

Lycée Victor et Hélène Basch, an upper secondary school in Rennes, France, has introduced plurilingual programmes for 15 and 16 year-old pupils. These programmes involve making linguistic and cultural comparisons between the foreign languages taught at the school (English, German and Spanish) and the local language, French.

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Eurolanguages Project at Lycée Victor et Hélène Basch upper secondary school in Rennes, France

Foreword (Jonas Erin)

The contexts in which a language is used and the consideration of the cultural issues inherent in language communication are among the elements on which teaching and pedagogical approaches in the modern languages field are based. So as not to confine language learning to the purely operational communication skills (reception, production and interaction), a very large majority of European education systems have sought to ensure that language teaching also serves cultural, broader educational and sometimes interdisciplinary goals. Tying the teaching of a specific subject to a modern language course, through pluridisciplinary co-teaching or an integrated language learning approach,¹ contributes both to cultural anchoring and to the development of the plurilingual use of subject content.

Enriching pupils' language repertoires while simultaneously inculcating a subject's academic concepts² seems to be recognised as an effective solution for integrating modern language learning into the teaching of other subjects, and simultaneous exposure to several languages seems a very promising avenue to explore for the development of plurilingual and intercultural skills.

Nonetheless, setting up a plurilingual co-teaching project requires a very clear grasp of pupils' learning paths and underlying issues:

- plurilingual co-teaching cannot replace lessons in each language, it complements them; this makes the implementation of a project of this sort highly dependent on a flexible approach to pupils' and teachers' timetables;
- scheduling plurilingual teaching sessions requires the setting of shared goals – particularly through the identification of areas of convergence with other disciplinary fields – and close co-operation between the teachers involved, so as to take full advantage of the synergies between languages and cultures;
- the aims of co-teaching should not be limited to juxtaposing projects and languages but should also enable scenarios to be devised that help pupils to develop cross-disciplinary skills – particularly cultural and educational ones:
 - a contrastive approach to the cultural content conveyed by each language contributes to their full acquisition;

¹ By an integrated approach, we mean *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL) in English or *l'Enseignement d'une Matière Intégrée à une Langue Etrangère* (EMILE) in French.

² CLIL and literacy – *Improving language skills through subject learning integrating a modern language*.
www.ecml.at/F7/tabid/969/language/en-GB/Default.aspx.

- co-operative activities among pupils with different language backgrounds help to involve them more in a group project and give everyone an opportunity to contribute to meeting the challenges of "living together";
- intercultural mediation projects make it possible to raise pupil awareness of communication in a context of otherness and to highlight the benefits of empathetic conduct.

Merely setting out these aims shows how plurilingual co-teaching can make a major contribution to the development of plurilingual and intercultural education paths, even if it can be implemented only from time to time. Situations that involve plurilingual and intercultural communication are more the rule than the exception. Many pupils are exposed daily to a diverse range of languages and cultures. Is it not the case that this form of teaching derives further legitimacy from the fact that it places pupils' own life experiences on a formal educational footing?

From this viewpoint at least, plurilingual co-teaching may contribute to the conception of formal educational settings (classes) capable of also taking into account pupils' informal or personal learning experiences.

From a purely linguistic viewpoint, plurilingual co-teaching offers all the conditions to:

- explore situations of interlinguistic mediation and intercomprehension with pupils;
- create opportunities for reflective thinking, in a process of co-operation between pupils, through metalinguistic and metacognitive evaluations;
- help all pupils reinforce their plurilingual repertoires and make them aware of the challenges inherent in the development of overall language proficiency.

In this respect at least, this initiative ties in well with the PlurCur project.

Although the Eurolanguages Project set up at the Lycée Victor et Hélène Basch in Rennes can most certainly provide an example, it cannot serve as a directly transferable model. The success of the project derives simultaneously from the outstanding quality of the teachers' individual and collective thought processes, their full commitment and the educational and conceptual support given to the team. A project of this type cannot be conducted by teachers alone. It entails a collective, inclusive process involving all those concerned: pupils, parents, administrative staff, inspectors, etc. It combines plurilingual education, language teaching, the holding of lessons in the languages concerned and special measures (personalised support³, supervised personal work⁴ and civics, law and social studies (ECJS)⁵), again in the related languages, allowing pupils to acquire plurilingual skills through a "networking" process.

³ Personalised support is a cross-disciplinary measure set up for first-year classes of French lower secondary school (collège) and all levels of upper secondary school (lycée). The aim is to assist pupils, enhance their skills and prepare them for higher education on the basis of three main activities: support, further study and educational guidance.

⁴ Supervised personal work is a form of teaching offered in the second year of French upper secondary school, that provides pupils with the opportunity to work as teams on documentation and investigation projects focusing on themes located at the intersection of several disciplinary fields.

⁵ ECJS (Education Civique, Juridique et Sociale) is a joint course taught from different standpoints in each year of upper secondary school: in first year, "The rule of law"; in second year, "Institutions, political and social affairs, the nation and its

Our aim therefore in presenting the Eurolanguages Project is to highlight all the possible tools – linguistic and methodological, educational and pedagogical or organisational and structural – that would make it possible to adapt this project to another school, another level of education or another educational context.

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How to integrate mediation into plurilingual, intercultural education: the example of the Eurolanguages Project at Lycée Victor et Hélène Basch upper secondary school in Rennes

The Eurolanguages concept stemmed from an academic debate on pupils' passage through the education system and follows on from an investigation into areas of innovation in modern language teaching. It readdresses the issue of the place and role of pupils in the construction of their education path, along with the relationship established with learning with a view to empowerment and the development of autonomy. In short, it is an invitation to reconsider the role assigned to modern language teaching in the French school system.

The proposal is to go beyond the mere juxtaposition of measures, by drawing on a thorough diagnosis of the school's potential to shape its projects and courses around languages thereby enabling all pupils of the school to benefit from the human resources available and from teaching methods tested in high-quality projects.

The Eurolanguages concept is supported by the Regional Education Inspectorate. Academically, it is based on pluralist approaches to languages and cultures and on work on the subject of European intercomprehension⁷ and is applied in various forms in several lower and upper secondary schools in the Rennes regional education authority.

1. An example of the implementation of the Eurolanguages Project

The teaching team at the Lycée Victor et Hélène Basch has chosen to offer a teaching programme entitled Eurolanguages to pupils who, although they come from very diverse social and cultural backgrounds and are enrolled in a school environment conducive to specialisation in language learning (the international and European sections), had not shown any particular predilection for languages.

The Eurolanguages approach adopted goes well beyond the bounds of modern language teaching per se and opens up new prospects for schools to engage their pupils in a collective, interdisciplinary and local response to fundamental educational issues. Its inclusion in the ordinary first-year upper secondary school curriculum has therefore required some detailed joint

defence"; and in the final year, "Citizens confronted with major ethical questions" (Special Official Bulletin No. 9 of 30 September 2010).

⁶ IA-IPR: *Inspecteur d'Académie-Inspecteur Pédagogique Régional*.

⁷ The term "European intercomprehension" designates access to the meaning of a text written in one language through gateways established with one or more languages of the same European language family. Passing through another language from the same European language family (the Romance, Slavic or Germanic family) depends less on formal learning of the neighbouring language than on the acquisition of European intercomprehension strategies.

consideration, which was essential in order to gradually establish the credibility of such a new non-programmatic teaching project.

1.1. The practical teaching arrangements

Pupils in two first-year upper secondary classes receive the following teaching:

- five hours per week of English L2 (second language) and German or Spanish L3 (third language);
- a Eurolanguages lesson based on convergent exposure to three modern languages – German, English and Spanish – under the guidance of three teachers, one in each language (one hour every two weeks);
- an introduction to English in mathematics as part of a personalised support package.

Modern language assistants are mobilised to provide pupils and teachers with as much support as possible.

Volunteer final-year pupils may be called on to help first-year pupils with sub-tasks.

The structural organisation therefore reflects the educational goals of the Eurolanguages concept, such as openness, education in otherness, decentration, an intercultural approach to European issues, co-operation and mutual assistance.

1.2. The unifying elements

Of course, the Eurolanguages lessons cannot be enough in themselves. They must systematically be linked, firstly with the lessons in L2 and L3 and then with all the other components of the scheme, with a collective, educational goal in mind because, over and above the benefits of a plurilingual approach to language skills, the educational approach pursues two basic aims:

- the possibility of developing a shared educational ethos and of addressing as a team the challenges posed by an innovative approach, following a process based on solidarity and complementarity. The close link between the scheme and the L2 and L3 courses guarantees that no language is regarded as a simple means of communication devoid of cultural aspects;
- strengthening pupils' self-esteem, willingness to take risks in their oral work and team spirit, all of which is underpinned by an emphasis on creativity and the systematic deployment of collaborative activities.

1.3. The educational foundations

Implementation of the Eurolanguages Project has prompted teachers to:

- clarify the goals and the progress being targeted in each modern language;
- explain the concept of plurilingual competence;
- establish the ground rules for a joint reflection on educational issues and the development of civic and social skills.

1.4. The educational approaches adopted

The teaching process

- all courses are structured around a limited number of Eurolanguage lessons, taking place every two weeks;
- each Eurolanguage teaching project is co-ordinated, both in terms of cultural content and from an organisational viewpoint, with the L2 and L3 classes (English and German or Spanish);
- Eurolanguage lessons are based on a comparative and contrastive approach to languages and cultures. They contribute to the emergence of a civic reflection capacity.

Instructions

- instructions are accompanied by scenarios;
- instructions are given in German and Spanish by the teachers;
- they are reworded in the same language by the pupils [intralinguistic mediation];
- they are spelt out in English by the pupils [interlinguistic mediation].

The materials

- they are accessible to pupils who have reached A2/B1 level;
- they are made accessible to beginner pupils (without German or Spanish) through oral mediation activities;
- they fuel intercultural reflection by bearing testimony to an identity that is unique to the cultures of the languages studied.

Teaching activities

- interaction between pupils with different linguistic profiles serves as a catalyst for teaching activities;
- projects are built on the model: “Reception in one language → Oral mediation → Production in one or two other languages”;
- the multicultural foundation fosters intercultural reflection.

Sub-tasks and the final product

- the principles adopted guarantee that a balance is struck between languages and cultures. Reception and production activities are carried out in all languages;
- sub-tasks are carried out in the Eurolanguages classes and in each modern language class;
- the final product is a summary in which pupils reappropriate the results of a collective task for themselves.

Discussion-based review

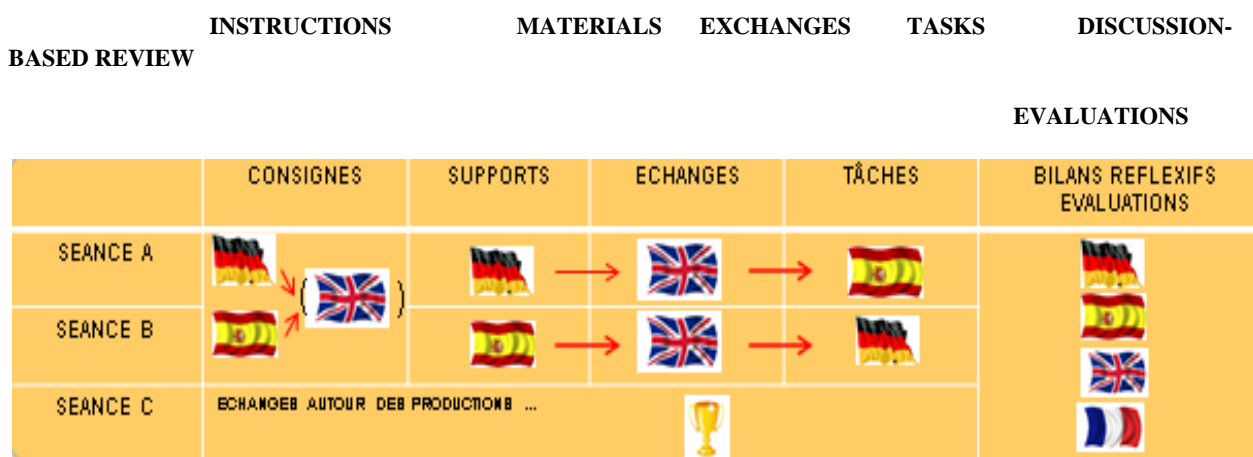
- discussion of metacognitive aspects forms an integral part of the educational project;
- this makes it possible to trigger discussions between teachers and pupils or among pupils about strategies to access meaning, discursive strategies, intercomprehension, the organisation of group work, work assessment, evaluation of learning outcomes, etc.

2. An example of a sequence of Eurolanguages lessons

The sequence presented below, entitled “*Essen = Müll? – ¿Comida = basura?*”, is built around three Eurolanguages lessons. The learning path proposed to pupils forms part of a methodical, conceptualised approach, which needs to be continuously placed in the context of the entire Eurolanguages Project.

This progressive approach is clearly explained to pupils and the objectives are made simple, intelligible and accessible to everyone. It is important to facilitate acceptance of the approach and to maintain a pedagogical dialogue with the class. At each stage pupils’ learning paths are clearly distinguished while ensuring that they intersect well with one another. Pupils are given specific responsibilities, particularly tasks linked to the presentation, leadership and organisation of group work.

Balancing languages and cultures is one of the fundamental principles of the approach, as can be seen from the overall structure of the lesson sequence presented in the diagram below:



Session A, B, C - exchanges centring on the work produced

Session A: aim – to be capable of presenting cultural content

Discover cultural content; acquire language tools; introduce a methodology of mediation

Stage 1: All pupils work on materials in German only:

- Spanish-speaking pupils on a video
- German-speaking pupils on press articles

All the materials relate to the same theme: “*Schnippeldiscos*” (disco-soups), which are solidarity-based, eco-responsible schemes against food waste, initiated by the movement Slow Food Germany.

Stage 2: Groups are reorganised into mixed-language groups (German-Spanish) to pool the information collected. Exchanges take place in English, the common language of all the pupils, so as to produce responses in Spanish to one of the following sub-tasks:

- *You launch an invitation to a disco-soup on Facebook*
- *You record a radio jingle and message inviting listeners to a disco-soup*
- *You design a poster containing all necessary information for anybody interested in being part of the next disco-soup*
- *You write a short press release to explain what disco-soups are*

- *You create a short radio programme about people discussing disco-soups*

NB: Although this work is to be produced in Spanish, each pupil contributes according to his or her own skills, which may be as a language expert, a creator, a mediator or in another role (see section 4.2 below on “The benefits of group learning”).

Session B: aim – to be capable of expressing a point of view and adopting a position

Discover and look further into cultural content; re-use and flesh out language tools; practise mediation

Stage 1: All pupils work on materials in Spanish only:

- German-speaking pupils on a video
- Spanish-speaking pupils on press articles

All the materials relate to the same theme: the Tomatina festival, which is portrayed in a positive light in some material and a negative one in others. The aim is to elicit a reaction to this event, which has been declared a Fiesta de Interés Turístico Internacional by the Spanish authorities, but during which some 120 tons of tomatoes are wasted in one hour simply for the pleasure of tourists.

Stage 2: Groups are reorganised into mixed-language groups (German-Spanish) to pool the information collected. Exchanges take place in English, the common language of all the pupils.

Following this exchange, each mixed group produces a subjective written or oral piece in German, which implies that views need to be exchanged within the groups to establish whether they wish to recommend or criticise the event:

You are a German journalist, a special correspondent sent to Spain to investigate the Tomatina event in the Spanish town of Bunol. When there, you will be helped by Spanish colleagues. Write either a press release or a radio report to be put online for your newspaper.

Although this work is to be produced in German, each pupil contributes according to his or her own skills, which may be as a language expert, a creator, a mediator or in another role (see section 4.2 below on “The benefits of group learning”).

Session C: aims – to summarise; to learn to analyse a piece of work; to express one’s opinion; to adopt a discussion-based approach

Show a command of content and processes; be capable of standing back and expressing a well-argued personal viewpoint

Stage 1: All work is shown to the entire class.

Having been divided into mixed-language groups (German-Spanish), pupils are invited to comment on their fellow pupils’ work in the foreign language of their choice. Exchanges are based on a table in four languages (German, English, Spanish and French).

The aim of this process is to help pupils develop a critical eye and take a first step towards contributing to discussions.

This stage ends with the selection, on the basis of sound arguments, of the best work produced in each language and an awards ceremony with a congratulatory speech in English.

Stage 2: The pupils are invited to take part in a discussion-based review in French, their language of schooling. They discuss, in particular, the strategies they have deployed to manage the transition from one language to another, to organise their plurilingual collaborative work and to acquire practical skills.

The lessons sequence is followed up in the L2 and L3 classes. Each pupil is asked to produce an individual piece of work on the theme “*Essen = Müll? – ¿Comida basura?*”, which helps to gauge each pupil’s achievements.

3. Evaluation of the scheme's impact on pupils

The aim of the Eurolanguages Project is to develop plurilingual and intercultural skills and build up self-esteem through training in intercomprehension and mediation activities. The Project complements the modern language classes, in particular by helping pupils to develop reflective thinking capacities in the course of the specific activities to which it gives rise.

While it is clear that the project has benefits, both for the pupils and for the teams accompanying them, it seems difficult at this stage to evaluate in quantitative terms the cultural, social and civic skills developed by pupils in the specific context of this scheme.

With regard to this point, the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches (FREPA),⁸ published by the Council of Europe, is a key reference tool for an alternative approach to the question of evaluating the impact of an integrated, inclusive and cross-disciplinary approach, such as the ground-breaking Eurolanguages Project.⁹

FREPA descriptors relate essentially to two types of competence:

- competence in managing linguistic and cultural communication in a context of otherness;
- competence in the construction and broadening of a plural linguistic and cultural repertoire.

These descriptors help teachers to identify more accurately what the aims of a Eurolanguages approach are and to view the goals of modern language courses in a different light.

The learning situations proposed in the Eurolanguages Project combine operational and cross-disciplinary skills with a view to developing language knowledge, intercultural reference points and social skills in an interconnected manner. Teachers must progressively familiarise themselves with a process of assessing the paths, approaches and procedures deployed, going beyond the usual process of evaluating the quality and degree of success of the work produced.

Some examples of descriptors taken from FREPA

Verbal and non-verbal communication

K 3.4.1 Knows that one can try to resort to linguistic similarities (e.g. genealogical links, loans, universals) to facilitate communication

Evolution of languages

K 4.1 Knows that languages are linked by so-called “kinship” relationships; knows that languages belong to families

K 4.1.1 Knows about some language families and some languages that make up these families

⁸ CARAP – carap.ecml.at

⁹ Drawing on research, it presents a series of descriptors set out in terms of knowledge, skills and behaviour. In this way, it provides tangible support for the investigation by teachers of the aims pursued by plurilingual and intercultural education, assists in the work of preparing suitable teaching programmes and helps to identify exactly what subjects are being addressed.

Multiplicity, diversity, multilingualism and plurilingualism

K 5.7 Is aware of the existence of situations of multilingualism or plurilingualism in one's environment and in other places, near or far

4. Analysis and commentary on the Eurolanguages scheme

The following analysis is the result of an inspection carried out jointly by the education inspectors for each of the three modern languages involved in the project. It is based on a conversation held at the end of the Eurolanguages session they observed. The teachers were invited to talk about their intellectual and professional progression, discuss developments and share any thoughts they had about adjustments that needed to be made to the scheme.

The key points raised are set out below. They cannot, however, reflect all the subtlety of the implementation and complexity of the various forms of linguistic and personal interaction experienced during Eurolanguages lessons.

4.1. Awakening of plurilingual awareness

By means of the co-teaching approach, pupils can be trained in discursive strategies through the manipulation of a wealth of language teaching materials based on tasks such as reformulation, explanation and presentation. The inter-linguistic situation that is generated facilitates decentration and distanciation. It prompts pupils, in particular, to make spontaneous and natural use of various strategies, such as inference, circumvention, compensation or explanation in situations suited to oral risk-taking and linguistic initiative. Through experience, pupils build up their general language-learning skills and their understanding of how languages function.

A cross-language approach is conducive to the development of plurilingual skills:

- **intercomprehension:** the explicit description of how to decode a language they do not know (German or Spanish) using a related familiar language (English or French) reassures pupils as to their ability to “work towards the unknown” on the basis of prior knowledge;
- **linguistic and intercultural mediation:** reformulation in another language and code switching through translation, illustration, explanation or transfer facilitates a detached approach to languages and a comparative approach to the cultures conveyed.

In the context of this type of teaching, a discussion-based approach contributes to awareness-building and to the development of plurilingual skills among all pupils.

The place of French, the language of schooling, in the scheme

In the context of the Eurolanguages lessons, pupils have shown their ability to work in a multilingual, intercultural context. They have commented on the advantages of this approach during the many discussion phases provided for in the classroom. They switch automatically from one language to another depending on the relationship that they have with each of the foreign languages (for example, when carrying out the same reception activity in language A in order to produce work in language B, some take notes in reception language A whereas others take notes in language B). Immersion in a multilingual context is therefore well accepted by pupils.

However, pupils will always use French in the following situations: firstly, when reacting spontaneously and, secondly, when describing the organisation of their work.

As the true language of communication in the school and the vehicle for an action-oriented approach shared between pupils and teachers, French should probably occupy a more prominent position in class learning objectives. In the process of constructing pupils' relationships with modern languages, from a plurilingual and intercultural standpoint, it seems incongruous to exclude what is often a pupil's first language and means of expressing emotion. With a view to orienting a pupils' language development, which forms the basis for the Eurolanguages concept, it would undoubtedly be appropriate to improve the link between the learning of the first modern foreign language and the learning of French, as the language of schooling. The aim for the teachers is to lay the foundations of their pupils' relationship with languages. Breaking down barriers to reveal coherence and cohesion ultimately amounts to facilitating the personal and professional mobility of European citizens.

4.2. The benefits of group learning

The systematic deployment of collaborative approaches, adopted in particular when carrying out mediation activities on questions of meaning, involves pupils being in a structured relationship with otherness. Pupils' different learning profiles and personal and linguistic journeys are used as assets in the plurilingual groups formed for the purposes of the Eurolanguages lessons.

On an educational level, the Eurolanguages Project pursues an objective which is clearly spelt out to pupils by the teachers: "to enhance self-esteem, autonomy and initiative". This can only be achieved in a climate of mutual goodwill and empathy, as every pupil assumes in turn the roles of beginner, or the bearer of an expertise not shared by his or her fellow pupils or even his or her teachers. In this way pupils simultaneously develop an ability to understand or deal with others' difficulties and an awareness of their own knowledge, capacities and approaches.

In this process, each pupil's achievements (in the English-German or English-Spanish profile) are doubly valued:

- in the interactions based on the clarification of the meaning of documents in the foreign language not studied by his or her partners;
- in pooling the specific strategies deployed by each pupil to appropriate the new elements which make up the discovery of a language and a culture he or she has not studied.

The teachers themselves form part of the learning group. As non-specialists in the three languages studied in the Eurolanguages lessons, they place themselves in a position to receive assistance from their pupils in a field of language and culture with which they are not very familiar and to review the teaching methods they resort to naturally, in their specialist field.

The attitude of mutual support and complementarity observed among the pupils unquestionably echoes the proactive approach of cultural and intercultural openness developed by the teaching team managing the project.

Even outside the bounds of the modern language or Eurolanguages classroom, the project has been producing the expected impact. When asked about the benefits of the project, the head teacher points out that the classes involved in the Eurolanguages Project have swiftly

demonstrated a particular "class spirit" and fully subscribed to the notion of the "common good". For example, shortly after the beginning of the school year, pupils spontaneously devised a system of peer support between pupils in their own class, based on how the subject profiles of the class members complemented one another and how collective intelligence could be deployed for the success of each individual in the group.

4.3. The benefits of teaching as a team

The impact of the Eurolanguages scheme clearly extends beyond pupils. By breaking down barriers between languages and cultures, it encourages collaborative work, stimulates interest within teaching teams and generates collective impetuses. The effects can be noted at several levels:

- **the modern languages teaching team:** the modern languages teaching team has united around the project. The teachers talk of the emulation to which the collective discussion gives rise and the pedagogical creativity it engenders; they also highlight the human and professional enrichment it entails. Their feeling is that the project complements their lessons while leaving them enough freedom as teachers to pursue projects they wish to carry out in their own classes.
- **the school teaching team:** the project has enhanced the standing of modern languages within the school. Several teachers have expressed an interest in the project. They approached the Eurolanguages team spontaneously, to propose interdisciplinary projects. The work done by the modern language teachers helped to highlight the openings that the subject offers and the cross-disciplinary aspects of the courses for which the modern languages teachers are responsible. The scheme was launched in 2012 and since then it has gradually been enlarged either through partnerships abroad, activities carried out under personalised support or the ECJS schemes, or through partnerships with colleagues teaching their subject in a foreign language.
- **the regional education authority:** Eurolanguages provokes curiosity and has been mobilising teachers, trainers and head teachers throughout the region. To date, three other schemes aimed at developing plurilingual and intercultural skills have been set up in the region of Rennes, and are the subject of specific research work (PlurCur). Other teaching teams are currently devising their own Eurolanguages projects – in lower secondary schools, to breathe new life into bilingual classes, and in upper secondary schools, with a view to strengthening the link with higher education.

5. Eurolanguages: a flexible concept

The Eurolanguages concept takes various forms depending on the systems that already exist in the school and that are an integral part of the French education system (i.e. a global timetabling approach for modern languages, personalised support, co-teaching, supervised personal work and ECJS).

5.1. The educational use of a global timetabling approach for modern language teaching

Consideration of ways of making innovative use of the global timetabling approach adopted for language teaching, could assist with the planning of the time given to languages learnt by pupils (as opposed to languages taught by the teacher). Targeted timetable slots offer the potential to take the occasional half-day out of the standard school timetable and give it over to modern languages.

Moments of convergence between modern languages, focusing on issues linked to the cultural content or concepts in subject curricula, are intended to:

- help pupils look differently at the world around them. The goal is to look beyond the still all too fragmentary approach induced by the juxtaposition of subject teaching and attempt to identify, in the content of the lessons given in each language – while respecting its distinctive features, the converging aspects, differences and complementary features deriving from an interconnected approach to two languages and the cultures they convey;
- foster among pupils the processes of decentration specific to modern languages teaching. The aim is to work with the pupils to develop co-ordinated plurilingual and intercultural reference points, valuing protean language profiles and raising awareness among groups of pupils that otherness is an asset that can be shared (e.g. "because of my specific background, I will teach you what I know", "we highlight invariants linked to the families to which the languages we speak belong", etc.).

In this context, pupils taking part in projects in which co-operation, complementarity and otherness are recognised assets, adopt a broader viewpoint about facts, ideas and concepts that are generally dealt with separately. They approach the world illuminated by these different languages and cultures, which provide the materials for their education.

5.2. Personalised support in upper secondary schools

Teaching and education teams have gradually been introducing personalised support into upper secondary school since September 2010. This helps pupils adjust to the upper secondary level of education and prepare for higher education through a combination of support, further study and assistance with educational guidance. It can offer a specific setting in which to set up a Eurolanguages scheme. Eurolanguages' inherent cross-disciplinary nature meets the need to build discursive, practical, social, civic and other skills and strategies, in areas such as access to meaning, planning, information networking, etc., which first prompted the introduction of personalised support into upper secondary school reform. For example, it is aimed at helping pupils to clarify, to give formal expression to, to reformulate and delimit study goals, to develop

working methods and to target their comments. In short, teachers implement an approach of mediation between the knowledge imparted and the epistemology of each disciplinary field to facilitate its appropriation and the acquisition of an articulate command thereof.

5.3. Co-teaching

The supervision of a single group by several teachers under a co-teaching or co-facilitation system in the context of lessons in modern languages (combining several languages) or lessons using modern languages (combining a language and another subject), provides a possible entrance point for the introduction of a Eurolanguages project in schools.

Co-teaching arrangements involving teachers of different languages stimulate reflection on the modern languages discipline. In addition to the didactics of their specialist language, teachers learn by experience about general language teaching theory. The educational approach makes it possible both to underline the distinctive features of each of the languages and cultures taught, and to think about and make links with the other languages and cultures. The linguistic and cultural mediation that stems from this, in which each language learnt is placed in the context of its relationship with pupils' other languages (e.g. the common roots of the Romance languages, the shared culture of Germanic and Nordic mythology), helps pupils to develop plurilingual and intercultural skills.

Co-teaching arrangements involving modern language teachers and teachers of another subject constitute a further aspect of the approach, drawing on the complementarity which was intended when the European sections were set up. They make it possible to address European issues from varying, complementary viewpoints. They also invite teachers consciously and deliberately to establish approaches akin to interdisciplinary mediation, with the potential to create synergies between working methods and specific patterns of thought or conceptual approaches.

Supervised personal work (TPE) and ECJS are also potential areas in which the Eurolanguages concept can be implemented. The TPE system, whose aim is to stimulate pupils' "intellectual curiosity in an active learning situation, forge their critical-mindedness help them discover the links between different subjects and understand how what they learn in school all ties together" and to also "develop new capacities and skills, which will be useful for their further studies, work and social life, such as independence, group work, documentary research, argumentation, knowledge of computing and the Internet and oral expression",¹⁰ echoes the key principles on which the Eurolanguage concept is based. Similarly, the content of ECJS courses, which "form part of a civic process of training in citizenship, aimed at instilling republican values and principles through the acquisition of knowledge and skills to help pupils become free, independent citizens exercising their critical judgment in a democracy in which they are called on to take action",¹¹ are in keeping with the educational aims of the Eurolanguages concept. The aim is to take a different view of the possible areas of mediation between school and society.

¹⁰ eduscol.education.fr/cid47789/themes-nationaux.html

¹¹ Official Bulletin No. 21 of 26 May 2011

6. Conclusion

The Eurolanguages concept is an outstanding means of promoting mediation as part of pupils' language activities (in the form of mediation skills) through a systemic approach. In the academic teams that take it up, it brings about a revival of interest in the educational and teaching issues tied up with language learning in schools, giving an impetus for the voluntary updating of vocational skills and uniting cross-disciplinary teaching teams around some of the major issues of our society.

It can take place over various timeframes, be adjusted to local conditions (resources, structures, networks, etc.) and is by definition inclusive, integrated and cross-disciplinary.

Inclusive:

- pupils are not recruited according to their profile – they may all take part in the Eurolanguages Project;
- a premium is placed on opportunities for exposure to all languages (through decompartmentalisation, convergence and seeking complementarity);
- value is given to pupils' whole linguistic experience (first language, language of schooling, modern foreign languages and other languages in their environment);
- the use of innovative learning methods based on co-operation and mutual support is essential.

Integrated:

- every lesson contributes to the development of “language” per se;
- every modern language practised prepares for and reinforces the learning of other languages;
- teachers' skills are mobilised in all the teaching activities for which they are responsible.

Cross-disciplinary:

- an interdisciplinary approach is necessary for pupils to develop cross-disciplinary skills;
- schools must deal collectively with all the linguistic, cultural, educational and communication issues at stake.

Four indissociable threads run through the Eurolanguages system:

- the learning of two modern languages, with all their specific characteristics, in dedicated lessons (L2 and L3);
- the formalised development of plurilingual competence, and enhancement of self-esteem through training in intercomprehension and mediation activities;
- the educational goal and intercultural focus of the practice of all languages (including French, which is the language of schooling, and the other first languages of L1 pupils);
- the convergence of teaching in the various disciplines around European issues.

These four threads come together around the educational challenge of “living together”, which is looked at from different angles: cultural, linguistic, educational and systemic.

The question of mediation, within one language area, between cultural spheres and between participants with varying aspirations, is an integral part of the pluralism of modern societies. The Eurolanguages concept and its four-thread-based organisation is an educational and pedagogical response to this, which is unique and ground-breaking in the context of the French school system.

Drawing on their unique expertise, of which they are not always aware, language teachers have a major role to play in everyone’s success. As indisputable specialists in language learning and mediators between cultures, their task is to work with their pupils, in a permanent quest for convergence and consistency, between the lessons delivered, to build up knowledge and awareness of European affairs in order to instil in everyone the feeling that they belong to a shared European culture.

Learning languages in the plurilingual and intercultural environment opened up by the Eurolanguages concept instils in participants the humanist idea that, in a globalised world, the development of identity goes hand in hand with exposure to otherness.

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