

**WINNING BUSINESS PRESENTATIONS. DERIVING GOOD
PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR CLIL IMPLEMENTATION AT
TERTIARY LEVEL FROM ACTUAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE.
A FIELD REPORT**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Objectives

The objective of this field report is to propose a brief set of good practice guidelines on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) for teachers and course developers in tertiary education. The guidelines are to be derived from the author's experience of teaching business presentation skills in the Design Management International (DMI) study programme at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (LUASA). Extra emphasis is laid on the particular class held on 26 April 2011 and the accompanying Business Presentations Lecture Script (BPLS).

1.2. Background

1.2.1. The Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts

The LUASA, founded in 1997, comprises five schools specializing in engineering and architecture, business, social work, art and design, as well as music. It offers various Bachelor and Master programmes, focusing on research and close co-operation with local industry, businesses, and cultural institutions. The students have mostly completed an apprenticeship with extra academic qualifications in a profession related

to their area of study, or they can produce equivalent qualifications from outside Switzerland.

1.2.2. Design Management International

The DMI study programme focuses on the theory and practice of design, business and engineering, teaching students the skills to manage the various interfaces between these domains (Design Management International – In English, n.d.). The programme is taught completely in English to students from Switzerland and abroad, allowing for a multicultural learning experience. By the end of the first year DMI students are expected to have reached at least a level of English competence equivalent to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) of C1.

1.2.3. Winning Business Presentations

This first-year course makes use of a Business Presentations Lecture Script (BPLS) to prepare students to make winning presentations in an international business setting. In the academic year 2010/2011 the course participants, whose English often constituted their second or third foreign language, consisted of ten female and ten male students from six different nations with various language levels ranging from near-native to C1 or B2 on the CEFR scales. Aged 23 on average, they had all acquired academic school leaving certificates as well as extra professional experience in the domains of either business or design.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Brief Description

The method applied in this paper is tried and tested action research (AR) (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988), which applies the same quality cycle as the business world, i.e. plan-do-check-act. As understood in this report, planning in an educational setting does not only involve preparing lessons, but also formulating a penetrating research question before beginning to teach. Similarly, acting does not only involve incorporating

students' feedback into one's next round of teaching, but also consulting the relevant educational literature for more information on possible improvements.

2.2. Research Question

How to teach a set of highly variable skills, namely business presentations, the evaluation of which depends on the predominant national culture, the business setting and the personal preferences of all involved parties?

3. RESULTS

The table below presents the author's CLIL teaching experience in four theses. These are discussed in chapter 4, and a set of good practice guidelines is derived from them in chapter 5.

Thesis	CLIL at tertiary level...	Reasoning: This is because...
-C-LIL 1: Content	often involves teaching intercultural skills, especially in business English.	many typical business skills, such as meetings, negotiations and presentations, are situational and highly dependent on cultural variables.
C-L-IL 2: Language	involves teaching language skills, but this is not the main challenge, especially in English.	motivation for learning English is generally high and ample resources are available both online and offline, in educational and non-educational settings.
CL-I-L 3: Integrated	seriously challenges teachers with the requirement of carefully planned and skilfully implemented learning environments if content and language are to be fully integrated.	teachers must seek authentic materials and adapt them for classroom use, plan in ample and flexible time for various forms of exercises and feedback, devise realistic learning tasks, and prepare extra materials for both fast and slow learners.

<p>CLI-L- 4 Learning</p>	<p>entails a long and stressful process, as various degrees of resistance to learning must be overcome before deeply rewarding effects can be achieved for both teachers and students.</p>	<p>fossilized skills and thought patterns must be unlearned before the target structures can be learned, which proves all the more difficult if learners' prior experience and successful actions in their L1 environment contradict the new learning goals.</p>
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Table 1: Four Theses for CLIL at Tertiary Level

4. DISCUSSION

Before beginning the detailed discussion of the class held on April 26, 2011, readers must be reminded that there appear to be at least two very different *styles of presentation* used in business settings:

- Technical briefings: The speaker attempts to *inform* the target audience about a business issue in a very precise and concise way. The focus is on the issue; any show of emotion beyond the exigencies of politeness is perceived to be a distraction from the facts. This is the preferred style of many academics and engineers; it is often encountered in Switzerland and central Europe.
- International presentations: The speaker attempts to *persuade* the target audience of a course of action in a compelling and entertaining way. The focus is on the speaker; emotions are perceived to be quintessential in the attempt to move the target audience in a certain direction. This is the preferred style of many salespeople and international managers; it is often encountered in multinational corporations with an American-style business culture.

4.1. Pre 2010

The author's first approach to teaching business presentations was to choose a reliable text book which explained and practised how to prepare, hold and evaluate a presentation in English, and to add several video recordings of American presentations

in order to show the difference between the American and the Swiss style. Examples were chosen from a seminal book about Steve Jobs' presentation skills (Gallo 2010).

The end-of-term summative evaluation required each student to present in English a paper which they had written. The students had –no doubt– been seriously prepared for their task, but their performance in the examination was disappointing, usually consisting of a Swiss-style technical briefing in English with hardly any elements of the American style. Despite the author's effort to include more illustrative materials and practical exercises in the following year, there was no significant improvement in student performance.

More and more it became apparent that an intercultural issue lay behind the students' unwillingness or inability to present in any other style than that of a technical briefing. Accordingly, business presentations were no longer understood as a set of generally accepted business skills –albeit with local variations– but as a highly differentiated cultural artefact with different functions in different cultural environments. This new approach would particularly have to incorporate three tenets of *interculturalism*:

- The *cultural iceberg* (Hall 1976), which postulates that perceived human behaviour in culturally sensitive situations is determined by underlying beliefs, values and thought patterns.

The new approach: It was inferred that comparing and contrasting different verbal behaviour patterns, e.g. the way people begin a presentation in the U.S. as opposed to central Europe, would not suffice. Instead, the underlying cultural issues would have to be addressed: American businesspeople very often want to inform and persuade at the same time, while central Europeans are generally happy only to inform, as they tend to perceive persuasion techniques as unserious.

- The concept of *corporate cultures* (Hofstede 1980), which postulates a matrix of four national corporate cultures: the Village Market in English-speaking countries, the Well-Oiled Machine in central Europe, the Pyramid of People around the Mediterranean and in South America, and the Traditional Family in most of the rest of the world. However, critics of Hofstede, with Oertig-Davidson (2002) among them, have argued that a corporation's culture is not only defined by the country, but also by the industrial sector in which it

operates. Thus banks are usually a Pyramid of People and design agencies a Village Market, independent of the predominant national culture.

The new approach: It was inferred that special provisions would have to be made for central or southern European students preparing for a career in international design management with its particular corporate culture. More time and resources would have to be allotted for students not only to acquire new skills, but also to change the underlying values and thought patterns about business presentations.

- The concept of *culturally sensitive presentation styles* (Bennett 1998: 111), which postulates that different presentation styles result from different cultural attitudes, especially the perception and management of time: Southern Europeans with their polychronic attitude to time allow for many more digressions in a presentation than northern Europeans with their monochronic attitude.

The new approach: It was inferred that three of Hofstede's corporate cultures could be associated with three distinct presentation styles, namely the Village Market with the American style, the Pyramid of People with the digressive style, and the Well-Oiled Machine with the technical briefing. This makes the learning path to one and the same teaching target different for every student, due to different cultural environments at their respective starting points.

The new approach would also have to incorporate two tenets of *second language acquisition* and *anchored instruction*:

- The concept of *fossilization* (Ellis 1994: 354), which postulates that second language acquisition often remains incomplete because learners fossilize certain non-target language forms before attaining full L2 competence. Although the concept is usually applied to the incomplete acquisition of linguistic competence, it offers four possible explanations for the students' pragmatic shortcomings: (1) They do not feel a real need for learning a new presentation style, as their accustomed style has served them well so far; (2) exam periods are very often stressful and students unconsciously default to their old presentation style under pressure; (3) they do not often experience other presentation styles than their accustomed one; (4) they have presented successfully in their accustomed style before leaving their jobs and starting to study.

The new approach: It was inferred that much attention would have to be given to the age-old principle that an old structure has to be unlearned before a new one can be learned. This requires the didactic arrangements to be carefully planned.

- The concept of an *anchor* (The Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt 1990), which postulates that new learning content should be anchored in a realistic and meaningful situation which encourages the active construction of knowledge by students. The objective is to prevent students from acquiring inert knowledge.

The new approach: It was inferred that authentic video material would be very helpful in integrating both language and intercultural skills and encouraging students to actively apply the newly-acquired skills.

4.2. The 2010 Lecture Script

The new BPLS focuses on the bottom seven-eighths of the cultural iceberg, on matching presentation styles to situational exigencies, and on guiding students in their endeavour to integrate their old culturally mediated preconceptions into a new, deeper and fully functional concept.

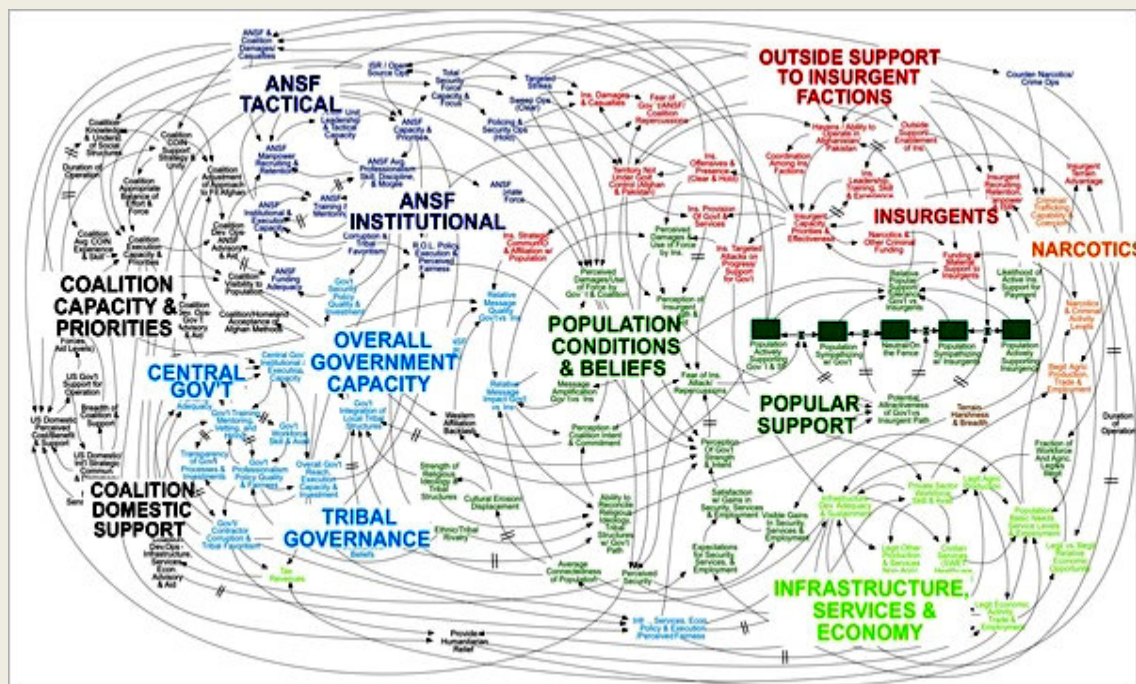
The BPLS now offers ample viewing opportunities. Students watch, discuss and emulate some of the best business presenters in the world, such as Steve Jobs (Apple) and Carly Fiorina (Hewlett-Packard), but they also discuss and learn from failed business presentations, all of which culminates in an on-going performance task at the end of every learning sequence. This simulation was designed to be realistic and motivating by asking the DMI students to take the role of a design manager presenting a product to an international jury in Singapore for the annual Reddot Design Award.

4.3. 26 April 2011

This chapter now walks the reader through a step-by step discussion of the various parts of the chapter on business graphs in the new BPLS, the excerpts of which are framed and slightly shaded. The different parts were taught in a block of four consecutive morning lessons from 08:15 to 11:45 on April 26, 2011.

4.3.1. Losing Presentations – The Bowl of Spaghetti

Based on an article in the *New York Times* of April 26, 2010



Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, former leader of American and NATO forces in Afghanistan, was presented with the PowerPoint slide above in an effort by Pentagon officials to explain military strategy. Instead, the slide looked more like a bowl of spaghetti to the general at the briefing. “When we understand that slide, we’ll have won the war,” McChrystal remarked sardonically.

Discuss in groups the following two questions:

1. Why exactly was the graph so difficult to understand?
2. What changes to the graph can you suggest to make it better?

Discussion

The first step was to create awareness of a problem which needed to be solved in the course of the module. Additionally, students who realized that their own unreflected behaviour would not have been very different might start to feel a bit uneasy. All this hopefully builds up intrinsic motivation to learn from the model presented in the next section.

4.3.2. *Winning Models – Dan Roam*

Based on <http://www.thebackofthenapkin.com>

In order to use visual aids more effectively and memorably in a presentation, the presenter must be able to think visually. To find out more, do a google search by entering dan roam and fox business. The video is called illustrating business.

In this video Dan Roam makes three simple, but ingenious sketches. Watch closely how he uses each of these visuals:

1. The first sketch shows Southwest Airlines’ original business plan in 1967. What is the first thing he does when sketching something?
2. The second sketch explains why Microsoft CEO Steven Ballmer wanted to buy Yahoo in May 2008. What does Dan Roam do before entering the positions of Microsoft, Yahoo and Google in his sketch¹?

Discussion

The second step was to learn from a model how to solve the problem raised in the first chapter. Models are not only chosen for their technical skills, but also for the specific cultural environment in which they perform successfully. It is essential here for the teacher to review the video again and again, freeze-frame in certain positions and engage the students in a discussion of any pertinent details. Enough time has to be allotted to this exercise, as students are not only learning skills here, but also acquiring new beliefs and thought patterns. This is absolutely pivotal to the entire learning process, as the remaining steps follow almost naturally from here.

4.3.3. *The Basics*

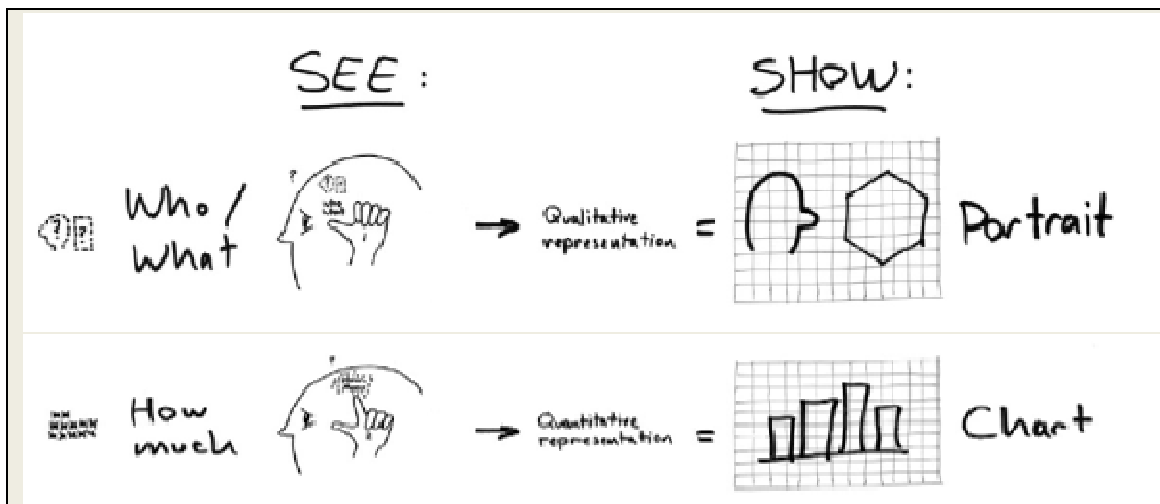
A. Choosing the Right Visual

In order to choose the right visual, you must know the six ways in which visual thinkers see and show things. Return to Dan Roam’s website to learn about the 6x6 Rule of visual thinking and study the worksheet below.

The 6 by 6 Rule²

¹ The students’ lecture handout contains further observational tasks.

² The students’ lecture handout contains the full rule set.



B. Visuals and Their Parts

Label the following visuals using the listed words:

pie chart – map – table – diagram³

New York State Milk Production - 2004

Category	Percentage
Other New York	79%
Wyoming County	8%
Adjacent Counties	13%

Oracle E-Business Suite Releases

Release	GA Date	Premier Support Ends	Extended Support Ends	Sustaining Support Ends
11.0.3	May 1999	Feb 2007	Not Offered	Jan 2009
11.1	May 2000	Jul 2006	Not Offered	Indefinite
11.2	Oct 2000	Jul 2006	Not Offered	Indefinite
11.3	Jan 2001	Jul 2006	Not Offered	Indefinite
11.4	Jun 2001	Jul 2006	Not Offered	Indefinite
11.5	Sep 2001	Jul 2006	Not Offered	Indefinite
11.6	Jan 2002	Jul 2006	Not Offered	Indefinite

PDCA Cycle: Plan → Do → Check → Act

Map: Shows streets including Norton Folgate, Commercial St, Hanbury St, Brick Lane, Fournier St, Brushfield St, and Old Spitalfields Market. A red square marks the location of Women's Link.

³ The students' lecture handout contains many more examples.

Discussion

The third step was to secure the newly acquired skills and thought patterns with the relevant theory and a number of accompanying structural exercises. This theory will be all the more effective if it is securely anchored in a situational model with ‘real’ people solving ‘real’ problems in a new and effective way.

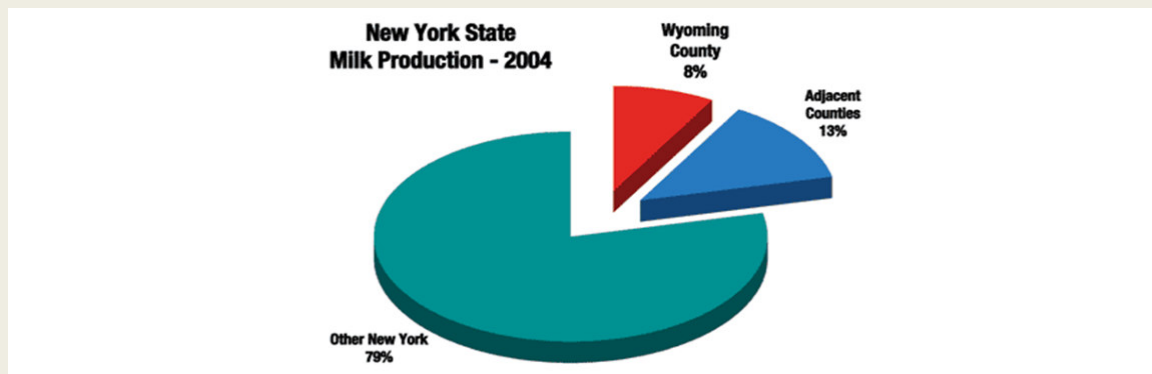
4.3.4. *Know-How*

A. How to Use a Business Graph

When introducing a visual, it is important to do this step by step. Otherwise, your visual may turn out to be more of a hindrance than an aid for your audience.

1. **Title.** Tell your audience what the visual is about.
2. **Layout.** Help your audience to interpret the visual. Give them an overview by explaining the meaning of the different parts (the horizontal and vertical axes, the pie and its segments, the different bars, etc.) as well as the different colours and lines.
3. **The main point.** Draw your audience’s attention to the main point you want to make about the visual by using the TTT method for presenting graphs:
 - **touch** (or point) a detail on the screen,
 - then **turn** to the audience,
 - and finally, **talk** to them.
4. **Conclusion.** Explain for the benefit of your audience the significance of the visual within the context of your presentation.

B. Presentation Example



“The next chart is an overview of the New York State milk production. The pie represents the total amount of milk produced in the State of New York in the year 2004, while the two segments represent the amount of milk produced in the County of Wyoming and in the counties adjacent to Wyoming respectively. You will quickly realize that more than one-fifth of the total milk production in New York State is centred in the area in and round Wyoming. The point about this is that the proposed infrastructural changes to the road and rail systems in that part of

New York State will not only affect the lives of people living in that area, but will also directly impact the supply of dairy products in the metropolitan area of New York City.”

Discussion

The fourth step was to distil a set of how-to instructions from the video model (step 2) and the theory (step 3) and to reinforce these skills with a second model, this time in writing.

4.3.5. *Presentation Language*

A. Describing Change

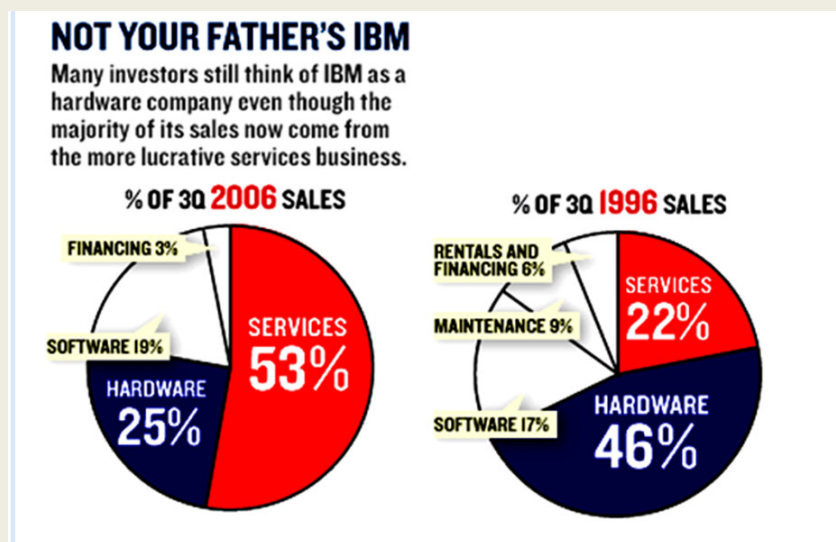
Gradual rise:	to climb	a gradual rise occurred
	to go up (went-gone)	there was an upward trend (...) ⁴

Discussion

The fifth step was to supply the vocabulary necessary to perform the skills detailed in step 4.

4.3.6. *Practising*

A. Comparing Two Pie Charts⁵



⁴ The students' lecture handout contains more vocabulary items.

⁵ The students' lecture handout contains more practice material.

Discussion

The sixth step was to practice the skills and vocabulary of steps 4 and 5 in a relatively strictly controlled learning environment.

4.3.7. Performing

You are now ready to integrate a chart or a graph into your product presentation for the Reddot Design Award. Prepare for an oral presentation to your co-students and ask for their feedback. Discuss.

Discussion

The final step was to integrate the language skills of steps 3 to 6 with the intercultural skills of steps 1 to 2 in a realistic and uncontrolled setting, the teacher handing over control of the learning process to the students and relying on peer feedback to fine-tune the acquired skills.

4.3.8. Consolidation

From <http://www.presentationhelper.co.uk>

The Seven Sins of Visual Presentations

Visual presentations are great – they are one of the best kept secrets in the business world (...)⁶.

Discussion

This does not constitute a further step, but offers extra exploration opportunities to challenge fast and more motivated learners with the above article and the link inside.

4.4. Post 26 April 2011


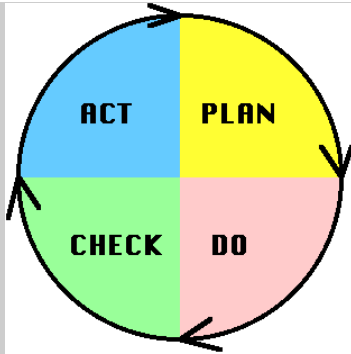
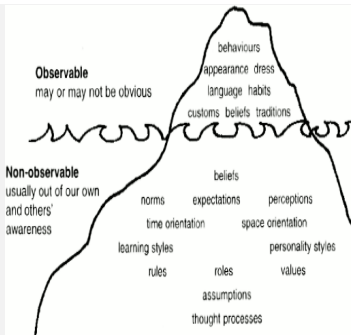
Since the development of the new approach the students' anonymous feedback has greatly improved. Students now appear to be quite happy with the methodology, but have suggested various improvements which will be incorporated in the 2012 version of the script; e.g. to reorganize the beginning and the end of a presentation with more

⁶ The students' lecture handout contains the full text of this article.

emphasis on ethos and pathos respectively (Heinrichs 2007), and to include a new chapter on multimedia learning (Mayer 2005).

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The chapters Results and Discussion are now condensed into a brief set of good practice guidelines for teachers and course developers in tertiary education.

Thesis	CLIL at tertiary level	Guideline: Therefore good practice means...
<p>-C-lil 1: Content &</p>		<p>guiding students in their endeavour to integrate their culturally mediated preconceptions into a deeper and fully functional intercultural concept which emphasises the situational constraints of any social skill set.</p>
<p>c-L-il 2: Language</p>		<p>using continuous and varied forms of feedback to check whether the students are on track to learning the target language skills as well as the target intercultural concepts and adjusting one's teaching accordingly.</p>
<p>cl-I-l 3: Integrated</p>		<p>not only comparing and contrasting different verbal behaviour patterns, but also addressing the underlying and culturally defined values and thought patterns by means of an anchor which ties the target behavioural pattern to a concrete interculturally relevant situation.</p>

<p>cli-L- 4 Learning</p>		<p>helping students to progress on their individual learning paths from the often fossilized concepts of their native cultures to the new concept of the target culture.</p>
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Table 2: Good Practice Guidelines for CLIL at Tertiary Level

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WEB SITES

STUDY IN LUCERNE:

<<http://english.hslu.ch/index>>.

DESIGN MANAGEMENT INTERNATIONAL – IN ENGLISH:

<<http://english.hslu.ch/h-hochschule-luzern-design-management>>.

