

## COLLABORATIVE PEER LEARNING MEDIATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

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### Abstract in English

The significant function of linguistic mediation as a *curricular element* to be taught in school and its function as a valuable *social practice* have been examined at length in a recent publication edited by Dendrinou (2024a). The present paper focuses on another – equally important – function of linguistic mediation which is a *facilitator of learning* among peers collaborating with one another. This context specific function of mediation was revealed through research, in a Case Study involving university students using their entire linguistic repertoire to interact with their peers, helping them and being helped to understand texts and concepts, to resolve communication gaps, and much more. Inspired by the results, the present paper proposes that linguistic mediation be taken advantage of in schools, which are multilingual sites, for collaborative peer learning (CPL) – a pedagogical approach used to enhance learning by students working together to deal with the curricular and extra-curricular challenges they face. The last section of this paper presents sample CPL mediation activities selected among all those performed by the Case Study participants and adapted as considered appropriate for the school context.

### Riassunto in italiano

La funzione significativa della mediazione linguistica come elemento curricolare da insegnare a scuola e la sua funzione come pratica sociale di valore sono state esaminate a lungo in una recente pubblicazione curata da Dendrinou (2024a). Il presente lavoro si concentra su un'altra funzione, altrettanto importante, della mediazione linguistica: quella di facilitatore dell'apprendimento tra pari che collaborano tra loro. Questa funzione specifica della mediazione legata al contesto è stata evidenziata attraverso una ricerca condotta in un caso di studio che ha coinvolto studenti universitari, i quali hanno utilizzato il loro intero repertorio linguistico per interagire con i propri compagni, aiutandoli ed essendo aiutati a comprendere testi e concetti, a risolvere lacune comunicative e molto altro. Ispirato dai risultati, il presente lavoro propone di sfruttare la mediazione linguistica nelle scuole, che sono luoghi multilingue, per l'apprendimento collaborativo tra pari (CPL) - un approccio pedagogico utilizzato per migliorare l'apprendimento da parte degli studenti che lavorano insieme per affrontare le sfide curriculari ed extracurriculari. L'ultima sezione di questo documento presenta esempi di attività di mediazione CPL selezionati tra tutte quelle svolte dai partecipanti al caso di studio e adattate come ritenuto opportuno per il contesto scolastico.

### 1. Introduction

Linguistic mediation was (re)defined and described in detail with scaled can-do statements in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment Companion Volume* (CEFR CV), (Council of Europe 2020). This influential document considers mediation as a significant aspect of language users'/learners' plurilingual competence and recommends that it be included in foreign language curricula, with a view to enabling young people to learn to communicate across linguistic and cultural barriers in our globalised world.

Dendrinou (2024a) draws attention to the fact that linguistic mediation is not only a learning element to be developed in today's multilingual social and educational contexts, but an important social practice. Understood in her earlier work (Dendrinou 2006, 2013) and in the CEFR CV as the ability to render or relay messages from one language to another and within the same language, mediators act as social agents helping to resolve communication gaps as they facilitate comprehension

by explaining events and phenomena, interpret information or ideas for others or for oneself, and function as intermediaries between individuals and groups when they fail to understand or to agree with one another.

The role of the mediator is essential across all social domains. It is vital in legal matters, diplomacy, politics, advertising, the mass media and all other public and private affairs, as well as in different settings, including the workplace, the home and educational institutions. Acting as linguistic mediators – something we all do, at one time or other (Dendrinos 2006, Piccardo 2016) in our social and personal lives – involves our ability to work out and convey meanings using our entire semiotic repertoire: our linguistic resources (all the languages and language varieties we know) as well as our non-linguistic resources (visual, acoustic, spatial), not separately but in combination with one another. Also, it involves our ability to extract and render meanings *in ways appropriate to the social context*. Clearly, we mediate differently depending on:

- where we are: think, for example, about how we talk/write at home, in class, at a party, at the doctor's office, at the tax office, at the police station, in court
- who is mediating to/for whom: think about how children mediate for their parents, lawyers mediate for their clients, teachers for students, students for their peers
- why we are mediating: think about when we mediate to clear up a misunderstanding, to help ourselves or someone understand what is said/written in a 'foreign' language, to help ourselves or someone make decisions, fill in forms, find out how to get somewhere.

However, research concerning how people mediate differently in different social domains and situational contexts, such as the detailed ethnographic studies by Orellana (2001) and Orellana *et al.* (2003), or sociolinguistic studies such as those by Baraldi (2018 and 2024), is limited and mostly having to do with one issue: children of immigrant families assuming the responsibility to help their parents and family survive socially in the host country whose language they are not proficient in.

## 2. Background study

Wishing to contribute to the understanding of how people mediate in different social contexts, a Case Study on Linguistic Mediation in Higher Education was carried out as part of a University of Strasbourg led project entitled "Le multi-/plurilinguisme dynamique, terreau de l'excellence inclusive dans l'enseignement supérieur" (MUDExI)<sup>1</sup>. The aim of this study was to investigate university students' linguistic mediation practices; how they mediate across different languages (cross-linguistically) and within the same language (intra-linguistically).

The Case Study was carried out in two phases, as explained in MUDExI Report 1 (Dendrinos 2023). The first phase involved the collection of data, through an online Survey-Questionnaire regarding what the university students of eight different universities in different countries do when they mediate, with whom, and on which occasions they perform mediation practices. Nearly 300 students from the participating universities responded, revealing their linguistic profile, and disclosing information about which linguistic mediation practices they perform at home, which in their social and which in their university life. This random sample of students, surprisingly enough, speak more than 50 languages in total and their responses showed that their mediation practices are different in their private life, with family and friends, from those they perform at university

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<sup>1</sup> The project, funded by the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), was directed by Prof. Irini-Tsamadou-Jacobberger, Vice-President for International Relations of the University of Strasbourg.

with their peers. These findings served as a basis for the second phase of the Case Study, whose purpose was to investigate students' mediation practices *as socially situated practice*. We wanted to know what type of mediation activities they perform in the context of their academic life. Nearly 30 students from four European universities<sup>2</sup> who had participated in the first phase of the study, volunteered to serve as acting researchers in a small-scale qualitative research endeavour during which a learning-by-doing or 'action-oriented' approach (cf. Piccardo & Notrh 2019) was used. Research participants were asked to carry out up to 10 cross-linguistic and intra-linguistic mediation tasks each, over a period of 20-30 days, and to complete a Verbal Protocol Form as soon as they had completed a mediation encounter. The form was designed so that each research participant would record, in either English or French,<sup>3</sup> the following information: (a) when, with whom, and under what circumstances they performed each task, (b) what exactly they did when mediating, how they managed the mediation, (c) how they articulated or 'languaged' their output, and (d) in what way the task benefitted them or their peer(s). The outcomes of this second phase of the Case Study, which are analytically discussed in MUDEXI Report 2 (Dendrinis 2024b), showed that university students mediate with their peers in order to learn from each other and that mediation encounters involved interaction.

### 3. Linguistic mediation to facilitate learning

Based on the outcomes of the aforementioned Case Study, this paper proposes that linguistic mediation serve not as an element to be taught but as a facilitator of learning, in the context of a collaborative peer learning (CPL) pedagogy across the school curriculum, i.e. for all school subjects.

Collaborative learning and peer learning educational approaches have been highly praised as significant moves away from the typical teacher-centred instruction (eg. Amalia 2018, Lin 2015, Philp et al. 2013, Swain 2002). In linguistically mediating for/with their peers, across languages and within the same language, students help one another learn (*peer learning*) by sharing linguistic or content knowledge, individual experiences, opinions and understanding, and work with each other (*collaborative learning*) to learn by solving problems, completing tasks, processing and synthesizing knowledge and opinions, locating data, material and evidence to support viewpoints, learning new concepts, reframing ideas.

In using linguistic mediation to facilitate the learning process in school, students may resolve language issues that the teacher is unable to, for many reasons including lack of time to attend to individual learners' queries. However, dealing with language issues which prevent comprehension is the first step to learning, given that language is the essential condition of knowing, the process by which experience becomes knowledge (cf. Halliday 1993). Unless language difficulties are resolved there can be no learning process. There is little doubt that a significant amount of educational failure is linguistic failure, as linguist M.A.K. Halliday (1978) has argued, building on the work of the sociologist Basil Bernstein (1973).

Whether or not students mediate without having been asked to do so by a teacher, and whether or not teachers approve of such practice, students usually do it anyway; they mediate for themselves and for/with each other to facilitate their learning experiences, as they make individual and joint

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<sup>2</sup> University of Strasbourg (UNISTRA), France; Babes Bolyai University (BBU), Romania; National & Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), Greece; University for Foreigners in Siena (UNISTRASI), Italy.

<sup>3</sup> The 30 students serving as acting junior researchers had high-level proficiency in either English or French and chose to record their mediation experiences in either of the two languages, but it should be noted that the overwhelming majority of the respondents did not have either of these two languages as their mother tongue.

intellectual efforts to understand and convey meanings expressed through their verbal and non-verbal semiotic resources. In doing so, they address their needs in ways that the teacher often cannot. Learners, as individuals, have different linguistic repertoires and sociocultural experiences, different intellectual and practical skills. When they actively support one another, by cross- and intra-linguistically mediating, they can resolve communication problems, develop linguistic and cultural awareness and gain knowledge from one another. The proposal here is that such mediation practices between peers be encouraged, regulated and organised in ways that may have the best possible results.

Both collaborative and peer learning approaches bank on social constructivism, the basic principle of which is that we learn by doing rather than by listening to others or observing – however helpful these may be. Learning is an active and constructive process (cf. Piccardo & North, *ibid*) involving learners in making use of their previous knowledge in combination with the present learning situation to understand the learning outcome critically and to be in a position to evaluate it. It was Vygotsky (1962, 1978, 1986) who argued that all learning is a social act, which occurs naturally through communication. He maintained that community is a significant factor in the process of creating meaning and knowledge. Useful is his concept of the ‘More Knowledgeable Other’; that is, a person who already has the knowledge or experience that learners are seeking: a teacher, an older adult or a peer with whom learners engage in ‘collaborative dialogue’, seeking knowledge, internalising it when it is provided, and using it to guide their own actions. Endorsing social constructivist theory, which promotes the idea of linguistic mediation as a vehicle for collaborative and peer learning, Keerthirathne (2018) made a case for the learner using social interaction and cultural practices in the construction of knowledge, which develops through language.

CPL mediation is meaningful for students when they themselves or their peers need to understand information in a language that they are unfamiliar with, to comprehend instructions and guidelines, to grasp new concepts, course content, ideas, standpoints, attitudes, to address misunderstandings, clarify misconceptions, to interpret messages for oneself or for their fellow students. It is useful for them when they are preparing for an assignment, to select or choose a project, when they require technical assistance or support and when they socialize with other students, exchanging information and experiences.

The mediation practices that university students perform with their peers were revealed in the Case Study, whereby participating researchers described each mediation interaction: the purpose and social situation of each encounter; the different languages and the other semiotic resources they used, the interaction processes, the types of meanings negotiated, the accommodation techniques adopted and other interesting information.

What became obvious when analysing the data that students documented is that CPL mediation encounters are not orderly Q&A exchanges, they are not activities or tasks meant “to teach and assess mediation” (Stathopoulou *et al.* 2023: 11) and they are definitely not speaker-centred, unidirectional language activities, such as those described in the CEFRCV<sup>4</sup> (Council of Europe 2020). They involve a two-way process during which meaning is constructed between interlocutors who are sharing knowledge, attempting to resolve communication gaps while also developing their language awareness and literacy skills. The students’ mediation encounters implicated complex communication practices that required the use of students’ entire linguistic (and non-linguistic)

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<sup>4</sup> The mediation descriptors contained in the CEFRCV have been criticized as unidirectional and speaker-centred by Deygers (2019: 3-4).

repertoires, their linguistic, sociolinguistic and cultural awareness. Ideally, both/all peers involved in the exchange profited from the interaction in different ways – not just the party to whom information, advice, etc. was provided. And it is in this sense that mediation encounters between learners becomes a means (i.e. *a facilitator*) to an end (i.e. *to learning*), not an end in itself – as is the case when linguistic mediation is treated as an element to be taught. When mediation is a facilitator of learning, emphasis is shifted from the linguistic performance of the mediator to the interaction process of the mediation encounter. After all, it is important to remember that learning is an active, constructive process. It requires that all students – both the ones who assume the mediator's role, as well as those with whom the mediator interacts – work actively in purposeful ways to select relevant messages from what is being transmitted, to integrate it with what they already know and use it to reorganize their thinking. Likewise, the mediator is affected by both their mediation performance, i.e. how they articulate their message, and the response of their interlocutors. Both are intellectually processing to construct meaning that makes sense to them and therefore crucial to learning.

#### **4. The purpose of CPL mediation activities**

It has been argued that mediation practices are context specific (Dendrinis 2024a) and task specific (Stathopoulou 2015). The MUDExI Case Study confirmed that it is so. It became evident that linguistic mediation between students at university functions as a facilitator of learning. Convinced that linguistic mediation among students at school, which are also multilingual sites, can serve the same purpose, this paper proposes that mediation activities be taken advantage of pedagogically for CPL, and in the section that follows provides a large sample of mediation activities which are grounded on the mediation encounters recorded by the Case Study university students. Those activities selected for inclusion in Tables 1 and 2 are those thought to be the most relevant but also adaptable for the school context. They are not listed in order of importance or according to the form or function of discourse, they are not scaled from easy to difficult, nor are the activities classified into cross-linguistic and intra-linguistic mediation, since they often involve both. However, they are divided into two broad categories.

The first category includes activities in which students spontaneously requested or invited their peers to act as mediators and create meaning in what they read or hear in the context of their work at school. They 'bestowed' to their peers the role of facilitator of meaning making for them, through mediation across or within the same language, when they failed to understand something or were unsure about what to do. When this happens in school, most of the time, teachers are unaware that such collaboration is taking place and do not cash in on it, while traditional educators, who think of themselves as the fountains of all legitimate knowledge, discourage mediation encounters of this sort. As a matter of fact, it is not at all uncommon in the teacher-centred classroom for students to be reprimanded or penalized for receiving or offering help to their peers. However, in learner-centred classrooms, where CPL mediation pedagogy is appreciated and the value of peer mediated instruction is recognized, teachers can perhaps ask students to record their mediation encounters in a Mediation Portfolio – work for which they might be rewarded at the end of each school trimester. Such a portfolio can serve both as a language awareness-raising and a self-assessment tool.

The second category includes mediation activities which may be prompted and organised by teachers – those who wish to encourage their students to be engaged purposefully with their peers and negotiate meanings as they mediate cross- and intra-linguistically. In adopting such a

pedagogical tactic, it does not mean that teachers give up their role as knowledge transmitters altogether. Peer-mediated learning does not exclude teacher-mediated instruction which can also result to learning. However, allocating curricular and extra-curricular mediation activities in a well-planned fashion may have an exceptionally beneficial effect because educational experiences which are active, social, contextual, engaging, and *student-owned* may lead to deeper learning. The benefits of peer-mediated reading classroom practice, for example, are discussed by Kos (this issue), who argues that an organised pedagogical intervention may create valuable language learning opportunities for participating students.<sup>5</sup> Generally, however, CPL mediation activities, when preparing and/or performing school work, may facilitate exposure to different ways of thinking and doing, increase the possibility of valuing diverse perspectives, and help one another understand the what, how and why of their assignments. However, they ought to be well designed by the teacher. The learning objectives of each activity need to be defined in advance, interdependence structures (such as goal achievement and incentives, resources, division of tasks) should be set up prior to assigning the activity and specific tasks, and ground rules for participation and contributions should be established. Peer evaluation and the teacher's role should be spelled out – if it is supervisory, evaluative, or supportive when trying to maintain cooperative norms at different stages of student learning. The roles of pair or group members also need to be assigned while students could be encouraged to rate each other's quality and quantity of contributions.

## **5. Sample CPL mediation activities for secondary school students**

### **A. STUDENT INITIATED AND REGULATED CPL MEDIATION**

Students needing information, suggestions, advice about schoolwork and school-related procedures are the ones who commonly initiate and regulate the social interaction with peers in the same or different class, school, country, requesting that they take the role of mediator. Providing that the role of mediator is assumed, the response is based on how the point at issue is articulated and understood. Once some form of response is provided, the exchange between those who made the request and those who responded may continue for several conversational turns as both sides negotiate meanings to achieve their communication goals.

The CPL mediation interaction is not expected to be an orderly Q&A between two or more parties but a process that involves reciprocal stimulation and response between interlocutors. The same is true in situations which occur not because a student asks their peer to help, advise, etc. but students who wish to help their peers resolve communication gaps, agree with each other or others, etc. intervene voluntarily. The interaction in any of the encounters between peers may be conducted in two or more languages, with students mediating within the same language, across languages and other semiotic modes, and/or a combination of these. The encounters do not always require students' physical presence as the interaction may also be online.

To encourage students to cross-linguistically and intra-linguistically mediate with their peers, a list such as the CPL mediation activities such as those in Table 1 could be provided for the whole class, explaining to students that these are examples of how students might mediate with one another, and urging them not only to perform such mediation across languages (they already know and others they are learning) or within the same language (be it the official school language, a language they already know or one they are learning) but also to record the mediation activities they have

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<sup>5</sup> See: Tomáš Kos paper in this issue "And now, let's read it together! " A peer-mediated reading intervention in secondary EFL classrooms in Germany.

performed in a Mediation Portfolio – possibly designed and uploaded online – which the teacher could check periodically to reward by giving credits to students for their mediation performance.

**Table 1: Student regulated CPL mediation activities**

	<b>A. Student initiating mediation</b>	<b>B. Student responding to peer request</b>
About school work, participation and performance	1. Asking about task rubrics and a task which has been assigned.	a. Reformulates rubrics b. Clarifies what the demands of the task are c. Explains what the task involves, possibly using examples.
	2. Formulating queries about an assignment – its content or form of submission and/or other details.	a. Clarifies instructions b. Describes what the assignment is about c. Gives information about (some) submission details.
	3. Suggesting that the 'what' and 'how' to choose the topic for a project be discussed.	a. Recounts topics available and makes recommendations about choices b. Explains what each choice entails c. Gives opinion about the most interesting, the least demanding, etc.
	4. Asking about course requirements, wanting to understand better.	a. Describes course content and shares notes from first day of class b. Conveys what the course entails and how knowledge/skills will be tested c. Highlights key information regarding course proceedings.
	5. Inviting peer to work together (like a language buddy) to prepare for a language exam.	a. Proposes a study schedule covering all components of the exam b. Suggests they locate past papers to familiarise themselves with the format of the exam c. Suggests they do practice tests (timing themselves) and then evaluate each other d. Suggests using language exchange platforms to practice listening skills and help to improve confidence speaking in the target language.
	6. Expressing hope that a peer will help fill in a participation form for an EU project and work together for the submission.	a. Suggests that they go over the form together to understand all available information b. Explains participation requirements c. Fills in the form in cooperation with peer.
	7. Asking peers to share their prior experience in a community event organised by the school that they want to take part in.	a. Recount experiences of previous event – how the community responded b. Talk about what one is expected to do before during and after c. Explains what is required of volunteers d. Explains what one may gain by participating.
	8. Asking a peer to practice for a debate assignment on the pros and cons of using surveillance cameras on school premises – including classrooms and washrooms).	a. Deciding on the pro and con roles b. Reading online views about their use c. Taking notes and exchanging information d. Rehearse the debate e. Try reversing sides.
For technical assistance	9. Requesting a peer's help to create a multimodal and multilingual power point presentation about the different languages of the student body	a. Decide together which modes, besides reading and writing) will be used – sound and image? b. Decide on and create an online a survey to find out which languages are spoken at school c. Decide on the form of the ppt presentation d. Search and decide together on the most suitable ppt template.

	10. Inviting a peer to cooperate on an assignment which involves creating a presentation about the students' views about an issue (eg. game-based learning) and sharing that presentation through video.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Suggest they investigate together which free tool is easiest to use for this purpose.</li> <li>b. Research the issue at hand and take notes from different texts</li> <li>c. Create an outline for the presentation of the issue and decide if script and representation will be used.</li> </ul>
	11. Asking for help on how to navigate and understand the content of the host school portal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Visiting the portal together</li> <li>b. Describing content management</li> <li>c. Explaining content in areas of interest</li> </ul>
	12. Asking for help to respond to an online questionnaire (assigned by the school) about one's linguistic and cultural experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Inform where/how to locate the questionnaire</li> <li>b. Explain what linguistic and cultural experiences were already recorded</li> <li>c. Discuss with peer which linguistic and cultural experiences to record and how</li> </ul>
Helping with exchange students	13. Enquiring about the organisation and extra-curricular activities that the host school provides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provides information about opportunities</li> <li>b. Refers to difficulties</li> <li>c. Poses questions about expectancies and prospects</li> <li>d. Gives advice as to expectations</li> </ul>
	14. Requesting help to understand how to enrol in classes and communicate with school administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Show the online enrolment procedure</li> <li>b. Take exchange student to the school secretariat and the administration and facilitate communication.</li> </ul>
	15. Complaining to another exchange students that the host school's rules of conduct are unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Intervene and explain what one should pay special attention to</li> <li>b. Answer ensuing questions and ask about rules at the snappy students' school.</li> </ul>

## B. TEACHER PROMPTED AND/OR ENCOURAGED MEDIATION

The following CPL activities were initiated and regulated by the university students who took part in the Case Study also, but they have been adapted for the school context. Any of the activities in Tables 2 and 3 could assigned to students so that they work together, in pairs or groups, to prepare schoolwork, to perform in or carry though after class of any school subject, provided they are designed carefully considering and clearly articulating (a) Grouping procedures (rationale of pair or group formation), (b) Role assignment, role fulfilment requirements, task allocation (that could mention languages to be used), (c) Shared learning goals and outcomes, (d) Strategies for goal achievement, incentives, and resources, (e) Evaluation procedures (which may include individual, peer, and teacher assessment, as well as self-reflection) and assessment criteria; (f) Teacher's role (if it's supervisory, evaluative, or supportive).

**Table 2: Teacher assigned CPL mediation activities**

1.	Taking notes in language A (or B) from a text in language B for oneself and then exchanging notes with a peer with a view to helping one another on a class assignment.
2.	Discussing online with a group of peers, in language A, how to organise and present the review of a book in language B.
3.	Exchanging ideas, with one or more peers, in one language (or register) so as to come to a common decision about the gist of an oral or written text that must be delivered in another language (or register).
4.	Discussing difficult points in a text with a peer using languages A and B (perhaps also C), as well as the questions based on this text for which answers are to be provided in language B.
5.	Working with one or more peers to prepare a plan for carrying out a class project, involving a documentary in language A, by using languages A and B (perhaps also C).

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<b>6.</b>	Using bilingual dictionaries and language technology tools, in pairs, to understand a text in language A, and possibly discussing in language A and B the meanings of unfamiliar terms, words, expressions.
<b>7.</b>	Preparing a multimodal ppt presentation for a class assignment in, in pairs or groups – using one or more languages but also other semiotic modes like graphics and other visuals (such as pictures, maps, charts), sound effects (music, sounds, noises).
<b>8.</b>	Preparing, with a peer, for an exam in language A, using languages A, B and possibly C, by going over course content and questions likely to be asked, working on past papers, etc.
<b>9.</b>	Working in teams to prepare an interview with a member of the community in language A, using language B and possibly C.
<b>10.</b>	Working in teams to decide on a topic for a class presentation in language A. In order to decide, team members are to locate and read, in language A, texts which support one of the topics and render the gist of each text to other members of the team in language B.
<b>11.</b>	Discussing in language A with a view to deciding which character/situation/occurrence in a work of prose (in language B) to present in class, and preparing the presentation in language B.
<b>12.</b>	Reading a book in language A for a project in language B, taking notes in language A and rendering them later in language B, but also resorting to sources in language C for the project.
<b>13.</b>	Interviewing online a student from a school in a different country (different language), about the country's languages and customs and writing an article for the school or the local paper.
<b>14.</b>	Transcribing an interview held with an important school guest and then reporting on the main points of the interview in a school event.
<b>15.</b>	Working with a peer, comment and provide feedback on each other's response to an assignment to be handed in.
<b>16.</b>	Interpreting the basic ideas contained in a multimodal text (such as a videoclip, a motion picture, entertainment video) in language A to be used for an assignment in language B.
<b>17.</b>	Looking up and explaining scientific terms in a science lesson and using examples from social or personal life to make explanations clearer.
<b>18.</b>	Rendering data presented in a graph (with numbers and percentages), in plain language, and explaining the significance of the statistical information provided.
<b>19.</b>	Discussing in pairs some striking choices that a translator has made to convey meanings in a poem written in language A and translated in language B and then reporting to class.
<b>20.</b>	Students presenting in language A to their peers in class their views about the ending of a short story which they had been assigned to read (or listen to) in language B, as homework: whether the ending was effective and why or whether they would have like the story to have a different ending and why.
<b>21.</b>	Comparing similarities and differences between texts on the same topic in two different languages.
<b>22.</b>	Working in groups, students review 10 proverbs about, for example, 'never giving up' in two different languages, to select the one which is the most interesting, and explain to the class why they think so.
<b>23.</b>	Students watching an online lesson about the history of European art in language A, take notes in language A and B, decide in pairs about the most important differences between Romantic and Realist art, and together write a short essay in language B.
<b>24.</b>	Working in pairs, students use language A and B (possibly also C) to prepare an interview which they are to role-play for the class, using language B.
<b>25.</b>	Interpreting, rewording, outlining key points, explaining complex notions in simpler language, breaking down complex ideas to ensure clarity, and using examples to facilitate fellow students' understanding of a lesson, as well as answering their questions on issues are unclear to them – in a peer tutoring exercise.

## 6. Concluding remarks

Undoubtedly, it is necessary to teach school students how to mediate as per social context and situation, using the full gear of their semiotic resources, because mediation is a social practice of great importance. Besides, the teaching and assessment of mediation especially across languages<sup>6</sup> helps develop students' plurilingual and pluricultural competence which are essential if one is to be an active member of today's multilingual societies. On the other hand, the use of mediation not as a curricular element to be taught in the language class but as a tool that may facilitate learning across the curriculum, i.e. in all school subjects, can prove enormously beneficial in multilingual educational spaces when peers are socialised into helping each other understand in their own terms, share information, opinions, viewpoints, and ideas through a collaborative process. Moreover, it empowers students as it shifts the learning responsibilities from the teacher to the student allowing them to create their own learning experiences, and to develop interlingual and intercultural awareness. CPL helps students solidify their knowledge by teaching each other which can result in better learning and retention, because to teach another, one must first fully understand the information themselves. Verbalizing a concept and sharing the information with a peer serves to reinforce the knowledge gained. The role of the educator then becomes to create learning ecologies, shape communities, and release learners into the environment (Siemens, 2007). Moreover, CPL embraces diversity, as it supports different perspectives and the diversity of ideas, theoretically providing for no hierarchy in the value of knowledge. Finally, it fosters teamwork, cooperation, patience, social and plurilingual communication skills. In a cooperative peer learning environment, each student's strengths can serve to complement the group and enhance learning; it provides opportunities for students to recognize the gaps in their own knowledge. But when they learn with their peers, they can see new processes for answering questions and come up with creative, collaborative solutions. It is also possible that they will carry these new perspectives, as well as a willingness to seek and accept feedback, with them as they progress in their education.

A word of warning, however: it is important to stress that for peer-mediated learning to be successful, students need to be 'weaned' into the culture of CPL and recognise the value of mediation they perform for themselves, for each other and for the class. Therefore, it is a good idea to introduce CPL mediation early in the semester/trimester to set clear student expectations; establish ground rules for participation and contributions; plan for each stage of group work; carefully explain to students how they are to operate and how peer-teaching (individual students address the whole class) pair-work and groupwork will be graded.

To get started with CPL mediation activities *in class*, it would be wise for teachers to introduce students to the tasks they are to perform (hand out the CPL activity sheet with tasks itemised); provide students with enough time to engage with the first task as an example; walk around and address any questions as needed; address any misconceptions or clarify any confusing points and ask if there are any questions.

For project or assignments outside of class, teachers might think of some strategies ensure productive group dynamics, such as to provide opportunities for students to develop rapport and pair/group cohesion through icebreakers, team building, and reflection exercises; give students time to create a pair/group work plan allowing them to plan for deadlines and divide up their responsibilities; have students establish ground rules; assign roles to members of each pair/group; allow or rather encourage students to rate each other's quality and quantity of contributions. Use these evaluations when giving individual grades, but do not let it weigh heavily on a student's final

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<sup>6</sup> The M.E.T.L.A. project, presented in this issue by Maria Stathopoulou, produced a variety of useful resources for the teaching and assessment of cross-linguistic mediation in the foreign language class, and the *M.E.T.L.A. Teaching Guide* (Stathopoulou et al. 2023) is an excellent source of ideas for mediation linguistic activities across languages.

grade. Communicate clearly how peer assessment will influence grades; check in with pairs/groups intermittently but encourage students to handle their own issues before they come to the teacher for assistance.

Of course, teachers are not readily willing to give up the safety of their role as legitimate knowledge providers and, truth be told, teachers in most countries have not been trained to follow CPL pedagogies, which many feel (as oftentimes parents do) that it is a waste of class time. So, it is also a matter of teachers being educated to embrace such a pedagogic culture.

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