

# A CLIL Model for Generalist Teacher Education Cultivation

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**Abstract:** In the context of globalization, education must adapt to foster skills such as cross-cultural communication, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which merges language learning with subject instruction, has emerged as a potent strategy to address these demands. This study explores the viability of CLIL in preparing college students majoring in Primary General Education for teaching roles in rural Chinese primary schools. By focusing on the role of generalist teachers in rural elementary schools, the research promotes a CLIL model for generalist teacher education cultivation and underscores CLIL's potential to improve educational quality and equity in China. It seeks to contribute to educational reform efforts, enhance teacher professional development, and elevate student achievement, thereby advancing educational fairness and excellence in a globalized era.

**Keywords:** CLIL; Generalist Teachers Cultivation; Teacher Professional Development

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Since Marsh's seminal introduction of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which underscores the synergistic teaching approach integrating content with linguistic development (Coyle,2007), there has been a continuous and comprehensive enhancement in CLIL methodology research landscapes. Following the establishment of the conceptual framework for CLIL by Coyle, this pedagogical approach has witnessed further dissemination and application globally, particularly within educational paradigms emphasizing interdisciplinary integration and the cultivation of comprehensive competencies (Dalton,2011). The essence of this teaching philosophy, centered on the integration of content and linguistic skills, provides a methodological foundation for the synthesis of multidisciplinary knowledge (Marsh,2013). Consequently, the training programs for elementary school teachers in China's new era are closely aligned with the principles of CLIL, underscoring the necessity not only for mastery over traditional subjects but also for competencies across interdisciplinary teaching design, evaluation, research, and innovation (Lo and Lin,2019). Based on the previous study, this research resonates with the core tenets of CLIL, aiming at fostering holistic professional development in teachers and enhance students' overall quality through the symbiosis of subject knowledge and language proficiency.

Based on a meticulous review of literature combined with the integration of disciplinary knowledge acquisition and second language learning advantages within the primary school generalist teacher education system, this study proposes a CLIL model for generalist teacher education aimed at enhancing the future teachers' pedagogical competencies and cross-cultural communication skills.

## 1. Theoretical Foundation

### 1.1 Theory of Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences asserts that individuals possess a diverse array of intellectual capacities beyond those assessed by conventional measures of intelligence. Gardner's theory expands intelligences to the areas such as spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligence, each impacting learning differently. The CLIL model

embraces Gardner's theory, using it to structure activities like text analysis, logical puzzles, and visual aids to create an inclusive learning environment. By incorporating the multiple intelligences theory, educators can tailor instruction to individual students, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and socio-emotional growth while enhancing teaching practices' adaptability and diversity (Nget,2020) .

## **1.2 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes the communicative function and practicality of language learning, fostering a learning environment where students develop language proficiency through real-life language usage situations (Hien,2021). CLT stresses practical application rather than abstract knowledge acquisition, and in the design of classroom activities, it promotes interaction among students to enhance their language communication abilities (Shahid, Abbasi and Bhutto, 2022).

## **2. Core principles**

### **2.1 Dual emphasis on subject content and language objectives**

CLT places importance on concurrently establishing subject content objectives and language learning objectives (Savignon, 2005). This approach ensures that students can effectively enhance their language proficiency while studying subject matter. For example, by selecting relevant subject content, teachers can design activities that enable students to improve language expression skills through discussions and articulation of viewpoints, while also reinforcing their understanding of the subject matter.

### **2.2 Interdisciplinary themes**

The adoption of interdisciplinary themes is a key feature of communicative language teaching, such as environmental science, sociology, and the arts. These themes not only cover knowledge points from multiple disciplinary domains but also provide rich language learning materials and contexts (Savignon, 2005). In such scenarios, in addition to learning the relevant subject matter, students can enhance their language expression and language application abilities through participation in discussions and activities related to interdisciplinary themes.

## **3. Teaching Strategies**

### **3.1 Task-based learning**

Incorporating task-based learning strategies, such as project work and problem-solving tasks, align closely with both CLT and CLIL approaches. This method involves designing activities centered around specific tasks, enabling students to learn and apply language skills and subject knowledge while completing these tasks. By engaging in practical, real-life tasks, students are encouraged to use language in authentic contexts, reinforcing their language proficiency while acquiring subject-specific knowledge. Task-based learning fosters an integrated approach to language and content learning, thereby aligning with the principles of both CLT and CLIL.

### **3.2 Collaborative learning**

Encouraging collaborative learning through group work aligns with the principles of CLT by promoting interaction and communication among students. This strategy also corresponds with the collaborative nature of CLIL, as it emphasizes the integration of language and content learning through cooperation. Collaborative learning enables students to work together in groups to accomplish learning tasks, facilitating interactions that enhance their language practice and communication skills, while also developing their teamwork and collaboration abilities. This method not only supports language development but also contributes to the holistic integration of language and subject matter, aligning with the core principles of CLIL and CLT.

## **4. Evaluation System**

### **4.1 Formative assessment**

Incorporating the principles of communicative language teaching and CLIL methodology, teachers can employ formative assessment to monitor students' learning progress. This encompasses various assessment methods, such as peer assessment, self-assessment, and teacher observation, aimed at providing timely feedback and support. This approach is beneficial in helping students continuously adjust their learning strategies, improve their language expression abilities, and deepen their understanding of subject matter.

### **4.2 Comprehensive assessment**

To comprehensively evaluate students' language proficiency, subject knowledge, and application abilities, teachers can design comprehensive assessment activities, such as oral presentations and research project displays. These activities not only assess students' language expression abilities but also evaluate their mastery and application of subject content, thus reflecting the integrated principles of communicative language teaching and CLIL methodology.

### **4.3 Feedback and improvement measures**

In communicative language teaching and CLIL methodology, timely and effective feedback is crucial for students' learning. Teachers should provide targeted feedback and develop improvement measures based on students' performance to help them continuously enhance their language expression and subject application abilities.

## **5. Course Design Procedure**

### **5.1 Needs analysis**

Conduct an assessment of the target student group's levels of subject knowledge and language proficiency to determine the teaching content and language objectives. This involves evaluating the students' existing knowledge and language skills, identifying their learning needs, and setting clear learning goals based on the findings. Understanding the students' starting point is crucial for designing effective CLIL-based instruction.

### **5.2 Curriculum development**

Develop integrated course materials that align subject content with language learning, and design instructional activities that adhere to CLIL principles. This stage involves creating materials that not only convey subject-specific information but also facilitate the acquisition and practice of language skills within the context of the subject matter. The materials should cater to the linguistic needs of the students while also addressing the subject's core concepts and knowledge.

### **5.3 Instructional implementation**

Implement CLIL teaching activities, utilizing diverse teaching strategies and techniques to create a rich language environment. Teachers should execute the planned activities, integrating subject-specific content with language instruction in a way that encourages meaningful language use and enhances students' understanding of the subject matter. This step involves actively engaging students in language-rich learning experiences across various subject areas.

### **5.4 Assessment and feedback**

Employ diverse assessment methods to evaluate students' mastery of subject knowledge and improvement in language proficiency. Additionally, provide constructive feedback to students based on their performance, considering both their subject-specific understanding and language development. Evaluating students' progress and language use within the subject context is essential for determining the effectiveness of the CLIL approach and guiding instructional adjustments.

### **5.5 Reflection and improvement**

Engage both teachers and students in reflective practices to assess the effectiveness of the CLIL instruction. Based on the reflective insights, make necessary adjustments and improvements to the teaching methods and materials. This process allows for ongoing refinement and enhancement of the CLIL curriculum, ensuring that it continues to effectively integrate language and subject learning while meeting the students' needs and optimizing their learning outcomes.

## **6. Conclusion**

This essay explores the viability of the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) model in preparing college students majoring in Primary General Education for teaching roles in rural Chinese primary schools and advocates the adoption of CLIL to enhance educational quality and equity in China, contributing to broader educational reform efforts and professional development for teachers. The discussion delves into various theoretical foundations and emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to teacher education aligned with the principles of CLIL. The essay further elaborates on the CLIL model's core principles, teaching strategies, and evaluation system and outlines a comprehensive course design procedure incorporating needs analysis, curriculum development, instructional implementation, assessment, and feedback, emphasizing the iterative process of reflection and improvement. Overall, the essay emphasizes the potential of CLIL in cultivating generalist teachers and enhancing students' learning outcomes in a globalized educational landscape, addressing the diverse needs of both students and teachers in primary education.

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