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Learning non formally via online CLIL

Learning formally is, in contrast to learning non formally, having substantially different realities for its implementation of CLIL-included learning, illustrated among other by the fact that the predominate control of learning service arrangements are mainly made by others than the learner, and that the learning processes are often defined in formats that are not easy to extensively change or control by the learners (like a curriculum). Factors like 'volunteerism' and self-management are often more articulated in more informal learning opportunities, and for many CLIL ambitions this may also impose additional demand on the preparations for the delivery/usage and on the quality assurance. Such additional demands and implications may also be further reinforced and accentuated by the larger 'freedom' variable that oftenexist in online learning compared to classroom learning. This article will provide a set of reflections/experiences that potentially will encourage, give highlights to and support implementation of CLIL-included online learning.

## I – Reflections on CLIL-inclusion in informal learning

The reflections presented here are some selective fragments of the results/outcomes and conceptual processing that took place during the much appreciated and useful AECLIL project. The initial reflections will be summarised under three main dimensions, namely 'usage', 'market' and 'quality' concerns/considerations.

Learning non formally in an online environment (USAGE)

CLIL-inclusions in learning service has implications far beyond the 'language learning addition to a learning services, and will impose service demands beyond the need for language teaching/support resources within the learning service solution. Some of these implications may be clearer if one is taking a different perspective on learning.

*A modality perspective of learning services*

Learning opportunities and learning service provision can take place in many forms and in a wide range of modalities. The scope of service modality options could be summarized as a three-dimensional space based on (1) in what context it is provided, from an institutional to situational context, (2) with what 'control', from managed by others to managed by the learners themselves, and (3) whether it takes place in the physical space or in the virtual space, e.g. as online learning. In this article we are focusing mainly on the learner service space placed in the lower far right part of the cube. CLIL-included learning however can appear in any modality position.
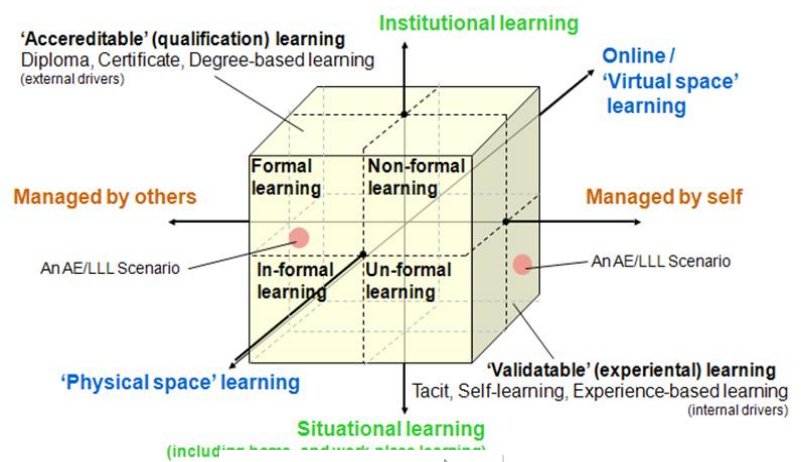
## Actor perspectives of a learning service

Learning services have a usage side and a supply side. The former is at an individual level the learner while the facilitator represents the supply side. A third party is the learning service designer, having the ambition to construct the learning service modality and content to match the ambitions/ requirements of the other two sides.

Each of the three actor categories have different expectations, demands and potential contributions to give to the a CLIL-included learning service, and all have to be engaged in / committed to the CLIL-components of a learning service provision.
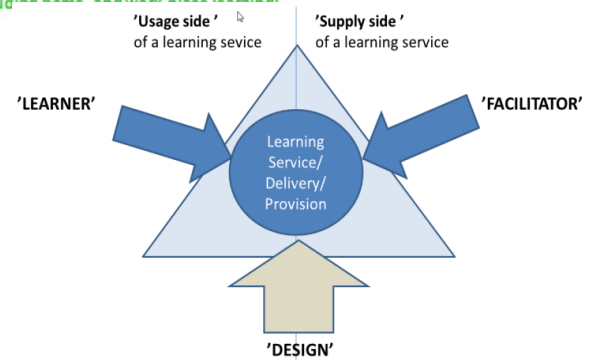
Contextual perspectives of a learning service

In a wider perspective the situation can be viewed as four interacting and influencing contexts. The previously mentioned service utilisation and service provision contexts, with its set of actors, the service development context, with its designers, are all stakeholders. A forth stakeholder is the service market context with a possibly more indirect stake, but often with more influential power than the others. CLIL-inclusion in learning services may not be possible if not also those stakeholders are agreeing to its design/implementation.
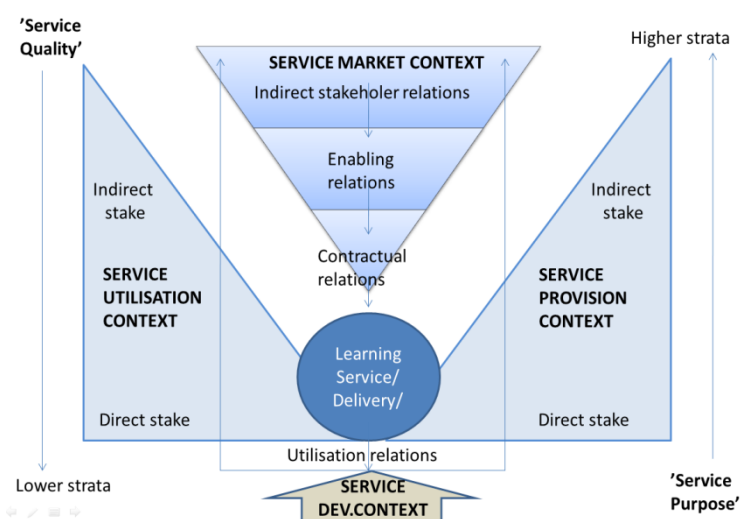

Both in actors and contextual stakeholders need to be introduced to, be in consent with and support the ambition of introducing/including/integrating CLIL components into a given learning service. The purpose and derived benefits, and on the other hand the probable increased resource demands on all involved parties, needs to be

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both formally and mentally committed to by all prior to an initiation of a CLIL effort. This does not only include efforts made in connection with delivery, before and after.

A learning service perspective beyond the 'delivery' aspect of learning

The 360 degree perspective of a learning service provision includes different stages and different forms of actions from both the learning service provider and usage sides. Initially it may include market contacts of different kind, often implemented with the aim of 'closing-a-deal' with the usage side. Once this is successful 'delivery' type of contacts and interactions can take place, and be followed by evaluation/assessment interactions contacts, and possibly also a renewal of the service provision/usage.
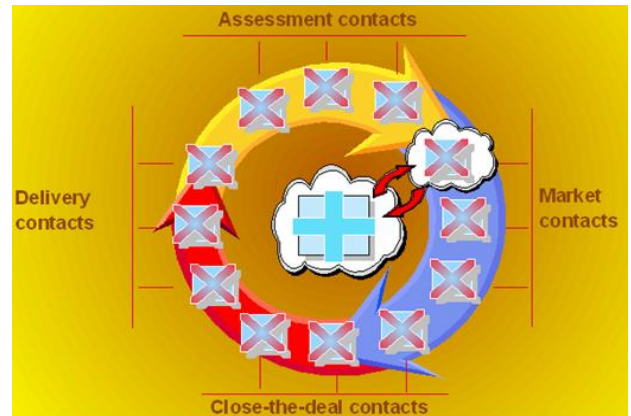

The service approach being adopted for a given learning service possibly can be characterised as six 'levels', ranging from the lowest level, providing without a user request, to making the options available, and integrated in a larger plan/ ambition up to more serious learning partnerships. It is for CLIL-included learning services important that the CLIL-components in those have a level at least or higher than the learning service itself.
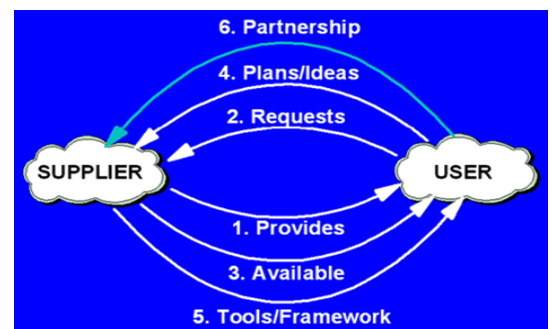

Role distribution between learning service provider and service users/learners

Another important consideration in the design and delivery of CLIL learning services is the role relationship allowed and encouraged between the supplier/enabler and user/ learner. This can range from a strong 'me-them' service provider view, to a 'we-us' view on the learner partnership with mainly peer and companion-based learning relations. When having an upper-level relation in the overall learning service it will often be unproductive to maintain a lower-level relationship for the CLIL components.
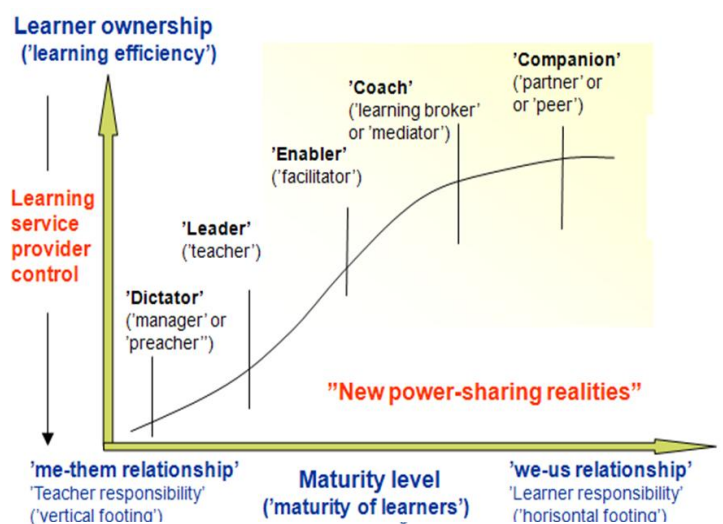
Making learning services available online (MARKET)

One of the main concerns in connection with planning for design and delivery of informal learning in general, and CLIL-

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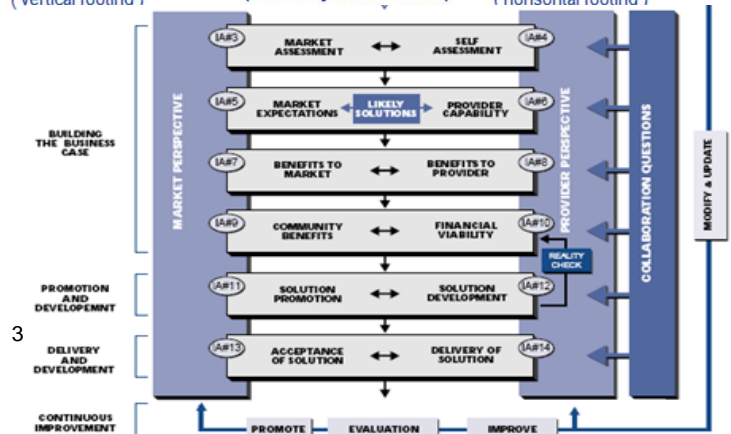
included learning services in particular, for a particular target group niche, industrial or conceptual sector, and market segment is the sustainability, cost-coverage and learning effectiveness of that learning service.

There are three stages that needs to be attended to (1) the market entry/introduction, (2) the design of the learning services so that those have contextually optimal configurations, and (3) that the learning service provision delivers the expected learning value, have the desirable usefulness for its stakeholders as well as has the usability for the learner group(s) it was established for in the first place.

Preparations for market introductions/ engagement in CLIL-included learning

During the pilot implementation of the CLIL-based modules/learning sessions it was found most useful in its preparatory stages to make a provider-side market-fitness assessment preparation exercise, based on the Australian 'Learning Business Planning Framework' model.

From the experiences gained during the AECLIL pilot it can be recommended that also others intending to introduce CLIL-inclusion in their online learning services are prior to such commitment also carry out such self/market assessment using this tool.
(http//pre2005.flexiblelearning.net.au/busmodels/flbpf.pdf)

Design of CLIL-included informal online learning

Both the overall learning services as well as the CLIL-included components have also to be pedagogically designed to both optimally adjust their respective ambitions to each other and to the particular characteristics of the learning purposes, target groups and context within which it is intended to be provided. There are three 'design dimensions' and six performances that needs to be accommodated for according to the EU/ NeWorkers project. The essential conditions, indicators and measures proposed for those were found most useful also in connection

(http//NeWorkers.EUproject.org)

with design of CLIL-included learning services. In addition, the questions defined in the "Usable e-learning" article were also found most useful for the review of the most significant design considerations they proposed. (http://www4.ncsu.edu/~brad_m/research/elearning05.pdf)
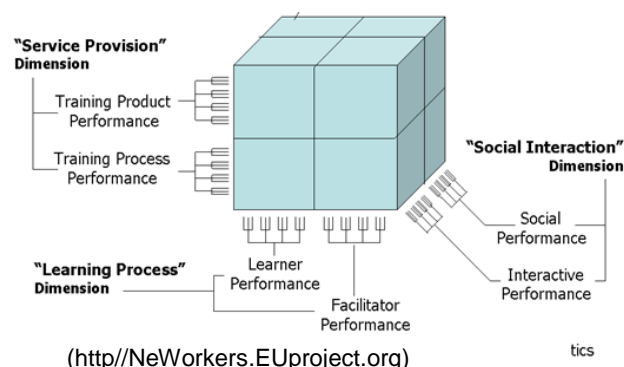
Provision of CLIL-included online learning services

A number of unique considerations, including those concerning which online platform and media being used, and the usage maturity levels that exist among learners, need to be taking into account also when providing CLIL-included learning services.

Many online learning platforms are treating language variants of the content as separate entities, and user cannot switch freely from one language variant to another, or interact in more than one language per session. During the AECLIL pilot a virtual learning community platform catering for simultaneous multi-language sessions was used, also catering for almost all of the usability dimensions and criteria proposed Costabile et al. (http://www.computer.org/comp/proceedings/hicss/2005/2268/01/22680006b.pdf

Careful attention is needed to be placed on ICT and media maturity among learners for CLIL-included learning, as these may impose other ICT/media capability requirements than for conventional online learning (like 'click on options' vs 'interact in real time').

The media maturity needs to be attended to both in terms of whether traditional or innovate media are used in a conventional or innovative manner, and/or with different user expectations on the media, such as supported or self-managed media usage. This may also include the ability of users to operate different media devices, such as mobile devices and various web-based phone connections. Definitions of media capabilities have to be carried out for each learner and for each usage case.
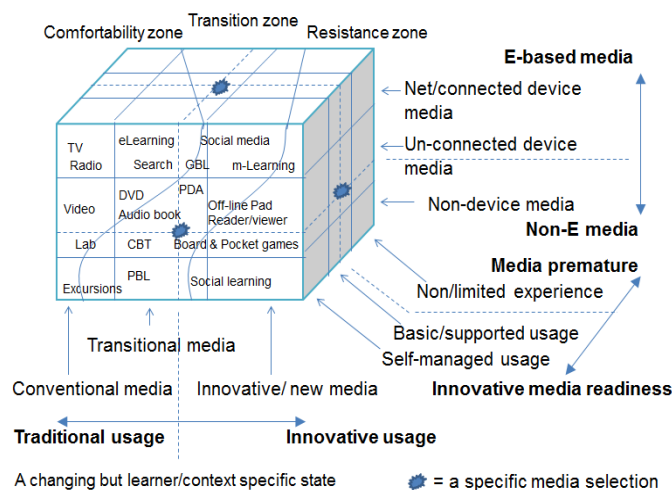
Ensuring quality in online learning services (QUALITY)

For most cases of online learning service design there is an instructional design model applied. In a given design effort that model is either independent or more or less dependent on the learning service platform that is being used. In our case we found it was essential to utilise a model that both focused on the desired learning outcomes, or the performances that the learner should be able to demonstrate or practice at the end of a module or service, and that the design and delivery processes are capable to cater both for engagement of end-users/learners and stakeholders in the process, from start to end.

The usage of the above learning service design model and the VCP-based application development engines enabled us in the pilot to cater for both aspects.
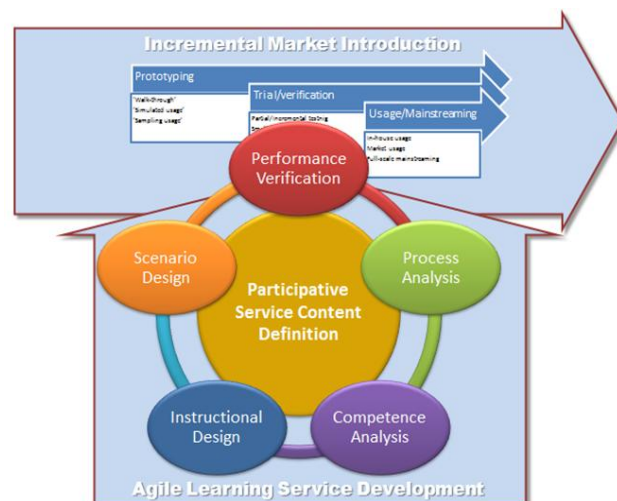
Ensuring individual language capabilities in CLIL-included learning

In informal online learning, particularly those provided in a lifelong learning (LLL) context, there is often a substantially larger heterogeneity in both the subject-centred entry skills and perhaps even more in the second and/or third level languages addressed by the CLIL component in such informal online learning services. The demand for both an extensive flexibility and a high level of personalisation of respective learner's learning journey is therefore essential for CLIL learning success.

Different tools can be applied for both assessment and adjustments of the content and learning processes, learning modalities and learning paths. Online learning often have an advantage in this respect as a wider range of (Internet-based) tools are available, and that it is more easy to accommodate for large-group personalisation.

We also found that the language handling could be made more user-managed, and handled as online self-assessments using 'measurement scales' such as ALTE CanDo statements and the CEFR levels, both for entry and exit assessments as well as to review progress and setting of ambition levels among the learners. Tools like ELPs such as those developed by the EU/ProfELP project (http://ProfELP.EUproject.org) were tested in connection with our pilot and were found to have a large potentiality.

Evaluation of informal learning services

A common dilemma with evaluations of informal learning is that those easily slip into a formal modality. This applies to both the subject matter assessment/evaluation as well as to evaluations of e.g. entry levels and learning outcomes of CLIL components. Evaluations may also have different purposes than in formal learning (e.g. segregate learners, and verify gained competencies) while informal learning may have more motivational and engagement-generating purposes. This may also imply that the evaluation processes and its focus are placed on accommodating different aspects, such as the earlier mentioned 'market', 'quality' and 'usage' concerns, for the overall learning service evaluations as well as for evaluating the CLIL-included components.

The 'market dimension' which is often a key concern for stakeholders and for potential sustainability of the developed/provided learning services, and focuses mainly on the service orientation and the contextual relevance of learning services.
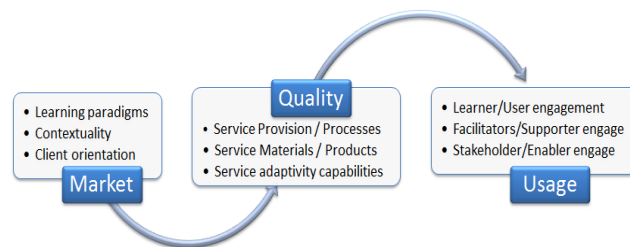
The 'quality dimension', often a core' evaluation dimension, focuses typically on the products and services used, and on adaptivity of those towards contextual demands, while the 'usage dimension' focuses on extent of user and stakeholder engagement in design, delivery, on quality concerns and transferability/sustainability of services.

Proposed multi-focused Evaluation Framework

The proposed evaluation framework, also applied both in and for the piloted AECLIL module, takes a multi-focus perspective on learning, with prime and secondary attention to different aspect of each evaluation focus. The model includes eight focus areas, with the two first referring to the 'market' dimension, the middle four to the 'quality dimension' and the two last referring to the 'usage dimension'.
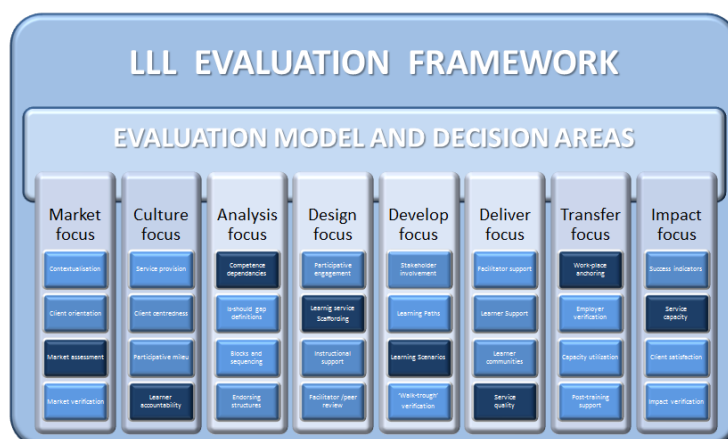

This evaluation framework was found to be also suitable for CLIL component evaluation.

II – Piloting of a CLIL-included informal learning

The Swedish pilot of CLIL-inclusion focused on the application of CLIL in informal learning, and more specifically on informal online learning services, and the concepts and practices of evaluation for such types of online learning services.

Piloted Module on Evaluation

The online learning module was designed and implemented in line with the concepts, models, processes and guidelines that have been introduced in earlier parts of this article. Both during design and provision of this module was the VCP-based application development engines used within the AECLIL VCP community environment. The pilot module is intended to be further expanded and become more widely used as a post-project service.
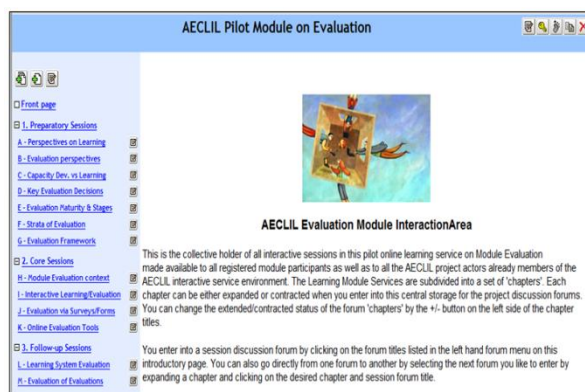
Rationale for selection of the module subject

More and more teachers are being increasingly engaging in design and delivery of online learning services, and they are also beginning to explore the potentiality of providing CLIL-included components into different forms of e-learning services. The ambition with this pilot was to try out such CLIL-inclusion in online informal learning.

CLIL inclusion into the learning processes

In the piloted learning sessions a dual language was introduced; a native (Swedish) language and English language. Presentation materials and online services were provided in English and with Google Translate as an option, while the presentations and dialogues were verbally run either in the native language or partially in English.

List of included learning session in the piloted module

The piloted learning service module included in total 14 online learning sessions. Eight of these were optional, conceptual and preparatory in nature. Four sessions were considered to be 'core', and contained practical learning activities, and the two last sessions, also optional, focused on evaluation of this module and its sessions.

Optional sessions, used by some learners	Recommended sessions, used by most learners

0 Introduction to online service platform
A Perspectives on formal / informal learning
B Evaluation perspectives
C Learning as capacity development
D Key evaluation decisions
E Evaluation maturity stages
F Evaluation strata
G Evaluation frameworks
	Core sessions:
	  H Module evaluation context
	  I Interactive learning and evaluation
	  J Evaluation using survey forms
	  K Online evaluation form-generating tools
	Evaluative follow-up sessions:
	  L Learning service evaluations
	  M Evaluation of evaluations

Learning support materials used during the pilot

Each session included the following support materials;

|	
# Session Introduction Sheet	# Illustrative Presentation Slides
# Self-study materials / WebQuests	# Interactive Online Forums
# Session Evaluation Questions	# Capability to interact with other learners

All learning materials were provided in English, with an option to use Google Translate.

Evaluation of the Swedish AECLIL partner pilot

The prime attention during the evaluative stages of the AECLIL pilot was on determining how and the way in which the CLIL-included design components were influencing the overall learning effectiveness and what design improvement indicators could be derived from our own learning/ experiences of piloting the Module.

Pilot evaluation approach

Three clusters of evaluative concerns were attended to (1) the pedagogic design of the online learning services, (2) the learning support services being part of the piloted module, and (3) the interactive communication channels and tools used during the module implementation. For each of those three areas of concern there were a number of evaluative measures taken, and a number of potential design improvements were derived from the pilot. The latter were clustered into a format proposed in UNSW guides on learning design. (http://www.guidelinesonlearning.unsw.edu.au)
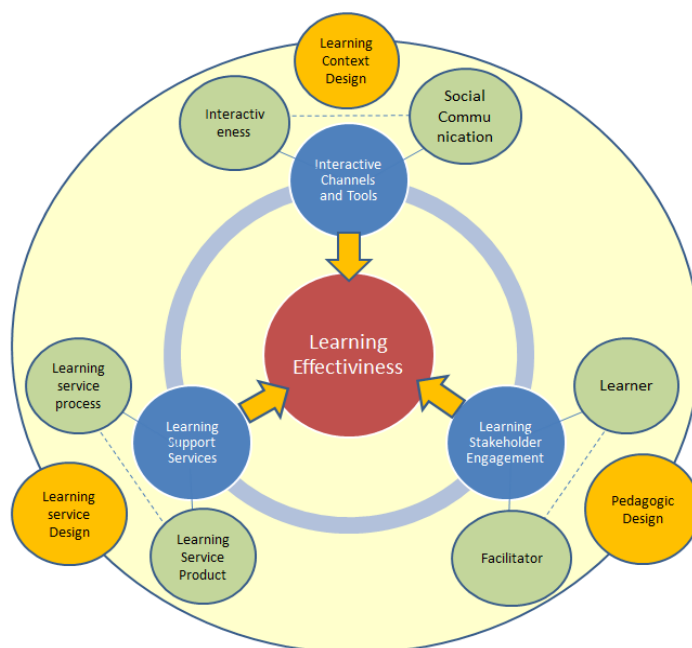
III - Summary and conclusions

This third and final part of the article will summarize the experiences gained from the AECLIL pilot, and outline the intended follow-ups/continuation of piloted CLIL efforts.

Experiences from the piloted AECLIL Module on Evaluation

Informal learning, and especially if provided as a lifelong learning ambition rather than as formal education modality, imposes new and excited challenges for online learning designers. If we also are adding methodological value-added components into the overall learning service design, such as CLIL-inclusion, the consequences and implications escalate further. This article was through its selected illustrations of potential solutions, design considerations and implementation approaches aimed at highlighting some of these challenges and possible ways on how to address those.

The learning service design and pilot implementation of the module on evaluation gave us as service providers both encouragement to take the developments and the CLIL applications further also under a post-project implementation context. The learning services developed and tested in connection with the pilot will therefore continue to be used and improved in line with the findings from evaluation of the pilot.

Expected continuation / follow-up of the AECLIL project

We have in particular become encouraged to explore further the ways in which learning service design processes can be structured to better and in a more integrated manner cater for CLIL-related concerns, such as the often high level of heterogeneity of language capabilities among informal/LLL-learners in online learning. In addition we will also cater for an ambition to establish a 'design-once' approach for learning services being provided with a multi-modality.

This among other for the purpose of being more conveniently able to re-contextualise a learning service, as well as to improve its sustainability.

Another area for further developments that we are planning to embark upon is to explore the possibility to make CLIL-inclusion in scenario-based learning and 'serious games'. The latter is envisage to make use of same VCP-based Learning Scenario development tool as was used for design of the modular structure for our CLIL pilot.

The online learning service module, as it was initially piloted, is available from the AECLIL VCP platform from the following web-link; http://AECLIL.EUproject.org Further refinements will also be provided from the EUproject.org after the project.

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