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# Making Emotions Count Through CLIL

*La importancia de las emociones con AICLE*

*Fazendo valer as emoções através do CLIL*

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**ABSTRACT.** In this article, we consider the importance of learner well-being for a better performance during the learning process, taking into account their emotions and how they affect them. The CLIL approach is used to integrate learners' language knowledge and provides strategies about how to manage their emotions and develop a positive mindset. In this context, we suggest three meaningful activities for teenage learners to identify and analyze their emotions while learning and encourage their critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative work. Furthermore, learners can learn about how emotions affect not only their school, but also their personal lives. Through these proposed activities, students may develop some tools and pieces of advice to take care of their emotional health.

**Keywords:** learning process; emotions; CLIL; strategies; positive mindset; experiences; learners.

**RESUMEN.** En este artículo consideramos la importancia del bienestar de los alumnos para un mejor desempeño durante el proceso de aprendizaje, teniendo en cuenta sus emociones y cómo les afectan. El enfoque AICLE es utilizado para integrar el conocimiento lingüístico de los alumnos y proporciona estrategias sobre cómo gestionar sus emociones y desarrollar una mentalidad positiva. En este contexto, sugerimos tres actividades significativas para que los estudiantes adolescentes identifiquen y analicen sus emociones mientras aprenden y fomenten su pensamiento crítico, creatividad y trabajo colaborativo. Además, los alumnos pueden aprender cómo las emociones afectan no solo a su vida escolar, sino también a su vida personal. A través de estas actividades propuestas, los alumnos podrán desarrollar algunas herramientas y consejos para cuidar su salud emocional.

**Palabras clave:** proceso de aprendizaje; emociones; AICLE; estrategias; mentalidad positiva; experiencias y alumnos.

**RESUMO.** Neste artigo consideramos a importância do bem-estar dos alunos para um melhor desempenho durante o processo de aprendizagem, tendo em conta suas emoções e como elas os afetam. A abordagem CLIL é utilizada para integrar os conhecimentos linguísticos dos alunos e fornece estratégias sobre como administrar suas emoções e desenvolver uma mentalidade positiva. Neste contexto, sugerimos três atividades significativas para que os estudantes adolescentes identifiquem e analisem suas emoções enquanto aprendem e fomentem seu pensamento crítico, criatividade e trabalho colaborativo. Além disso, os alunos podem aprender como as emoções afetam não apenas sua vida escolar, mas também sua vida pessoal. Através destas atividades propostas, os estudantes poderão desenvolver algumas ferramentas e dicas para cuidar de sua saúde emocional.

**Palavras-chave:** processo de aprendizagem; emoções; CLIL; estratégias; mentalidade positiva; experiências e alunos.

## Introduction

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This article focuses on the significance of taking care of students' well-being, emphasizing on emotions. The purpose is to support students through the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approach to manage their emotions so that they do not have a negative impact on their lives, such as suffering from anxiety or depression. As is known, in CLIL, "learning is improved through increased motivation and the study of natural language seen in context. When learners are interested in a topic, they are motivated to acquire language to communicate" (Darn, 2009). In this sense, content, communication, cognition, and culture could be related to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) to work with 16- and 17-year-old teenagers with an intermediate level of English.

The paper introduces the issue of emotions, how they affect learners and how CLIL could support students' well-being, since they will be learning how to deal with feelings that could lead to mental health problems through their personal experiences. Moreover, students could gain knowledge and advice about mental health through different activities, which can be put into practice in their everyday life.

The article is divided in the following sections: conceptual framework about what emotions are, how they are perceived and how they affect the learner's personal and social life, and the benefits of underpinning the learners' emotions in the classroom through CLIL with a series of three activities, and a conclusion.

## Conceptual Framework

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This paper is based on the importance of emotions and how they can be approached through CLIL. It has been demonstrated that self-confidence and a low level of anxiety have an important impact on students' performance and that language learning can have a positive attitude among teenagers. Following these ideas, Barrios (2018) claims that it would be useful if English teachers considered the emotional

dimension in learners to find suitable strategies in order to help them develop a positive mindset.

It is also known that emotions could be a key element in achieving happiness. We consider the learner's mood and their interest in the knowledge we want them to develop to be of paramount importance. Consequently, the selection of the theme of the lessons should be properly adapted to the students' engagement in certain topics.

Through CLIL, we developed three different activities, in which learners will have the possibility to share what they think and feel in specific situations. The four language learning skills (speaking, reading, listening, and writing) are integrated, and language is approached from a lexical, rather than grammatical, point of view. What is key in CLIL, according to Coyle et al. (2010), is that the content needs to be cognitively engaging to students, with tasks that promote problem solving and higher-order thinking processes, which is reflected in the three activities proposed. They also required a language proficiency level for students in order to understand and engage in these tasks.

By developing these activities, learners also get involved in a more real and meaningful interaction, as the process is supported by authentic materials such as texts, videos, and cards. According to Bentley (2010), materials can be taken from different sources and translated from the L1 to develop thinking skills from the beginning and to promote links with community and citizenship values.

Moreover, CLIL motivates students to learn new contents and revise others that are initially linked to their own interests and curiosity. Contents regarding students' emotions may generate a positive impact because they are related to their personal experiences, as can be seen during the reflection and sharing time provided in the activities.

## Activities

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In the following section, we will present the development of the activities planned to achieve our main goals of this article.

## Activity 1: Talking about emotions

This activity introduces pupils to the importance of emotions and how they can positively or negatively affect their learning process. They will also be reviewing vocabulary related to the topic by watching an authentic video about the topic.

**Aims:** Students will be able to develop general knowledge about what emotions are and how they impact their studies, as well as how to recognize their emotions while learning.

**Target learners:** Students between the ages of 15 and 17, with a B2 English level.

### Language focus:

- Vocabulary: review about feelings and emotions.
- Grammar point: review of different tenses.
- Linguistic functions: connecting their emotions with different moments in their life.

**Skills focus:** Students will develop their listening skills by watching a video and listening to the teacher's questions and instructions, as well as listening to their partners. They will also improve their speaking skills by talking about the topic.

### Materials:

- Video: "The importance of emotions in learning" (Knowledge-One, 2022)
- Communicative chart photocopy

**Estimated time:** 25 minutes.

### Procedure:

1. Brainstorming activity: The teacher encourages the students to think about their emotions by asking the following questions:
  - What emotions do you feel at school? For example: in an exam, when you are working in groups, when you have to face an oral lesson, etc.
  - Do you think there are positive and negative emotions?
  - What do you do when you feel those emotions?
2. Listening activity: The teacher asks the students to watch the video and take notes about words related to emotions. After that, the teacher tells students to share their notes and writes the words on the board.

3. Communicative activity: The teacher gives each student a photocopy of the following table (Table 1) for them to ask the questions in it to three classmates and write down their answers.

**Table 1.** Questions for interviewing peers

|                       | Student 1 | Student 2 | Student 3 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Students' names       |           |           |           |
| When do you feel...   |           |           |           |
| anxious?              |           |           |           |
| embarrassed?          |           |           |           |
| afraid of failing?    |           |           |           |
| discouraged?          |           |           |           |
| pleasure in learning? |           |           |           |
| enthusiastic?         |           |           |           |
| hopeful for success?  |           |           |           |
| proud?                |           |           |           |

Source: Own elaboration.

**Feedback:** The teacher checks each activity orally and shares their own experiences in order to encourage them to talk.

**Anticipated problems:** Some students may be reluctant to speak in front of the class at the beginning of the activity because they are shy and not so confident. The teacher may respect their decision but also encourage them to speak during a communicative activity in which they work in pairs to help them feel more comfortable.

**Alternatives:** Students may complete the chart with their own answers instead of asking three partners and then share with the rest of the class. They can also choose which emotions they want to ask their classmates about.

### Activity 2: Knowing about emotions

In this activity, pupils reflect and learn about emotions and how they function in order to analyze their own experiences by reading a meaningful and authentic article that links the content-driven and the language-driven approaches.

**Aims:** Students will be able to acquire specific knowledge about emotions and share and analyze the impact that emotions have on their experiences.

**Target learners:** Students between the ages of 15 and 17, with a B1 English level.

**Language focus:**

- Vocabulary: Specific vocabulary about feelings and emotions.
- Grammar point: Review of different tenses.
- Linguistic functions: Analyzing and categorizing their experiences while taking into account the three components of emotions mentioned in the article.

**Skills focus:** Students will develop reading skills by reading an article from the web; listening skills by listening to their classmates and teacher; writing skills by writing about their experience; and speaking skills by commenting on the experiences they have written about.

**Materials:**

- Article from a website: “5 reasons emotions are important” (Cherry, 2022)
- Computers

**Estimated time:** 40 minutes.

**Procedure:**

1. Discussion: The teacher encourages students to talk about how emotions and actions are related by asking the following questions:
  - In your opinion, are emotions important in your life? Why?
  - Do you feel your actions are related to your emotions?
  - Could you tell us about any experience in which your emotions influence your actions?
2. Reading: The teacher asks the students to form groups of four, read the article together, and answer the questions in a collaborative document in Google Drive:
  - What are the three components of emotions?
  - Why are emotions important? Mention the five reasons.
  - How do emotions influence our actions?
  - How do you manage your emotions in order to feel better?
3. The teacher encourages the students to think about a situation in which they faced a negative emotion at school and describe

it, taking into account the three components mentioned in the text. Each student should write their own situation on the Drive document. After that, if they wish, they can share what they wrote with their classmates.

**Feedback:** Once pupils finish the activity, the teacher checks the Drive document and makes positive and encouraging comments about it.

**Anticipated problems:** Some students may not understand the meaning of some words in the article, so the teacher may advise them to infer their meaning from the context.

**Alternatives:** If there aren't any computers at school, the teacher can do the same activity on paper, by bringing a printed copy of the article and having them do the activities on a sheet of paper.

### Activity 3: Managing our experiences

Emotional intelligence is essential for the well-being and healthy development of people in general. In this activity, students will be learning to manage their emotions in specific real situations that they consider important for their emotional health.

**Aims:** Students will be able to develop critical thinking and creative skills, as well as empathy, respect, collaborative work, and fellowship.

**Target Learners:** Students between the ages of 15 and 17, with a B1 English level.

**Language focus:**

- Vocabulary: Review about feelings and emotions.
- Grammar point: Review of different tenses.
- Linguistic functions: Connect their personal experiences with what is written on the cards and to manage their emotions through emotional intelligence cards.

**Skills in focus:** Learners will develop reading skills by reading and interpreting emotional intelligence cards; listening skills by listening to their classmates, their teacher, and creating a short video; writing skills by making a new card with tips for their classmates; and speaking skills by discussing and exchanging their personal experiences and doing a role play activity.

**Materials:**

- Board
- Marker
- Emotional intelligence cards; and
- Electronic devices

**Estimated time:** 60 minutes.

**Procedure:**

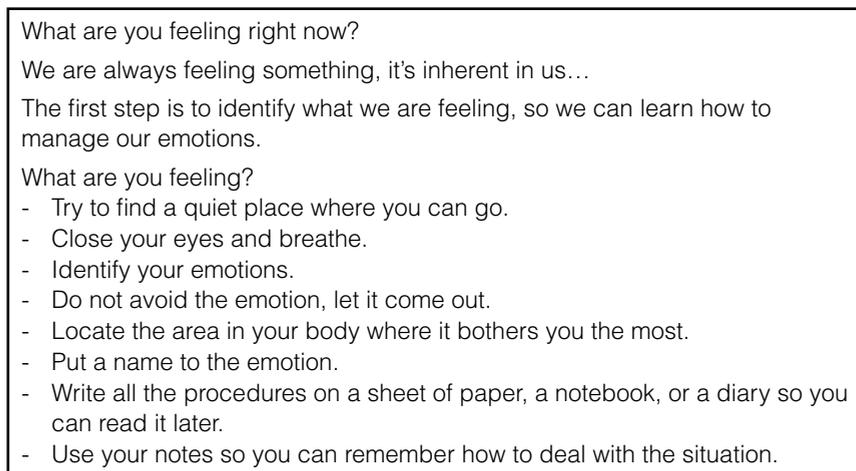
1. Pre-reading activity: The teacher tries to activate the students' previous knowledge with the following guided questions in order to get them into the mood of emotions (making them discuss and exchange ideas as a whole group and respect those who do not want to talk about it).

**Questions for discussion:**

- In which situations at school have you felt overwhelmed, anxious, or even depressed? Would you like to share with us?
- What did you do? Did you ask for help?
- What were you thinking about at that moment?

2. While-reading activity: During this stage, the teacher encourages learners to read the three emotional cards (Figures 1 and 2) in pairs and encourage them to interview each other. Then, the teacher asks them to write short notes or answers. Finally, they encourage them to share their own experiences with the class.

**Figure 1. Emotional intelligence card for learners**



Source: Adapted from “Fichas didácticas” by “Educa y aprende” (Rodríguez-Ruiz, 2019).

**Figure 2.** Emotional intelligence card for learners

- How is the emotion that I'm feeling right now?
- Right now, I feel...
- What have I thought to feel like this?
- Do I like or dislike this emotion?
- What do I do when I feel like that?
- What color can I put to that emotion?

Source: Adapted from “Fichas didácticas” de “Educa y aprende” (Rodríguez-Ruiz, 2019).

3. Post-reading activity: During this stage, the teacher tells students that they are going to work in small groups of four. They will be required to create a new card that they think or feel will be of great help when managing their emotions.

After that, they will have to create a poster. It must contain colorful pictures, questions, statements or tips that help students to manage their emotions. They can also add some relaxing music. They should use Canva or any other digital tool to design it.

As homework, the teacher encourages learners to create a short video in which they explain the poster and also act out a situation following the steps they have considered to manage the emotions. This way, students will be practicing and making it more real.

Finally, they will have to share the video with the rest of the groups in the following class.

**Feedback:** After the discussion and the while-reading activity, the teacher congratulates them for their participation, effort, and dedication by making positive and encouraging comments about their experiences. The teacher follows the same procedure next class when the students present the final activity (video to share with partners).

**Anticipated problems:** Some learners may not feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings in front of others; this is respectable, and teachers should give learners time to feel confident and provide them with the necessary space. They should not force them to talk or share. Instead, the teacher can encourage them to listen to the others and participate in their own way.

**Alternatives:** If learners do not have electronic devices or internet access, the teacher can provide them with colorful cardboards or

posters, magazines or newspapers so they can all have the necessary materials. Based on the recording, they can act out what they had to record on an app in the classroom.

## Conclusion

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The purpose of this article was to help students to know and control their emotions in order to achieve comprehensive wellness and a better academic performance. The aim was to suggest three activities that would serve as models for teachers in the classroom and also demonstrate how to include these activities through a CLIL approach. These activities also show that teachers can relate to emotional intelligence and cognitive content to their learner's personal experiences.

Educators can articulate an interesting and motivating topic (emotional intelligence) to foster the students' self-expression, creativity, authenticity, and critical thinking. Moreover, teachers can promote cross-curricular lessons with other school areas/subjects in a meaningful process, making use of authentic materials. In this way, students can learn about emotions and how they can apply that knowledge in their everyday life. Teachers may ask students to develop a variety of tools that may help them manage potential anxiety in the learning process as well as in personal situations inside and/or outside school.

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