the relevance of teacher education and ongoing professional development in CLIL in Chapter seven (7). They contend that CLIL necessitates specialized skills and expertise such as the capacity to integrate language and subject learning, scaffold instruction appropriately, and successfully assess language and content learning. CLIL teachers, according to the authors, need access to ongoing professional development opportunities, such as workshops, courses, and mentoring programs to acquire these skills and knowledge. They also stress the value of collaboration among CLIL instructors, both inside and between schools, for exchanging best practices and resolving common difficulties. The chapter details the skills and knowledge required for effective CLIL teaching, as well as practical advice on how to build these skills through continual professional development and collaboration.

Lastly in the final chapter, the authors state that good CLIL leadership entails a variety of traits, such as a clear vision for CLIL, effective communication and collaboration with teachers and other stakeholders, and a dedication to continual professional growth. They argue that CLIL leaders must have a good understanding of CLIL concepts and practices along with the ability to support teachers in effectively adopting CLIL in their classrooms. The authors advocate a variety of techniques for developing these traits, including attending professional development opportunities, engaging in ongoing reflection and self-evaluation, and developing relationships with other CLIL leaders and stakeholders. They also stress the significance of cultivating a collaborative and innovative culture in schools alongside incorporating teachers and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of CLIL programs. Overall, Chapter eight is an excellent resource for school administrators and teacher educators who want to promote and support CLIL in their classrooms. The chapter delves into the qualities of good CLIL leadership and offers practical advice on how to cultivate these traits through continual professional development and collaboration.

Conclusions

Coyle, Hood, and Marsh's book has made a significant contribution to the field of language education. It has provided an in-depth look at CLIL and its potential benefits for language and subject learning. The book is especially useful for language teachers, teacher educators, and school leaders who want to integrate CLIL into their teaching and learning activities. By offering a clear and concise introduction of CLIL and its theoretical underpinnings, the book has inspired the work of numerous experts in the field of language teaching. It provides practical assistance on how to properly integrate CLIL in various educational contexts that is beneficial to language instructors and school leaders. The book has raised new questions and provided novel answers to inspire further studies in the field of language education. It has, for example, emphasized the significance of continual professional development for CLIL instructors as well as strong leadership in promoting and supporting CLIL in schools. These additional questions and answers have helped to improve understanding of how CLIL can be effectively utilized in various educational environments. Ultimately, I would strongly recommend this book to language teachers, teacher educators, and school leaders who want to incorporate CLIL into their teaching and learning processes. The book includes significant insights into CLIL theory and practice and provides practical advice on how to effectively integrate CLIL in various educational settings.

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