

## ***An overview of the upcoming Integrated didactics toolkit***

The toolkit will include a series of guidelines and techniques for implementing integrated didactics in language education. This document presents a preliminary overview of techniques for making learners' linguistic repertoire visible.

**To help learners acquire language competences and to develop learning strategies, teachers should use techniques for identifying and articulating linguistic repertoires.**

In the mid-1960s, Gumperz (1964) coined the concept of “verbal repertoire” to refer to “all the accepted ways (within a speech community) of formulating messages” (p. 138). One central aspect of his theory is that he considered all languages, dialects and varieties employed in the course of a socially significant interaction within a community to be part of the verbal repertoire of that community. This concept later evolved to focus on the linguistic knowledge of individual speakers and the notions of “plurilingual and pluricultural repertoire” (Council of Europe, 2001) or “linguistic repertoire” (Busch, 2012) emerged.

Today the term *linguistic repertoire* refers to the languages and language varieties a person has at their disposal and uses to communicate and support learning. This includes curricular languages, home languages, and language varieties. It is important to note that ‘disposal’ does not imply full proficiency: A person can have full competence in several languages or varieties and partial competences in others, but they will all form part of their linguistic repertoire. The languages people know little about or wish to learn are also part of their repertoire as they are potential resources for communication and identity construction, reflecting the dynamic and evolving nature of one's linguistic experience.

### *How should teachers proceed?*

Integrated didactics draws on learners' linguistic repertoires as a tool for scaffolding the learning of a new language and for building bridges among all the languages learners know and the target language. This perspective aligns with the view that language is not a fixed system but rather a flexible set of resources plurilingual speakers have at their disposal to engage positively in any communicative event they participate in. It also challenges the target-language-only premise and builds on the idea that knowledge, skills and abilities can be transferred from one language to another and, therefore, establishing cross-linguistic links should be actively encouraged in multilingual classrooms.

In this context, helping learners identify and articulate their linguistic repertoires is essential. To put this into practice, teachers can take two simple steps. First, they should design activities that help both them and their students discover which languages form

part of their repertoires. Second, they should encourage plurilingual discourse practices in the classroom. This means, on the one hand, allowing learners to use languages other than the target language to support communication and learning; and on the other, creating opportunities to connect the languages in the learners' linguistic repertoires with the target language—for example, by using words from learners' home languages to aid comprehension.

### *Why is it useful?*

Identifying the learners' repertoires serves two purposes. First, it helps teachers know which languages they can draw on to compare with the target language. This enables them to use these languages to support learning of the target language and to create more meaningful and real-world communicative tasks. Second, it is valuable for students, as it helps them recognise and appreciate the languages that form an essential part of their identity. This can help students raise their awareness of their own linguistic resources, improve their communicative competence across multiple contexts and develop a great appreciation of linguistic diversity.

Encouraging learners to strategically articulate the languages in their linguistic repertoire helps them become more confident communicators, autonomous learners, and reflective language users. By thoughtfully designing activities that enable learners to draw on, compare, and transform elements from their repertoires, teachers can support the development of both language competence and metacognitive learning strategies. At the same time, such practices promote the recognition and appreciation of individual identities and the diversity of others, creating a classroom environment where linguistic and cultural differences are valued.

### *Examples of techniques to identify learners' linguistic repertoires*

The following techniques allow teachers to identify the languages and communicative resources learners bring to the classroom, while helping students recognise, appreciate, and build on their own linguistic assets:

- **Collage.** It is a narrative that combines verbal and nonverbal communication to reflect upon one's autobiographical memories of language learning (See Vallejo & Tonioli, 2023, and the [work of artist Evelyn Eller](#), 2020, for examples of collages).
- **Language biographies.** It is the second component of the *European Language Portfolio (ELP)* developed by the Council of Europe in 2000 (see also Little & Perclová, 2001 for [an ELP guide for teachers and teacher trainers](#) or the [ECML database of ELPs](#) from multiple countries). It serves as a tool for learners to reflect upon how they use (when, with whom and how often) the languages they

either know or learn. More Information and resources linked to this technique can be found on the [ELP website of the Council of Europe](#). Examples of language biographies can be found on the [website of the Maledive team of the ECML](#). See also [the template](#) produced by the Council of Europe (n. d.).

- **Language Flower.** It is a visual tool created within the framework of the EVLANG project (Candelier & Kervran, 2018) to help learners become aware that they have *partial* and *imbalanced* competences in different languages. Students are asked to write the names of the languages and language varieties they know on a piece of paper cut in the shape of flower petals. There are petals of different colours, and each colour represents a language skill (languages I speak, languages I understand but do not speak, languages I can read, languages I can recognise but cannot read, etc.) and learners should write the name of the languages and language varieties they know in the corresponding petal. Once they finish, learners glue together all the petals to form a flower. The heart of the flower can be either their name or their picture. See [an example](#) (Anonymous, n. d.), based on the work of the EVLANG project (Kervran, 2006), of a teaching sequence in French on how to implement this technique.
- **Language Passport.** It is the first component of the *European Language Portfolio (ELP)* developed by the Council of Europe in 2000 (see also Little & Perclová, 2001 for [an ELP guide for teachers and teacher trainers](#) or the [ECML database of ELPs](#) from multiple countries). It lists the languages that the passport holder has some competence in, provides a record of the language skills of the passport holder in relation to the CEFR descriptors of the Common, offers a summary of the passport holder's language learning, linguistic and intercultural experiences and provides a record of the language certificate and diplomas the passport holder possesses. More Information of this technique can be found on the [ELP website of the Council of Europe](#). See also a [Language Passport](#) for users over 16, developed by the Council of Europe (2010).
- **Language portrayals or language portraits.** It is an educational tool that derives from the multimodal biographic method developed in the early 2000s by the Research Group *Spracherleben* at the Institute of Linguistics at the University of Vienna to elicit the role languages play in people's life (Busch, 2018). In the classroom, learners are asked to map the languages they know or would like to learn in the drawing of a body shape. Each language must be coloured accordingly with the codes learners have previously created to explain their language practices and how they value the languages of their repertoire. The picture must be accompanied by a legend describing the coding. Additionally, it can be complemented with a short autobiographical essay. Examples of language bodies can be found on the [website of the Maledive team of the ECML](#). Further

explanations and ready-to-use templates can be found on the [website of the project Lost Wor\(l\)ds](#).

- **Linguistic (auto)biographic essays.** It is an educational tool that derives from linguistic biographies—personal narratives in which language is a central feature (Eakin, 1985)—used in research in the field of language identity. In language classrooms it is a narrative that accounts for the learners’ language journey: when and how they learned different languages, what they use each one for, and how they feel about them. It can take the form of a short text, a comic or a video. Examples of narratives and videos in English can be found on the [website of the Maledive team of the ECML](#). An example of [a comic](#) written in Catalan by a Swabian speaker or [narratives in Massai](#) with [translations into Catalan](#) can be found on the website of the GELA research group. See also the linguistic autobiography, in [video format](#), that won the first prize in the V contest promoted by Xarva Vives d’Universitats; it narrates how a Wichí speaker navigates between Spanish and her family language.
- **Timeline.** It is a method to illustrate chronologically important dates related to when learners had their first contact with the languages they know. Examples of narratives and videos in English can be found on the website of the Maledive team of the ECML (see [example 1](#) and [example 2](#)).
- **Dossier.** It is the third and last component of the *European Language Portfolio (ELP)* developed by the Council of Europe in 2000 (see also Little & Perclová, 2001 for [an ELP guide for teachers and teacher trainers](#) or the [ECML database of ELPs](#) from multiple countries). It provides a selection made by the learner of those materials that can document and illustrate the achievements or experiences recorded in the Language Passport or the Language Biography (see above). Information on how to elaborate a dossier can be found on the [ELP website of the Council of Europe](#).

Other techniques can be used to represent linguistic repertoires of a community or a group, these include:

- **Language Garden.** Displaying on a poster all the language flowers (see above) created by a class creates a linguistic garden that illustrates the language repertoire of the whole group. This visual collective display makes learners’ diverse linguistic resources visible and valued, while it also fosters a sense of belonging. Alternatively, learners can also create a tree with a sentence in the students’ home languages (see an [example from Institut Berenguer d’Entença](#)).
- **Linguistic Landscapes.** The term was first introduced by Landry and Bourhis (1997) to refer to the visibility and salience of languages on public and

commercial signs in a territory or region (see “[languages pa’ la citi](#)”, a video documentary told by Martín Rojo (n. d.) on how this technique was used in an adult education course to analyse the linguistic landscape of the city of Madrid. As a language learning technique, it involves documenting the linguistic diversity found in everyday environments by collecting photographs or videos that capture the languages present on the streets, storefronts, advertisements, product packages, and other public spaces. The linguistic landscape of an educational institution is often referred to as a **schoolscape**. Even though the technique was not originally created for the classroom, it provides meaningful opportunities for learning (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Gorter Cenoz, & van der Worp, 2021). To know more about this technique, read these [guidelines for introducing linguistic landscapes in \(foreign\) language learning and teacher education](#) (Brinkmann, McMonagle & Melo-Pfeifer, 2022).

- **Posters** showcasing all the languages present in a learning environment. The posters can display the names of the different languages present at school or words in multiple languages (**multilingual word walls**). [Examples of posters](#) created by children about the languages in their classroom can be found on the ECML website. [Examples of multilingual word walls and instructions](#) on how to use this technique can be found on the Odimet EU project website.

### *Examples of techniques to articulate learners’ linguistic repertoires*

Designing multilingual learning tasks is a core principle of integrated didactics, which emphasizes that language learning should build on learners’ existing linguistic resources rather than treating languages in isolation. The following techniques illustrate practical ways to implement this principle in the classroom:

- **Collaborative Clarification.** Encouraging learners to use languages other than the target language to explain difficult vocabulary or complex ideas to peers helps them recognise and use their linguistic repertoire effectively, while boosting comprehension and confidence.
- **Cross-linguistic Reflection.** Turning any moment into a lesson is an opportunity for learners to [make connections across the languages](#) they know helps them develop [metalinguistic awareness](#). Teachers can intentionally design activities to foster this awareness, formulate questions to elicit students’ reflections, or take advantage of learners’ spontaneous observations about language.
- **Mixed-Resource Drafting.** Generating ideas to produce a text (either written or oral) is easier if students are allowed to sketch ideas using hybrid notes: words from different linguistic origins, emojis, borrowed structures, etc. The draft then serves as a support to create the text in the target language.

- **Multilingual Glossaries.** Drawing on multiple forms of representation helps learners grasp meaning more quickly and supports long-term retention of target vocabulary. The technique consists of having learners identify and list the words or phrases in a text that are difficult to understand, and then enriching this list with visuals, example sentences, and similar words from languages they already know to facilitate comprehension.
- **Multilingual Noticing.** Developing inference strategies is essential for supporting reading and listening comprehension. While listening to a text, students can be encouraged to focus on words or expressions that are familiar based on prior linguistic experience. When reading a text, students can be asked to highlight any parts that resemble forms they already know. These moments of recognition help learners infer meaning, build confidence in using cross-linguistic knowledge, and strengthen intercomprehension skills, enabling them to understand texts in the target language more effectively.
- **Multilingual Semantic Mapping.** Making cross-linguistic word connections helps learners articulate what they already know and transfer knowledge across languages. The technique requires learners to place a central concept in the middle of a mind map and add branches with words or expressions from the same semantic field in the target language, as well as words from any other languages they know. Reflecting on these connections helps learners become aware of gaps in their vocabulary and identify which words in the target language still need to be learned. Additionally, learners can focus on cross-linguistic sound similarities and include words from other languages that sound similar but have different meanings. This would support memorisation of the target language's pronunciation and intonation patterns.

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