



# Content in the language classroom (in higher education)

June 8<sup>th</sup> 2018



Universiteit  
Leiden  
Academic Language Centre



09.00 Registration

09.30 Rosie Tanner (Education Consultant) & Tessa Mearns (ICLON - Leiden University)

*Workshop Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in practice*

11.00 Coffee & Tea break

11.30 Oliver Meyer (Johannes Gutenberg-University/Mainz)

*\*KEYNOTE\*: Deeper Learning and Pluriliteracies: Growth in Higher Education and Implications for Course Design, Assessment and Research*

12.30 Lunch

13.30 Vicky Alcalde (LUCL - Leiden University)

*Discussing gender equality in Spanish language classes*

13.50 Olja Karmanova (LUCL/ATC - Leiden University)

*Content-Based Learning Project: Poster Presentations in Russian language classrooms*

14.10 Lissan Taal (University of Amsterdam)

*Content in Scandinavian language classes*

14.30 Coffee & Tea break

15.00 Bert Le Bruyn (Utrecht University)

*Time in Translation in the foreign language classroom*

15.30 Deborah Yapp, Rick de Graaff, & Huub van den Bergh (Utrecht University)

*The effects of reading strategies on L2 reading performance of undergraduates at Hogeschool Leiden*

16.00 Closing discussion (Nivja de Jong & Tessa Mearns, ICLON/LUCL/LIAS – Leiden University)

16.30 Reception

## **Abstracts**

### **\* Workshop \* CLIL (content and language integrated learning) in practice**

*Rosie Tanner, Education Consultant & Dr. Tessa Mearns, ICLOON, Leiden University*

What IS CLIL, actually? Is it the domain of the English-medium content teacher? Or can content be a motivating vehicle for language learning in higher education? If so, how can we teach meaningful content without detracting from language learning goals? In this hands-on, interactive workshop, we shall discuss these questions, as well as talking about some benefits of incorporating CLIL into language education. You will experience some practical ideas and work on applying them to your teaching and your students' learning.

### **\* KEYNOTE \* Deeper Learning and Pluriliteracies: Growth in Higher Education and Implications for Course Design, Assessment and Research**

*Oliver Meyer (Johannes Gutenberg-University/Mainz)*

Deeper learning and the development of transferable knowledge and skills are highly desirable goals in Higher Education programs. However, current studies indicate that these goals are rarely achieved. In this presentation, we will present a model of deeper learning that promotes the development of disciplinary literacies and transferable knowledge, which could be applied to language learning and beyond. Based on our joint work I will outline a revised course design that aims at putting the principles of deeper learning into practice through a focus on affect, student engagement, knowledge construction, meaning making and active demonstration of understanding as well as reflective practice. Further, I will outline a research agenda for evaluating and assessing deeper learning processes and outcomes in Higher Education and discuss how deeper learning might pertain to the notion of positive learning.

**\* Exposé of good practice\* *Discussing gender equality in Spanish language classes***

*Vicky Alcalde, LUCL – Leiden University*

The purpose of this presentation is to share some activities that were created to introduce and facilitate the discussion of gender equality in Spanish language classes at three different levels of the language curriculum. The first of this series of exercises is applicable for an A1 level class. The idea is to switch the roles of women and men as they appeared in the language textbooks. The aim of this is to practice the grammatical gender of nouns in Spanish and to acquaint the students with the stereotypical gender roles that the learning materials are presenting as examples. The second exercise can be used to illustrate the interpretation of some adjectives in the Spanish language that reveal inherent gender stereotypes. The material used was adapted from current discussions in social media (e.g. memes and comics). The last exercise is developed to create a debate in a B2 level class on how the world would be if women were holding powerful positions in the society. The idea behind this series of activities was not only to practice some specific grammar or lexical components of the Spanish language, but to encourage the critical thinking skills of university students from the beginner's level.

**\* Exposé of good practice\* *Content-Based Learning Project: Poster Presentations in Russian language classrooms***

*Olja Karmanova (LUCL/ATC - Leiden University)*

My students are enrolled in the Bachelor Program International Studies at the University of Leiden with a focus on Russia and Eurasia. One of the objectives of my language classes is to create a content-rich language learning environment where language is linked with other disciplines such as culture, history, politics and economics.

Poster presentations are widely used in academic settings. I have decided to experiment with this type of assignment with my A2 level (CEFR) student groups (60 students), in order to combine language teaching with the teaching of content. During the project, the students were studying Modern Russian

History and Politics. The main objective of the assignment was to motivate the students to learn more about the key players in modern day Russia, by creating a poster about a person they might come across in academic (authentic) sources or in mass media articles, while reading materials for other tutorials.

My presentation will describe the 10-hour curriculum I have developed, the materials of which use a Content-Based Learning approach. In order to illustrate my project, the following parts of my language classes will be presented:

- Lesson objectives and CBI
- Classroom activities (focusing on content by applying new vocabulary and grammar)
- Tasks targeting higher-order thinking skills
- Usage of authentic sources as a motivating device
- Peer review
- Assessment rubrics
- Examples of the end-products (posters)
- Exhibition (60 posters) and presentations
- Project evaluation

Finally, I would like to share a few findings and suggestions for future research.



#### \* Discussion - presentation\* *Content in Scandinavian language classes*

*Lisan Taal (University of Amsterdam)*

At our programme in Amsterdam (UvA), we have students learn scandinavian languages through classes on history, culture, and society. In this session, we will discuss potential benefits and pitfalls of this practice.

#### \* Exposé of good practice\* *Time in Translation in the foreign language classroom*

*Bert Le Bruyn (Utrecht University)*

I present the Time in Translation project (<http://time-in-translation.hum.uu.nl>) as well as its potential applications to the foreign language classroom in the

Netherlands. The project is an NWO-funded program (2017-2021) that studies tense/aspect variation in five languages: Dutch, French, German, English and Spanish. The project is data-driven and applies computational methods to translation corpora. I discuss applications that range from improving existing grammar descriptions over using the datasets for in-class inductive instruction to setting up work packages for student research.

**\* Research presentation\* The effects of reading strategies on L2 reading performance of undergraduates at Hogeschool Leiden**

*Deborah Yapp, Rick de Graaff, & Huub van den Bergh (Utrecht University)*

For a student today to succeed academically in higher education the ability to read effectively is essential. There is some concern whether students in Dutch higher education are reading effectively (Chall et.al. 2009) and whether Dutch students lack essential second language (L2) skills. Furthermore, students from MBO often experience L2 difficulty having had little experience with reading in English (Beeker, 2012). A programme of L2 reading strategies combined with training in metacognitive awareness can help improve L2 reading for struggling students (Macaro & Erler, 2008). This one year reading strategy study at a Dutch polytechnic of 631 first year students from five different departments used a regression discontinuity design (Cook et. al., 2002) with participants functioning as own control. Students received two hours weekly reading strategy instruction for 7 weeks. Results were analyzed using multilevel and contrast analysis and point to the benefits of an L2 reading strategy programme with a mean improvement in reading scores of 4.99 between pretest and posttest ( $p= .002$ :  $ES= 1.25$ ). Teachers attended weekly reading strategy training sessions for one year and contributing actively to the programme. The level of improvement varied between instructors, calling for more research into fidelity implementation issues of reading interventions.