

DAVID MARSH (DM) INTERVIEWED BY HANNA GOZDAWA-GOŁĘBIEWSKA (HG-G)

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HG-G: Could we start please with the question of terminology because it seems that there is a lot of confusion concerning the very name - CLIL. The term we use in Poland when referring to *content and language integrated learning* is *bilingual teaching* (nauczanie dwujęzyczne). Is there any difference between the two?

DM: Well, different countries use equally different terms, and often there are subtle differences between them. In English the term bilingual education is often used for situations where a heritage or minority language is being taught, or the majority language for immigrant students. This is very much the case in the USA with Spanish and students of Hispanic descent.

The problem with the term *bilingual teaching* that we faced back in the early 1990s, is that the word *bilingual* is loaded. It implies a very high level of linguistic competence in two languages. It is a very high goal, which can be achieved in specific types of school over a long period of time. Perhaps this is the case here in Poland with English, French and German, for instance.

Another weakness in bilingual teaching, if we think about the use of the term in international circles, is that it doesn't actually reveal anything about methodology - and this is where CLIL starts to take focus. CLIL is a dual-focused methodological approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language - which means much more than simply changing the language of instruction for certain lessons. CLIL means having simultaneous dual focus on both content and language in both content and language lessons. Content drives CLIL, and this means that those working as teachers are no longer acting only as content or language teachers, but, to a greater or lesser extent, as a combination of both.

HG-G: What would you say is the essential feature of CLIL?

DM: When we launched this term in 1994, after some years of experimentation and analysis, our main goal was to take best practice from special or otherwise exclusive schools, and regions, into mainstream schools in different countries. So, to me the single most important feature then was egalitarianism and wider access to developing a love of languages by children with very different backgrounds, and learning styles.

Now things have changed with the benefit of hindsight. We can now see that actually CLIL is not dual-focussed in good practice - it is triple-focussed because the third dimension, cognition or thinking skills, is emerging as the most exciting feature by which we can further understand how good outcomes are achieved. So CLIL is not only about language learning at the same time as content learning - it is about education - and a form of education which is particularly significant in this new Knowledge Society age.

HG-G: What do you consider the most important assumption CLIL makes? What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the name?

DM: Well, first I think about a tree in the Middle East - yes, there is a tree called CLIL. Secondly, I think about modern education. We live in a period of time characterised by convergence, and convergence means moving away from fragmentation towards integration. CLIL has become a form of education which provides new learning opportunities and effective results. If you look at the world of entertainment - think of Cirque du Soleil. That started in the 1980s about the same time we were exploring CLIL. Cirque du Soleil is a form of integrated fusion of different disciplines from dance, gymnastics, theatre, music -and others - these were integrated to create a new entertainment phenomenon, which has gone on to become world class. The mobile phone is an example of integrated technologies - it functions as a phone, but also a navigator, media player, camera, amongst others - CLIL is a very similar example which is about education. We live in an age of convergence and CLIL is one of educational convergence which suits our understanding of multiple intelligences - It takes us back to Piaget, to Vygotsky - moves us forward in time with people like Skinner and Bruner - and provides a practical set of methodologies which can be used in the classroom.

HG-G: In one of your articles published in the Guardian in March 2007 you argue about the key aspects in achieving language success. You wrote in that article that generally learner performance in foreign languages remains largely inadequate considering the investment of time and resources. Could you comment on this, please.

DM: The Guardian article was for an international audience and the point being made was that there are too many countries where children and young people spend many, many hours learning a language, which they can barely use by the time they enter adult life. This may not be the case in Poland - but it is a widely discussed issue globally, and particularly here in the European Union. The return on investment has not been good enough in some countries. This view is not a criticism of language teachers. It is to do with language learning and the broad range of young people who need languages. Look at the work of Howard Dinklage in Harvard University in the 1960s on high flying young academics who simply could not learn French, Spanish or German. Look at the more recent publications by Carol Dweck at Stanford University (February 2007) on growth and fixed mindsets. To me, language should not be included in the curriculum only as

a subject - it should also be developed across-the-curriculum - as is the case with CLIL.

HG-G: In Poland students who wish to attend bilingual schools have to take entrance exams. It might be assumed then that CLIL or bilingual teaching requires selective procedures. Can CLIL be recommended for all types of schools, all language levels, most age groups?

DM: The Polish bilingual schools may have special characteristics which require use of specific selection procedures. But the answer is an emphatic yes - look at CLIL used with special educational needs learners, and in some of the vocational settings and you will see why. High flying youngsters who stick closely to the demands of the curriculum and examination structures will fly high whatever - the joy of CLIL is seeing the results with children with diverse backgrounds and learning preferences. You don't have to be a diamond to shine, glass shines too.

HG-G: Are there any limitations within CLIL that you are aware of?

DM: The main limitation we have faced is attitudes of people who are either cynical about change - often because they have done the same job for too long and are reluctant to embrace challenge positively; and those who do not want to step outside their comfort zone - and who don't want to change the status quo - the way things are. If you look at the speed of change in our world, and the corresponding speed of change within education you will sometimes find a substantial time lag. The teachers involved with CLIL, regardless of their age, are often exceptional and they are the pioneers who ride over such limitations.

HG-G: One final question. If you were to address CLIL sceptics, what would you say to make them believe that content and language integrated learning is not just a fashionable trend bound to become marginal sooner or later?. There is a lot of interest around CLIL in Poland but many teachers are rather apprehensive in their attitude, considering the approach extremely demanding.

DM: Go and see for yourself. That simple. One way to do this will be through a new European Commission supported CLIL Network which is due to start up in early 2008. It is called CCN, is coordinated in Finland, and you can get news of it through www.clilconsortium.jyu.fi after 1 October.