

# USING LANGUAGES TO LEARN AND LEARNING TO USE LANGUAGES

An Introduction to Content and Language Integrated  
Learning for Parents and Young People

Edited by

David Marsh & Gisella Langé

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **Part 1 David Marsh**

Using Languages to Learn and Learning to Use Languages

An introduction to Content and Language Integrated Learning for parents and young people

### **Part 2 Ione Steinhäusler & Monika Kazianka**

Sprachen lernen und sprachen anwenden lernen

Einführung in das integrierte Fremdsprachenlernen für Eltern und junge Leute

### **Part 3 Teresa Naves & Carmen Muñoz**

Usar las lenguas extranjeras para aprender

y aprender a usar las lenguas extranjeras

Una introducción al AICLE para madres, padres, y jóvenes

### **Part 4 Patricia Bertaux**

Utiliser les langues pour apprendre, apprendre en utilisant les langues

L'EMILE – l'Enseignement d'une Matière par l'Intégration d'une Langue

Etrangère – présenté aux parents et aux jeunes

### **Part 5 Gisella Langé**

Usare le lingue per apprendere e apprendere a usare le lingue

Una introduzione al CLIL per genitori e giovani

### **Part 6 Marie Hofmannová & Jarmila Novotná**

Jak využít jazyky k učení a jak se naučit používat jazyky

Úvod do integrace jazykové a odborné výuku pro rodiče, učitele a mládež

### **Part 7 Anne Maljers**

Gebruik talen om te leren en leer om talen te gebruiken

Een introductie tot tweetalig onderwijs voor jongeren en hun ouders

### **Part 8 Marie Edite Aires Orange**

Utilizar as línguas para aprender, aprender a utilizar as línguas

Uma introdução à Aprendizagem Integrada de Língua e Conteúdo destinada a encarregados de educação e jovens

### **Part 9 Aini Hartiala & Lotta Harviainen**

Vieraan kielen oppimista ja vieraskielistä oppimista

Johdatus vieraskieliseen opetukseen. Opas vanhemmille ja oppijoille.

### **Part 10 Liisa Suopanki, Carin Söderberg & Margaretha Biddle**

Att använda språk för att lära sig och att lära sig använda språk

En presentation av SPRINT för föräldrar och elever i undomsskolan

## INTRODUCTION

Professionals in all walks of life possess knowledge and skill which outsiders might find admirable, incomprehensible or simply mysterious. Although surgeons, carpenters or footballers can make their jobs look easy, things often seem much more complicated when they talk about their work. This is true of a wide range of human endeavours, including language and communication.

Teaching and learning languages, whether as a mother tongue or as an additional language, involves a research tradition which is as complex as it is controversial. Each decade brings new advances in knowledge of how the human brain functions with respect to language and thought. Correspondingly, new opinions and approaches constantly surface regarding when and how it is best to teach languages.

Although the skills used in the workplace or classroom may seem seductively simple, they are often built on a vast knowledge base, which an expert must continually confront, challenge, and expand. For those of us without such deep awareness, it can be very difficult to know what is best for our own needs at any given time. We become dependent on information that filters through from a professional group which may or may not serve our better interests.

Using Languages to Learn and Learning to Use Languages is for people who do not have formal knowledge and training in the field of language teaching and learning. It introduces Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which is a generic term that refers to any educational situation in which an additional language, and therefore not the most widely-used language of the environment, is used for the teaching and learning of subjects other than the language itself.

The publication consists of ten language-specific variations on a single original text. Each text provides a basis to help the reader take further steps towards finding out more about what CLIL can offer children and young people in schools. It does not state bald facts, for these can be found elsewhere. Nor does it attempt to handle all of the many very important issues which the reader might wish to know more about with respect to language education. The texts literally *skim the surface* by describing why CLIL may be advantageous for youngsters in schools and how it can be introduced.

By summarizing the complexities of this form of teaching and learning in a simple introduction of about ten pages, the contributing authors hope that it will serve the interests of all involved in the introduction of CLIL across Europe.

David Marsh

Gisella Langé

