Languages Working Group
Peer Learning Activity Report

Helsinki 27-28 March 2014, Graz 15 May 2014
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1 Background to the Peer Learning Activity

A peer learning activity (PLA) for the members of the OMC Group Languages in Education and Training took place in Finland on 27-28 March 2014. It focused on teaching methods to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of language learning through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and language learning in vocational education and training in compulsory schooling (VET). Views about these methods were exchanged between Finnish and other EU experts. It was attended by delegates from the OMC group from 18 countries, the European Commission, the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), the Finnish Government, various experts from Finland and GHK Consulting (a total of 32).

A further PLA for the members of the OMC Group took place at the ECML in Graz, Austria on 15 May 2014. It focused on computer assisted language learning (CALL). Views about these methods were exchanged between the ECML and other EU experts. It was attended by delegates from the OCM group from 19 countries, the European Commission, Eurydice, the ECML, the coordinators of the ICT-REV project, an expert advisor to the OMC Group, an expert from Austria and GHK Consulting (a total of 30).

A full list of participants can be found in Annex 1.

1.1 Purpose

A recent and detailed comparative analysis of the Member States' foreign language teaching policies1 reveals that despite significant investment in foreign language teaching in recent years, the competence level of European students continues to be below expectations. The report shows that while it is clear that there are gradually less problems with the availability of foreign language learning in a school setting, the effectiveness of foreign language education in many Member States is problematic. A renewed focus must be made on the quality of language teaching2.

There are several ways of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of foreign language education in schools. One method which is used in an increasing number of Member States, according to the comparative country analysis carried out by the Group, is the CLIL method (a teaching method in which the foreign language is used for the teaching of non-language school subjects). Given that the comparative analysis found that a considerable number of Member States have experience to share in the use of this method (at least 12 countries) but understanding of how it works is still evolving, the comparative country analysis suggests exploring how learning outcomes could be improved through this method.

The comparative country analysis also found that at least eight countries had large scale strategies to increase the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in language education. The use of ICT and on-line learning material is still not fully exploited in education. Member States have raised problems associated with the use of ICT in language education, such as the lack of adequate training for teachers, and the low quality of on-line teaching material. The comparative country analysis calls for a more in-depth exploration of how teaching outcomes could be improved through the use of ICT and open educational resources (OER). This will be described as computer assisted language learning (CALL).

The Commission intends to prepare a follow-up report to the comparative country analysis focusing on methods to improve the quality of foreign language education using CLIL and

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1 Languages in Education and Training: Final Country Comparative Analysis, prepared in 2013 by the TWG Languages in Education and Training with support by GHK.

2 The findings of a comparative analysis of Member States' foreign language education policies discusses the possible reasons for the disappointing state of students' foreign language competences in the Member States. According to this analysis, there are a fair number of countries, where learning time is considered to be adequate, but achieved competency levels at the end of secondary education are too low, thus pointing at a problem with the efficiency and quality of teaching.
CALL. The peer learning activity will contribute to this by providing an insight into how effective CLIL (in combination with or without CALL) can be in foreign language learning; what methods work and why; what implications they have for teacher training, and how to apply the CLIL method effectively in language learning in education including vocational training.

1.2 Outline of the programme

In Helsinki, the discussions at the peer learning activity were structured around three sessions on the first day:

Session 1 addressed the use of CLIL and CALL in early and general education with the following components:

- What the research literature on CLIL and CALL says about their effectiveness in developing different language competences (including possible drawbacks) and the effective classroom use of CLIL and CALL; and
- Presentations on Belgium's and Finland's experiences in CLIL education and how it is implemented successfully.

Session 2 covered foreign language teaching in VET including the competences students need to achieve by the end of their vocational education and the use of CLIL.

Session 3 presented good practices and innovative projects in Finnish language education. These and the context of Finland's education system can be found in Annex 3.

On the second day the group took part in visits to one of three schools to discuss and see the implementation of different approaches to CLIL and CALL in language learning discussed in the sessions on the first day within primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools in Helsinki. This was followed by a discussion about the main insights gained from the school visits.

In Graz, after a reflection on key learning about CLIL, there were two sessions on the use of CALL and its implementation. Session 1 brought the findings of the literature review on effective use of CALL up to date and provided presentations on the development of CALL in Latvia, Austria and Switzerland. Session 2 described the ECML- European Commission project on ICT in language education to enable the use of CALL and how it has been applied in Slovenia.

The agendas for the PLAs can be found in Annex 2.

1.3 Structure of this report

This report brings together the contributions and discussions in question and answer sessions following presentations around the themes of the peer learning activity. Chapter 2 covers the use of CLIL and CALL in language education and how it works generally and specifically in Belgium, Finland, Latvia, Austria, Switzerland and Slovenia. Chapter 3 examines language education in VET pathways within secondary education with particular reference to CLIL in Austria, Finland and France. Chapter 4 draws out some specific lessons emerging for the Commission and policy makers from the peer learning activities for both CLIL and CALL.
2 CLIL and the use of CALL in language education

This chapter draws on findings from research into the implementation of CLIL and CALL and the work of the ECML to improve the implementation of CLIL and CALL in language education at all levels of education. This was followed by learning about experiences of CLIL in Belgium and Finland and visits to three schools in Helsinki to learn at first-hand how CLIL and CALL are implemented on the ground.

2.1 A review of the research literature

ICF GHK reported on the initial findings of the literature review examining whether and how CLIL and CALL improve the language competences of children during compulsory education.

2.1.1 CLIL

The study has found that CLIL:

- Has a positive impact on children’s language competences compared to standard language teaching programmes in schools in a range of countries over a long period. Although a few commentators believe the scale of the effect may be due to the selection of participants, the results identify benefits for those involved. It does not generally have an adverse impact on content learning outcomes in the subjects where it is used;

- Some language competences are more affected than others by CLIL, such as receptive skills (listening and reading), morphology (structure of language units), and creativity/fluency, while CLIL may also diminish the effect of sociocultural status and can boost the performance of lower ability learners and males; and

- CLIL can boost learners’ motivation towards learning languages. Motivation may increase when ‘real issues’ become the centre of study.

Some key studies are summarised in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Outcomes of CLIL on language competences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Design/sample</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>De Zarobe (2008) (ES/BAC)</td>
<td>One CLIL group taught social science for three/four hours per week, and the second CLIL group taught social science for three/four hours a week plus Modern English Literature for two hours a week. The control group took the standard EFL classes and received three hours of classes per week.</td>
<td>CLIL groups significantly outperformed the non-CLIL group in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and content. Students taking two CLIL subjects also obtained significantly better results than the one CLIL subject. Differences were less pronounced in higher grades and groups there was not a significant increase in proficiency except in fluency and content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ergebnisse der DESI-Studie (2008) (DE)</td>
<td>958 grade nine students from 38 classes. Only schools which had been offering CLIL for at least four years were considered for selection to ensure reliable treatment. Test results were only included in the analysis if at least 95% percent of pupils in the class had participated in CLIL at least from grade seven onwards.</td>
<td>Students in the CLIL programme performed better on all aspects of the assessment encompassing text reconstruction, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, grammatical proficiency, writing, and socio-pragmatic competency (i.e. linguistic consciousness and linguistic acting). Particularly with regard to listening comprehension, the yearly increase in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Report of Languages Working Group Peer Learning Activity

#### Admiraal et al. (2006) (NL)
- 1,305 students across four cohorts in five schools, 584 of which were part of a CLIL programme and 721 of which followed the regular programme (control).
- Students in the CLIL programme performed better on reading comprehension and general oral proficiency. Only moderate positive effects for pronunciation.

#### Dobson et al. (2010) (ES)
- An evaluation of the Bilingual Education Programme (BEP), Spain, focused on identification of evidence on pupils’ English language proficiency.
- The study involved visiting 21 schools, sixteen of which received periodic visits and five of which received single visits. There was no control group for this study.
- Pupils aged 3-7 showed substantial progression in learning during their initial years. The evidence suggests there is a benefit of beginning at a young age.

Successful implementation of CLIL depends on the language skills of content teachers. The research indicates that the conditions for the successful use of CLIL are as follows:

- Teacher training to teach both content and language
- Possession of a specific set of professional competences for CLIL teachers
- Support from school leaders

- Classroom materials that are meaningful, challenging, and authentic
- Scaffolding to reduce the cognitive and linguistic load of the content/input
- Effective intersection of content, cognition, and language
- Classroom interaction that balances listening and speaking for students
- Appropriate teacher feedback and correction
- Task-based language teaching that promotes student interaction and pushed output

- Development of cognitive/academic language proficiency
- Development of cognitive skills (the ability to express complex thought processes appropriately)
- Focus on the process of learning rather than the outcome
- Small group work that promotes quantity and functional scope of students’ language output
- Meaningful and authentic communication that is functional and relevant to the students’ needs
- Opportunities for real meaning negotiation with teacher or peers, which arises in the course of the pressure to produce comprehensible output

#### 2.1.2 CALL

With CALL the evidence is less compelling not least because CALL is very diverse and being a study aid evaluation has focused on the short term learning outcomes expected to be improved by the use of the technology.

**What is CALL**
- CALL refers to any process in which the learner uses a computer to improve
foreign language competence (includes smart phones, tablets, MP3 players, and consoles/gaming)

CALL includes:

- Authentic FL online material, e.g. video clips, pod-casts
- Communication with native speakers (e.g. text-based computer-mediated communication or voice/video conferencing)
- Language-learning/testing systems (e.g. apps/software)
- Online proprietary virtual learning environments
- Game-based learning

But nevertheless:

- In some instances CALL has brought short term positive impacts on children’s language competences;
- CALL tools can support traditional foreign language teaching in the classroom. For example: synchronous text chat can increase amount of learner’s language production and its complexity; online audio and visual multimedia resources improves retention of words;
- CALL offers innovative ways of teaching and learning (especially outside of formal teaching). For example: there is strong evidence for computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT); games-based learning can also develop problem solving and critical thinking skills through engagement and iterative feedback; and
- CALL also appears to increase learners’ confidence and motivation through providing a more independent self-regulated environment for learning and getting feedback. For example, online audio and visual multimedia resources can promote interest and motivation in foreign languages, and reciprocal role peer tutoring enhances motivation by providing a real context for communication.

Some key studies are summarised in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2  Outcomes of CALL on language competences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Design/sample</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
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</table>
- 69 participants from Gazi University Preparatory School used WEBVOCLE as a supplementary material after class for one semester.                                                                                     | - Presenting items through spaced repetitions, and the contextual presentation of words enriched with audio and visual multimedia resources is effective for retention of the words previously taught in the classroom. This is dependent on the number of revision practices using the tool. |
| Dourda et al. (2013)| - Study of online game for English language learning  
- Study of 17 students (11 to 12-year-old) attending a Greek public primary school engaged in an eight-week collaborative game play.                                                                                                               | - Post-test scores revealed a 30 % improvement in student’s knowledge of geography. Qualitative data obtained through observation, journals, video-recording and evaluation tasks, also showed enhanced reading skills, vocabulary, motivation and collaboration. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saz et al. 2011</td>
<td>Study of 12 students at an international school (11 years old) using Vocaliza, a Computer Assisted Pronunciation Training (CAPT) tool, over five weekly (45 minute) sessions in which the students used the application in a separate room from the normal classes. The tool uses audio-visual prompting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendelson, 2009</td>
<td>An observation study of forum-based text-based computer-mediated communication (CMC) as preparation for classroom oral discussion about set readings (11 assignments over 11 sessions).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The CAPT tool measured improvements over time.

The use of forums to prepare students for oral communication challenges the assumption that only synchronous as opposed to asynchronous CMC can be beneficial for developing the ability to speak FLs. Learning outcomes result from the way in which technologies are used more than the characteristics of technologies.

The learning processes needed for CALL present some key pedagogical decisions for teachers to consider. The design of lessons should take advantage of CALL's potential contribution to the development of student autonomy while it is evident that CALL teaching aids can promote the acquisition of language knowledge, develop challenging task-based learning, avoid reliance on the recognition of language at the expense of recall, and engender prompting-answer strategies where the teacher encourages learners to notice and repair their own errors.

The research indicates that the conditions for the successful implementation of CALL are as follows:

- **Teacher training**
  - CALL pedagogical design
  - Effective adoption and integration of CALL into teaching

- **Teaching approaches**
  - Good selection of online material – should provide comprehensible input, promote acquisition of knowledge, and be stimulating for the learner
  - Promotion of student-centred learning for reducing anxiety and increasing risk-taking
  - Good balance of CALL with more traditional methods

- **Learning processes**
  - Tools that prompt students to construct responses, maximise deep learning, and promote recall of knowledge (as opposed to recognition)
  - Games-based tools that promote interaction and negotiation of meaning

CALL requires access to material and systems; much of which is readily available.
2.2 Good practice resources

The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) has supported the implementation of effective language education policies through the dissemination of good practices in language teaching and the promotion of innovation and development of language expert networks.

The ECML has run four-year programmes, which consist of individual projects focusing on the promotion of excellence in European language education through professional networks of language educators and the production of resources and toolkits to enable the implementation of more effective approaches to language education.

The resources are based on evidence in the research literature about what works which are then translated into draft tools which practitioners review and reflect on in relation to their experience. This process is iterative and involves a mix of active practitioners, academics and policy implementers to develop effective tools in workshops and co-writing that reflect best practice and can assist them on the ground.

Projects in the last ten years or so have included the implementation of CLIL and CALL in different education settings and for different languages as well as the training and development of teachers for CLIL and online teaching. Box 2.1 below sets out examples of recent projects.

Box 2.1 ECML project examples

Developing online teaching skills (DOTS)

The aim of the project was to assist language teachers in using up-to-date technology in their teaching. A training kit was developed, which includes bite-sized activities for ten online pedagogic tools. By completing the activities, teachers can learn to use these tools and integrate them into their language classes. They can also watch video clips of experts explaining their use of the tools and discuss their experiences and needs.

Developing CLIL competences (CLIC)

The CLIC Matrix is an internet awareness raising tool for teachers that provides a series of indicators that teachers can use to assess their teaching in a CLIL context together with good practice to help them improve. The indicators cover the four aspects of culture, communication, cognition and community, each from the perspective of context, language, integration and learning.

A framework for the professional development of CLIL teachers

The European Framework for CLIL Teacher Education provides a set of principles and ideas for designing curricula for professional teacher development in the area of content and language integrated learning (CLIL).

It is a macro-framework that identifies the target professional competences for CLIL teachers; it includes the competences necessary to teach content subjects and an additional language in an integrated manner; and it proposes professional development modules to help teachers attain these target professional competences.

The current 2012-2015 programme is called “Learning through languages” and focuses on promoting inclusive, pluri-lingual and intercultural education. Among other things, it aims to support the provision of pluri-lingual whole school curricula and the use of open resources to develop online teaching skills.

Resources and guides on all these projects are available on the ECML website (http://www.ecml.at/).

4 http://dots.ecml.at/
2.3 Country experiences: CLIL

2.3.1 Belgium

In Wallonia, CLIL was legally permitted in schools in 1998 (further decree in 2003). In 2007, a decree enabled its application in vocational sections of secondary education. Schools are required to have approval for CLIL teaching and are subject to inspection every three years. This has taken place alongside permitting submersion (of Dutch within French schools).

There are currently 16,589 CLIL pupils in 171 schools providing pre-primary and primary education, which is approximately 3% of the total pupil population in this type of education. There are further 10,608 CLIL students in 142 secondary schools, amounting to 4% of all students in secondary education. The foreign languages most used in teaching are Dutch, English and occasionally German. Various subjects are taught in these languages, including mathematics, history and music.

Surveys have shown that successful implementation of CLIL involves:

- Team work between teachers of foreign languages and the subject teachers to develop authentic material;
- Development of the bilingual vocabulary for subject concepts and visualisation approaches which takes time;
- Favourable attitudes towards CLIL from all stakeholders involved (including parents and children); and
- Meeting quality expectations in subjects taught in the foreign language (i.e. the acquisition of a foreign language should not be at the expense of the subject taught).

The feedback from school inspections has demonstrated that those who participate in CLIL achieve higher levels in target foreign language than those who do not. This is not at the expense of subjects taught. Even though CLIL students learn more slowly at the beginning, they catch up with their non-CLIL peers later on. On the less positive side, the CLIL-taught subjects cover on average only about 60% of their curriculum content which compares unfavourably with the 80% achieved for non-CLIL subjects. Pupils participating in CLIL tend to be more able learners and in schools with a higher socioeconomic background. Some schools are recruiting native speakers for CLIL teaching which requires them to develop curriculum knowledge.

The situation is slightly different in Flanders. Pilot projects introducing CLIL were run in nine secondary schools in 2007 and they were monitored and evaluated afterwards. They showed positive benefits in language competences. Informed by this evaluation, the Decree XXIII (2013) set out the most recent legal prerequisites for integration of CLIL in secondary education. These are:

- It must respect the free choice of pupils/parents;
- Schools must provide a parallel subject offer in Dutch;
- CLIL can be provided in French, English or German; and
- Official education targets have to be met in CLIL subjects.

2.3.2 Finland

In Finland, CLIL has been offered since the 1980s in vocational education and since 1991 in general education. It has generally taken two main forms: immersion in Swedish which aims at functional bilingualism and the teaching generally of English within subject classes (the definition of CLIL used here) although there is some variation in the mode, subject classes used for CLIL, and the extent of CLIL.

The share of schools that offer CLIL has declined over time. In 1996, over a tenth of schools offered CLIL, but in 2006 this had fallen to 5.7% with concentrations in urban areas possibly where it is more practical for children to transfer from a primary to a secondary CLIL teaching environment. This decline was attributed to insufficient support by national educational
authorities, costs and lack of suitable teaching materials and training. Maths and science classes are seldom used for CLIL.

Current factors affecting the provision of CLIL are summarised in Table 2.3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors encouraging CLIL</th>
<th>Factors hindering CLIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internationalisation and globalisation of current society</td>
<td>Lack of systematic guidelines and support for CLIL at the national level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More frequent encounters and more positive orientation towards English in Finnish society</td>
<td>High stake matriculation examination cannot be taken in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The willingness of schools to invest in CLIL</td>
<td>Relatively good English as a foreign language teaching outcomes without CLIL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The experience with CLIL has been mostly positive in the Finnish context. CLIL has been shown to support language learning without impeding the development of the mother tongue. It has created more discourse space than traditional English as foreign language courses and led to joint knowledge construction among peers. It has also found that the learners themselves became more motivated and keen to learn in CLIL classes.

However, some less positive effects have also emerged. Some students displayed high levels of language anxiety and were overtly critical of their language skills. Teaching subjects in foreign languages has also placed additional demands on teachers (see Box 2.2) because they often need to develop specific subject resources for CLIL teaching.

Box 2.2 Immersion/CLIL teacher competencies in Finland

Key competences for immersion/CLIL teaching

In Finland, immersion/CLIL teachers are required to prove both their teaching skills (i.e. have a degree in education) and mastery of the language of instruction as stated in the Regulation 25/011/2005). This means that they need to have the following key competences:

Language skills
- General language mastery; and
- Subject-specific language mastery

Pedagogical skills
- General pedagogical skills;
- Pedagogical skills specific for teaching certain subjects;
- Pedagogical skills for teaching subject-specific language; and
- Pedagogical skills for teaching second language learners.

These skills can be acquired through in- and pre-service training courses. Several Finnish universities offer such courses (for example, the University of Vaasa offers a specialised Master’s degree for immersion teachers). Nevertheless, there is still a shortage of qualified immersion/CLIL teachers according to a recent national report by Kangasvieri et al. 2012 and there is no course available for CLIL teaching in secondary education. As a consequence, CLIL teachers are generally supported by in-service training and there is a need for more pre-service initial teacher training in CLIL.

2.3.3 Discussion points

From the discussion the following points emerged:

- The successful introduction of CLIL has required improving the language competencies of teachers and their ability to understand language learning (AT, IT). Language teachers in schools (both foreign and first language teachers) have to provide support as part of a whole school approach to language learning.

- In-service training is generally needed to supplement what training and peer learning a school can provide especially where content teachers’ language competence has to be
raised considerably to reach B2 and their teaching practice has to be adjusted (IT, ES). This can be expensive although the benefits are long term.

- The take up of CLIL loses momentum if it is only available in some settings. For example, it is not commonly found in primary schools where there are clear advantages in building language learning into other parts of the curriculum and learning a subject over an extended period through the medium of another language (FR). If it is not commonplace either, teachers in initial teacher training with language skills will not seek or experience CLIL teacher training (DE).

- Communities of practice among CLIL schools have been found to maintain schools’ involvement in CLIL and their motivation. These are self-organised and have developed standards for good CLIL teaching (NL). External training and the provision of materials for CLIL integrated into the curriculum such as the British Council project in Spain are relatively expensive although successful.

- CLIL provides opportunities for learning transversal skills (literacy, cultural awareness) and this should be exploited in selling CLIL to schools.

- Some country’s legal framework for education does not always allow CLIL where the language of instruction is specified (SI) although there may be ways that CLIL can be offered such as through cross curricular collaboration in projects and providing reading material in foreign languages.

### 2.4 Country experiences: CALL

#### 2.4.1 Latvia

Language teachers were generally not using CALL and many did not have the skills to consider introducing it to their teaching. The government ran three in-service training projects to build language teachers’ skills in using CALL between 2010 and 2013 at a time when the challenge was to increase the competence level to be achieved by pupils. The project in schools providing general education offered 48 hours of training for language teachers with a choice of programmes which included improving their confidence and competence in using ICT and specific CALL applications. The wide range of training reflected what were perceived to be considerable differences in language teachers’ ICT competences and experience.

The programme attracted 24,000 participants. It was successful in increasing the basic ICT skills of many teachers through the training in computing, the use of white boards which were available in schools and the use of commonly available web tools as well as requiring all registration and access to materials to be online. This meant all teachers had to go online and set up email addresses if they did not have one. As a consequence many teachers have not only increased their knowledge and understanding of material available but have also increased their confidence to use CALL in their lessons and for homework.

One of the training programmes for English teachers used British Council courses which included a moderator to work with teachers to implement CALL. This was useful for teachers with more advanced ICT skills but was challenging for teachers without a high competence level in English.

It was also successful in establishing a platform to access the training materials. It is continuing to be used to provide materials such as the sample tests of language skills which they are introducing.

#### 2.4.2 Switzerland

A challenge in VET educational institutions is to enable teachers to develop blended learning for language learning for both full time and part time learners. The challenges are that there is only a limited amount of guided learning in languages that can be offered with no room to
expand it and teachers need to increase their knowledge and skills to use Moodle and use CALL to enable students to study in their own time.

At the Applied Sciences University in Ticino, the language department has assisted this process by:

- Introducing game based narratives to learning languages which would appeal to both genders. These link language learning to solving a crime and require the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar to achieve this in a series of episodes. These are called Mystery Cove;
- Providing online dictionaries (pools-M) linked to words in screen text so that the text can be read more quickly and understood. This overcomes the time delay and reluctance of students to check meanings of words they are not familiar with; and
- Providing exercises to test the recall of vocabulary and practice grammar and training teachers in their use.

The material has been developed with peer reviewers and tested with groups of learners before being made more widely available. Initial feedback is that the online dictionaries help learners understand text more quickly. The use of authentic materials related to the specific course of study (e.g. Biology) reinforces listening skills and acquisition of vocabulary. The approach is valued by learners who are motivated by the variety of activities that can be offered.

2.4.3 Austria

One of the challenges of CLIL teaching and learning is increasing all students’ opportunities to write and speak in the foreign language they are learning beyond the time they do so in class. In a vocational secondary school in Austria, teachers have developed the Hello Little World (HLW) Skypers Platform. It originated from using Skype with a school in Texas to develop students’ English speaking and writing skills which successfully led to collaborative learning by the teachers, e-pals among the students and discussions organised by the students not the teachers with an all-round improvement in students’ confidence and competence in English as well as teachers’ competence in CALL and letting students’ develop the conversations.

The teacher who led this decided to approach schools in other countries to extend the professional networking and collaborative cultural learning which was previously so difficult and costly to do face to face through school exchanges. This has attracted widespread interest and HLW has developed into a platform involving schools in many other countries because it was found to be effective. Both teachers and students have found they can learn from the wide variety of contacts that they could build with other schools through skyping. This has included:

- For students: a greater cultural awareness through the conversations they have and the opportunities to practise their speaking and understand English in different accents. They have more formal conversations around events where the schools have a common interest in learning about each other;
- For teachers: it has provided infotainment materials for learning, the opportunity to share practice and ICT learning aids and a ready network of language teachers to solve problems and build networks to participate in international projects. This has helped considerably in navigating the vast amount of material that can be used to aid language teaching both within and outside the classroom.

The great value of the platform they have helped to build is that it’s free, it is not technology heavy, it keeps them up to date, and it provides benefits to teachers as well as the students.

2.4.4 Slovenia

Since 1994, the Education Ministry has organised a series of projects around the concept of an e-competent school, to develop e-learning and the use of ICT in schools for teaching and
learning. This has included developing e-text books, a set of e-competences for schools and staff, providing equipment and support, and creating a single web resource for e-learning materials. National conferences have been run to share good practice. These have been seen as the building blocks to support teachers’ continuing professional development. The Open Up Slovenia national pilot, launched in April 2014, intends to make Slovenia a strong environment for testing innovation at all levels of education.

For language teaching and learning the National Educational Institute provides initial teacher training. The Institute provides language advisors to schools to advise on training. In organising an ICT-REV workshop (one of the joint projects funded by the ECML and the Commission) with the ECML’s team, the Institute sought to build the capacity of teacher trainers to:

■ Build language teachers’ ability to use CALL to aid learning;
■ Bring together language teachers to work on a whole school approach to language learning in primary as well as secondary settings;
■ Create bottom-up approaches in schools to sharing teaching practice and building competences.

**Box 2.3 The ICT-REV workshop programme**

In the ECML’s experience communities of practice are needed to develop tools for successful language teaching and also for their use in educational institutions. The ICT-REV programme is designed to build and sustain communities of practitioners who can disseminate and use the resources and tools created by the ECML to use CALL effectively and access CALL teaching aids. The programme has two strands. These are:

■ Country workshops, such as the one for Slovenia, which bring together teacher trainers, teachers and others with an interest in CALL to develop their understanding of the resources available and the means to increase take up and effective use. These are also designed to enable the participants to develop how they can disseminate and sustain the use of the tools within schools. An action plan is then developed.
■ An inventory of tools for CALL which have been tested by practitioners and found to be of value for teaching and learning which they intend to keep up to date.

The Institute has also worked with the French Institute over many years to motivate young people to improve their competences in French. In the last year a project focused on improving speaking and pronunciation through drama provided preparation and practice through CALL tools.

### 2.4.5 Finland

Finland has an extensive national strategy for developing the use of ICT for learning, self-improvement and filling recognized skills gaps. There has been a drive to implement ICT in education and training since the mid-1980s.

The focus of national strategies has been on large-scale, state-funded teacher training programmes, funding collaborative projects, forming consortia and creating e-learning materials for blended or self-study learning modules. The extent of using ICT in education varies, depending on the school, but overall, the technical resources for using ICT, both at school and at home, are very good.

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However teacher skills are more heterogeneous, with the most highly skilled teachers tending to be young and male\(^9\).

According to Tammelin (2006), the current critical challenge in Finnish language learning is closing the gap between the technology itself and the pedagogically meaningful ways of using the technology in teaching\(^10\). A 2007/09 EACEA study\(^11\) surveying Finnish language learners found that most thought using ICT for language learning was important and interesting. The main advantages of using ICT were perceived to be:

- Enabling communication with native speakers;
- Facilitating access to knowledge, dictionaries and other learning resources;
- Increasing exposure to a foreign language, versatility, flexibility and time-independence; and
- Some emphasised ICT as an added motivational factor in language learning.

2.4.6 Discussion points

From the discussion the following points emerged:

- Many teachers are convinced of the advantages of CALL but need professional development to enable them to use the technology successfully in their teaching. Many lack the skills and experience and these are the biggest hurdles to overcome. In service training can tackle these barriers but it also requires changes to initial teacher training.
- Some resistance may arise from CALL supporting skills other than reading and writing which in some school systems may have a greater importance than listening and speaking skills.
- CALL provides opportunities for learning transversal skills (digital, cultural awareness) and this should be exploited in selling CLIL to schools.
- Keeping up with the technology and the array of CALL teaching aids is beyond most teachers’ ability without guidance. Communities of practice have been found to assist the process in the country case studies and other countries (BE, HR) but they are difficult to sustain on a voluntary basis.

2.5 CLIL and CALL in Helsinki schools

2.5.1 Case study schools

Brief details of each of the case study schools in Helsinki can be found in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 2.4 Schools visited</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Puotila Comprehensive School</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>School</th>
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| Meilahti Comprehensive School              | **Teaching of languages**
- The school includes English, French, Swedish, German, Spanish and Chinese in its curriculum. A special bilingual Finnish-Chinese tuition was developed for speakers of both Chinese and Finnish. The goal of this tuition is to achieve working bilingualism.
- The school also offers language immersion in Swedish, with the aim to reach functional bilingualism. Swedish is used to teach art and skills subjects, history, maths and health education. |
| Educational level                          | Lower secondary education ISCED2 (age group 13-15, grades 7 to 9)                                                                          |
| School type                                | Public                                                                                                                                 |
| General school description                 | The Mielahti Comprehensive School focuses strongly on arts and music in its curricula. It aims to provide students with good skills in visual expression. To do this, the school uses multi-purpose art classrooms that include a space for ceramics, graphics and painting, a darkroom and iMac computers. It also cooperates with several cultural institutes and museums. The school has over 400 pupils attending. It is a well-established institution that has provided education in its neighbourhood for 67 years and art classes for over 20 years. |
| Teaching SEN students                      | Pupils with disabilities receive prolonged compulsory education. They work alongside the mainstream education.                                |
| Itäkeskus Upper Secondary School           | **Teaching of languages**
- The school has the following languages available on its curricula: English, Swedish, German, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese. It also offers courses in Japanese culture and language. Besides that, six courses in Finnish as a second language are available. 
- Apart from general education, the school offers a language-oriented study programme. Participants need to study at least 12 courses from the language programme, which consist of... |
| Educational level                          | Upper secondary education ISCED3 (age group 16-18)                                                                                       |
| School type                                | Public                                                                                                                                 |
| General school description                 | The Itäkeskus Upper Secondary School specialises in languages, international contacts and knowledge of cultures, arts and sustainable development. It has a national special educational task in languages, which means that it offers extended course selection in this area.
- The school offers general study and language-oriented study programmes. Yearly, 116 students begin the general programme and another 70 start the language-oriented one. |

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12 http://www.hel.fi/hki/meikku/fi/In+English
The school also participates in various international activities, including exchange programme with a German upper secondary school and a camp school in Rome.

### Teaching SEN students

The school tries to identify learning difficulties as soon as possible in order to adjust education according to individual needs. All students are tested to establish whether they have problems in reading and writing. Those with linguistic development disorder often receive special support in studies, such as support lessons or more time to write exam papers.

### 2.5.2 Observations on the implementation of CLIL and CALL

Members of the groups visiting each school reported the following:

**Primary (Puotila):**
- Parents chose to send their children to the school because it offers a bilingual immersion programme in Finnish and Swedish for a group of pupils in each year group;
- Pupils generally have Finnish as a first language but not exclusively;
- The extent of CLIL in Swedish for the Finnish first language children on the programme increases with age until it is about half and half;
- The immersion class groups can be relatively small (about 15 pupils);
- Pupils also learn English; and
- Pupils tend to move to a lower secondary school which offers bilingual teaching.

**Lower secondary (Meilahti):**
- Groups of pupils in each year group follow Finnish-Chinese and Finnish-Swedish CLIL courses (approximately 15 of each in each year group); most will have started in a primary school though the school attracts pupils with Chinese or Swedish as a home language;
- Potential pupils are tested for their ability to cope with these programmes (aptitude tests);
- Alongside this the school offers language learning in English, French, German and Spanish and supplementary Finnish for migrant pupils. Pupils will have generally learnt English in their primary school; and
- Chinese teaching has been aided by an exchange with a school in Beijing and the provision of bilingual teachers from China.

**Upper secondary (Itäkeskus):**
- CLIL is not used for language teaching at this stage;
- Wider range of languages available for students although this depends on funding which enables smaller classes to be offered in some instances (German, Italian);
- CALL is widely used within language teaching and for out of class learning;
- CALL includes games, blogs for lessons and applications to learn vocabulary ahead of classes; and
- Traditional end of course assessment is used for matriculation.

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13 [http://www.hel.fi/hki/itislu/fi/In+English/Language+Programme](http://www.hel.fi/hki/itislu/fi/In+English/Language+Programme)
2.5.3 Discussion points

A shared discussion of the experience from observation, questioning and discussion in the schools drew out the following:

- CLIL teachers face the same pedagogical challenges as those with immersion and submersion pupils learning a foreign language. Effective approaches are well known and can be developed by teachers with practice and training;
- Teachers adapt to pupils’ needs but benefit from in-service training to develop their practice for CLIL;
- Pupils benefit where they can transfer from a primary to a lower secondary setting offering CLIL in the same languages;
- CLIL teachers need a high standard of competence in the foreign language and support from language teachers; bilingual teachers whose first language is the foreign language can fill gaps if they have the content/curriculum knowledge and teaching experience;
- If CLIL is to be offered more widely it would need to be better integrated into initial teacher training to enable a supply of teachers with a competency framework for CLIL teaching; and
- Large schools with multi class year groups should have the flexibility to timetable and offer CLIL classes for pupils who choose this pathway, although to offer languages which would have lower demand requires class sizes that may not be affordable.

2.6 Key summary points

It is widely recognised that both CLIL and CALL are means of expanding the amount of time for effectively learning languages without increasing the length of the school day or reducing the study of other subjects or competences.

2.6.1 CLIL

For learners, CLIL can be effective in raising the achievement of students in language competences compared to those who have not participated in CLIL. This seems to be in many different contexts and with learners of different ages although it seems to be best applied with those who have started learning a language although it can be used to start learning.

Some competences are improved more than others as a result of CLIL, especially those linked to vocabulary and speaking. A larger amount of CLIL teaching appears to have greater effects on language competences.

CLIL can also motivate students and raise their interest in language learning without it affecting their subject content learning in the longer term.

To make this happen, teaching skills have to be adapted for CLIL to work effectively as a means of learning content as well as language competences; the challenges are well known and are equally applied to effective immersion and submersion approaches to language learning. CLIL teachers would benefit from training which ensured they could achieve a set of competences for teaching CLIL.

While continuing professional development can provide teachers with the skills to implement CLIL, it needs teachers with higher levels of language competences in the language of instruction (at least B2). This requires in-service training to up-skill non-language teachers.

Collaboration within and between schools can support the implementation and sustainability of CLIL. Language teachers should work with CLIL teachers to develop effective practice and materials for teaching CLIL classes. CLIL teachers benefit from belonging to networks of CLIL teachers in other schools.
The expansion of CLIL on a large scale depends on initial teacher training and the supply of teachers with foreign language competences as well as the willingness of schools to timetable groups for CLIL.

If learners have not been introduced to CLIL in primary school, they have to be ready for or accustomed to CLIL teaching which can be achieved through providing choice, aptitude testing and introducing it gradually.

2.6.2 CALL

For learners, CALL can be effective in developing specific language skills, such as pronunciation and vocabulary, where it is used as part of teaching and learning programmes both in class and for personal study. CALL can improve motivation and confidence as well as supporting specific learning styles.

The longer term effects of CALL on the achievement of language competences have not been researched because CALL includes such an array of teaching aids focused on a specific language competency.

Effective use of CALL depends on teachers’ ability to understand and integrate the use of the applications in their curricula. Many teachers lack the competence to use them in the classroom and the knowledge about CALL teaching aids. This requires in service training to be addressed. Communities of practice can assist in sustaining knowledge and competences.

The expansion of CALL on a large scale also depends on the availability of schools and homes with access to software and systems although this is not considered to be a barrier in some countries.

2.6.3 ECML

The ECML has developed many resources and toolkits to implement CLIL and CALL which can be used by schools, trainers of teachers, education authorities and communities of practice to address issues such as teacher competences and lesson materials.
3 Language education in VET

In this chapter improving language competences for students in vocational education is discussed in the context of Austria, France and Finland.

3.1 Why is CLIL important in vocational education

It is said that young people now need the skills and qualifications to help them acquire on average seven jobs and three changes of career in the course of their working lives. Linguistic competences are one of the lifelong learning skills to be acquired as a foundation for employability and citizenship.

CLIL can contribute to this by providing a community for learning language, experiential learning, active participation, and the integration of culture and content. It can also move language teaching towards content around business and service. Much depends on the ability of teachers to adapt their approach to overcome language barriers and improve language competences. For many this requires training to develop these skills, reassess approaches used in first language classes, and to work in teams with specialist language teachers.

Box 3.1 Lessons from CLIL in VET schools

CLIL in Austrian VET

The flagships of CLIL in Austrian VET are technical colleges that focus on arts and crafts. Bilingual education can also be linked to international business entrepreneurship courses and internships. In addition, multilingual competences are a general pedagogic principle in colleges focusing on social services, including tourism.

Some lessons have already emerged from the use of CLIL in the Austrian VET system:

- CLIL should focus on and prioritise agreed parts of the content subject matter;
- CLIL should take at least 25% of the content in an annual teaching programme;
- There should be a clear division between who teaches and assesses the target language and who uses the language in teaching of other content but team working between these teachers is essential;
- Language support is provided;
- If the target language is used for assessment, tests should be kept simple; and
- Assessment of learners in the content subject should be based on their products and achievements rather than on their target language ability.

3.2 Languages in vocational education in France

At the present the French government is aiming for equivalence between general and technical/vocational education to enable vertical and horizontal movement. This includes expecting the study of two foreign languages. All vocational diplomas require relevant skills and knowledge which include languages with the level of language competence (against the CEFR) and the choice of languages to be learnt determined by the sector (Advisory committees which provide the industry perspective on qualifications and the content of training). The diploma assessments cover and test five competences.

CLIL can be used for vocational learning. Where it is there is collaboration between language and content teachers, there is an expectation that teachers have a CEFR B2 level in the foreign language used, they take advantage of in service training to develop their skills for CLIL teaching, and classroom learning is reinforced through ICT (cinelycee) and language materials.
3.3 Languages in vocational education in Finland

National requirements for VET qualifications are set by the National Board of Education in consultation with social partners based on occupational standards. There are pathways to higher levels for the students who study for vocational qualifications.

All initial vocational qualifications for those aged 16-19 have a common structure with languages as part of the core element with some such as tourism related vocational qualifications requiring language competences in their vocational element. Languages can include mother tongue, either of the two national languages and two foreign languages. As a minimum, students are expected to achieve A1 or A2 levels with the testing of interaction, comprehension and acquiring information (and grading as satisfactory, good or excellent). It is recognised that about one in eight VET students participate in mobility at some point after they leave school.

Integrating language learning with acquiring vocational knowledge and skills has been found to be vital to motivate students. Authentic materials make language learning relevant. This has been taken forward into assessment so that ‘foreign language learning is not seen as the object of study’.

3.4 Key summary points

CLIL can be adopted in vocational learning. By doing so, it can make language learning more relevant to students and introduce authentic material. This may help to maintain and develop vocational students’ language competences which are a key aim of vocational pathways in some countries.

Much the same teaching skills and approaches used in implementing CLIL in general education are required for it to be effective.

Requiring language competences as a mandatory part of vocational course curricula are a necessary foundation along with setting expectations (for CEFR competence levels) in line with employment needs.
4 Key learning points

For policy makers the peer learning activity has identified policy actions which would enable CLIL and CALL to be more widely introduced to language learning. The European Commission could actively support these actions.

4.1 CLIL

CLIL can raise the achievement of students in language competences compared to those who have not participated in CLIL, particularly for those in general education who have started learning a language. This is well demonstrated from studies in a variety of Member States.

CLIL also improves cognitional development, cultural awareness and motivation to learn languages without any significant detriment to content learning in the subjects where it is used.

Competences are improved more with a higher intensity of CLIL though by increasing motivation and possibly attracting more motivated learners, CLIL may also generate better results.

In service training which supports whole school approaches to all language teaching and learning are a building block of effective implementation of CLIL; effective approaches to implementing CLIL are well established and can be developed through in service training. It remains a challenge for schools and education authorities to find the resources for this and to motivate teachers to participate although many projects demonstrate teachers’ enthusiasm and willingness to learn. These are mainly development costs, not recurring costs.

Schools and education authorities providing in service training could benefit from using a framework of competences for CLIL teachers.

Expanding CLIL requires teachers with higher levels language competences in the language of instruction (at least B2); this might be a constraint for many countries where language competences are not found among sufficient non-language teachers (or general teachers in primary settings).

Schools need to be permitted to provide CLIL if they do not have such flexibility in their teaching arrangements to meet curricular requirements; they could be encouraged through understanding the benefits and providing support to introduce CLIL. Large schools should be able to introduce CLIL classes for specific teaching groups as an option.

Enabling schools in primary and lower secondary to provide CLIL should create pathways for students making the transition and build on the benefits of increased language competences.

As a consequence it is critical for the implementation of CLIL for policy makers to:

- Permit schools at all ages and of all types to organise and delivery CLIL tailored to their needs and in a flexible way;
- Promote the wider benefits of CLIL to school managers and leaders and to the authorities which fund them;
- Develop supportive national guidelines on CLIL implementation in the curriculum;
- Provide opportunities for initial teacher training in a content subject while developing language competences and teaching in CLIL environments (including immersion and submersion);
- Provide or support schools to provide suitable continuing professional development for CLIL teachers and developing whole school approaches to language learning; and
- Provide or support teachers to develop communities of practice so that they share resources and methods for teaching CLIL effectively.
4.2 CALL

CALL can be effective in developing specific language skills in class though the longer term effects of CALL on the achievement of language competences are not so well researched. CAPT, chat and intelligent tutor systems in particular are found to improve learners’ competences.

CALL can also improve motivation and confidence as well as supporting specific learning styles.

Continuing professional development is needed to develop language teachers’ ability to understand and integrate the use of CALL applications in their guided learning.

Expanding CALL on a large scale requires the availability of schools and homes with access to software and systems which could be a constraint in some countries.

As a consequence it is critical for the implementation of CALL for policy makers to:

- Enable schools to provide facilities and resources for CALL in both formal and non-formal learning;
- Promote the benefits of specific CALL tools in language learning supported by the research evidence;
- Provide training for teachers in initial teacher training about the application and use of CALL and the selection of appropriate CALL applications;
- Provide or support schools to provide suitable continuing professional development for language teachers in CALL including the ability to use ICT effectively; and
- Provide or support teachers to develop communities of practice so that they share resources and methods for using CALL effectively.

4.3 Support from the European Commission

The European Commission could support this through:

- Promoting the findings of the research which evidence the positive benefits of CLIL and CALL through disseminating this report and facilitating exchanges of good practice to enable the efficient implementation of CLIL and CALL by policy makers and schools;
- Using available funding instruments to support large scale projects which will increase the effective take up and implementation of CLIL and CALL in Member States;
- Promoting sustainable cross national communities of practice among CLIL and CALL practitioners and teacher trainers;
- Encouraging cross boundary partnerships and interchanges between CLIL schools and between schools using CALL teaching aids; and
- Exploring with the ECML whether there are shared interests in further research, development and dissemination of resources for improving the implementation of CLIL and CALL to the benefit of all Member States.
# Annex 1 Attendees

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<th>Graz</th>
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<td>ABUJA, Gunther</td>
<td>Austrian Centre for Language Competence</td>
<td>Austria</td>
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<td>AUTERE, Hanna</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Culture</td>
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<td>Lithuania</td>
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<td>BAIDAK, Natalie</td>
<td>European Commission – Eurydice Research</td>
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<td>BEADLE, Shane</td>
<td>GHK Consulting</td>
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<td>BENE, Krisztina</td>
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<td>BRESLIN, Sarah</td>
<td>ECML – Executive Director</td>
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<td>BROGAN, Kristin</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>D’ALLESSIO, Germana</td>
<td>Special Expert</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>DE CASTRO, Ana Teresa</td>
<td>LLP National Agency</td>
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<td>EMKE, Martina</td>
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<td>ECLM – Deputy Chief Executive</td>
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<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
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<tr>
<td>STAJONEVIC, Mateusz-Milan</td>
<td>Co-coordinator Joint ICT-REV Initiative</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>STRAUS, Bronka</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Science and Sport</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>TONU, Tender</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Research</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>VAN DEN HOOF, Sien</td>
<td>Flemish Department of Education and Training</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
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<tr>
<td>VERAGHEN, Murielle</td>
<td>Ministry of the Federation Wallonia Brussels</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZABLATNIK, Katherine</td>
<td>ICT Expert</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</table>
Annex 2  PLA Agendas
# Agenda

Peer Learning Activity for the Delegates of the OMC group Languages in Education and Training 27-28 March 2014

**Venue:**
Thursday 27th House of Estates (Säätytalo), Snellmaninkatu 9-11  
Friday 28th Ministry of Education and Culture, Room Väinämöinen, Meritullinkatu 10

The aim of the PLA is to follow up on the comparative analysis on languages in education and training, as presented to the Thematic Working Group (TWG) in February 2014. The workshops will focus on methodologies that are considered by the group to have the potential to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of language learning and be conducive to better learning outcomes. The main topics will be Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and other ways of integrating ICT. The TWG has also expressed an interest in gaining some insight in vocational training. The basis of comparison will be the Finnish practice in these areas of foreign language training and the comparison will be made with other educational systems.

**Thursday, 27 March 2014, House of Estates, Snellmaninkatu 9-11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Country/Institution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 – 9:30</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 – 9:45</td>
<td>Welcome and run-through of the programme</td>
<td>Finland/EC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45 – 12:15</td>
<td><strong>Session 1: CLIL and use of ICT in early and general language education</strong></td>
<td>Speakers:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CLIL, ICT and teacher training</td>
<td>Shane Beadle, GHK</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Review draft of follow-up report by GHK on these two projects</td>
<td>Murielle Verhaegen, BE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• CLIL/immersion teacher training</td>
<td>Tarja Nikula, FI (CLIL</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• CLIL in Finland</td>
<td>expert)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Karita Mård-Miettinen, FI</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Expert in immersion</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>teacher training)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:15-13:45</td>
<td>Lunch break, restaurant Piano</td>
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</table>
### Session 2: Finnish educational system, vocational education and curriculum work
- What lessons to draw from the Finnish educational system?
- Languages in vocational education and training
- Curriculum work

### Session 3: Good practices and innovative projects in language education
- Presentation of language education project "Language Circus"
- Presentation on “Network for Language Education Policies” and fresh news from 2014 Language Parliament

### Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13:45-15:45</td>
<td>Session 2: Finnish educational system, vocational education and curriculum work</td>
<td>Franz Mittendorfer, AT (vocational education)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Patricia Janissin FR (vocational education)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hanna Autere FI (vocational education)</td>
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<td>Anna-Kaisa Mustaparta, FI (Curriculum)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:45-16:15</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
<td>Finland</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:15-17:30</td>
<td>Session 3: Good practices and innovative projects in language education</td>
<td>Annamari Kajasto, FI</td>
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<td>Teija Kangasviero, Sari Pöyhönen, FI</td>
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<tr>
<td>20:00</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
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Friday, 28 March 2014, Ministry of Education and Culture, Room Väinämöinen, Meritullinkatu 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:30</td>
<td>Transfer from the Hotel</td>
<td>Finland</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 09:00-11:00 | School visit  
- Group separated into three groups visiting CLIL/ICT classes at lower elementary, upper elementary and secondary school | Finland                      |
| 11:00-11:30 | Lunch break (School lunch)                                               | Finland                      |
| 11:45    | Transfer to the Ministry of Education and Culture                         | Finland                      |
| 12:15-12:30 | Coffee Break                                                             | Finland                      |
| 12:30-14:00 | Discussion of school visit  
- What could be used in upcoming follow-up report | OHK/Experts/Delegates Discussant: Kristiina Skinnari, Finland (CLIL teacher and researcher) |
| 14:00-14:30 | Linking the outcome of this PLA to ECML activities and to second part of PLA | Hanna Komorowska             |
| 14:30-15:00 | Conclusions  
Rounding up, "checkout" |                                                             |
# Agenda

**Peer Learning Activity for the Delegates of the OMC group**  
**Languages in Education and Training/Conclusion of the work of the group**  
**15-16 May 2014**

**Venue:** European centre for Modern Languages, Nikolaiplatz 4, 8020 Graz, Austria

The aim of the PLA is to follow up on the comparative analysis on languages in education and training, as presented to the Thematic Working Group (TWG) in February 2014. The workshops will focus on Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and other ways of integrating ICT into language teaching and learning. The second day will be dedicated to the conclusion of the work of the Thematic Working Group on languages in education and training and the contribution of the group to the new ET 2020 Working Group on Transversal Skills.

**Thursday, 15 May - Peer Learning Activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 – 9:30</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30– 10:30</td>
<td><strong>Welcome and run-through of the programme</strong></td>
<td>ECML/EC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Synthesis of PLA in Finland 27-28 March 2014</td>
<td>EC/GHK</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30 – 12:30</td>
<td><strong>Session 1: Use of ICT, OER and social media in early and general language education</strong></td>
<td>Speakers:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Presentation of findings on ICT use in language education</td>
<td>Shane Beadle, GHK</td>
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<td>• Examples from Member States for effective use</td>
<td>Rita Kursite (LT)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Germana D'Alessio</td>
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<td>Katherine Zablatnik (AT)</td>
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<td>12:30-14:30</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Session/Activity</td>
<td>Speaker(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:30-15:45</td>
<td><strong>Session 2:</strong> Experiences from the ECML/EC joint project on ICT use in language education</td>
<td>Speakers: Martina Emke, Mateusz-Milan Stanojevic; Bronka Straus (SI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:45 – 16.15</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.15-17.30</td>
<td><strong>Session 3:</strong> Demo workshop on the application of selected ICT tools</td>
<td>Martina Emke, Mateusz-Milan Stanojevic/ Delegates</td>
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<tr>
<td>17:30 – 18:00</td>
<td>Wrapping up of the PLA</td>
<td>GHK/EC</td>
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<td>19:30</td>
<td>Buffet dinner</td>
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**Friday, 16 May – Concluding the work of the TWG**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Organizers/Delegates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 – 10:00</td>
<td><strong>Updates from the Commission, from Delegates and the ECML</strong></td>
<td>EC/ECML/Delegates</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Council Conclusions</td>
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<td>• Linguistic support</td>
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<td>• ECML work programme</td>
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<td>• Cooperation agreement btw ECML and EC</td>
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<td>• Recap of the activities and results of the TWG</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:45</td>
<td><strong>Review of the comparative study analysis report and the preliminary findings of the follow-up report</strong></td>
<td>GHK/EC/Delegates</td>
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<td>• Discussion of the final deliverable of the Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45- 11:00</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussion of the final deliverable of the Group continued</td>
<td>GHK/EC/Delegates</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30-14:00</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:00 – 15:00</td>
<td><strong>Status of CEFR</strong></td>
<td>ECML/ Council of Europe/EC</td>
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<td>• Summary of CEFR Web Conference, 28-29 March 2014</td>
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<td>• How can existing knowledge about reference framework be further</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Report of Languages Working Group Peer Learning Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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</table>
| 15:00 – 16:00 | **Language competences in the context of the ET 2020 Working Group on Transversal Skills**  
- Update on policy experimentation  
- Future work of the ET 2020 working group | EC/Delegates |
| 16:00-16:30 | Conclusions  
Rounding up, "checkout" |              |
Annex 3  Language education in Finland

A3.1  Finland’s general education system and language learning

By way of context this section sets out the key features of language learning in Finland’s education system.

A3.1.1  A brief overview of Finland’s Education System

Finland’s education system is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture, who prepare legislation on the system and policies, the annual budget, and oversee the education and training system. They work closely with The Finnish National Board of Education who is responsible for the national core curriculum and requirements of qualifications in pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and adult education.\(^{14}\)

The results of Finland’s general education are shown to be relatively very high in international comparative tests, such as PISA. They also have university-level teacher training resulting in highly skilled teachers.\(^{15}\)

Key features of the structure of the system are:

- Most pre-primary, primary and upper secondary education is provided by local municipalities. Municipalities usually allow individual schools significant autonomy in designing their own curriculum and teaching;

- Compulsory education begins at the age of 7 and lasts for 9 years\(^{16}\); Annually, only around 200 young people drop out or leave general education without completing their studies\(^{17}\), giving Finland one of the lowest dropout rates in the world;

- The vast majority of education providers are public schools. Of the small number of private schools, most are public funded and under public supervision, following the national core curriculum and assessment requirements; and

- Every pupil has the right to educational support. Guidance and counselling is seen as the work of all educational personnel. Teachers are required to treat children and young people as individuals and to help them progress according to their capabilities.

As to funding:

- In practical terms, pre-primary education for six-year-olds and general education through to upper secondary levels are completely covered from public funds, as public expenditure accounts for more than 99% of all expenditure. Private expenditure only accounts for 2.6% of all expenditure on the official education system; and

- Historically, between 10-13% of Finland’s GDP is spent on its education system, which is relatively high within Europe\(^{18}\).

And in relation to assessment and examinations:

- There is a strong focus on both self-evaluation of schools and education providers and national evaluations of learning outcomes;

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\(^{14}\) [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/ fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Finland:Overview](Jan 2014)


\(^{16}\) ICF GHK Finland Assessment Profile (February 2012)


Finnish education providers are expected to participate in national and international assessments but are ultimately responsible for self-evaluation of the education they provide; and

There are no mandatory national examinations in compulsory education. Pupil assessment is done by teachers following national guidelines. The only exception is the Matriculation examination board who administer the examination taken in the upper secondary phase).

Vocational learning is provided in the post-compulsory upper secondary level which offers both general and vocational education. This is generally for students aged 16-19 years but many students are older in vocational upper secondary education.

About 50% of general education school-leavers opt for the general upper secondary school and 41% for vocational upper secondary education. Less than 9% do not immediately continue to secondary level. Around 2% continue general education for a tenth year on a voluntary basis. The number of secondary school pupils in vocational education has increased since the 1970s. About one fifth of all vocational education and training (VET) institutions are private. The proportion of private funding in upper secondary VET and in higher education is slightly higher than for general education, but it still remains below 5%.

A3.1.2 Language learning in Finland’s schools (up to the age of 19)

The main languages of tuition are the two national languages, Finnish and Swedish. Regional languages spoken in Finland are Saami (Lappish) and Roma but there is no education offered in the Roma language.

Finnish or Swedish are the only compulsory languages, but they are generally not the first foreign languages. 90% of pupils take English as their first foreign language; Finnish (5%) and Swedish (1%)21.

The age a child starts learning a language varies in Finland. The earliest age is seven, but according to the statistical yearbook of the National Board of Education, the majority (87% in 2010) of students begin their first compulsory language on the third grade (age of nine). The average duration for learning a second language in Finland is 3 years. Schools can decide on how nationally set hours for language learning can be distributed across grades.

Finland has CEFR based national guidelines for the minimum competence level in foreign languages. At ISCED 2, a competency level of A2 of the CEFR is specified for the first foreign language and A1 for the second foreign language.

A3.2 Language education initiatives in Finland

In this chapter specific initiatives in Finland are described which have reversed the trend towards a reduced range of foreign languages being learnt and brought social partners together with educators to raise the profile of language learning and in developing the curriculum to consider the changing needs of employers and society.

A3.2.1 Language Circus

There are two compulsory foreign languages in Finnish primary schools, which ensure that pupils learn at least one additional foreign language apart from Swedish or Finnish. Pupils have traditionally studied a wide selection of further foreign languages – German used to be particularly popular in the 1990s. However, this tradition has weakened over time and in 2008 almost all pupils were studying English and Swedish.

21 ICG GHK: Languages in Education and Training: Final Country Comparative Analysis (Jan 2014)
The Finnish National Board of Education ran the Language Circus project to counter this decline in the variety of foreign languages principally by enabling schools to offer different languages by subsidising the additional teaching costs for smaller groups.

The project was launched in 2009, lasted for four years, and 102 providers of basic education participated. The main goals of the programme were:

- To inspire children and teenagers to study different languages (such as Russian, German, and Chinese);
- To inform pupils, parents and local decision makers about the importance of language versatility;
- To increase the use of distance teaching by the internet; and
- To enrich the language programmes in municipalities.

To achieve these goals, in addition to the extra funding, a national information campaign was launched. It included a website with online language games that had over 200,000 visits in peak-months. Besides that, up-skilling training was provided for approximately 400 hundred language teachers and an online discussion forum for teachers was set up. Meetings of coordinators from schools and municipalities were organised twice a year.

The number of pupils studying other languages than English and Swedish has increased because of these activities and the networks have remained in place.

A3.2.2 Finnish Network for language education policies and the Language Parliament

The Language Network is an organisation funded by the Ministry of Education that brings together Finnish language education policy stakeholders including employers, educators and policy advisors.

The Centre for Applied Language studies at Jyväskylä University coordinates its activities, which include:

- Influencing decision-making about language education policies;
- Spreading information about current issues in language education;
- Carrying out research on language education policies; and
- Organising lectures and in-service training on similar topics.

The goals of the organisation are put into practice through annual themes for dialogue, research and dissemination. In 2013, the focus was on minorities, while in the current year attention turned to skills and competences. Some of the research activities carried out under the Language Network deals directly with CLIL and language immersion (such as Immersion and CLIL in Finland: the municipal situation, 2011, MEC).

The annual Language Parliament took place at the same time as the PLA and produced a position statement on key issues about skills and competences in languages.

A3.2.3 Curriculum reform

Reforms to the basic education curriculum are being taken forward to modernise teaching and learning in basic education. At its core are seven draft competences which include multilingual literacy and cultural understanding.

Box 4.1 Finland’s General Education Reform

General Education Reform, 2012-2017: Dimensions of broad-based competence:

- Thinking and learning
- Cultural competence, interaction and expression
- Looking after oneself, managing daily activities, safety
These recognise that Finland has growing linguistic and cultural diversity, sociolinguistic understanding is important, and that the skills of spoken interaction and writing to convey understanding are fundamental.

To ensure children acquire these there will need to be cooperation across school subject teaching and for foreign language teaching to be part of language education.

Curriculum guidance for language learning will not be closely prescribed: there will be no fixed domain of language vocabularies and there will be an emphasis on practising language skills in and out of classrooms by means determined by schools so that CLIL (less than 25% of curriculum bilingual) and immersion (over 25% bilingual) are approaches which can be used. It is expected that all competences will be tested.

**A3.2.4 Key summary points**

Communities of practice for language learning require top down as well as bottom up support to thrive and be sustained. Top down support can come through network funding, research, training and maintaining a high profile for language learning; bottom up support draws on the interest of teachers in sharing their practice and continuing professional development.

The curriculum reforms will set the broad parameters of learning outcomes expected leaving schools and teachers to decide how they will be achieved. CLIL and CALL are very much left to schools to consider as ways of increasing children’s language competences.