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# Cooperative Assessment for Learning in CLIL Contexts

## *Evaluación formativa y cooperativa en contextos AICLE*

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**Abstract:** The present article aims at providing a valid framework for practitioners to assess social processes and learning outcomes when implementing Cooperative Learning tasks in CLIL contexts, a matter that needs careful consideration. The article explores the possibilities of cooperative assessment for learning in CLIL settings from a sociocultural perspective, providing a number of multifaceted instruments that endorse an assessment framework shedding light on three basic components of Cooperative Learning: positive interdependence, individual accountability and social skills development.

**Keywords:** cooperative learning; CLIL; sociocultural theory; assessment for learning.

**Resumen:** Este artículo presenta un marco que ayude a evaluar los procesos sociales y los resultados del aprendizaje cuando se ponen en marcha las técnicas de Aprendizaje Cooperativo en contextos AICLE, un tema que necesita ser estudiado en profundidad. El artículo investiga las amplias posibilidades que una evaluación formativa y cooperativa tiene en contextos AICLE desde una perspectiva sociocultural, ofreciendo instrumentos que proporcionan información sobre tres componentes fundamentales del Aprendizaje Cooperativo: la interdependencia positiva, la responsabilidad individual y el desarrollo de habilidades sociales.

**Palabras clave:** aprendizaje cooperativo; AICLE; teoría sociocultural; evaluación formativa.

## INTRODUCTION

CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) is, according to Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010), “a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language. That is, there is a focus not only on content, and not only on language” (p. 1). CLIL is a flexible and dynamic approach where students learn both content and an additional language and perform tasks that may range from drama and puppets to project work, chemistry practicals, mathematical investigations or examination courses (Coyle, 2006).

The flexibility associated with CLIL adds variety, enrichment, dynamism and creativity to learning contexts, but may also pose problems, since CLIL appears to be open to a multitude of pedagogical approaches, and there are few clear guidelines: diverse methods, materials and curriculum organisation have arisen, catering for different needs in different countries (Barbero, 2012; Coyle, 2007; Hönig, 2009). In this context, the 4Cs Framework (Content, Culture, Communication and Cognition) is widely used, as a way of structuring CLIL programmes without imposing a specific methodology. As Coyle (2007) states: “In order for CLIL to earn its rightful place in the pedagogic arena of contemporary and future curricula, it has to demonstrate rigorous theoretical underpinning, substantiated by evidence in terms of learning outcomes and capacity building” (p. 546). To this purpose, Coyle (2006, 2007) recalls the principles governing the 4Cs Framework, the ground for effective CLIL implementation. One principle that is particularly important, although not exclusive to CLIL, and which forms the focus of the present article, is the need to promote “a level of talking and interaction that is different from that of the traditional language classroom” (Coyle, 2006, p. 11) since: “CLIL learners need to discuss, debate, justify and explain using more complex language in different sorts of language than would be practised in the regular foreign language lessons” (Coyle, 2006, p. 10). The present article centres on how to implement and to assess that interaction in CLIL settings, with a view to enhancing teaching practice and providing guidelines for teacher training.

The background to understanding group work and class discussions in CLIL contexts can be found in the theories associated with Cooperative Learning. This can be defined as the systematic use of structured small heterogeneous groups to create learning, develop social skills and promote academic achievement through its five major components: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face to face interaction, social skills development and final group processing (Johnson,

Johnson & Holubec, 1994). Cooperative Learning may constitute a fruitful ground for the 4Cs Framework to take place, offering a motivating and challenging context in CLIL settings that could lead to better lifelong learning: more active and in-depth participation; better development of language productive skills; better subject retention; improvement of cognitive skills (solving problems, debating, enquiring, discussing information, teaching others, relating old and new content, thinking, memorising, negotiating meaning); lower inhibition; higher empathy and better social and leadership skills; better student-teacher and student-student relationships; higher levels of motivation as well as increased self-esteem and feelings of autonomy (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2012; Casal, 2008, 2014; Coyle, 2007; Coyle et al., 2010; Escobar & Sánchez, 2009; Hargreaves, 2007; Horrillo Godino, 2011; Johnson & Johnson, 2014; Marsh, Pavón Vázquez, & Frigols Martín, 2013; Mehisto 2012; Meyer, 2010).

In Ghaith and Yahi's (1988, quoted in Ghaith, 2004) words: "Cooperative Learning enriches the language classroom with comprehensible, developmentally appropriate, redundant and somewhat accurate input as described by Krashen (1988) as well as promotes frequent, communicative, and referential classroom talk in a supportive, motivating, and stress-reduced environment" (p. 280).

However, Cooperative Learning is not as common a practice in classrooms as should be expected (Ghaith, 2004; Gillies, 2004; Hargreaves, 2007). Hargreaves (2007, p. 197) mentions, among other factors, the pressure of summative assessments and the competition these promote, as well as the challenge of shaking students' and teachers' expectations and beliefs. As Coyle (2007) highlights: "Learner-learner interaction and specific scaffolded teacher support may not be in the usual repertoire or classroom routines of either teachers or learners" (p. 554).

The first step towards introducing Cooperative Learning in CLIL settings would be that of connecting with teachers' beliefs. Ghaith's investigation (2004) corroborates previous studies (Rich, 1990) which concur that adhering to Cooperative Learning techniques depends on what teachers believe; namely, according to Ghaith's study, whether teachers follow a *transmissive* or an *interpretive* model of instruction. The transmissive model is aligned with the grammatical accuracy approach, with a focus on teacher-directed and error-free presentation, transmission and assessment of knowledge and extrinsic motivation. The interpretive model, on its part, endorses the fluency approach, fostering negotiation and interaction among learners. It also focuses on non-cognitive issues such as self-esteem, motivation and social development. This sort of instruction reflects a *change of mindset* from teachers as the major source of learning, to the view that students can become sources of learning for their partners (Strom and Strom, 2011). Practitioners who

adhere to the latter position are the ones who choose to try Cooperative Learning (Ghaith, 2004, p. 281).

The second step towards fruitful Cooperative Learning implementation would lead to changes in assessment, one of the most important experiences of a student's life and, following Price, O'Donovan and Rust, (2007): "probably the single most powerful influence on student learning behaviour" (p. 143). Research has shown assessment may affect not only students' academic performances, but their affective and psychological development as well (Murillo, Martínez-Garrido, & Hidalgo Farran, 2014). Assessment is a complex matter for teachers, who regard it as the aspect of teaching they like least (Millis & Cottell quoted in Barkley et al., 2012). Assessing group and individual performance and how groups work together becomes especially complex for teachers in this context, as they cannot be present in the dynamics of every group all the time, nor can they observe properly how members contribute in a group, which leads to disappointment among teachers and students alike (Strom & Strom, 2011).

Assessment reflects the epistemological beliefs of teachers, which may be visually perceived along a continuum ranging from knowledge retention at one end and knowledge construction and transformation at the other. While the former shows assessment as knowledge control, based on acquiring factual knowledge and giving the right answer (structure and process-based curriculum), the latter reflects assessment as an inherent part of teaching and learning based on students' involvement, leading to authentic, meaningful evaluation (competence-based curriculum). It is around this end of the continuum that teachers obtain more information about students' performances, information which can be used to enhance and facilitate their learning, namely through formative assessment or assessment for learning (Weurlander et al., 2012, p. 748).

Assessment for learning gears teachers and students towards better analysis of teaching and learning in response to the information gathered, allowing them to take sound decisions aimed at helping students to learn better (Hargreaves, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 2014; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013; Quartapelle, 2012). Learning may be manifested in making connections, pursuing questions, overcoming confusion, and solving problems that are not exactly the same as the ones in the original task (Poehner & van Compernelle, 2011, p. 186).

Black and William (2010) carried out an extensive investigation in which they concur that assessment for learning improves student academic achievement and raises standards of education. It has been shown to have a positive impact on student learning in areas such as motivation to study, awareness of their own learning and the effects on learning (Weurlander et al., 2012). If learners engage in Cooperative

Learning techniques on a regular basis, assessment for learning should reflect and encourage Cooperative Learning processes and learning outcomes, which should also be socially appropriate for learners of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Hargreaves, 2007).

This article focuses on cooperative assessment for learning, and proposes a framework that strengthens its theoretical underpinnings in the CLIL context. By viewing assessment as an integral part of the process of learning and teaching, it tries to provoke thoughts on the matter while also providing tools to assess processes and products, and to obtain information about positive interdependence, individual accountability and social skill development, three key features of Cooperative Learning. It thus aims to contribute to CLIL practice, and to provide guidelines for teacher training in this context.

#### COOPERATIVE ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING IN CLIL SETTINGS

As we have seen, there is no single methodology that works best in CLIL settings. However, many would contend that communication is basic and that priority should be given to practices that are linked to the outside world, imply independent study, encourage interaction among students and involve authentic materials (Coyle et al., 2010; Escobar & Sánchez, 2009; Horrillo Godino, 2011; Mehisto, 2012; Quartapelle, 2012; Suárez, 2005). Task-based learning is mentioned as very appropriate for CLIL, since tasks (Barbero, 2012) “are the typical activities of the subject, with genres, cultural conventions and specific structures, which require the students’ ability to rework knowledge and skills on their own” (p. 45).

Tasks in CLIL bear similarities to the idea of learning outlined by Hargreaves (2007, p. 197) for assessment for learning:

[...] learning is particularly valuable if it includes learners making their own meanings in a particular area of knowledge, constructing knowledge of participating and communicating socially and reflecting critically on their learning in diverse contexts, as well as retaining, using and applying information appropriately.

It is important to highlight the social perspective within which Hargreaves views learning when she states “[...] if an assessment actually promotes learning, but that learning is out of keeping with social priorities, the assessment lacks validity” (2007, p. 186). Since learning is a social process, assessment should also be understood socially, with a focus on the students’ active engagement and participation (Rust, et al., 2005, p. 232).

Creating a permanent dialectic attitude about the learning process between learners themselves and between learners and the teacher is a key to introducing assessment for learning in CLIL settings (Maggi, 2012). This mediation provides the basis, supported by Vygotsky's (1978) ideas, for the learners' transition from relying on others towards self-regulation, showing how near they are to independent functioning.

Assessment for learning enhances learning in CLIL settings when: assessment results are used to *adapt future teaching* to students; students receive *understandable feedback* which leads them to improvement; both teacher and student *know the learning outcomes* (what students will be able to know/do by the end of the lesson) and the *assessment criteria* being developed; peer and self-assessment is used; it generates positive effects on the students' self-esteem and motivation; and students take an active role in their assessment (Hargreaves, 2007; Murillo et al., 2014).

However, simply placing students in groups and asking them to work together or asking them to assess each others' productions is not the way to achieve cooperation or cooperative assessment for learning (Gillies, 2004; Hargreaves, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 2014; López Rúa, 2015). The teacher's challenge is to promote interaction by fostering positive interdependence (i.e. making students exchange resources or information with each other; ensuring that they need to assist other members to complete the task) through structured tasks, where students have a common objective to reach as a group. The teacher needs to make sure that social abilities are explicitly taught and not taken for granted (i.e. respecting others' opinions; solving conflicts; negotiating).

Studies such as those carried out by Gillies (2004), Hijzen et al. (2007), and Roseth, Johnson & Johnson (2008), show that structured cooperative groups outperform unstructured groups as well as individualistic or competitive learning situations. Results show that students, when working in structured learning groups, are more predisposed to work with others, show more group cohesion and social responsibility and produce more elaborate help for their group members. The type of task, group composition and teacher support play a major role in the effectiveness of Cooperative Learning groups. (For more information on how to work on the five major features of Cooperative Learning, see Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1994.)

#### A SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON COOPERATIVE ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

From a sociocultural perspective, knowledge is constructed by the individual within the social context of learning in a cyclic, dynamic and in-constant-evolution re-

lationship between the private and the public spheres (Rust et al., 2005; Vygotsky, 1978). It is an established fact that social interaction adds individual cognitive gains to the construction of knowledge (Arvaja et al., 2007; Hargreaves, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 2014).

However, judging all individuals' learning outcomes through one single, group task would be unfair, according to Barkley et al. (2012), because, for example, the workload may have been unevenly shared. These and other factors may deter students and teachers from implementing Cooperative Learning. Cooperative Learning assessment should therefore reflect a group component, providing information about the learning outcome of the group as a whole and an individual component showing what the individual has learnt and how well they can perform on their own. The table below shows examples of how Cooperative Learning tasks can give information about group and individual performances related to learning outcomes, reflecting positive interdependence and individual accountability:

**Table 1. Examples of Cooperative Learning tasks showing group and individual learning outcomes**

POSITIVE INTERDEPENDENCE	INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY
Video recording of a news bulletin	Writing / presenting orally the steps followed to read the news; aspects that have been taken into account; criteria used to choose the news
Poster about a given conflict	Writing an essay about the causes and consequences of a given conflict
Choosing a god from Greek mythology and composing a song/a poem about him/her	Writing a commentary about a Greek play where gods play an important role
Designing an ideal school	Doing some research about people who have fought to create ideal schools and presenting the results
Performing a play	Writing a review about the play
Discussing a given topic, such as the advantages and disadvantages of being a vegetarian	Interviewing different people holding contrasting views of being a vegetarian and recording them

Undoubtedly, the more involved the student becomes in the group task, the better their performance at an individual level will be. In order to do well in both columns of the table above, students need not only to develop cognitive skills but to share social practices since, as Walqui (2006) states: "The cognitive and the social go hand in hand in classroom learning" (p. 159). Individual work, from a sociocultural perspective, has sense and gains momentum only within the framework of cooper-

ative work (Johnson & Johnson, 2014; Walqui, 2006). Social skills to be developed include: 1) attending to homework; 2) seeking and sharing information; 3) communicating with teammates; 4) thinking critically and creatively and 5) getting along with teammates. (Strom and Strom, 2011). (See Table 2 below for a breakdown of these five blocks into subcategories.)

When students work together on a shared task in the social context of the classroom, they may be assisted by an expert (the teacher or another peer); they may share equal knowledge with another partner; they may assist a lower-level partner or they may work individually, once they have internalised the knowledge that has been socially constructed. These are all cases of scaffolding, where the student gets different opportunities to learn. Scaffolding is the assistance provided to the learner by another individual with more or equal knowledge that is gradually removed once the learner becomes progressively independent and can perform the task autonomously. Scaffolding encompasses three scales: a support structure for activities/skills to develop; the activity implementation; and the assistance while interacting (Walqui, 2006).

In order for this assistance to be helpful, some factors should be taken into consideration (Webb, 1989): 1) help should be *relevant* to clarify the students' lack of understanding or misconceptions; 2) assistance must be set at a *level of cognitive elaboration* similar to the help needed; 3) it should be provided *shortly after* the problem/question has arisen; 4) the student needing help must *understand the explanation* and be offered the opportunity to use that knowledge purposefully; 5) the student in need of help must be *willing* to accept this assistance. Raising students' awareness on how to provide and receive assistance from their peers increases social responsibility and feelings of self-efficacy (Gillies, 2004).

Walqui (2006) distinguishes different kinds of instructional scaffolding that are relevant to teachers and students in cooperative assessment for learning: a) modelling, that is, providing clear examples of what students are requested to do; b) bridging: activating students' previous knowledge and connecting with students' personal experiences before setting the task; c) contextualising: making the task accessible by amplifying and enriching the topic from multiple perspectives (i.e. different kinds of material, written, oral, visual or audiovisual); d) schema building: providing tools such as graphic organisers, charts or graphs; e) re-presenting a text: asking students to write a text in a genre different from the original text genre; f) developing metacognition: making students apply strategies such as planning, assessing or adjusting performance.

Although Walqui (2006) points out that these strategies are not novel in the education arena, the important point is that teachers communicate and make ex-



pllicit the purpose and the uses of these scaffolding strategies, so that learning and assessment become open windows for students and teachers. In a cooperative assessment-for-learning situation, peer interaction mediated by scaffolding may involve challenges posed by peers or teachers and self-regulatory actions on the part of the learner themselves (Hargreaves, 2007).

Once students are familiar with building positive interdependence by providing and receiving effective help, peer and self-assessment may become scaffolding tools and may be carried out in the form of questionnaires, individual or group journals, and individual or group interviews inside or outside class (Iborra Cuéllar & Izquierdo Alonso, 2010). Peer and self-assessment free the teacher from being in charge of everything that happens in the classroom, encouraging mutual trust and students' active involvement in the assessment for learning process. As Strom and Strom (2011) argue: "Rather than suppose that teachers who trust students are naive, it may be wise to reflect on whether some adults have left behind the ability they once had to perceive the best in others" (p. 235). Peer and self-assessment promote student autonomy; develop critical thinking; foster intrinsic motivation; provide richer information about the learning process; enable teachers to reflect and adapt teaching to learners' needs, establishing more realistic objectives (Maggi, 2012).

Peer and self-assessment may yield an enriched perspective about learning outcomes and social dynamics at group or individual level to teachers and students. The latter need feedback not only from teachers but also from classmates so that they can be steered towards personal development (Strom & Strom, 2011). Moreover, research (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007) has shown that students can be very accurate when assessing their classmates' work. When asked to assess their own performances or contributions to groups, however, students tend to be overgenerous with themselves (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). Objectivity and validity of peer and self-assessment can be raised by the adoption of *rubrics*, a tool which will be dealt with in depth below.

#### ELEMENTS OF COOPERATIVE ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING FROM A SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: EXPLICIT LEARNING OUTCOMES, ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND FEEDBACK

As stated before in this article, cooperative assessment for learning requires students to learn by doing a common task (through positive interdependence) that makes each individual stronger (individual accountability). Students learn by helping each other, developing social skills, and assessing each other and themselves.

The dialectic attitude that is generated in this process, between students and teacher and between students themselves, means a step forward towards explicit learning outcomes, assessment criteria and feedback. This way, learning, instruction and assessment are organised to create a “constructive alignment” (Biggs, 1996). Although a necessary condition, this alignment is not sufficient: research has proved that there also needs to be *active engagement* with the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria on the students’ part for them to be really effective (Johnson & Johnson, 2014; Hargreaves, 2007; Price et al., 2007; Rust et al., 2005).

Likewise, useful, constructive feedback requires that students actively engage with it. It very often occurs that students do not understand feedback, or do not interpret it well; it is not found useful and has no effect on students’ later performances; sometimes it is not even read or can damage students’ self-efficacy. As Price et al., put it: “It cannot simply be assumed that when students are “given feedback” they will know what to do with it” (2007, p. 78).

To address this problem, students should be explicitly trained as to how to interpret feedback so that they are able to connect the required standards of the task with their own productions, working to bridge the gap between the two. Other strategies to solve the self-efficacy problem include providing students with comments on their work, and granting them the opportunity to self-assess their work based on these comments (Price et al., 2007). Rubrics may contribute to explicit learning outcomes, assessment criteria and feedback.

Panadero and Jonsson explain: “Rubrics are documents that articulate the expectations for an assignment, or a set of assignments, by listing the assessment criteria and by describing levels of quality in relation to each of these criteria” (2013, p. 130). Rubrics can be applied to any kind of written or oral work that students produce, especially where there is complex behaviour to assess as in the case of Cooperative Learning in CLIL, and can take two forms: *holistic* or *analytic*. A holistic rubric assesses the work as a whole, giving a score which is associated with a descriptor (i.e. excellent: the work shows a complete and thorough knowledge of the subject). Although this is fast to use, feedback is limited. An analytic rubric, for its part, includes three mayor components: 1) assessment criteria (i.e. in a written product, assessment criteria may contain: content; text organisation; accuracy; variety); 2) an identified behaviour (i.e. in an oral presentation, an identified behaviour may entail ‘the presentation starts with an introduction to the topic’); 3) score (i.e. excellent, good, etc.) (Barbero, 2012; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007; Maggi, 2012; Rezaei & Lovorn, 2010).

An analytic or multiple trait rubric contributes to cooperative assessment for learning by making learning outcomes, assessment criteria and feedback explicit

related to a number of elements present in CLIL (content and language) and in Cooperative Learning (positive interdependence, individual accountability and social skills development). (For examples of analytic rubrics, see Johnson & Johnson, 2014; Quartapelle, 2012.)

The table below summarises the main points reflected throughout the article related to cooperative assessment for learning, with a view to clarifying the content and also to encouraging teachers to implement Cooperative Learning techniques in CLIL settings. The rubric can be used as a tool by the teacher, peers and/or individuals as self-assessment. It can also be negotiated and discussed with students. In this particular example, no specific level has been chosen, since its aim is just to clarify the content previously explained. Percentages are just provided by way of example, and may be changed according to the teacher's criteria. The language may be also adapted to the learners' language level.

**Table 2. Example of a cooperative assessment for learning rubric for a CLIL task**

1. GROUP LEARNING OUTCOME: POSTER (40%)	EXCELLENT	GOOD	OK	WEAK	VERY WEAK
1.1. CONTENT (25%)					
The poster shows the team has understood the main causes and consequences of the conflict					
The poster summarises all the information dealt with in class					
By reading the poster, the reader has a good grasp of the causes and consequences of the conflict					
The poster contains extra information about the conflict (Internet, books other than the textbook, etc.)					
1.2. LAYOUT (5%)					
The poster is visually attractive					
The information has been well structured					
Graphs, graphic organisers help understand the information					

<b>1. GROUP LEARNING OUTCOME: POSTER (40%)</b>	<b>EXCELLENT</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>WEAK</b>	<b>VERY WEAK</b>
1.3. LANGUAGE (10 %)					
Vocabulary					
Grammar					
Spelling					
<b>2. INDIVIDUAL LEARNING OUTCOME: AN ESSAY ABOUT THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONFLICT (40%)</b>					
2.1. WRITING					
The essay has a title					
The essay has an introduction, a development and a conclusion					
The text is divided into paragraphs					
Each paragraph develops an idea					
Ideas flow well					
The text summarises the main causes and consequences of the conflict					
2.2. LANGUAGE					
Grammar					
Vocabulary					
Spelling					
<b>3. SOCIAL SKILLS (20%) (STROM AND STROM, 2011)</b>					
3.1. ATTENDING TO HOMEWORK					
Shows acceptable attendance for meetings					
Arrives on time for scheduled team meetings					
Stays focused on the task during group work					
Fulfils individual role assigned by the group					

COOPERATIVE ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING IN CLIL CONTEXTS

<b>3. SOCIAL SKILLS (20%)</b> (STROM AND STROM, 2011)	<b>EXCELLENT</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>WEAK</b>	<b>VERY WEAK</b>
Does fair share of work expected of everyone					
<b>3.2. SEEKING AND SHARING INFORMATION</b>					
Admits uncertainty about what to do					
Asks questions that help understand lessons					
Helps by explaining or reviewing lessons					
Brings reading materials for the group					
Refers to reading materials during discussions					
<b>3.3. COMMUNICATING WITH TEAMMATES</b>					
Shares feelings, ideas, or opinions.					
Speaks clearly with acceptable vocabulary					
Limits length of comments so others can talk					
Listens to everyone and respects their views					
Recognizes individual contributions					
<b>3.4. THINKING CRITICALLY AND CREATIVELY</b>					
Evaluates evidence for different opinions					
Uses logic to challenge group thinking					
Thinks carefully before reaching conclusions					
Combines and builds on the ideas of others					
Offers new ways of looking at problems					

3. SOCIAL SKILLS (20%) (STROM AND STROM, 2011)	EXCELLENT	GOOD	OK	WEAK	VERY WEAK
3.5. GETTING ALONG WITH TEAMMATES					
Takes criticism in a friendly way					
Avoids using put-downs or blaming others					
Accepts compromise to deal with conflict					
Keeps trying when a task becomes difficult					
Expresses hope about group success					

Although more research is needed to observe how rubrics may actually facilitate student performance and learning, so far no research has found negative effects while using them (Rezaei & Lovorn, 2010). On the contrary, the literature reflects a number of benefits associated with the implementation of rubrics: increased transparency through reliability and validity (assessment becomes more objective and consistent both for teachers and for students and can be done faster); reduced anxiety and improved self-efficacy (rubrics represent a guide for students, who know exactly what needs to be done to perform well); student self-regulation support (rubrics mean a useful tool towards planning and self-assessment once students internalise the criteria of the rubric). It seems that, when rubrics are combined with self-assessment, rubrics gain momentum (Barbero, 2012; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013).

## CONCLUSIONS

This article has started by making the case that, although CLIL entails no specific methodology, there is much to be gained when social contexts - where students can interact and share information and knowledge - are created in the classroom. Cooperative Learning has been suggested as a possible setting for these communicative, cultural, cognitive and content exchanges, as well as the ground for assessment for learning to take place: assessment where there is a focus on learning, on the active engagement of students in the process and on explicit learning outcomes, assessment criteria and feedback. Teachers' beliefs and the difficulty of assessing group and individual performances, as well as the complexity of observing and

rating social skills, have been argued as possible reasons for not using Cooperative Learning as a daily routine in CLIL contexts.

With their link to real-life situations, tasks support the social perspective of learning defended here and represent an ideal context for having groups working together towards a common goal. Throughout the process, the dialectic attitude involving all participants prepares the ground for the advantages cooperative assessment for learning offers: positive attitudes towards learning, prosocial behaviours and successful learning outcomes for students (Gillies, 2004). However, just placing students in groups and asking them to work together is not a sufficient condition to create true Cooperative Learning situations, which must reflect positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, social skills development and final group processing.

Cooperative assessment for learning is based on the idea that knowledge is constructed socially and is progressively internalised to become an individual act. That is the reason why assessment should reflect not only socially constructed cognitive and social skills but also the individual results of this internalisation process. Teachers and peers scaffold the journey towards individual learning by providing effective help, assessment and feedback. The final aim is a self-regulated, autonomous lifelong learning individual. Rubrics that stress positive interdependence, individual accountability and social skills can mediate this process.

Without ignoring the hurdles that practitioners encounter in their daily teaching practice at any level (e.g. heavy syllabi to cover, large and heterogeneous classes, different teachers, unmotivated students), this article has aimed at encouraging teachers to use Cooperative Learning techniques in CLIL contexts by providing a flexible rubric that may clarify the weight of group outcome, individual learning and social skills in the overall teaching and learning process. This rubric may be used not just by the teacher but also may prove useful for peer and self-assessment.

As stated in the article, more research is needed in relation to detailed aspects of rubrics in cooperative assessment for learning. In this sense, the use both teachers and students make of them and how useful they are considered would constitute fruitful fields of research. Teachers may design/use rubrics in different ways and obtain different results as a consequence. It would be interesting to research how many students check instructions/evaluation criteria in the rubric before completing a given task or how many try to incorporate feedback provided in subsequent tasks. It would also be worth observing whether students find the rubric useful to understand what they need to do before a given task, to understand the feedback received or to see how their work will be assessed. Finally, it would be of interest to compare the

differences between assessment by the teacher, self-assessment and peer assessment, studying how fair students are towards their peers' and their own performances.

As a way of conclusion, we would like to support Walqui (2006) when she comments on the importance of including scaffolded social opportunities for students in the class and allowing 'message abundance' through different means. It is important to counter potential criticisms that it may take longer to teach the same unit or that the content will not be taught in detail. Quoting her words (Walqui, 2006), we could say that, by implementing and assessing Cooperative Learning techniques in the CLIL classroom, "We may have 'covered' less but in the end we will have 'uncovered' more" (p. 178).

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