



Faculty of Humanities in Warsaw, SWPS University  
& Polish Association of Modern Languages (PTN)

## CONFERENCE

# Mediation and Mediation Activities in Communication in Foreign Languages

15-17 September 2025

## COLLABORATIVE PEER LEARNING (CLP) LINGUISTIC MEDIATION

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President of ECSPM

# Mediation, translation, interpretation

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- Mediation, translation and interpretation are **distinct social practices** and each serves different purposes:
  - The purpose of translation is to render the meaning of an entire script in one language – be it a literary text, an academic or scientific text, a healthcare or social-benefit text, an advert or a menu, a legal text, etc.) in another language and the translated product must as close as possible to the original.
  - The purpose of interpretation (at conferences, business meetings, health care services, in courts, etc.) is to render as closely as possible everything that the speaker is saying in another language.
  - The purpose of mediation is to facilitate exchange of meanings when there is a communication gap between people trying to communicate with one another in different social contexts.

# Mediation vs Translation and Interpretation

## Translators, like interpreters:

- appear nowhere in the discourse produced. They do not express their personal take on an issue or their opinion, and they are not interlocutors in a communicative exchange
- remain true to the original text which they are required to respect
- do not have the 'right' to change the discourse, genre or register of the text they are producing (that is, they render a flight announcement into an announcement, a poem into a poem, a political speech as just that)

## Mediators:

- participate in the communicative event; they become interlocutors in an exchange of meanings, interpreting and making choices they think are useful for the person for whom the mediation performance is intended
- choose which messages to transfer and which to leave out because they do are of no relevance in the instance of communication
- are likely to change discourse, genre, register (that is they may convey the gist of the lyrics of a song – not translate or interpret the lyrics in their entirety).

# Defining “linguistic mediation”

- A deliberate intervention aimed at helping others and/or ourselves when encountering communication challenges in receiving, sending, processing, or comprehending verbal, nonverbal, and symbolic information.
- The intervention involves the (re)construction of meaning through written or spoken language, as well as non-linguistic signs, including visual, acoustic, gestural, etc.
- This process involves the negotiation, interpretation, and construction of meanings, appropriate for the communicative context.



# Mediation

**Cross-linguistic**

Conveying (redesigning) messages from one language to another

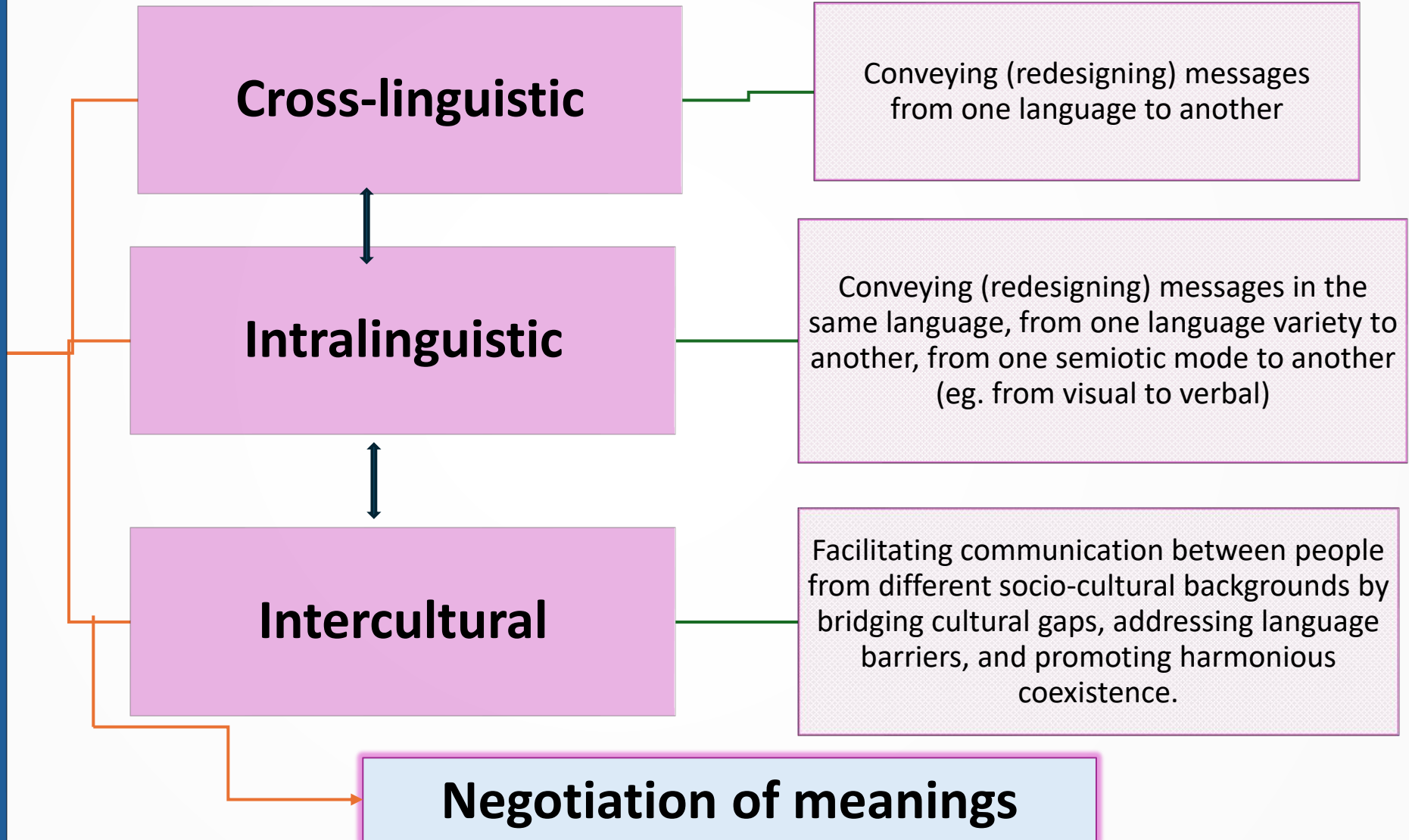
**Intralinguistic**

Conveying (redesigning) messages in the same language, from one language variety to another, from one semiotic mode to another (eg. from visual to verbal)

**Intercultural**

Facilitating communication between people from different socio-cultural backgrounds by bridging cultural gaps, addressing language barriers, and promoting harmonious coexistence.

**Negotiation of meanings**



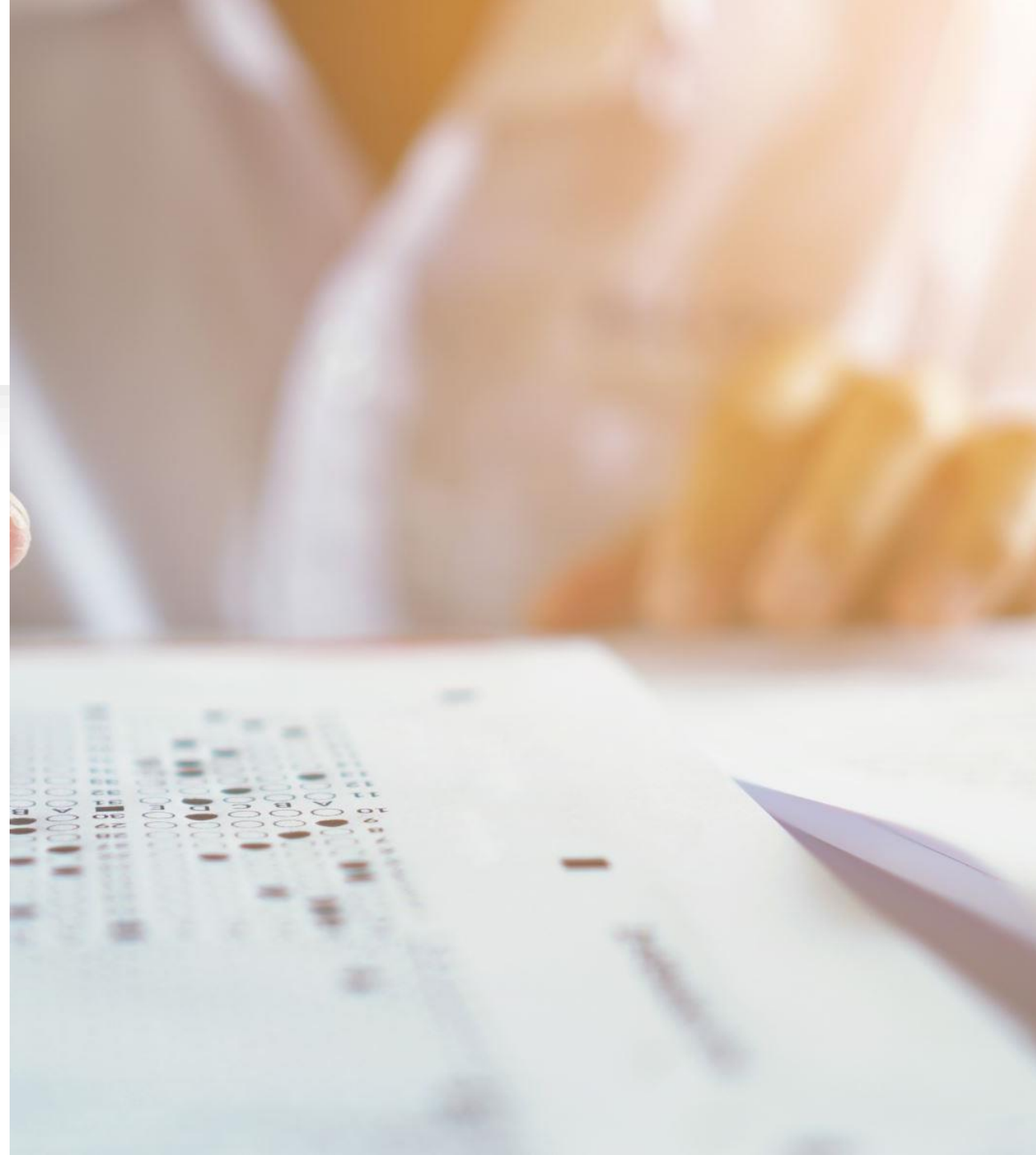




Linguistic mediation was introduced in teaching and testing in **Greece and Germany** in **2003** – much earlier than in other European educational systems.

# Sample learning activities and mediation tasks

*Inspired by the test tasks in the Greek national FL proficiency exams*



# A1 listening comprehension activity

Listen to items 1-3 and choose the best answer (A-D). There is one answer you do not need. (Posłuchaj fragmentów 1-3 i wybierz najlepszą odpowiedź (A-D). Jedna z odpowiedzi jest zbędna.)



## WHY ARE THEY CALLING?

1. ____	A.	<u>Wyjaśnia, dlaczego nie kupił czegoś, o co go poproszono.</u>
2. ____	B.	Dziękuje swojej przyjaciółce za radę.
3. ____	C.	Udziela komuś pozwolenia na udział w wydarzeniu.
	D.	<u>Doradza komuś, gdzie można coś kupić.</u>

## TAPESCRIPT

- 6a.** *Hi, Sammy. It's mum. Ok, you can go to the game, but make sure you are back by 6 o'clock cause you promised to help your dad with his computer, remember?*
- 7a.** *Hi Mary. I just wanted to tell you that your idea was great! I did ask Ms McDowell for help with the project and she did help us. You were right? Thanks!*
- 8a.** *Dad? I didn't buy the batteries I needed. I didn't have enough money! They were much more expensive than you thought! Can you pick up some when you come home? Thanks!*



# A2 reading comprehension activity

Przeczytaj tekst i wybierz najlepszą odpowiedź (A, B lub C) dla pytań 1-4.

**THE Wire** NEWS FROM THE ATLANTIC FOLLOW THE WIRE 

## Do today's teens have more time to spend than some years ago?

By Jonathan Armbands


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COMMENT

**A.** In many countries teenagers today have more time than in the past, so they get together and enjoy themselves. Teens need free time to spend it with friends and relax. Free time can teach them important things that they will need when they grow up.

**B.** Of course, too much free time can be a problem. Bored teenagers looking for something to do will probably get into trouble. Not all teenagers can find useful activities for themselves when parents are not around. They need to learn how to find them. Here are some things parents can do to help teens learn how to have fun and stay out of trouble.

**C.** Set specific family rules, such as time to be at home, what chores and task they must do. Allow kids help set these rules. Let them decide which household chores they can do. For example, if they do not like ironing or they can't cook, ask them to make their beds every day to keep them busy.

**D.** Older teenagers should help at home by getting a part time job. In their job they will meet people, learn new things and earn money - their own weekly allowance.



## A2 reading comprehension tasks

Przeczytaj tekst i wybierz najlepszą odpowiedź (A, B lub C) dla pytań 1-4..

1. Tekst dotyczy głównie nastolatków i

A.	ich życia	B.	ich rozrywek	C.	ich rodziców
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2. Część B tekstu mówi nam, że dzieci mające dużo wolnego czasu

A.	są zazwyczaj bardziej kreatywne	B.	na pewno wpadną w kłopoty	C.	muszą znaleźć sobie jakieś pożyteczne zajęcie
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3. Zgodnie z częścią C tekstu rodzice powinni

A.	zapewniać im wskazówki	B.	kontrolować swoje dzieci	C.	dużo rozmawiać ze swoimi dziećmi
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4. Ogólnym celem tekstu jest:

A.	udzielenie porady	B.	wyjaśnienie sytuacji	C.	przekazanie instrukcji
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# THE EFL CLASS POSTER





# The EFL class poster activities

## B1 speaking activity

The class is asked to bring tokens from home – each student brings one. It can be a wishing or a picture card, a written message, a drawing or a map, a list of some sort, a poem, an illustration, a comic strip or cartoon, a photo, a puppet, etc.

- When each student is called to the poster (made of board), they pin up their token and tell the class about it and what its significance is
- Next, the class works in groups, and they try to link 5 of the tokens and to produce a story which each group leader tells the class.

## B2 writing activity

The teacher has brought her own token to the class – a message to the first boy/girl the teacher liked when she was very young (in the school language), but never sent to him/her.

- Students are asked to work in pairs and write what a response to this letter would have been if the message had been sent.



## Important Polish women

Queen Jadwiga (1384-1399)



Maria Skłodowska-Curie (1867-1934)



Helena (Chaja) Rubinstein (1870-1965)



Agnieszka Holland (1948-)



Olga Tokarczuk (1962-)



Iga Świątek (2001-)



## C1 speaking activity

- 1) Class works in groups and provides as much information as they can about two of the women in the photos.
- 2) One member of the group reports the information they shared to the class.
- 3) Members of other groups who worked on the same famous women are to report on additional information they have found.
- 4) They read the short texts (next slide) about the women that were reported on by class groups, and about those that noone provided information for, and discuss the main points as a class – especially things they did not know about.

## C2 writing activity

- 5) In pairs, they prepare a power point presentation on one of the famous women to present her to a group of students who do not speak Polish. They may look for additional visual and verbal information for their presentation.
- 6) Individually, they write how these and other important female figures have significantly shaped the country's history and culture through their contributions in various fields, including science, politics, literature, and social activism.

## Important Polish women

Queen Jadwiga (1384-1399)	Maria Skłodowska-Curie (1867-1934)	Helena (Chaja) Rubinstein (1870-1965)
Jadwiga z Polski panowała jako pierwsza kobieta-monarcha w historii kraju (formalnie nosząc tytuł „króla”) w latach 1384–1399. Znana była ze swojej inteligencji, pobożności i współczucia, a także była kochana przez swój lud. Była również mecenaską sztuki i finansowała liczne instytucje kulturalne i edukacyjne. W 1997 roku została kanonizowana jako święta w Kościele katolickim.	Urodzona w Warszawie kobieta znana reszcie świata jako Maria Skłodowska-Curie była pionierką w dziedzinie nauki i akademii. Była pierwszą kobietą, która otrzymała Nagrodę Nobla, oraz pierwszą osobą, która zdobyła dwie Nagrody Nobla w różnych dziedzinach (fizyka i chemia). Jej odkrycia dotyczące radioaktywności zrewolucjonizowały dziedzinę medycyny i utorowały drogę przyszłym pokoleniom naukowców.	Helena Rubinstein była bizneswoman i filantropką, która założyła jedną z największych firm kosmetycznych na świecie. Urodzona w Krakowie, wyemigrowała do Australii bez żadnego majątku, wprowadziła na rynek linię kremów do twarzy i zbudowała globalne imperium kosmetyczne, stając się jedną z najbogatszych kobiet świata. Była również mecenaską sztuki i kolekcjonerką dzieł sztuki nowoczesnej.
Agnieszka Holland (1948-)	Olga Tokarczuk (1962-)	Iga Świątek (2001-)
Jest polską reżyserką i scenarzystką, która zastępnęła w Hollywood. Jej uznana filmografia jako reżyserki obejmuje takie tytuły jak „Europa Europa”, „Tajemniczy ogród” i „W ciemności”. Znana jest z surowego realizmu i komentarzy społecznych, a jej twórczość została doceniona licznymi nagrodami i nominacjami. W 2020 roku została wybrana na przewodniczącą Europejskiej Akademii Filmowej.	Jest polską pisarką, aktywistką i intelektualistką. Jest jedną z najbardziej cenionych przez krytyków i odnoszących największe sukcesy autorek swojego pokolenia w Polsce. W 2019 roku otrzymała Nagrodę Nobla w dziedzinie literatury za rok 2018 jako pierwsza polska prozaiczka za „narracyjną wyobraźnię, która z encyklopedyczną pasją przedstawia przekraczanie granic jako formę życia”. W rezultacie wiele jej książek zostało przetłumaczonych na inne języki, a nawet zaadaptowanych na potrzeby filmów.	Profesjonalna tenisistka, która obecnie zajmuje trzecie miejsce w rankingu singlowym kobiet według Women’s Tennis Association (WTA), przez łącznie 125 tygodni utrzymywała pozycję liderki światowego rankingu. Zdobyła 23 tytuły singlowe na poziomie WTA Tour, w tym sześć tytułów wielkoszlemowych: cztery na French Open, jeden na Wimbledonie i jeden na US Open. Wygrała również finały WTA 2023 i dziesięć tytułów WTA 1000. Jest pierwszą Polką, która zdobyła tytuł wielkoszlemowy w grze pojedynczej.

- Those interested in how the mediation construct was operationalised in the Greek foreign language proficiency exams may wish to consult:

- Chapter 6 in the edited collection *Mediation as negotiation of meanings, plurilingualism and language education*, Routledge, 2024, produced by Dendrinos, B. & Karava, E., entitled “Conceptualisation and operationalisation of linguistic mediation as a testing construct”
- Past papers in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Turkish uploaded on the Hellenic Ministry of Education website and, specifically, here:  
<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/kpg-prostheta/kpg-themata>





**Also consult:** <https://www.ecml.at/en/ECML-Programme/Programme-2020-2023/Mediation-in-teaching-and-assessment>



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## Mediation in teaching, learning and assessment

How foreign language teachers in primary and secondary education can include (cross)linguistic mediation in their teaching practices

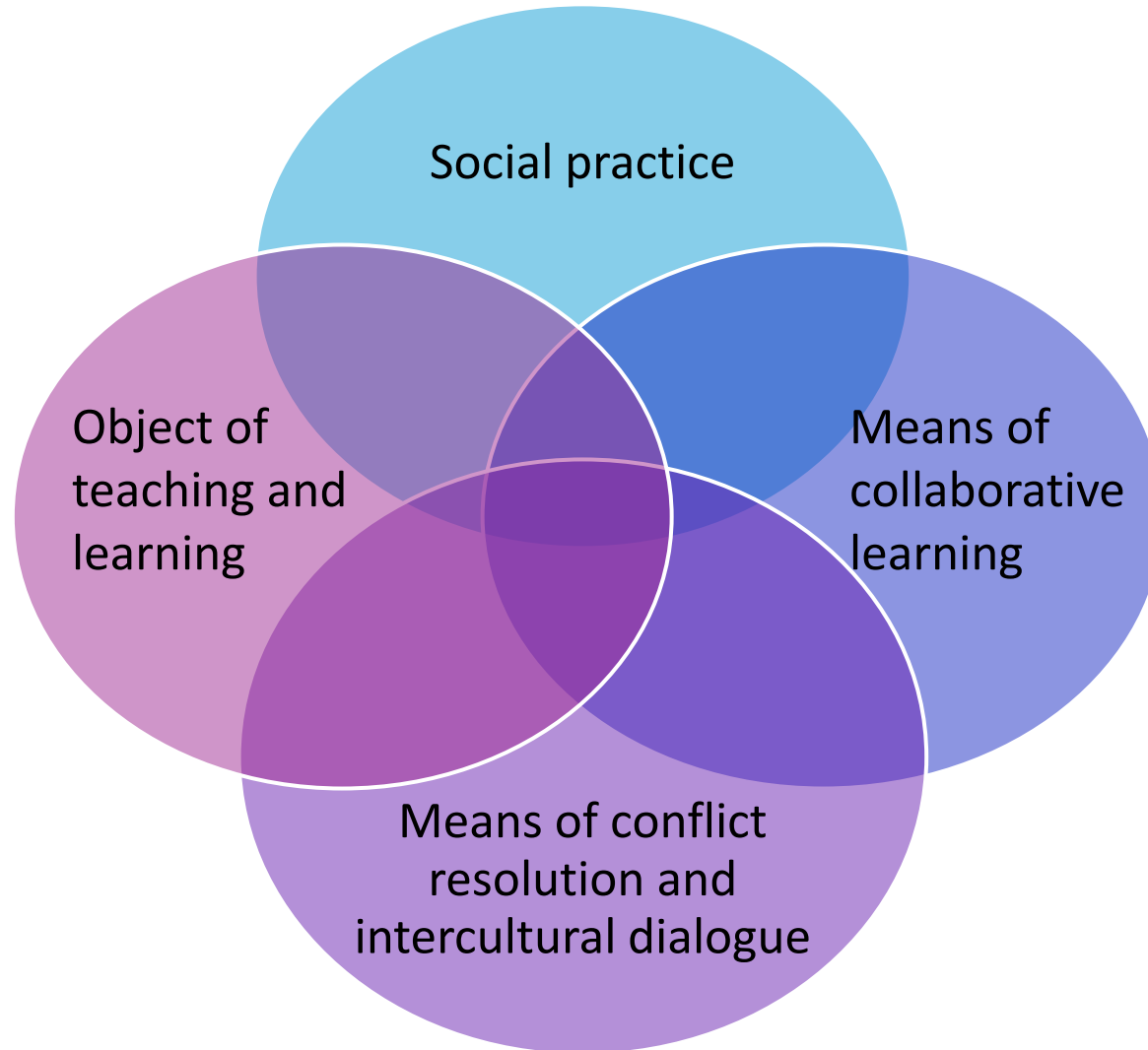


The METLA resources propose innovative and engaging ways in which teachers can include language mediation in their everyday classroom practice. The resources provide essential information about language mediation, examples of cross-linguistic mediation tasks and step-by-step guidelines on how you can design and evaluate your own language mediation tasks.

Cross-linguistic practices call for an acknowledgment of the learner's full linguistic and cultural repertoire as a resource for learning.



# Linguistic mediation





We mediate using the linguistic repertoire we have developed to:

- **Interpret** meanings / texts
- **Facilitate** message comprehension
- **Cultivate** our own and others' language awareness
- **Support** learning
- **Contribute** to working out differences, disagreements, misunderstandings
- **Combine** (linguistic and non-linguistic) resources to acquire knowledge



Mediation involves

- the creation
- the (re)construction
- the co-building

of meanings and knowledge

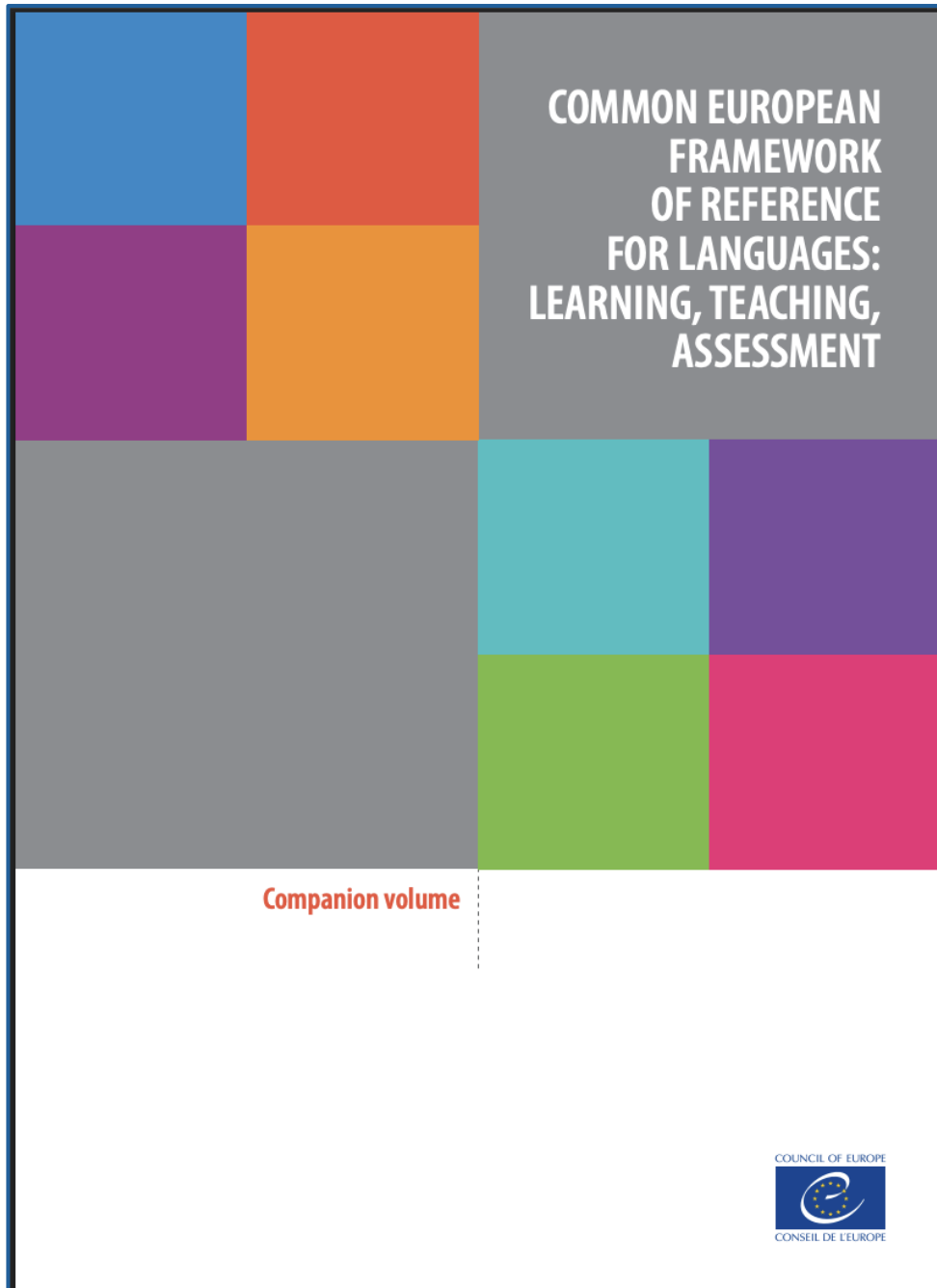


# Mediation:

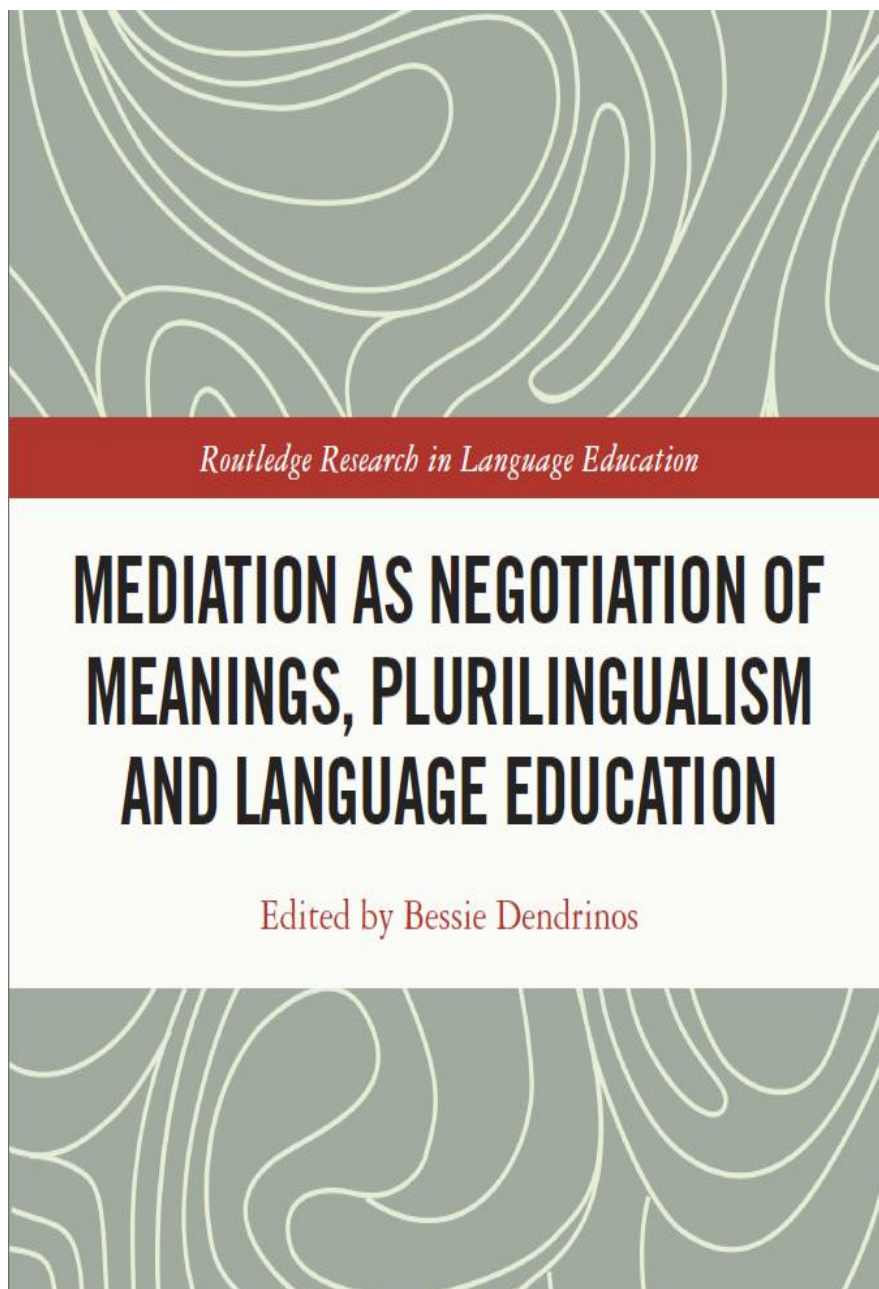
Is it something to be taught or does the ability develop naturally, on its own?

- As we learn to communicate in one or more languages, we also learn to mediate for different purposes in different situations and contexts.
- Mediation is a social activity all of us as language users, perform and practice makes us better.
- If cross-lingual practices are normalised, welcomed and encouraged even, with instruction and guidance our mediation abilities may be improved further.





- The heightened interest in the methodical **teaching of linguistic mediation** is thanks to its inclusion and systematic description in the CEFR CV as a "learning object" in foreign language teaching programs.
- The CEFR CV's pedagogic goal is the development of students' **plurilingual competence**, which involves the combined use of languages (not the use of each language separately).
- Its broader aim is to train foreign language students to **use their entire linguistic repertoire** and other semiotic resources.
- Why? So that they can **facilitate communication in a globalized multilingual environment** and overcome language barriers between speakers of different languages.



The book contains chapters dedicated to linguistic mediation as:

- **Social practice** which we all, as language users, frequently perform .
- **Teaching (curricular) object** particularly in foreign language curricula aiming at the development of plurilingual competence.
- **Testing** object

The book argues that the ability to mediate and that mediation strategies are:

- **naturally developed**
- **cultivated**
- **taught**



# Research project (2022-2025)

Le Multi-/plurilinguisme dynamique, terreau de l'excellence inclusive dans l'enseignement supérieur (MUDExI)



Coordinating institution: University of Strasbourg  
Academic director: Professor Irini tsamadou-Jacoberger

## The aim of MUDExI:

- To promote dynamic multilingualism and plurilingualism through actions that help activate the entire linguistic repertoire of all those communicating with each other in academic settings.
- To improve the practices used by staff and students at eight universities in Europe, Africa, and South America for the production and transmission of academic knowledge.

**MUDExI: Action 2  
Case Study  
PHASE 1**

Responsible for Action 2: ECSPM  
Director of the Case Study: B. Dendrinos

**It focused on:**

- The **linguistic profile** of a sample of students from the 8 participating universities
- The type of **mediatory interventions** that students make:
  - What kind of interventions they make
  - For what purposes
  - In which situations
  - How do they perform
  - What is required of them so that they act effectively
- What motivates students to use their **plurilingual competence** in which situations and what communicative contexts?

## PHASE 1: FINDINGS



# The students' linguistic profile

After analysing the data from a total of 300 students from eight universities, we discovered:

- The languages used in the courses attended by the respondents are the official languages of their university
- The respondents speak more than 50 languages (including Polish)
- Approximately 50% of the respondents has a mother tongue other than the official language of their university
- The languages respondents use in social events, activities, and social media are often different from those they use in their academic environment
- 65% of the respondents often mix the languages they know and switch from one language to another (they translanguage), especially when talking to family and friends, and when using the internet and social media



## Initial hypothesis proven correct

- Mediation acts among students in their academic setting are different than those they carry out with family and friends in their social environment.
- This finding corroborated our initial hypothesis: that mediation is a socially situated act; it depends in the social context.



## Examples of mediation acts **outside** of the academic context

- Explain words, phrases, parts of a written or spoken text that are difficult for someone to understand (in the same or another language)
- Interpret parts of a conversation (in the same or another language)
- They render messages or parts of a text (in the same or another language)
- They speak or write on behalf of a third party in language A with information in language B
- Rephrase instructions, guidelines, procedures, orders, etc. (in the same or another language)
- Interpret (part of) a document that is difficult for a third party to understand (in the same or another language)
- Fill in an official document, application, affidavit, etc. on behalf of a third party (in the same or another language)
- Intervene in a difficult, awkward, problematic situation between third parties (in the same or another language)
- Write an official document, official letter, application, speech, email, etc. on behalf of a third party

## Examples of mediation acts **within** the academic context

- Clarify points in spoken or written text in collaboration with their peers and with the use of aids (in the same or another language)
- Explain, comment on, or clarify elements or points that cause problems for themselves or others
- Summarize information/emphasize important points in written or spoken text (in the same or another language) alone or with aids
- Take notes, highlight the key points of a text, or summarize the essence of a text/speech/discussion for themselves or their peers
- Exchange ideas, concepts, theoretical positions, or other information from texts with their peers (in the same or another language)
- Explain/interpret ideas, positions, etc. from a lecture or lesson for themselves or their peers (in the same or another language)
- Explain information presented in a diagram, graph, infographic, etc.
- Explain concepts, ideas, information, etc. conveyed through images, sound, gestures, movement, etc.

## Purpose of mediatory interventions

- **Outside** of the academic context, their purpose is to assist family members, friends, acquaintances to respond to social and personal needs.
- **Within** the academic context, students mediate:
  - to serve their own and/or their peers' needs linked to their university studies.
  - using their plurilingual competence to facilitate learning and access to knowledge.



**MUDExI: Action 2  
Case Study  
PHASE 2**

- Responsible for Action 2: ECSPM
- Director of Case Study: B. Dendrinos

50 students from 4 European universities volunteered to take part in Phase 2 of the Case Study, as research assistants, and, once they were trained for the tasks below, to:

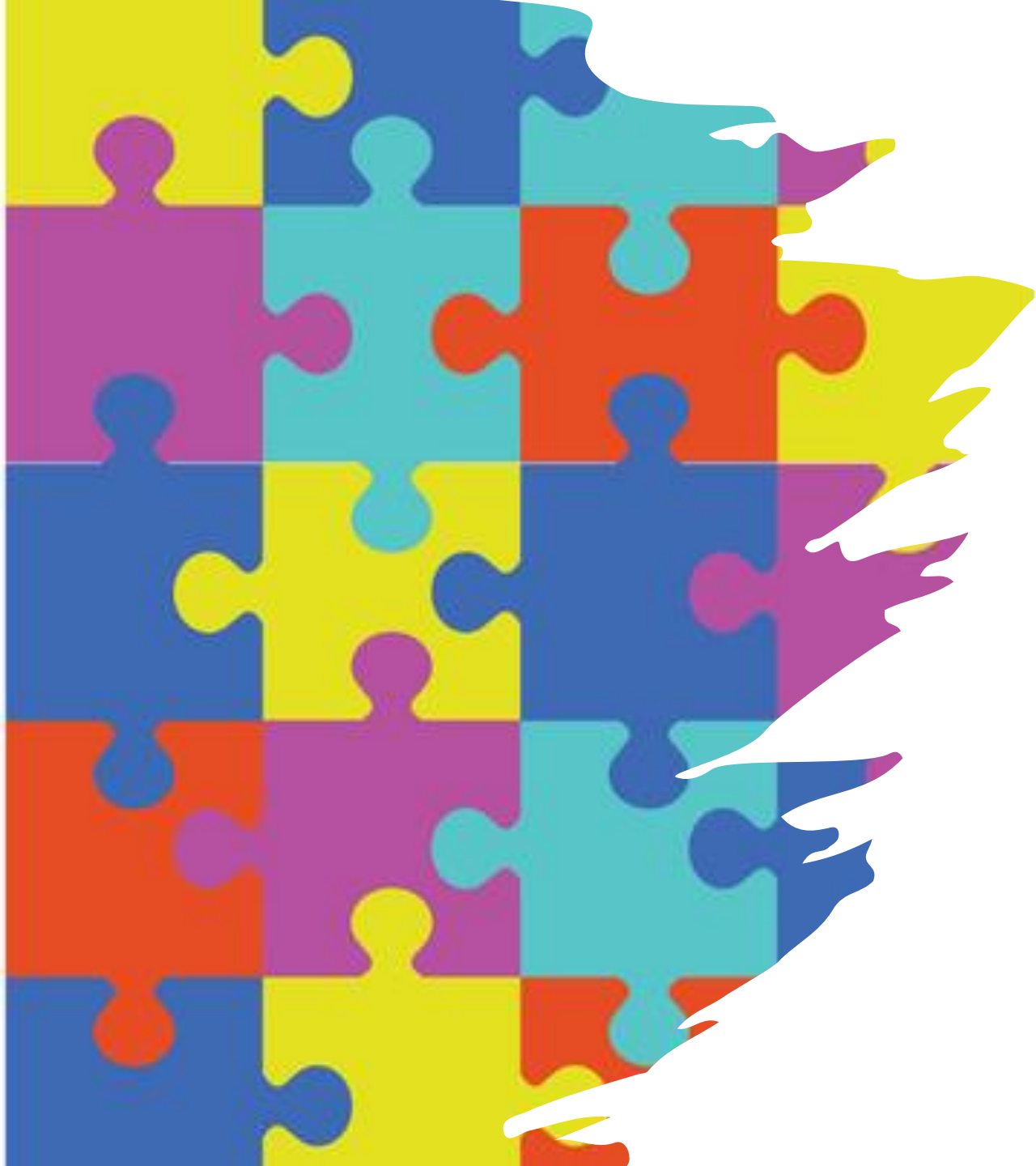
- initiate and perform 10 (intra-linguistic and crosslinguistic) mediation acts in specified stretch of time
- describe in detail each mediation instance, on a standardised Verbal Protocol Form (VPF) prepared for this purpose.

## Verbal protocols

- ✂ pioneered by psychologists studying problem-solving
- ✂ have people “think out loud” as they do some activity, step by step
- ✂ Advantage: can get at some of the invisible steps that people go through on the way to a solution, steps that

The research assistants’ description of each mediation performance included:

- the reason and context of each instance of mediation
- the semiotic resources used during each instance
- the interaction process and the meanings negotiated, linguistically or intellectually, during the performance
- the strategies used to facilitate communication
- the resources used to help production
- ways in which peers seemed to benefit from the interactions



The data analysed were derived from 114 VBFs that teaching assistants completed.

# Overall conclusions

- ▶ Students mediate, using their entire semiotic repertoire to facilitate learning and everyday life at the university—their own and that of their peers.
- ▶ When they mediate for/with other students, intra-linguistically or cross-linguistically, it is so as to:
  - help each other by sharing linguistic or academic knowledge, personal experiences, opinions, views, etc.
  - participate in joint construction of knowledge
  - collaborate in order to:
    - jointly address difficulties encountered
    - complete assignments/projects
    - process information needed
    - formulate views and opinions
    - discover facts, data, and materials which support positions and hypotheses, assist them understand new concepts
    - (re)formulate ideas in the most appropriate way





- Mediation performance in the context of collaborative learning does not involve a simple Q&A exchange, nor do they involve the actions of a single speaker.
- Each instance of mediation recorded in a VBF entails a two-way process, in which meaning is constructed between interactants who share knowledge and attempt to resolve communication gaps.
- Each act of mediation involves complex communication practices that require
  - the use of the mediator's entire semiotic repertoire
  - their sociolinguistic and cultural awareness
- Everyone involved in the mediation instance benefits – in different ways, of course.

## Collaborative peer learning (CPL) mediation pedagogy

Inspired by the results in this Case Study, it is proposed that linguistic mediation be taken advantage of in education spaces 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.



**This pedagogical approach reverses power relations between instructor learner.**



It empowers students to take ownership of their learning process, fostering self-directed learning, enabling them to confidently and creatively face learning challenges.

# Confirmed hypotheses

The way language users mediate differs depending on the communicative context. This hypothesis was confirmed by the fact that students:

- mediate differently when interacting with family and friends at home, at social events, in public institutions and when interacting with their peers at university.
- perform differently since the purpose of mediation is not the same inside and outside the academic environment.
- express themselves differently inside and outside the university—they *language* meanings differently.
- use their linguistic and other semiotic resources to work in partnership with each other.

# Implications of the Case Study

- Mediation practices in academia (and by extension in schools) help students:
  - develop a collaborative ethos
  - use different language skills and other semiotic resources
  - develop the ability for inquiry, reflection and plurilingual performance
  - (re)construct and develop new knowledge
  - manage the way learning takes place and use the language tools used to facilitate learning.
- The CPL mediation approach empowers learners and equalizes the power differential between the instructor and the learner in the existing educational systems.



