



Coste D., Cavalli M. (2015)

Education, mobility, otherness: the mediation functions of school¹

Council of Europe (Language Policy Unit)

Main fields

Nano: Language learning		Micro: Teaching methods		Meso: Piloting schools		Macro: (Inter)systemic approach	
1.1.		2.1.	✓	3.1.	✓	4.1.	✓
2.1.	✓	2.2.	✓	3.2.	✓	4.2.	✓
3.1.	✓	2.3.	✓	3.3.	✓	4.3.	✓
4.1.	✓	2.4.	✓	3.4.	✓	4.4.	✓
5.1.	✓	2.5.	✓	3.5.	✓	4.5.	✓

Key elements

- ⇒ In a **constantly changing environment** (migration, international exchanges, globalization), it seems essential to adopt a dynamic vision of language policies centred on two notions:
 - **the social agent's mobility**, which facilitates integration and movement between social groups (aim);
 - **the actions of mediation** to support and facilitate mobility, to deal with and reduce otherness, to foster integration, etc. (means).

- ⇒ School institutions play an important role as **agencies of mediation** to help everyone to “keep on track”, taking into account that a social agent develops a plurilingual and pluricultural repertoire while participating in many acts of socialization: within **the family, peer groups, immediate social environment** (urban, rural or other), **other communities** (religion, sports), **media** and **social networks**, through **mobility** (geographical, real or virtual). Since the process of cultural and linguistic adaptation needs support, it is important to facilitate mobility, the approach to otherness, and inclusion into “communities” through various forms of mediation.

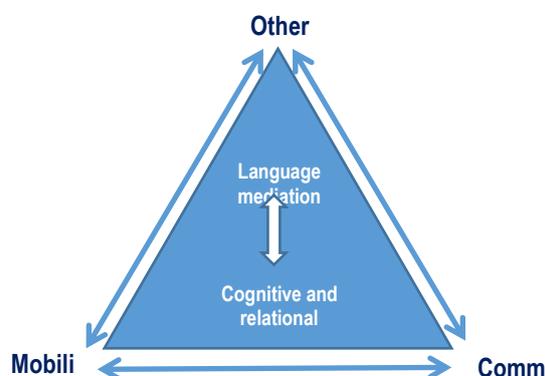
- ⇒ Whatever form it may take, mediation operates in two ways, both of which require language mediation:
 - at the **cognitive level**: mediation aims at facilitating access to information and the development of competences;
 - at the **relational level**: mediation contributes to interaction, the quality of exchanges and the resolution of conflicts.

	Main issues	Responsibilities and tasks of schools
Mobility	Mobility can be physical, geographical, migratory, professional, educational (school orientation etc.), social, virtual or even imaginative .	- building knowledge and developing competences within school subjects; - facilitating access to communities of practice (school subjects); - easing the paths to the labour market, professional orientations and to making personal choices .
Otherness	Otherness means “what is dissimilar” different or new. What is perceived as different may be an individual, a group, a culture, but also an item of knowledge to be acquired, a task to be addressed .	Reducing distance to otherness by: - applying existing knowledge and competences ; - using strategies (inference, transfer, hypothesis formation) to experiment and explore; - questioning, by means of complex, global reflection .

¹ Coste D., Cavalli M. (2015), *Education, mobility, otherness – The mediation functions of schools*, Council of Europe (Language Policy Unit), Strasbourg. <http://rm.coe.int/education-mobility-otherness-the-mediation-functions-of-schools/16807367ee>

Communit	A group can be defined as a social community , to which a social agent can belong and which can be characterized by communities of practice, networks, group relations, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - developing intracultural competences to facilitate actions and interactions within a group; - developing intercultural competences to interact within groups; - developing “altercultural” competences to facilitate contact with new forms of otherness.
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Focusing on: Educational development



The learner's development at **school** can be given considerable support by:

- the **process of mobility** generated by the **mediation actions of schools**
- the **perceptions of otherness** and the training to understand and accept otherness
- cooperative work to **facilitate** the process of mobility and **education** for otherness

Suggestion : helping all stakeholders in education to explain the role of languages in the school life of each learner (see concrete examples in the chart on the next page)

Similar resources

1. Beacco J.-C., Coste D., van de Ven P.-H. and Vollmer H. (2010), *Language and school subjects, Linguistic dimensions of knowledge building in school curricula*, Council of Europe (Language Policy Division).
<https://rm.coe.int/16805a0c1b>
2. Stathopoulou M. (2015), *Cross-language mediation in foreign language teaching and testing*, Multilingual Matters, Series New Perspectives on Language and Education, Toronto.
3. Egli Cuenat M. et al., *Plurilingual and intercultural learning through mobility* (2011), Council of Europe (European Centre for Modern Languages).
<https://plurimobil.ecml.at>

Examples of learning experiences

This chart aims to show the role of languages in development of learners, based on a selection of learning experiences described in the publication.

Mediation levels		BEGINNER ISCED 0 = pre-elementary	ELEMENTARY ISCED 1 = elementary	INDEPENDENT ISCED 2 : lower secondary	EXPERT ISCED 3 : upper secondary
MOBILITY	aims	Towards formal learning	Towards basic knowledge	Diversifying language learning forms	Preparing adulthood
	learning experiences	Experiencing simple forms of oral literacy (short poems, sketches, stories)	Experiencing the development of a personal portfolio (introduction to self-assessment)	Experience of language and cultural visits and/or virtual international exchange programs	Experiences of specialization and/or professionalisation
	NANO	Students learn how to indicate what they don't understand and to draw what they do	Students learn to identify their successes/needs and give feedback within a group	Students learn to prepare and reflect on their experiences and to evaluate their progress	Students learn how to formulate and design a personal project (general, school or professional)
	MICRO	Teachers make key elements of texts comprehensible to students and help them to make their learning processes explicit in their own words (linguistic and cognitive scaffolding)	Teachers moderate collective reflection on success criteria and the development of tools for peer-assessment or self-assessment	Teachers make use of project work to support communication with partners and assessment of progress	Teachers develop activities based on experiences of mobility and meetings with business people, skilled workers etc.
	MESO	Adapting language to reinforce educational cooperation between schools and families	Sharing with parents in simple language a common culture of assessment	Supporting cross-subject approaches and co-operation between teachers and between schools	Developing partnership networks (firms, universities, etc.)
	MACRO	Supporting inclusion through various forms of expression (multilingual display, oral transmission, multimodal experiences etc.)	Shaping assessment to support learner mobility with a view to discovering main subject areas	Supporting the experiential dimension of learning to reinforce formal curricula (e.g. mobility experiences in orientation projects)	Ensuring a balance between the necessary preparations for final examinations and the future educational pathways (tertiary education, professional integration etc.)
OTHERNESS	aims	Discovering a new environment	Gaining access to basic knowledge	Gaining access to plurilingual knowledge	Acquiring knowledge for the future
	learning experiences	First experiences of reflecting on languages and human communication	Experience of school genres (textbooks, presentations) and genres occurring outside of school (media etc.)	Experiencing linguistic mediation activities (summing up, translating, from text to schema)	Experiencing interpretation activities (commenting on a text, interpreting results, analyzing)
	NANO	Learners learn how to use non-verbal strategies and expressions in several languages	Learners learn to explain, report, revise, combine etc.	Learners learn how to summarize information in one language from documents written in another language	Learners learn how to formulate a reasoned opinion, to develop critical thinking, to formulate a well-balanced response
	MICRO	Teachers support contributions in different languages	Teachers paraphrase, contextualize, interpret, discuss with learners	Teachers show learners how to represent information (graphs, charts, tables)	Teachers encourage learners with open questions which allow different responses
	MESO	Sensitizing parents to the importance of family practices which support literacy (stories, rhymes, fairy tales etc.)	Guiding learners towards linguistic and cognitive empowerment through mediation between the school and the family culture	Placing linguistic education at the heart of the school: all stakeholders contribute to a metalinguistic and metacultural approach	Helping learners to manage their multilingual and intercultural repertoire (including mastery of digital literacy)
	MACRO	Valuing the language diversity brought by learners as well as the language of schooling as a common tool and property	Making explicit the language dimension of all learning activities (oral/written; reader's perspective; text genres; information potential)	Together with the school staff and with the learners to reflect on discourse features of each subject	Developing a reflective perspective in all subjects as well as the discourse competences to express their thoughts
COMMUNITY	aims	Learning to live and work with others	Learning to be autonomous, learning with others	Towards a community of practice : adopting with others specific identities	Discourse communities preparing together for life in society
	learning experiences	Experiencing norms of interaction in groups	Oral presentation of group work	Experiences of complex tasks (projects, problem-solving activities) in groups	Experiences of debates
	NANO	Learners learn to listen to others and express themselves in ways which show respect to others	Learners learn how to report a group work	Learners learn how to contribute to solving problems or making joint decisions	Learners learn how to defend a point of view, to contribute to resolving conflicts etc.
	MICRO	Teachers guide the process of collective reflection to help learners become aware of their standpoints and attitudes	Teachers contribute to the development of a sense of social citizenship	Teachers assume different roles according to specific needs (resource person, mediator, supervisor etc.)	Teachers moderate classroom exchanges with tact and efficiency and facilitates the development of balanced and constructive reflections
	MESO	Supporting the mediation function of school by creating a broad and cooperative school community	Building up confidence-inspiring relations with all families to bring them into the school (common school & family action plan for learners with specific needs)	Strengthening a culture of mediation to support: 1) "community spirit" and 2) "learning together"	Developing a school culture which centres on a community of practice, working cooperatively etc.
	MACRO	Educating to respect otherness	Strengthening self-esteem and empathy	Empowering all stakeholders	Fostering innovation and cooperation

This is an output of the project "Learning environments where modern languages flourish" (2016-2019) of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML). The ECML is a Council of Europe institution promoting excellence in language education in its member states. www.ecml.at/Learningenvironments

