

St. Etienne research

This study has provided valuable insights into the perceptions of students from five European universities regarding an intensive ICLHE/CLIL course. The findings corroborate prior research indicating that students enrolled in English-taught courses tend to report greater satisfaction than dissatisfaction (Aguilar & Rodríguez, 2012; Ekoç, 2020). Furthermore, the study has underscored the potential advantages of such intensive courses for learners. The benefits appear to be more closely associated with the intensity of language exposure rather than mere exposure, as existing research suggests that improved outcomes are achieved when instruction is concentrated into shorter, more intensive periods (Aguilar & Rodríguez, 2012).

Although this language-focused course yielded positive outcomes in two of the four key dimensions of CLIL—namely, language and culture—there remains a need for increased emphasis on strategies and pedagogical practices that enhance the other two dimensions: content and environment. These areas appear to have been somewhat neglected, despite participants reporting gains in subject-specific terminology. Both the content and environment dimensions could be strengthened through enhanced pedagogical training for instructors.

Students' responses also indicated that instructors were generally effective in applying core CLIL/ICLHE methodologies and practices, such as project- and task-based learning, cooperative learning, personalized attention, and linguistic support. However, shortcomings were identified in the areas of inclusive teaching strategies and the provision of meaningful feedback. These aspects warrant specific attention in future teacher training programs.

The results of this study have several implications for the design and quality assurance of future intensive ICLHE courses. They reveal critical areas of student dissatisfaction, most notably in relation to "programme content," with participants perceiving an oversimplification of subject matter and a lack of leisure activities. In terms of "organizational aspects," students expressed concerns about the programme schedule, suggesting a preference for intensive lessons and activities to be held in the morning and early afternoon, allowing time in the evening for social interaction. Additionally, students raised concerns regarding "methodological aspects," particularly the insufficiency of teacher feedback and the lack of instructional strategies tailored to students with lower levels of English-language or content proficiency. Addressing these shortcomings could significantly enhance student engagement and motivation to participate in future intensive courses.

Below are the summaries of the student focus groups interviewed by the UCO team in St. Etienne during the intensive week.

WILDAU

- Satisfaction with achievements, group making, connection with other people and cultures
- Difficulty to get going at the beginning

- Fun to do lessons in English, gaining confidence
- Interesting topics
- Not a big difference that the topics were in English
- Socializing was great, everyone was super nice
- Good preparation for professional career
- Initial disappointment (no tech fair)
- Uncertainty at the beginning, some lessons not clear
- Some lessons should have been earlier in the week and earlier in the day
- More work than expected
- Days too long
- Splitting up on Wednesday was not good
- Sometimes feedback from teachers was not nice on the first day and not critical but in the following days more helpful and positive
- Visits should have been more planned out

UCO

- Setting up the stand, the posters, making the fair was a great experience
- The graKiti day helped a lot to get to know each other
- It was fun to interact with people of the same age from different cultures
- In general, the students from other cultures were more experienced
- Not much learning of new content, sometimes things were repeated for several days
- Too long days, too tired in the afternoon, too much downtime
- The organization of meals was not very good
- Some teachers know a lot, but students are not used to such direct feedback
- Lack of adaptation in the feedback to the culture of the different students
- Sometimes the comments were somehow rude (they give the example of a teacher who told them that the comments they have elaborated were not personal and that they did not know about the subject)
- Some comments were not positive, they were not helpful for elaborating the product

HAN

- New experience working with international students, positive
- Wide experience with courses in English and with English in general
- Very helpful because we need English
- Great differences between universities and cultures, the level of bilingualism in the Netherlands is probably the highest in the world
- Good initiative for students
- How different cultures work, how the Finnish and the Spanish are totally different, and how sometimes it doesn't work very well, but you must make it work, and that was like an interesting experience
- The Dutch (together with the Germans) are very direct and it's difficult to communicate with people from other countries, especially if they are not as confident in English, sometimes a bit frustrating working with the French and Spanish students
- This helped to learn to get adapted to other systems
- Learning so much more about other people and other cultures when talking to them doing something else than school related activities
- We were told we were going to a tech fair and expected to have the product

that was market ready with real investors

- Maybe it was a just a problem of communication, we should have come here with a different mindset
- Lectures were a bit simple, our knowledge is a bit wider
- The later lectures were long, so you lose your focus and the program was so full
- The tech students of the Gimeolex project, they didn't want to go further, they couldn't speak any English at all
- The campus tour was good. But that maybe better be used at the beginning just like the cultural things maybe just the first day just to get to know each other now
- Professors got a bit obsessed with what they think should be the compulsory components
- The second day the lunch was not arranged, or it was not learned for us so we have to do it by ourselves but the time schedule was too tight to go to a place and to eat
- The schedule in general is what you call an intensive program, it's very full and that's why we're here I guess

JEAN MONET

- It was a really good experience
- Really good to speak with students that have a better English level. It was really interesting
- The content of the project was really good, every group made cool projects, but some of them were more difficult than the other
- The half of us are in the international business. So, it's good to have an experience, to take advantage of the common experience
- It's positive that you get this project so you can prepare to what is going to happen
- We all come from different countries, so we have different points of view, and it is a strength to be able to understand each other
- First time that you have something in content taught in in English. That's why it was very complicated
- The support in the whole process from the teachers and the lectures was very kind, they didn't ask a lot of questions
- Sometimes there was too much information, or it was difficult to understand
- It was a little frustrating because we had the opportunity to already do that at school and to not be able to express ourselves correctly and put these skills
- During lunch we had like 30 minutes and didn't know where to go, so for me be a little problem with the organization

KARELIA

- First experience working in multicultural settings, interesting
- Different backgrounds in the group, different cultures, very interesting experience
- Even though there were some tensions within the group, at the end, the experience was a very good educational experience
- Really interesting experience, hard work but super experience
- A good practice for understanding other people's mind and practice to speak

better.

- Great opportunity to balance things and to understand other people's opinions
- Being in different groups forced us to engage with members from different places and to collaborate with other multicultural people
- Not sure what to do in the first day
- Sometime the advice provided by teachers was contradictory
- Some members of the group understood feedback differently and wanted to take different options resulting in final product that was not consistent
- Feedback could be a bit more organized
- Different knowledge of business in the group made us teach first others and then convince them
- Instructions and purpose of activities were not clear sometimes
- Quite often the management of workshops was quite chaotic
- Sometimes even teachers were not sure what was happening, not totally efficient communication