



CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), bilingual and immersion education

[Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec 2022\)1 on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture](#)

Measures

- b. viii. promote bilingual and immersion education and content and language integrated learning (CLIL)**
- b. vii encouraging teacher collaboration across subjects and languages**
- c. iv. engaging teachers in a detailed exploration of what plurilingual and intercultural approaches to education entail in terms of classroom practice**

What it is about?

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a form of bilingual and plurilingual education in which learners study curricular subjects through an additional language, different from the language of schooling. CLIL is part of a continuum of approaches ranging from immersive models where learning takes place largely through an additional language to more flexible forms of bilingual teaching.

In line with the Recommendation, these approaches combine language learning and subject learning, strengthen learners' plurilingual repertoires and foster intercultural understanding. They also require explicit attention to the language dimension of all subjects, including subject-specific discourse genres, academic practices and ways of building knowledge (see also toolbox entry "The language(s) schooling"). By integrating cognitive challenge with language development, they enable learners to engage in critical and creative thinking across disciplines.

Why is this important and what can be done?

Bilingual education (CLIL, immersion) may pursue different aims depending on the status of the languages involved (foreign, regional, minority or migration languages) and the educational context. By using more than one language as a medium of instruction, learners not only develop competences in several languages but become aware of how language shapes knowledge and develop strategies to access and express subject content in different ways. Engaging with the same subject through more than one language also enables learners to view knowledge from multiple academic and cultural perspectives, supporting deeper learning and intercultural understanding. To achieve these benefits, links between subject content and language need to be made explicit, and effective collaboration between language teachers and subject teachers is essential. Bilingual approaches require careful curricular planning as well as sustained and systematic professional development to help teachers plan, implement and reflect on integrated language-and-content learning across the curriculum.

Council of Europe resources for policy/ decision makers

Resource 1: [Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education](#)

The Guide serves as a resource for shaping plurilingual and intercultural language education policies and for embedding such approaches across curricula. It presents key issues and principles of curriculum design from a plurilingual and intercultural perspective and explains how to identify, integrate, and sequence relevant content and goals throughout the different stages of education.

Chapters 1 and 2 offer robust conceptual and practical foundation for designing curricula that integrate content and additional language learning. The two chapters clarify aims, constructs, and curriculum approaches grounded in plurilingual and intercultural framework.

Chapter 3.9.2 (pp. 108–120), offers decision makers a clear framework for designing inclusive bilingual education across ISCED levels 0-3, showing how immersion, CLIL and other bilingual approaches can be combined in realistic, flexible and coherent curricula.

Resource 2: [A pluriliteracies approach to teaching for learning](#)

This ECML resource shows teachers and material developers ways of fostering deep learning by paying attention to the development of students' subject specific literacies as well as their conceptual understanding and automatization of subject-specific procedures, skills and strategies.

This resource extends CLIL by supporting learners in becoming effective meaning-makers through the development of subject-specific literacies across languages and cultures. It fosters deep, transferable learning and promotes responsible, globally minded citizenship. Policymakers can use this resource to *review or redesign curricula* in ways that explicitly integrate content and language objectives, ensuring inclusive, language-sensitive education. It supports system-level decisions that foster plurilingual competences, intercultural understanding, and workforce-relevant literacies.

- the [Pluriliteracies Model](#) explains the integration of deeper (content) learning and language progression.
- the section on [Implementation](#) offers strategies to align subject and language objectives.

Resource 3: [CLIL in languages other than English](#)

This ECML resource supports the development and long-term sustainability of CLIL in languages other than English (CLIL-LOTE), offering a coherent set of recommendations and examples to strengthen plurilingual and democratic competences across educational levels.

- See in particular the section on [Curriculum](#)

Council of Europe resources for teacher educators/ pedagogical advisors

Resource 1: [CLIL in languages other than English](#)

See above

Especially the sections on [Teacher Education](#) and on [Materials for the CLIL LOTE class](#).

Resource 2: [The European Framework for CLIL teacher education](#)

A conceptual framework crafted to guide the design of professional development programmes for CLIL educators. It offers overarching principles—not prescriptive mandates—emphasizing dual-focused teaching of both subject content and language.

Resource 3: [Language skills for successful subject learning - CEFR linked descriptors for mathematics and history/civics](#)

This ECML resource helps teacher educators to plan tasks and materials on how to integrate language and content objectives by raising awareness of the role of academic language in subject learning. It offers a structured framework (Planning–Teaching–Learning) and practical tools to support inclusive, language-sensitive instruction in multilingual classrooms. This resource provides a clear framework for embedding language-sensitive teaching across

subjects, supporting equity and quality in education. Its alignment with European frameworks enhances coherence across systems.

Resource 4: [Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education](#)

See above

Appendix 5 is valuable for **CLIL and immersion teacher education**, as it translates policy principles into pedagogical implications that directly support the integration of content and language learning. It highlights the competences CLIL teachers need—such as scaffolding academic language, designing cognitively challenging tasks through an additional language, and fostering collaboration between subject and language teachers—while also stressing the importance of reflective practice.

Further resources

[ECML thematic area on CLIL](#)

The website offers various tools and materials to teacher educators who want to use CLIL as a way to enhance a language sensitive approach to subject teaching in additional language(s). Another important aspect is the wealth of materials for CLIL in languages other than English. Through the areas of the website, it is possible to apply for an ECML Training and Consultancy session with experts in the field.