

Network meeting, 15-16 May 2021



The *ME.T.L.A.* project
*Mediation in Teaching,
Learning & Assessment*



The ME.T.L.A project

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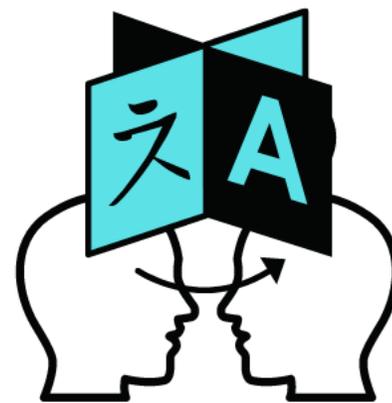
Inspiring innovation in language education: changing contexts, evolving competences
Inspirer l'innovation dans l'éducation aux langues : contextes changeants, compétences en évolution





Let's imagine a situation where...

- A tourist seeks information in a foreign city and asks about the meaning of a certain sign. Since the tourist cannot understand the sign what a local can do is try to convey this information in another language (language that the tourist can understand).
- A friend relays information from a magazine article in a foreign language in order to warn someone else about the dangers of smoking.
- A passer-by asks a street artist to explain in a foreign language the meaning of a piece of graffiti on the road.
- A pupil asks a classmate to summarize, in a shared language, the content of an audio-visual source in a foreign language.



Online Workshop, 18-19 May 2021



The ME.T.LA project

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*Mediation in Teaching,
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Description and aims of the project

Working languages : English, French

Project term: 2020-2021

Website: www.ecml.at/mediation

Project facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Mediation-in-Teaching-Learning-and-Assessment-METLA-106948367795298>



Inspiring innovation in language education: changing contexts, evolving competences
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What is the ME.T.L.A project?

Outputs

■ sets out to develop a **Teaching Guide** for **foreign language teachers** of primary & secondary education who want to include **cross-linguistic mediation** in their pedagogical practices

■ A **digital database/ repository** will also be produced.

Information about the theory and practice of mediation

Ideas/tips/suggestions for differentiation across contexts

Examples of mediation tasks in different languages, which draw on the CEFR Companion Volume

Mediation tasks in different **languages**, for various educational **environments**, for different proficiency **levels**

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EXTRA



Year 1

Year 2



language education: changing contexts, evolving competences
l'éducation aux langues : contextes changeants, compétences en évolution





The ME.T.L.A objectives

The *ME.T.L.A.* project
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- ▶ **The development of a guide and mediation activities as a means for engaging students in languaging practices which involve interplay of languages**
- ▶ **Teachers** will gain awareness as to how to **design materials** aiming at **developing and assessing learners' mediation performance**, and will be able to:
 - ✓ distinguish between cross-linguistic and intralinguistic mediation
 - ✓ explain what a mediation activity/task is and what the language users of different levels are expected to do
 - ✓ distinguish between different types of mediation tasks
 - ✓ identify linguistic and mediatory requirements of a mediation task
 - ✓ prepare different types of written mediation tasks for different purposes
 - ✓ select appropriate texts to be used in mediation tasks on the basis of certain criteria for each proficiency level
 - ✓ create and use assessment criteria effectively to assess written mediation production





What is (cross-linguistic) mediation?

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Cross-linguistic mediation concerns a language user who plays the role of an intermediary between interlocutors who do not share the same language.

In this project it is seen as the purposeful selection of information by the mediator from a source text in one language and relaying this information into another language (target text) with the intention of bridging linguistic and cultural gaps.





What is (cross-linguistic) mediation?

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involves interplay of languages.

a **social activity**: its products cannot be seen in isolation from the situation in which they are produced.

“the process which connects the social and the individual” (Swain, Kinnear & Steinman 2015: 151) in order to bridge communication gaps.

The users' ability to mediate does not only involve being **linguistically competent** in the relevant language or languages, it also entails using **mediation strategies**.

transformation process

information in the ST are not only **transferred** to the target text but they are also **transformed** in order to fit the new context of the target text.

part of someone's plurilingual competence

selective extraction of information by the mediator from a source text in one language and relaying this information into another language with the intention of bridging the communication gap(s).

selection process

interpretation of meanings articulated in STs & **making / construction of new meanings** in the TL expressed appropriately for the context of situation (Dendrinos, 2006).

is interwoven with the other three modes of communication (reception, production and interaction) or mediation integrates the other language activities.

Defining mediation in the CEFR-CV... (3)

(North and Piccardo, 2016: 9)



It focuses on three main categories for which various scales have been provided

This project

- a) **Mediating a text:** transferring information to a person with no access to the original text due to linguistic, cultural or social barriers
- b) **Mediating concepts:** related to the pedagogic aspects of mediation and the scales relevant to this category refer to educational domains which require managing interaction, collaborating to construct meaning, facilitating collaborative interaction among others
- c) **Mediating communication:** the process of facilitating understanding between participants as for instance in tensions, or disagreements

☞ Descriptors for mediation strategies were also developed.



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The ME.T.LA project

The Teaching Guide (TG)

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The METLA underlying principles reflected in the TG:



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- ❑ respects students' heritage languages and home cultures
- ❑ views all languages as equal
- ❑ sees heterogeneity as an asset respecting all languages
- ❑ supports linguistic and cultural integration
- ❑ suggests a plurilingual approach to the teaching of languages
- ❑ stresses the importance of using **cross-linguistic mediation activities** – incorporating different languages in different tasks – for the development of learners' **plurilingual competence**.

Cross-lingual mediation activities which ask for the parallel use of languages in the classroom can be used to soften linguistic and cultural barriers (Stathopoulou 2013, 2016b, 2019)

The benefits of such fluid language practices in the classrooms are many; the challenges as well!





1. General philosophy

The *ME.T.L.A.* project
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- suggests a **plurilingual approach** to the teaching of languages
- stresses the importance of using cross-lingual mediation activities – incorporating different languages in different tasks – for the development of learners’ **plurilingual competence**.





2. Specific objectives

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This Guide offers **orientations** and provides **suggestions** as to how the Foreign Language (FL) teacher can:

- help learners develop mediation strategies
- adapt & differentiate tasks across languages, proficiency levels, learner groups
- incorporate learners' heritage/home languages
- integrate the pluricultural component in activities which ask for the parallel use of languages
- develop learners' collaborative and social skills across languages
- develop learners' intercultural understanding, openness, respect towards other cultures
- ensure authenticity of different texts presented in different languages
- ensure authenticity of tasks which respect the needs of the social actor
- deal with different genres in various languages
- incorporate multimodality in the design of complex, authentic communicative situations
- assess his/her learners' mediation performance mainly through providing ideas for alternative assessment





3a. Contents of the Teaching Guide

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- Theory and practice of cross-linguistic mediation for the development of plurilingual competence
- Guidelines for designing **oral and multimodal** mediation tasks with examples
- Guidelines for designing **written and multimodal** mediation tasks with examples
- Guidelines for assessing mediation performance
- Guidelines for the alignment of mediation tasks with CEFR-CV descriptors





EXAMPLE FROM TASK 13

The strategy of note-taking is practised.

Step 1
Are you familiar with the health benefits of the Mediterranean diet? Briefly discuss with your partner and come up with one reason each why you think the Mediterranean diet is considered healthy.

Incorporating videos ensure **multimodality** and **authenticity** and stimulate learners' interest

Step 2
Watch the video on the Mediterranean diet and write down in note form the health benefits it offers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5aof7UI3yg>
Use either English or any other language for your notes.

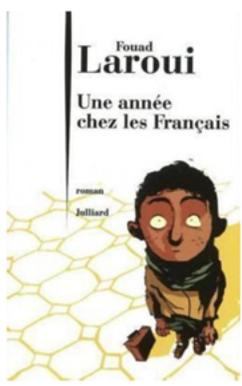
This can be an example of both intralinguistic mediation (within the same language –English) and cross-linguistic mediation

Step 3
Your friend Brian from Switzerland has recently informed you that he intends to start eating healthier food. Read the article below and send him an **email** (in English) (100 words) **agreeing** with him and **presenting** the Greek salad as a healthy option.

EXAMPLE FROM TASK 18

1. Lis le synopsis du roman « Une année chez les français », de l'auteur Fouad Laroui.

1969 : les Américains marchent sur la Lune. Mehdi, 10 ans, débarque au lycée Lyautey de Casablanca où son instituteur, impressionné par son intelligence et sa boulimie de lecture lui a obtenu une bourse. Loin de son village de l'Atlas, Mehdi pense être un membre de l'équipage d'Apollo découvrant une planète inconnue : qui sont ces Français qui vivent dans le luxe, adorent les choses immangeables, parlent sans pudeur et lui manifestent un tel intérêt ? Durant une année scolaire animée par une galerie de personnages surprenants, l'histoire émouvante d'un enfant propulsé dans un univers aux antipodes de celui de sa famille.



Tips for the teacher

Mots utiles :

Note: students can **take note** of the unknown vocabulary they find important to retain, and **provide their meaning in any language** they want. This allows them to make sense of a text in a target language, using their individual

Handout E

EMAILS

Self-assessment email list

Based on what you have written, mark the right answer:

I have included:	I am not sure	Yes	No	not applicable
an informative subject line				
opening greeting/salutation (e.g. Dear Ms. Smith)				
background information (e.g. the purpose of my email/ name of the lesson/ date/ time etc.)				
specific request				
polite forms (e.g. modal verbs: I would / I should /shall etc.)				
a complimentary close (Yours faithfully, Yours sincerely...)				
attachments				

I have :	I am not sure	Yes	No	not applicable
taken into account a specific audience (age/ethnicity/culture)				
used headings when appropriate				
stated the main point early				
effectively used transitions between ideas and paragraphs				
avoided slang				

Now, pass your email and

The particular grid has been provided in three different languages (English, Finnish and Greek) (see Appendix 5)

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The ME.T.LA project

Mediation activities

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What is a (cross-linguistic) mediation task?

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Mediation tasks are those tasks which require users of languages to relay information from one language to another for a given communicative purpose.

When learners are involved in a **mediation task across languages**, they first have to **process** information included in a text (either verbal or visual) in Language A and then **transfer** some of its messages in Language B in a way that is appropriate for the context of situation.



Some METLA examples

Example from Task 10 - B2

Your parents' friend from Mexico, Miguel, is staying with your family in Spain for two weeks. He wants to go sightseeing. Since your mom, who speaks Spanish, is at work, you try to help Miguel by searching on the Internet for information about popular places to visit in the area where you live, Valencia.

You found the texts below about two interesting places and want to tell Miguel about them.

A. Before you start talking, write down in note form the adjectives that you are going to use to describe the places.

B. Orally describe them in English to Miguel, and say **why you think** he should visit them.

1. Las plazas del casco antiguo

Como en todas las ciudades, las plazas de Valencia son lugares de encuentro, repletas de terrazas, árboles y fuentes para escapar del calor del verano. Conectando cada plaza, discurren un sinfín de callejuelas, repletas de tiendas, restaurantes y cafeterías, a través de las que descubriremos más plazas y patios privados.



Una de las plazas más bonitas de Valencia es la Plaza de la Reina, situada en el corazón del casco antiguo.

La Plaza de la Reina es un lugar perfecto para pasar el rato, con un montón de lugares para comer. Sin embargo, ten cuidado evita los precios turísticos. Te recomendamos refrescarte con unas bebidas en la plaza y luego acercarte hasta las sinuosas calles que la rodean para disfrutar de sus menús de tapas comida local. En pocos minutos te encontrarás con un lugar encantado y precios mucho más asequibles.

Example from Task 7 - B1

2. Vivi con i tuoi genitori a Malta. Tua nonna è italiana e viene a farvi visita durante l'estate. Sei in sala attesa al comune con la nonna che deve firmare alcune pratiche, quando vedi il seguente poster. **Spiega il contenuto del poster alla nonna in italiano.**



INSTRUCTIONS IN ENGLISH:

You migrated with your parents to Malta where you have been living for the past three years. Your Italian grandma comes to visit every summer. You happen to be with her at the Local Council office when you see the following poster. Explain in Italian the content of this poster to your grandma.





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Assessing mediation

Cross-linguistic mediation can be taught and assessed through mediation tasks which ask for the use of different languages (i.e. passing on information from one language to another), softening linguistic and cultural gaps in the process



Why to assess cross-linguistic mediation?



- The need for assessing cross-linguistic mediation is relevant to the needs of any modern plurilingual society and since “teaching is going in the direction of a multilingual focus, assessment should also follow the same path” (Gorter and Cenoz, 2017: 43).
- Besides, changes in language teaching (e.g. pluralistic approaches etc.) naturally require changes in assessment practices as well (Dendrinos, 2019).





How to assess cross-linguistic mediation?

- On the basis of the new CEFR-CV scales and according to the specific cultural, linguistic and other needs of the local teaching context, (i.e. languages used in a context, the needs and interests of learners etc.), assessment tools can be constructed in order to assess learners' **ability to move between languages** in order to relay information from one text into another.
- In a **classroom environment**, assessment informs both teacher and students of the next action steps in achieving learning objectives. Assessing mediation through specific tasks can be an **on-going learning experience** for the students (**formative assessment or assessment for learning**). Teachers should provide learners opportunities **to reflect on** and assess their mediation skills and strategies as an integral part of life-long learning.

Go for **alternative assessment** methods!



Alternative forms of assessment in ME.T.L.A tasks: portfolios



Drawing upon Hamp-Lyons (1996), portfolio assessment in lessons focusing on cross-linguistic mediation can:

- allow learners to display their overall **performance on a series of mediation tasks** rather than their performance at a particular time on a particular day;
- increase **student involvement** in assessing their own work and progress, especially through discussion of their achievements not only with the teacher but also with their peers.
- Portfolio assessment can also be done either in the foreign language or **in any language** brought into the classroom.



Alternative forms of assessment in ME.T.L.A tasks: learning logs



Learning journals are similar to portfolios; however, a portfolio tends to focus on the product while a learning journal focuses more on the process.

Date from _____ to _____

In the past week/month (etc.) _____ I have done (*how many*) _____ mediation tasks:
On (*topics*):

I **selected** information from (*what sort of texts, e.g., emails reports, brochures*)

I **produced** (*what sort of texts*) _____

I **selected** information from texts in (*which language(s)*) _____

I **produced** texts (*using which language(s)*) _____



Alternative forms of assessment in ME.T.L.A tasks: self-assessment or reflection tasks



- Getting learners to *reflect* on their own performance on the basis of certain criteria.
- Reflection worksheets can be used as the final step of a classroom activity and can be designed to reflect on the mediation skills developed during the tasks.



Alternative forms of assessment in ME.T.L.A tasks: A reflection task



EXAMPLE FROM TASK 15

D **PRESENTATION**

GROUP: TITLE:

How strategic are you?
Use these questions as a useful guide for your poster. These questions could help you provide an informative poster and presentation

Have you used strategies to explain a new concept such as first-aid instructions? For example, did you:

- link information to previous knowledge: use questions to remind students about concepts they already know e.g. from other courses?
- make comparisons between new information and things you already know?
- provide examples and definitions?
- adapted the language of your text based on your audience? How? (e.g. paraphrase, explain new terms etc.)

Provide some examples from your poster:

Have you used strategies to break down complicated information? How?
(explain a process step-by-step, use bullet points, highlight the main points etc.)

Provide some examples from your poster:

Have you used strategies to simplify a text? For example, did you:

- use repetition or skipped information you didn't need e.g. paraphrase in different ways?
- change the style to explain things in more detail?

Provide some examples from your poster:

In the final task of the First-aid poster, the students can use a handout to reflect on the information presented on their poster.

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Alternative forms of assessment in ME.T.L.A tasks: The METLA reflection grid for the student



Name:	3	2	1
ARE YOU A GOOD MEDIATOR?			
GENERAL			
I know what a mediation activity involving different languages is.			
I know that I should pay attention to the instructions of the activity.			
I know that mediation activities ask me to transfer information from one language to another.			
DEALING WITH THE SOURCE TEXT			
I read the source text carefully and more than once.			
I can distinguish relevant from less relevant information from the original text.			
I can identify and select the information needed to accomplish the mediation task.			
I consider the purpose of the text (why it has been written, where it appears and by whom).			
TRANSFERRING INFORMATION IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE			
I can transfer information from the original text in another language (Specify the language(s) _____)			
I can paraphrase source information and use it into another language.			
I can evaluate and correct the final outcome.			
I can use pictures, tables, and other visual material in order to better understand the text.			
THIS TASK/LESSON HAS HELPED ME... (put one or more tick(s) and add your own ideas if you wish)			
<input type="checkbox"/> use my knowledge and skills in different languages to understand or communicate in a multilingual setting			
<input type="checkbox"/>			
IN THIS TASK/LESSON I FOUND DIFFICULTY IN... (add your own ideas)			
<input type="checkbox"/>			

The grid is divided into five parts with the first three parts dealing with **mediation strategies** and the last two with **what students have achieved and what difficulties they faced**.

Find it in the Appendix of the TG



Alternative forms of assessment in ME.T.L.A tasks: peer-assessment or peer-feedback



C

PRESENTATION

PEER-FEEDBACK LIST:

GROUP:

TITLE:

PRESENTERS:

I liked the design of the poster.

I could follow the presentation.

The presenters spoke mainly in English.

Both the symptoms and the treatment were included in the poster.

The presenters explained some difficult words.

Three new words I have learnt:

1..... 2..... 3.....

<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">EVALUATION</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">5 - Highest 3 - Average 1 - Lowest</p>	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">NAME THREE NEW THINGS YOU HAVE LEARNT:</p>
<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">OVERALL GRADE:</p>	





Any questions?

Thank you! Kiitos! Ευχαριστούμε!

Grazie! Grazi! Obrigado! Merci ! Vielen Dank!

