

‘AI for CLIL: Lesson Plans, Resources and Assessment Tools’, Europass Teacher Academy, Dublin, Ireland, Summer 2024

In the Early Middle Ages, when much of classical learning had disappeared together with the Western Roman Empire, it was way out in the Atlantic, in newly Christianised Ireland, that monastic communities preserved ancient learning, both pagan and Christian, faithfully copying and recopying parchments, illuminating the gospels and praying for their own illumination. They then would spread their learning all across Western and Central Europe as missionaries. Today, in a very different age, one that has moved from writing on parchments to writing code, Ireland is once again a ‘media hub’ and at the forefront of a change in creating, processing and spreading media technology.



Ireland – a centre of learning in the Early Middle Ages as well as in 2024! (Source: Kulok)

In August 2024, I was privileged to be able to attend a course at the Dublin branch of the Europass Teacher Academy. The course was on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and AI, focusing on how CLIL can profit from what is a major game-changing technological development that is quickly altering how students engage with media and how they learn. Drawing on local digital expertise, the course participants were introduced to a wide range of tools for text generation, text analysis and text translation, for image and audio creation and also for writing code. The aim was always twofold, teaching us participating teachers and teacher trainers to get to know the new technologies and critically assess them, but also introducing us to how these might prove fruitful for teaching and learning – especially in the field of language teaching and CLIL.

This practical approach was definitely very beneficial, but I feel that perhaps the most important take-away of the course for me was that they taught us that through AI there is a paradigm shift in learning and as the digital tools keep rapidly transforming the teaching and studying practice in class, it is first and foremost our mindset that must change. We now live in a time of ever shifting technological borders, often even with such borders disappearing altogether. How the mindset should change can, at this stage, only be tentatively formulated: Learning is perhaps getting ever less deductive and far more inductive and constructivist, but, at the same time, learners should be ever more critical of the quality of the building blocks used in knowledge construction. It is work in (fast) progress. So, my trip to Dublin has presumably just been the beginning of a long journey into a vast new territory and has taught me that there is much more to learn. In that respect, the day-trip to Glendalough Monastery as part of the culture programme of the course provided inspiration in that we learned that, from there in the green Wicklow Mountains, early medieval missionaries would leave for unknown lands to teach and, in so doing, finding illumination themselves – often even successfully.

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