Pleasure Reading: Incorporating CLIL Into an Extensive Reading-Based Course

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Abstract

The goal of this paper is to introduce the pedagogical methodology in which Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) was incorporated into Pleasure Reading, an extensive-reading based course for L2 university students in Tokyo. Described simply, the course can be seen as having two strands: students read self-selected literature and learn content selected by the instructor. After devising a method of teaching content to analyze literary texts, the authors structured their lessons based on the principles of CLIL, mainly Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture, or the 4Cs. Activities were scaffolded using Bloom's revised taxonomy, moving from lower-order thinking skills (LOTS) to higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). Visual and graphic organizers were incorporated to aid the comprehension of authentic texts and higher-level content. The paper concludes with a sample lesson handout designed using the aforementioned principles.

Keywords: pleasure reading, extensive reading, graded readers, EFL, CLIL

Introduction

Pleasure Reading is an elective course within the Independent Module at Rikkyo University. The course is aimed at helping L2 sophomores, juniors, and seniors improve their reading skills through extensive reading. The class is designed to help students find English books they wish to read in English and make it a pleasurable experience. Students choose graded readers based on their current reading level and complete various assignments based on those readings. While it is up to the assigned teacher how best to achieve course objectives, typically this course includes activities such as in-class reading, discussion of selected books, and written or oral assignments that both summarize and analyze the material being read. This paper addresses the attempts of the authors to implement a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) framework for the Pleasure Reading course in order to more effectively engage students in the understanding and enjoyment of literature.

Perhaps it is best to start with a shared definition of pleasure reading, which the National Literacy Trust describes as follows:

> Reading for pleasure refers to reading that we to [sic] do of our own free will anticipating the satisfaction that we will get from the act of reading. It also refers to reading that having begun at someone else's request we continue because we are interested in it. It typically involves materials that reflect our own choice, at a time and place that suits us. (Clark & Rumbold, 2006, p. 6)

Similarly, students in the Pleasure Reading course select books at the request of their teacher, although they are expected to read both in the classroom and independently outside of class. Choice is an essential component of this extensive-reading course. It should be no surprise that the books young people find most interesting are the ones they have chosen for themselves. Gambrell (1996, p. 21) reports that when children were asked to talk about the books they enjoyed most, "over 80%

responded that they had self-selected the books from the classroom libraries." While students in the Pleasure Reading course are free to choose their reading materials, it is generally recommended that they select graded readers, which are adaptations of literature from various cultures designed to help L2 students improve their reading skills. With thousands of level-appropriate titles available from the school library, it is hoped that students will come away feeling motivated by the experience of self-selecting their reading materials for class.

At least part of what separates the Pleasure Reading course from more conventional EFL courses is its emphasis on extensive reading (ER) and the extensive reading of literature in particular. The term "extensive reading" was first used by Harold Palmer in his attempt to differentiate between texts for "intensive reading" in which "each sentence is subjected to a careful scrutiny," whereas in extensive reading "book after book will be read through without giving more than a superficial and passing attention to the lexicological units of which it is composed" (1917, p. 205). Day and Bamford's (2002) principles for teaching extensive reading are built on this concept further by emphasizing the use of easy-to-read texts that are self-selected by students from a variety of topics and materials, with a focus on speed, reading enjoyment, and limited teacher interference, encouraging teachers to play the role of guide as students read both independently and silently. With regard to reading materials, Tsang and Paran (2021, p. 2) remind us that in the L2 context, there "has been a widening of the concept of literature and literary texts," referring to McRae's (1991) description of literature as having either a capital 'L' for traditional works of the literary canon or a small 'l' for more modern works "ranging from fantasy and young adult novels." Within the L2 classroom, all of these works are considered classroom literature and are encompassed within the spectrum of graded readers.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in and acknowledgment of the benefits of such literature in the L2 contexts. Takase (2012) notes that various studies have shown the beneficial effects of ER, including proficiency gains not only with discrete skills but also gains with the positive affect and self-confidence that stem from self-selected, extensive reading of literature. Secondary-level EFL students, as documented by Tsang, Paran, and Lau (2020), tend to be quite positive about the use of literature in the EFL classroom. A few of the improvements that extensive reading of literature provides are "becoming independent of others" as well as promoting confidence and motivation (Walker, 1997, p. 124).

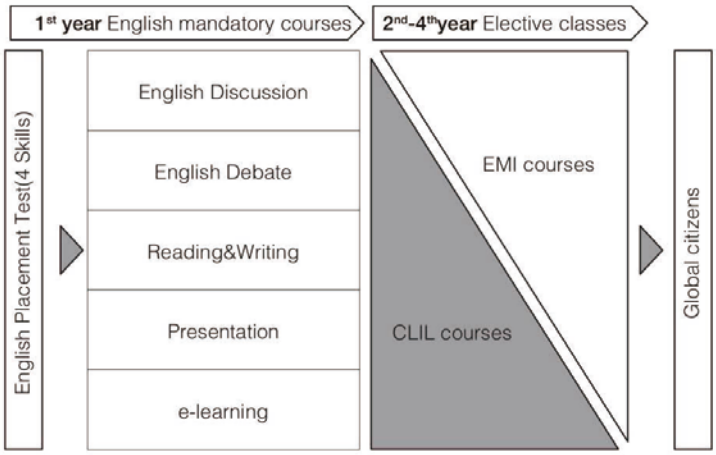
It is also important to note that while Yang (as cited in Paran, 2008) found "language improvement in classes using literature in contrast with classes that did not," the classes that "experienced traditional teacher-centered lecturing on literature" had "a sharp drop in attendance" (p. 472). Moreover, a study by Tsang and Paran (2021) found that while learners generally have a positive attitude toward the use of literature in the L2 classroom, they occasionally experienced lowered levels of motivation when teacher-selected texts were considered poor or uninteresting. These studies remind us that to achieve the full benefits literature can bring to the L2 classroom, adherence to the principles of extensive reading–such as limited teacher interference and the provision of student self-selected materials–is essential.

The Role of CLIL in Pleasure Reading

Content and Language Integrated Learning is defined by Coyle, Hood, and Marsh as "a dual-focused approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language" (2010, p. 1). Graddol differentiates CLIL from English-medium instruction (EMI) by stating that "the learner is not necessarily expected to have the English proficiency

required to cope with the subject before beginning study" (2006, p. 86). This distinction is fitting considering that Pleasure Reading—as part of the forthcoming framework of CLIL courses under the subheading of Global Communication—will follow the mandatory freshman-level courses while preceding most EMI courses, which are generally taken near the end of the undergraduate program (Figure 1). CLIL is typically categorized into two main types: *hard* and *soft*. Hard CLIL, also known as *strong* CLIL, refers to a content-led approach, whereas soft CLIL, alternatively known as weak CLIL, describes language-led approaches (Ball, Kelly, & Clegg, 2015, p. 26-27). In other words, hard CLIL courses might be content-heavy and somewhat closer to immersion compared with soft CLIL courses that utilize more scaffolding while emphasizing language skills. Courses such as Pleasure Reading would fall somewhere in between, but with a heavier emphasis on content than mandatory courses such as English Discussion, Debate, Presentation, and Reading & Writing, all of which typically provide scaffolding such as sentence stems to assist spoken and/or written communication. Therefore, it can be said that Pleasure Reading as a course should place more of an emphasis on its content than these mandatory courses.

Figure 1.
Four-year curriculum framework (Yamamoto & Nitta, 2021, p. 126)

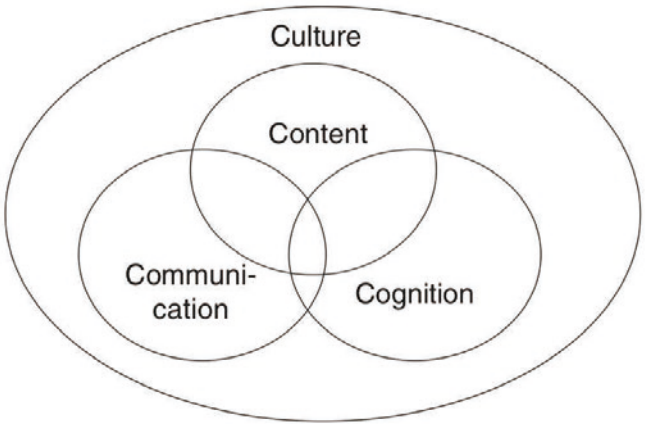


The authors' pedagogical goal was to apply the principles and frameworks of CLIL to the Pleasure Reading course. While students were expected to engage with the readings, having a full understanding of the text was not necessary. That is to say that the discrete learning of typical grammar- and vocabulary-based courses was not part of the curriculum. However, full engagement with the material was required in the form of pair and group activities and written assignments. Students were not tested on their reading in traditional ways, like vocabulary checks, but rather assessment was conducted through students' writing. Students were expected to understand and use the literary concepts taught in the course, such as genre and symbolism, and this was assessed in their written reports, oral presentation, and/or regular discussion-based activities.

The guiding principles of CLIL are *content, communication*, *cognition, and culture*, also termed the 4C's by Coyle et al. (2010). The starting point and foundation is the first C: content. Communication is the second aspect, and while this is a very broad aspect, for the purposes of CLIL instruction, "it involves learners in *language using* in a way which is different from language learning lessons" (Coyle, 2005, p. 5). Learners are challenged to use higher-order thinking skills with cognition, the third principle, and culture (or to be more specific international cultures and multicultural focus) completes the framework. These four aspects should not be considered as a linear process or as

separate from one another; indeed, throughout the coursework, the 4C framework focuses on the interrelationship between all four of these principles toward the broader goals of integrated learning and language learning (Gierlinger, n.d.). Nitta and Yamamoto (2020) take this one step further in their reconceptualized 4C framework (Figure 2), in which "Culture is given a superordinate role of integrating the other Cs," essentially structuring the curriculum in such a way that Content, Communication, and Cognition occur *through* Culture as opposed to alongside it. In this way, students acquire intercultural skills by understanding "other cultures (Content), communicating with others (Communication), and learning critical thinking skills (Cognition), all of which contribute to developing competency to negotiate and solve complex social problems (Culture)" (Nitta & Yamamoto, 2020, p. 52). This reconceptualization fits naturally with Pleasure Reading because of its emphasis on graded readers that naturally introduce cultural concepts through the perspectives of foreign characters within a global community. By learning basic concepts of literary analysis (Content), discussing with both teacher and peers (Communication), and applying critical thinking skills to produce written and oral projects (Cognition), students both engage with and begin to internalize new global perspectives.

Figure 2.
Nitta & Yamamoto's Reconceptualized 4C framework



While Pleasure Reading would not necessarily be considered soft CLIL, at least not to the extent of the aforementioned mandatory courses, a certain amount of scaffolding is necessary to ensure maximum effectiveness of the course aims throughout individual lessons. Bruner (as cited in Coyle, 1999) coined the term "scaffolding" to refer to "the provision of temporary, adjustable support that is provided by a teacher to assist students in developing and extending their skills" (p. 60). Ball, Kelly, and Klegg remind us that students within the CLIL context "make more cognitive effort to fulfil the academic demands of the syllabus, probably because they are more aware of the gap between their cognitive level and the language required to nail down their learning" (2015, p. 55). That's why it is up to the teachers to make efforts to reduce this cognitive gap through a process of careful lesson planning.

One aspect of scaffolding that should be carefully considered is the cognitive skills needed to complete the tasks within a CLIL lesson. Cognitive skills are essentially "thinking skills," which include (1) *information processing*, "or concrete thinking skills, such as identifying and organizing information," (2) *abstract thinking,* "such as reasoning and hypothesizing," (3) *creative thinking* and synthesis, "for example, when we use our knowledge to imagine, to solve problems, and to think of new ideas," (4) *enquiry skills*, "for example, when we ask questions and plan how to do research," and

(5) *evaluation skills,* "for example, when we use criteria to comment on how good our work is" (Bentley, 2010, p. 20). Bloom's (1956) revised taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) organizes these skills into six main areas in order of cognitive complexity: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating. To help students deal with the cognitive load, teachers of CLIL should carefully organize lessons in a conceptual hierarchy from *lower-order thinking skills* (LOTS) to *higher-order thinking skills* (HOTS). For example, early in the lesson, students might be asked to recall facts or concepts (Remember) related to the lesson's target, which prepares them to classify new but related information (Understand) and inevitably to use that new knowledge (Applying) to complete level-appropriate tasks. Remembering, Understanding, and Applying not only require LOTS, but also serve to prime students for the challenges ahead requiring HOTS. For example, in the second half of the lesson, students might be asked to compare and contrast what they have learned (Analyzing), judge which is better for a given situation (Evaluating), and write their own example (Creating) to be presented to the peers. Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating are HOTS and should therefore be utilized in the latter half of the lesson. By organizing a lesson from LOTS to HOTS, students will be better prepared to contend with the cognitive load of content-rich CLIL lessons.

Another form of scaffolding that can aid student learning is the use of concept mapping to break down complex content. Phil Ball (n.d.) points out that CLIL learners, especially adults, will face a concept-language gap in which they may struggle with the cognitive demand of materials due to a lack of language skills, particularly when dealing with authentic texts that are conceptually and linguistically complex. This point is reiterated by Nitta and Yamamoto (2020), who remind us that in most CLIL courses, "learners are required to understand linguistically and conceptually demanding texts and use low-frequency academic vocabulary and complex structures, which are hardly used in everyday conversation." To help students cope, visual or graphic organizers such as mind maps, t-charts, tables, and Venn diagrams can be used to help CLIL students categorize information as a means of connecting ideas to better understand information (Bentley, 2010, p. 43). Although these organizers can be used at various stages of a lesson, the authors of this paper used them during the presentation phase while introducing new content, mainly to support authentic reading passages or short lectures that introduce key concepts. One added benefit of using graphic organizers is that they help to deal with the level gap within mixed-ability elective classes. Carol Ann Tomlinson describes how the use of organizers can help teachers overcome the challenges of differentiated instruction:

> Some students, even of older ages, find it very difficult to read text or listen to a lecture and come away with a coherent sense of what it was all about. For such students, it can be quite useful to work with a visual organizer that follows the flow of ideas from the text or lecture. Not only might such organizers help them focus on key ideas and information, but they may also help some learners see how a teacher or author develops a line of thought. (2001, p. 77)

Although mixed-ability learners may not necessarily understand every word of an authentic text or lecture, after collaborating with their peers to complete a graphic organizer, it can be reassuring for teachers to see that all students were able to come away with a conceptual understanding of the key points of the lesson.

While graphic organizers may help tackle the challenges of authentic teacher-selected texts, students are free to choose their extensive-reading materials, and thus, a certain amount of

scaffolding will still be necessary to ensure the success of students' choices. For this reason, graded readers can be implemented as a form of scaffolding within the Pleasure Reading course. However, at the onset of class, it is necessary that teachers provide guidance on how to choose graded readers that are at an appropriate level for each student. This can be done using placement tests such as those provided by Oxford University Press and the Extensive Reading Foundation. Students can also be encouraged to follow the Extensive Reading Foundation's "Five-Finger Rule," which is based on a similar concept by Hiebert & Reutzel (2010). According to this method, students can open a self-selected book to any page, read it, and count the number of unfamiliar words. If there are two to three new words, this would be an appropriate level, while four words might be considered challenging but acceptable if the book seems interesting to the student. However, one or less could be considered too easy, whereas five or more should be ruled out due to its difficulty. While students should be encouraged to take note of newly learned words in their reading records, they also need to understand that the goal of the course is to read without a dictionary.

A CLIL Lesson for Pleasure Reading

In terms of assessment, Pleasure Reading was set apart from traditional courses in that there was no testing of students on the reading material; the instructors wanted the course to live up to its name and actually be pleasurable, and tests, many students would argue, are not pleasurable. Similar activities that L2 students are frequently tasked with, for example, cloze activities such as gap fills, were not used. Instead, the focus was placed on discussion-based activities centered around literary devices that help students to analyze the texts in a more meaningful way. Since the stories students self-select are written at their level, there were no quizzes to determine if they had achieved 100% comprehension. Instead, the instructors wanted students to deeply engage not only with the text but also with their peers. As Paran posits, "Our fundamental goal as language professionals is to expand and enrich the lives of our students and the society in which they live" (Paran, 2008, p. 469). The 4Cs were used in the Pleasure Reading Course in the following ways:

Content (Literary Devices). As Coyle emphasizes, when explaining best practices in CLIL curriculum planning, "the content is the starting point of the planning process" (Coyle, 2005, p. 4). Lectures, slideshows, and handouts were the media by which students learned the content, which focused on various literary devices. This portion of the class was generally teacher-centered, though with frequent comprehension checks with partners and groups that were implemented with graphic organizers. The lectures on literary devices included topics such as genre, theme, character, etc., and these dimensions of literature were taught with little to no emphasis on conventional grammar and vocabulary. Aside from the topics and concepts themselves (i.e., "genre") as novel vocabulary terms, the pedagogical focus lay in defining and exemplifying the topic and, ultimately, having students apply and synthesize those ideas through the lens of their own chosen graded readers. Students were given handouts (see Appendix), either a hard or digital copy via Google Docs, and these contained activities geared toward providing students with a steady progression of complexity and cognitive skills.

Communication (Discussions). Focus was also placed on student-to-student interaction as opposed to teacher-centered instruction when possible. For this reason, students frequently discussed content in pairs and groups. These activities ranged from simple, low-order skills like

remembering and understanding and progressed to higher-order skills such as creating and evaluating. L2 discussions were at the core of many class activities, from Warm-up and Pre-reading Questions at the start of the class (i.e., "What kind of books was it?") to collaborative pair and group projects in which students used higher-order thinking.

Cognition (Discussions/Production/Book Reports or Presentations). As Coyle emphasizes, for CLIL to be effective, students must use HOTS and "construct their own understanding and be challenged" (2005, p. 5). In Pleasure Reading, these skills were demonstrated in discussions and also in projects such as book reports, in which students applied their knowledge of literary concepts and other material toward a summative evaluation of their graded reader. Course activities also included creative writing, either individually or in pairs/groups, which utilized communication skills as well as the highest-order thinking skill of creating. Other "high-order" class projects involved students creating short skits based on their readings and performing them in class.

Culture (Foreign Graded Readers). Just as Nitta and Yamamoto's framework depicts the Culture aspect as encompassing the other three, this principle applied for the graded readers students chose in the Pleasure Reading course. By choosing foreign-language readers (all were English-language books), students were engaged in reading content, not just outside their L1 language but also outside their L1 culture. Most graded readers were from Anglosphere countries (U.K., U.S., Canada, Australia, N.Z.) but not all; many selections were from various countries around the world. The cultural context plays an important role in the course; if we treat the readings as "cultural artifacts," then they provide "authenticity, cultural value, and meaning" (Coyle & Meyer, 2021, p. 151). With regard to LOTS and HOTS, the authors structured lessons keeping Bloom's revised taxonomy in mind. This can be demonstrated by following the sample lesson handout (Appendix). The initial stages of the lesson focus primarily on the use of LOTS, whereas the final project culminates in the use of HOTS. By looking at these stages in order, one can see how the 4Cs and scaffolding have been implemented:

Pre-Reading (Communication)

The first stage of the lesson is simply a communication-based warm-up activity. Students are asked to recall a book or film, which relates to Bloom's taxonomy's lowest-order thinking skill of remembering. The pre-reading questions are intended to lead students toward the topic of genres by asking them to consider whether they often read/watch similar kinds of books/films. While the purpose of the course is to discuss students' extensive reading, the authors frequently used movies as a way to help students connect with and become interested in the lesson's theme. However, the emphasis was always placed on "stories," as the literary analysis tools taught in the class could be applied to both literature and film. For example, if the lesson's theme is characters, it does not necessarily matter whether students talk about characters in *Hamlet* (play), *Harry Potter* (film/book), or *Howl's Moving Castle* (animation) because the focus would be on terminologies such as protagonists, antagonists, and static/dynamic characters. Therefore, films can be a useful bridge for connecting with course content.

Reading (Content/Communication/Cognition/Culture)

In the second stage of the lesson, the main content about genres is introduced with an authentic text based on an online article (Urban, 2022). However, scaffolding has been provided in the form of a graphic organizer to assist with cognition. The examples provided in the text reference works such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (ancient Mesopotamia), *Romeo & Juliet* (16th century England), and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (20th century Netherlands), which could be further explored in order to enhance the cultural aspect of the 4Cs. This activity relates to the second level of Bloom's taxonomy, Understanding (LOTS), because students are being asked to both explain and categorize. Before reading, students scan the article to find the definition of the word "genre" and then paraphrase its meaning in their own words. They then read the article while categorizing the four Literary Genres (Figure 3). This can be done independently or in pairs; however, to make the activity more communicative, students should be encouraged to help each other while comparing their answers with their classmates before revealing the correct answers. Communication with peers also helps to address level gaps when dealing with mixed-ability classes.

Figure 3.
Answer key for Reading section

Literary Genre	Key Features	Type(s)	Example
Poetry	-lines and stanzas -figurative and rhythmic language about emotional and heartfelt ideas	epic poem	*The Epic of Gilgamesh*
Fiction	-figurative language -sentences and paragraphs -punctuation and grammar	mystery, fantasy, and science fiction	*I am a Cat* (by Natsume Soseki)
Drama	-a kind of fiction but differs because it is intended to be performed for an audience	a play	*Romeo and Juliet*
Non-fiction	-It is not fake. -It comes from real life	Newspapers, diaries, and biographies	*Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl*

Vocabulary (Content/Cognition)

Depending on student levels, the third section may be skipped in favor of something more challenging. Alternatively, it could be assigned for homework or used for review in the subsequent lesson. Both the Vocabulary and Identifying Genres sections expand on topic content by adding terminology that aids cognition, thus solidifying concepts for the upcoming discussions. This lower-level activity simply asks students to match images with key vocabulary, again covering Bloom's taxonomy's second level of understanding (LOTS). It's worth noting that in higher-level classes where this activity was skipped, many students opted to complete the task anyway due to the intrinsically fun nature of matching activities.

Identifying Genres (Content/Cognition)

This activity is a slightly more challenging alternative to the vocabulary-matching activity. The task asks students to identify the genre using a one-sentence clue, which again falls under the Bloom's taxonomy category of understanding (LOTS). For higher-level students, this activity can be

taken one step further by providing slightly longer excerpts from authentic texts and asking students to identify the genre based on keywords, for example:

> Mr. Ollivander moved closer to Harry. Harry wished he would blink. Those silvery eyes were a bit creepy. "Your father, on the other hand, favored a mahogany wand. Eleven inches. Pliable. A little more powerful and excellent for transfiguration. Well, I say your father favored it—it's really the wand that chooses the wizard, of course. (Rowling, 1997, p. 82)

From this *Harry Potter* excerpt, students should be able to identify the genre as fantasy fiction based on keywords such as wand, wizard, and transfiguration. The authors used excerpts from other authentic texts such as *Dracula* (horror/gothic fiction), *Treasure Island* (adventure), *Pride and Prejudice* (romantic fiction), *The War of the Worlds* (science fiction), and *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* (mystery).

Project (Content/Communication/Cognition)

The final stage of the lesson requires students to use cognition and communication to apply what they have learned to dramatize a genre of interest. As this lesson would most likely be taught early on in the course, teachers may also opt to have students write their own short excerpt in a specific genre, thus sparing them the potential discomfort of having to perform in front of unfamiliar peers while still achieving the objectives of the activity. To complete the project requires several steps, all of which necessitate HOTS with regard to Bloom's taxonomy. Students compare their favorite genres through discussion, create a short skit of a favorite genre in pairs, perform their skits while classmates identify the genre, and evaluate their own performances, all of which require students to analyze, create, and evaluate. For the self-evaluation, students should be offered targeted questions such as the following: "Did you feel good about your performance? Why or why not? Could your classmates guess the genre? If so, what clues helped them? If not, what other clues could you have provided?" The activity concludes with teacher-fronted feedback including keywords that could further enhance genre identification.

Conclusion

As more Japanese universities begin to incorporate CLIL-based courses into their undergraduate programs, it becomes essential for instructors to consider how to best implement its essential principles. While language-heavy courses such as debate may take a more soft-CLIL approach and content-heavy courses such as chemistry require a more hard-CLIL approach, a course in extensive reading with mixed-ability students ends up falling somewhere in between, creating unique challenges in terms of lesson planning and curriculum development. Therefore, the authors of this paper hope that sharing the pedagogical methodology used for designing lessons will create a dialogue between others facing similar challenges. In some respects, the authors found certain aspects regarding scaffolding to be commonplace in most EFL lessons, although the means of doing so differs in its use of Bloom's revised taxonomy to structure lessons from LOTS to HOTS. Nonetheless, the concept itself is far from foreign. However, an area of particular interest has been the implementation of the 4Cs, which remains at the heart of CLIL itself. Furthermore, an understanding of the Nitta and Yamamoto's reconceptualized 4C framework (2020) in which Content,

Communication, and Cognition occur *through* Culture is useful when devising lessons that both highlight and supplement the cultural aspects of both graded readers and lesson content.

While this paper focuses mainly on the application of CLIL in the planning of a lesson on genres, further research is necessary to better understand the impact of CLIL on the overall course outline of curriculums based on extensive reading. For these reasons, the authors plan to continue their research into CLIL to improve future iterations of the Pleasure Reading course. The future aim of this project is to report on the author's methodology of curriculum development by introducing the specific content taught to improve students' literary analysis skills. It can then be demonstrated that by teaching these skills, students will be able to improve the quality of course assignments such as in-class discussions, book reports, and presentations. In addition, further details will be provided on the research conducted in hopes of better understanding the students' perspectives of the newly implemented course content.

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Appendix
Example Handout for Lesson on Genres

2 TALKING ABOUT LITERARY GENRES

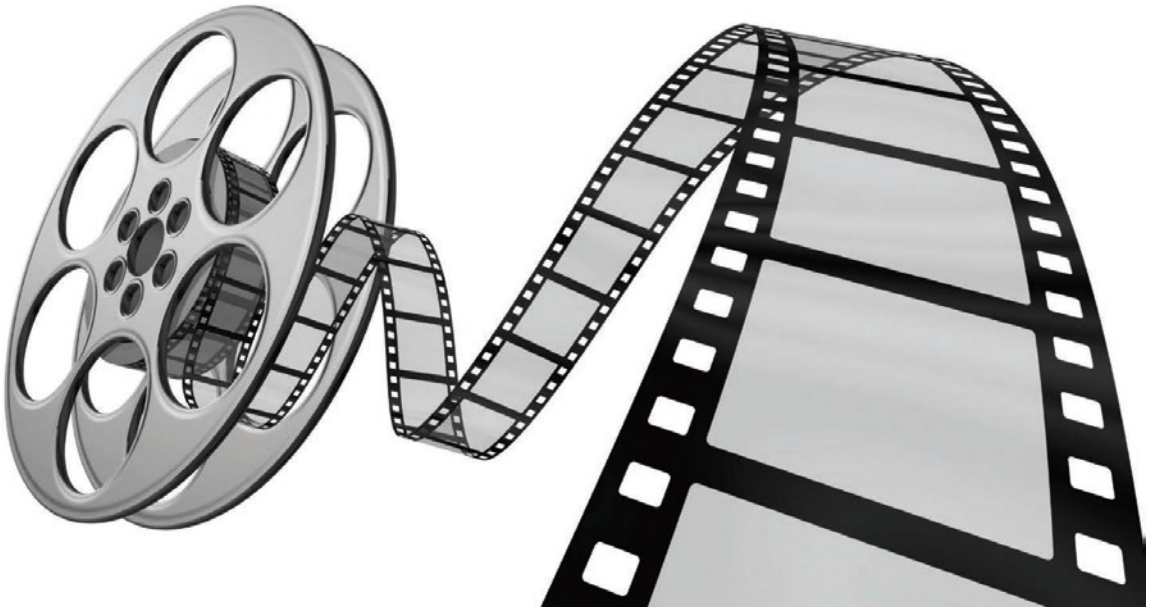
Reading for Pleasure

Our Favorite Stories

1. Pre-reading

Think about the last movie you watched and answer the following questions:

- What was the movie's title?
- What was the movie about?
- What kind of movie was it? (i.e., horror)
- Did you like or dislike the movie? Why?
- Do you often watch similar kinds of movies? Why or why not?



Now, think about the last book you read and answer the following questions:

- What was the book's title?
- What was the book about?
- What kind of book was it?
- Did you like or dislike the book? Why?
- Do you often read similar kinds of books? Why or why not?
- Are the books you enjoy reading similar or different to the movies you watch?

2. Reading

Skim the article and find the meaning of the word “genre.”
Can you explain it in your own words? Do you know how to say it in Japanese?

What is a Literary Genre?

Have you ever had a friend suggest a movie to go see, but you responded, “I'm not in the mood for that?” What did you mean? Was it a scary movie and you were in the mood to laugh? Was it a sad movie, but you wanted some action? If so, then you already know about genres. A **genre** is a term that translates from the French to mean “kind” or “type,” so it refers to any works that share certain characteristics. When choosing a book to read, just like choosing a movie, it is important to know the genre because readers will already have certain expectations before they begin to read. The term **literary genre** makes it clear that you're talking about books and writing. In literature, there are four main genres to help the reader focus their expectations for the piece. These genres are **poetry, drama, fiction,** and **non-fiction**. However, these genres can be broken down even further.

The oldest of all the literary genres is poetry. Unlike other genres, poems are typically written in lines and stanzas instead of sentences and paragraphs. They may use figurative and rhythmic language to express emotional and heartfelt ideas. Early **epic poems** were longer and described the extraordinary deeds of characters as they deal with gods and other supernatural forces. The oldest epic poem is the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which was written over 3000 years ago. Another literary genre that utilizes figurative language is fiction. However, unlike poetry, fiction is organized into sentences and paragraphs with proper punctuation and grammar called prose. It is usually broken up into chapters, as well. Fictional stories are about events that didn’t really happen, so **mystery**, **fantasy**, and **science-fiction** novels are full of imaginary characters. Natsume Soseki famously used a cat as the main character in his fictional novel *I Am a Cat*! Drama, on the other hand, is a kind of fiction but differs because it is intended to be performed for an audience. Shakespeare’s most famous **play**, *Romeo and Juliet*, dramatizes the tragic romance of two young lovers born into feuding families. If fiction is fake, then non-fiction is the opposite: it comes from real life. When you read the **newspaper**, you are reading non-fiction. Other examples include **diaries** and **biographies**. For example, *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl* is the diary of a teenage girl who hid from the Germans in World War II. After her death, her family published the diary without changing her words. What Anne wrote was real. It was her life, and a great example of non-fiction.

Libraries and bookstores use literary genres as a way to separate books into different sections, like "classics" or "mysteries." Therefore, to help you find the book that’s right for you, we will discuss the kinds of literary genres you like (and dislike) reading!

*adapted from Study.com

Literary Genre	Key Features	Type(s)	Example*
		epic poem	
			I am a Cat (by Natsume Soseki)
Drama			
	It is not fake. It comes from real life.		

3. Vocabulary

Match the picture with the correct genre.

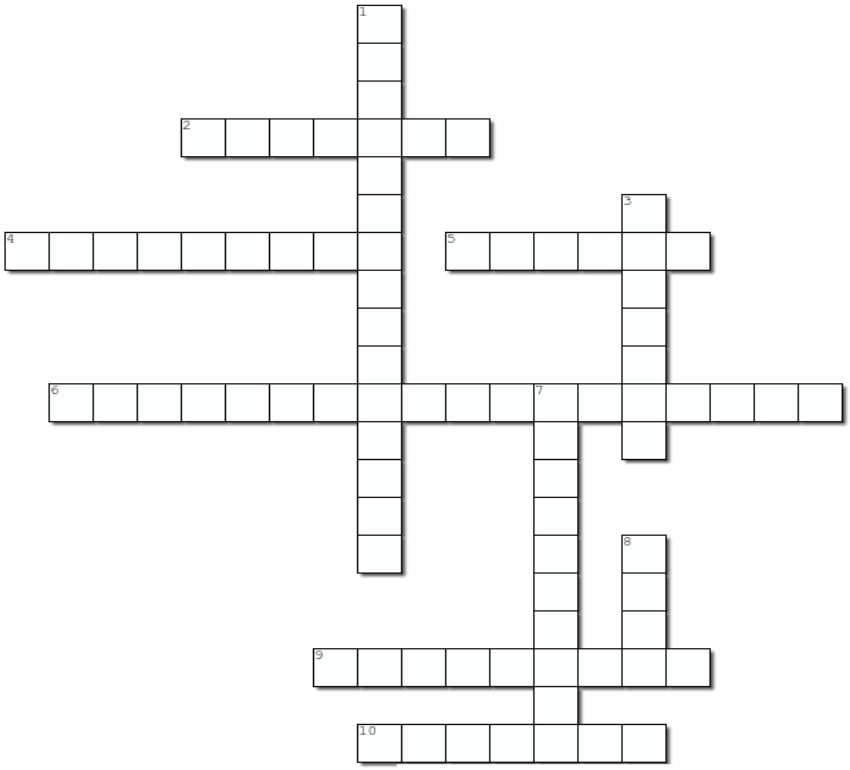
comedy	•	•	
fantasy	•	•	
horror	•	•	
war	•	•	
history	•	•	
thriller	•	•	
mystery	•	•	
biography	•	•	
romance	•	•	
tragedy	•	•	
science fiction	•	•	

Do you know of any other genres?

4. Identifying Genres

Complete the crossword puzzle using the vocabulary and clues below.

science fiction	fairy tale	myth	western	adventure
romance	biography	mystery	horror	historical fiction



Across

2. A young boy tries to tame a wild pony to impress the man who is temporarily staying with his family.
4. It's man against ocean when Joe Martin attempts to sail around the world.
5. There's a monster hiding in the forest, but now it is hungry—for blood!
6. A female radio operator during WWII befriends a Nazi spy.
9. The true story of the life of New York's first mayor is told by his great grandson.
10. A down-on-his-luck detective must find a serial killer or get kicked off the force.

Down

1. Human set out to colonize Mars, but space travel is more dangerous than they bargained for.
3. A man and woman experience instant attraction, but they are opposing counsel in an important lawsuit.
7. A princess is tricked into biting a poison apple and can only be revived by the kiss of true love.
8. The story of a man who was so strong that he could snap tree trunks with his bare hands.

5. Project

Work in pairs or small groups. First, you will talk about books, films, and comic books that you like. Please be sure to identify genre. (i.e., "My favorite comic book is One Piece. It's an adventure story. The reason I like it is…") Then, you will choose a book that you have all read (or want to read) and introduce it to you classmates. First, discuss these questions with your classmates:

- What is your favorite **book**? What is its genre? Why do you like it?
- What is your favorite **film**? What is its genre? Why do you like it?
- What is your favorite **comic book**? What is its genre? Why do you like it?
- Is there a **book, film,** or **comic book** that you all like?

Next, you will perform a scene from your favorite book, film, or comic book. However, you won't tell its title or genre. Your classmates will try to guess. With your group, please do all of the following:

1. Choose a book, film, or comic book you all know.
2. Select a scene you all want to act out*.
3. Decide who will play each character.
4. Create a short script of your scene.
5. Enact a scene from your classmates' chosen book or film (1-2 minutes per group)
6. Ask your classmates to guess the genre.

*It's also okay to create your own imagined scene that's not from a book, film, or comic.