

Putting CLIL into practice: plan a DNL lesson in four steps

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STEP ONE

Devise the learning objectives for a DNL lesson by using *cognitive discourse functions* (CDFs) (see Table 1). Use the verbs in the ‘members’ column to describe the thinking in your subject that learners are learning to do in the lesson. Use the following sentence stem for a learning objective: *By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to...*

Table 1

List of CDF categories, underlying communicative intentions and their members

CDF Type	Label	Communicative intention	Members
1	<i>Categorise</i>	I tell you how we can cut up the world according to certain ideas.	Classify, compare, contrast, match, structure, categorise, subsume
2	<i>Define</i>	I tell you about the extension of this object of specialist knowledge.	Define, identify, characterise
3	<i>Describe</i>	I tell you details of what can be seen (including metaphorically).	Describe, label, identify, name, specify
4	<i>Evaluate</i>	I tell you what my position is vis à vis X.	Evaluate, judge, argue, justify, take a stance, critique, recommend, comment, reflect, appreciate
5	<i>Explain</i>	I give you a reason for and tell you the cause of X.	Explain, reason, express, cause/effect, draw conclusions, deduce
6	Explore	I tell you something that is potential.	Explore, hypothesise, speculate, predict, guess, estimate, stimulate, take other perspectives
7	Report	I tell you about something external to our immediate context on which I have a legitimate knowledge claim.	Report, inform, recount, narrate, present, summarise, relate

Note: Reprinted from: “A construct of cognitive discourse functions for conceptualising content-language integration in CLIL and multilingual education” by C. Dalton-Puffer, 2013, *European Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 1(2), 216–253 (pp.234–235) (<https://doi.org/10.1515/eujal-2013-0011>), with revision of CDF ‘categorise’ in line with Evnitskaya & Dalton-Puffer (2023). Copyright 2013 and 2023 by C. Dalton-Puffer.

STEP TWO

Plan a sequence of learning backwards from the learning objectives you have formulated. In other words, what are the stages and tasks that are needed to achieve the learning objectives? How does the sequence start, and what assumptions can you make about the learners' prior knowledge? Sequence the learning using the 'three-course meal' lesson shape and the directions for planning progression across the "main course" phase (see Table 2). Keep your focus on learning as a process of internalisation of subject conceptual knowledge and the automatisisation of skills.

Table 2

The "Three-Course Meal" Lesson Shape

Starter	<i>Activating prior knowledge/experience of language and/or subject content</i> Orientate the learners; stimulate curiosity; frame the learning; share learning objectives ↓
Main course(s)	<i>Sequencing learning...</i> > from general ideas to specific concepts... > from surface to consolidation to transfer... > from lower order thinking to higher order thinking... > from word level to sentence level to text level... <i>with tasks that build on each other...</i> (e.g. pre-reading task(s)...while reading task(s)...post-reading task(s)) <i>each task broken down into steps (with language support)</i> ↓
Dessert (or plenary)	<i>Reflection task(s)</i> (e.g., review the learning objectives)

STEP THREE

Give primacy to tasks. Think of the learning sequence as a smart pinball machine and plan for multiple “learning-hits”. For example, in order for learners to learn new language, they must encounter this language and use it in multiple ways. Likewise, for learners to learn new concepts in your subject, they must encounter and use these concepts in multiple ways. Plan mindful and meaningful repetition of key language and concepts so that learners encounter and use this language and the concepts in different ways. Use the ideas for general task types in Table 3.

Table 3

General task types for CLIL

Listing tasks (e.g. brainstorming)
Ordering & sorting tasks (e.g. sequencing, ranking, classifying)
Matching tasks (e.g. connecting and relating)
Comparing tasks (e.g. finding similarities and/or differences)
Problem-solving tasks
Creative tasks
Projects (e.g. cross-curricular projects)

Be mindful of cognitive load. Break tasks down into steps; plan when to separate learning in the linguistic dimension from the conceptual dimension. For example, learners may need to encounter and use key language before going deeper into the conceptual dimension.

Design tasks with the four drivers of deep learning in mind: affect, engagement, mastery and reflection (see Table 4).

Table 4*Driving deep learning through CLIL*

<i>Affect is driven by...</i>	> making the purpose of tasks clear > visual representations to guide understanding of lesson input > activating creativity and curiosity with open and stimulating questions > collaborative tasks > discussions that include talking about feelings and personal experiences
<i>Engagement is driven by...</i>	> language support > visual organisers for organising ideas and notes > group tasks, discussions, time for questions and clarification > stretching and challenging learning through higher order thinking and tasks that develop critical thinking > opportunities for learners to give feedback on their learning (with teacher acting on this feedback)
<i>Mastery is driven by...</i>	> encountering and using concepts and key language in multiple ways > connecting new concepts to prior knowledge; applying new knowledge > breaking down complex tasks
<i>Reflection is driven by...</i>	> opportunities for learners to undertake planning for a task > opportunities for self- and peer-assessment > including reflection focused tasks within a sequence of learning

STEP FOUR

Plan for moments of contingency (Table 5) and use the three questions and seven building blocks for responsive teaching (see Table 6). Enable learners to generate evidence of their learning in different ways so that you then have opportunities to check learning and give your learners feedback to help them move forward in their learning.

Table 5*Planning moments of contingency*

Proactive planning	Interactive planning	Retroactive planning
Creating a classroom culture in which <i>learners are responsible for their learning</i> .	Identifying and responding to learners' needs <i>during the lesson</i> .	Takes place <i>after the lesson</i> has been taught. It involves planning for the next lesson or for a unit of work based on the formative-assessment outcomes of a lesson.
Enabling responsive teaching through lesson planning		
• Foster learner responsibility through self- and peer-assessment opportunities. • Help learners recognise that they are able to help each other with their learning through cooperative learning tasks.	• Provide opportunities for learners to produce evidence of their learning in different ways.	• Include a starter phase in the lesson in which prior knowledge and learning from previous lessons can be activated, recapped and consolidated.

Table 6*Responsive teaching questions and building blocks*

Questions	Building blocks
<i>Where are my learners going in their learning?</i>	1. Learning objectives that describe new knowledge, understanding and skills or changes in attitudes, and success criteria to help show learners what successful achievement of a learning objective looks like. 2. Examples of successful learning, and modelling of specific skills.
<i>Where is each learner now in their learning?</i>	3. Starter phases that activate prior knowledge & plenaries to review the learning. 4. Questions that help teachers to find out how much their learners understand, and to encourage and prompt further learning to deepen understanding. 5. Discussions — purposeful discussion tasks based on open and stimulating questions or problems to think about provide a window into learners' thinking. Discussions can also stimulate higher order thinking that helps to deepen understanding. 6. Self- & peer-assessment that involve learners in assessment and encourage learners to help each other with their learning.
<i>How do I help a learner move forward in their learning?</i>	7. Feedback as part of a formative process. Three types: • Feed-up ensures that learners understand the purpose of the assignment, task, or lesson (learning objectives), including how they will be assessed (success criteria); • Feedback provides learners with information about their successes and needs; • Feed-forward identifies the next step in the learning and how to get there.

Additional practical tips for putting CLIL into practice

- Provide opportunities for languaging and translanguaging: plan for learner interaction and discussion, including pair or small group work and collaborative tasks. Support learner spoken output with speaking frames; support their writing across word, sentence and text levels with writing frames.
- When using texts in your lessons, simplify form and apply easification devices to adapt texts to the level of the learners and to guide their understanding (Table 7).
- Foster critical reflection through reflective learning tasks, particularly at the end of a lesson; focus on supporting learner reflection with guidance and through an emphasis on dialogue.
- Think about how your lessons help induct learners into the culture of your subject and the ways experts in the subject think, communicate and behave.

Table 7

Strategies for Adapting Texts

Simplify form by...	Apply easification by...
• restricting general academic language (e.g. paraphrase or use synonyms). • modifying syntax (e.g. reduce the use of subordinate clauses and passives). • shortening the text (e.g. omit unnecessary detail).	• reorganising the rhetorical structure of the text (e.g. make the purpose of the text clearer by showing the key points made in the text at the start). • using visual support (e.g. pictures, diagrams, graphic organisers) to guide understanding of terms and concepts. • adding cohesive devices to the text (e.g. headings, sub-headings, numbering, bullet points, highlighting topic sentences in paragraphs). • inserting pre-reading questions to activate learner thinking about the topic and questions alongside the text to prompt and guide thinking while reading.

Recommended further reading:

- Ball, P., Kelly, K., & Clegg, J. (2015). *Putting CLIL into Practice*. Oxford University Press
- Coyle, D., & Meyer, O. (2021). *Beyond CLIL: Pluriliteracies Teaching for Deeper Learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Fletcher-Wood, H. (2018). *Responsive Teaching: Cognitive Science and Formative Assessment in Practice*. Routledge.