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## ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN CLIL COURSES

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In the last 15 years Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach has been viewed as one of the most promising in foreign language teaching. The benefits of CLIL in teaching content, developing communication skills, intercultural competence, and cognition are obvious. However, to successfully fulfil its potential, its essential to set clear objectives, supply good resources, and apply appropriate strategies. Moreover, this approach requires strategies that will help to involve students and make them active participants in the learning process.

According to J. Handelsman (2007), “Active learning implies that students are engaged in their own learning. Active teaching strategies have students do something other than taking notes or following directions...they participate in activities...[to] construct new knowledge and build new scientific skills.”

S. Freeman suggests that “Active learning engages students in the process of learning through activities and /or discussion in class, as opposed to passively listening to an expert. It emphasizes higher-order thinking and often involves group work” [3].

Thus, to involve students the teachers need to be “equipped” with active learning strategies which enable them to work efficiently in the class. Active learning strategies can be applied both in face to face and online classes, their main aim is to turn a student from a passive recipient into an active participant. So active learning strategies are connected with work in groups, teams, with a partner (taking part in discussions, problem-solving activities, TBL (task based learning) etc) or individually (reflecting at the end of every session).

CLIL presupposes the integration of curricular content and language learning with the aim of making a foreign language an inherent part of the school curriculum

[1]. Content and language are equally important and interconnected in this approach. As “CLIL deals with teaching a subject at the same time as teaching language” [2, p. 4], its effectiveness has been proven at different levels of education. It brings enormous benefits for learners, teachers, and institutions as well as challenges, but also raises educators’ awareness of the challenges and questions [2, p. 41 - 45] CLIL poses when implemented sustainably. However, these challenges can be overcome by selecting activities, which promote active learning, develop students’ learning, language, cognitive and communication skills.

Different CLIL activities can be used for activating previous knowledge, guiding understanding, focus on language, speaking, writing, assessment, review, and feedback [2, p. 43]. Each activity in a CLIL event presupposes flexibility and can be supplemented by graphic organisers, handouts, tips on collaboration as well as ideas before, while, and after teaching. Within activating and guiding understanding activities the teacher builds bridges by scaffolding new or previous knowledge and developing cognitive skills based on Bloom’s Taxonomy. Students are encouraged to work with graphic organisers such as timelines, flowcharts, mind maps, etc. The activities also promote the development of both oral and written English language skills. Asking higher order thinking (HOT) questions the teacher aims at developing cognitive and speaking skills. In a “KWL (know, want to learn, learned) chart”, the focus is on cognitive and learning skills (note-taking). Overall, CLIL activities are aimed at the development of all macro-skills (reading, speaking, listening and writing) in an integrated and coherent manner.

Assessment activities promote constructive review and feedback through cooperative interaction. Learners are provided with questions for individual and self-assessment, rubrics to assess essays, oral presentations, microteaching. Another example of self-assessment activity is a questionnaire through which teachers can find out useful information about their learners’ learning styles.

In summary, all CLIL activities should be matched to specific curricula, teaching aims, and contexts. Subject and language teachers can use them to add variety to their lessons and implement active learning in their teaching contexts.

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