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## **INNOVATIVE APPROACHES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING: POWERFUL CONNECTION OF DBP AND CLIL**

### ***Abstract***

*Learning is a constant process, hence striving for new knowledge and new skills should be amongst the highest priorities in people's professional and personal lives. To speak, at least, one of the foreign languages has, nowadays, become one of those essential skills for every person striving for their improvement. Being aware of the constant growth and urgent need for new language learning methods, language teachers need to be able to improve and implement them in their teaching. This paper aims to introduce two innovative approaches that have recently been getting significant attention based on their effectiveness.*

*Drama Based Pedagogy (DBP) and Content and Language Learning (CLIL) are two approaches to learning whose main aim is to increase the quality of the very teaching-learning process where the central focus is on a student. How to effectively engage students in learning while raising their motivation, and developing learner autonomy is what these approaches strive to achieve. This paper aims to present both approaches in terms of the advantages, structure, and techniques they use. Based on this overview, the very shared characteristics these approaches have will be presented. The final part of this paper presents a practical example of the lesson plan adjusted by implementing the powerful connection of DBP and CLIL.*

**Keywords:** *drama, content, language learning, innovative approach*

## Introduction

Learning new languages is one of the priorities and the need for it is growing due to the recent language policy of the EU, which requires the knowledge of more foreign languages to protect the linguistic diversity of Europe and promote language learning. Therefore, many teaching approaches have been adapted to this need to improve the quality of teaching, students' abilities, and learning motivation. Nowadays, using traditional ways of teaching foreign languages, it is challenging for teachers to keep their students motivated enough to learn and to make them able to acquire new knowledge easily. In addition, successful teachers will change their approach and methods to create a stimulating setting and relaxed atmosphere for learning. Furthermore, the teaching materials, as well as situations or environments need to be made authentic as much as possible. Two approaches that enable these two factors are Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Drama Based Pedagogy (DBP). Both of the approaches are innovative and evolve from their predecessors, i.e., for CLIL they were French immersion programs and content-based approaches (Adrian, 2015), while DBP has used drama in the classroom since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and under many names such as drama in education, theatre in education, applied drama, applied theatre, educational drama, dramatic inquiry, role-play, creative drama, improvisation, and Theatre of the Oppressed techniques (Dawson & Lee, 2018). The very term "innovative approach" tells us that they are still in the process of entering the classrooms with a lot more research and (pilot)projects needed to be done. This paper aims to briefly present the two approaches and provide key features that they have in common. According to the recently published work of researchers, the paper will provide an overview of the possible connection between CLIL and DBP, and their shared characteristics to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process and raise awareness of how important it is to connect language, content, movement, and art into one teaching unit.

## Content and Language Integrated Learning

One definition of Content and Language Integrated Learning is the one given by David Marsh, who says that CLIL is “*a generic umbrella term which would encompass any activity in which a foreign language is used as a tool in the learning of a non-language subject in which both language and the subject have a joint curricular role* “ (Marsh, CLIL-The European Dimension, 2002). From this definition, it is obvious that both language and content are equally important to acquire. This dual focus is what makes it appealing to fulfill the aims of the European Union towards teaching and learning different languages. Furthermore, the European Commission states that CLIL “*has a major contribution to make to the Union’s language learning goals*” (European Commission, 2004).

Amongst many benefits of this approach which were discussed by several authors (Marsh, 2008; Grabe, Stoller, & L., 1997; Marsh, Mehisto, Wolff, & Martín, 2011; Montalto, Walter, Theodorou, & Chrysanthou, 2016) the following are believed to be the most valuable for learners:

- natural use of language,
- authentic contexts, materials, and situations that disable learning in individual fragments,
- active learning,
- collaboration,
- development of cognitive skills,
- raising intrinsic motivation,
- focus on the learner who has more power in topic choice and activities,
- development of intercultural communication skills, knowledge and understanding,
- development of multilingual interests and
- attitudes.

According to David Marsh et al (2001), one of the experts in the field of CLIL, the process of planning and implementing this approach implies the five dimensions that must be taken into account, and these are:

- The Culture Dimension – CULTIX
- The Environment Dimension – ENTIX
- The Language Dimension – LANTIX
- The Content Dimension – CONTIX
- The Learning Dimension – LEARNTIX

Besides the dimensions mentioned above, there is the concept of 5Cs listed in the CLIL Guidebook, published within the *Lifelong Learning Program* by the European Union (2016), which consists of:

1. Content
2. Communication
3. Competences
4. Community
5. Cognition

The dimension of culture builds intercultural understanding, knowledge, and communication skills which can relate to the component of community in the 5Cs concept. Through this component, the CLIL teacher is aware of the importance of connecting students' environment with the lesson where students get the knowledge not just from the content of the lesson but rather from a real-life experience. The dimensions of language and content give CLIL a dual focus emphasizing the equal importance of both. The learning dimension is the one that contributes to the improvement of individual learning strategies while exposing students to various teaching methods and forms increases their motivation for learning.

Being aware of the learners' Zone of Proximal Development, teachers must ensure needed help by using effective strategies that will help learners easily acquire knowledge and encourage their learning. The term which is used for these strategies in CLIL is scaffolding which implies techniques for verbal scaffolding (ways and methods to make the teacher's input comprehensible for the students), content scaffolding (techniques to assist and support students' understanding of the content), and learning process scaffolding (techniques which

assist CLIL teachers in supporting students' working process as well as their learning process) (Ioannou-Georgiou & Pavlou, 2011).

Based on the same principle, the following chapter will briefly present the DBP approach, i.e., the definition, the positive outcomes, main concepts, strategies, and techniques.

### **Drama Based Pedagogy (DBP)**

Another innovative approach in the teaching-learning process is using drama to teach content of various subjects. Its presence has been recorded in the classrooms long since teachers started using some forms of dramatic art in their lessons, such as role-plays or acting out scenes from famous plays, books, etc. It has been used to put students into the imaginative world of the wanted setting where they can freely express their thoughts, use authentic language, and immerse themselves in different experiences. As stated by Marjanovic-Shane (2016, p. 48), Drama in Education (the term she uses to call this approach) is “to what in reality are diverse educational practices”. Furthermore, she lists these practices and authors who use them: “process drama, the mantle of expert or role-play, playworlds, improvisation-based education, and performative psychology. The term which is used in this paper is Drama Based Pedagogy (DBP) which is used by Kathryn Dawson, author of the book *Drama-based Pedagogy: Activating Learning Across the Curriculum*, an associate professor and internationally recognized consultant in creative learning and teaching artist practice. According to her definition, “*Drama-Based Pedagogy (DBP) uses active and dramatic approaches to engage students in academic, affective and aesthetic learning through dialogic meaning-making in all areas of the curriculum*” (2018, p. 17).

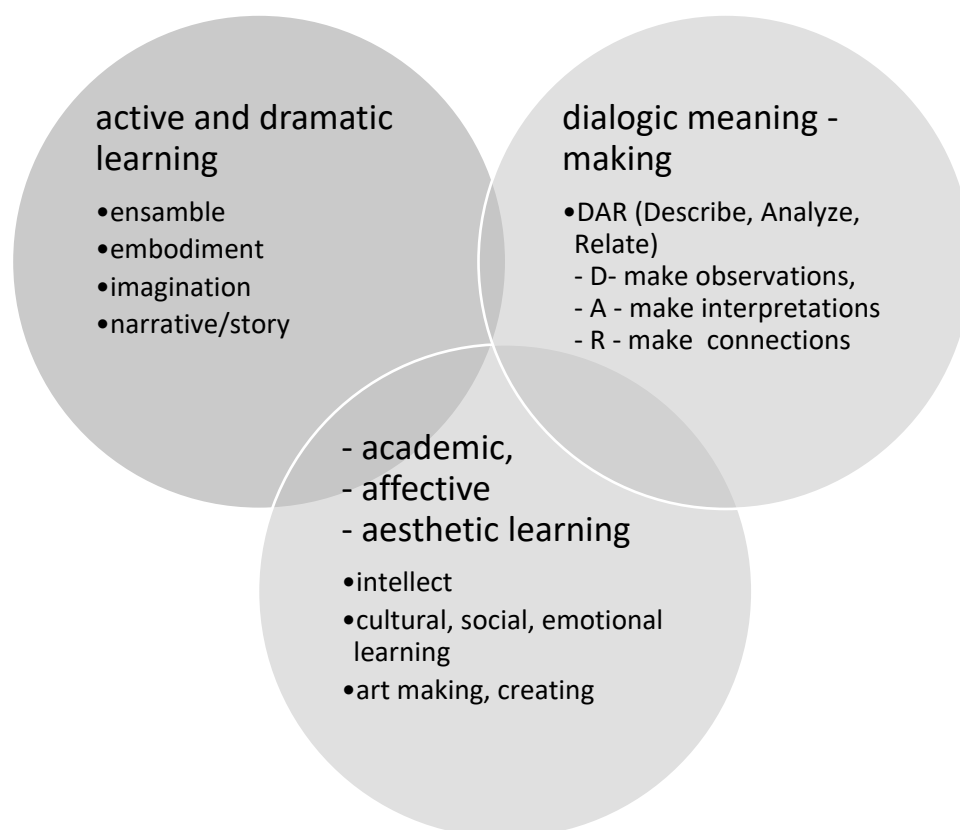
According to the research by different authors (Andersen, 2004; Ashton-Hay, 2005; Ranzau & Horowitz, 2017) the following benefits can be easily recognized in the DBP approach:

- development of cognitive skills,
- learning within the “essential elements of authentic contexts” (Andersen, 2004, p.284),
- acquiring implicit knowledge,
- raising motivation,
- engaging in reflective and active learning,
- enhancing oral skills development,
- engaging all learning styles,
- includes constructivist learning.

In his research, Chris Boudreault (2020, p. 48), according to Charlyn Wessels, summarizes DBP benefits in the context of language learning, as follows:

- the acquisition of meaningful, fluent interaction in the target language,
- the assimilation of a whole range of pronunciation and prosodic features in a fully contextualized and interactional manner,
- the fully contextualized acquisition of new vocabulary and structure,
- an improved sense of confidence in the student in his or her ability to learn the target language.

According to Dawson (2018), the basic concept of the DBP approach consists of its very definition. The following chart will present the main parts of the approach.



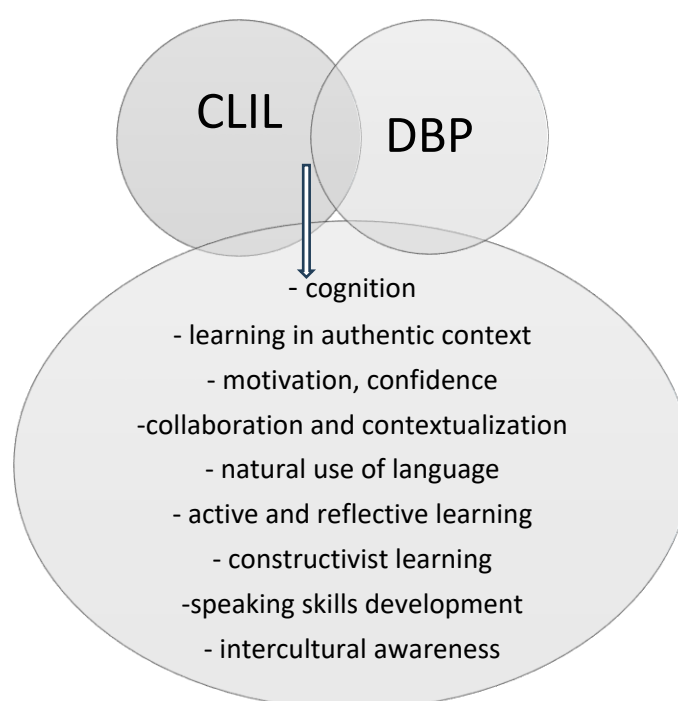
### *1. Components of the DBP approach (Dawson & Lee, 2018)*

The same author groups strategies used in DBP into three larger categories: Activating Dialogue, Theatre Game as Metaphor, Image Work, and Role Work (Dawson & Lee, 2018). Here, the role work is in the highest place of a pyramid because the first three categories can be incorporated into the more complex setting of a role play. First students need to grasp the importance of building a dialogue, and then be aware of the drama and image work that

eventually will be shown in the role-play category (Dawson & Lee, 2018). Regarding language teaching, these strategies present a perfect way to create a stimulating environment for students to perform different tasks and effectively learn the content of their subject/lesson. Besides role play, Bessadet (2022) includes simulation, mime, improvisation, frozen image building, and scripted play as drama strategies in the language classroom.

### **CLIL & DBP - Shared characteristics**

Having an insight into the two approaches, their definitions, concepts, strategies, and techniques, it is seen how huge potential these two approaches have once they are integrated into the classroom. Knowing all the benefits CLIL has for students, the implementation of DBP would be a trigger for the successful and effective transfer of knowledge. Once the benefits written in this paper are compared, the following chart is presented:

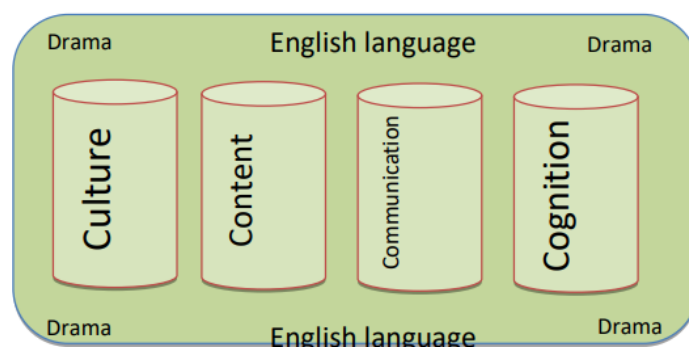


### *2. Shared features of CLIL and DBP*

One of the main components of DBP, collaboration, is listed here as a CLIL benefit which makes the connection of these two approaches stronger. Furthermore, both of them provide fully contextualized acquisition of new vocabulary and structure which gives them the common benefit of natural use of language and a great opportunity to acquire foreign language more easily and effectively. In addition to this, they present a motivating factor for learners who are the focus of the learning process of both approaches. For instance, when content is found not as exciting by students, teachers will include drama into their lesson and in that way, bring its active, dramatic, and affective component which easily improves students' motivation to

participate and learn. Furthermore, according to Aladini (2020, p. 58), there are more of these mutual characteristics they share: – context and problem-focused approach, increasing analytical/critical/interpretive skills, encouraging creativity and increasing learner motivation through greater learner autonomy, cross-curricular nature, expansion of linguistic functions, and the significance of comprehensible output.

The same author further states that CLIL components are fully encompassed in Drama which he shows in his Framework:



3. *Drama and CLIL Framework* (Aladini A. A., 2020)

In terms of Dawson’s main components of DBP, this framework can also be used to explain the mutual structure these two holistic approaches share. Dawson’s active and dramatic approach partially corresponds to CLIL 5Cs’ Communication which aims to minimize the frontal form of teaching and put the focus on the relationship between learners, and their team work while learning and researching together. This makes them actively participate in the class. On the other hand, an active and dramatic approach implies the full integration of learners working as an ensemble including imagination, embodiment, and narrative/story (Dawson & Lee, 2018). Academic, affective, and aesthetic learning can correspond to Content, Cognition, and Culture since this DBP’s component encompasses intellect (academic curriculum), cultural, social, and emotional learning, art-making, meaning-making, and creating (Dawson & Lee, 2018). The last Dawson’s component is dialogue-meaning making which perfectly corresponds to Communication, especially in terms of the DAR (Describe - Analyze - Relate) strategy where learners make observations, interpretations, and connections. The focus is again on learners and improving their skills and competencies, while at the same time addressing their emotional, social, ethical, and academic needs which makes both approaches holistic. According to Bessadet (2022, p. 528), “drama is a specific action to make the learning process more active, exciting, communicative, and contextual”, while “drama techniques refer to all



those strategies that accompany a dramatic discourse to help a better understanding and a better performance of a text.” According to Dawson (Dawson & Lee, 2018), role play is one of those strategies that comprises other important ones such as activating dialogue, image work, and theater games as a metaphor. In addition to this, CLIL is said to open new methods for drama implementation where role-play is stated as one of them along with simulations, drama activities, educational drama, etc. (Aladini & Jalambo, 2021, p. 37). One of the examples that can be incorporated easily and effectively in both approaches is *The Mantle of the Expert* strategy (Aitken, 2013). It was first introduced by Dorothy Heathcote, a drama educator who highly contributed to the field of drama education. By using this strategy, students are given roles of experts with knowledge, skill, experience, and authority. They choose different names or identities but often their opinions and interpretations remain close to their belief system (Dawson & Lee, 2018, p. 256). This strategy can be used for teaching various topics so it can be adjusted to different subject contents. In addition to this, it is more than suitable to be integrated into a CLIL lesson. Here, the role of a teacher is crucial since (s)he is the one who has to lead the activity being aware of all the modalities within it (inquiry learning; drama for learning; and “expert framing”, which involves children being positioned as adult experts (Aitken, 2013)). This role of a teacher is important in both aspects – teacher in and outside role, where Teacher in Role helps students to easily step into their roles, “introduce information or facilitate students’ meaning-making and interaction” (Dawson & Lee, 2018, p. 344). In the CLIL approach, the teacher’s role plays a crucial part in the scaffolding process which is used to help learners within their ZPD. In both DBP and CLIL, the teacher’s role is still visible and needed. The mutual relationship between scaffolding, i.e., the teacher’s role in CLIL and DBP is visible in the following citation:

*“By structuring the nature of the frame and roles, the teacher allows learners to make a valued (i.e., legitimate) contribution at their level (i.e., peripheral). It is not enough simply to frame learners as scientists in an as-if laboratory; the frame must provide enough cognitive structure and support to permit learners to engage in meaningful roles.”* (Andersen, 2004, p. 284)

According to Dawson (2018, p. 25), scaffolding within ZPD in drama lessons is best ensured by using DAR strategy since it “supports critical thinking and reflection”; however it is still the teacher who, through DAR pays attention to “how each question they offer scaffolds, or builds upon, prior ideas to support individual and collective meaning-making and understanding”.

In the DBP approach, it is drama used for teaching different content, whereas in CLIL, it is the language that is used as a tool to teach also, content. On the other hand, drama uses language to develop “the story and dramatic process” (Aladini A. A., 2020, p. 58). Integrating drama, language, and content in the teaching-learning process while at the same time giving them the same importance is motivating, more exciting for learners, efficient, and provides a relaxed and authentic setting for language and content teaching and learning. Susan Hillyard (2010, p. 5) explains the connection between these two approaches: “The five “tixes”<sup>1</sup> of CLIL overlap, intertwine, and weave their way through the minds, the souls, and the bodies of the students in the charge of teachers worldwide.”

### **Suggested example of a dramatized CLIL lesson**

This chapter intends to present an adjusted version of one already-made CLIL lesson into a unit that will contain both CLIL and DBP elements. It is a history lesson and in one of her studies, the author Elena del Pozo (2016) investigated whether using CLIL with drama and music can be more effective for teaching history when compared to standard textbook-based methodology. The study suggested that for some topics teaching history using CLIL, drama, and music, students achieved better results. She stated that “students find it fun and easy to step on the shoes of historical characters that for them are no longer ‘strange aliens but people like them with whom we share a common humanity’” (Pozo, 2016, p. 129).

The lesson is taken from the website *Onestopenglish*, a teacher resource site, part of Macmillan Education, one of the world’s leading publishers of English language teaching materials<sup>2</sup>. Since there is a lack of CLIL teaching materials in terms of students’ books and workbooks, this website provides a huge help to teachers who need ready-made materials to teach in their CLIL classes. One of the lessons chosen for this paper is a history lesson on Ancient Greece: The Rise and Fall of Athens by Cristoph Suter<sup>3</sup>.

According to the author, the main aims of this CLIL lesson are to understand the institutional system of ancient Athenian democracy, to learn some technical terms of ancient Athenian institutions, and to compare ancient Athenian institutions with institutions in one’s own country. The focus is on reading, writing, and speaking skills. The description of a historical place and events using Simple past tense, and Simple past passive is the language focus of the

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<sup>1</sup> 5Cs or ENTIX (environment), CONTIX (content) LANTIX (the English language dimension) LEARNTIX (“Learning to Learn”, or learner training) CULTIX (culture and intercultural communication and understanding)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.onestopenglish.com/> last accessed 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.onestopenglish.com/download?ac=4675> last accessed 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2023.

lesson, while the content focus is to introduce Pericles and present some key aspects and terminology of ancient Athenian democracy. The estimated time for the lesson is 30 minutes for four tasks:

1. reading the text and vocabulary activity
2. filling in the missing parts in the mind map
3. writing full sentences according to the mind map
4. completing the sentences to describe the organization of the student's country.

The following activities are proposed to integrate the components of both approaches and to provide students an opportunity to feel and experience the text in the “*as-if*” world of the DBP approach.

After reading the text carefully, students do the first task already given in the CLIL lesson – matching the unknown words. For better acquisition, teachers can include physical movement and acting out in this type of activity by different ways of checking the students' answers.

**1. Act Out the Unknown Vocabulary** - student chooses a word and acts out its meaning, e.g., aristocrat – stands up and steps into the role of being an aristocrat – changes behavior, language, tone of speaking, etc. Other students guess the word and together with their teacher check the meaning.

After completing the first task, students continue working on completing the mind map which will help them to fully understand the text and make a smooth transition to the following activity.

**2. A Citizen in Athenian Democracy** – three groups of students are formed: *the Ekklesia*, *the Boule*, and *the Heliaea*. Given some time to read and learn more about their institution, students will come up with an issue they would like to discuss and decide about within their institution. Once finished with the task of preparation, students dramatize their meeting and if necessary/possible, include other groups in the final decision.

**3. Discussion** - After completing the previous task, students reflect on the discussion and include their own country to list the institutions that oversee the same issues they discussed. By having these activities, students will be able to engage themselves in the discussion by previously having to learn about the institutions, explore and describe their issues, and make decisions. In the end, they will reflect on what they have learned. This is the engage–explore–reflect process which is used by Dawson (2018) to plan a DBP lesson where students often relate the activities in the classroom with their everyday surroundings.

Activity	CLIL	DBP
1.	Content ✓ Communication ✓ Cognition ✓	Activating dialogue Dramatization Imagination Embodiment
2.	Content ✓ Communication ✓ Cognition ✓ Competences ✓	ensemble embodiment imagination narrative/story academic and aesthetic learning dialogue meaning-making
3.	Content ✓ Communication ✓ Cognition ✓ Competences ✓ Community ✓	Active and academic learning, DAR Dialogue meaning-making.

## Conclusion

These two holistic approaches, CLIL and DBP, put the focus on the student and what needs to be a primary aim of each teacher. Nowadays, when the teaching-learning process has gradually been moving away from the traditional frontal form and closed learning environment to more open, dynamic, and learner-centered teaching, new approaches that will ensure this way of teaching have to be considered and tested. CLIL offers students new ways of learning, motivating and problem-solving activities, and authentic materials to learn from while at the same time learning a foreign language. To avoid static learning in which students might find themselves while learning content, teachers must put in additional effort to avoid this. The best and most effective way is to combine CLIL with DBP elements. This approach easily turns static learning environments into dynamic ones offering students interesting, motivating, and

challenging strategies to indulge themselves in the learning experience. Once they are actively involved in challenging and stimulating activities, their cognitive academic language proficiency improves. In addition to this, CLIL and drama share a strong connection in keeping the students actively involved, motivated, and interested in learning and participating in the class. In both approaches, they are responsible for making choices what makes them directly involved in the very lesson; their creativity is increased as well as their analytical and interpretive skills. Students are easily exposed to a powerful learning environment, cooperation, and social and cultural understanding where their knowledge, skills, and competencies gradually improve towards the real-life experience. Once they grasp the true meaning of the very content but also, of all the outcomes of their learning, they will successfully implement them into their future careers. One of the recommendations for further research would be to provide more detailed insight into both approaches which might eventually, lead to a practical handbook of teaching activities containing both segments of CLIL and DBP that, at the same time, would be able to be adjusted to any level and content.

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## **INOVATIVNI PRISTUPI U UČENJU JEZIKA: MOĆNA VEZA DBP-a I CLIL-a**

### ***Sažetak***

*Učenje predstavlja kontinuiran proces te bi stoga težnja ka znanjem i novim vještinama trebala biti visoko postavljena u profesionalnom i ličnom životu ljudi. Govoriti najmanje jedan strani jezik je u današnje vrijeme postala neophodna vještina za svaku osobu koja teži ka vlastitom napretku. Svjesni konstantnog razvoja i potrebe za novim metodama učenja jezika, profesori/nastavnici jezika moraju biti spremni na usavršavanje starih ili uvođenje novih metoda i tehnika. Cilj ovog rada je upravo predstaviti dva relativno nova, inovativna pristupa podučavanju jezika koja dobijaju sve veću pažnju obzirom na njihovu učinkovitost. Dramska pedagogija (DBP – eng. Drama Based Pedagogy) i integrisano učenje jezika i sadržaja (CLIL – eng. Content and Language Integrated Learning) su dva pristupa podučavanju jezika koji za glavni cilj imaju povećanje kvalitete nastavnog procesa koji je fokusiran na učenika. Ova dva pristupa žele da ponude rješenja i odgovore na pitanje kako učinkovito animirati učenika za učenje, pritom mu razvijajući motivaciju i samostalnost. Struktura, prednosti i tehnike koje ovi pristupi koriste biće predstavljeni u ovom radu te na osnovu tog uvida ponudit ćemo zajedničke karakteristike koje oba pristupa dijele. Uzevši u obzir sve navedeno, u zadnjem dijelu rada predstavljen je prijedlog prilagodbe jedne nastavne pripreme vodeći se zajedničkim odlikama DBP i CLILa.*

***Ključne riječi:*** drama, sadržaj, učenje jezika, inovativni pristupi

## ANCIENT HISTORY

Ancient Greece  
Christoph Suter

## HISTORY

## 1 The rise and fall of Athens

## Reading, Vocabulary

Read the text and match the words in the box below with their meanings.

**The organization and institutions of Athens**

Around the year 450 BC, Athens was one of the most powerful cities in Greece with a population of more than 300,000 people. For centuries, the city had been ruled by the Athenian aristocracy. But Pericles, one of the aristocrats who led the city from the year 462 BC, wanted every free citizen to be able to participate. A new form of government was created: democracy.

The most important institution of Athenian democracy was the *Ekklesia*, an assembly of Athenian citizens, which met three or four times a month. Every male citizen over 18 was allowed to participate, and it was not unusual for five to six thousand men to attend. Political and legal issues were discussed and decided, and everyone could get up to speak and vote. The *Ekklesia* also elected magistrates, who were responsible for applying the

laws, and *Strategoi*, or military generals, who led the army.

The *Boule* was a council of citizens which prepared the political and legal issues for the *Ekklesia* and was responsible for day to day affairs. Five hundred citizens were selected by lot to serve on the *Boule* for one year.

In addition, there was the *Heliæa*, a court of law with judges, elected by the *Ekklesia*. In important law cases, up to 1501 citizen judges would participate in decisions. All posts were limited to one year in order to make sure that no citizen gained too much power over the city. However, if one citizen seemed to become too powerful, he was sent into exile and banned from Athens for ten years.

Pericles died from the plague in 429 BC. At this time, Athens was already fighting a war with Sparta, which was to last for 25 more years. Athens lost the war and its wealth, and Athenian democracy was abolished.

abolish	aristocracy	aristocrat	citizen
democracy	magistrate	plague	select by lot

- 1 a disease that spreads quickly, causing a high fever, and in the past usually death
- 2 a system of government in which everyone can vote and share in making decisions
- 3 a member of the aristocracy

plague

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



- 4 a judge in a court for minor crimes \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 someone who lives in a particular town or city \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 the people in the highest class of society, who usually have money, land and power, and who often have special titles, such as 'duke' or 'countess' \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 to choose from a group without any particular method \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 to officially get rid of a law, system, practice, etc \_\_\_\_\_

## 2 Democracy in Athens

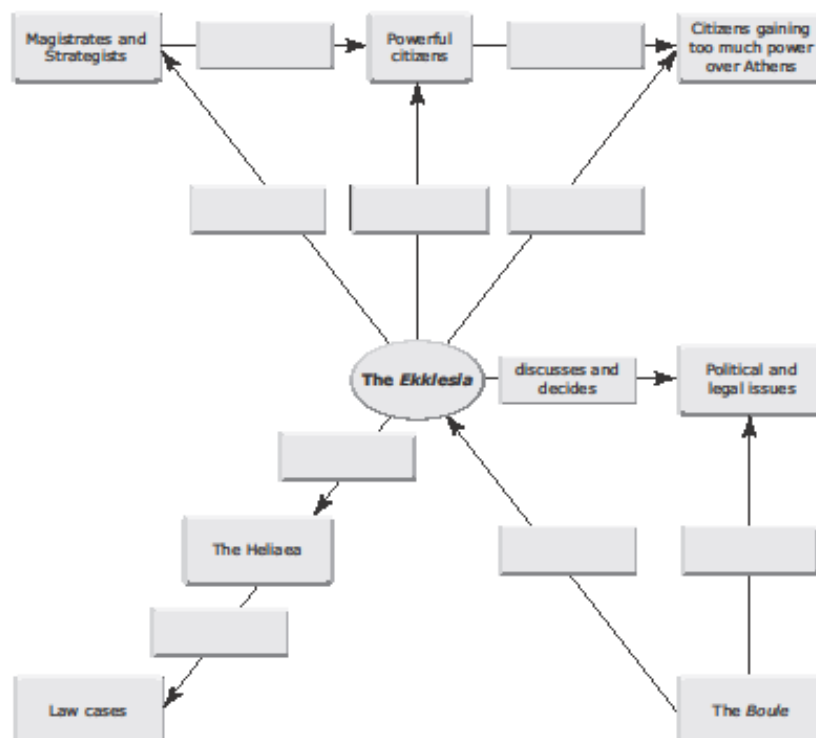
## Vocabulary, Speaking

1 Complete the mind map with the correct words and phrases from the list.

bans  
elects  
judges  
controls

can become  
elects  
may be seen as

discusses and decides  
is selected by lots from  
prepares



**2 Work in pairs and write correct statements about the institutions of Athenian Democracy using the information in the mind map.**

Example: *The Ekklesia discusses and decides political and legal issues.*

**3 Work with a partner and discuss the information in the mind map.**

**Student A:** cover your mind map and listen to Student B's statements. Decide if they are true or false. Correct the false statements.

**Student B:** read out true or false statements from the mind map. Ask Student A to correct the false statements.

**4 Complete the sentences with the appropriate term to describe the organisation of your country.**

1 In my country, \_\_\_\_\_ discusses and decides political and legal issues.

2 Citizens elect \_\_\_\_\_.

3 Minor legal cases are judged by \_\_\_\_\_.

4 Major legal cases are judged by \_\_\_\_\_.