



# CROSSING LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL BORDERS:

## TEACHING AND ASSESSING CROSS-LINGUISTIC MEDIATION

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funded by European Centre of Modern Languages (Programme 2020–2023), Council of Europe



### Mediation

"In mediation, the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning" (Companion Volume, 2020:103). It is possible to distinguish between two types:

**Cross-linguistic mediation:** involves more than one language - source language(s) and target language(s) (ME.T.L.A focus)

**Intralinguistic mediation:** refers to mediation in the same language but across different types of texts.

According to the CEFR-Companion Volume(2020), mediation can involve:

1. **Mediating a text** - relaying, explaining, processing or translating information from a text which could otherwise not be accessed due to linguistic, cultural or social barriers. (ME.T.L.A focus)
2. **Mediating concepts** – focusing on how the user/learner facilitates access to knowledge and concepts through language.
3. **Mediating communication** – focusing on the process of facilitating understanding between participants, as, for instance, in tensions, disputes or disagreements.

### The ME.T.L.A project: an introduction



### A mediator focuses on:

1. **The addressee:** Who are the interlocutors? What is the relationship between them?
2. **The purpose:** What is the communicative purpose set by the context? Is it to inform, clarify, explain, analyze in detail, present, promote... ?
3. **The source and target language(s)/cultures:** What are the languages involved? How is the same concept dealt with in different languages and what is considered as acceptable in a specific linguistic or (inter)cultural situation?
4. **The genre:** What type of texts are involved? Is it a radio show, a newspaper article, a poster, an e-mail, a podcast discussion ...?

### ME.T.L.A outcomes

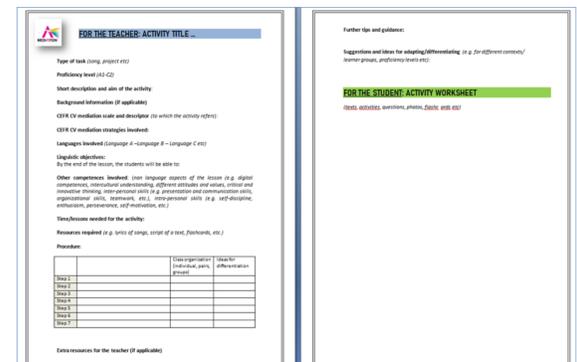


Teaching Guide



Mediation task database

### M.E.T.L.A task template



### Reasons to promote mediation in the classrooms:

- Societies and subsequently classrooms have now become superdiverse
- Freedom of movement within the European Union
- Migrant crisis and the flow of refugees
- Minority languages
- Fluid, heteroglossic (as opposed to monoglossic) and pluralistic language practices



### ME.T.L.A task example

**GROCERY LIST** Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Work with a partner (B). Do not look at your partner's handout. This activity is a scenario. Read your scenario first and discuss it with your partner.

**Scenario:** You just came home and your fridge is empty. Ring up your cousin, who is in the shop now. Read the grocery list and ask your cousin (B) who speaks only Finnish to buy these things. Add at the end of the list (numbers 11/12) one fruit and vegetable that you like.

**Remember:**

- *Voitko...? -> Could you please...?*

**GROCERY LIST** Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Work with a partner (A). Do not look at your partner's handout. This activity is a scenario. Read your scenario first and discuss it with your partner.

**Scenario:** You are at the shop now. Your cousin (A) has created a grocery list and he/she is going to tell you in Finnish what you should buy. Listen carefully and circle only the fruit and vegetables your partner mentions and write their names in Finnish. Finally, draw the last fruit and vegetable you have just heard and write the words in Finnish (numbers 11/12 from the list).

**Remember:**

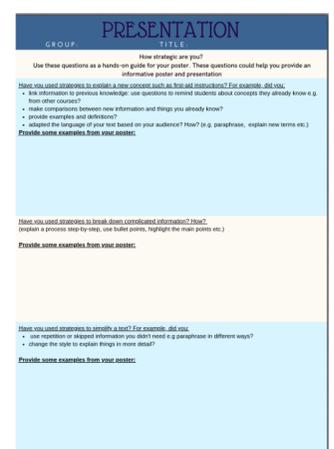
- *Voitko...? -> Could you please...?*

Draw the last fruit and vegetable you have just heard and write the words in Finnish (number 11 and 12 from the list)

### Designing mediation activities: Key considerations

- Incorporating learners' home languages
- Incorporating the (pluri) cultural component
- Ensuring multimodality & incorporating visuals
- Ensuring authenticity
- Developing learners' mediation strategies
- Dealing with a variety of genres
- Developing learners' collaborative skills
- Introducing technology
- Integrating abilities
- Considering means of alternative assessment

### Formative assessment example



### Assessment

Mediation can be assessed either in a formative or summative way. According to Gorter and Cenoz (2017:43), since "teaching is going in the direction of a multilingual focus, assessment should also follow the same path". A way to achieve cross-linguistic mediation in the assessment process is to utilize mediation tasks which promote the parallel use of languages (Stathopoulou, 2015, 2019). The following instruments can be used to assess cross-linguistic mediation abilities: introspective approaches, additive approaches, parallel tasks in different languages and mixed approaches (Melo-Pfeifer & Thölkes, 2021).

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