Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament d'Ensenyament

The language model of the Catalan education system

Language learning and use in a multilingual and multicultural educational environment

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A plurilingual and intercultural educational model

The aim of education is to prepare pupils to live, interact and develop in a sociocultural environment that is diverse, complex, dynamic and difficult to predict. A context that requires the attainment of skills which will help them to live and participate in diverse and complex societies, and develop successfully in any personal, social, academic and professional field.

The changes that have occurred in recent years in the technological, demographic, commercial and cultural fields pose new challenges and involve important changes from a teaching and learning perspective. It is necessary to consider, on the one hand, the change in our perception of time and space resulting from globalization; on the other, the technology which has changed our way of communicating, interacting and learning; and finally, the power of images and maximum synthesization.

Nevertheless, one of the most relevant elements for the continued preparation of students remains their command of LANGUAGE, the tool which allows them to understand reality, express thought, emotions, reason, create, transmit knowledge and a certain point of view, understand the world, and interact with each other. Command of language and communicative competence, along with personal and emotional skills, is essential to carry out tasks with a strong cognitive component and to activate critical thinking, negotiate and explain knowledge to others, and do so in different languages.

These skills have their theoretical foundation in three relevant facts which have highlighted the need to renew educational systems around the world. On the one hand, through the principles of social constructivism and connectivism and of research and reflective teaching, neuroscience has contributed to the consolidation of interactive and integrated quality methodologies. On the other, the generalisation of information and communication technologies in an increasingly globalised world has enabled us to access, manage and convey knowledge in a contextualised manner through a variety of projects that facilitate student participation in taking on and solving real life problems. And, finally, changes in job markets require teaching methods focused on comprehensive education for students and greater levels of self-demand in the control of personal resources for lifelong learning.

In this context, the mastery of linguistic and communicative competence, constructed on the basis of interrelations and interaction between different languages, should be considered as a cognitive instrument which facilitates access to and the creation of knowledge, as a means of taking action in international spheres and participating in digital environments; and as a strategy to facilitate access to the labour and cultural market of today's world.

The Catalan language model presents plurilingual education as something more than the teaching and learning of different languages. This approach means that all languages, both curricular and native, contribute to the development of each student's communicative skills, meaning that they can use them to gain knowledge and achieve effective communication in different languages as well as different situations and circumstances.

Therefore, our language model **is based on a holistic approach to language and its learning which is reflected in a teaching practice that revolves around the integrated management of languages and of contents, and it facilitates both language learning and knowledge building through different languages.**

And this is possible because it is developed within the context of a curricular system focused more on the development of skills than on curricular content, fostering team work among teachers, which drives forward activity programmes and promotes a holistic approach to the subject knowledge worked on in different languages. This model can only be applied in a context of real independence of schools, enabling them to define different language projects based on each specific sociolinguistic reality and, as such, they can single out educational initiatives and promote the widespread development of educational quality across the whole system.

This plurilingual education model has been developed using the knowledge and experience gained over the past 40 years. The approval of Act 7/1983 on Linguistic Normalisation meant that Catalan became the reference language of the education system and that education in this language was generalised, up to the present day when information and knowledge is produced and distributed in different languages. We have seen a shift from a sociolinguistic reality reflecting a population that basically spoke in either Catalan or Spanish, to a situation in which over two hundred different languages are present in today's schools.

The application of the Language Immersion Programme helped to consolidate a single educational model whose objective was to guarantee equal opportunities for all students and, consequently, social cohesion. Today, when the first language of a considerable number of students is not the teaching language of the school, we must continue to position Catalan as the main communicative language of the whole education system, ensuring all students are proficient in it and fostering its use, while also establishing the foundations to promote inclusive, plurilingual and intercultural approaches that build relationships between different cultures and between the first language and other languages, that facilitate interdisciplinarity and closer cooperation between teachers across the curriculum.

It is for this reason that this language model, which must ensure that all students acquire solid linguistic competence developed through different languages, is considered to be the fundamental axis of Catalonia's education policy.

The document is organized around three broad sections: The first section is of a conceptual nature and defines the fundamental characteristics of the model; it sets the objectives and sets out the system for the achievement and accreditation of the levels of language proficiency. The second section addresses the establishment of strategic, methodological, didactic and organizational bases best suited to the implementation of the model. And, finally, it specifies how to clearly set out the path to be followed by each centre in its language programme.

Regulatory background

The **Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia** establishes, in Article 6, that the native language in Calalonia is Catalan and that it is also the usual vehicular language and language of learning in education. Similarly, Article 20 of the **Language Policy Act 1/1998, of 7 January 1998**, establishes the Catalan language as the native language of Catalonia and of all levels of education. And the Education Act sets the linguistic system deriving from the statute which, in Article 143.1, established that the Generalitat enjoys exclusive competences over Catalonia's own language and, as such, determines the linguistic system for the education system with the aim of ensuring the linguistic normalization of Catalan. The Occitan language, known as Aranese in Val d'Aran, is the native language of this region and an official language in Catalonia, as established in the **Statute, Act 35/2010, of 1 October 2010, on Occitan, Aranese in Aran** and the Language Policy Act. Therefore, all the references made in this document to the Catalan language will apply to Occitan in the case of Aran.

Thus, Article 35.2 of the statute, which regulates the education system in Catalonia, guarantees the entire school community, whatever their habitual language may be upon starting their education, fulfilment of the duty and exercise of the right to have a sufficient oral and written level of Catalan and Spanish, in addition to Aranese, in the case of Aran. Furthermore, Article 50.6 establishes the guarantee of the use of Catalan Sign Language as a guiding principle of public policy. In accordance with Act 17/2010, of 3 June 2010, Catalan Sign Language is the native language for the signing community in Catalonia.

Article 5 of **Act 17/2010, of 3 June 2010, on Catalan Sign Language** establishes that, in the school sphere, learning is guaranteed within a bilingual educational modality, in which LSC is a teaching language in conjunction with Catalan, and the other oral and written official languages of Catalonia.

Education Act 12/2009, reinforces the importance of Catalan and the learning of it as a native language in Catalonia and its importance as a factor of social inclusion, and makes a commitment to the promotion of plurilingualism in schools, ensuring – as a minimum – a good level of learning in a third language, in accordance with Article 44.2 of the Statute.

Additionally, the curricula prescribed by the Government of the Generalitat establish the framework of basic skills necessary to achieve the effective plurilingualism of all students. These curricula present grouped objectives and linguistic content with the aim of reinforcing the standard elements in all languages and promoting the development of students' plurilingual and intercultural skills.

Decree **102/2010, of 3 August 2010, on the autonomy of educational institutions**, establishes that they are responsible for managing languages through their language programme.

And, finally, in **Decree 150/2017, of 17 October 2017, on the educational care of students within an inclusive education system**, Article 1 plans a range of measures and support aimed at all students, with the aim of promoting personal and social development, advancing their achievement of skills from each educational stage and their transition to adult life, within the framework of an inclusive educational system.

Based on this regulatory framework, **the Catalan Government designs the language education policy with the aim of providing students with a strong communicative competence** – based on a command of the vehicular language, Catalan and/or Occitan, as a guarantee of educational quality and equality, and of the development of student plurlingualism – **which allow them to develop and function in the society where they live and in the global environment, and give them the linguistic and cognitive skills required by new job market needs**.

This language policy is in line with the European Union common policies which promote specific goals to achieve by 2020, among which the one referring to command of several languages must be highlighted, which is set as an international indicator of employability and which is valued as a collective asset that must be promoted to enhance coexistence and competitiveness in the current world.

Language at the centre of learning: as a fundamental instrument for the personal, social, academic and professional development of all students, and as a guarantee of social cohesion and equality

In the ***Rethinking education*** document, which accompanies the strategy and was approved by the European Commission in November 2012, language learning is recognised as an essential tool for lifelong learning and a European indicator for language competence is proposed which fixes, with regards to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, the level of knowledge that students must reach by the end of their compulsory education – B1 level in their first foreign language at the end of compulsory education – and a recommendation: at least 75% of students in the first year of secondary education must be learning at least two foreign languages.

The Catalan government defines the language model for the education system by placing language at the centre of learning: as a fundamental instrument for the personal, social, academic and professional development of all students, and as a guarantee of social cohesion and equality.

I. The language model of the Catalan education system: a plurilingual and intercultural model

In Catalonia, there is a long tradition of commitment to a plurilingual educational model. Ever since the mechanisms of self-government were recovered in 1978, a school system has been chosen that enables all students, regardless of their family origin, to know the two official languages, and Aranese in Aran, to the same level when they finish their studies, and have knowledge of at least one foreign language.

Since the early 1980s, the vehicular language of learning and habitual use at school is Catalan and, in environments where students are predominantly non-Catalan speakers, the methodological strategies of the language immersion programmes are incorporated.

With regard to this model, the High Level Group on Multilingualism, created by the European Commission in 2005, published a **report** in 2007 in which praise was given to, among other questions, the bilingual education model followed in Catalonia. Together with other experiences, the Catalan education system was considered as an example to be followed to promote language learning. In fact, it was stated that "Bilingual communities comprised of speakers of *regional* or minority languages and of majority languages are good practice laboratories relevant to the EU's aim of promoting multilingualism across the Union".

The vehicular language of learning and of habitual use at school is Catalan and, in environments where students are predominantly non-Catalan speakers, the methodological strategies of the language immersion programmes are incorporated.

The same text refers to the *know how* acquired in bilingual schools in the Basque Country, Galicia, Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and the Valencian Country, "where sophisticated methods of language immersion and special teacher training programmes had been in place for decades".

Currently, after applying this educational model for more than 40 years, Catalonia's new generations of citizens, who are finishing their compulsory education, are in a position to express themselves, both orally and in writing, in both official languages, and also in Aranese in the Val d'Aran, as demonstrated by all objective studies carried out both in Catalonia and by the State.

When they complete compulsory education, they are in a position to express themselves, both orally and in writing, in both official languages, and also in Aranese in the Val d'Aran.

Knowledge of the Catalan language guarantees equal rights for all students and has under no circumstances caused knowledge of Spanish to drop. The results of Spanish exams agreed upon between the National Institute of Evaluation and Quality of the Education System (INECSE) of the Ministry of Education and the Higher Council for Evaluation of the Education System of the Department of

Education which were developed and applied between 1998 and 2003 in Catalonia and the rest of the Spain, showed no significant differences between the results from Catalonia and those from the rest of Spain, showing that students in Catalonia and those in the rest of Spain have the same level of Spanish.

Knowledge of the two official languages to the same level has been possible because Catalan is the language normally used language in the education system, which acts as a compensatory element of the linguistic uses in our societies, as such it can be said that the school system in Catalonia has managed, effectively, to make the entire population that has gone through it bilingual. In addition, Catalan language teaching in educational institutions has become one of the key elements maintaining the intergenerational transmission of Catalan and also ensures that knowledge and use of this language extends to society as a whole. In particular, at the start of the 21st century, the arrival in Catalonia of very large numbers of people from places around the world has added sociolinguistic complexity to the system and, thus, also educational complexity, but has also provided an opportunity for very significant linguistic and cultural enrichment.

Knowledge of both official languages to the same level has been possible because Catalan is the language that is normally used.

Furthermore, the processes of globalization in the economy and cultural industries clearly benefit the major international languages and languages that are stronger in demographic, economic and political terms. Therefore, the majority of language communities have to protect their linguistic space. In the case of Catalan, one of the protection instruments, agreed and approved by the citizens of Catalonia, is the fact that the Catalan language is considered the backbone of the education system and the key element in guaranteeing the social cohesion and communicative competence of the population in both official languages.

Command of various languages is essential to interact in linguistic and cultural contexts that are complex and open to the world.

Recognising the success of language immersion as an effective methodology for guaranteeing knowledge of the official languages, we have to increase the knowledge of other languages that are essential for interacting in complex and diverse linguistic and cultural contexts such as ours. This means that the education system must be directed at training plurilingual speakers, adapting the linguistic model in such a way as to ensure the entire school population learns other languages.

Even so, in the process of pedagogical change and renewal taking place in our educational environment – in which the main focus in the learning process is shifting to the learner, and knowledge-building is being developed in a participative and collaborative way and. as such, peer learning takes on a very significant role – it is necessary to ensure that the school continues being the context of use for the language we wish to protect, Catalan, and that students do not miss opportunities to use the minority or foreign languages when they are used to convey content.

Given the linguistic and cultural composition of our society, the requirements of cultural, economic and academic internationalisation, and the results of research in the field of language learning, we are directing the Catalan education system towards a language model with a plurilingual and intercultural focus.

1. Characteristics of the plurilingual and intercultural educational model

The concept of plurilingualism, according to Council of Europe documents, can be understood from a threefold perspective: as a **capacity**, which all speakers have from using and learning – independently or through instruction – more than one language; as a **skill**, which any person has from using their partial knowledge of various languages and their experience of different cultures, for communicating and participating in intercultural activities; and as an **attitude** of tolerance towards diversity. Furthermore, the fact of being plurilingual is also becoming an **educational value** because the speakers' awareness of their own plurilingualism promotes an appreciation of all native and foreign languages. This concept is given strength and structure through the teaching language – in our context, Catalan. And is materialised in the repertoire of languages that the speaker can use.

The ***Guide for the Development of Educational Language Policies in Europe*** from the Council of Europe (2007) defines plurilingualism as a skill that can be acquired. All speakers are potentially plurilingual since they have the ability to acquire various languages and they do so with varying levels of expertise and, therefore, their linguistic repertoire is not homogeneous.

Being plurlingual does not mean being completely fluent in a large number of languages, but rather acquiring the skill to use more than one linguistic variety with different levels of expertise and for different purposes.

Plurilingual skills are, therefore, transversal and extend to all languages acquired or learnt. As reiterated by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, this skill is not "the result of a superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences [...] but rather [...] a complex competence" that is not only linguistic but also has an important cultural aspect.

Plurilingual skills are transversal because they extend to all languages learnt

Plurilingual education, thus, has three key objectives:

- Make learners aware of their linguistic and cultural repertoire, and appreciate it.
- Expand and improve the learners' general communicative competence.
- Provide all learners with the means to develop this competence independently throughout their lives.

Becoming aware of one's own linguistic repertoire helps to better understand the linguistic repertoires of others, it helps to recognize other language and cultural communities and facilitates interaction through mutual respect and inclusion. Respecting the languages of a speaker, making an effort to learn and use other languages, even if only partially, are prerequisites for the exercise of democratic citizenship, given that they are the expression of the acceptance of linguistic difference.

On this basis, the implementation of a plurlingual educational model implies:

- Awakening plurilingual awareness in learners to promote democratic values such as tolerance and respect for differences.
- Promoting a school system where learners develop a heterogeneous level of fluency in the languages and acquire intercultural skills.

- Coordinating teaching of all the languages to increase cohesion and synergy between the vehicular language, the languages of the learner and foreign languages, and focussing on the language element in all the subjects.
- Guaranteeing coherence between the different stages of education.

As such, plurilingual education goes further than the teaching of several languages. It implies that all languages share the same purpose - the development of speakers' communicative competence - and it involves the use of different languages as a vehicle for the acquisition of new knowledge.

However, speaking of plurilingualism also implies speaking of pluriculturalism and interculturality because it is impossible to separate a language form the culture that it carries with it.

If the main objective of plurilingual education is developing this ability to use the skills that exist in different languages and to apply them in different contexts, "pluriculturalism" develops when the linguistic and cultural skills that an individual has in each of the languages he or she knows become modified by knowledge of other languages and cultures, and contribute to the birth of intercultural awareness (***Council of Europe, Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education. 2016***). In this way, students develop a richer and more complex personality, and are prepared for the acquisition of other languages and for the knowledge of other cultures. As a result, they can easily navigate between a wide range of cultural contexts and, by doing so, develop a new identity which is not limited to one single cultural perspective.

The aim is to promote skills and an education which enable us to live together and improve our quality of life as a collective.

The plurilingualism of the student body is a realistic and attainable goal if it is accepted that the linguistic repertoires which are developed through education may be diverse, that the languages which shape plurilingual skills do not have to be learnt to the same level, and that language learning has a place throughout life and not only during schooling.

From this perspective, it is not just about deciding which languages should be spoken and how this should be done, but rather it is about formulating objectives for language education that are aimed at developing a single competence which includes all languages (the language used at home, the language of schooling, foreign languages, etc.). This organisational principle implies designing plurilingual education from the context of intercultural education and education democratic citizenship.

Developing plurilingualism does not only meet a functional need: it is also an essential component for democratic behaviour

2. Aims of Catalonia's plurilingual and intercultural educational model

In our context, this plurilingual and intercultural educational model is summarised in the following aims:

- Provide students with plurilingual and intercultural skills which guarantee, upon completing compulsory education, a good command of the official languages, Catalan, Spanish and Occitan in Aran, and of Catalan Sign Language - if applicable - and sufficient skills in one or two additional languages, as well as the ability to live together in a multilingual and multicultural society.
- Reinforce the role of the Catalan language as the language of reference in the education system and encourage its use among students.
- Enable students to use all the languages in their personal repertoire for pleasure and aesthetic creation, for critical analysis and social action through language, and to behave in an ethical and responsible way in questions of local and global importance.
- Develop students' ability to use their plurilingual skills to process information transmitted in different languages with the aim of building new knowledge.
- Give greater presence in schools to the languages and cultures of students with other family languages; to promote their recognition, to emphasize their cultural and economic value, and to promote their educational integration.
- Awaken students' curiosity for other languages and cultures, provide them with knowledge of what they are like and how they work, and encourage their independence to learn them throughout their lives.

Taking into account these objectives and in accordance with the current regulatory framework, the Catalan model for language education is being developed using the following building blocks:

1. The Catalan language and Occitan in Aran are the official languages of reference and the languages normally used in the instructional, administrative and communication fields, and form the cornerstone of a plurilingual education project.
2. The curricular languages (Catalan, Spanish and foreign languages) are treated as teaching languages and as vehicles for content during class time and school time in accordance with each institution's language projects.
3. Non-curricular languages, particularly when they are the language of students and families with other family languages, play a role of integration and equality by raising awareness, respect, recognition, and openness toward the learning of all languages. Likewise, the formal teaching of these languages, as an optional subject within the curriculum or as an extracurricular activity, helps to increase the number of foreign languages that students can learn and demonstrate, and increases our society's cultural wealth and competitiveness.
4. Reception and language support for students with other family languages takes place in Catalan in accordance with the following specific measures: a welcome plan, a newcomers' class, and language and social support. These students are provided with a personalised plan which adapts the curriculum to their immediate learning needs and which evaluates their learning processes in relation to the objectives set out in this plan.
5. For the remainder of students with specific educational support needs, measures and support are planned and the criteria to be used to assess their achievement of linguistic and communicative competence are set out in their personalised plan.

3. Achievement and accreditation of knowledge: the levels of language proficiency

3.1. The official languages and the first foreign language

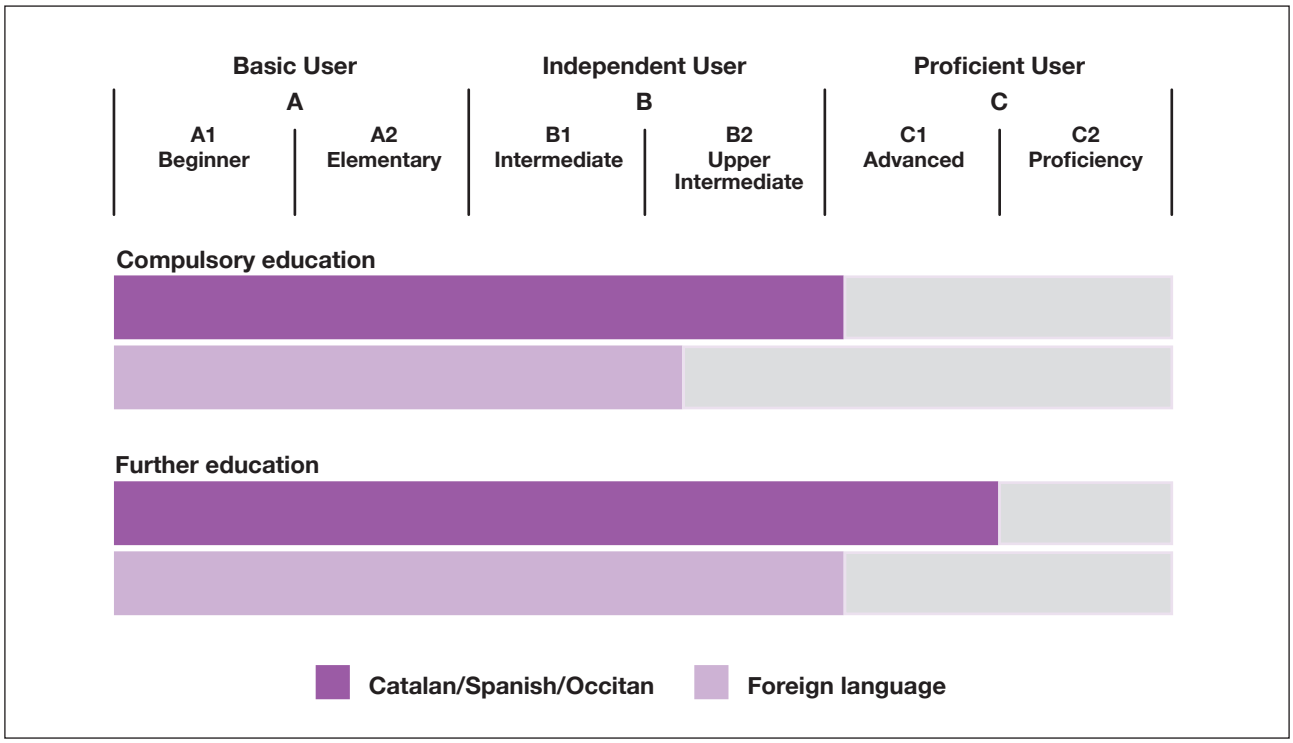
Upon completing compulsory education, students must be able to use Catalan, Spanish, and Aranese in Aran normally and correctly, as well as at least one foreign language. This means that students must have achieved the oral and written knowledge set by the curriculum for this stage of education, which corresponds to the following knowledge levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Language of the Council of Europe:

- B2 level in Catalan, Spanish and Occitan in Aran
- B1 level in the first foreign language

In order to ensure perfection of the students' knowledge and use of languages, when receiving the baccalaureate certificate it is necessary to have attained knowledge of both official languages of Catalonia, of Aranese where applicable, and of the foreign languages set by the corresponding curricula for this stage of education and in accordance with the following levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Language:

- C1 level in Catalan, Spanish and Occitan in Aran
- B2 level in the first foreign language

TABLE 1 LANGUAGE LEVEL



3.2. The second foreign language and student heritage languages

During compulsory education, institutions must offer students the opportunity to learn at least one second foreign language.

The institution's language programme must determine which foreign languages are on offer and specify which are to be taught as a first foreign language and which as a second.

The aim is for students to attain, at least:

- A2 level in the second foreign language by the end of secondary education
- B1 level in the second foreign language by the end of Baccalaureate education

The second foreign language may be curricular, either an international language or the home language of students with other family languages.

To prevent the learning of a curricular or non-curricular (heritage) language from stalling after it beginning it in primary education, it is necessary to promote its continuity in secondary institutions in the area. And, in order to make the learning of this second language effective, it must be offered on all secondary courses.

The second foreign language may be curricular, either an international language or the home language in the case of students with other family languages

A non-curricular second foreign language may be given during school time if the institution has teachers (from the system or visiting) who are qualified to do so.

This second language may also be recognised by language knowledge gained outside of school time, through official language schools or institutions dedicated to training and accreditation of language knowledge, or in the Ministry of Education's language specific programmes. This academic recognition can translate into a validation for courses (a foreign language elective) at secondary level and into the incorporation of accreditations of language knowledge on the student's academic transcript.

3.3. Recognition of non-formal and informal learning

Given that languages are learnt by using them, it is clear that the uses transcend the school setting. Formal education – characteristic of the structured education system – only covers one aspect of the language learning that results. In recent years, above all following the increase in mobility of people and the consolidation of the digital society, opportunities to come into contact with other languages have grown tremendously. It is obvious that this growth in the degree of exposure to different languages encourages plurilingualism in learners, who acquire knowledge through non-formal and informal learning paths.

We understand non-formal learning to be the by-product of planned activities in terms of duration and learning objectives which have an educational purpose and usually include a teacher-learner relation. Language academy courses and language stays abroad are part of non-formal learning. By contrast, informal learning is the result of daily activities related to family and leisure; it is not organized or structured by objectives, time commitment or learning support, and its intention is not usually learning.

The challenge, in these cases, is recognising and validating all this non-formal and informal learning, and accrediting it. In fact, validation of this learning has been a political priority in Europe for the last fifteen years. In this regard, it is worth remembering the appearance of the European Union's ***European Qualification Framework*** (EQF) in 2008, a device to relate different European countries' national qualifications systems and facilitate the collection of learning experiences. Later, in 2012, the Council of the European Union called on member states to establish provisions for the validation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired non-formally and informally through open educational resources, and to obtain total and partial qualifications on the basis of non-formal and informal learning experiences (European Union, 2012: C/398 3). This recommendation already made reference to specific tools, such as **Europass** and **Youthpass**, devices which share the objective of helping citizens to present their skills and qualifications in an effective way in order to find work or access to studies.

The challenge is recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning, and accrediting it.

In our context, validation of language learning obtained in non-formal situations takes place both through the use of tools such as Europass - which is used to validate skills attained by teachers and students who have carried out a mobility activity within the Erasmus+ programme, and also through the acceptance and recognition of language certificates and qualifications issued by entities external to the education system.

Additionally, the value generally given to accrediting language knowledge within society and, especially, by businesses, makes it necessary to find devices which facilitate the incorporation of language accreditations obtained in non-formal learning environments into students' academic transcripts.

Finally, with regard to the recognition and validation of language knowledge obtained in informal learning situations, mention must be made of the Council of Europe's **European Language Portfolios** (ELP), a predecessor to the Europass tool, which is now linked to it, designed with the aim of facilitating and promoting the recording of plurilingual skills. The ELP is a document with an educational and informative aim which has three elements: the language passport, the language biography and the portfolio. The ELP (and its electronic version, the eELP) allows people who are studying or have learnt one or more language, to gather the results of their language learning and of their intercultural experience in a systematic way, and at the same time it helps them reflect on their learning process. These devices should be considered not only as tools for collecting evidence of learning (documents produced, certificates and qualifications obtained, description of language experience, knowledge obtained in work environments, or mobility programmes, etc.), but also as tools that facilitate the learner's self-evaluation, reflection on their level of knowledge in each language and culture they know and on their own learning strategies; and they are tools that facilitate decision-making as regards widening and consolidating their knowledge.

Therefore, these tools have a potential which goes much further than each learner's personal use and the personal benefits it may bring them (justifying language knowledge when looking for work, for example). They are tools which facilitate and promote the student's learning process and, as such, are suitable for use in a school context of formal learning.

4. Language uses in the education system

The Language Normalisation Act 7/1983, of 18 April 1983, declared Catalan to be the native language of the four main areas of the Generalitat's language policy: administration of Catalonia, place names and signage, means of communication of the Generalitat and non-university education. This consideration of Catalan as a native language - a language of reference - has been reinforced by all posterior laws (The 1987 Language Policy Act, the 2006 Statute of Autonomy, the 2009 Education Act).

In the field of education, legislation determines the existence of a single education model, coupled with the Catalan language, with the aim of making it possible for the entire population in Catalonia to have the opportunity to learn both official languages. As such, it determines not to separate students in different institutions for language reasons, and it guarantees that, upon completing compulsory education, students demonstrate an adequate knowledge of Catalan and Spanish, no matter what their habitual language may be when they began their education. Likewise, it states that teachers must know both official languages and determines that institutions must make the Catalan language the normal means of expression and communication, both in internal and external activities.

Institutions must make the Catalan language the normal means of expression and communication, both in internal activities and in outreach activities.

This decision, which complies with criteria for effectiveness set out in the language policies, has the aim of guaranteeing preferential place to the use of the less socially powerful language in order to make it more present, to counteract the prevailing uses in society and thus guarantee its survival and continuity as a language of use.

TABLE 2 SCHOOL LANGUAGES

Language of reference	Curricular languages	Other languages
The language of communication and school life	Languages of instruction and of learning as a subject	Elective subject (school time) or extracurricular subject
Catalan Occitan (in Val d'Aran)	Catalan, Spanish, Occitan, English, French, German, Italian	Languages of students with other family languages

For this reason, it is important that internal and administrative activities, oral and written communication between the school and external agents, as well as documentation issued, is preferably in Catalan, or Occitan in Aran, which are the reference languages of the education system. At the same time, it is important that teachers' pre-

sentations in learning and assessment tasks, as well as interactions between teachers and students, are conducted in Catalan, except in cases when the objective is to promote knowledge and use of other languages. Although signs in school areas should be in Catalan, or Aranese in Aran, it is also important to ensure that other languages, both curricular ones as well as heritage languages of students, can be seen in the physical space, especially through exhibitions showing students' work.

Similarly, in order to achieve social cohesion and educational continuity in the teaching and use of the Catalan language, and of Aranese in Aran, education centres must coordinate their actions with surrounding institutions and entities. And they must make these languages the normal means of expression in cultural and public events and in their outreach activities, to strengthen them and give them value and to increase their social presence, especially in environments where they are less used.

In addition, education centres must offer curricular and extracurricular activities to students that involve the use of the foreign or home languages of students, as prioritized in the language programme, such as twinning and access to cultural products, films, programmes or games in their original languages, books and magazines in print and digital form, language trips, participation in online networks, etc., which lead to the effective improvement of student plurilingualism.

In view of this, school management teams must pass on information about the uses of language at the school, as agreed upon in the linguistic project, to the professionals responsible for the management of non-teaching activities, such as the school canteen or extracurricular activities. They should highlight the educational value and set out courses of action to ensure the presence of the Catalan language and the other languages prioritized in the language programme, encouraging students to use them and promoting communicative competence and educational activities for coexistence in diversity.

All these actions enable schools to establish coherent uses of language that help to harmonise knowledge of languages and opportunities for using them, since having a good knowledge of a language is not enough to use it.

In addition to all these points, we must also remember the key part played by teachers as role models. Raising awareness of the importance of using language in a professional way and expressing oneself in the best way possible, is a key way to ensure the quality of the teaching delivered.

For this reason, Catalan is not only a target language of learning. It is the language of the institution and, thus, the language of habitual use in all of its areas, in relations with the education community and with all the social strata in general.

II. Implementing the model: methodological, didactic and organisational strategies

1. The quality of language education: a prerequisite for educational quality

Starting from the premise that the idea of quality is linked to the purpose of education: personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies and preparation for the working world, the quality of language education is key. We know that school failure is, partly, a result of inadequate control of a wide range of language forms and that having control of the teaching language prevents students from leaving school early. As such, guaranteeing a good command of the schooling language or languages helps a great deal to ensure equality, social inclusion and education quality.

As such, guaranteeing a good control of the schooling language or languages helps a great deal to ensure equality, social inclusion and education quality

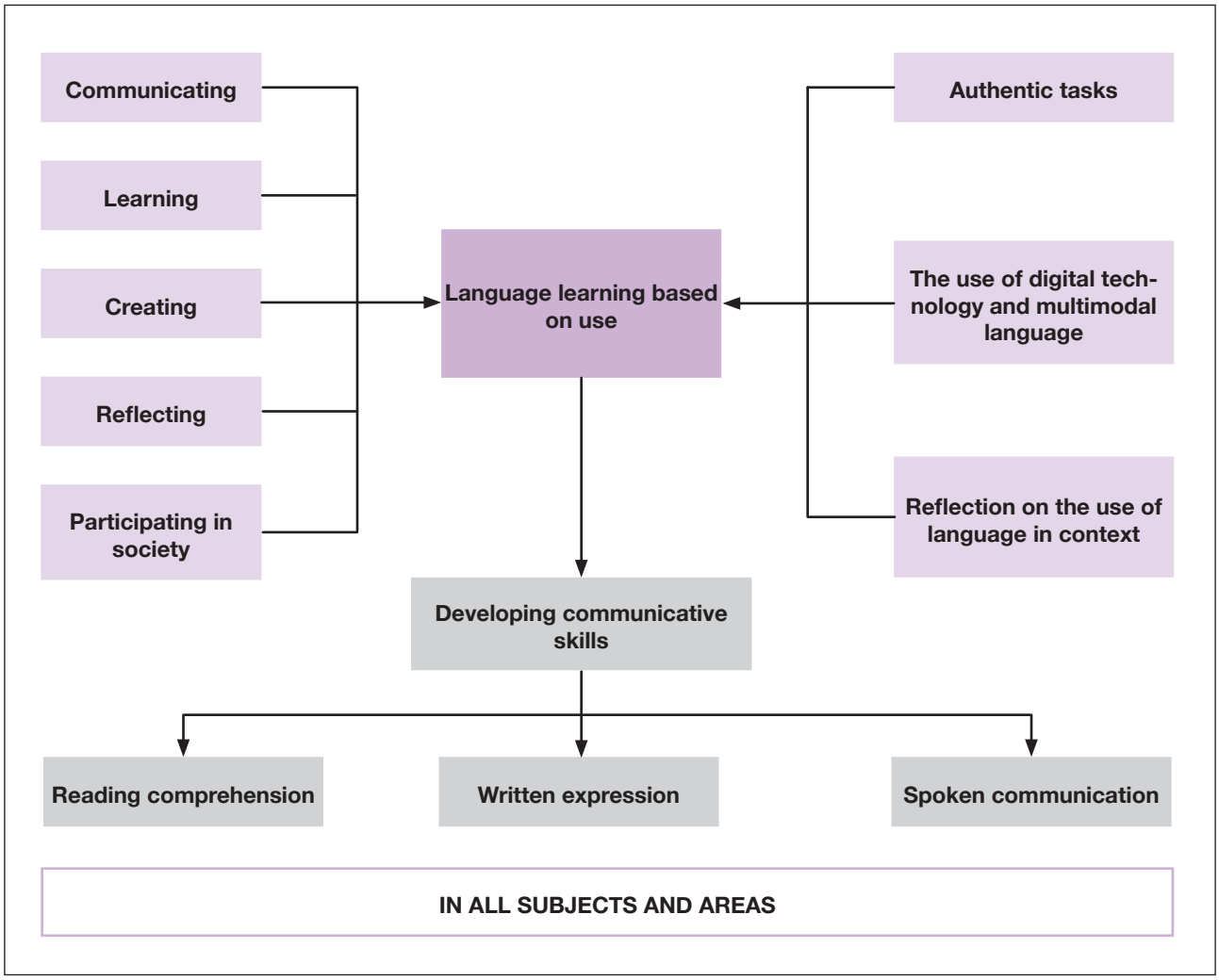
In this respect, we understand that mastery of language and communicative competence is a basic requirement to ensure a quality education. For this reason we place it at the heart of learning. (***Recommendation CM/Rec (2014)5 of the Committee of Ministers the importance of competences in the language(s) of schooling for equity and quality in education and for educational success***).

Mastery of language skills and communicative competence is a basic requirement to ensure a quality education.

Consequently, it is very important to emphasize in the work of all the strategies that, transversally, build linguistic and communicative competence, and facilitate the learning of language structures, genres, and text types in all of dimensions (oral and written comprehension and production).

Language skills and communicative competence, in other words the language system (concepts and structures) develop, in our model, from the Catalan language, which is the vehicular language of reference, at the same time as working on the transfer of communicative and academic knowledge into other languages.

TABLE 3 COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE



2. Teaching languages using a comprehensive methodological approach

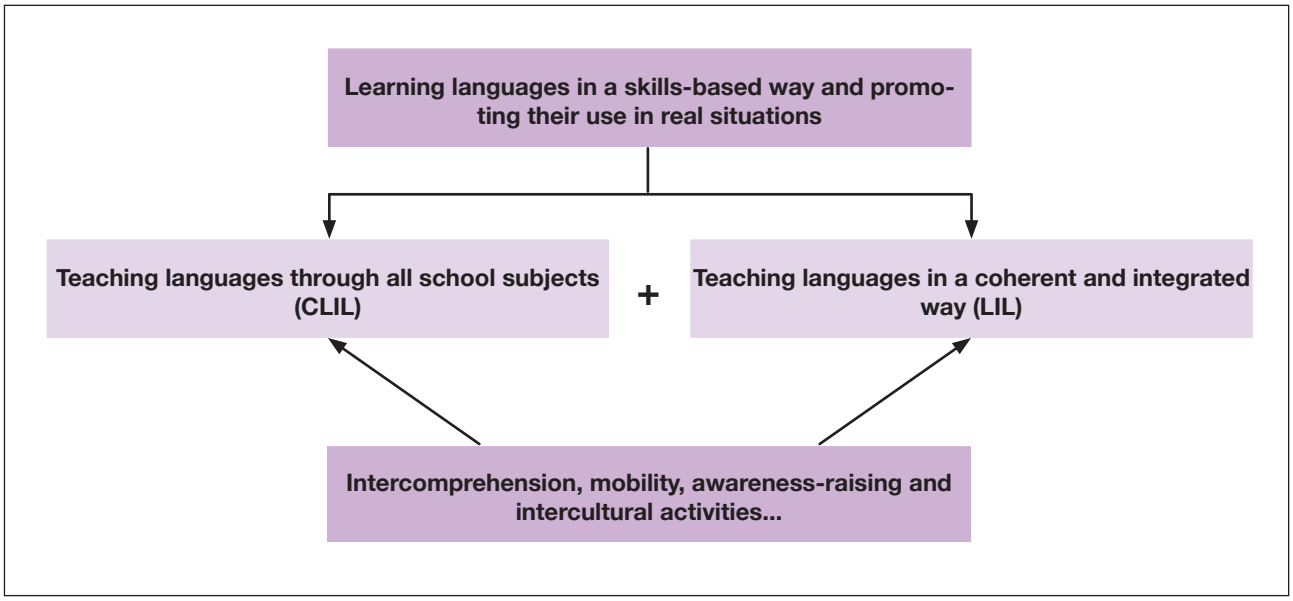
For the satisfactory implementation of a plurilingual and intercultural education, the ***Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education***, published in 2015 by the Council of Europe, proposes various methodological approaches and supplementary activities. These approaches, often described as "plural", do not contradict the individual methods used to teach the different languages; to the contrary, they are complimentary and designed as strategies that reinforce each of the languages within a learner's linguistic repertoire.

Unlike other approaches based on knowledge or skills, the plurilingual approach promotes the ability of students to comprehensively put into practice the acquired knowledge, abilities and personality traits which help them to deal with various situations, to use them in different contexts and situations, and, above all, to develop strategies for lifelong learning. This approach, based on questions not only of language, but also questions related to cog-

nitive processing and conceptual issues, is a fundamental element for the joint use of languages in a plurilingual education model which also takes cultural elements into account.

The two most complex and demanding approaches, both from the point of view of the objectives of language learning and use, as well as with regard to teacher training, which allow us to advance in this overall conception of language learning, are those that are based on language integrated learning (LIL) on the one hand, and content and language integrated learning (CLIL) on the other. These two approaches have key role in the implementation of plurilingual education and, as such, are fundamental to our system's language model.

TABLE 4 OVERALL CONCEPTION OF LANGUAGE LEARNING



Language integrated learning and content and language integrated learning (LIL and CLIL) promote a comprehensive approach through a joint perspective on the teaching and vehicular use of languages, which is a fundamental element for the organization of a plurilingual education model that shapes the curriculum and its development from a new perspective.

Other approaches, such as working on intercultural skills, intercomprehension, activities to raise awareness of linguistic diversity (awaken language skills) and openness to other cultures, real or virtual mobility activities, etc. are considered supplementary and integrable in any of the approaches mentioned.

All of these methods, approaches and activities form a plurilingual pedagogy through which plurilingual and intercultural education becomes the integrative framework.

2.1. Language integrated learning

Language Integrated Learning (LIL) is a methodological strategy based on the communicative approach to language teaching and it is applicable to learning situations in which different languages coexist. LIL recommends collaborative work between the teachers of the different school languages based on all the elements that these languages have in common, and facilitates student skill development, a more in-depth and meaningful active learning, conducted in all languages. This approach promotes language teaching based on common methodological principles in order to facilitate the transfer of knowledge between languages.

LIL recommends collaborative work between different language teachers

The application of LIL in multilingual contexts is supported by disciplines such as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and text linguistics.

LIL promotes knowledge transfer between languages

Psycholinguistics reminds us that all languages are acquired through interaction and from similar acquisition and learning strategies, that plurilingual learners use the underlying competence common to all languages (Cummins, 1983), and that these learners apply the strategies acquired from their first language to learn other languages. And this is possible because the skills that they develop in one language and another are not isolated in the speaker's cognitive system but rather are part of their "core operating system".

Sociolinguists, for their part, present language as a social product and highlight the diversity of elements that can be analysed in all languages: attitudes towards languages and their speakers, the relative importance of social, geographical and cultural varieties, and contextual factors, etc.

Finally, text linguistics highlights that both knowledge of types of text and discursive genres, as well as procedural knowledge in relation to the structure and organization of information, are common to all languages. Consequently, this implies that a large part of language content can be worked on by grouping and integrating it into language activity and through discursive genres.

Beyond coordination of language teaching, this approach also promotes conscious metalinguistic reflection on the part of the student and the contrast between linguistic forms, which favours in-depth learning in all languages and subjects. However, the implementation of LIL will only be successful if some basic principles which affect all language teaching are taken into account:

• **Language activities should be directed towards strengthening key skills**. The core skills (described in the Ministry of Education documents on ***Basic Skills in the Field of Languages***), thinking skills (critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, communication, collaboration) and personal skills (curiosity, initiative, persistence, adaptability, resilience, cultural and social awareness) promoting cooperative work with meaningful didactic proposals based on authentic communicative situations.

• **Language teaching should be based on use**. Teaching and learning a language from an approach based on its use leads to the consideration of text as a unit of communication understood in the broad sense (multimodal or

pluricode - texts that combine verbal text, typography resources, photos, drawings, maps, graphics, videos, image, sound, movement, music, multimedia documents, etc.) A use oriented approach also involves starting from textual genres as a basic unit of communication, given that they are the result of the declarative activity of humans in different areas of communication and, thus, are linked to the context in which they occur and to the social and cultural worlds which claim them as their own product.

• **Metalinguistic reflection reinforces learning both in relation to the language that is being learnt and in relation to the other languages that the student knows**. Traditionally, reflection on the language system has been reserved for first languages and, in contrast, attention to use has been recommended as a priority for second and third foreign languages. Nevertheless, any language use involves a certain degree of ability to analyse the functioning and idiosyncrasies of the language system that is used because analytical knowledge of the language system and control of its use are interdependent (Bialystok, 1991). Thus, it is advisable to promote metalinguistic reflection in each language and, at the same time, search for the most appropriate spaces and moments to compare the similarities and differences between target language systems.

• **The mechanisms of language transfer must be made explicit**. All plurilingual speakers unconsciously use mechanisms of language transfer which they have developed throughout their experience in the learning and use of several languages. Student ability to transfer knowledge from one language to another can be improved if this mechanism is consciously and systematically incorporated in the classroom. Use of this mechanism can be accomplished in various ways: through cross-comprehension activities (comprehension, particularly reading comprehension, of texts in one language using knowledge of another language and the identification of common linguistic elements), promoting the acquisition of a new linguistic element based on its similarity with a known element in another language; proactively, reflecting on the differences in the form, meaning and use of certain linguistic elements before the error is made (medio-mediano // medi-mitjà-mitjan), or, reactively, once the error has already been made (*provar* instead of *tastar* or *emprovar*; *fabrica* instead of *factory*, etc.)

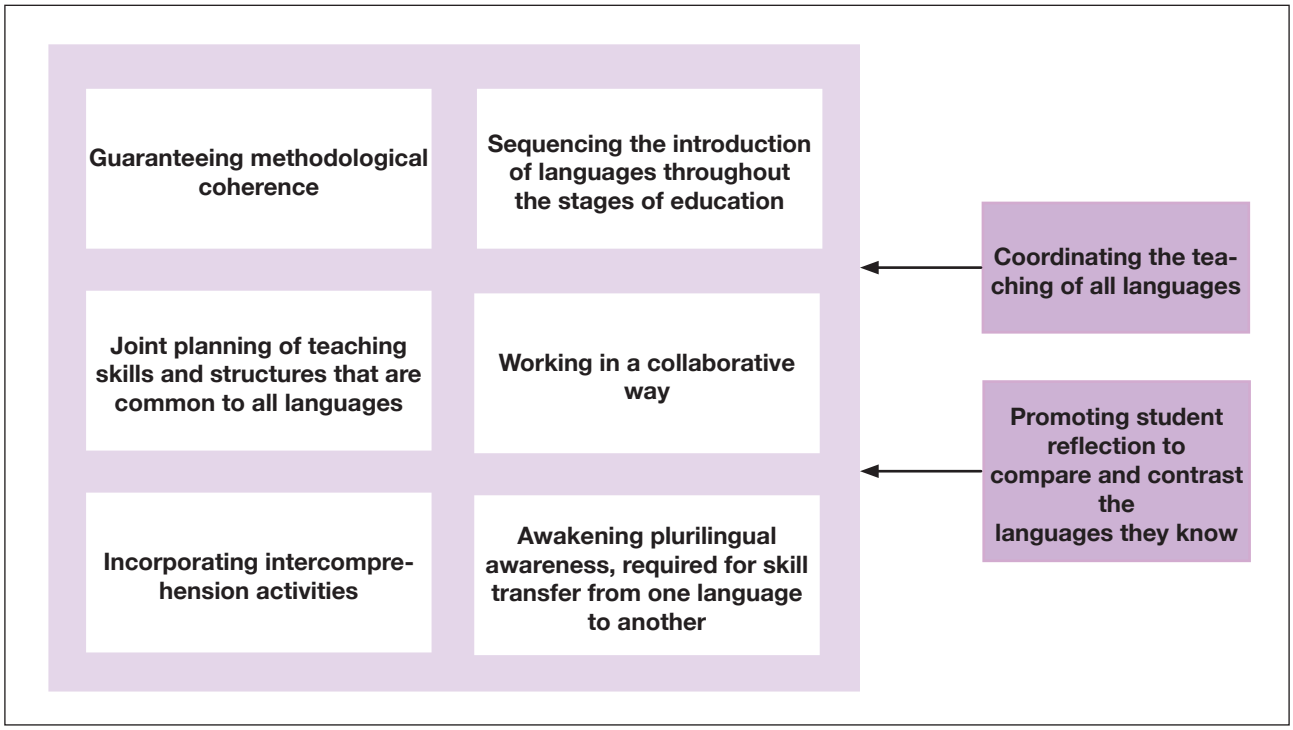
• **Student language awareness must be developed in all languages**. Promoting respect for diversity for an education in democratic values is a shared goal in all languages and subjects, and at all stages of education.

• **Recognition of student languages must take place in all languages and subjects**. In a multilingual and multicultural context like ours, placing value on student languages also involves accepting a controlled use of these languages as a strategy for strengthening the target language or languages for learning (Cummins, 2007). This strategy should not imply, however, the reduction of the student's use of the teaching language, either in oral interactions or in written ones. Neither should it imply a decrease in the teacher's use of the target language. In this regard, it is worth remembering the importance of guaranteeing a good-quality continued use of the target teaching language on the part of teachers, with the aim that language input for the learner be as rich and significant as possible.

• **Taking advantage of the teaching potential of code-switching methods(translanguaging)**. Translanguage activities such as reading texts in one language and spoken discussion of the texts' content in another, intra or interlinguistic transformation activities (from one type of text to another, from oral speech to written, or vice versa), promote more in-depth learning of a subject.

Putting this approach into practice in the classroom means working on areas common to languages (general language concepts, procedures and linguistic reflection habits, attitudes of respect and appreciation, etc) from

TABLE 5 LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING



any language. Furthermore, it means promoting methodological consistency, in the sense that all languages will be taught using a common and agreed method, which emphasises communicative and use-oriented learning.

From the point of view of curricular organisation and teacher planning in the classroom, **integrated language teaching implies an appropriate selection and sequencing of language learning content for each language and stage, in order to avoid unnecessary redundancies and to focus on the specific and distinguishing traits of each language.** It also drives the development of classroom activities which involve active and passive use of more than one language. This approach strengthens and improves the design of integrated communication projects: organised sequences of activities which are based on a functional objective, develop curricular topics that are of interest to students, and which incorporate evaluation as a fundamental part of learning, culminating in a final spoken or written project. These types of projects boost the functionality of language lessons and have an impact on the general learning of students.

Implementing integrated language teaching in an educational institution in order to promote a more effective development of student plurilingual skills implies designing and implementing the following actions:

- Organising language teaching throughout the different stages of education - establishing the order and moment for the incorporation of each language and considering both the sociolinguistic context of the school, as well as student results in language skills.
- Language teachers collaboratively planning the objectives, content and evaluation criteria of the different languages, both from the course perspective (horizontal programming) and from the stage perspective (vertical programming).
- Guaranteeing a language education based on shared and common methodological principles.

- Creating organizational structures that promote collaborative work among language teachers and efficient timetable management.
- Bringing into the classroom skills-based language activities, intercomprehension methods and metalinguistic reflection that facilitate interlinguistic transfer, and communication projects which involve several languages in a consistent and integrated way.
- Organising and promoting academic and non-academic activities which awaken language awareness in learners and strengthen attitudes of openness and respect towards other languages and cultures (present in the classroom or not).

2.2. Content and language integrated learning

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a methodological approach focused on teaching language and content in an integrated way in all areas or subjects, and it recommends collaborative work between teachers of the various school languages and teachers of subjects that are given in each of these languages, promoting more in-depth and meaningful active learning. Paying attention to language in these curricular subjects and areas helps students to further their understanding of the subject and to learn. For these reasons, CLIL is an indispensable approach for improving the level of all students in all areas and subjects, and also for dealing with the complexity and diversity inherent in any plurilingual and intercultural language model.

Paying attention to language in these curricular subjects and areas helps students to further their understanding of the subject as well as to learn more and better.

The implementation of CLIL is suitable,

- Because some linguistic, cognitive and strategic content – what we call academic language – is easier to work with when integrated into non-language areas rather than in the area of language.
- Because the academic content of subjects is better learnt if the language resources needed to acquire it are taken into account, either in the native language, in a second language or in a foreign language.
- Because use of foreign languages as a medium for learning other subjects, in CLIL in a foreign language programmes, allows students to obtain superior skills in these languages without directly increasing the number of teaching hours.
- Because non-Catalan speakers cannot be expected to master the main schooling language before learning the subject content and, as such, learning must be simultaneous with language acquisition.

All curricular areas offer optimal environments for language learning where language is acquired through authentic tasks and materials, which meet student needs and interests and which guarantee their motivation. And, in addition, they diversify the areas of use, in relation to conventional language classes, and promote the acquisition of a wide variety of spoken and written text genres, using both receptive and productive skills.

Furthermore, although this knowledge can be expressed in other semiotic systems, such as mathematics, it must also be verbalised in discussion. Language, thus, has an epistemic and heuristic function in learning: it is not only a medium for transmission, but a space for the creation of knowledge (Beacco *et al*, 2015a; 2015b).

2.2.1. CLIL as a response to linguistic and cultural diversity

Although CLIL has its origin in the first immersion programmes, in its present form it is not only essential to the teaching and learning of a second or foreign language, but rather, in the most recent research, the idea is taking shape that it is also the most suitable approach to learn the main language of communication. Opting for CLIL methodology for teaching curricular subjects and areas makes sense in the current sociolinguistic setting, in which Catalan is not the family language or language of use for a large number of students in the education system and in which current institutional composition is highly diverse, with students from different language and cultural backgrounds, different skill levels in the language of communication, and different levels of subject knowledge and control of academic language.

In this setting of diversity, CLIL provides teachers with tools to adapt their didactic response to classroom diversity and thus meet the needs of all students in all subjects:

- Provide in-depth learning for native students, both those who are attending school in L1 and those who are doing so in L2
- Helping students with other family languages, who are learning the language at the same time as the subject content, to not fall behind their native-born classmates.
- Increasing knowledge of foreign languages.

Emphasizing the importance of language teaching in all subjects promotes the academic success of all students and, particularly, the most vulnerable ones – both those with other family languages and those of deprived socio-economic and sociocultural backgrounds, which can influence learning.

Simplifying language and even providing explanations and readings in a colloquial register to improve the understanding of students with difficulties is not good practice.

2.2.2. The difficulties of academic language

As the curriculum incorporates knowledge from the various disciplines and the processes of construction and communication of this knowledge, the language required to acquire this essentially becomes more complex and decontextualised, and poses higher cognitive demands, giving rise to a veritable “hidden curriculum” (Beacco et al, 2015b) (Pascual, 2006).

This complex, decontextualised language which is linked to the content's cognitive demands – academic language –, must essentially be developed at the same time as the content for non-linguistic areas. Competence in this academic language, which has characteristics and cognitive demands that are very different to conversational language, cannot be fully achieved in the field of language, in a decontextualised and essentially artificial way, and must be constructed, along with the content, in the context of non-language subjects.

Academic language is learnt along with content in non-language areas

The learning of academic language includes the general elements belonging to the school setting (general academic language) and the specific elements of each subject (subject-specific language) Each scientific discipline has its own langua-

ge, because it offers a different vision of the world (Polias, 2006); for example, geology, literature and geology will not give the same description of a landscape. With specific vocabulary and discursive genres and with ways of expressing knowledge that are adapted to the requirements of its discourse, each subject communicates knowledge of its field and protects its scientific community from intrusion.

2.2.3. Implications for teaching subjects

The importance of language for the construction of knowledge and the difficult nature of academic language require non-language subjects to include aspects of language associated with the needs of the discipline, and require language learning to be presented through its real world uses such as the different subjects and areas.

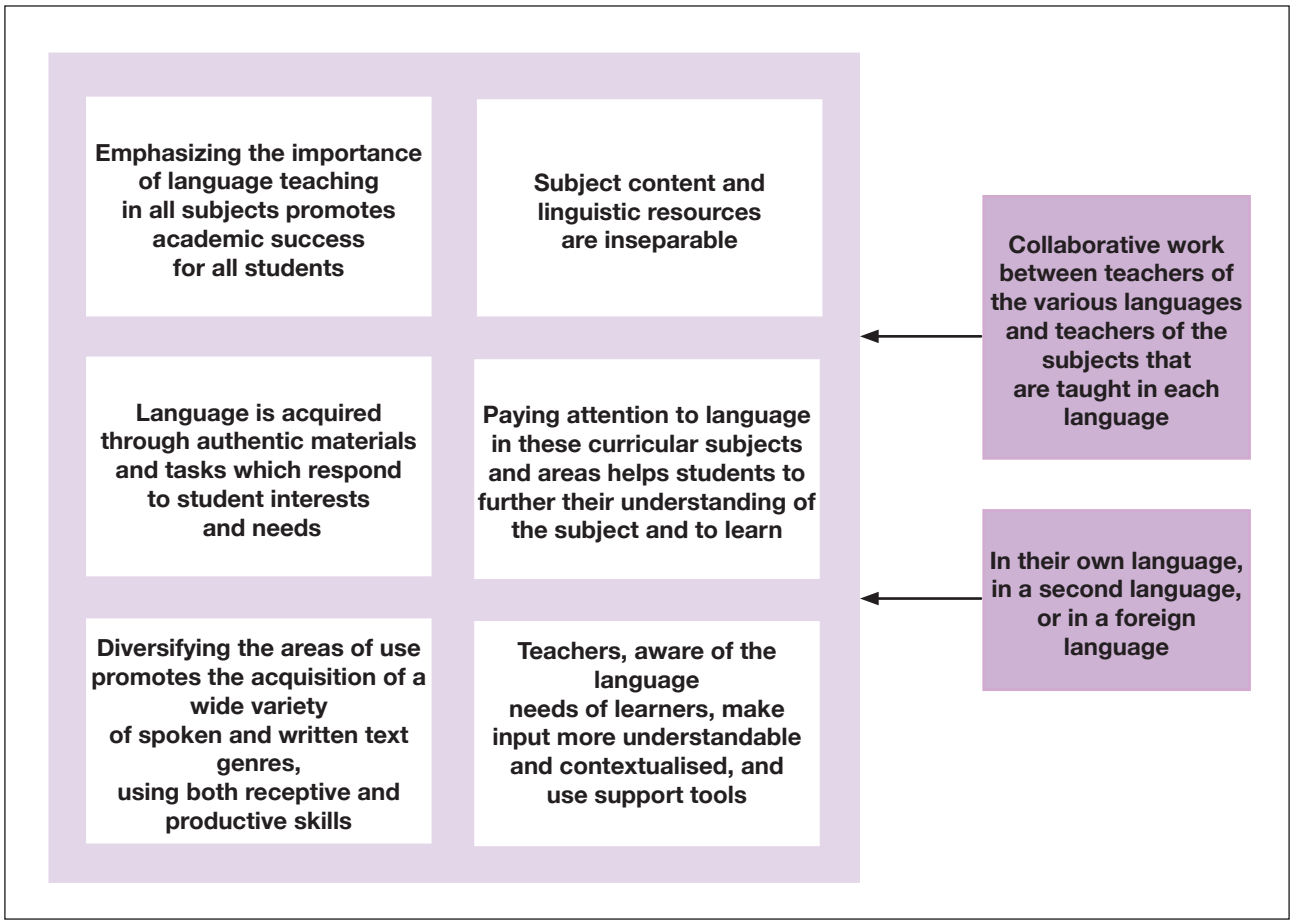
This work on academic language should include, both in terms of understanding and production:

- the presentation of the discursive genres belonging to the subject, specific knowledge of vocabulary and of the mechanisms which create it,
- the development of cognitive-linguistic skills and abilities,
- knowledge of explanatory text structures, as the most common text type in scientific disciplines,
- identification of the forms of communication used in the classroom,. in particular interaction as a way of building knowledge, and
- the incorporation of multiliteracy and use of ICT.

Besides paying attention to teaching academic language, CLIL also recommends developing metacognitive skills, critical awareness and intercultural perspectives in learners, all together, to achieve high performance in subject content and enhance their ability to use the language of communication - especially in the case of students who do not have it as their first language.

To achieve this, a comprehensive approach to CLIL must be made by promoting coordinated action and professional growth among teachers, which are essential for teaching language as a cross-curricular tool, and promoting a change in teaching-learning in all subjects, within the framework of critical and transformative teaching methods.

TABLE 6 CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING



2.3. Settings where CLIL is applied

In accordance with the Council of Europe's ***Language in Education, Languages for Education*** project, which proposes a structure in which school languages –first language, second language, foreign language, or new language (for newcomers) – are studied not only as specific subjects, but also worked on as languages of communication, in Catalonia, CLIL can be applied in different contexts through the following methods:

2.3.1. Language immersion

Language immersion is an education model particularly well-suited to sociolinguistic situations in which a large number of students do not speak the schooling language as their first or home language. For this reason, in the 1980s these programmes began to be implemented where the majority of students did not know the language of communication. At that time, Catalonia looked to the model used in Quebec, especially the educational practice implemented at the Saint Lambert school in Montreal in 1965, which involved schooling children from English-speaking families in a second language - French - recognised as the vehicular language for all. The experience was so positive for all students that it became the basis of the linguistic education system of Quebec.

The main theoretical foundations of this experience were laid in the early 1980s by Jim Cummins, professor at the University of Toronto, who developed the concept of "linguistic interdependence". Based on the cognitive capacity to transfer certain shared linguistic competences from one language to another, particularly from a second language (L2) to a first (L1), he concluded that the learning acquired in a minoritised second language is transferred to the first language, with both languages benefiting from the experience.

In Catalonia, Miquel Siguan, professor of psychology at the University of Barcelona and specialist in psycholinguistics, imported the language immersion programme from Quebec in order to apply it to the Catalan education system, through the Catalan Education Service.

To adequately apply this method, it is also necessary to consider the personal characteristics that influence L2 learning.

- **Types of motivation when learning a language**. There are a series of factors which influence L2 acquisition: age, personality, migratory grief, cognitive style, attitudes and motivation. Motivation to learn a language comes in a variety of types: integrative, instrumental, extrinsic and intrinsic. Learning a language implies personal involvement and effort on the part of the student, and reflection on the importance of language learning in today's world generates motivation for language learning.

- **Family relations** Positive attitudes towards Catalan and schooling must be developed, offering a good welcome plan to families and students. Trust and collaboration is generated through the information given to families about the teaching-learning process that their children will follow, and the goals and the results that will be obtained through this methodology. Mutual knowledge helps reduce suspicions and mistrust.

- **Learning of home languages**. In a language immersion programme it is very important to recognise and respect students' cultural and social identities, accepting the baggage they bring and knowing how to incorporate them into the learning activities. Symbolic recognition of the home language is a way of respecting a student's language identity and promoting the maintenance of the home language helps L2 learning.

- **How understandable the teaching (input) language is**. In an immersion programme, the school language is the teaching language for curricular content. The foundations of learning is ensuring that all students understand and, therefore, the teacher must adapt their speech so that it is understandable to the students according to the learning level and their language competence in the language of communication. This must be accompanied by non-verbal support and strategies should be applied which enhance oral and written text comprehension, without forgetting that more advanced classmates can often provide the best adapted help that a student might need.

Language immersion is applied when a large number of students do not speak the schooling language as their first or home language

The following questions should also be considered:

- **Interaction**. Interaction has a vital role in language learning, since it is the foundation for knowledge building. To promote interaction, it is necessary to manage classroom time and space. And for interaction to become a source of learning, a series of habits must be developed. Therefore, there must be activities or work methods that promote interaction and negotiation of meaning. As such a teacher who works with the immersion method

must know in which communicative situations Catalan interaction is easier and must plan activities where production is more controlled: playground games, board games, role plays, and dramatizations, for example.

- **Learning of spoken language**. Providing teaching and learning with a communicative approach and planning speaking activities in a systematic way.

- **The relationship between spoken language and written language**. In this methodology spoken and written language learning occurs simultaneously and the skills reinforce one another.

- **Language teaching-learning across all areas of the curriculum**. To ensure the acquisition of concepts and specific vocabulary in each subject, students must be able to establish connections between the language of communication and the academic language.

Treating Catalan as the language of communication for non-linguistic subjects in upper primary school and compulsory secondary education

At this educational stage, language learning, now focused more on academic contexts, is developed alongside the corresponding curricular content. We should remember that for a language to be acquired at the same level as a native speaker, it takes about seven years. In view of this, we should remember the classic division established by Cummins (2008) between what he called BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills) and CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency). BICS refers to daily and conversational language, while CALP refers to academic language involving the skill of expressing relevant ideas and concepts in the academic world, which is needed to obtain good academic results.

For these reasons, in order to improve the level of all students in every subject, and also to deal with the complexity and diversity inherent in any plurilingual and intercultural language model, it is essential to work on language from a content perspective. Developing educational programmes for a diverse student population, such as we see in today's classrooms, using curricular material generally designed for students whose L1 is the same as the vehicular language requires complex teaching and organisational strategies.

Correctly applying such a methodological approach in general results in high levels of achievement in disciplinary content, enriches skills in the use of the vehicular language, especially in students who do not have this language as L1, while also developing learners' metacognitive skills, critical awareness and intercultural perspective.

Use of Spanish for communication with students who have Catalan as their native language, in a context of full Catalanization.

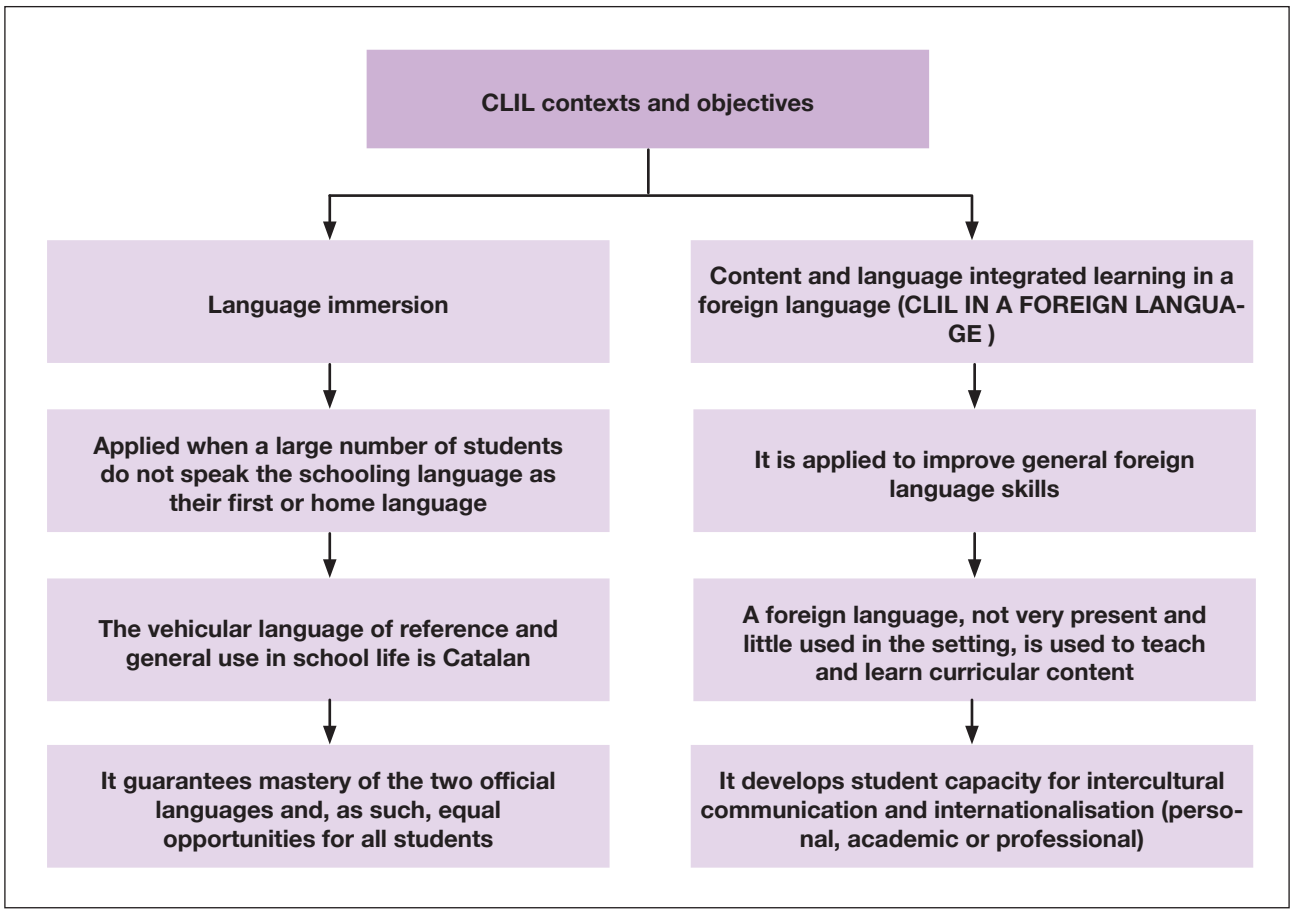
As the Spanish language is linguistically very close to Catalan and due to its large social presence in Catalonia, the transfer of knowledge between them is very large. For this reason, initial learning, which is unconscious and automatic, in both languages is also facilitated by greater cognitive development and metalinguistic awareness.

However, this fact should not cause us to forget, when teaching the Spanish language, that the sociolinguistic context must be taken into account. In many settings, Spanish is the majority language of school students and has a very large social presence. In this situation, Spanish should be taught as the students' first language, since they already bring it from home and from their surroundings. It will however be necessary for the school to go

into more detail on formal registers of the language and know how to value the diversity of this language, which is increasingly present in our country (especially with speakers who come from Latin America).

In areas where Spanish does not have this social force and is not the first language of many students, it will be necessary to implement a teaching approach which is similar to that used with second languages (language immersion in the case of Catalan). If the number of language exposure hours were insufficient to achieve the same level of Catalan and Spanish upon completing education, the school will have to decide to incorporate curricular content blocks in Spanish and plan activities to enhance students speaking skills in its language programme.

TABLE 7 CLIL CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES



2.3.2. Content and Language Integrated Learning in a foreign language (CLIL in a foreign language)

The good results achieved with the Catalan language immersion programme (which allows students to acquire high-level and equal competence in both official languages), explain the Ministry of Education's interest in this applied methodological approach to foreign languages.

Meanwhile, the results of various European studies and reports on student language skills during compulsory education have revealed the need to introduce changes in foreign language teaching methods. In this regard, the European Commission published its ***Improving the effectiveness of language learning*** report in 2013: ***CLIL and computer assisted language learning*** which recommends integrated language and content learning on the one hand, and language learning through use of technology on the other hand, as being scientifically proven and innovative methods that can speed up language learning.

In our context, it is also useful to bear in mind the results achieved in English language skills by primary and secondary students in basic skill tests. The data obtained so far by the Higher Council for Evaluation shows quite satisfactory results in receptive skills (listening and reading) in both primary and secondary education, although it also shows the need to improve productive skills and justifies the need to employ strategies which contribute to the improvement of these results.

Both the results achieved in our own context and data from studies of a wider scope justify the implementation of strategies such as CLIL in a foreign language, which can contribute to the improvement of our students' foreign language skills.

Definition of the Concept

Over time various definitions of CLIL in a foreign language have appeared. D. Marsh and G. Langé (1997) use the term to refer to any educational situation in which an additional language, and thus one that is little used and not very present, is used to teach and learn different content to that of the language subject. More recently, Nikula *et al.* (2013) defined it as an educational approach in which a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction to teach content subjects to a large number of students.

This approach is usually applied to educational situations where the foreign language is little or not used in the social environment beyond the classroom. This contextual situation also limits non-formal and informal language learning. Therefore, the classroom is often the only place in which learners have the chance to use the target language. Consequently, the application of this method results in an increase of opportunities for learning and practising the language without increasing the hours on the curriculum that are specifically assigned to language teaching and learning.

CLIL in a foreign language is applied to situations where the foreign language is little or not used at all in the social environment beyond the classroom

Objectives of the Approach

According to D. Coyle, P. Hood and D. Marsh (2010), this method contributes to an increase in the learner's language competence through cognitive challenges and problem solving activities, it promotes and encourages learner independence and helps them to develop *thinking skills*. As we have seen with CLIL, language is used with a real purpose during classes of CLIL in a foreign language, in other words, its use is authentic and thus much more meaningful for students.

The educational objectives of implementing a CLIL in a foreign language approach can be very broad and varied but, according to the Dalton-Puffer's (2007) suggestions, they should include at least the following:

1. Developing intercultural communication skills.
2. Preparing students for internationalisation (personal, academic and professional).
3. Improving general foreign language skills.
4. Developing spoken communication skills.
5. Diversifying classroom methods and strategies.
6. Increasing learner motivation.

Benefits for Learning

Various studies attest the positive impact of CLIL in a foreign language on students' foreign language skills. Dalton-Puffer (2007) mentions evidence that learners using CLIL in a foreign language often show more fluency and creativity when using the foreign language. This is explained by the fact that CLIL in a foreign language helps students to lose their fear of using foreign languages spontaneously in face-to-face interactions.

Therefore, **students using CLIL in a foreign language can reach levels of foreign language knowledge which are significantly higher than those of other students who only learn language through conventional methods.** With this approach, however, some language skills develop more than others. The skills that benefit the most are receptive skills (listening and reading comprehension), vocabulary (especially technical and semi-technical), morphology, creativity and risk acceptance, and fluency and quantity of spoken language produced. Whereas, syntax, writing, informal language and pronunciation are elements that do not progress as much.

Meanwhile, no negative impact of this approach has been observed on non-language based knowledge (subject content) acquisition. In fact, several studies suggest that learners using CLIL in a foreign language achieve better results than other students who study the subject in their first language (Bonnet, 2012; Coyle, 2010; Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Meyer, 2008).

Beyond the benefits for the acquisition of foreign language skills, the CLIL in a foreign language method promotes an increase in student motivation when “real problems or authentic situations” become the subject matter. This fact helps increase learner confidence in their own ability to learn a foreign language. Other potential benefits for students are:

- Communication and reflection in the foreign language classroom helps improve spoken and written skills.
- The challenge of new language inputs provides a setting of meaningful communication.

- The acquisition and development of skills for intercultural communication are promoted.
- Knowledge transfer between subjects is enhanced and critical thinking is developed.
- Motivation and self-confidence for language learning grows.
- Specialised vocabulary can be adapted to learner needs, interests and levels.

Additionally, from the point of view of foreign language teaching, the CLIL in a foreign language approach highlights the following three points:

- Teachers are more aware of the language needs of learners, something that obliges them to make input more understandable and contextualised, using support tools.
- Constantly checking learner understanding increases the amount of communication among learners and between learners and teachers.
- Incidental and implicit learning are promoted by focusing on meaning and communication, rather than on instruction.
- Fluency is promoted in the place of language correction.
- Both the learning capacity of the student as much as the need to produce a meaningful and complex result (output) are promoted.
- Teacher awareness is raised regarding the need to use universal measures which help diversify the communication channels (visual, gesture, voice modulation, repetition, etc.) to enhance language comprehension.
- Coordinated work is encouraged between subject and foreign language teachers which also favours joint reflection on classroom practices.

Timetabling and Classroom Practices

Some studies suggest that older CLIL in a foreign language students learn better and faster than young ones, even as regards pronunciation. However, introducing this approach in the early stages of education enhances the acquisition of foreign language speaking skills. If it is decided that CLIL in a foreign language is to be implemented as early as the second cycle of pre-primary education, it is advisable to do so using, as we have indicated in previous sections, activities such as reading stories, songs, mural and poster creation, etc.; through educational practices which prioritise learning through play over grammar instruction.

In **primary education**, teaching and learning language as a medium for reaching other knowledge areas can be accomplished in the foreign language classroom, using an approach based on taking on topics with interdisciplinary content.

In **secondary education**, this approach can be introduced in specific areas (planning combined teaching of language and subject) or in discovery projects and research. In post-compulsory education, as well as the communicative use of the foreign language in curricular subjects, student participation should be promoted in real situations based on the adult world which require an effective and efficient use of the foreign language both in academic and professional situations.

In any case, and independently of the time chosen for the implementation of these classroom methods, the success of CLIL in a foreign language will depend on the way in which it is carried out, and on the specific teaching practices to which it is applied.

An appropriate classroom implementation of CLIL in a foreign language considers elements such as the following:

1. Use of teaching materials that are relevant and meaningful to students, preferably coming from real and authentic sources. It is advisable for students to take part in this selection.
2. Meaningful and non-anecdotal presence of speaking comprehension and expression and practical and collaborative activities which promote student interaction and enhance meaning negotiation through speech.
3. Incorporation of activities which offer opportunities for language use in authentic communicative situations (constructing messages, participating in debates, arguing an opicion, etc.). It is about promoting cognitive challenges which motivate and engage them in pair and team work through dialogue.
4. Prioritising correction of content error rather than of errors in form. In the CLIL in a foreign language classroom, a learner's language skills should not be constantly or systematically evaluated.
5. Teacher awareness of the vocabulary and syntax used in their classroom explanations. Language must be simple and understandable, above all taking into account the extra effort that a student must make in order to understand. In this respect, use of a wide variety of mediums is recommended to make the student's task of understanding and producing messages in the foreign language easier.

Ways of Implementing the CLIL in a foreign language approach

Educational institutions can choose from various ways of implementing the CLIL in a foreign language approach. The following methods are ordered from most to least difficult:

• **Developing projects that integrate language and content learning in a contextualised way.** These projects, which can be applied from pre-primary education to vocational training and research at baccalaureate level, are strategies aimed at promoting students' active participation and independence in learning. Projects can go beyond the classroom and enhance students' entrepreneurial spirit and social involvement. These include work placements, community service, service-learning, voluntary work, and local, national or international educational cooperation projects.

• **Teaching, in whole or in part, one or more non-language area or subject in a foreign language.** For this method, the school must plan progressive activities throughout each stage which promote the achievement of each subject's core skills on the basis of the evaluation criteria in each the area.

• **Controlled use of several languages in one or many subjects.** The aim is for students to strategically apply their language knowledge as a means for accessing information, for synthesising knowledge, presenting conclusions from research, etc.

In all cases it is necessary to ensure optimal learning of subject content as well as of the languages involved. This will be possible as long as there is educational purpose and explicit teaching.

Regardless of the specific method chosen, a heterogeneous implementation of this approach is recommended, so that the communicative use of the foreign language is promoted in various areas or subjects, and at different educational levels and stages. In any case, the curricular presence of this approach must have an inclusive nature (facilitating the participation of all students) and its implementation must be increasing and progressive.

TABLE 8 INTEGRATED LEARNING OF LANGUAGE AND OF LANGUAGE AND CONTENT (CLIL)

Provides in-depth learning for native students, both those who are attending school in L1 and those who are doing so in L2
Helps students with other family languages, who are learning the language at the same time as the subject content, to follow the curriculum
Increases knowledge of foreign languages

3. Skills-based language learning

To make learning meaningful and practical we must move away from learning language simply for the accumulation linguistic knowledge, to learning to use the language to communicate, create and reflect on the problems encountered and the resources required to solve them.

It is about promoting skills-based learning, both in formal (school) and informal contexts (social environment) - simultaneously or consecutively - which helps us to deal with real life situations and problems, and through which students can use their linguistic baggage (skills and knowledge of various languages) to learn other languages.

Skills-based learning helps us solve real life situations and problems and learn new languages

If the learning objective is not only knowledge of the language but also the ability to use it in speaking and writing, grammar reflection must be done in an integrated way, predominantly within communicative tasks, and not in an analytical and decontextualised way. All of this is achieved with a communicative and textual approach which:

- Recommends authentic learning tasks, which are set in communicative situations similar to or the same as life outside the school.
- Involves use of learning activities integrated in complex units (speaking, reading or writing projects, teaching tasks and sequences, etc.) and which require active participation of students, cooperative work and self-assessment.
- Proposes working on languages in all their complexity, using all skills – interaction, listening, speaking, reading, writing, acting – and making the most of learning efforts to avoid repeating the content common to each language, like functions – giving information, expressing complaints or thanks, asking for a service, giving opinions – and the types of text or genre.
- Enhances learning and use of language by offering different ways of presenting information and taking advantage of information and communication technology.

3.1. Implementation at the different stages of education

The decision about when to introduce the teaching of different languages, as well as about the languages that are taught as the first or second foreign language, depends on the sociolinguistic situation of each school and thus must be included in its language programme.

According to the recommendations made by the Council of Europe for the implementation of plurilingual education (***Plurilingual and Intercultural Education***), the following considerations need to be made for each stage of education:

3.1.1. Pre-primary education

For this stage of education, the construction of students' linguistic and cultural repertoires is considered a priority, emphasising plurality and diversity within the classroom, and aiming to ensure the acceptance of student identities and the acquisition of skills in Catalan – the language of socialisation / schooling. It is also about facilitating guided concept development. The schooling language has a key role in this stage, given that it is through this that students build - with teacher guidance –key concepts such as time, space, quantity, measurements, etc. Therefore, it is advisable to use a broad repertoire of discursive genres to teach it, using it as a tool for basic communication with the student (instructions, advice, directions, reading texts out loud, etc.), so that students are exposed as much as possible.

If a foreign language is taught at this stage, it should be done through games, without placing emphasis on the linguistic objective. It is thus about raising student awareness of the foreign language and motivating learning. As regards intercultural skills, they should be taught through acting out story readings, songs, festivals, murals and posters, etc.

3.1.2. Primary education

At this stage, the development of student language skills is understood, as laid out in the current curriculum, in reference to the Catalan and Spanish language, and Aranese where applicable. Nevertheless, a special emphasis is placed on the country's language -Catalan- which is predominantly used to teach content. As such, it is advisable to underline the linguistic regularities and standard form. At this stage, students' language errors should also be addressed, especially in the case of groups of students who were integrated late.

Furthermore, it is a very good idea to establish links between Catalan, Spanish and the first foreign language: comparing linguistic and sociolinguistic elements or cultural practices (connecting this with students' personal experiences in other languages and cultures). As is introducing short texts in Spanish and the first foreign language to non-language subjects for topics that have previously been dealt with in the schooling language, in order to get students used to using plurilingual information sources.

The adoption of a task-based communicative approach is recommended for foreign languages. As is, in the context of learning other subjects through this language, the occasional use of elements which have been learnt in the foreign language (such as polite forms, among others) and the incorporation of some new linguistic elements.

3.1.3. Compulsory secondary education

At this educational stage, it is necessary to incorporate the teaching of the schooling language as a subject, tools and approaches which can also be used for teaching Spanish and foreign languages (and other subjects): categorising discourse into genres (articles, scientific reports, etc.), text analysis, critical analysis of information in the media, tools for the description and analysis of language, etc. It is also a good idea to gradually diversify teaching and working methods, and to promote reflection on learning. It is also important to help students learn independently.

It is about guaranteeing that learning inputs for the Catalan language are just as valid for Spanish and foreign languages and raising student awareness of the similarities and differences between the languages they learn and speak, and pedagogically exploiting this potential.

It is also important to explain the types of text and speech that are specific to each subject, and work from an integrated and cross-curricular perspective. Likewise, it is advisable to begin by introducing linguistic mediation methods: firstly, in the schooling language (paraphrasing) and then from one language to another.

In foreign language learning it is very important to find spaces for interaction with foreign students by establishing collaboration networks with schools in other countries that facilitate language exchanges, through the design of collaborative projects (especially virtual projects) and emphasizing the development of intercultural skills among students.

The aim at this stage must be, on the one hand, reinforcing and consolidating education in the Catalan and Spanish languages, and on the other, ensuring continuity in teaching the first foreign language and, finally, introducing a second foreign language by paying attention to skill transfer, especially those acquired in the first foreign language (learning strategies, reflection activities, etc.).

If the introduction of two foreign languages is chosen (English and a romance language), given the different linguistic distance of English and French with Catalan and Spanish, English is recommended as the first foreign language (with a CLIL in a foreign language approach) and French as the second foreign language which, due to the smaller linguistic distance, can benefit from greater transfers from Catalan and Spanish.

Additionally, secondary education is probably the best stage to open learners' eyes to how languages are used outside of school, and to provide them with the tools and strategies necessary for them to take advantage of the learning resources available to them (media, internet, real and virtual exchange programmes, resource centres, etc.). It is also a good time to cultivate language functions in foreign languages which go beyond ordinary communicative uses: building knowledge and artistic creativity.

The final goal is deepening learning in the Catalan, Spanish and foreign (first and second) languages as subjects. It is also about expanding the linguistic repertoire of students in the schooling language by increasing their capacity to understand and produce texts which are used in other curricular subjects which are increasingly complex and specialised.

Towards the end of this stage is an opportune moment for improving mediation activities (paraphrasing in another language, translating, changing from one discursive genre to another, etc.) and cross-comprehension strategies in languages which are perhaps not spoken but which may be useful in future academic or professional activity.

In order to help students become competent in managing their own learning in an essential education project (throughout their life), moments for interlinguistic reflection should also be introduced in teaching which help students analyse their learning methods.

From the point of view of intercultural education, emphasis should be placed on the importance of mediation and knowledge-building activities in different languages; promoting critical, constructive and responsible responses from students when in contact with people from other cultures, and taking advantage of the benefits of mobility programmes (exchanges, study visits, work placements) so that students put not only their linguistic and cultural repertoire to the test, but also their ability to negotiate meaning in their interactions with classmates from other cultures.

3.2. Promoting language learning through ICT

In recent years technology applied to education has gained an increasingly relevant role. As emphasized in the recent Horizon 2017 report (**https://www.nmc.org/nmc-horizon/**), for the coming years an outstanding growth of ICT is predicted in the field of technology applied to learning, as well as in the field of learning space design. Regarding this second point, advances in multimedia wireless technology already allow for the creation of smart spaces which simulate real social and work environments, and which promote interactive learning, based on the collaborative solving of interdisciplinary problems. In a few years time, important advances are also foreseen in technology for personalised or adaptive learning and in the use of mobile technology for permanent learning. In the mid-term the emergence of the internet of things in the world of education is equally foreseeable, with the use of augmented reality taking a prominent place.

Multimedia technology encourages interactive learning, based on collaboratively solving cross-curricular problems

All these advances help improve teaching and learning processes, and have positive effects in all subjects and areas. In the field of language learning, however, computer-assisted learning deserves special attention. This type of learning refers to any process in which learners use a computer to improve their language skills. The technology this involves ranges from desktops to smartphones, tablets, MP3 and MP4 players, and games consoles.

“Computer-assisted language learning” is a broad concept and refers to any digital communication content, medium, environment or tool which can be used as learning support:

- Videos, animations, webquests, podcasts, webcasts, digital articles...
- Virtual environments where students communicate with speakers of other languages through email, forums, live chats, social networks, and voice and video conferences.
- Language tools: mobile apps, software for working on specific language elements (phonetics, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, syntactic analysis) and which may include speech recognition features.
- Virtual learning environments which facilitate teacher-student communication or provide peer learning opportunities.
- Digital and online games.
- Etc.

Computer-assisted learning will also include online courses, interactive whiteboards, portfolios, digital text corpora and dictionaries, virtual tutoring systems, grammar correctors and machine translators, speech recognition tools and social networks, provided that their classroom use has a clear learning objective.

Although there is little scientific evidence about the positive impact that the use of technology has on the acquisition of language skills, some studies show general benefits for learning. For example, digital games help develop critical thinking in students, speech recognition tools are useful for improving pronunciation and spoken expression, and participation in live chats and forums allow for real and complex uses of language, etc. All these tools provide access to the target learning language and its culture, increase the time students are exposed to it, and provide opportunities for communication and, as such, for practice and use of the language being learnt. Furthermore, we should not forget the positive impact that computer assisted learning has on learner motivation.

ICT provides opportunities to access and communicate in the language being learnt

One of the factors that contributes most to language exposure is the consolidation of the digital society

The truth is that today's learners are more exposed than ever to languages, promoting the development of plurilingual skills. Without a doubt, one of the factors that contributes most to language exposure is the consolidation of the digital society. Internet, and social media in general, are an inexhaustible source of language exposure which increases the chances of getting in touch and, as a result, of learning.

Beyond the possibilities of language browsing offered by the web, Internet also offers a large amount of information about languages, which facilitates the acquisition of declarative knowledge, also necessary for increasing plurilingualism. Additionally, in recent years digital platforms have appeared which are specifically designed for language learning. Without disregarding the drawbacks which these environments often present (unequal content quality, activities that focus excessively on memorising, decontextualisation, etc), the advantage of participating in them is that you get quick and easy exposure to real communication (through oral and written mediums, with audio and video components, through live chats and forums...) which help, as we mentioned before, to increase learner motivation and desire to communicate.

As we have seen, the digital environment also conveys a large amount of learning materials and resources. In this respect, Open Educational Resources (OERs) stand out: digitalised material offered in a free and open way so that educators, students and self-taught learners use them in teaching, learning and research.

The digital environment conveys a large amount of learning materials and resources

Social media offers a wide and diverse range of resources for language learning and learning in any other subject. But this way of learning requires one precondition: sufficient technological, informational and digital competence to get the most out of the potential learning opportunities of the digital world.

In this context, the role of teaching staff is key, both in assessing the student's efficient use of technological tools and digital content for foreign language learning, as well as in teaching them to choose the most appropriate material from the thousands of possibilities and to make the most of all the opportunities for incidental learning offered by the digital world.

4. Spoken, written and reading communication: transversal strategies for the acquisition of general language and communicative competence

Language skills form the foundation of all lessons, so the education system must help students develop the necessary skills for spoken communication, reading comprehension and written expression. And it must be able to do this in different languages.

Skills in the language field refer to the use of language as a device for interpreting and understanding reality through oral and written texts, for communicating through speech and writing, and for organising and self-regulating thought, emotions and behaviour. These skills allow students to express thought, emotions, experiences and opinions, issue critical and ethical judgements, generate ideas and structure knowledge. This implies being able to read, listen, analyse, accept different opinions and express oneself adequately.

The aim is thus for students to be able to understand and express the types of messages that belong to each level of education, and for them to be able to interact in the various communicative situations and have a positive attitude towards linguistic diversity and a desire to learn other languages.

At the end of primary education students should have developed the communicative and language skills that will make it possible, both personally and socially, for them to be able to act and succeed in their environment and build the foundations of citizenship and knowledge, and thus be able to take on the challenges of a diverse, multilingual and multicultural society. Upon finishing this stage of education, students should therefore be able to express their understanding of reality, relate to people of their own age and adults everywhere, and integrate, understand, value and communicate the content and values belonging to their own culture in both official languages and in Aranese in Aran. In the case of foreign languages, it will be necessary for them to acquire the basic communicative skills to allow them to express and understand simple messages and communicate with each other in everyday situations, in at least one foreign language.

In compulsory secondary education, the fundamental aim, in terms of language, is ensuring that all students can use Catalan and Spanish in a normal and correct way, and can understand and transmit oral and written messages in the foreign languages that the institution has established in its education programme.

Teachers must consider the social presence which the institution's languages could have as well as the home language of its students to give it special treatment. And they should also develop an educational practice which ensures that Catalan becomes the common language and a tool for social cohesion.

Furthermore, the development of these skills should not be the sole responsibility of the language department, but rather the responsibility of all departments. A large part of this work's success will come from the way in which the language of communication and learning is treated.

4.1. Speaking

Knowing how to listen and speak well are essential qualities to be able to develop good personal and social relations. Students will receive a better education and, certainly, good professional development throughout life.

Spoken communication consists of the ability to understand and express spoken messages taking into account the communicative situation. Listening and speaking are usually linked because they take place in a context of interaction in which the interlocutors alternate between being senders and receivers. As such, the abilities to understand, express oneself and talk or converse are in action. Understanding spoken language is one of the processes that students practice most often in everyday formal and informal situations, and which is also used to take in lessons. Furthermore, speaking skills a factor of social integration between people, since, through interactions with others, they enable the elaboration and expression of ideas, opinions and feelings, and the construction of one's own thoughts.

Spoken communication is the ability to understand and express spoken messages taking into account the communicative situation

Students should be prepared for both types of existing speech: for speech produced by a single person, as in the case of a talk, a lecture, or a poetry recital, and for plurimanaged speech, that is, when different people intervene and continuously exchange the roles of message sender and receiver. Spoken interaction is the place where comprehension and expression processes are put into play together. **It is very important to practice this in settings related to school life and the environment, so that students express themselves clearly and thoroughly. It is also important for teachers to find time and space to carry out well-planned activities that allow students to improve their speaking and see the progress they have made.**

It is of course also necessary to keep in mind that a competent communicator also uses non-verbal communicative elements and applies lexical, grammatical and textual knowledge to interpret and express spoken messages.

Speaking well means knowing how to adapt language verbal and non-verbal language to a variety of communicative situations and purposes

As such, if we ask ourselves what it means to speak well, the answer is that speaking well means knowing how to adapt verbal and non-verbal language to a variety of communicative situations and purposes.

Traditionally, our educational system has given little importance to speaking. Because it is considered that one learns to speak in a natural, autonomous way. And because working with spoken language has some different characteristics when compared to written language which make teaching difficult:

- It is irreversible (it cannot be “deleted”).
- Collective or simultaneous teaching can be complicated.
- The result of activities can be unpredictable.
- The organisation of activities is more complex.
- Evaluation is difficult, or at least presents difficulties.

However, we know that the learning of spoken language and its evolution do not take place naturally. Many of the components of speaking skills can only be ls, at the same time, the opportunity to participate in communicative situations which require their use. Students, on their own, only develop one discursive form, conversation, and still with limitations; the development of speaking skills can stop at six or seven years old if they do not participate in communicative activities and activities in which there are more skilled people.

Knowing how to communicate oneself with different levels of formality and in different fields of use is not simple. Knowing how to adapt words to a communicative intention and achieve two of the objectives which we give the "spoken word" – the exchange of information and the establishment of respectful and, if possible, friendly relations – requires slow learning.

In today's society, speaking is part of the concept of basic literacy. And situations requiring mastery of the levels of "formal speech" increase. In addition, no precise divide can be traced between spoken and written language: there are writings to be spoken and speeches to be written, and both are essential for the construction of knowledge.

As such, in the field of compulsory education, increasing control of speaking skills (emission, reception and interaction) are fundamental, perhaps even essential, for:

- Classroom interaction.
- Acquiring knowledge and learning how to think.
- Understanding and sharing readings.
- Learning to write.
- Learning to speak.

In order for students to be able to develop adequately, the teaching and learning of speaking should be included systematically.

4.2. Reading

It is necessary to understand reading as the joint control of strategies which enable students to understand texts and use them to access information, reflect on it and generate knowledge and meaningful learning.

Reading has been one of the elements which has helped to establish western societies. To successfully participate in society, students should learn what it means to read for a precise purpose, such as establishing a dialogue with the text. Learning to grasp what is implicit and how authors, through their selection of words, syntax and content, position themselves culturally, historically, scientifically, economically, politically... And to relate this to the context. All texts, in any format, structure, length and field, are placed in a time, space, culture, economy and political position. Knowing how to read adequately means recognising these positions, a certain world vision and how the author tries to ascribe to that vision.

We also have to consider how newly arrived students can read and attribute meaning if they come from cultures that are quite or very distant from ours. How they can draw the necessary inferences to understand the variety of texts being worked on if everybody reads the text from their own social, cultural or economic environment. And the same thing should be taken into consideration when reading texts written in languages which transmit cultures that are very far from ours. **Learning to read should be, not only a cognitive activity, but also a social activity filled with interactions between teachers and classmates.**

Reading comprehension is the ability of a person to understand, evaluate and use written texts to achieve personal objectives, develop and enhance their own knowledge, and participate in society

Reading comprehension is the ability of a person to understand, evaluate and use written texts to achieve personal objectives, develop and enhance their own knowledge, and participate in society.

To understand, the reader needs to recognise letters, words, sentences, and also interpret the message carried by the text. Therefore, a competent reader adapts their way of reading using reading strategies according to the text type, format and medium, and the purpose of the reading that motivated them to read it. In all these respects, various processes come into play: localising and obtaining information from the text, knowing how to integrate and interpret it, and reflecting on and evaluating it.

A good reader thus has to:

• **Know how to read.** Linking spelling and sound; recognising words and sentence structure; linking ideas; having a reading purpose; recognising text structure, different types and their features, and using reading comprehension strategies.

• **Read to learn.** Acquiring knowledge through resources such as ICT and libraries- finding and processing it to study, follow instructions, develop thought.

Reading is closely connected to the ability to understand and think. Training independent learners, who are capable of learning throughout their life, involves preparing readers who enjoy reading and who can use it to learn. The

attitude towards reading is the willingness to read for pleasure – which leads to free and voluntary practice – to fill the curiosity and desire for knowledge, as well as to gain personal satisfaction.

We read to learn, to inform ourselves, to know where we come from and where we are going, who we are, to know others better, to preserve history, to take advantages of others' experiences, to feed our curiosity, to distract ourselves, to exercise our critical thinking.

• **Read for pleasure.** Develop reading habits and encourage systematic reading in any medium, learning to reflect on what has been read, knowing how to explain it through speaking or writing and knowing how to share it. In promoting the enjoyment of reading, an important role is played by the library, family, reading tutorials, literary training, good models...

When we read for pleasure, when we read literature we occupy the most intimate corners of our mind. When we read literature all our being is working. Meaning is a building that we construct with fragments, dogmas, childhood injuries, newspaper articles, chance comments, old films, small victories, people we don't like and people we love. Our objective is that students gain this experience through activities that they do with literary texts which we suggest and offer.

Social learning from reading implies a complex approach to reading objectives from various points of view, moving past the traditional idea of school work structured in a single temporal axis, according to linear, cumulative and irreversible progression.

Critical reading is not one more option on the path to learning, it is the environment in which written language must be positioned in order to adequately develop communicative competence, a basic learning requirement in a democratic society.

And yet, we must bear in mind that the skills required for reading in digital environments are not the same as those required for reading analogical information. This is due to the difference in the reader's aims and motivation, the skills and competences required to extract and build meaning, the features of texts, the nature and conditions of the tasks being developed, and finally the changes in the sociocultural context in which this reading takes place and in which the study, reading, working, consumption, personal communication and collaboration contexts.

See: *Reading in an educational centre* [online] Generalitat de Catalunya: Ministry of Education, 2013. <**http://ensenyament.gencat.cat/ca/departament/publicacions/monografies/lectura-centre-educatiu**>

4.3. Writing

Written expression is the ability to use writing as an activity which allows us to communicate, organise, learn and participate in society. It is a frame and system for graphic representation of language which fixes the message and maintains it in time.

As such, writing is an activity which allows us to participate in various communicative situations, in which there is always an intention and a context: we write to request information, to transfer knowledge, to try to convince, to express feelings and experiences, for pleasure.

The process of writing involves knowledge of the topic about which a student wants to write and their previous knowledge about the linguistic content and organization of the text.

Learning to write must be approached using meaningful texts or ones which are personal to students. It is also important to plan collaborative writing tasks, bearing in mind that the teacher can model the skills, strategies and knowledge required for students to become competent writers.

In this respect, competent writers allow thinking time before writing, they plan by setting objectives, generating and organising ideas, they select the most relevant and interesting information in order to begin writing. They write the text and check it according to the communicative situation, context, target audience, objective, and the grammar rules and conventions. They write in different formats and mediums - paper or digital, continuous or non-continuous texts - but always in a way which is coherent, cohesive and which follows language conventions.

It is worth noting that regular practice is the key to gaining this competence. We learn to write by writing, so it is necessary to find moments to dedicate to written expression and the its improvement.

We learn to write by writing, so it is necessary to dedicate time to written expression and the its improvement

This ability is closely linked to reading, since both skills mutually reinforce on another. Writing well enables us to think well. To improve writing, it is necessary to have already read a lot: various written references can provide good models as students improve their writing.

Special emphasis should also be placed on the elements which are key to learning how to write; establishing elements for the coordination between different languages and different stages of education and sharing with the school's teachers key elements for the learning and teaching of writing structured around the following content: initially learning to write, the function of writing , the text composition process, textual properties and language reflection, writing in areas/subjects, and creative and literary writing. And coordinating the planning and evaluation of writing in the languages taught at the centre and in the different curricular areas.

For this reason, writing skills must be considered in order to increase the academic performance of all students and thus promote educational success; valuing writing as a tool for knowledge building and learning; recognising writing as a cross-curricular strategy to improve school performance in all curricular areas; encouraging the habit of personal writing and writing for pleasure and growth; identifying the value of written competence for starting the lifelong journey towards participation in the various fields of human activity – private, professional, social and academic – throughout life; and incorporating literature as a reference for written expression.

5. Students with other family languages

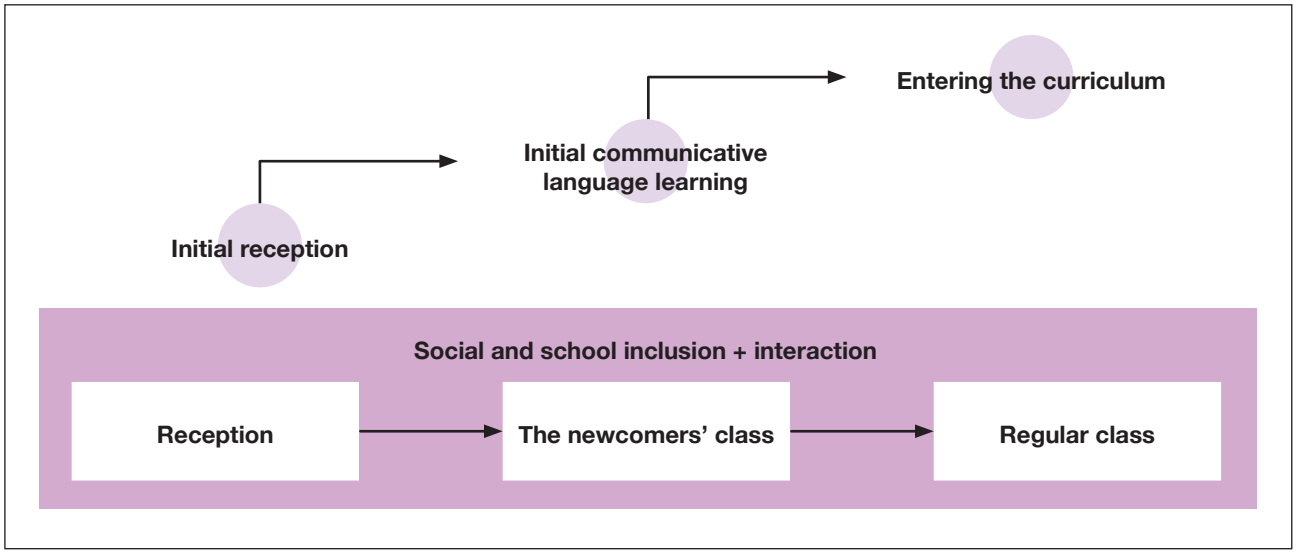
5.1. Reception and language support for students with other family languages

When speaking of the methods and support aimed at students with other family languages, it is necessary to first distinguish between newly arrived students and those who have been incorporated in the Catalan education system for longer, but still need extra help.

Support for students of foreign with other family languages is organised on a path which begins with the initial welcoming of students, it continues with the newcomers' class and, once conversational communicative competence has been attained, should be implemented with support in the ordinary classroom, so that the educational success of all students is guaranteed.

For this reason, educational centres must plan personalised support for students with other family languages and, particularly, language support which will enable them to start and continue the learning process of the two official language. The institution's education programme and the documents which develop and define it, should set out the specific attention that students must receive in order to actively incorporate this, as soon as possible, in the everyday dynamics of the institution. To construct inclusive educational institutions, in which action is taken to secure an education which guarantees equal opportunities.

TABLE 9 SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH OTHER FAMILY LANGUAGES



The preparation and application of a personalised plan for newly arrived students and students with other family languages will make it possible to determine which measures and support a student needs to understand the curriculum, as well as the evaluation criteria with which he or she will be evaluated. The time of arrival of these students, their age, academic level when incorporated and their learning progress will be taken into consideration.

The personalised plan allows us to determine the measures and support required by the student to be able to enter the curriculum and be evaluated

The support required by students with regards emotions, relationships and their sense of belonging is essential, and it is also necessary to promote their ability to build a multiple identity. In this regard, it is essential to facilitate the involvement of families and create truly inclusive schools that incorporate intercultural education for all students by presenting linguistic and cultural diversity in curricular activities and in the school environment.

Language, school and learning

Students with other family languages need to acquire the language skills which will enable them to communicate with their classmates and staff in the school, and to understand academic language to learn curricular content. These requirements can be broken down into three fields:

- Recreational spaces and extracurricular activities, where students interact with one another and with school staff in an informal environment. Conversational communicative skills (BICS) are used in these spaces. The majority of students of foreign origin acquire these basic communicative skills for informal social interaction quite quickly, especially if Catalan is the language of habitual use in the sociolinguistic setting.
- Students require academic language (CALP) in order to understand curricular content. This is the language used to communicate curricular content and build lessons. For this reason, acquisition of this specific linguistic register is necessary for academic and professional success, and is also a requirement for an active citizenship.
- In an intermediate space, we encounter the third type of school language which we can call “administrative language”. It is the language used in school reports, instructions for evaluation activities, correspondence and certificates, timetable management, information on course organisation, rules, norms for co-existence etc., in which language has a regulating function. It is a type of language which can be difficult for students of foreign origin and their families.

We could also add, especially in secondary school, the language needs of these students outside school: to communicate in the environment in which they live, to help their families solve administrative issues, to travel, etc.

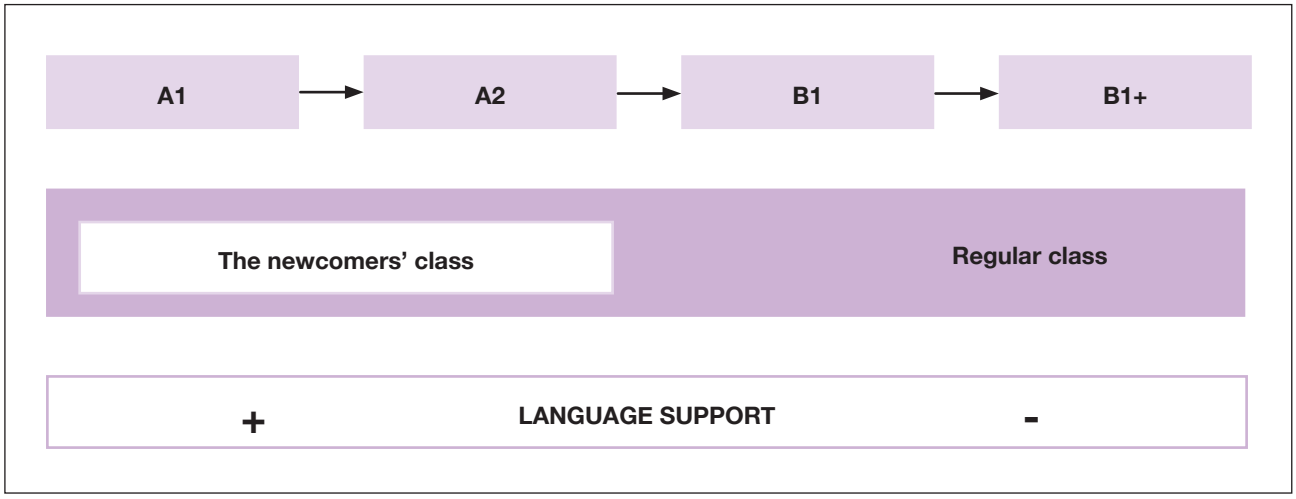
During the early stages of schooling, students of foreign origin develop conversational competence and academic language. These two lessons are done in parallel but the process of acquiring competence in academic language takes much longer than that required to gain conversational competence. As such, students with other family languages need more time to acquire academic control than they need to speak the schooling language (Catalan) correctly.

Academic language is acquired when the student has already begun to structure the new language, and is able to refer to non-present objects and situations, and to participate in conversations with a variety of interactions and compose small oral and written texts. At this time, the student can already take on activities which are set more in curricular content and less in informal levels.

If we link this approach with the CEFR and the support methods for students with other family languages, the student is considered to obtain a first communicative competence in the newcomers’ class (A2 level) and to need specific support to understand the curriculum until they get to B1 level.

Additionally, the teaching approach advocated by the first curricular foreign language in the development of core skills, may also be applied to students who start learning Catalan when they begin compulsory education: “The explanation of core skills and the methodological guidelines which appear in this document can also be applied to

TABLE 10 EVALUATION OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE



the initial teaching of Catalan and Spanish to newly arrived primary and secondary students who join the schools of Catalonia late" (*Basic Skills in the Field of Languages. Foreign languages. Primary education*, page 7). It is a teaching approach based on communicative focuses and in which spoken communication is the cornerstone for the acquisition of other skills.

After this initial language learning, the aim is for students to progress in language and non-language subjects until they become independent learners, in line with the skills-based approach of the curriculum.

Finally, with regards to the acquisition of language and communicative skills, it should not be forgotten that learners need to create an emotional bond with the new language and new environment, based on an inclusive school and a positive opinion of their language and the baggage from their native culture.

5.1.1. Initial reception

The arrival of new families has highlighted the great importance of the processes for welcoming students. As such, a way must be found of ensuring that the first contact is positive and helps to reduce the feeling of uprooting and insecurity when faced with an unknown situation.

Action must be planned which, at the time of initial reception, helps to reduce the possible emotional filters that limit learning and social and school integration. **Emotional communication is a fundamental element, along with the teachers' capacity for empathy, positive expectations of the student, commitment to inclusion and awareness of the value of cultural and linguistic diversity.**

One of the keys to the success of the reception and schooling of newly arrived students is for all teachers to be aware that both the reception, in general, as well as the support of students with other family languages are the responsibility of all the educational community and not only of the teachers who can take more direct action.

Support given to students with other family languages is the responsibility of the entire educational community

The most suitable device for organising the initial support for new members of the school community is the Welcome Plan, which sets out the processes to be followed to put it into practice and the organisational structure which will enable the reception to be approached as a gradual process, sequenced in time, and which is not restricted to a first contact or initial meeting.

5.1.2. The newcomers' class

The newcomers' classes are specifically designed resources for the support of newly arrived students in the moment that they are incorporated in Catalonia's education system, in schools which have a significant number of this type of student.

The newcomers' class, as a resource for supporting the specific needs of certain students, must be an open classroom, which promotes language learning in the context of an inclusive school. In addition, it must adapt the curriculum to learning needs according to the characteristics of each student. It is another element of the institution's educational activity and, consequently, must form part of the educational reflection processes and of the Language Programme.

The newcomers' class is an open classroom which promotes language learning and reception in an inclusive school setting

The standard groups and tutors for all students are those in the regular classes

It must be clear from the first day that both the groups and the main tutors for all students are those of the regular classes. As such, it is very important to coordinate between the tutor in the newcomers' class, the regular class tutor and the personal tutor (if applicable), as well as between the entire teaching team. However, the newcomers' class tutor plays a leading role in the support for newly arrived students, both as regards language teaching, and in emotional aspects and those related to school and social environment.

Objectives and organisation

The role of the newcomers' class is providing newly arrived students with the initial communicative competence necessary to interact in the school environment and, subsequently, to attain academic language and address school and social integration, as well as emotional and relational aspects, which are equally essential for guaranteeing students' academic success and adaptation.

The established objectives for welcome classes are the following:

- Providing quality personalised support.
- Responding to the emotional aspects that play a part in the welcome and integration processes in a new society.
- Beginning intensive learning of the Catalan language, providing a basic communicative competence (A2).
- Helping to move from conversational skills to academic language in order to facilitate access to the everyday curriculum.

The newcomers' class provides newly arrived students with basic initial communicative competence

One of the fundamental principles of support for newly arrived students is that from the first day of their incorporation in the school they share the newcomers' class with the everyday class, which is, definitively, their class of reference. Students should not be in the newcomers' class for all the hours that they are at school. It is recommended that they spend approximately 50% of class time there and that the groups have no more than 12 students.

School adaptation process

As regards the school integration of newly arrived students in the framework of the newcomers' class, it is necessary to give special consideration to factors related to the emotional situation of the student and to the acquisition of the school and social habits necessary to guarantee the success of teaching-learning processes. The factors considered most relevant to facilitating a student's integration in the new environment, and therefore those on which a specific impact is made in the newcomers' class, are the following:

The acquisition of school and social habits is just as important in the reception an integration process as emotional support

- Adaptation to the school environment. This is about providing a basic knowledge of the institution (spaces, time distribution, customs, habits, types of task, etc.) and promoting a degree of trust in the new setting which allows the student to feel comfortable and safe, and can therefore take on the teaching, learning and socialisation processes with no worries or fears.
- Strategies for learning and motivation. The aim is to provide sufficient strategies to take on school tasks and to promote the emotional factors involved in learning a new language (interest, attention, participation, effort, ability to ask for help, etc.).
- Co-existence and participation. This is about promoting co-existence and interaction with all classmates, detecting strengths and weaknesses in the network of relationships that a student has established in order to redirect possible attitudes of closure or rejection on the part of both the student and of other classmates, in a context of respect for diversity, the rules of coexistence and positive conflict management.

5.1.3. Language and social support

The newcomers' class has, as has already been mentioned, the aim of providing language skills which enable newly arrived students to interact in the school and social environment from the first moment. However, the explanation of why students with other family languages generally achieve inferior academic results to their native classmates lies, among other aspects, in the challenge posed by the complexity of academic language, which is much more abstract and decontextualised than the language of everyday communication.

Both the Council of Europe and the reports of the OECD, as well as experts in learning in multilingual classrooms, suggest that, beyond the initial reception and learning of the language, continued language support should be provided for students of foreign origin so that they can understand the everyday curriculum, and guarantee equal opportunities and fairness of the education system. Furthermore, all research agrees that it takes years to master a language: from two to three years to communicate in informal conversation situations and from five to seven to do so in academic settings.

The methodological strategies which should be applied in this context of multilingual classrooms are those based on language immersion and on content and language integrated learning.

It is important to provide language support for students with other family languages who, fully integrated in the everyday classroom, still require specific support to follow curricular content. Furthermore, depending on their complexity, schools may allocate additional allowances to provide this support to students who find it difficult to follow the curriculum in the everyday classroom. In the same way, schools which do not have high levels of complexity may direct the task of some teaching staff to specifically accompany the learning process of these students, especially in the case of teachers who have the professional profile of immersion and language support.

Language and social support provides specific help with following curricular content in the regular classroom

All teachers must apply support strategies and a dynamic of cooperation must be established between all members of the teaching team

The specific difficulty which these students must overcome is that they must increase and deepen their control of the language and, at the same time, of the curricular content - in all areas and subjects - without mastering the academic language through which it is communicated. Therefore, even though there may be a teacher who has a more specific dedication to the attention of students with other family languages, it is essential that all teachers apply support strategies and that a cooperation dynamic is established between all members of the teaching team.

Target students

Language and social support is directed at students with other family languages who cannot strictly be considered newcomers and who no longer attend the newcomers' class. These students have specific needs that derive from limitations in their control of the language of communication necessary to understand lessons, from the lack of cultural references and previous knowledge which enable them to follow the curricular content in a normal way, and from the difficulties of school and social integration which prevent their academic success.

- Non-Spanish speaking students in the first and second year of primary school who have started their education in Catalonia but have very limited knowledge of the two official languages and, thus, need specific support in the language and relational field, especially with spoken language.
- Students in mid and upper primary school and compulsory secondary education who find themselves in one of two situations:
  – They have joined the education system in Catalonia late and have a limited knowledge of the vehicular language of learning.
  – Even for students who have exceeded the two years or, exceptionally, the three years stay in the newcomers' class, they find themselves in the process of attaining the control of academic language required to follow the everyday curriculum.
- Students with other family languages in mid and upper primary school and compulsory secondary education who, despite having received schooling in Catalonia at some point, have later been part of the schooling in another state.

- Students with other family languages who enter Catalonia's education system in post-compulsory education.

In the case of pre-primary education, it is thought that the objectives set out in the curriculum for this educational stage, such as stimulation of spoken language and discovery of the literacy code, already cater to the needs of students with other family languages. Nevertheless, specific support strategies are also suggested for this stage, which are specially designed for students coming from non-Spanish speaking families.

Objectives and content

The objective of language and social support is to help students understand content from the areas of the curriculum, with a very diverse range linguistic structures and registers, and at the same time help them continue advancing their language knowledge, until they can use it in all learning activities and environments (inside and outside of the school) in an independent way without specific support.

The aim of language and social support is helping students become independent learners

From a language-based approach, the content which must be prioritised when planning lessons is the following:

- Linguistic resources which enable students to interact in everyday school situations.
- Discursive structures from subjects related to cognitive abilities (describing, arguing, summarising, etc.).
- Skills related to written and spoken comprehension and expression. In pre-primary education and the first year of primary school priority must be given to working on spoken language.
- Specific vocabulary related to fields of knowledge.
- Difficulties associated with the differences in cultural references and the lack of the prior knowledge needed to acquire new knowledge.

The educational success of these students will also depend on the inclusive capacity of the institution, the possibility of making them feel “part of it”. As such, while it is necessary to increase the participation of students in school life and make them feel more rooted in the region, it will also be necessary, through respect and appreciation of differences, to move towards an intercultural approach in which all students become visible and can feel recognised. It should be noted that an inclusive school involves a set of attitudes and actions which equally affect and involve native students, students with other family languages and their families.

From an intercultural approach, the content which must be considered when planning lessons is the following:

- The linguistic and cultural baggage of students.
- Exposure in cultural plurality activities in the classroom.
- Respect for difference in a framework of common values.
- Development of multiple identities.

Therefore, language and social support for students of foreign origin is aimed at achieving control of the vehicular language of learning and full integration in school dynamics, as well as catering to personal, relational and contextual elements which also determine the academic success of students.

Organisation

Language and social support should be structured in a flexible way, according to the characteristics of the students it is aimed at and in accordance with the organisational culture of each centre. Under no circumstances will this form of support for students of foreign origin mean that a student receives more than 20% of class time out of the regular class or spends more than half of the hours of a subject outside the regular group. In the case that groups of students are created outside of the regular classroom, it is recommended that the number of students in the group should be no more than 10.

Some suitable organisational forms for providing support to students with other family languages are having two teachers in the classroom, creating flexible reduced groups, giving personalised attention or peer tutoring.

Newly arrived students in post-compulsory stages of education

In order to facilitate the language learning of these students who enter our education system having completed compulsory education in their country of origin, the Catalan language classes offered by the region's official language schools will be made available to them.

5.2. Integrating the home languages of students with other family languages

The successful education of students with other family languages also depends on the recognition and appreciation of their language and culture. It is necessary, therefore, to take into account the linguistic and cultural references of these students, to give them greater presence in school activity and to encourage their curricular incorporation through extracurricular activities of native language and culture, with elective subjects in secondary education, through the completion of subjects and facilitating the certification of knowledge and its formal recognition, among other things.

The successful education of students with other family languages also depends on the recognition and appreciation of their language and culture

Thus, **the interest in ensuring the maintenance and promotion of the heritage languages of newly arrived students is also one of our system's objectives**, due to the wealth that they bring and the value given to them by students who speak them, as well as for the internationalisation of the Catalan society and economy.

The aim must be to ensure that non-curricular language activities, even if they are extracurricular, are part of the language programme of the school in which they are taught. For this reason, it is necessary to ensure that the teaching staff giving these lessons, even if they are in non-school hours, hold regular meetings with the management team of the associated centre and with the language, intercultural and social cohesion team (LIC) which accompanies and advises it throughout the course. Similarly, heritage language teachers should be encouraged to participate in the activities organised by the educational centre (cultural days, excursions, etc.).

Non-curricular language activities must be part of the school's language programme

This participation has a double objective: these teachers integrate and actively participate in school life, and the language they teach is made visible and given value in front of all the educational community.

Boosting and maintaining the heritage languages of students is a challenge for any education system. Diversified student support is made more complex by the number and diversity of languages that are present in schools, allowing us to take into account the different degrees of knowledge of these languages and to exploit this baggage for learning other languages and/or for knowledge building in other languages.

Meeting this need involves having teachers capable of teaching these languages, establishing partnerships with institutions that offer training in these languages and, as mentioned earlier, putting mechanisms in place which allow for the recognition of language knowledge acquired by students outside school time.

Furthermore, the incorporation of heritage languages in the school environment meets the main objective of improving the reception of newly arrived students, placing value on their home languages, which are sometimes neglected in the home country, promoting intercultural education and, above all, ensuring that Catalan society has some truly plurilingual citizens who, on top of Catalan, Spanish and English, and/or other international languages, can communicate in their own heritage languages.

When it is not possible to introduce teaching in the heritage language, the symbolic presence of students' home languages should be incorporated. Among other things, making native languages present enables the establishment of continuity between the school and family environments, with the enormous advantages that this involves (Bronfenbrenner, 1987; Vila, 1998), and, furthermore, it also means increasing self-esteem related to personal things and gaining a positive self-image, both conditions for successful integration in the activities offered by the school.

Making native languages present allows us to establish continuity between the school and family, and boosts self-esteem

Of the various ways to make students' native languages symbolically present, one is to welcome or say goodbye to students using the different languages that are present; writing the names of nursery students on the hanger in both our alphabet and the alphabet of their own language; learning and sharing some features of the languages present in the school, and, above all, never prohibiting the use of a native language when it is used between students who speak it.

Along with symbolic recognition of students' home languages in the school setting, it is important to also incorporate language knowledge developed in the native language into educational practice in order to enhance knowledge of the school language.

Firstly, all students who are integrated in the school, be it in P-3 (at 3 years old) or at another stage in the education system, know how to do things with language. Students whose native language is the schooling language progress in their own language thanks to the activities which take place in the school setting. But students who are studying in a programme that changes the home language for the school language must learn to do things in a new language which they already know how to do. Meaning girls and boys who are being newly schooled in our education system are not linguistically incompetent individuals who have to learn the school language to be able to join school activities. What they have to learn consists of recognising a new linguistic instrument for doing things that they already know how to do. And they can only learn how to do this if, through teaching methods, they use the skills already developed in their own language as a source of learning for the new language.

Finally, another way of giving greater presence to home languages in school activities is for students of late integration, especially in compulsory secondary education, to be assisted at the beginning of their schooling (if possible, and in addition to the teaching staff) by a student who has the same home language, since the *tutor* student can use this to *translate* exercises and give explanations about what is done in the school, classroom, etc. and, therefore, encourage and speed up the process of adaptation to the centre.

See: *Language and Social Support* [online] Generalitat de Catalunya: XTEC <**http://xtec.gencat.cat/ca/projectes/alumnat-origen-estranger/suport-linguistic-social/**>

III. Educational cooperation

1. Educational environment

The community is the key strategic pillar to the educational performance that helps to achieve continuity and coherence between the actions of different educational agents that operate within a region, whether they belong to formal education or non-formal/informal education. The interaction of all educational, social, economic, cultural, artistic, athletic, and leisure agents is necessary in order to achieve coherence between the academic and extracurricular dynamics. Schools must open themselves to the community, and the social community must be more aware of the educational tasks of the different social agents. **In order to achieve this, we must work and interact as a community, and promote the culture of networked learning. In doing so, we understand community-based learning as a methodology that responds to all the educational challenges in current societies.**

In order to broaden the impact of educational action and increase exposure to languages, the role of informal and non-formal education is very important. Learning a language involves, above all, learning how to use it while interacting with others. It also requires a positive attitude and a desire to use it in order to do stimulating and motivating activities with each other. This also depends on emotional elements, such as feeling a part of something, or feeling welcomed, recognized, and respected for the linguistic and cultural identity of each individual. Therefore, it is necessary to promote the development of school and extracurricular activities that allow students to use the languages that they are learning in real situations. The involvement and collaboration of national and international agencies, institutions, and networks that offer various activities and projects to encourage students to use the languages face-to-face or virtually is fundamental.

The community must promote the development of academic and extracurricular activities that allow students to use the languages that they are learning in real contexts

Therefore, it is essential to connect the educational community to the local community through collaboration with educational services, the cultural, sports and business worlds, universities, social entities, or parent organizations in order to enrich both the language and school programmes.

1.1. Community educational plans and other socio-educational plans

One of the most important actions in this area is the **community-based educational plans**, conceived as a proposal of educational cooperation between the Department of Education and the local councils, along with the participation of other entities, which aim to contribute to social cohesion by means of equity, intercultural education, promotion of coexistence, and the use of the Catalan language in a framework of respect for linguistic and cultural diversity.

The social character of language and, in particular, the need to make the Catalan language an element of social cohesion and equal opportunities, force the promotion of Catalan as a language of use, in addition to the acquisition of strong language skills. As is common knowledge, in order to consolidate language learning, one must practice the language in contexts of meaningful functional use and, especially in settings that are directly linked to a student's own emotional and recreational experiences. Therefore, it is necessary to promote educational activities that allow for contexts of use. Language policies must also be oriented in this direction, promoting the use of Catalan in school environments. It is here where we must count on the entire network of educational agents, working collaboratively. In this sense the community-based educational plans promote the cross-disciplinary use of Catalan language, through all their activities, in a framework of respect and recognition of linguistic diversity.

The community-based educational plans give an integrated and communal response to the educational needs of children and adolescents. In addition they facilitate language uses in real situations and promote the participation of the entire student body and their families in different educational spaces: whether in the classroom or in supplementary activities - both extracurricular activities and those that are offered by various important local entities, especially in the field of leisure (choirs, community centres, Casteller associations, athletic bodies, etc.), because they provide optimal interpersonal spaces that promote interaction and social cohesion.

In addition they facilitate actions related to the consolidation of proficiency in the Catalan language (promotion of language partners, storytelling, theatre, conversation classes and workshops, poetry contests and workshops, hobbies, literary tours, exhibitions, language hosting centres, etc.) through reading (promoting reading in libraries and community entities, storytelling, visits from writers, a city reading plan, reading clubs, openings of school libraries, reading networks, book markets, book swaps, *BookCrossing*, book buddies, shared take-home book collections in classes, etc.) or cultural activities (promotion of various situations for use of the Catalan language in activities that involve music, theatre, local radio, leisure, sports, Catalan popular culture, etc.).

They also allow for the organization of activities to support schoolwork (acceleration and reinforcement of material learned in the school curriculum, acquisition of organizational and study habits, planning of schoolwork) and other activities that involve families with the purpose of facilitating the interaction between native and newly arrived families, as well as the knowledge and use of Catalan as a language of use and social interaction through conferences and educational talks, language classes and workshops, conversation workshops, literacy workshops, neighbourhood classrooms, literature fairs, language partnerships, theatre workshops, cooking workshops, reception and assistance to families, parent schools, promotion of parent groups, networks of workshops for families, promotion of family participation, meeting spaces, knowledge of the community, etc.

In addition to the previously mentioned native language classes, community-based educational plans that seek to promote intercultural dialogue recognize and take into account the students' and families' native languages, as well as the cultures that coexist in the community, through the organization of heritage language and intercultural workshops. They also contribute to the incorporation of new members into the educational community by helping them gain knowledge of the community's landscape and cultural heritage, as well as the local social fabric through facilitating participation, interaction, and coexistence among the various people who make up the educational community.

2. Internationalisation of education

The complexity, interconnection and dynamism of our society means that students need to be able to understand and analyse their environment, which is becoming increasingly global, and to interact in different languages with speakers from different cultures. Young people of today have to develop what the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has identified as global competence (*Prepare young people for an inclusive and sustainable world.* OECD, 2018), and which is understood as the capacity to examine questions of a local, global and intercultural nature, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others, to participate in open, suitable and effective interactions with people from different cultures, to actively contribute to the collective good and to the sustainable development of today's societies.

It is evident that plurilingual and intercultural competence plays a key role in this global competence. To develop these competences, strategies need to be implemented that help students understand the world in more depth, and that prepare them to be able to interact in a flexible and respectful manner with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and to contribute actively and positively to the construction of a more cohesive and plural society.

In this sense, the internationalisation of education becomes a key strategy that provides opportunities for promoting the learning of other languages, educational mobility schemes for teachers and students, international education programmes and projects, and unique school projects or classroom activities aimed at recognising, valuing and fostering the learning of the languages and cultures of students of foreign origin, given the intrinsic internationalising nature and the potential of such activities.

Promoting the internationalisation of educational centres in Catalonia is an effective way of consolidating plurilingual and intercultural education, and is underpinned by the main goals of promoting the development of international collaboration projects in educational centres, increasing the participation of students and teachers in European and international cooperation programmes, using digital communication technologies efficiently, and promoting training and professional mobility.

Internationalisation actions aimed at students must focus on facilitating the development of part of the curriculum in a foreign centre, acquiring practical experience in companies in different countries, accessing the learning of additional languages present in the social context or linked to their own family origins or those of their peers, and to participating in educational projects aimed at recognising and valuing linguistic and cultural diversity within an inclusive approach which fosters dialogue and social peace.

With regard to teachers, internationalisation actions must be focused on promoting and facilitating their participation in training and teacher observation activities in educational centres, companies and other entities in different countries, which contribute to their professional development and to fostering collaboration with teachers from other education systems, in order to carry out quality education cooperation projects and to share their teaching knowledge and experience.

Finally, in relation to the education centres themselves, internationalisation must mean an opportunity for participating in European and international programmes that enable them to develop quality innovation projects, to exchange good educational practice, and to access additional economic resources. Moreover, this should also

help them to widen their academic options, with international Baccalaureate studies, batxibac and dual training programmes, and to certify knowledge in the foreign languages acquired.

Establishing collaboration agreements with local agents and educational bodies, who offer intercultural educational activities, who foster coexistence and provide spaces where languages can be used in a real way through competitions, theatre performances, workshops and talks, seminars, extracurricular classes or language volunteering schemes, among other initiatives, helps to guarantee the same opportunities for all students and to create networks through which the results of experiences can be shared and through which new educational cooperation projects can be developed.

The goal of these collaborations is to promote the involvement and commitment of the entire educational community to the creation of spaces that promote and facilitate the use of languages.

IV. Implementation: the school language programme

The implementation of a multilingual and intercultural education model is not a starting point, but rather the end of a long process that involves a reflection and change of individual and collective conceptions regarding teaching and learning, a gradual incorporation of attainable innovations, and a restructuring of the same practice in the context of a particular school.

Multilingual education is not an innovation that a teacher or even a limited group of teachers can individually apply, but rather it requires a comprehensive, organizational, methodological, and evaluative approach that involves all the cycles and stages, as well as the entire teaching staff of the school. The implementation of this model requires organizational and methodological changes in a systemic fashion, with the goal of improving the linguistic and communicative competence of students, as well as developing key skills (basic skills, such as thought and personal skills), promoting cooperative and group work, and acquiring strategies for autonomous learning.

These changes must respond to the specific strategy of each school that is both suited to the diagnosed needs based upon internal and external evaluations, and tailored to the set goals. The definition of the strategy and the decisions made to carry out said strategy comprise the **school language programme** (articles 10, 11, 12, and 16 from the Education Act 12/2009, July 10, and article 5.1.e from Decree 102/2010, August 3, on the autonomy of schools).

The language programme forms part of the school educational programme, and is the organized compilation of the decisions made regarding educational proposals for the teaching and learning of languages, as well as the linguistic uses of the school. It is a resource that helps develop language-learning activities in a coherent and effective fashion, and puts an emphasis on the daily educational administration of the schools. Therefore, it is a pedagogical and flexible tool that evolves from the set educational strategies and the achievement of set goals.

The language programme is the organized collection of decisions made regarding the teaching and learning of languages, as well as the linguistic uses in the school.

In order to elaborate on the language programme, the school must take into account its sociolinguistic context and environment, the linguistic background of the student body and their individual needs, the results of the internal and external evaluations, the general evaluations of the system, and the language skills of the teaching staff. This analysis is used to establish the school's linguistic goals from three points of view: the learning goals for different languages for students, the linguistic uses that are to be established and promoted, and the professional and linguistic development of the teaching staff. The project must also specify the actions that are oriented to achieve these goals.

The implementation of the language programme requires educational leadership and a strategic vision aimed at planning and organizing different learning scenarios that allow for the fulfilment of projects, tasks, and activities that facilitate a coherent progression of learning throughout all of the educational stages. These activities, pro-

jects, and tasks should also facilitate the implementation of monitoring plans, evaluation, and improvement, as well as ensure the achievement of set goals and desirable standards of skills.

Educational leadership is fundamental for a successful implementation of the language programme.

The strategic pillars of the language programme, from which the document is structured, are as follows:

- The role of the Catalan language and Occitan in Aran as the backbone of a multilingual educational project and linguistic uses in the school.
- The treatment of languages, both curricular and non-curricular, in formal and non-formal educational spaces of the school.
- The organizational and administrative aspects that have methodological and linguistic repercussions.

The decisions set forth in the language programme are structured based upon three levels: class, school, and the community, and they are organized into three main areas: communication (linguistic uses), methodologies, and organization. The combination of the areas and levels provides a framework that allows for management of the specific linguistic needs as a whole.

1. The centre's language uses

Regarding linguistic usage, schools must ensure that Catalan, and Occitan in Aran, are the vehicular languages used in teaching and in communications with the educational community.

To ensure the learning and use of Catalan, and of Aranese in Aran, and to promote the development of plurilingualism among students, it is important to anticipate the strategies and mechanisms needed, which help to establish, in a reasoned way, the languages used by teachers when delivering classes, the physical and virtual didactic material used, coursebooks and learning and assessment activities. It is also important to establish which languages and in which contexts of use interactions between teachers and students are conducted, as well as administrative activities and oral and written communications with the rest of the educational community. Establishing the language uses of teachers is essential, since they not only act as language role models, but they also determine the language of interaction and communicative model of the centre.

Therefore, the School Language Programme must include the linguistic and communicative school actions aimed at increasing mastery and use of Catalan among students who do not have it as their habitual language, and to specify in which contexts foreign languages will be practised, aiming to find both classroom based and virtual spaces for interaction. Equally, in addition to actions aimed at guaranteeing coexistence in diversity and the value of plurilingualism, schools must establish strategies for recognising, promoting and making visible the languages of students of foreign origin, as well as mechanisms for incorporating these languages in school life.

In order to assess the linguistic and cultural baggage that these students and their families contribute to the school, it may be necessary to adapt communications between school and families.

The School Language Programme must also specify the courses of action that need to be taken to pass on information about the uses of language at school to the professionals responsible for the management of non-teaching activities, such as the school canteen, extracurricular activities, or outreach activities. These activities facilitate

and promote the use of languages – those prioritised by the school – in real learning situations and represent a significant increase in the exposure time to these languages, which means that they have high educational value, motivate students, and help to improve their communicative competence.

2. Methodological aspects of language learning

With the goal of assisting the student body in the development of their multilingual skills, helping them to become aware of their learning process and take a leading role in it, the Language Programme must determine the methodological strategies that allow for language learning in all areas and subjects, and integrate evaluation throughout the whole teaching and learning process. In addition, it must bring about the consolidation of methodologies and student groupings which encourage interaction, as well as the aspects of organization and coordination that stem from this (spaces for the coordination of level, year group, or project if necessary).

The school language programme must consolidate the set of language goals and content in the planning of each level, academic year, or educational stage (including intermediate and advanced vocational training courses) in order to ensure a real and effective progression of learning. It must also foresee ways of incorporating the continuous evaluation of acquired learning and the measures that must be catered to in order to deal with the different learning speeds of the students.

Similarly, with the goal of facilitating the joint treatment of common structures, the transfer of learning from one language to another, and the recognition of the individual wealth derived from the linguistic diversity of the student body, the programme must include the approach to language acquisition, the teaching of languages, and the coordinated administration of languages that will be used. Therefore, it should lay out the procedures that guarantee the coordination of the language areas, and strategies that allow for increasing the degree of exposure of students to languages – especially foreign languages – through integrated language and content teaching, and specify the criteria that justify this. It should also specify the criteria that justify the delivery of content in languages other than Catalan and determine the stages and spaces of learning aimed at facilitating authentic contexts of language use, which promote cooperative work and intensify the students' oral and written production.

In schools where Catalan is not the dominant language, it is necessary to describe the educational language immersion strategies that must be applied in order to ensure the intensive use of the Catalan language as a common teaching and learning language, to ensure that the students systematically have the necessary help in order to access learning.

3. Organisational aspects

The implementation of a multilingual educational model requires leadership on the part of the school administrative teams in the processes that are a result of the change in model. These teams must be composed of qualified teachers in order to develop and achieve the set goals, and they must count on the involvement of the entire educational community and its environment.

From an organizational point of view, the language programme must determine the spaces provided for coordination among the language teaching staff, as well as the coordination between language teachers and those

of other subjects, with the aim of promoting educational reflection and coming to an agreement on the learning goals. In this respect, to ensure the coherence and continuity of the content and methodologies throughout the school years and stages (taught by different teachers), it is necessary to establish the vertical coordination of the teachers between courses, areas or subjects, and between educational stages, especially between primary and secondary school.

In order to facilitate the harmonization of teaching and the common use of languages (taught simultaneously to the same students by various teachers), horizontal coordination is essential. Therefore, the language programme must specify the coordination procedures of the language teaching staff with the goal of fostering an integrated learning of languages that allows for the development of coherent didactic programmes, which strengthen the common elements between languages, avoid duplication, and contribute to the development of students' plurilingual skills. In addition, it must specify the organizational strategies for the coordination between language teachers and teachers of other subjects, with the goal of helping students to develop a general language and communicative competence, and increasing their exposure to the foreign languages that they are learning, especially in relation to the methodologies of immersion and CLIL in a foreign language.

The language programme should set out dialogue spaces, work criteria, and evaluation strategies that allow for the tracking of language learning as well as the achievement of content in all subjects. It should also set out the strategies that ensure a flexible organization of the student body, which breaks the indissoluble teacher-class unit and enables us to deal with diversity from new perspectives.

Schools that offer non-curricular foreign languages during the school timetable or during extracurricular activities, should aim to ensure that students follow the same language teaching methods, following communicative and skills-based approaches, and should therefore provide mechanisms that allow teachers who teach these languages to be able to participate in school activities.

The language programme should also include the collaboration and coordination with different educational agents in the community that aim to ensure educational continuity and consistency in connection with the use of the Catalan language as an element of social cohesion and the practice of foreign languages that are prioritized by the school. In this regard, the school language programme must establish criteria for collaborating with institutions, networks and national and international bodies, to help them develop specific projects and programmes aimed at promoting the informal and non-formal learning of languages. It must include actions resulting from the existence of community-based educational plans or other socio-educational plans in which the school has been involved, by engaging in relationship networks among the social fabric, and at the same time, encouraging the use of the Catalan language in all activities addressed to the educational community. They must also incorporate partnership activities with other schools, student and teacher mobility, and coordination of formal or non-formal education spaces in the school during school time.

The language programme is set up as an instrument that should serve the school by designing and implementing a pedagogical and organizational strategy that responds to the detected needs, promotes collaborative and cooperative work on part of the teaching staff, and facilitates the incorporation of procedures that measure the academic progress of students and the relationship with the environment.

4. Professional qualifications of teaching staff

The main challenge for teachers of any academic subject is ensuring that students achieve the goals set forth in the curriculum through the most rigorous, effective, and motivational methodology possible.

Therefore, the language programme must specify the actions that ensure that the teaching staff have a strong control of the languages in which they teach, as well as mastery of the methodological strategies that they use to guarantee learning.

Within the approach of content and language integrated learning, each teacher, whatever their academic discipline may be, must focus in addition on academic language – both general and typical language in his/her area – by working on their forms and linguistic structures, and paying attention to their cognitive demands, as well as using necessary teaching strategies so that students learn the material, and at the same time, use what they have learned in the construction of knowledge of the subject.

Teachers of non-linguistic subjects must keep in mind that, as shown in the latest research, academic language comes into play through their functions and responsibilities as educators. The lack of knowledge of academic language by newly arrived students and incoming students with poor sociocultural and socio-economic backgrounds is the first factor in academic failure, and therefore, its explicit usage in teaching of each and every academic subject becomes absolutely necessary.

With regard to the language skills of the teaching staff, all teachers in Catalan schools, regardless of the ownership of the school, must know and master the two official languages (as well as Aranese in the Aran Valley), and must be able to use them adequately, orally and written, in the exercise of the teaching function.

Notwithstanding the level required to access the speciality of languages (C2), any teacher that is new to the education system must demonstrate a level of knowledge corresponding to that of a B2 level of at least one foreign language.

With respect to CLIL teachers, in addition to the requirement of sufficient knowledge of a foreign language, which they must use as the language of instruction, one must keep in mind the ability to provide scaffolding and educational support to the students, as well as the ability to provide specific resources and rich, diverse contexts that are cognitively demanding.

The two instruments that schools use to ensure the adequacy of the staff in achieving the goals set forth in their language projects are: the training of executive teams and teaching staff, and the possibility of selecting teachings in accordance with the professional qualification required for their language programme.

4.1. Teacher training

The linguistic training of teachers must be oriented to achieve organizational and methodological changes that respond to the school strategy, and have a main goal of consolidating skill-based teaching and promoting reflection on the teaching practice in order to directly influence the improvement of this practice in the classroom and in the school.

The language training of teachers aims to ensure:

1. A high level of competence in the language or the languages that they teach.
2. Plurilingual skills, as a necessary element to collaborate in the construction of plurilingual skills on part of the students.
3. Knowledge and practice in methodological approaches and multilingual teaching: CLIL and CLIL in a foreign language.
4. The ability to collaborate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a language programme in the school.

4.2. Specific work areas with a professional profile

The Education Act of Catalonia places the autonomy of schools as a strategic, key area in order to improve the quality of the education system. Based off the experience of the systems with the best results and most fairness, the public administration backs a model in which the school has extensive powers in order to provide for the needs of the student body according to their context, on the basis of a unique educational project. The administration establishes the main educational goals, priorities of the system, and curriculum framework, and the schools have extensive powers in order to specify and develop these priorities. The law consists of three decrees: those of Autonomy, Direction, and Provision of positions of work.

The Decree of Autonomy allows for the specification of the curriculum and the internal organization of the school. The Decree of Direction strengthens the role of the administration as a key figure in articulating and making effective the autonomy. In addition, it also grants extensive administration powers, highlighting educational leadership as a priority. The Decree of Provision grants power to the school administration in regards to the management of staff, with the goal of consolidating teaching teams committed to the application of the educational project. Because it is impossible to consolidate an educational programme focused on academic success without affecting the consolidation and incorporation of the teaching staff that must be incorporated into the school, the framework of this Decree helps to create professional profiles.

The provision of teachers in schools in the framework of the regulation of public teaching prioritizes facilitating and organizing teacher mobility requests based on the criteria of seniority and qualifications, without taking into consideration the need to create and consolidate teaching teams engaged in the application of an educational project. The Provision Decree seeks to correct this situation and establish a procedure for a specific provision – professional profiles –, which can reach up to 50% of the school positions, always starting with positions that are vacant through the ordinary procedure. Teachers are also interviewed to see what qualities they can bring to the positions in regards to contributions that can be made in the application of the educational programme.

The definition of each specific teaching position establishes its content and requirements for the profile: specific qualifications or accredited education of the position, which are appropriate in assessing individualized characteristics of the position and their specific teaching functions, in accordance with the school's educational programme, as well as the administration project.

The school educational programme, along with the administration programme justifies the existence of a specific position and its definition. The specific teaching functions that determine the profile of specific positions are related

to the linguistic field, among others. The professional profiles of specific jobs in this field are:

- Linguist in foreign language (content and language integrated learning in a foreign language: English, French, Italian, German)
- Reading and school library
- Immersion and linguistic support

Schools that wish to teach content in languages that are not Catalan, that anticipate designing and implementing a school reading plan, and that have a high number of either non-Catalan speaking students or foreign students may determine some structural vacancies with the profiles of Foreign Language (CLIL in a foreign language), Reading and School Library, or Immersion and Linguistic Support in terms of content. The teachers that fill these vacancies have training and experience in each of these specific areas and can be a key element for the implementation of the school language programme.

5. Supplementary resources

In the language programme, the material resources or additional or supplementary staff that contribute to the implementation of the multilingual and intercultural educational model must be clearly laid out. These may include: newcomers' classes, conversation assistants, language volunteers, etc., both during and outside of school hours.

The School Language Programme (PLC) is, therefore, the result of the decisions made as a consequence of the reflection and internal debate of each school about how to improve linguistic uses, as well as how to teach languages. Making a good diagnosis of the reality of the school based on the sociolinguistic context, the school's linguistic situation, the educational starting points, academic results of students, and resources available allows for the sharing of responsibilities and commitments regarding the vision of the future, goals to be achieved, and distributed leadership. It also allows for the establishment of priorities and decisions to be made regarding actions and timelines.

The language programme is the result of a process of reflection and debate on how to improve the linguistic uses of the school as well as the teaching of languages

The language programme becomes the roadmap of the school for the implementation of a multilingual and intercultural education model

With a multicultural approach, the school language programme is the plurilingual and intercultural framework of reference for integrated and comprehensive planning of all languages, whether they be curricular, non-curricular, or native to the student body. This plan is divided into three levels: class, school, and community, and is organized into three main areas: methodologies, organization, and communication. The combination of the areas and levels provides a framework that allows for management of the specific linguistic needs as a whole.

Given the autonomy of each school in responding to their specific needs, each language programme is different, since they are a result of organized teaching decisions that take into account the characteristics and qualifications of the teaching teams and material resources of each school.

The language programme is the fundamental and indispensable instrument for advancing in the implementation of the plurilingual and intercultural education model that contributes to developing the communicative and intercultural skills of each student, allowing him/her to acquire new knowledge and communicate effectively with speakers of other languages and cultures in a wide range of contexts.

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