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Challenges in implementing CoBI/CLIL in English Language Teaching and Learning: A Review

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ABSTRACT

“Each Day is a clean slate you start a fresh and make the most of it” is an adage in which each and every teacher who loves to take challenges has to shadow it. Planning, Execution and Assessment are the real challenges that are there before the teachers. All good teachers must be good planners. No matter whatever the subject we teach i.e. it may be Mathematics, Physics, Geography and History etc should produce language accurately. Teachers have to anticipate in advance the difficulty and understanding level of the student through that planning. It is also expected that the Teachers need to view every content lesson as a language lesson. Especially, other subject teachers can teach the content in English with proper grammar and vocabulary. Teacher needs to ask more questions in the class to encourage analytical thinking skills of a student. Recapitulate the rubrics in English as many as times till the learner understands what the facilitator’s expectation is. This paper discusses such challenges in implementing CoBI/CLIL.

Key words: Content lesson, Challenges, analytical thinking skills, grammar & vocabulary, rubric, recapitulate

Introduction

What is CLIL? CLIL means Content and Language Integrated Learning. Teaching subjects like Mathematics, History, and Geography etc through a foreign language. It is an approach learning content through the second language of the native speakers. Teachers can enlighten on both the subject and leave the essence of language in classrooms. This approach provides a greater opportunity to the students to learn a new language in advance rather than learning later. We should always remember that Content is the primary word in CLIL. Teachers of that subject have to speak more so that the students will expose to different terminology, vocabulary and grammar through listening.

According to Coyle’s 4C’s of CLIL planning lessons (Coyle, 1999) is one of the best processes,

works the best for the teachers and the students. Content, Communication, Cognition and Community go hand in hand. Selecting a lesson, teaching the students using both the languages (primary & secondary languages) is very easy to make the student understand easily. But what is the use? How can we develop the thought or need of English among the students?

As I have mentioned, a good teacher must be a good planner, create many questions. How to plan according to the need of students? How to execute in class? How to assess it?

Can I make My CLIL Class Interesting?

To answer this question being an English teacher I would say only one answer that is “YES”.

- Planning in a sequential manner plays an important role to execute well among the class
- Keeping the requirements and needs of the students in mind is also mandatory
- Segregating the whole class according to the abilities of the students and embolden them to achieve the task given.
- Design and introduce the activities among the students and elevate the competition.
- Identify the problem where they are facing while performing an activity.
- Try to give the list of different vocabulary in prior like verbal prompts.
- Giving the concept of grammar directly to the students may make them uninteresting.
- Taught the grammar accordingly in the class where the student makes mistake rather than teaching the entire grammar at a time.
- Give much space to the student to speak more in the class rather than the teacher.
- Make the student be innovative and creative throughout the session.
- Often check on Communication, collaboration, creativity, practice and feedback
- Note the achievements made by the learner, encourage and give an appreciation.
- Make the list of the problems by the learners have with content and language.
- Think about the best possible reasons for the problems.
- At last, consider even the learners feedback for whole class as well as the individual.

Challenges in CLIL: Generally, we have two counterparts to take up the challenges. One is the challenge for the teacher and the other for the learner or student.

Subject teachers: In this aspect, the subject teachers should be very confident in giving the lecture with accurate and proficient language. Because many times subject teachers start with English language and drops in the middle, starts delivering in the native language assuming that the learners are not comfortable with the foreign language.

Subject teachers have to present the content very accurately with confidence. Irrespective of the subject the teacher has been very clear with the pronunciation (neutral language). As each and every subject has its specific vocabulary which may phone similar to that of few English words have different pronunciation.

Teacher has to use appropriate classroom language keeping the future needs of a student. Generally, subject teachers may think that they have language teachers who can teach communication, grammar and vocabulary in the class. But every teacher has to aware that learning language is not an hourly based, it should be daily based. As much as the learner exposes to listen to the language with proper pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary that much he will be flexible in using the language.

Hence along with the content subject teachers are even exposing the language skills to the students for better communication & language.

Language teachers: Language teachers can teach either through CLIL based or activity based. Prior planning and executing well among the heterogeneous group, identifying the difficulties, reframing again according to the needs of the learner, encouraging and learning from each counterpart definitely a class would be a successful class and can see an utmost happy environment between the two counterparts.

Learner's challenges: At the outset teachers always concentrate on the best performers initially and identify the strugglers among that group. Now the facilitator has to make the struggler involve more in the designed activities.

Learner has to understand the concept according to the expectation of the facilitator and they should be self motivated to take up the different kind of challenges put before them.

Whatever the activity the learner takes has to think and develop critical thinking skills on the given concept.

Using bilingual strategy or approach helps the learners communicate fluently. Language plays an important role in the development of subject knowledge. Imagine a student who worked hard for the examinations, does not have the language to develop the content? Listening, Speaking, Reading

and Writing (LSRW) play an important role to discuss any subject. At the same time, a student with critical thinking will also help him to understand the concept more deeply. The classroom of CLIL connects each and every individual language to the real life through grammar, vocabulary etc.

If all the practices happen in the targeted classroom, Learner can raise doubts

- Can develop content on the given task very freely and interestingly.
- Can encourage the peer group or peers.
- Can never deviate from the focus
- If deviate continuous instructions would be there from the facilitators or from the peers

Lack of materials: Apart from planning, execution also play a vital role in the concept of CLIL. Predominantly facilitators will concentrate more only on the text books. Creating an interest among the learners one has to be advanced in planning with the required material also. Because supplements like chart paper, scissors, reading cards etc according to the need of the facilitator is also required. Daily referring the same text like Maths, History, Geography and history may not generate interest among the learners. Different activities related to the same content and concept may give much involvement of the learner in the designed classroom.

Assessment: Learners have to know the Assessment Criteria on the concept or the content that was situated before them. Facilitators have to announce before the class starts on what areas the assessment will be. CLIL assessment leads to much discussion. Now facilitators have to assess on both the language and content. Facilitators have to allow the learners to give the assessment on the peers. As CLIL promotes task-based learning, it is appropriate that the learners have the opportunity to be assessed by showing what they know and what they can do. So that the facilitator can evaluate the practice and performance level of the learner and can justify the communication skills and attitude of the learner in taking up the challenges and learning ability through critical thinking.

Can I overcome challenges as a CLIL teacher?

As a subject teacher: Using Standard English dictionaries like Advanced Learner's English Dictionary, Oxford dictionary or Cambridge English dictionary with online audio helps to listen to the exact pronunciation of the vocabulary.

Using Standard Grammar textbooks they know how to write the conditional statements in Maths grammatically? Which verb has to follow the subject or noun in other subjects? How to give grammatically valid statements?

Make sure learner has to know the functional language needed to talk about their subject area.

As a language teacher: Activity or the task that is already planned in advance has to execute well among the peers

Check for the grammar accuracy, lexical beauty and vocabulary

Analyzing the task that is executed among the peers Pros and Cons of the performed tasks have to be discussed among the peers

Assessment and feedback are mandatory

Make the student take turns more to Speak, Read and Write.

The facilitator has to plan well. Basing the learning objective and outcome each activity has to be considered. Plan according to the need of a learner. Create an interest through the activity where language acquisition has to take place more.

More worksheets and more vocabulary will help learners learn.

Picture representation or picture interpretation activities would be lively in the classrooms.

Using the internet in the classrooms also make the learner give wider scope on the given concept or topic.

Make the learner involve much in the classroom.

Prior planning, Proper execution and immediate Evaluation are the best principles for the successful learning environment.

Conclusion

"Believe in yourself, take on your challenges, and dig deep within yourself to conquer fears. Never let anyone bring you down. You got to keep going." Chantal Sutherland "Teachers can change lives with just the right mix of chalk and challenges." Joyce Meyer

Do not compare your chapter 1 to some else's chapter 20. Everyone has different experiences, different opportunities, different challenges and different lives. Introducing the methods of CLIL in the classrooms among the learners is a real challenge to the facilitators and learner. Language should be practiced in classrooms but not to be taught. Practicing Grammar and Vocabulary in each and every minute through activities and tasks no matter whether it is a Maths Class, Social Class or Science Class, will successfully help the learner to achieve the language an easy way.

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