ASSESS FOR CLIL SUCCESS

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Abstract: In recent years, much research has been devoted to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Spain. This method closely relates teaching specific non-linguistic subjects such as music, physical education or science to students through a foreign language. Nevertheless, few theorists have improved the development of assessment in CLIL in national contexts. In fact, few method practitioners would disagree with the importance of assessment improvement, which embodies the theoretical principles of methods and tools. Overall, our study on CLIL assessment suggests the solution to some of these challenges.

Keywords: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), CLIL training, CLIL assessment and evaluation, assessment tools.

Resumen: En los últimos años, en España se han realizado numerosos estudios del Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lenguas Extranjeras (AICLE). Este método trata de apoyar la enseñanza de contendidos específicos como puede ser la música, la educación física o la ciencia a estudiantes mediante una lengua extranjera. Sin embargo, el desarrollo de evaluación en AICLE en contexto nacional cuenta con pocos estudios científicos a pesar de la importancia que tiene mejora de los principios teóricos, prácticos y procedimentales de evaluación. Nuestro estudio propone una solución a los desafíos de evaluar dentro del método AICLE.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lenguas Extranjeras (AICLE), metodología AICLE, formación del profesorado AICLE, evaluación AICLE, herramientas de evaluación.

1. Introduction

Over the past three decades, the autonomous communities in a historically multilingual Spain oversee and legislate language policy and education. The six bilingual or trilingual territories, such as the Balearic Islands, the Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia, Navarre, and the

Valencian Community use their local languages and the official state language, Spanish (British Council 2012, European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017, Vila et al. 2017).

Recent linguistic policies of the Valencian Community (Decree 127/2012) have integrated specialised training for teaching in English courses. To deal with plurilingual education, several universities have started teaching specialised skills required for sharing expertise in English. One of them, the Catholic University of Valencia, has provided a training programme including a core course on CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) assessment.

We present a study based on a survey of the assessment training process. Predictably, the basic tenet of this approach is the investigation of CLIL assessment tactics chosen by the course participants after the training. We seek to address the transformation of the content teachers' perceptions of their prior experience and their new preferences regarding the evaluation process. Nevertheless, it also important to make survey participants reflect on key assessment issues and values arising out of the CLIL training.

In line with this, the following research analyses future content teachers' assessment preparation before, during, and after specialised training undertaken. The study's research questions will generally be formulated the following way:

- How do we assess in CLIL?

- What assessment techniques do they know?

- What are the ones they learn?

- What are the optimal ones?

This research is organized as follows. The first section of this paper reviews the specific CLIL method background and details its assessment tools as a part of the CLIL training process. The second part of the paper presents a detailed description of the survey and the examinees' assessment choice made by the participants. Finally, conclusions are offered to reflect on the collected data.

2. Literature review

2.1. CLIL method

CLIL has often been described as a dual-focused approach in which content and language are learnt simultaneously (Coyle et al. 2010, Mehisto et al. 2014). By using CLIL as "an educational approach in which a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction to teach content subjects for mainstream students" (Nikula et al. 2013:91), we obtain a combination of content, language and common educational policies that support an accessible teaching-learning process.

We also hear about "the added value of CLIL" (Marsh, 2012:181) meaning the contribution this approach has made on the students self-learning skills. Therefore, one of CLIL's most important features is getting students to think rather than receive. This basic principle conditions many of the ideas that content teachers have had so far on how to present content.

However, there is a further dimension of CLIL which is now beginning to be analysed: the implications this approach has on teachers´ methodology and on the assessment tools in use. In this paper we want to analyse the knowledge Valencian teachers preparing for the certificate to teach other subjects in English, had of the assessment tools related with CLIL before the course, which ones they learnt throughout the course and which ones they incorporated into their teaching after the course.

2.2. CLIL assessment

Assessment is an essential part of the teaching-learning process, and this is especially true in CLIL. According to Marsh et al. (2011:9), it is a process of "collecting and interpreting evidence" for measuring learning outcomes. CLIL teachers need tools that allow them to assess not only content, cognition, culture and competences but also communication.

Several attempts have been made to tackle the effect of different assessment instruments. There exists research, such as the CLIL project undertaken by Massler, Stotz and Queisser (2014), which has shed light on how to assess these areas by making use of a three-dimensional project. This project came to light after analysing how Swiss and German teachers introduced contents in their countries in the L2.

Adopting a similar approach, we decided to study the knowledge that Valencian teachers preparing for the English Training Habilitation (Capacitació per a l'ensenyament en anglés, 24 credits) had of assessment tools. We surveyed one hundred and thirty-two students undertaking CLIL teacher training courses and analysed the results. Here we summarise our training methodology, detail survey results and conclusions.

2.3. CLIL assessment training and tools

Along the course, participants were introduced to the principles of "Assessment in CLIL". Students attending a CLIL-training course tend to believe L2 language is at the core of the assessment process. Through the study of the four Cs (Coyle et al. 2010), they learnt that in CLIL, language progression is one of four legs building up a table. Additionally, other issues such as thinking skills (cognition), knowledge (content) and intercultural awareness (culture) need to be considered.

Future CLIL teachers were shown how to classify assessment tools attending to the following criteria: assessment of learning (exams, tests) and assessment for learning (rubrics, self-assessment diaries and portfolios). In our study we clearly favoured those tools which assess for learning over those that assess learning itself. An important part was to show students how to elaborate descriptors that compile language (following the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages checklists [Council of Europe, 2001]), skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), content and cognition.

During the first sessions of our course we wanted our students to get to know the principles of CLIL methodology and promote a reflection on the tools that would be most suitable to assess this way of learning. Our starting point was a group of teachers whose main knowledge of assessment tools were "Assessment of learning" tools (those that make it

easier for teachers to quantify, such as exams and tasks) rather than "Assessment for learning" (rubrics, diaries and portfolios).

We soon realised that a distinction between evaluation and assessment needed to be presented. As it stands (Harlen, 2007:12), "evaluation is the process of collecting evidence about programmes, systems, procedures and processes and the interpretation of evidence with respect to stated or desired objectives". Assessment is defined as "a process of collecting and interpreting evidence for some purpose" (ibid), it supports learning and helps measure progress being made towards planned outcomes. So, the focus is on how to enhance teacher`s capacity to measure CLIL learners' progress through the formative assessment for learning.

As can be seen, the main differences between evaluation and assessment are those that make the latter a tool more related to CLIL, being a part of instruction (Barbero 2012, Llinares et al. 2012) and namely, helping "measure progress towards planned outcomes" (Harlen, 2007:12). Therefore, CLIL assessment generates reliable feedback on the content and language understanding. The application of CLIL should consider a number of tools and strategies that measure the training's effectiveness and our goal is to make our students – future CLIL method practitioners – aware of such a serious issue is a necessity.

Hence, following a model of Socratic questioning we proposed to our students a reflection on what aspects CLIL should evaluate. For this we presented some CLIL teaching simulations, introducing some new CLIL activities for them like "True / False" dictation or "From answers to questions", activities oriented to facilitate the scaffolding of language and content. These were the reflection points coming from Barbero & Clegg (2005), Järvinen (2009), Coyle et al. (2010):

1) What do we mean by assessment in CLIL? The first thought that this question posed was that obviously knowledge was not the only answer. It was clear that CLIL had to evaluate something more, since the simultaneous learning of language and content had to focus not only on knowledge but on how this knowledge is best acquired.

2) What do we assess, content or language? As mentioned before in this paper, participants attending a language training course often have the preconceived idea that language assessment will play a central role in CLIL. Although they progressively discovered that was not the case, what is certain is that the evaluation tools known hitherto were not suitable for evaluating CLIL. New concepts such as CEFR and "can do" descriptors that blend language and content were introduced which meant for them a new evaluation strategy.

   In addition to content and language CLIL also assesses other issues such as learning skills, materials, effort, engagement, 4 language skills, partner / group work, and social / emotional development. The consideration of all these aspects made it clear that new assessment tools were needed. During the course, rubrics were introduced as a three-dimensional model (Massler et al. 2014) compiling curriculum content, metacognition and language on the one hand, and portfolios with recollection of evidence and self-

assessment. These two tools gained acceptance as the students developed assessment tools for their didactic units over a 15-week period.

3) What are the roles of cognition and culture? The students participating in the course were aware of the role that cognition and culture have in the assessment process. This was particularly true for preschool and primary education teachers as their curricula develop around the centres of interest of the students. While this aspect has also been widely considered in secondary curricula, through competences, our students did not actually know how to evaluate them. Reflecting on the tools used by them until then, it became clear that they were not suitable for this purpose. For the evaluation of these competences that included culture, we proposed journals and guided self-reflections that could be adapted to any level through scaffolding techniques.

4) What tools can we use for assessment? Through this point of reflection, we were able to check the knowledge of the evaluation tools used and known before the course. Tests and indirect observation were the most widely used tools. This fact corroborates the idea that the assessment of learning was the strategy most widely used before the course.

5) Who assesses? To pose this question in a course that covers so many educational levels cannot have a single valid answer. Thus, rather than talking about rules or "commandments" the idea we suggested is to establish some "trends". And it was obvious that although pre-schoolers cannot self-assess themselves in the same way as high school students, it is necessary to initiate processes of self-reflection and peer assessment that will certainly develop self-learning techniques in the future. Self and peer-assessment certainly raise students' autonomy and responsibility as well as striving for a deeper understanding of skills, subject-matter and processes. Because of this assessment process the role of the student is lifted from passive learner to that of active learner and assessor.

6) How do we assess? From the first notions of CLIL, the participants in this course intuited that both the content with the language had to be assessed. However, they did not know how, in what percentages, and whether other aspects had to be assessed as well. They also did not know what evaluation tools they could use to make this assessment effective. We explained to our students that we should evaluate content, language and self-learning skills. All this we would do through a series of CLIL language strategies that facilitated the scaffolding process

Within "how to evaluate the content" we introduced our students to the notion of curriculum Coyle's 4c's (Coyle et al 2010), Bloom's taxonomies, and its later revisions by Lorin Anderson. Through this Socratic questioning we were able to know the starting point of our students regarding the subject of Assessment, introduce the CLIL features in a real teaching simulation, promote a process of reflection on the conditions of Assessment in CLIL, offer possible tools to meet these needs. And finally, we allow the selection of those that are more convenient according to the level of education and tasks.

Throughout the training, we focus on a three-level assessment process: diagnostic, or initial pre-teaching knowledge estimation, followed by formative, or continuous feedback on learners' performance, and summative, or final results obtained by testing students' content and language outcomes. The last two phases were suggested by Coyle et al. in 2010, and the core approach recommended for CLIL was the formative assessment. Notwithstanding, summative assessment is useful for detecting final results via examining learners' as a part of formal schooling (ibid).

The main CLIL assessment tools examined during the course are in line with alternative assessment tools such as observation, portfolios, conferences, dialogue journals and learning logs. Genesse & Hamayan (2016) advocate for focusing on systematic observation, checking major content and language advances in terms of rubrics or teachers' journals. Both researchers also advise elaborating "a purposeful collection of a student's work that documents their efforts, achievements and progress over time", a portfolio (ibid, 2016:210). Additionally, conferences, dialogue journals and learning log review and assess CLIL learning process by discussing or writing on chosen topics but these tools were not included in the training programme.

In this training course, the CEFR "can do" statements or descriptors for assessing language competences were used as recommended by Järvinen in the Language in Content Instruction Handbook (2009:115-118). Likewise, it is a valuable tool for editing worksheets setting relevant standards for self, peer and teacher assessment.

We now offer the rationale, results and conclusions of our survey based on the assessment teaching training in CLIL.

3. Survey design

3.1. Participants' personal and professional background

The study of CLIL assessment represents a valuable tool towards the improvement of content teachers' preparation and quality control of the teaching process. Bearing this in mind, the survey designed has a double objective: first, to make participants reflect on the CLIL teaching assessment and, second, compare trainees' considerations concerning their choice of assessment tools and methods after the English Training Habilitation (Capacitació).

In line with this, the survey was carried out during academic year 2016-17 as an online questionnaire on personal and educational profile of respondents (items 1-3), specialised assessment strategies (items 4-6), and European project participation or assessment course suggestions (items 7-8). The mission of the study is to provide an insight on CLIL training outcomes.

For the purpose of study, 132 survey participants answered three questions about their background. The items in this group address respondents' age (item 1), education (item 2), and teaching area (item 3). We take into consideration this data due to the fact that teaching training and development is closely related to the necessity to adapt subject teaching to the modern schooling.

<u>Item 1. Age group</u>

As shown in Figure 1, we asked participants to select the age range to which they belong. The options offered vary from the age under 20 to over 60. Option one, the youngest group aged between 20 and 30, including 42,4% of the participants, is clearly the biggest group. It is closely followed by teachers aged between 31 and 40. The next age groups, 41-50 and 51-60+, are distributed as 17,4% and 2,3%, accordingly. What is interesting in this data is that two major groups, totalling 80,3%, include teachers from 20 to 40 years. The fact that the age group over 50 years old has been poorly represented within the group of survey participants might be concerning because of new approaches not reaching this group.
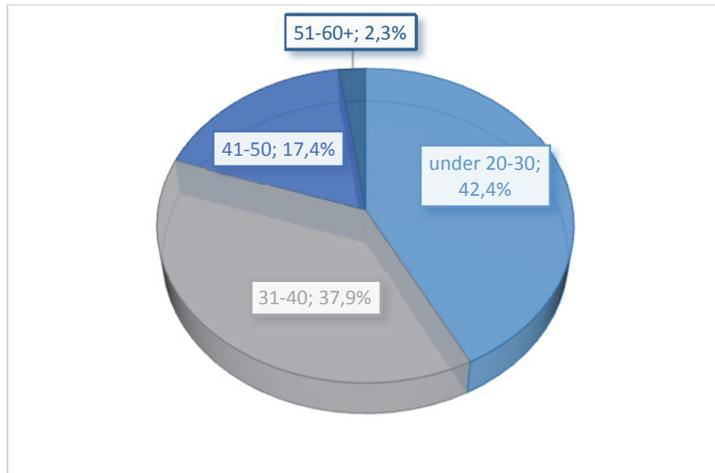

Figure 1. Survey participants' age

<u>Item 2. Formal education</u>

This item provides us with basic information regarding the educational and academic background of the participants (see Figure 2). They all hold a university degree (63,6%) but 36,4% reached higher education levels (Master's degree and doctoral studies, 31,1% and 5,3%, accordingly). This fact is necessary to understand relationships between academic level and assessment tools and approaches based on the development of learning strategies versus those based on knowledge.
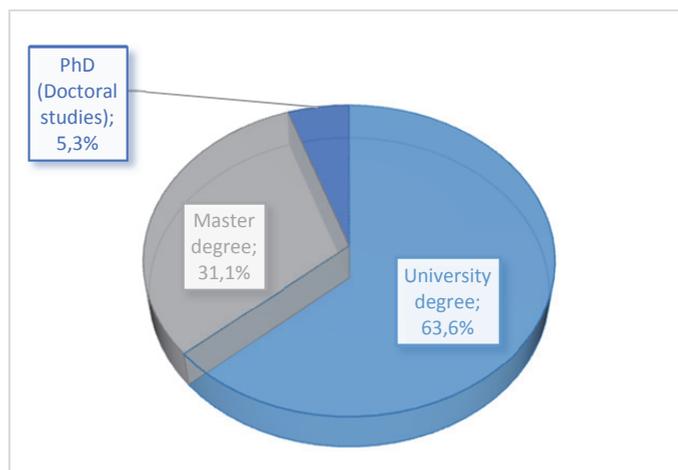
Figure 2. Survey participants' educational background

Item 3. Survey participants' teaching areas

Participants were asked to give information regarding the ages of their students, thus providing an insight into the techniques used to scaffold content and language, how outputs are assessed and how language skills are presented. The pie chart (see Figure 3) shows an overall quantity of 56,8% pre-school and primary school teaching staff getting ready to start applying CLIL methodology. Specifically, there are 34,1% of primary teachers and 22,7% of pre-school teachers who are being trained for teaching non-linguistic subjects in English. Slightly lower numbers are related to the 31,8% of secondary school teachers and 9,1% of vocational training teachers pursuing the same aim.
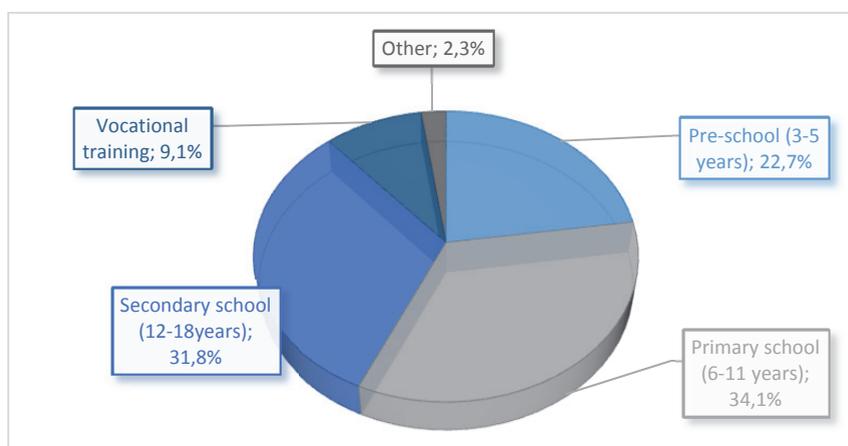

Figure 3. Survey participants` teaching areas

From the point of view of the survey design, it is important to extract the information corresponding to the items 1, 2 and 3. The majority of those who responded are aged 20-40, hold a university degree and work as pre-school and primary school teachers. The number of Master`s degree holders seems to correlate with the quantity of secondary school teachers, both reporting an overall 31%, meanwhile vocational trainers are a clear minority among respondents with less than 10% of the survey participants.

3.2. Assessment preferences

These items include three questions directly targeting the assessment approach and establishing a connection between the previous experience and the CLIL assessment instruction. Each question addressed only one issue related to the course progress and assessment tools used: item 4 (before), item 5 (during) and item 6 (after). Therefore, survey participants were asked to choose from a list one or more answers for each question. The graphs below illustrate the relationship of the assessment methods background of the training participants, their learning progress and the course outcomes.

Item 4. Assessment tools normally used before CLIL assessment course

When the participants were asked to name the assessment instruments that they normally use, the majority chose direct observation (98 responses), diagnostic, formative and summative assessment (73 responses), diagnostic, formative and summative tests (69 responses) and indirect observation (21 responses) or other (4 responses). More specifically, permanent feedback on learners' progress and understanding through a variety of assessment activities not relying solely on tests makes the difference between diagnostic, formative and summative assessment and diagnostic, formative and summative tests.
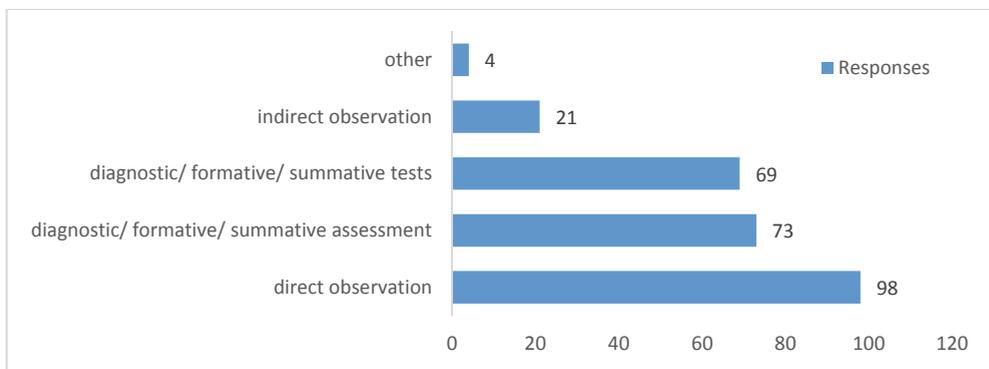

Figure 4. Assessment tools normally used before CLIL assessment course

The results, achieving an overall quantity of 265 responses, as shown in Figure 4, indicate a limited number of assessment tools used before the course. Considering 98 answers, school

teachers tend to mainly choose direct observation, followed by various types of assessment or tests. The probable explanation of this feedback could be related to the pre-school and primary school teaching areas where most of the survey respondents work.

Item 5. Assessment tools suggested during the CLIL assessment course

The options below represent some of the alternatives currently taught as a part of the CLIL assessment course. Due to the learning-by-doing course approach, the items selected for the survey were embedded in the training process through presentations, group and individual activities, homework and even the course calendar.
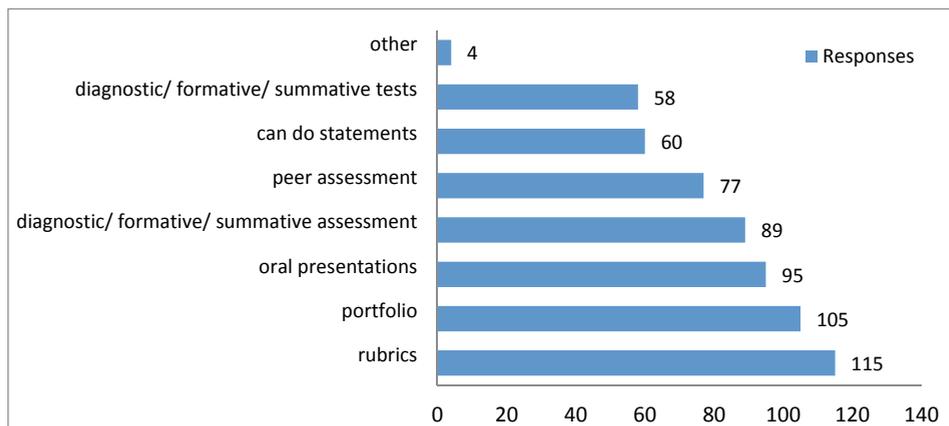

Figure 5. Assessment tools suggested during the CLIL assessment course

Interestingly, some new assessment instruments suggested during the course such as rubrics (115 responses), portfolio (105 responses), oral presentations (95 responses), diagnostic, formative and summative assessment (89 responses), peer assessment (77 responses), "can do" statements (60 responses), diagnostic, formative and summative assessment tests (58 responses) and other (4 responses) as shown in Figure 5, changed their previous preferences.

Item 6. Assessment tools chosen after the CLIL assessment course

With respect to the general assessment course outcomes, the following set of responses comprises CLIL assessment course trainees` change of viewpoints. The contrast between the item 5 and 6 represents a new mental concept of CLIL assessment approach clearly selected for a practical implementation.
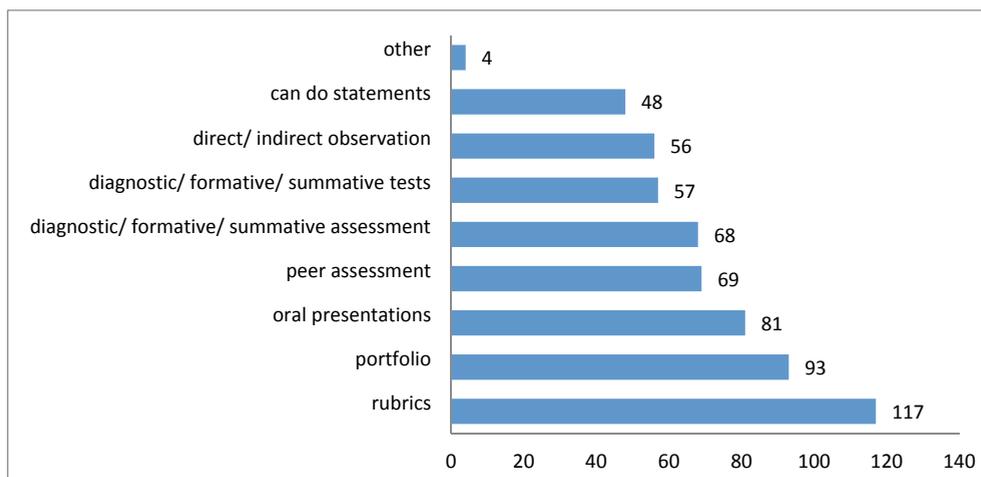
Figure 6. Assessment tools chosen after the CLIL assessment course

From the data in Figure 6, one can see that the strong leadership of the first three assessment tools has not suffered any drastic change: rubrics (117 responses), portfolio (93 responses) and oral presentations (81 responses). Probably a slight decrease of the second and third instruments has to do with a reappearance of direct/ indirect observation. The fourth and the fifth elements, scoring 69 responses (peer assessment) and 68 responses (diagnostic, formative and summative assessment), have exchanged their positions as compared to the previous graph. The remaining procedures, such as diagnostic, formative and summative tests (57 responses), direct/ indirect observation (56 responses), "can do" statements (48 responses) or other (4 responses), concern less popular but relevant aspects.

Item 7. Are you considering taking part in any collaborative project with schools or European bodies?

Special attention should be paid to participation of survey respondents in collaborative projects as a part of a common perspective. This study includes a question regarding teachers' participation in European projects and the answers collected in Figure 7 below.
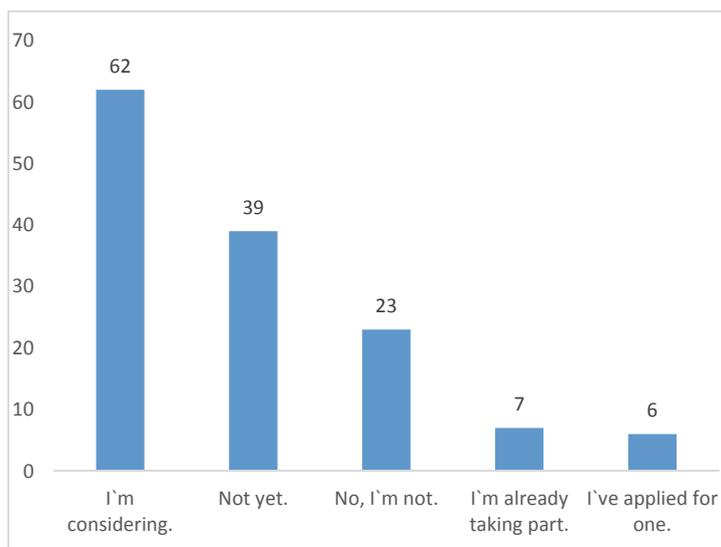
Figure 7. Are you considering taking part in any collaborative project with schools or European bodies?

This item is related to the content and language learning cooperation as one of final parts of the training course, it triggers trainees' awareness about further cooperation with foreign colleagues. The answers provided in Figure 7 illustrate a clear trend of increasing popularity of European collaboration awareness, as the most widespread answer shows ("I`m considering", 62 responses). This positive intention is added to the participative actions such as "I`m already taking part" (7 responses) and "I've applied for one" (6 responses). Quite the opposite, we can see two negative answers stating, "Not yet" (39 responses) and "No, I`m not" (23 responses). From this data, the overall optimistic balance of active attitude toward European integration emerges, based on positive 75 responses versus 62 negatives ones.

Item 8. Your assessment suggestions

Finally, there are only 12 recommendations concerning assessment suggestions. Several of the following issues address specific tools, for example, rubric, Kahoot (an online quiz), peer assessment or group work. Others suggest how to improve the course applying more secondary school strategies or adapting them to special needs education in a CLIL class. Some participants expressed gratitude for the course experience shared.

4. Results

By asking participants to provide the assessment tools they employed before the course, those which were covered during the course, and those subsequently chosen after completing the course, we were able to assess the impact of the strategies discussed during their training.

Table 1. Comparison of the reported assessment tools

Tools	Suggested during the course (603 responses)	Tools chosen after the course (593 responses)
Rubrics	115	117
Portfolio	105	93
Oral presentations	95	81
Diagnostic/ formative/ summative	89	68
Peer assessment	77	69
"Can do" statements	60	48
Diagnostic/ formative/ summative tests	58	57
Direct / indirect observation	-	56
Other	4	4

If we take a closer look at the results, obtained from the preliminary analysis (Figures 5 and 6) and presented in Table 1, there are no significant differences between the two columns regarding the top three assessment instruments. However, further analysis reveals that after the course, trainees selected peer assessment as the fourth preferred option followed closely by diagnostic/ formative/ summative assessment. The most striking observation to emerge from the table data is the reappearance of the direct/ indirect observation method not included in the training but, obviously, steadily reflected in the respondents' evaluation ideas.

5. Conclusions

Broadly speaking, while referring to the factors influencing provision of CLIL and the teaching staff, we can find both weaknesses and opportunities (European Commission, 2014). On one hand, content teachers proficient in language are getting actively involved in the schooling process and create communities of practice. On the other, lack of CLIL guidelines and training along with the need to improve language skills of subject teachers are some of the factors hindering CLIL. From the data collected during the study, it can be concluded that the English Training Habilitation (Capacitació per a l`ensenyament en anglés) course participants-survey respondents are between the ages of 20 and 40 (80,3%), holders of university degrees (63,6%) or post-graduate degrees (36,4%) and mainly are primary school (34,1%) and secondary (31,8%) teachers.

Our research deepens and expands the connection of professional development of content teachers and CLIL assessment. This study has shown some improvements in the way teachers tackle assessment needs and content training in English: their perception of evaluation as a definitive control instrument rather than a progress feedback tool has shifted away from the traditional command-and-control approach. Because of the course, educators are now able to design and use more complete, adapted and student-friendly assessment processes.

It is therefore no surprise, that many teachers are glad to include new approaches to their assessment palette as was recommended during the course: rubrics, portfolio, and oral presentations. The unanimous choice of the above-mentioned tools suggested during the course and selected after it, praises the adaptability of Valencian teaching staff. Moreover, their willingness to use new assessment approaches is proved by the range of strategies such as peer assessment or "can do" statements along with top-rated new tools.

Before undertaking the course, participants showed a preference for four evaluation tools. During the course they were presented with three further techniques. Among the impact of the implementation of these additional tools is a willingness of the participants to collaborate in European-level programs and to perform further research and thus increase our knowledge regarding the application of new tools to obtain success in CLIL teaching.

Returning to the research questions posed at the beginning of this study, it is now possible to state that an extended knowledge of assessment tools improves trainees' professional qualification as content and language integrated teachers. A more in-depth research on the CLIL assessment strategies and training demonstrates a step toward the common plurilingual content and language teaching curriculum. And, in Valencian Autonomous Community, the special situation of using three languages to teach the curriculum instead of two languages (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017) is a prospect that involves adoption of wise plurilingual policies.

However, more research on this topic needs to be undertaken before coming up with a set of common evaluation techniques and tools for the pre-school, primary, secondary school and vocational training teachers. Furthermore, a common front of European, state, local authorities and CLIL trainers focused on specific CLIL assessment issues should be created to tackle this phenomenon, which has global CLIL methodology consequences.

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