Integrating CLIL in VET: Recommendations for Education Providers and Policy Makers

The VET’s CLIL project is aimed at widening the opportunities of VET students in a globalised world by implementing the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) methodology in the curricula.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
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The **BOOST for CLIL in VET (VET’s CLIL)** project’s goal is to improve the competitiveness and employability of vocational students in the European labour market through language learning. In this sense, VET’s CLIL has aimed at widening the opportunities of VET students in a globalised world by implementing the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) methodology in the curricula:

- Developing and testing a Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) on the CLIL approach, starting by testing an Open Online Course (OCC) in English which will result in a MOOC.

- Designing and implementing an electronic open platform that permits to mutualise the different materials developed in each region/country and to share experiences; this will ensure a sustainable and transnational community of Vocational Education and Training (VET) professionals that allows the exchange of materials.

The project is running from September 2018 to the end of August 2021. It is funded by the Erasmus+ programme KA2 (Strategic Partnerships) and coordinated by the Provincial Education in Flanders (Provinciaal Onderwijs Vlaanderen, POV, Belgium). Project partners are the Education Department of the Government of Catalonia (Spain), the Education Department of the Basque Country (Spain), Sedu (Finland), Da Vinci College (Netherlands), and EARLALL (European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning, Belgium).

This document offers policy recommendations based on quality research in the field of CLIL and the policy context at regional, national and European level. Its drafting process has followed the procedure and methods included below:

- Desk Research: benefits of CLIL and its specific use in VET contexts and other levels beyond school education

- Desk Research: EU policies, national reports from project partners, regional regulations

- Feedback from participants in multiplier events
Feedback from teachers in testing phase

Feedback from project partners

Peer review and validation by project partners

The VET’s CLIL policy recommendations aim at facilitating the implementation of CLIL in public centres, engaging competent regional authorities with the concept and methodology. These recommendations shall also follow the Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages (art. 19) and extends its approach to the VET sector. They build on the experiences of the VET’s CLIL project partners and stakeholders, as well as on quality academic and research work in the field of CLIL regarding policies and practices at European, national, regional and local level.

Key areas have been found to remain unexplored to some extent by the academia regarding CLIL: teacher CLIL-specific training and upskilling; the use of CLIL in adult learning, in-company training strategies, and other education areas beyond formal education; VET and HE regarding specific career paths and sectors, with a focus on hard skills’ acquisition, and the regional/local component, with special attention to multilingual territories that already count on bilingual education programmes. In this sense, policy reviews show that while theoretical support is provided, especially in EU documents, further efforts are needed in a coherent approach to the implementation of CLIL, particularly at national and regional level.

Building regional and local CLIL ecosystems that integrate all relevant parties into a space of exchange and dialogue to boost CLIL in VET is a target to be considered and further explored at European, national and regional/local level. Building on the quadruple helix fostered by the Centres of Vocational Excellence of the European Commission, the ecosystem shall include representatives from the four axes (authorities, society, employers, VET centres), but a fifth element regarding the research and teacher training community is added.
In this sense, cooperation can be fostered through funding programmes such as Erasmus+ but also through initiatives like events and smaller-scale projects at all levels.

Furthermore, specific recommendations can be provided to decision makers at political and administrative level, as well as at school level:

**7.1. EDUCATION PROVIDER MANAGERS / PROGRAMME COORDINATION**

- Keep constant contact with the regional and local authorities, as well as with other actors (companies, parent associations, CSOs, etc.) in order to identify key areas for CLIL implementation and anticipate a good reception of the methodology among the local education community, including students and parents.

- Engage in international projects, with special attention to Erasmus+, to exchange best practices and learn from other VET centres, but also from other levels of education (e.g. general education, adult learning and education, etc.).

- Provide additional language support for students in lower levels so that they can reach the language level required to join the CLIL classes or feel safe and successful in them.
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- Facilitate teaching schedules so that teachers can take part in CLIL training activities.
- Allocating funds for the development of CLIL programmes in VET.

7.2. POLICY MAKERS

7.2.1. EU LEVEL

- Foster a multi-level approach with a practical view beyond general support.
- Acknowledge the overlaps between multilingual territories and foreign language learning, and develop specific recommendations in the field.
- Finance projects such as VET’s CLIL and make language learning a priority of education programmes.
- Combining CLIL with a lifelong learning approach, taking into account also non-formal and informal education.

7.2.2. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL/LOCAL LEVEL

- Include the commitment to language skill improvement and support for the CLIL methodology in legal texts, acknowledging European recommendations
- Making funds available for the development of CLIL programmes in VET.
- Improve coordination at regional level of CLIL courses and foster teacher networking and community-building.
- Facilitate training opportunities for teachers and trainers on CLIL, including different levels of expertise, in order to foster teacher upskilling and reskilling according to the latest developments in the field.
● Widen the scope of education sectors and areas where CLIL can be implemented.

● Take part and support research studies on CLIL at different levels of education with specific attention to VET.

● Improve inter-regional cooperation at European level to exchange CLIL best practices and organise joint initiatives for teacher training, innovation, and student exchange.

● Engage local and regional actors in VET’s CLIL programmes, facilitating the involvement of all skills ecosystem axes in the learning process of students and fostering CLIL also in in-company training programmes.