Developing O'Clils with very young learners

by Carme Flores and Cristina Corcoll



Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a content-based approach well-known by all language teachers nowadays. The concept of **Outdoor CLIL at School (O'CLILS)** develops from the former and tries to implement the basic features of CLIL in new contexts that go beyond the classroom. Infant Education seems to us the most appropriate context to develop O'CLILS, as there are many educational moments that are part of the very young learners' daily lives at the school that take place outside the classroom, and which provide very good opportunities for immersion.

In effect, infant school educational time and space open their limits in terms of communication, as there are many possibilities for interaction among children and teachers apart from the classroom. The playground, the corridor, the dining room or even the bathroom can become very rich settings

for content development and natural exchanges in an additional language, especially as regards habits and play (Corcoll & Flores, 2009).

Moments such as lunch time, playground time, and tidy up time, for instance, offer new possibilities for real and meaningful communication. In all these cases, the purpose should be the use of the additional language together with other languages in a context where the teacher guides the children, plays with them, joins in their games and in their actions in a more or less active way, using information talk when necessary, whilst showing, listening or observing as well.

Children will eventually start using words and expressions from the additional language for their real interactions. We are talking about Outdoor CLIL at School, CLIL beyond the Infant Education classroom.

Even though O'CLILS is a methodological proposal to

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be carried out outside the classroom, it is still implemented in an educational context. This is the reason why it is important to make clear connections between O'CLILS and the Curriculum, as we believe that teaching through O'CLILS is *still* teaching practice.

O'CLILS AND THE CURRICULUM

The new curriculum for Infant Education (3-6) states the following: "També caldrà desenvolupar actituds positives vers la pròpia llengua i la dels altres, despertant sensibilitat i curiositat per conèixer-ne d'altres, així com una primera aproximació, especialment en el darrer curs del cicle, a l'ús oral d'una llengua estrangera" (DOGC, 2008). This first approach can be understood as a new possibility to start living the language, a language that goes beyond the classroom and can serve the same purposes as the languages spoken at home1. The language will encompass the development of other capacities throughout all educational moments and spaces. Those capacities will interrelate to provide progressive learning and, consequently, the children's integral growth. Autonomy, communication, discovery, awareness, initiative and cooperation will become fundamental axes around which the aims and contents from the three areas of knowledge and experience will be globally developed. It is this integration of content and "real" communicative opportunities that makes O'CLILS an interesting methodological proposal to complement the immersion time of the formal classroom setting. In all educational moments and spaces available at school, we will need to make sure that our proposals cater for children's needs by developing their capacities2.

In order to get the best out of O'CLILS, the English teacher involved will surely find him/herself putting into practice the communicative strategies that are at the core of Additional Language Didactics. In this sense, language teachers will be able to use their expertise in different contexts.

HOW LANGUAGE DIDACTICS CAN HELP DEVELOP O'CLILS

Some of the teaching strategies that will surely play a role are the following: Language repetition and recycling: One of the most important aspects of teaching an additional language is related to repetition. The teacher needs to find different strategies, different times, different contexts, where the repetition of language is appropriate and meaningful. Only repetition will allow the children to acquire (passively, at first) and produce the language. In this sense, teaching through a routine easily provides for the meaningful repetition that the language requires.

Use of information talk and language expansion: Information talk will very often take the form of describing the actions undertaken by children. that is, the teacher will be putting into words the activities, games or processes in which they are involved. Children will benefit effortlessly from this contextualized input provided by the teacher. Furthermore, the language teacher will always be looking for effective ways to introduce more language or to establish connections between previous knowledge and potential things to be learnt. Establishing a relationship with the children in which the teacher accompanies them through a routine that allows them to acquire a habit, to experiment (with water, with soap, with sand, with a mirror...), to consolidate the process, etc. will inevitably bring new opportunities for the language, as the children's participation will be more spontaneous and enriching.

Integrating children's oral production: A change of scenery or a change of goals will bring with it innumerable possibilities for conversation with the children. If these are welcomed and promoted by the teacher, many possibilities for teaching will open. Clearly, this means that the teacher needs to feel at ease with the language and also ready to adapt to the interests shown by the children.

Rephrasing and recasting: These two strategies characterize language teacher talk. Rephrasing involves one language and is used by the teacher when a child produces something orally in English, making a mistake that the teacher feels needs to be corrected. The best way to express what the child has produced and wants to communicate will be provided. Recasting involves translating into English what the child has produced in the L1. Since conversations during an O'CLILS moment (even if spontaneous, and therefore impossible to plan) will be possibly repeated by many of the children, rephrasing and recasting become really

¹ See Desplegament del Currículum i la Programació al Segon Cicle de l'Educació Infantil (June, 2009).

² As will be exemplified in the following section, the ten basic capacities listed in the curriculum can be developed in an O'CLILS context in diverse ways.

communicative, more interesting and probably more useful than in the more traditional class-room context

Use of L1 and codeswitching: As a natural and spontaneous communicative space, in O'CLILS, children will use their L1s (which will be accepted by the teacher) and, eventually, will start using codeswitching. As Flores & Corcoll (2008) state, when this happens, children are developing their own interlanguage, which is "a very peculiar interlanguage because it shows that there has been a very similar process of acquisition to that of the mother tongue but it also incorporates the already acquired mother tongue". The acceptance and even promotion of this type of interlanguage³ makes sense in the present European context, where, on the one hand, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) deals with language teaching as focusing on developing communicative skills, plurilingualism, intercultural competence and mediation.

Use of visual aids: The language teacher knows how powerful and necessary visual support is in the language classroom. Furthermore, the language teacher also knows that out of the range of visual elements that can be used (flashcards, photographs, toys, etc.), real objects, or realia, are probably the ones that interest children the most. Making use of spaces in the school other than the classroom brings with it the possibility of using the objects, the pieces of furniture, etc. that we will find there. In the playground, we will inevitably find sand, a slide or a bucket. In the bathroom, we will inevitably find a mirror, soap or a towel. The idea is that these objects can easily and effectively become our visual support and thus interest children as soon as they are introduced with another name, in another language. With older children, another support that may be used is language sequences, which can be placed in strategic places and on cards where children can read the sequence they are supposed to follow and see the picture that describes the action. In turn, this will help children use this resource to learn autonomously and also to help classmates.

Modeling: Very often the language teacher uses modeling to support the linguistic message. However, when the action that needs to be modeled requires objects or elements that

are not present in a classroom, it is sometimes difficult for teachers to make themselves understood. In O'CLILS, modeling (for instance, how to turn on the tap in the bathroom) for the children to understand the meaning of these words becomes evident and easily understandable.

Creating meaningful learning contexts: What can be more meaningful for a child than following a routine that, as they have been taught, needs to be done before moving on to something else, i.e. going for lunch? The aim is clear, and so will the process be, eventually.

Promoting global learning: By taking the children outside the classroom, giving them tasks to fulfill and responsibilities to develop, opening up new venues, we are clearly creating opportunities for new connections to develop, new questions to be asked, new experiences to be lived.

New role for the English specialist teacher: If we believe in the benefits of introducing the additional language as naturally as possible in the lives of young learners, routines will also be very interesting moments to take advantage of. It is also relevant to note that, by inviting the English specialist teachers to participate in these moments, we are also giving them a new role to play in front of the children, the role of a teacher (who will make use of his/her specialized knowledge, of course) participating in an everyday task. This will have several positive consequences: first, it will help strengthen the relationship between the children and the specialist teacher4; second, it will show the children how the additional language can be used in real contexts that go beyond the classroom and the activities that are typically carried out in it; third, it will allow the teacher to benefit from everything that characterizes routines, i.e. they are context-bound, they are carried out daily, they are meaningful for the children, they allow for language repetition and recycling, among others.

This new role is also going to bring as a welcome consequence the need for greater coordination among teachers, and this coordination "should not be limited to the team of class teachers giving information on the topics that will be covered so that the specialist teacher can design parallel sessions; this coordination should mean developing a joint project that integrates all the activities in order to attain joint aims" (Flores & Corcoll, 2008).

³ Without forgetting that this will in turn gradually lead to a greater use of the additional language.

⁴ As Flores & Corcoll (2008) state "English teachers in Infant Education need to know what it is like to be a child if they want to ensure the global approach that the stage requires. One of the main difficulties specialist teachers have when they enter a classroom is their lack of knowledge of the abilities, instincts and needs that children from 3 to 5 may have". Giving the specialist teachers the chance to spend O'CLIL moments with the children will help them with this purpose.

IMPLEMENTING O'CLILS: A NEW PROPOSAL FOR THE SCHOOL LANGUAGE PROJECT

We would like to present an example of how O'CLILS could be implemented in Catalan or Spanish educational settings. Our intention is not to provide a rigid sequence nor a compulsory implementation of the "whole pack", but, on the contrary, one should feel free to try what could really work in her/his school, adapting and changing when necessary. Limitations in terms of human resources, immersion time and school organization, among others, should not prevent us from finding opportunities for taking advantage of O'CLILS potential.

Children have more language available that can be used in the different communicative moments lunch provides, from nutrition aspects to good manners, from expressing likes and dislikes to telling friends about their favourite TV programme.

Playground Time⁶ is the O'CLILS moment that may grow with children for the three years, because free time, such as the time spent in the playground, may provide the perfect conditions where all languages, verbal and non-verbal, music, art and maths come together naturally. No pressure, unlimited opportunities for imagination, playing and having fun, each child in his/her way. They choose, they decide.

Despite the proposal presented above, we also believe that each of the different O'CLILS moments could be

INFANT EDUCATION LEVELS ⁴	ENGLISH CLASS	O'CLILS
P3	LENGTH OF SESSION:	SNACK TIME
	TIMES PER WEEK:	TIMES PER WEEK:
P4	LENGTH OF SESSION:	TOILET TIME
	TIMES PER WEEK:	TIMES PER WEEK:
P5	LENGTH OF SESSION:	LUNCH TIME
	TIMES PER WEEK:	TIMES PER WEEK:
P3 + P4 + P5	LENGTH OF SESSION:	PLAYGROUND TIME
	TIMES PER WEEK:	TIMES PER WEEK:

O'CLILS moments will be provided at a regular basis from year one (P3) as a complement to English classes. Frequency is an aspect that needs to be decided, for English classes and for O'CLILS. Our suggestion is that for O'CLILS a minimum of 3 days should be guaranteed. The optimal frequency would be 5 days.

Our sequence places *Snack Time* as the first O'CLILS moment. Children are beginning to recognize and feel responsible for their own things. They become aware of the different moments at school and identify the snack routine as a relaxing time before leaving after a whole day at school. *Toilet Time* is our suggestion for P4, once the children are getting better at hygiene habits. For P5 we think *Lunch Time* would be ideal.

adapted to any level in Infant Education. As long as we are aware of the children's needs depending on their age, Toilet Time, for instance, could be designed for P3 or Snack Time for P5. Another possibility could be to decide on the same O'CLILS moment for all Infant Education, as we have suggested with Playground Time. In doing so, however, one needs to take into account that the language being used throughout the three years will always relate to the specific O'CLILS option and will evolve together with children's abilities. The aim is that English, Catalan and Spanish among other verbal languages can find common meeting points where interaction, content development and communication can take place naturally. This is why we suggest different O'CLILS proposals for each year. Alternating O'CLILS moments allows us to provide di-

⁵ If circumstances allow, this sequencing could include previous years.

⁶ For more details on *Playground Time*, see Corcoll and Flores (2009)



ferent contexts and to reap benefits from previous O'CLILS experiences by recycling language in the different opportunities we have to communicate with the children.

DIDACTIC EXPLOITATION: SNACK TIME AND TOILET TIME

We would like to finish this article by including the specification of two O'CLILS proposals, *Snack Time* for P3 and *Toilet Time* for P4. They have been designed to provide clearer guidelines for O'CLILS implementation, an approach that we feel can be an effective and meaningful way to enhance plurilingualism from very early years.

SNACK TIME (3-YEAR-OLDS)

Snack Time is the afternoon period in which children finish playing in the playground, return to their classrooms, collect their things and have their snack. They have a few minutes to relax before saying goodbye and going home. During this time, the following contents and resources may be addressed:

Contents (non-linguistic)

Back to the classroom!

- Finding our classmates and getting together.
- Going to the classroom (making a train, we are taxi drivers!, jumping frogs...)

- Singing and chanting
- · Washing hands and drinking water

School bags and tidying up

- Remembering what we need to take home everyday
- Putting our plastic glass, bib and agenda into our school bags
- Taking off our smocks, unbuttoning our smocks
- Asking for help (a child unbuttoning his/her mate's smock)
- · Becoming aware of clothing needs

Eating our snack

- · Giving out the afternoon snack
- Showing politeness
- Using paper bin, organic bin and/or waste bin
- Asking for more bread, milk, cheese...
- Asking for help (removing the aluminum foil from the cheese, the quince jelly...)
- Using the napkin
- Returning the cloth bread bag to the kitchen
- Showing likes and dislikes about snack food

Free time and good bye

Listening to a story/song

- · Drawing on the blackboard
- Going to the class library and choosing a book to "read"
- · Singing and chanting
- Dancing
- · Looking at and talking about classroom displays
- Saying good-bye and celebrating the end of the school day

Contents (non-linguistic)

Back to the classroom!

- Where is Pau/Júlia/...?
- Let's go, penguins (class name)!
- Let's make a train!
- · Let's drive our taxi!
- Get in line to go to the classroom
- Hold hands!

School bags and tidying up

- Remember what we need to put in our school bags
- What do we need?
- Plastic glass, bib and agenda
- Hang your playground jumpers on your hangers
- Can you help me, please?
- Do you want me to help you?
- It's difficult
- I can / I can't
- · Leave your playground
- · Take your jacket! It's cold outside
- Leave your school bag and jacket behind your place / hang your school bag and jacket on your chair

Eating our snack

- Today our snack is..... bread and cheese! / bread and chocolate! / milk and biscuits! /...
- I'm hungry! I'm very hungry!
- I like it! / I don't like it!
- · Delicious!
- Enjoy your snack!
- Thank you!

- · Here it is!
- Do you want some more?
- Can I have some more?
- It's Sara's birthday! Let's eat your birthday cake, Sara!
- You can throw the aluminum foil away in the waste bin
- Use your napkin / remember to use your napkin
- You can throw your napkin away in the organic bin
- Can you help me, please?
- Could you take the bread bag back to the kitchen, Marta?
- Look at your face. It's got chocolate all over it! Try to use your napkin.
- Snack food: bread, biscuits, cheese, quince jelly, chocolate, fruit (apple, banana, pear...), ham, butter, cupcakes, birthday cake...

Free time and good -bye

- Do you want to listen to a story / a song?
- Come on, everybody, sit at your place
- What are you drawing on the blackboard, Joan?
- It's a...
- Beautiful picture!
- Go to the class library and choose a book
- Which book did you take, Imma?
- You can share it
- Do you want to dance with me?
- Move your body!
- · Shake it, shake it
- I like your art work!
- Whose is this picture?
- It's Marta's
- Did you paint it with your fingers?
- Yes
- What colour is this?
- Happy birthday, Sara!
- Let's sing her the happy birthday song
- Good-bye! Have a nice day/evening!
- · Give me a kiss!

Songs and Chants

El que m'agrada per berenar És pa amb xocolata, és pa amb xocolata. El que m'agrada per berenar És pa amb xocolata sense pa. Si us plau, doneu-me xocolata, xocolata, xocolata Si us plau, doneu-me xocolata, xocolata per berenar	I really like some bread and chocolate, bread and chocolate, bread and chocolate. I really like some bread and chocolate, bread and chocolate without bread. Oh, please, give me some more chocolate, some more chocolate, some more chocolate, some more chocolate, some more chocolate. Some more chocolate, some more chocolate. It's snack time!
Volem pa amb oli. Pa amb oli volem. Volem pa amb oli. Pa amb oli volem. Volem pa amb oli. Pa amb oli volem. Si no ens en donen, si no ens en donen No callarem.	We are ready for snacktime. We are ready to eat. We are ready for snacktime. We are ready to eat. We are ready for snacktime. We are ready to eat. Please give us something, please give us something That we can eat. or We want bread and butter. Bread, butter and ham. We want bread and butter. Bread, butter and ham. We want bread and butter. Bread, butter and ham. If you don't give us, if you don't give us We're going to cry.
Oh-la-rà tinc gana. Oh-la-rà tinc fam, tinc fam, Oh-la-rà tinc gana. Oh-la-rà tinc fam, tinc fam. Oh-la-rà tinc gana. Oh-la-rà tinc fam, tinc fam. Oh-la-rà tinc fam, tinc fam. Oh-la-rà tinc gana i fam.	Oh-la-rai I'm hungry. Oh-la-rai it's time, it's time. Oh-la-rai I'm hungry. Oh-la-rai it's time, it's time. Oh-la-rai I'm hungry. Oh-la-rai it's time, it's time. Enjoy your snack time with a smile. We all like to sing and play
	And have fun every day <u>Juice</u> and (fill in snack) for our treat, Now it's time (for us) to eat.

RESOURCES

√ Visuals:

http://www.madeformums.com/uploads/images/Large/6747.jpg

http://picasaweb.google.com/lh/photo/bxpPZcJ9OA G-aiYX0qi4Lq

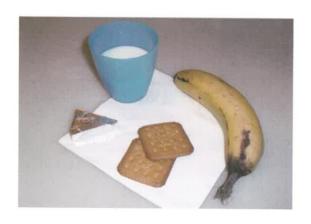
Cousins, L. (2001) *Snacktime, Maisy!* Candlewick Press

Cousins, L. (2009) Maisy goes to Preschool. Candlewick Press

 \checkmark Language sequences (on cards, together with picture)

 \checkmark Places involved: classroom, corridor, playground...

 \checkmark Objects involved: school bag, bib, plastic glass, agenda, smock, jacket, playground jumper, napkin, classroom displays, bins, cloth bread bag, blackboard and chalk, books, songs and stories, CDs...



 $\sqrt{\text{Snack food: biscuits, cheese, quince jelly, chocolate, fruit (apple, banana, pear...), ham, butter, cupcakes, birthday cake...$

 $\sqrt{}$ Possible extension: storytelling time contents, shapes, other food, other table sets (fork, plate, spoon, mug...), toilet time contents...

TOILET TIME (4-year-olds):

Toilet Time may be placed before or after lunch. It is the moment when children go to the bathroom, wash hands, have some water, etc. They are working autonomously on hygiene habits. During this time, the following contents and resources may be addressed:

Contents (non-linguistic)

Let's go to the bathroom!

- · Making a line
- Going to the classroom (making a train, we are taxi drivers!, jumping frogs...)
- · Singing and chanting
- Who goes first?

Going to the bathroom

- · Remembering what needs to be done
- Doing a wee, a poo, wiping one's bottom (asking for help from the teacher)
- Flushing
- Pulling pants and panties up

Washing hands

- Taking soap
- Turning on the tap
- Washing hands
- Turning off the tap
- Drying hands
- If drying with paper, using waste bin; if using towel, putting it back on the hook



Getting some water

- Taking the glass
- Turn on the tap
- Fill the glass
- Have a drink
- · Put the glass back on the shelf

Contents (linguistic)

- · Let's go to the bathroom!
- Let's go, penguins (class name)!
- · Let's make a train!
- · Let's drive our taxi!
- · Get in line to go to the classroom
- Hold hands!
- Who goes first? Who is next?
- Me! I'm first!

Going to the bathroom

- Ok, remember what we need to do
- Pants and panties down
- · Be careful, carefully
- Do a wee, a poo
- Take some toilet paper
- Wipe your bottom
- Can you help me, please?
- Flush the toilet
- · Pants and panties up
- It's difficult (R+P)
- I can / I can't R+P)

Washing hands

- Take some soap, some soap for you
- Turn on the tap

Is the water cold?

- Be careful, don't splash
- Wet your hands, wash your hands
- Scrub your hands! They are dirty!
- Rinse your hands!
- Excellent, very clean hands!
- Turn off the tap

- Dry your hands with some paper
- Do you need some more?
- Put the paper in the waste bin
- Well done!
- Dry your hands with your towel
- Here it is!
- Can you help me, please? (R+P)



Getting some water

- Take your glass/cup
- What a beautiful glass!
- Whose is the blue glass?
- Turn on the tap
- Fill the glass carefully
- Do not fill it too much
- Have a drink
- Put the glass back on the shelf
- Can you help me?
- Do you need help?
- This is not the right place, this is Jordi's

Songs and Chants

	This is the way I wash my hands, wash my hands, wash my hands This is the way I wash my hands, Early in the morning
Tinc un pipí ⁴ A punt de sortir Mestre si us plau On és l'orinal?	Got a wee-wee Ready to leave Miss, please, please Where is the pot?
A veure les mans? Ui que brutes! Que les anem a rentar? Les mans sota l'aixeta Les frego amb el sabó Amb aigua ben fresqueta Mira què netes! Ara per sobre Ara la cara Les galtes i les celles El front i el nassarró Amb aigua ben fresqueta Mira què neta! A eixugar amb la tovallola	Show me your hands! Uggh! They are dirty! Let's wash them! Place hands under the tap And wash them well with soap Wash them with cool water Oh, they are so clean! Now the other side Now your face Wash your cheeks and eyebrows And your forehead and nose Wash them with cool water Oh, it is so clean! Let's dry with the towel
Netejarem el cul Amb una tovallola Pomada perfumada D'aquella que t'agrada Una mica per aquí, una mica per allà Que aquest culet petit té ganes de jugar	Let's wipe your little bottom With a wet towel And nice smelling cream That you like so much A little bit here, a little bit there This little bottom wants to go and play

RESOURCES

√ Language sequences (on cards, together with picture):

Lift the toilet bowl up – pull pants and panties down – do a wee – wipe your bottom – throw paper in toilet - pull pants and panties up – flush the toilet – wash your hands

Wet your hands - get soap - scrub -rinse -dry

Get your glass - turn on the tap - fill your glass - turn off the tap - drink - put your glass in its place



√ Visuals:

http://www.lea.za.org/aboutus.html

"Maisy goes to bed" *Bedtime and other stories*. DVD. Universal, 1998/9.

 $\sqrt{\mbox{Places involved: classroom, (corridor), bathroom (toilet, sink)}}$

 $\sqrt{\text{Objects involved: soap, towel, glass, mirror, toilet roll, children's photographs...}}$

√ Possible extension: combing hair, using cologne, washing face, brushing teeth, playing with the mirror...

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