



Mentoring Investigation Report

Advocating for improved opportunities for the learning of languages and cultures through CLIL

Background information

Mentor teacher(s) name: *Margaret McIntyre*

Mentee teacher(s) name:

School: *St Patrick's College, Ballarat, VIC*

Language: *Japanese*

Year level: *Years 8-12*

School or class context

Saint Patrick's College is a Catholic College for Boys in Ballarat. There are 1350 students in 2012, with an annual student intake of 250 boys at Year 7 level. Total student numbers are expected to increase to 1500 by 2014. The students are allocated to 10 homeroom classes of 25 students each. Saint Patrick's College has a comprehensive enrolment policy and the students are largely of Anglo-Saxon or European background. Very few, perhaps 15 students at present, are of Asian background. Japanese is the only second language taught and is an elective subject from the end of Year 7. It is the only elective in a Year 8 curriculum in which all other subjects are core subjects.

The students are tested prior to commencing Year 7 and students with low levels of literacy are identified. They participate in the enhanced learning program and do not participate in the Languages program. However, there are many students not eligible for the enhanced learning program who have relatively low levels of literacy and who find Japanese, a character based language, difficult.

Located in a regional area, there are many families who do not see Japanese as relevant or as an important part of their son's education. They believe that they do not need to speak Japanese for future careers and that it has no practical benefit. There are also those who believe that Japanese is too difficult for many of the students of Saint Patrick's College. These views are shared by some members of the teaching staff as well as by some of the upper levels of the school leadership team.

The Language Faculty is a small faculty of only three teachers who have traditionally taught only in that faculty. There are few opportunities for professional interaction with teachers in other faculties. The faculty as a whole operates largely in isolation with few staff members from other teaching areas aware of the activities of the language faculty and many are unaware of the importance of learning a second language. However, there have been some recent changes to the situation. Some recent initiatives have resulted in closer relationships with other faculties and departments within the school. These initiatives have included:

- An ICT project that led to co-operation between language teaching staff and IT staff as well as opportunities to share the knowledge gained with teaching staff from all learning areas, such as through the delivery of professional learning sessions at school.
- The introduction of a VET Applied Language Certificate in Year 9. This has led to an increased support of Japanese at Year 9 by the Director of VET and the Year 9 leadership team.
- The publication of an AITSL Illustration of practice arising from previously completed Professional

Learning projects: NALSSP ICT and the Modern Language Teachers' Association of Victoria (MLTAV) LOTEHAT Project

- Sharing knowledge of elements from the MoRe LEAPS project and the Draft Professional Standards for Lead Teachers of Languages and Cultures (AFMLTA 2012).

Goals of mentoring program

The standards from the AFMLTA Lead Language Teacher Standard (AFMLTA 2012) to be addressed are:

Lead teachers:

- *work actively with others to create connections between curriculum areas*
- *take a leading role in developing and implementing language and education policies in their own schools*
- *have a commitment to applying innovations in their own practice and sharing this with others.*
- *work with others in designing, implementing and evaluating languages programs and languages and cultures learning models, suitable to different contexts.*

This research seeks to identify ways to address these lead teacher standards by:

- establishing and strengthening relationships between the Languages Faculty and other faculties
- establishing and strengthening relationships with individual teachers in other learning areas
- engaging with the wider school community including the school Board and parents
- advocating for improved opportunities for the learning of languages and cultures through the teaching of Japanese.

The project will Investigate whether CLIL (content and language integrated learning) could be introduced at Saint Patrick's College and to what extent it would:

- provide opportunities for cooperation between faculties
- increase the understanding of and support for the teaching of Japanese amongst teaching staff
- raise the profile of Japanese within the curriculum and, as a result, increase the support of the wider school community, including parents, for Japanese
- improve the quality of the teaching of second language Japanese
- by moving the focus away from the language and on to meaningful content increase the interest level for students, in particular among the more able students
- increase the time students spend using Japanese each week.

Design

- Read the Professional Standards for Lead Teachers of Languages and Cultures (AFMLTA 2012) to identify the standards that would be the focus and basis of the investigation.
- Read the Victorian Government's Vision for Languages Education (Victorian Government 2011). In this document CLIL is listed as one of the Phase 1 strategic initiatives for 2011-2012.
- Investigate the meaning of the term CLIL and how it is applied in classes, particularly in classes teaching Japanese, a script based language.
- Hold preliminary meetings with the Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) of the school to give him a basic understanding of CLIL and the rationale for CLIL programs as well as to gain approval in principle to continue the investigation. A copy of the report to Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) is attached (Appendix 1).

Implementation

- Attendance at CLIL seminars presented by Dr Margaret Gearon, both the seminar for language teachers and the seminar for School Administration. Subsequent discussion with Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) of the aims of CLIL, its benefits, challenges and potential costs.
- Attendance at CLIL Seminar, 'Content & Language integrated Learning (CLIL) for Victorian Schools: Potential and Implications' presented by Professor Do Coyle.
- Subsequent discussion with Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) of the aims of CLIL, its benefits, challenges and potential costs.
- Visit to Saint Monica's Epping to see a Year 7 Geography CLIL class in operation and to obtain samples of materials and resources developed by the teachers for use in the CLIL classes.

- Discussion with the teacher of the CLIL class at Xavier College where Year 10 Geography is taught in Japanese.
- In consultation with the Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) identification of Humanities at Year 7 as the most appropriate subject to be taught using CLIL at Saint Patrick's College. One or two class groups would be selected to be taught in Japanese.
- Preparation of a proposal for the Head of the Humanities faculty followed by a meeting to discuss the proposal. Matters raised included the need for appropriate staffing and the requirement that the content of the Humanities class not be compromised. Students would need to be able to complete identical assessments to those completed by classes not involved in CLIL. A copy of the proposal and the response of the Head of Humanities are attached (Appendix 2). The issues raised were most informative, and support for the CLIL initiative was very encouraging.
- There are also important practical considerations. Will CLIL students purchase the textbooks prescribed on the booklist? If work to be covered must replicate the work being undertaken by the non-CLIL classes will it be necessary to reproduce in Japanese the information contained in the textbooks? Are there issues related to copyright?

Findings

Most of the literature related to CLIL programs is about CLIL being used where the additional language used for the CLIL classes is a European language. I could find very few articles or reports about CLIL programs where the additional language is Japanese, or another script-based language. Thus the effect of the additional challenge that may be presented by the use of the Japanese script is still to be ascertained. There are reports of successful Japanese immersion programs such as that at Huntingdale Primary School in Victoria. By the end of primary school the students involved in this program are using Japanese at a level several years beyond that expected of students who have experienced only traditional Japanese language classes in primary school. As with all immersion programs, meaning is of greater importance than the structure of the Japanese language (Asia Education Foundation 2012).

CLIL at Saint Monica's College Epping, Victoria, is partial immersion in Japanese. As well as their regular Japanese language classes, the Year 7 CLIL students study 3 additional subjects partially immersed in Japanese. More detail of this program is contained in the report to the Deputy Head attached to this document. Materials are developed by the staff and contain some Japanese within the English text. Kanji are used as they enable comprehension. I have obtained copies of some class materials but do not have permission to include them with this report.

The Xavier CLIL program is full immersion for a Year 10 geography class. There is less difficulty with the script as the students have been learning Japanese for at least 3 years prior to Year 10. Materials are developed by the teacher.

Outcomes and evaluation

The value of CLIL is recognised by the Saint Patrick's College leadership but no decision has been made about its introduction. If a decision is made to trial a CLIL program it will be in 2014. More time will be required to design the program and prepare the teaching materials. If it is to be successful, a CLIL program needs to be implemented well from the inception and staff will need to be trained in the methodologies required for teaching following the CLIL model. I will continue to pursue the potential to implement CLIL.

The major questions will be:

- Is there funding available for time release for preparation of the course in collaboration with Humanities staff and for the writing of the teaching materials? How will these materials relate to those used by the classes not involved with CLIL?
- What happens after a CLIL program in Year 7? Do students simply return to the usual Year 8 Japanese language program? In terms of their ability in Japanese will they be ahead of the students who have not been in the Year 7 CLIL program? Further contact with Saint Monica's Epping may help provide the answers to these questions.
- Is there training available for teachers?

The CLIL proposal, even though not implemented, has achieved some of the goals set for the project.

Establishing and strengthening relationships between the Languages Faculty and other faculties

The Head of the Humanities Faculty was new to the school in 2012. The proposal has enabled the establishment of a relationship between the Humanities and the Languages Faculties.

Advocating for improved opportunities for the learning of languages and cultures through the teaching of Japanese

The time spent in consultation with the Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) has provided an opportunity for meaningful discussion about the factors that contribute to the decision made by students to discontinue the study of Japanese when it becomes elective. It has moved on from the old excuses of 'they don't like it' or 'they find it too hard'. The Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) has indicated that the electives offered at Year 9 and the methods of making choices will be reviewed to improve the learning outcomes for students. I am hopeful that Japanese will no longer need to compete with the electives that sound so very interesting and appear to be less work than Japanese. Year 9 Japanese, now a VET Certificate, is seen as being achievable by more of the students.

I have also been asked to prepare a proposal that Japanese at Year 8 be restored to the core curriculum. There appear to be two reasons for this: the achievability of the VET certificate in Year 9 and the success of the ICT introduced in Year 7 and 8 as a result of participation in the LOTEHAT project and the NALSSP ICT Project. Using ICT has enabled a complete change in pedagogy, a change from teacher-centred learning to student-centred learning. Not only are the students engaged by the ICT, but they are also making greater progress with their learning. The atmosphere in the classes is positive. The change in pedagogy has received acclaim from experts outside the school and as a result is recognised within the school.

Establishing and strengthening relationships with individual teachers in other learning areas.

While not directly related to the MoRe LEAPS project, the publication of an 'illustration of practice' on the AITSL Website demonstrating our approach to the incorporation of ICT into our Japanese classes has attracted the attention of many individual members of staff who have commented favourably on the video and taken the time to discuss with me the initiatives they are taking with ICT.

Other factors have arisen for the Languages faculty that require time and attention in 2013 and further highlight the need to extend the time for possible implementation. These are:

- A new training organisation (RTO) needs to be located for the Year 9 VET Certificate as RMIT will withdraw from 2014. This will necessitate the rewriting of the course at Year 9 for 2013 and Year 10 for 2014. It will also require the establishment of the record system to meet the requirements of the new RTO.
- At the request of the Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) and as a result of much advocacy, a proposal for Year 8 Japanese to be part of the core curriculum must be written. This proposal must be well researched and based on solid evidence.

The trolley of 30 ipads currently being trialled with my classes will move from the trial to be part of the suite of resources available for all Japanese classes. I will need to conduct professional learning sessions within the faculty to ensure that they are used effectively.

APPENDIX 1: Proposal to the Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning)

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

CLIL has been in operation in schools in Europe since the early 1990s. Its goal is excellence in the teaching of both content and the second language through which academic subject material is delivered. In Europe the second language is referred to as an additional language as so many students speak multiple languages and may be learning a third or fourth through the CLIL method. There is a range of curriculum models and variations suitable for both primary and secondary schools teaching a range of academic subjects. CLIL has developed many teaching strategies that are used effectively in cases of all levels and the most recent research is looking at effective CLIL practices using digital tools and virtual spaces.

I attended a workshop presented by Dr Margaret Gearon who is running the University of Melbourne Pilot Teacher Training Certificate for CLIL. She spoke of the advantages of CLIL and outlined some of the specific teaching strategies employed in CLIL programs.

I attended an evening seminar on the potential and implications for Victorian schools of CLIL, delivered on September 4 by Professor Do Coyle, an international expert on the CLIL methodology.

Advantages of CLIL

- It provides a meaningful context for second language learning. There are boys who say that they find it 'boring' just talking about themselves, and they feel they are not really learning anything. This is their reason for giving up the language.
- It can contribute to intercultural communication and understanding.
- In a crowded curriculum it provides students with more exposure to the second language.

Support from the Victorian Government

The Victorian Government's Vision for Languages Education (Melbourne October 2011)

In this document the Victorian Government explains why it is making languages education a priority. It describes its Policy Commitments to Languages Education grouping them into several categories. CLIL is listed among four Short term Strategic initiatives for 2011-12 which have had funding allocated and activities which have commenced.

CLIL is explained and described as an effective strategy used in many international jurisdictions as well as in Victorian primary bilingual programs. It requires of the teacher high levels of second language proficiency as well as deep pedagogical content knowledge of the domain of learning selected for the CLIL program.

It is seen as providing 'real-world application of languages, which may provide a way through what is perceived as the "crowded curriculum" debate' (p.11)

The government has commissioned the University of Melbourne to provide a pilot CLIL course for qualified languages teachers. This is currently in operation with a maths/science stream and a humanities stream. In 2012 there is no cost for the teachers completing the certificate. It is anticipated that this will provide languages teachers with the skills and strategies they need to lead their school communities in developing new approaches to languages learning.

Delivery of CLIL

Saint Monica's Model (Epping)

One class of Year 7 students is learning three subjects through Japanese, religion, geography/humanities and science. The teachers of these subjects are able to speak Japanese. The religion teacher is a languages teacher while the geography and science teachers speak Japanese but are not languages teachers. The teachers of Japanese do not teach CLIL but support the CLIL program in the timetabled Japanese classes. The model is one of partial use of Japanese. All classroom instructions are issued in Japanese and worksheets include both English and Japanese. According to the teachers at Saint Monica's, the students are making excellent progress in the CLIL subjects and did better in testing than those in the other Year 7 groups.

Xavier College

At Xavier College Year 10 geography is being delivered in Japanese. I will seek more information from the teacher at Xavier.

Funding

The Catholic Education Office (CEO) in Melbourne has provided significant funding for schools who are trialling CLIL in 2012 and participation in the certificate course at Melbourne University is fully sponsored through the education department. I do not know whether there is to be further funding for other schools implementing CLIL programs in the future.

I have spoken at length with Jennifer Brown-Omichi from CEO Melbourne. As could be expected, she is very supportive of CLIL and will do all in her power to support all schools that implement CLIL.

This is an excerpt from an email she sent:

I know staffing and resources (modified materials) will be the biggest challenges to an integrated learning approach. I want to seek funding for you and will make a case for funding with my office on your behalf so if you have any documentation outlining your intended approach for next year would you mind sending it to me?

Have you considered ACTLAN (see note below): this has been an important part of the program at St Monica's. When you know which learning areas you will focus on then you can start the really important marketing phase.

I wonder if your Principal or Deputy could speak to St Monica's leadership about the logistical challenges in terms of marketing and timetabling to help them get a better understanding of their role?

Note: Jennifer refers to ACTLAN. I did a professional learning session last Saturday with VSL which was on the 'gesture' methodology. ACTLAN is a Japanese-specific version of that methodology.

Jennifer also suggested contacting Dr Susan Crowe at CEO Ballarat. Since the retirement about a year ago of Carla Woodruff, the LOTE consultant, Susan is in charge of languages amongst her other responsibilities. I have not heard from her at all in this time, but I do understand that there is still funding for Languages for schools in the Ballarat dioceses.

Margaret McIntyre

6 August 2012

APPENDIX 2: Proposal to the Head of Humanities Response

Content and Language Integrated Learning

Margaret and I met on Friday 24th August to discuss her proposal for CLIL to be trialled at St Pat's. I can certainly see the benefits for language learning, but had a few reservations as far as the impact on Humanities was concerned:

1. The humanities teaching qualifications of the teachers in Humanities classes

Where possible, teachers with History qualifications should teach History, teachers with teaching methods in Geography should teach Geography and teachers with Commerce degrees should teach the Economics units. Obviously this is not always possible in schools, but the main aim should be to ensure that quality teaching and learning of the relevant Humanities content and skills occurs. If a teacher of Japanese is teaching these units, then it should be someone who has a background in Humanities as this content must take precedence.

2. The assessment tasks must be the same as those completed by other students

We have worked hard this year to ensure there is real consistency across all classes in Humanities. This would have to be the case even if CLIL is implemented.

3. The students are purchasing student workbooks as part of their booklist for the History component of the Humanities courses

If we are asking parents to pay for these workbooks, then the students should be using them. If alterations have to be made to incorporate Japanese text, then the implications of this regarding copyright must be considered. It would also add substantially to the photocopying budget.

If Margaret and/or Rachael were to take a Year 7 Humanities class in 2013, then the first two points I raise above would not be issues. If, however, this grew to encompass more classes, then I would maintain the same reservations.

I can see that this has the potential to work well and result in interesting classroom teaching and learning.

Debra McNaughton
Head of Humanities

Reflective summary

I believe that a CLIL program would be an asset for students at Saint Patrick's College. The focus on content may add interest to the learning of Japanese for those students who are 'bored' with the traditional communicative model. A CLIL program would allow more time per week for engagement with the Japanese language, and for students who live and learn in an environment that offers little contact with Asian societies it would provide a real purpose for the learning of Japanese.

However there remains much to be discovered about the Japanese CLIL programs that are currently in operation and many questions still to be answered before a program could be established.

If a CLIL program is to be implemented it must improve the learning outcomes for the students not only in Japanese but also across the learning areas. Following the publication of the White Paper on Australia in the Asian century by the Federal Government it is important for the students to have as much contact as possible with Asian languages and Cultures.

References

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- Bianco, Joseph Lo and Slaughter, Yvette. Language Teaching and learning: choice, pedagogy, rationale and goals. Babel 44.1 (2009): 24+ Literature Resource Centre. Web. 25 Oct. 2012.
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