



TEACHER TRAINING AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN PLURALISTIC APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE EDUCATION

PILOT ACTION ACTIVITY HANDBOOK

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**Networking the
Educational World:
Across Boundaries for
Community-building**

Teacher training and family involvement in pluralistic approaches to language education. Pilot action activity handbook.

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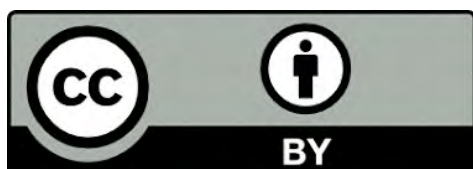
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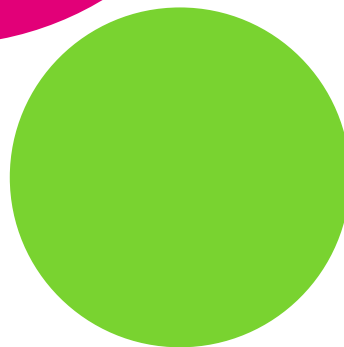
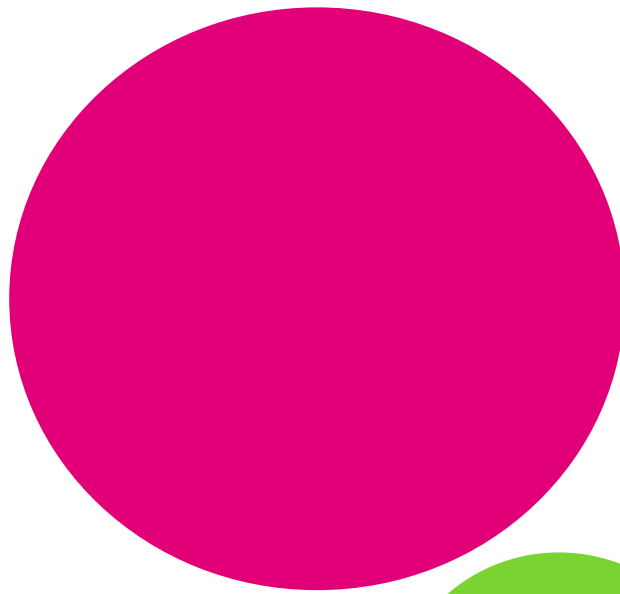
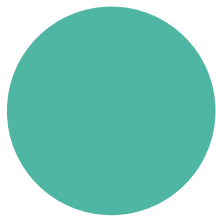
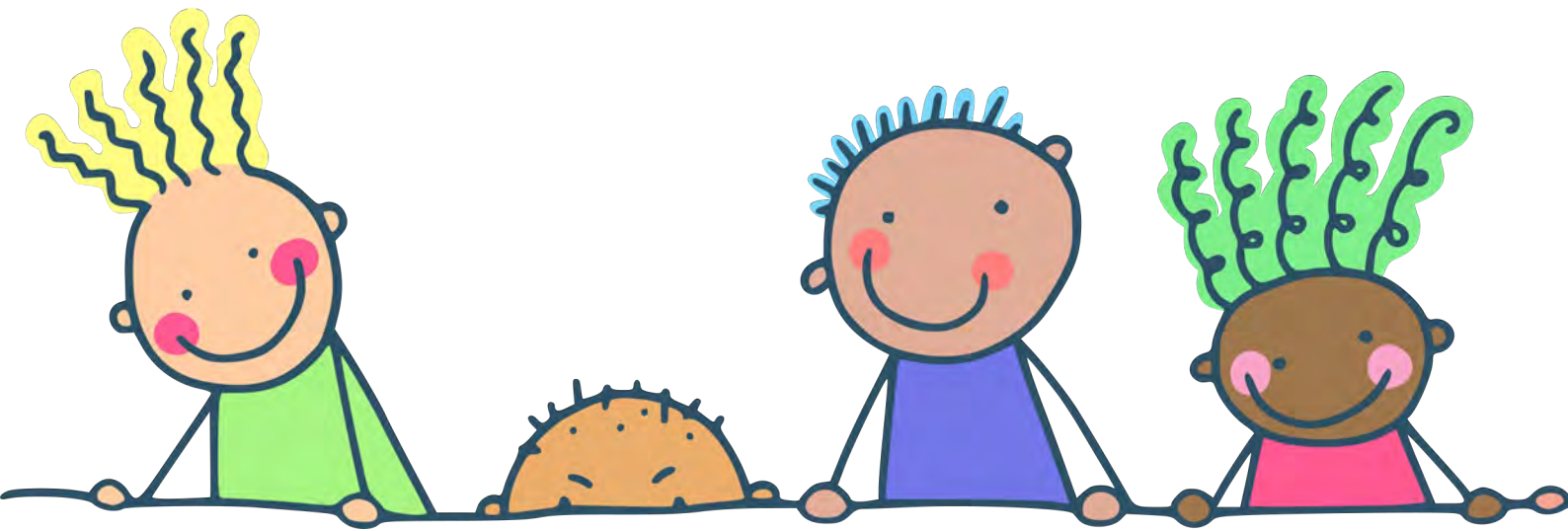
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INTRODUCTION

The NEW ABC project in a nutshell

NEW ABC is a project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. It draws together 13 partners from nine European countries with the aim of developing and implementing nine pilot actions. All NEW ABC pilot actions (activity-based interventions) include children and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, but also teachers, families, communities and other stakeholders in education, as co-creators of innovation to empower them and make their voice heard.

If you want to learn more about NEW ABC, [this is](#) the link to the project website where you can find information on the other pilot actions too:




newabc.eu

What is co-creation?

Before we introduce the activities co-created with children for the *Teacher training and family involvement in pluralistic approaches to language education* pilot action, we would like to explain in just a few words the basic features of co-creation.

Co-creation is a method used to develop democratic partnerships between researchers and local/community stakeholders by promoting their involvement in the design of practices that are tailored to a specific context and responsive to the needs of the community and the participants they serve.

Co-creation is particularly apt in increasing engagement and participation on behalf citizens in policy-making because it:

-  places end-user value at its core;
-  gives particular relevance to the implementation of co-created practices;
-  includes broader dissemination strategies as part of the design from inception.

All the activities presented in this handbook have been planned and implemented together with pupils and parents, headmasters, and researchers by taking the children's perspective and allowing them to voice their dreams and needs.



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Pluralistic approaches to language education: what does it mean?

As its title suggests, this guidance material is about the use of *pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures*. Pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures refer to the “didactic approaches which involve the use of more than one/several varieties of languages or cultures simultaneously during the teaching process” and you can read more about the Council of Europe’s general vision of language education in this link to **CARAP or FREPA**. CARAP provides and exemplifies standards for pluralistic approaches as well as a comprehensive list of descriptors (knowledge, skills and attitudes) functional to implement, depending on the specific context, a plurilingual and intercultural education.

Through the European CARAP and other national school documents in the same line, the idea that pupils’ multilingual repertoire should be actively engaged in (language) lessons has started gaining ground. Several theoretical and practical perspectives on multilingualism such as *éveil aux langues*, *intercultural approach*, *intercomprehension* between related languages or *integrated didactic approach* have been known, although partially put in action.

Pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures are mainly intended to:

-  overcome the monolingual and monocultural horizon in a school and in a multilingual and multicultural reality;
-  ensure that every pedagogical action in the field of linguistic education and in the teaching of the school subjects is based on a truly inclusive plurilingual and intercultural education.

How does this handbook work?

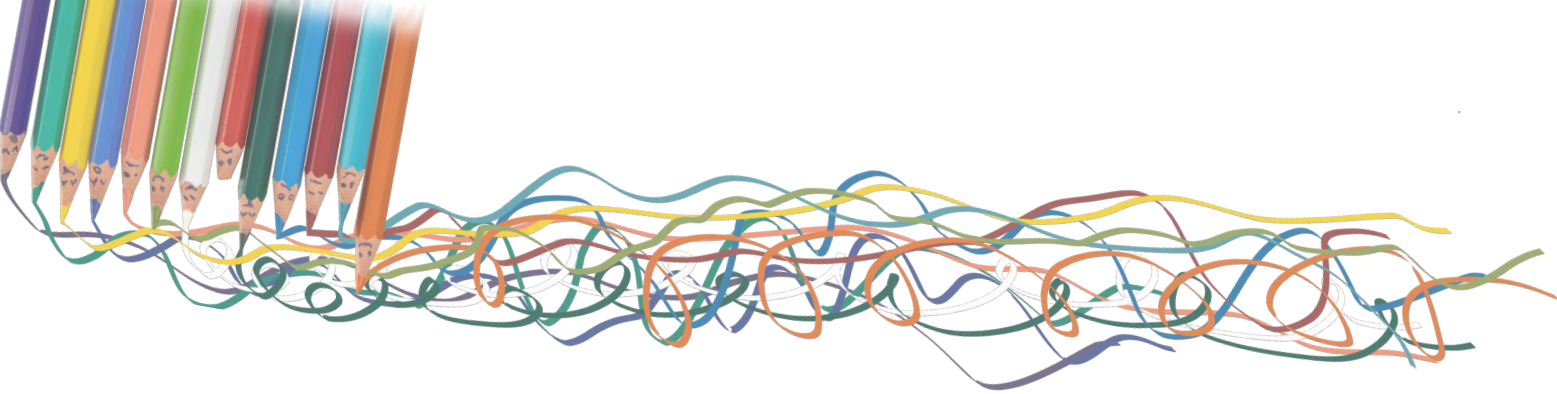
The *Teacher training and family involvement in pluralistic approaches to language education* handbook is a reader-friendly guide designed for teachers, educational professionals, parents and pupils and can be used to plan and implement activities based on co-creation. The handbook follows a step-by-step overview of all co-creative activities that will allow you to adapt and evaluate together with your pupils according to your classroom or educational context. It also provides a brief description of the pilot action’s co-creation approach and of some of the challenges that you are likely to encounter (bureaucracy is likely to be one of them!).

The handbook presents fourteen co-created activities that were implemented in Italian pre-schools, primary schools and middle schools. Each chapter section provides a description of the initial phases of the process and of the main objectives of the activity. You will also find a rough timescale and a list of all required materials. Finally, the handbook outlines possible ways to evaluate the impact of the activities you carried out and to disseminate your activities to other schools and associations.



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How should I use this handbook?

It is entirely up to you. Each pilot action experience is differently and uniquely shaped by the geographical and social context within which it takes place. The handbook is designed in such a way to offer a detailed but not prescriptive overview of the process behind the *Teacher training and family involvement in pluralistic approaches to language education* activities and to invite you to create your own unique version adapted to your class or educational context. How much time you decide to spend on each activity will be determined by your team, colleagues and co-researchers. Equally, you might also decide to develop your own activities to better respond to the needs and interests of your pupils and their families – just take what you need for your everyday work. Nevertheless, the activities should be based on two fundamental pillars: they should be co-created with participants, and foster young people’s plurilingual repertoires in education. This handbook would not have been possible without the input, creativity and generosity of all involved stakeholders (teachers, children and their families).



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LET'S GET STARTED!




Getting familiar with the context

If you are not familiar with the context, the first thing to do is to get some information about your school/organization. These might include how many students and teachers attend the school, the composition of the class, previous projects and activities, possible funding and so on.

A knowledge of the needs, challenges, and strengths of your school/your class will enable you to develop activities that are closer to the 'real' situation of the context you work in. To down-scale or up-scale the plurilingual and intercultural activities of this handbook to your context, you can explore the students' linguistic repertoires and the characteristics of languages and dialects used by children and their families (see Preliminary activities hereafter).

Aims and objectives

The suggested co-creative activities are aimed at creating a learning space to celebrate multilingual skills as a resource and an opportunity in the school curriculum. By using a participatory and co-creative approach, we collaborated with schools and families to develop and implement a series of activities aiming to:

-  raise awareness of teachers, students and families about benefits and educational outcomes of a multilingual oriented pedagogy;
-  empower families in children's school education, foster bottom-up synergies and build a transversal multilingual learning environment, which can support the use and enhancement of a multilingual repertoire;
-  support teachers in developing effective practices for the use and valorisation of plurilingual repertoires.



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HOW TO...

Involve colleagues

One of the key steps of setting up your own pilot action involves building a team that will collectively and interdisciplinary lead the project and set in motion the co-creation process. A problem that you might face regards the number of people in your organization who are willing to participate. All the activities can be carried out by a single class or parallel classes. Colleagues from different disciplines and educational professionals working in the class can be involved in order to contribute by providing support and exchanging ideas and strategies to co-develop the activities.

Sometimes teachers may show some objections about the extra curriculum work load (timetable arrangements of activities), the integration of the activities in the regular school curriculum. To overcome these likely objections, you might:

- o Point out that these activities are not necessarily alternative to the institutional curriculum, but might be integrated into it, e.g. to any already planned activity aimed at working with your pupils on language education and disciplinary subjects (arts, math, science, music, geography, etc.).
- o Share the activities carried out in this Pilot and materials that can be easily adapted to the specific context.
- o Underline the previous success of these activities: children actively participated and enjoyed the activities, and this resulted in creating a serene and constructive classroom atmosphere.

Deal with bureaucratic challenges

You can't wait to start brainstorming the activities with your pupils and get going. However, there is some red tape you need to take care of, which might include:

- obtaining permission from the school principal and, if the case be, from the school governing bodies;
- checking that there are no constraints regarding participation;
- making sure that the ethical procedures are all in place and thus:



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- o If necessary, ensure to get a signed consent form from children's parents (according to your school practice and procedures they may have already signed this form at the beginning of the school year) as well as other participants.
- o You could also write a note in simple language that accompanies the consent form to explain the aims of the activity.

Start the process

Ok, so you managed to find some colleagues who seem willing to participate. How can you start the process of co-creation?

To down-scale or up-scale the activities of this handbook to your context or co-create other activities, you can present your project to your students and their families by explaining what plurilingualism means and the importance of raising awareness about different linguistic repertoires.

Moreover, you can start a discussion with your colleagues in order to:

- o identify the objectives of the class and the ongoing projects (e.g. what are you and your colleagues working on? What projects are planned for the school curriculum?)
- o identify the resources available to the class (e.g. textbooks, whiteboard and other multimedia tools, collaboration of experts in foreign languages and dialects such as mediators, parents, grandparents...)
- o identify shared solutions (e.g. what are the students' interests that could be leveraged, such as sports, hobbies, music...? How could students' language skills be promoted and valued?)

Before starting your activities, you can ask your students what languages and/or dialects they know (speaking, understanding, writing and reading) and which languages and/or dialects students usually use within their families and with friends. You can use the materials and preliminary activities presented hereafter (e.g. Flower of languages and Linguistic Portfolio).



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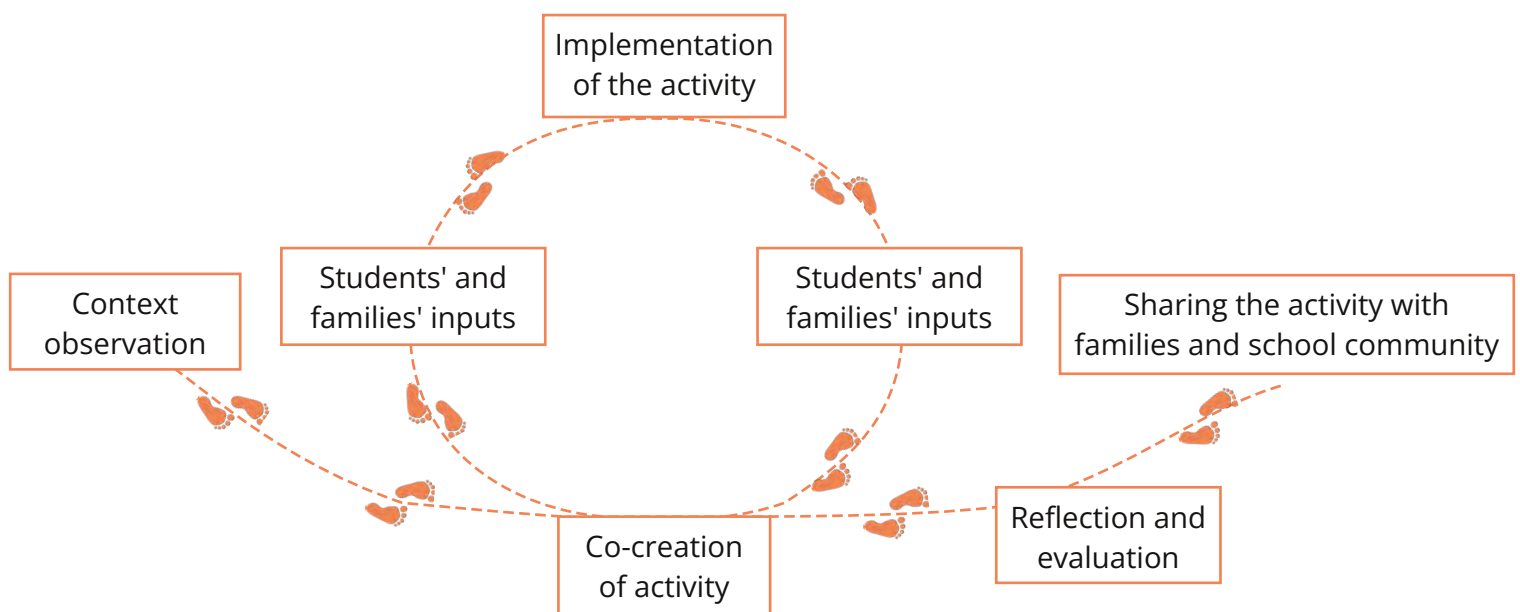
ACTIVITIES AND LEARNING AIMS

In what follows, 2 preliminary activities and 14 further activities are briefly sketched. Each activity starts with a brief description of the context, the learning aims, the materials you will need, and the estimated time to carry out the activity. These activities are simply examples of how a co-created activity might unfold. You can get some inspiration, you can decide to down-scale or up-scale the activities according to your context and your specific aims. The actual time of each activity can range from a 2 hours lesson to 20 hours; steps and time are determined by the group's needs, emerging inputs and ways of working. Don't be afraid of changing the activities according to your specific context!

At this link you can find posters and videos that showcase the activities.

At the end of each activity there is a further link to videos and/or materials that you may find useful.

All the activities explained in each chapter followed these steps:



PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES. RAISING AWARENESS ON STUDENTS' LINGUISTIC REPERTOIRES






Before starting all activities, you can carry out a brief preparatory activity in order to raise students' awareness on their linguistic repertoires. It's a way to bring out the different languages of the classroom and to lead children to discover all the facets of linguistic variation, including possible regional dialects they know or are familiar with. The preparatory activity is useful not only for student awareness but also for teacher awareness concerning the multilingualism in one's own class and his/her personal linguistic biography; for this reason, the following activities can also be considered as ways for teachers' involvement.

Here two possible activities are illustrated, namely the Flower of languages and the Linguistic Portfolio which are inspired and adapted from the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures (FREPA/CARAP).

PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY 1: FLOWER OF LANGUAGES

Context	Primary school (6 to 11-year-olds)
Materials	Drawing of flower (download the pdf sample), school materials: glue, scissors, colors, pencils
Estimated time	2 hours in the classroom + teacher's preparation of the activities + sharing homework (this can be further developed)

By the end of this activity children will have...

-  Discovered the linguistic variety of the class (foreign languages and dialects)
-  Developed an increased awareness of the value of their linguistic repertoire
-  Discovered and valued the linguistic and cultural heritage of their family
-  Discovered that being plurilingual means to know a language with different level of competence
-  Increased the self-esteem as multilingual students



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This preliminary activity follows an approach of awakening to languages (éveil aux langues) and it is freely adapted by an activity of ELODiL (Éveil au langage et ouverture à la diversité linguistique), available [here](#) and also on the [CARAP platform](#). The activity had been previously implemented and carried out in the project "[Noi e le nostre lingue](#)".

This activity helps students to focus on the different languages and dialects he/she knows and on the different situations of their use (at school, at home, with family, with friends).

Teaching aims:

- o stimulate curiosity towards languages
- o raise awareness of one's own plurilingualism
- o share experiences and situations of plurilingualism
- o gather sociolinguistic information about:
 - languages and dialects used in the family
 - languages and dialects used in other social contexts close to children



Step-by-step directions:

Step 1: Each child receives a circle of cardboard on which he/she writes his/her name and draws himself/herself.

Step 2: Each child receives cards with the shape of petals: on each one he/she writes the name of his interlocutor, draws him/her and writes the languages he/she uses with him/her (listening and speaking).

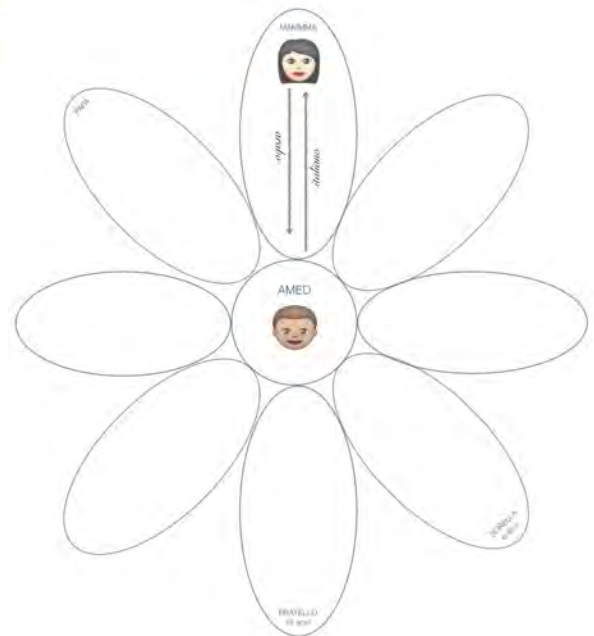
Step 3: Children are asked to start with their own family members and then to represent the languages spoken with other interlocutors in other contexts of the child's social life (school, shops, playground, sports, street...).

Step 4: The petals are as many as he/she will ask to represent his/her interlocutors and his/her languages, dialects or linguistic varieties.

Step 5: Children glue the petals around the center.

Step 6: All the language flowers are pasted on a poster or on a wall, to offer food for thought on the multilingualism of the classroom.










Two images from our own pilot action work. The one above is an example of a flower drawn by a pupil in one of our schools. In the flower they explain the different languages pupil uses with different interlocutors. The one on the right shows the template we provided in class.



PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY 2: LINGUISTIC PORTFOLIO

Context	Middle school (11 to 14-year-olds)
Materials	Filling portfolio (see the sample), school materials
Estimated time	2 hours in the classroom + teacher's preparation of the activities + sharing homework (this activity can be further developed)

By the end of this activity children will have...

-  Discovered the linguistic variety of the class (foreign languages and dialects)
-  Developed an increased awareness of the value of their linguistic repertoire
-  Reflected on the different uses and competences of their languages
-  Discovered and valued the linguistic and cultural heritage of their family
-  Increased the self-esteem as multilingual students



This preliminary activity follows an approach of awakening to languages (éveil aux langues) and it is freely adapted from one of the models produced by the various European countries and accredited by the **Council of Europe** (by the European Language Portfolio Validation Committee). The following **Linguistic Portfolio** is available on the **NEW ABC portal**.

This linguistic portfolio is based on the Irish ELP model nr. 10.2001, the Swiss ELP model nr. 1.2000 and the Bergen Can do Project, supported by the European Center for Modern Languages in Graz



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Teaching aims:

- o stimulate curiosity towards languages
- o raise awareness of one's own plurilingualism
- o raise awareness on one's own language uses and competences
- o share experiences and situations of plurilingualism
- o gather sociolinguistic information about:
 - languages and dialects used in the family
 - languages and dialects used in other social contexts close to children



Step-by-step directions:

Step 1: The teacher can ask pupils about the languages and dialects they know and use in different contexts of the pupils' social life (school, shops, playground, sports, street...). The teacher can also offer examples of his/her linguistic biography in order to stimulate discussion and share experiences. This brainstorming can raise awareness about the linguistic variation, the entire range of linguistic variety (including dialects).

Step 2: Each pupil receives the folder of the linguistic portfolio: he/she writes his/her name and personal information, draws him/her and writes the languages he/she knows (even partially).

Step 3: Each pupil indicates an interlocutor (family member, teacher, friend, etc.) and writes the languages he/she uses with him/her (listening and speaking). He/she starts with their own family members and then to represent the languages spoken with other interlocutors in other contexts of the child's social life (school, shops, playground, sports, street...).

Step 4: Each pupil self-evaluates his/her competence in different linguistic abilities (listening, speaking, writing, reading, interacting) for the languages known.

Step 5: Each pupil shares some reflection about his/her own language and about the languages of classmates.

Step 6: At home, each pupil can show his/her parents the portfolio and interview family members about their own linguistic repertoires.






Step 7: Afterwards, information can be shared in the classroom.



ACTIVITY 1. DEEP ROOTS ARE NOT REACHED BY THE FROST

Context	Pre-school and primary school (multi level classrooms)
Materials	Classroom materials (sheets of paper, glue, scissors, coloured markers), soil, seeds, bins
Estimated time	Range between 10 to 15 hours in the classroom + activities in the school yard + work with parents at home

By the end of these activities children will have...

-  Learned to work in team and with children of different ages
-  Developed an increased awareness of environmental issues and sustainable development
-  Learned to manage their social relationships and exchange knowledge in the peer group
-  Developed communicative and translation skills in Italian and English
-  Learned to cooperate in a shared project

As part of our pilot action, this activity involved pre-school and primary school children using peer tutoring. The activity, which partly took place outdoor, aimed at accompanying children to get to know the place in which they live so that they feel it is their own and protect it from an environmental point of view.



The first phase of the activity was carried out by primary school children. First, they start working on the life cycle of plants, in the classroom. Children read texts in school language, searched for information and reflected on the relationship between seasons and nature cycles. In this phase, children and teachers also learned a song in English that was accompanied by specific movements and gestures. The song was performed at the beginning of each 'session' of the activity with pre-school children.



Oats and Beans

American Folk Song

♩ = 108

1.Oats and beans and bar - ley grow, oats and beans and bar - ley grow, Do
 2.First the far - mer sows his seed Then he stands and takes his ease -
 3.Wait ing for a part - ner Wait - ing for a part - ner
 4.Tra la la...

you or I or any - one know how oats and beans and bar - ley grow?
 -stamps his foot and claps his hands and turns a - round to view the land.
 break the ring and choose one in while all the oth - ers dance and sing.
 tra la la...



[LINK to the activity's video](#)

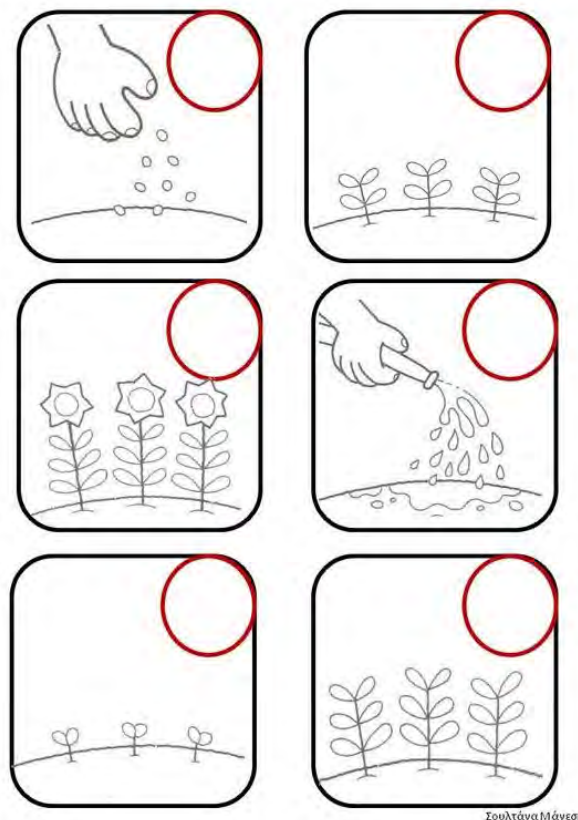
After this initial phase, primary school children introduced pre-school children to the activities. They shared their knowledge on plants, soil, and sowing with the younger children, using Italian and at times English as a lingua franca (since several pre-school children had limited competences in Italian). After this first introduction, children started working together to prepare the soil for the plants; the soil was put in several medium-sized bins in the school yard. When the soil was ready, children started planting the seeds of various plants.



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In the following weeks, children did systematic observations of the plant growth. These observations were written down, using Italian and English, or discussed in the classroom at the primary school and formed the basis of laboratory activities involving all children – again with an approach based on peer tutoring (e.g., group work) and plurilingualism. The written notes were also systematized in some posters, with qr code oral explanation in different languages, that illustrated the various phases of the life cycle of plants.



Σουλτάνα Μάνση

These activities are still ongoing! The bins with the soil and the plants are still there, and children take care of them in groups. Again, these groups involve both pre-school and primary school children who often use more than one language to communicate with each other.

SOME REFLECTIONS

You need to plan the activities so as to follow the seasonal variations of your own location. For instance, sowing and reaping must be done at specific times of the year! That's why you need to plan in advance and start early in the school year with the preliminary work.



Parents might be willing to provide knowledge and materials to plan and implement the activity! For example, the recordings of oral explanation illustrating the various phases of the life cycle of plants was carried with parental involvement.



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ACTIVITY 2. PLURILINGUAL FAIRY TALES

Context	Primary school (9 to 11-year-olds)
Materials	A short video (3.30 min), classroom materials (sheets of paper, glue, scissors, coloured markers)
Estimated time	At least 4 hours in the classroom + work with parents at home + sharing homework and pupils reflections (this activity can be further developed and time is determined by the pupils inputs and ways of working)

By the end of these activities children will have...

-  Developed an increased awareness of the value of their linguistic repertoire
-  Used linguistic and extralinguistic clues to understand a story in an unknown language
-  Learned to collaborate with their peers to share insights and ideas
-  Learned how to observe similarities and differences between words and sentences
-  Used the grammatical knowledge acquired during the school learning pathway to compare different languages
-  Discovered and valued the linguistic and cultural heritage of their family
-  Increased the self-esteem as multilingual students

Pupils and teachers often feel that is not possible to understand an unknown language. This activity shows some strategies to facilitate the comprehension of some elements and keywords through multimodal communication resources (images, gestures, prosody, etc.). Moreover, students struggle to reflect on how the language works. This activity offers some opportunities to lead grammar reflection starting from a language not studied at school.



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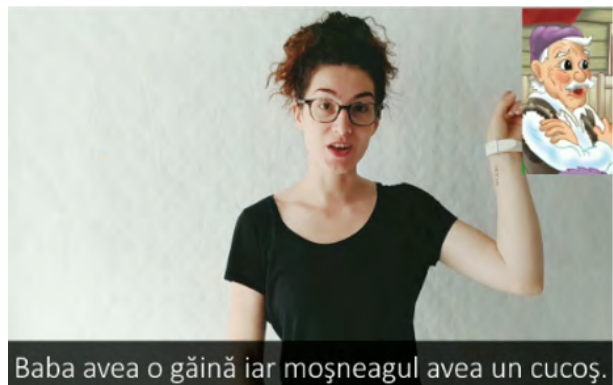


Step-by-step directions:

Step 1: This activity started with watching a video in which a person told a fairy tale in Romanian language and used gestures and pictures to facilitate the comprehension. Children were gradually guided to formulate hypotheses about the meaning of the various sequences of the story. The video had been previously created in the project "Noi e le nostre lingue".



Synchronizing the word with the gesture

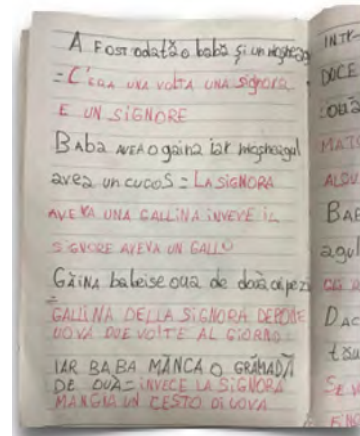


Synchronizing the word with the image

By cooperating and helping each other, the class group verbally reworked the text in the school language.



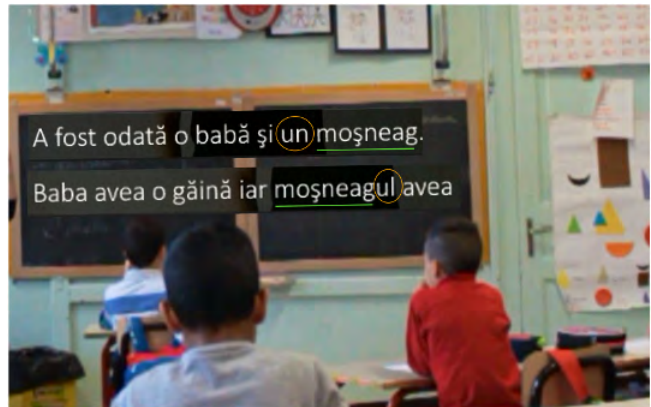
Discussion about the meaning of the narration



Notes to translate the sentences of the story



Step 2: By looking at the subtitles that flowed during the tale, children noted that the words may change according to the morpho-syntactic context of the sentence, while they brought into play their grammatical knowledge to make metalinguistic reasonings. For example, figure beside illustrates the differences between the two subtitled sentences that children had noticed during the narration: in the first sentence, the word “moșneag” is preceded by “un”, whereas in the second, it has the suffix “ul”. In this case, children were guided to retrieve and apply their grammatical knowledge regarding the way they express new referents and known referents. In addition, translation activities stimulated text-building skills and allowed them to find the appropriate lexical nuances.



Using grammar skills through observation and comparison of words



An illustrated story written and illustrated at home in collaboration with the parents

Step 3: As a homework assignment, children asked their parents or grandparents to tell them stories, legends or proverbs in their family language or dialect, and together produced texts, drawings, audio and video recordings to be shared in class. The produced materials were used in the classroom to carry out additional activities to stimulate the skills of understanding, translation and reflection on the language.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Products made at home with the help of parents can be used to stimulate further translation and linguistic reflection activities in class.



Helping parents to prepare the story with effective communication strategies could valorize their linguistic skills and cultural knowledge by promoting their participation in school life.



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ACTIVITY 3. A SALAD OF TALES

Context	Middle school (11 to 14-year-olds)
Materials	Classroom materials (sheets of paper, glue, scissors, coloured markers), dictionaries
Estimated time	20 hours in the classroom + working at home with parents

By the end of these activities children will have...

-  Developed an increased awareness of their own linguistic background, understanding the value of the languages that their parents speak at home
-  Developed an increased awareness of the interrelationships between language and culture
-  Developed an interest and reflected on similarities and differences between languages
-  Developed skills to use dictionaries and online translating apps

Creating a narrative text based on different fairy tales is a topic of language education and one of the aims of the school curriculum. Reflecting on narrative elements and transversal figures (such as dragons, witches, etc.) belonging to various cultures opens up discussions about cultural values and enables children to appreciate the intercultural richness of the class.

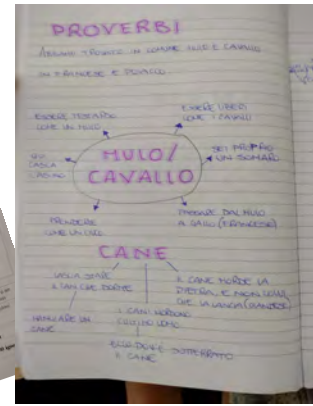
During this activity, teachers introduced the topic of 'animals' through presenting various proverbs and common sayings in Italian and French. Teachers and students reflected and discussed the similarities and differences between the two languages, and reflected on the different metaphors that are associated with the animals in different cultures.





ESPRESSIONS FRANÇAISES AVEC LES ANIMAUX

EXPRESSIONS	EXEMPLES	DESCRIPTION
Être en colère		
Avoir le cœur de lion		
Avoir le cœur de cochon		
Avoir le cœur de chat		
Avoir le cœur de singe		
Avoir le cœur de chien		
Avoir le cœur de mouton		
Avoir le cœur de vache		
Avoir le cœur de chèvre		
Avoir le cœur de cheval		
Avoir le cœur de bœuf		
Avoir le cœur de cerf		
Avoir le cœur de serpent		
Avoir le cœur de léopard		
Avoir le cœur de tigre		
Avoir le cœur de panthère		
Avoir le cœur de jaguar		
Avoir le cœur de puma		
Avoir le cœur de lionceau		
Avoir le cœur de chaton		
Avoir le cœur de chiot		
Avoir le cœur de poulain		
Avoir le cœur de poulain		
Avoir le cœur de poulain		
Avoir le cœur de poulain		



Example of reflection on animal characteristics and proverbs in various languages/cultures

On the basis of this initial activity, teachers read several tales whose protagonists are animals. Notably, teachers also read some tales that involved a mythical figure such as the dragon. Setting out from these tales, students discussed about the figure of the dragon and its role in several cultures around the world (they even drew some dragons!). Students also focused on Chinese culture, in which the dragon is a key figure in many tales and myths. This focus on Chinese culture was further explored by a laboratory on Chinese ideograms: students wrote several ideograms with the help of a cultural mediator.



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Starting from the most known classic tales, students wrote their own tales in small groups. Students then created a 'salad of tales': they took people, animals, places and narratives from different tales and merged them together keeping the presence of a dragon in all tales. These tales were then translated into other languages with the help of English and French teachers, dictionaries, online translating apps and helpful parents who could speak other languages. The resulting tale was also illustrated with various drawings:



SOME REFLECTIONS

This activity can be very engaging as it allows students to express themselves and give way to their creativity. Students are also very eager to get in contact with different languages, cultures and ways of seeing the world.

Another interesting aspect of this activity is parents' involvement. By helping their children with the translations, several parents may feel included in the school community and display their competences.



This activity involves numerous steps: you don't need to follow them all! Get inspired by these different activities and create your own project.



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ACTIVITY 4. THE LONG JOURNEY OF ROBOT VERBS

Context	Middle school (11 to 14-year-olds)
Materials	Classroom materials (sheets of paper, glue, scissors, coloured markers)
Estimated time	Range between 10 to 20 hours in the classroom + working at home with parents

By the end of these activities children will have...

-  Learned the value of cooperating and working together on a shared project
-  Learned how difficult academic topics can be made interesting and engaging through specific didactic methods
-  Developed an increased metalinguistic awareness

Students are not always willing and committed to study grammar and learn the rules. This interdisciplinary activity proposes a linguistic reflection on the verb and the creative use of line and watercolor technique. It becomes even more stimulating as it also involves the languages studied at school and the languages and dialects used in the family.



Step-by-step directions:

Step 1: The activity started with teacher presenting a narrative text (*The knights of the subjunctive* by Erik Orsenna) to reflect on verbs and their functioning in a sentence, in a text in the Italian language.



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Step 2: This activity is then expanded with a discussion of the brief extract of text *Wonder* by J. Palacio, which is presented in three different languages (Italian, English and French).

La prima neve dell'inverno è arrivata subito prima delle vacanze del Ringraziamento. La scuola era chiusa, perciò abbiamo guadagnato un altro giorno di vacanza. Ero contento, perché ero così deluso per tutta questa storia di August e volevo solo un po' di tempo per farla sbollire, senza essere costretto a vederlo ogni giorno.

ITALIANO

E poi, svegliarsi con la neve è la cosa che preferisco al mondo. Mi piace quella sensazione di quando apri gli occhi la mattina e non sai nemmeno bene perché tutto ti sembra così diverso dal solito. Poi di colpo capisci: è tutto silenzioso. Niente auto che strombazzano. Niente autobus che passano per la strada. Allora corri alla finestra e fuori è tutto coperto di bianco: marciapiede, alberi, macchine parcheggiate, i vetri della tua finestra. E quando succede in un giorno di scuola e scopri che la tua scuola è chiusa, be', non importa quanto diventerò vecchio: penserò sempre che quella sia la sensazione più bella del mondo, e non sarò mai uno di quegli adulti che usano l'ombrello quando nevica...mai.

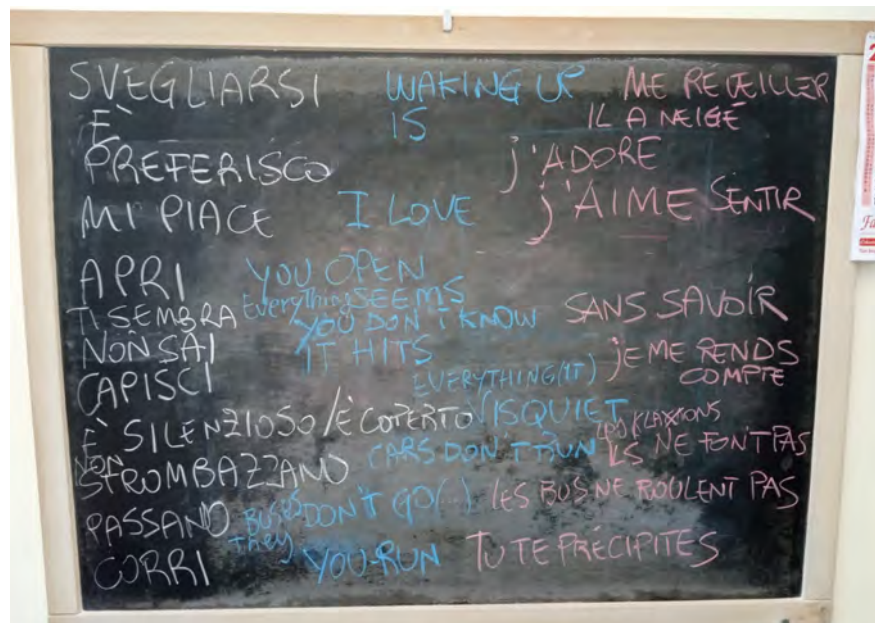
INGLESE

Also, waking up to a snow day is just about my favourite thing in the world. I love that feeling when you first open your eyes in the morning and you don't even know why everything seems different than usual. Then it hits you: everything is quiet. Cars don't run. Buses don't go down the street. Then you run over the window, and outside everything is covered in white: the sidewalks, the trees, the cars on the street, your windowpanes. And when that happens on a school day and you find out your school is closed, well, I don't care how old I get: I'm always going to think that that's the best feeling in the world. And I'm never going to be one of those grown-ups that use an umbrella when it's snowing-ever.

FRANCESE

En plus, j'adore me réveiller le matin quand il a neigé toute la nuit. J'aime sentir qu'il y a quelque chose de différent sans savoir quoi. Jusqu'au moment où je me rends compte du silence. Les klaxons ne font pas de bruit. Le bus ne roulent pas dans la rue. Tu te précipites à la fenêtre. Dehors, tout est blanc: les trottoirs, les arbres, les voitures garées, jusqu'aux carreaux des fenêtres. Et si à cause de la neige l'école est fermée, eh bien, c'est un plaisir dont je ne me laisserai jamais: c'est ce qu'il y a de plus beau au monde. Et quand je serai grand, on ne me verra pas sous un parapluie à me protéger des flocons. Ça, jamais!

Working on the text, students used their own initiative to find inductively the main differences between the ways of using the verb in the three languages. Specifically, students isolated some specific characteristics that were different in the three languages (such as their position in the sentence, or the explicit presence of the subject in the text, the negative form with one or two particles).



Step 3: This activity gave way to the next phase, in which students ‘visualized’ these differences by drawing robots that represented the different ways of using verbs (and thus the different languages). For example, robots with a hat represented languages with an explicit subject (such as English); conversely, robots without hats represented languages without an explicit subject (such as Italian).

Step 3: In the end, students voted the best robots, which were chosen as protagonists of a collaborative story that students constructed and narrated together (**watch story**).



Students' robot drawings

SOME REFLECTIONS

This activity was very powerful in relation to increasing students' metalinguistic awareness. 'Language' was a topic of reflection from the beginning until the end of the activity.



You can narrate and construct the final story in different ways. For instance, you can organize a small 'puppet play' with the robots, or you can create a digital story on the computer (for example adding images and audios through a software such as Book Creator). The story of robot verbs was staged with the **I-Theatre**, an integrated interactive system for the narrative invention of multimedia stories. Here you can watch the story of The long journey of robot verbs:

[LINK to the video](#)



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ACTIVITY 5. CREATING A GRAMMATICAL VIDEOGAME

Context	Middle school (11 to 14-year-olds)
Materials	Game-based learning app Kahoot, interactive blackboard, classroom materials (sheets of paper, glue, scissors, coloured markers)
Estimated time	Range from 10 to 20 hours in the classroom + working at home with parents

By the end of these activities children will have...

- Increased their motivation towards languages through the game situation
- Learned to collaborate with their peers to share insights and ideas
- Understood that linguistic subjects are cross-curricular and interconnected
- Learned to transfer acquired knowledge and competences from one language to another
- Reflected on the language by comparing sentences in different languages
- Learned to ask questions about their home languages, thanks to their parents' support

Students are more willing and committed to study grammar and learn the rules if they are able to deeply reflect on the rules of the language they use every day. Developing grammatical questions in collaboration with peers to challenge other teams can help increase motivation for grammatical reflection. This approach becomes even more stimulating when it also involves the languages studied at school and the languages and dialects used in the family.

The activity involves the use of game-based open access learning app Kahoot, to reflect on key grammar themes as introduced by the teacher. Students created questions and also multiple choice answers concerning grammar (tenses, articles, relative pronouns, etc.) and

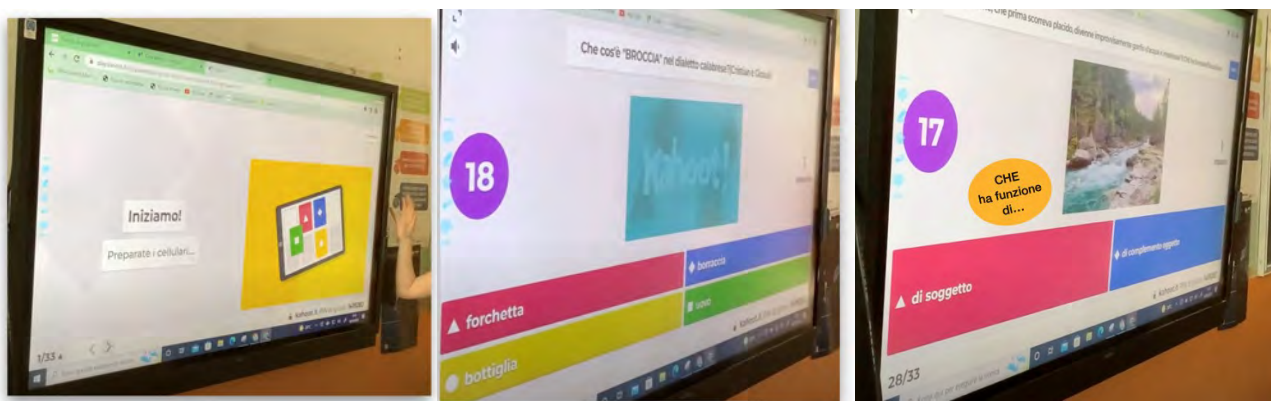


lexicon topics. Discussing together with the teacher's guide, students created questions on the grammar rules they study and other languages or dialect they know. Once at home, students asked their parents for help with the languages they know better.

Questions concerning the rules of morphosyntax and vocabulary, concerning various languages and dialects, were then inserted in the game prepared on the Kahoot app.

Some of questions developed by the students in our pilot action:

- o identify which of the sentences contains a complement of term.
- o what's the meaning of "cumu jamu" in calabrian dialect?
- o how do you ask for the bill in French?



During the grammar lessons a certain amount of time was taken both to build the issues and to play the videogame.

The game was carried out in pairs: each couple used a personal mobile phone connected simultaneously to the Kahoot app to answer the questions and worked collaboratively to be faster than the others.



SOME REFLECTIONS

The activity is designed in such a way to increase pupils' motivation and teamworking skills. Young people's focus on finding answers with the playmate makes it possible to review the concepts studied. Moreover, bringing home languages and dialects into play also contributes to improving the family's linguistic heritage and the parents' skills.



There is a risk that students will only ask questions about definitions learned in a mnemonic way. To guide students to invent the questions, the teachers should select the concepts on which they want to direct the creation of the questions and therefore orient the linguistic reflection with a problem-solving approach.









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ACTIVITY 6. CLASS VOCABULARY NOTEBOOK

Context	Middle school (11 to 14-year-olds)
Materials	Game-based learning platform book creator , paper vocabulary, interactive blackboard, classroom materials
Estimated time	About 10 hours in the classroom + teacher's preparation of the activities + working at home with parents

By the end of these activities children will have...

-  Enhanced their motivation to use vocabulary
-  Identified strategies for translating words from one language to another
-  Learned to find synonyms in different languages, including their own home languages and dialects
-  Realized that there is often no direct match between the words of the different languages
-  Learned to collaborate with peers in order to develop definitions by building clear, precise and comprehensible sentences
-  Engaged their parents in translating words into their mother tongue

This activity focused on collecting newly learned words and grouping them into different semantic areas. With the guide of the teacher, pupils tried to explain the meaning of each word and find the relative translation and definition in the vocabulary.





Under the guide of their teacher, the pupils co-constructed the definitions of the words they've recently learned, by working out sentences that can be understood by everybody. Working in teams, they searched for those images that represent and match up with each word and every pupil finds the corresponding words in their mother tongue language or dialect. At home, they worked with their parents to find the best translation and started practicing pronunciation exercises to find the best pronunciation in their mother tongue language so they could record it then on their ebook at school.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Using the online platform "ebook creator" helps you to put the words into a specific order in a flexible way thereby enriching the vocabulary of the whole class. Elaborating the definitions in a group setting, allows pupils to feel more confident while using the structure of the foreign language during the learning process.



It is important to reflect on all the potential meanings that differ from one language to another.









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ACTIVITY 7. PLURILINGUISTIC VIDEOGAME

Context	Middle school (11 to 14-year-olds)
Materials	Software to build a video-game, classroom materials (sheets of paper, glue, scissors, coloured markers)
Estimated time	20 hours in the classroom + teacher's preparation of the activities + sharing homework (this activity can be further developed)

By the end of these activities children will have...

-  Increased their motivation towards languages through the game situation
-  Understood that linguistic subjects are cross-curricular and interconnected
-  Learned to transfer acquired knowledge and competences from one language to another
-  Reflected on the language by comparing sentences in different languages
-  Learned to ask questions about their home languages
-  Increased the self-esteem as multilingual students

Through a process of co-creation between the pupils and the different teachers of the language disciplines involved (Italian L1, English and French LS), a videogame about questions and answers in the languages studied at school and in the home languages of the pupils was created. The work started by imagining the students' needs: how to communicate with foreign friends met on the beach on holiday? This game helped



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the students remember useful questions about everyday topics, such as family, pets, preferences and hobbies and it also helped their understanding of phrases in unknown languages through the constant practice of intercomprehension and interlinguistic observation.



Step-by-step directions:

Step 1: A complete videogame was created allowing students to play in teams using a single computer and projecting the game onto a Digital Interactive Whiteboard. The videogame can be easily downloaded and played in different classrooms, and it can be adjusted to better resonate with the different languages that are taught and speak in the class.



Alternatively, you can build a physical version of the videogame, that will not need any digital devices. To create a Plurilinguistic Board Game you need the following materials:

- o a game board with different squares that lead to the finish line;
- o a dice you throw to advance on the board;
- o a pawn for each team;
- o a first set of cards from which you can draw, at each turn, a sentence in a specific language to be translated into another random language; the correct translation can be written on the back of each card;
- o a second set of cards to include the languages of the “experts”, that is, the home languages of the multilingual pupils;
- o coins or tokens as a reward if the translation is carried out correctly.



Step 2: Whether you decide to play with the digital or the physical version, the game usually runs like this: the class is divided into teams; each team gets to pick their nickname; the teams take turns to throw the die and advance on the path. Different squares have different consequences or rules, but a typical plain square will ask the players to draw a card and read the

linguistic task aloud: the team will have to discuss and try to properly translate the question into the other designated language.



For example, it's "Ultima Fila" Team's turn. A team member draws a card and reads the task: translate "Que té gusta?" from Spanish to English. The student can cooperate with his/her teammates, but they must answer before the time runs out. If they don't know how to translate the sentence, they can ask another team for help... at a certain cost!



If they manage to complete the task, they are rewarded with some coins that they can use, in later rounds, to buy better dice to walk longer distances and arrive faster at the finish line before the other opposing teams, thus winning the game!

Step 3: Pupils enjoyed adding new sentences, going hand in hand with the new topics covered in class and, at the same time, the class was fortunate enough to have multiple students offering themselves as Experts of a particular language. At the end of this experience, the class collected more than 10 phrases to translate in 8 different languages.

[Click on this link to download the game!](#)



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ACTIVITY 8. FAMILY ROOTS

Context	Middle school (11 to 14-year-olds)
Materials	Classroom materials (sheets of paper, glue, scissors, coloured markers)
Estimated time	Range from 8 to 15 hours in the classroom

By the end of these activities children will have...

-  Become aware of the complexity of specific languages
-  Become aware of the difficulties that newcomers might experience at school
-  Compared various languages (included dialects) in terms of structural differences and similarities
-  Developed an increased awareness of their own local and national traditions
-  Learned to appreciate and respect the life-trajectory of each individual

This activity can support community building across a large group of students; for example, this might be the case of students always talking and playing in small groups, without developing a collective sense of a shared community in the classroom. In response, teachers in our pilot school organized an activity based on students' biographies and backgrounds: by narrating their 'roots' to each other, students would become closer to each other.



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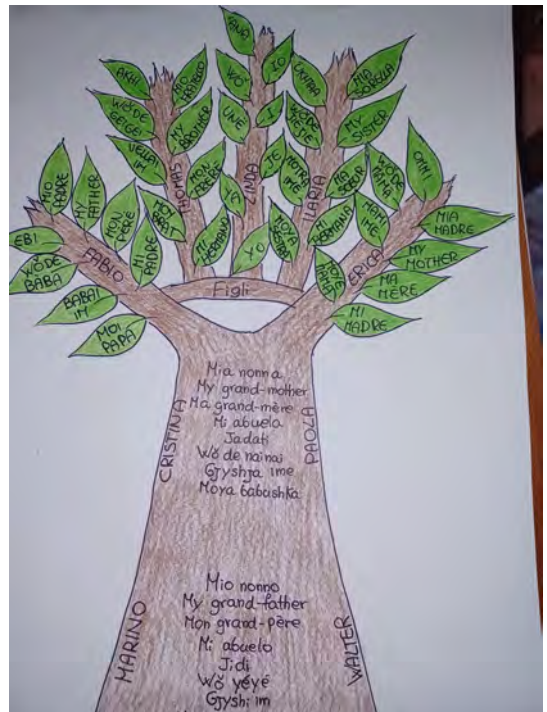


Step-by-step directions:

Step 1: Students were first prompted to write some notes about themselves, starting from some specific questions (my family, my friends, my sport, my music and so on). Then, students transformed these sparse notes into a personal story. Working in couples, one student tells the other his/her life-story (in 5/7 minutes) and vice versa. Since these couples are shifting, students told their story to several other classmates. After this activity, students are prompted to write an autobiographical narrative, individually.



Step 2: After this first phase, the activities focused on students' plurilingual repertoires. First, students created their own genealogical tree by using words in different languages (my mother, my father, my cousin and so on).

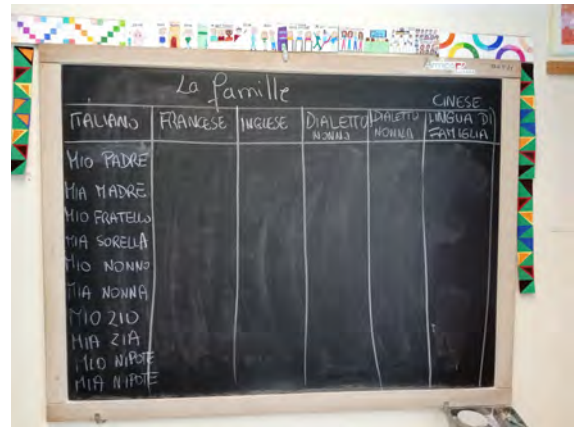
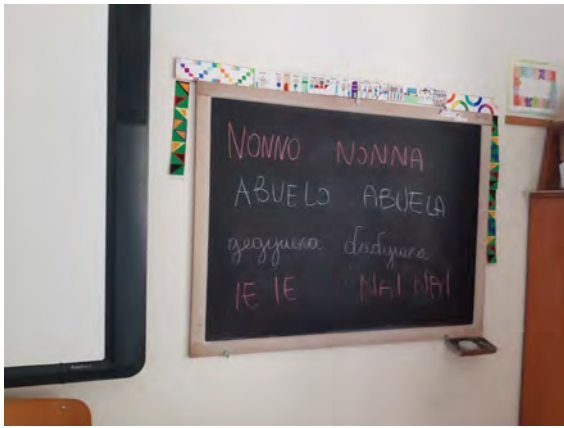


A genealogical tree carried out by pupils

Ethical note:

Children who have been in care (i.e. fostered or adopted), migrated without family or experienced the death of family members in their home countries might find this task difficult. Teachers can suggest they can create a fictional family tree or use the family tree of a famous person by searching them online.

Step 3: As part of this activity, teachers and students reflected on the differences and similarities between different languages; particular attention was given to gender, personal pronouns, possessive adjectives and the lexicon of the family. Eventually, children were asked to choose a photo of a place that has a special meaning for them, and to illustrate it in front of the classroom. For example, students chose a photo of the city in which they grew up or a photo of their grandparents' house.



Comparing different languages

SOME REFLECTIONS

This activity is very powerful in helping students know and understand each other – setting thus the basis for their construction of a supportive and cohesive peer group.







You could do this activity at the beginning of the school year, when students don't know each other well and need to build their social relationships. Alternatively, you could do it at the end of the school year, and observe students' startled faces when they realize how much they didn't know about each other after all these years!



ACTIVITY 9. ON DIALECTS AND POETRY

Context	Middle school (11 to 14-year-olds) – multi level classroom
Materials	Classroom materials (sheets of paper, glue, scissors, coloured markers), madeleine, recipes book (dialect o fereign languages)
Estimated time	Range from 8 to 15 hours in the classroom

By the end of these activities children will have...

-  Developed an increased awareness of the fact that dialects are languages on their own right
-  Developed an increased awareness of the fact that dialects have similarities with Italian and other languages studied at school
-  Developed an increased awareness of the value of their traditions
-  Learned to deal with complex topics and to reflect on their own cultural and linguistic background

Regional dialects are not always recognized by pupils as having the status of language. Teachers can exploit dialects as a valuable resource for language education in order to explore linguistic variation which is a part of the school curriculum.





Step-by-step directions:

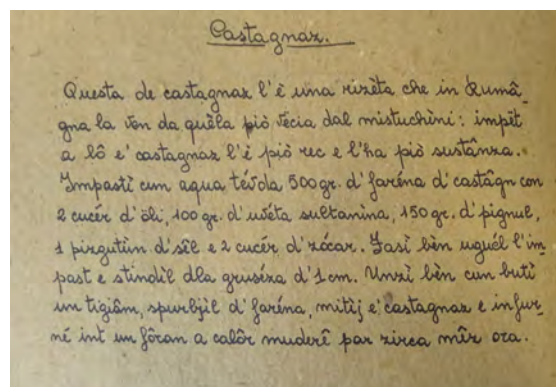
Step 1: This activity started with a brief brainstorming on the dialect of the region in which the school is situated. The teacher asked students if they have any knowledge of that dialect and of any text that was written in the dialect. Students reported several words in dialect, which were written on the blackboard. After this initial discussion, the teacher presented a poem "Udor ad ca" by Elide Casali, which is written in dialect. The students listened to an audio recording in which the author read the poem. Students tried to make sense of the poem and then worked in small groups in order to translate it into Italian. All translations were then discussed together and partly amended; the final translation was then compared to the original text.

The poem in dialect; "Udor ad ca" by Elide Casali (click on the image to listen), and the student's translation into Italian

Step 2: The poem was centered around memory and remembrance, in particular related to a product that evokes memories. In this poem, the product which brings the author back to the memories and flavors of her home is the chestnut, an element of traditional and popular Italian cuisine that can be consumed in different ways. Therefore, at the end of this translating activity, teachers and students reflected on the value of remembering and on the emotions that were associated with it and related to a specific food or dish. On the basis of this reflection, the teacher introduced the famous passage on the madeleines in Proust's "In search of lost time". In order to experience the feeling of the author, all students ate a madeleine that teachers had brought to the class.

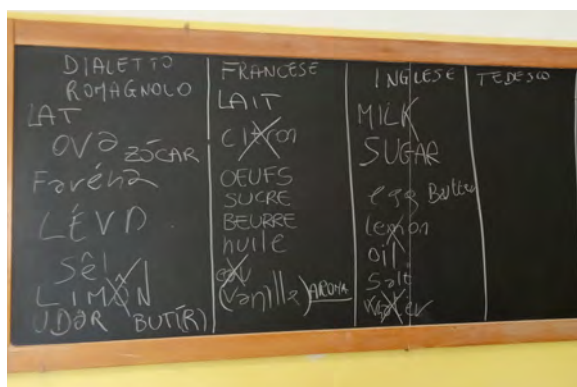


Step 3: After the 'tasting' session, students were asked to try and guess which ingredients the madeleines were made of. Students wrote all ingredients they could discern on their notebooks, using all languages in their repertoire (Italian, French, English, Italian dialects, Macedonian, Bissa). On the basis of these ingredients, the teacher introduced some recipes in various languages (dialect included).

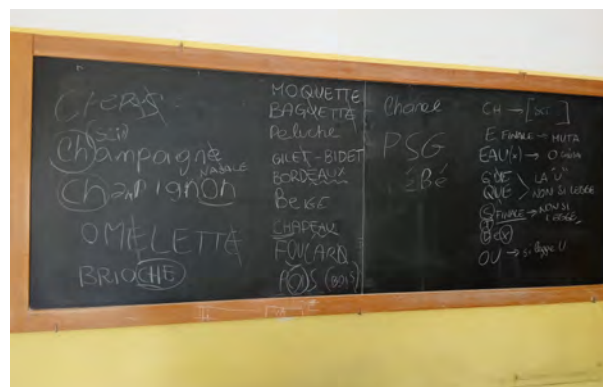


A recipe containing chestnut in regional dialect. Students had to identify ingredients used for this recipe and quantities

Step 4: Some of the ingredients of these recipes were then written on the blackboard and compared in different languages (image below on the left). Teachers and students then looked for phonological and morphological similarities and differences between the words, reflecting thereby on the common roots of some apparently distant languages. A related activity focused on French and on its various linguistic 'loanwords' (words borrowed from other languages) to Italian and dialect; teachers and students discuss on the pronunciation of these loanwords, and the teacher introduced some phonological rules in French and dialect (image below on the right). Eventually, students were prompted to write a brief poem in dialect.



The ingredients of madeleine in various languages



French loanwords to Italian and dialect - finding pronunciation rules

SOME REFLECTIONS

This activity can help students reflect on their own linguistic and cultural background, and on the value of memory for their emotional well-being.



You can choose any poem or book you like! The structure of this activity supports flexibility, allowing you and your group to work on different topics and different languages according to the initial texts that you introduce.



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ACTIVITY 10. FROM ULYSSES TO OTHER TRAVEL STORIES

Context	Middle school (11 to 14-year-olds)
Materials	Classroom materials (sheets of paper, glue, scissors, coloured markers), school textbook
Estimated time	10 hours in the classroom + teacher's preparation of the activities + working at home with parents

By the end of these activities children will have...

-  Established a link between academic topics and topics related to family storytelling
-  Discovered and valued the linguistic and cultural heritage of their family
-  Learned to reformulate explanations from literary language to colloquial language
-  Experienced that they can discuss academic subjects with their parents, by also using mother tongue
-  Realized that there is often no direct match between the words of the different languages
-  Increased the self-esteem as multilingual students

The story of Greek hero Ulysses is one of the oldest-known stories of Western literature. The theme of the 'epic journey' can be found in many cultural traditions. The story of Ulysses can serve as an opportunity to engage parents and/or grandparents in literature-based activities. During conversations at home about the adventures of Odysseus, students can ask their parents or grandparents about their personal travel experiences and stories.



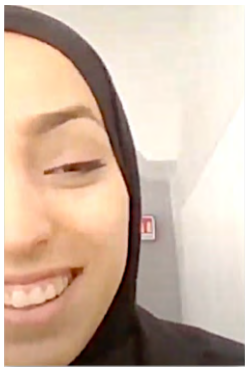
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Step-by-step directions:

Step 1: For the first step, students started completing their linguistic portfolio, talking about the languages and dialects they know. During grammar and literature classes, hypotheses were shared about similarities and differences among various languages and students were encouraged to reconstruct the meaning of new words.



Step 2: At home they were invited to interview their parents about their family's linguistic repertoire and, once back in class, they shared the dialogue recordings, translating them for their classmates.

Step 3: During literature classes, as the history of Ulysses continues, the teacher recommended that students talk to their parents about his adventures. Students were also encouraged to hear travel stories from their parents about their cultural tradition or family stories about the traveling experience.

SOME REFLECTIONS

To carry out this type of work of interlingual comparison it is necessary that the involved pupils or cultural mediators have a certain level of metalinguistic awareness.



The typology of the narrative text allows to stimulate the informal narration in the family environment and also supports the use of the languages or dialects used daily in the home.








ACTIVITY 11. LET'S TALK ABOUT SPORT

Context	Middle school (11 to 14-year-olds)
Materials	Classroom materials (sheets of paper, glue, scissors, coloured markers), recording devices, computer, dictionaries
Estimated time	Range from 10 to 20 hours in the classroom + working at home with families

By the end of these activities children will have...

-  Learned to work in a team
-  Developed an increased awareness of the similarities between different languages and cultures
-  Become more aware of their own linguistic background

Sport is a topic that fascinates many young people, fosters inclusion and promotes intercultural reflections. Sports reporting in newspapers are full of borrowings from other languages (especially English). This activity helps dispel the myth of monolingualism/monoculturalism and highlights the mixing and sharing between different languages between different languages.



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Step-by-step directions:

Step 1: At the beginning of the activity, teachers and students worked on words borrowed from other languages within a specific genre: sport commentaries in newspaper articles. Students wrote all these loans on a digital table including suggested definitions of the words and started reflecting on linguistic loans in general. In small groups, they discuss about all linguistic loans they could think of (in Italian, English, French and other languages).

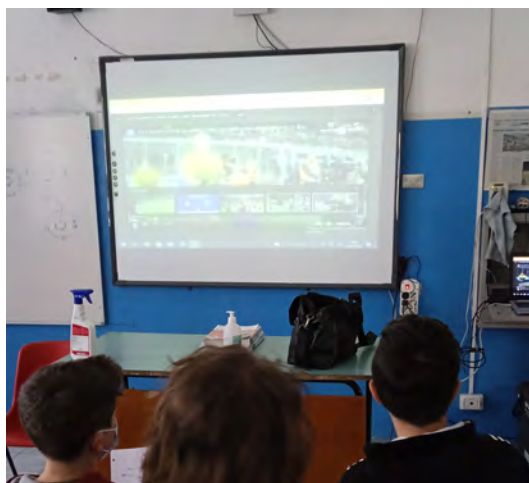


	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	Ace	Punto su battuta nel tennis										
2	Assist	Passaggio finale di un'azione che dà al giocatore che riceve la palla la possibilità di segnare.										
3	Autogol	Punto segnato involontariamente da un giocatore in una partita di calcio (o di hockey o pallanuoto) a vantaggio della squadra avversaria (detto anche autorete).										
4	Beach soccer	Tipo di calcio che si gioca sulla spiaggia con squadre costituite da un numero variabile di giocatori.										
5	Beach volley	Pallavolo giocato sulla spiaggia										
6	Big	Personaggio/ente la cui importanza, influenza, notorietà nel campo in cui opera sono nettamente al di sopra di quella di tutti gli altri.										
7	Big match	L'incontro più importante di un torneo o di una giornata di campionato.										
8	Blackout	Letteralmente interruzione elettrica. Nello sport è la fine di qualche movimento o strategia.										
9	Blitz	Letteralmente significa "operazione importante". Nello sport indica un'azione in grado di ribaltare la partita										
10	Bob	(sleight) Slittino da corsa con protezioni per le gambe										
11	Bomber	Nel linguaggio sportivo, gran realizzatore di gol, cannoniere; anche, pugile dotato di eccezionale potenza.										
12	Box	Ciascuno dei compartimenti in cui si suddivide un vasto ambiente mediante diaframmi sporgenti trasversalmente dalle pareti										
13	Budget	Totale delle somme utilizzate per un determinato investimento.										
14	Champions championship	Torneo calcistico organizzato dalla UEFA e fino a 1993 denominato "coppa dei campioni" al quale partecipano le squadre europee che hanno ottenuto i migliori piazzamenti										
15	championship	campionato di golf										
16	Chance	Probabilità di successo, occasione favorevole.										
17	Club	Società polisportiva che gestisce varie discipline sportive, in sezioni amatoriali.										
18	Conference league	Competizione calcistica continentale organizzata dalla UEFA dalla stagione 2021-2022 per le squadre in una certa posizione nel rispettivo campionato										

Step 2: After this activity, teachers and students discussed the French 'monolingual' policy, according to which all foreign words must be translated into French. This initial activity raised students' awareness regarding the similarities and the mixing and sharing between different languages. Students enumerated various English and French loans in the Italian language, reflecting on the semantic areas in which they were more frequent (such as technology, sport, etc.). Students discussed the reasons behind the success of some particular loans and about the advantages and disadvantages of specific language policies regarding loans from foreign languages. On the basis of this discussion, students worked in groups in order to create some neologisms that could substitute foreign loans that are perceived as superfluous.

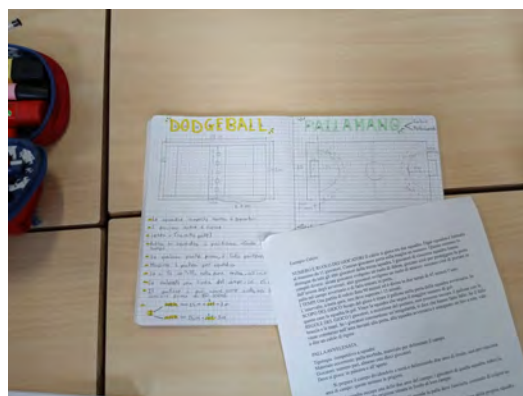
Step 3: Eventually, students suggested two activities centered on their previous reflections on language and language policies. First, students watched a football match without audio and created their own commentaries; by commenting on the match, students used linguistic loans from other languages with increased awareness.





Students watch the match and simultaneously commented it

Second, students wrote a regulatory text in Italian to summarize the rules of a specific sport (handball). The text is then translated into other languages with the help of English and French teachers, dictionaries, online translating apps and helpful parents who could speak other languages. Finally, students performed a 'plurilingual' handball match, explaining rules of the Handball to each other in various languages.



Students playing handball and explaining the rules in different languages in the school gym

SOME REFLECTIONS

To carry out this type of work of interlingual comparison it is necessary that the involved pupils or cultural mediators have a certain level of metalinguistic awareness.










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ACTIVITY 12. TOURIST GUIDE

Context	Middle school (11 to 14-year-olds)
Materials	Learning platform book creator , learning platform for creating geographical maps , interactive blackboard, classroom materials (sheets of paper, glue, scissors, coloured markers)
Estimated time	Range from 10 to 15 hours in the classroom + working at home with parents

By the end of these activities children will have...

-  Had a positive experience of inclusion
-  Experienced a motivating writing opportunity
-  Reflected on the difficulties of translating texts from one language to another
-  Learned to work with peers to compare bilingual texts
-  Attempt to match words in written texts with different systems of writing
-  Reflected on the relationships between phonemes and graphemes in the various languages
-  Valued the skills of newcomers classmates

This activity introduces mapping methods to support linguistic practice and processes of collaboration and effective communication between newly arrived and existing students.

If you are working with newly arrived international students, you can work with the class to create an interactive map of the city, by using Padlet or similar apps, with descriptions of their favourite places.





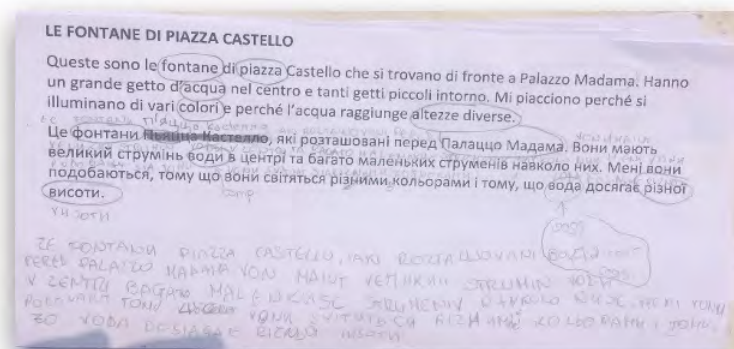
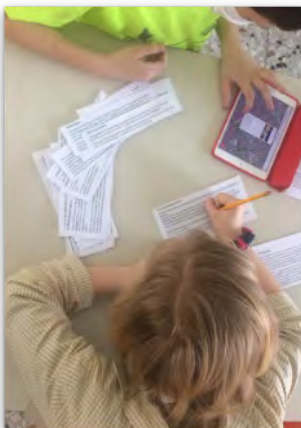
Step-by-step directions:

Step 1: During this activity, each student was responsible for coming up with the description of a preferred location. This involved searching online for the most suitable images and writing a clear and attractive text. All the texts were reviewed, using the most effective communication and language solutions. To translate each text into the language of the newcomer foreign student, you can use a translation software as a basis; supported by cultural mediators, parents or students in the same heritage language. It also involves the new student, depending on their level of language proficiency.

Step 2: As well as being inserted into the students' ebook pages, each description was also inserted into a point on the interactive map, so that clicking on that point opens the text with the image (click on the images to see the whole guide).



In the classroom, you can compare bilingual texts to match words and you can reflect together about similarities and differences in the morpho-syntactical structure of sentences.



Step 3: This activity concluded with the in person guided tour of the city through the interactive map, while also creating opportunities for informal communication between pupils.



SOME REFLECTIONS

It is important that students are free to choose their preferred locations, as that helps with keeping high motivation levels and supporting engagement across newcomer students. The teacher may then suggest including cultural places and historic monuments, also developing aspects related to the various school subjects, during the writing process as well as during the visit.



The comparison between bilingual texts also allows you to address the issue of the diversity of writing systems and the different correspondence between phonemes and graphemes in the various languages.



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ACTIVITY 13. THE LANGUAGE OF PROBLEMS

Context	Middle school (14-year-olds)
Materials	Classroom materials (sheets of paper, glue, scissors, coloured markers), dictionaries
Estimated time	Range from 10 to 20 hours in the classroom

By the end of these activities children will have...

-  Improved their skills in reading and understanding mathematical exercises and problems
-  Improved their linguistics and mathematical skills
-  Learned to find connections between different school subjects
-  Developed a metalinguistic awareness that enables them to play with different languages

Working on the text of the mathematical problems offers insights for linguistic reflection and highlights some critical issues related to the comprehension of texts. This interdisciplinary activity focuses on the specific structure of these texts and on the polysemy of some words in different foreign languages (curricular or used in the family), thus offering opportunities for language reflection and strategies for better understanding the problems.



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Step-by-step directions:


Step 1: The activity started with teachers presenting a brief text by Gianni Rodari (*La lingua come il mare*), which underlines the centrality of language for all school subjects: even mathematics, science, geography are based on language.

“La lingua non è una materia (lo è ancora sulla pagella), non è una materia separata dalle altre, che abbia confini ben precisi: qui è la lingua e qui è la geografia, nella geografia la lingua non entra. Senza la lingua non c’è la geografia, senza la lingua non c’è la scienza, senza la lingua non esiste nessuna di queste che noi distinguiamo, classifichiamo e chiamiamo materie. La lingua è l’aria in cui vivono tutte queste cosiddette materie. Non posso fare storia senza la lingua, non posso fare filosofia senza la lingua, non posso fare politica senza la lingua, non posso vivere senza la lingua. Noi siamo nella lingua come il pesce è nell’acqua, non come il nuotatore. Il nuotatore può tuffarsi e uscire, ma il pesce no, il pesce ci deve stare dentro.”

(Rodari, Gianni (2014), *Scuola di fantasia*, a cura di Carmine De Luca, Torino, Einaudi. p. 40-41)

Step 2: Setting out from this initial reading, students worked on two different texts: a mathematical problem and its oral ‘rendering’ (i.e., the same problem, but presented as a conversation between two students) (see figure below). Students and teachers reflected then on the similarities and differences between the two ways of representing the same problem.

Un cuscino di gommapiuma ha la forma di un cubo. Lo spigolo del cubo è lungo 50 cm.
Calcola
a) l’area della base
b) l’area della superficie totale del cuscino.

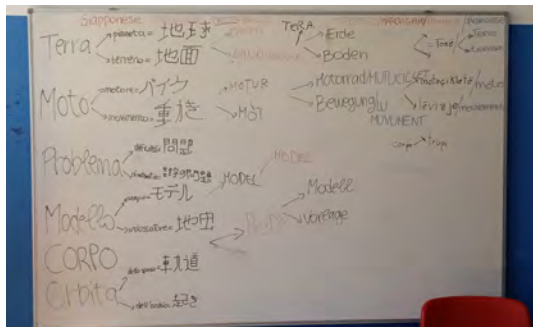
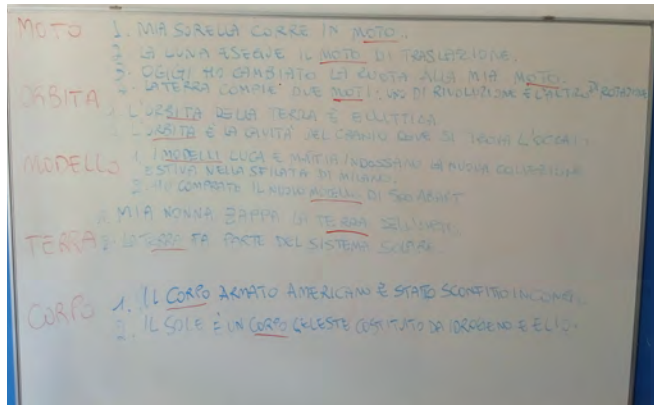
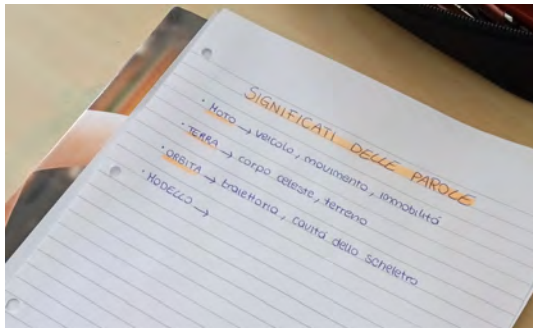


A mathematical problem in two different ‘formats’: written and presented as a conversation (click on the loudspeaker icon to hear it)

Step 3: On the basis of this activity, students started working on various mathematical problems. First, they looked for difficult words and noted that several words had multiple meanings (for example, an ‘ordinary’ meaning and another meaning which is bound to a specific subject, such as physics). Inductively, students reflected thereby on the specific



meanings that words can assume according to the text in which they are inscribed, and they wrote on the blackboard the different definitions they found in dictionaries. These words with multiple meanings are also confronted with their translations in other languages (dialects and foreign languages studied at school).



Second, students re-wrote the mathematical texts in a synthetic and analytic form, reflecting thereby on the difficulties that students can encounter when they read a mathematical problem.

Step 4: As a follow up, students worked on the text *Exercises in style* by Raymond Queneau. This book tells the same brief story in 99 different ways. The idea that the same story can be told in different ways is used as a prompt to invite students to tell their story: the teacher asked them to re-write a mathematical problem in another genre of their choosing (a fairy tale, science fiction, sport chronicle and so on).

C'era una volta un prisma rettangolare, ma non era un prisma qualsiasi, era niente di meno che un pacchetto regalo. Esso si sentiva molto importante, perché il suo contenuto era tanto prezioso e avrebbe reso felice chiunque lo avesse ricevuto. Questo pacchetto regalo era di medie dimensioni ed era rivestito da una carta color rosa cipria e chiuso con un fiocchetto color indaco. Esso avrebbe dovuto avere come destinazione, la casa di Giulia, una bambina di cinque anni, per essere il suo regalo di compleanno. Purtroppo il pacchetto regalo fu spedito all'indirizzo sbagliato. Arrivò nella casa di un anziano signore che rimase stranito, poiché egli non aspettava alcun pacco. Pensò subito che fosse della sua vicina, così le andò a suonare il campanello per chiederle conferma. Gli aprì la porta una bambina con un sorriso a trenta due denti e con un cappellino da festa sulla testa; egli capì che era nel posto giusto. Chiese alla bambina quale fosse il suo nome dato che sopra la carta regalo c'era scritto: "Per Giulia". Così iniziò la festa. Giulia presa dalla felicità invitò l'anziano signore assieme a lei e alla sua famiglia. Fu una giornata speciale, tutti erano felici, ma soprattutto la missione del prisma era stata compiuta!

SOME REFLECTIONS

This activity is very interesting from a cross-disciplinary perspective. For instance, mathematical problems are linguistic problems, and several students have difficulties in mathematics as a result of their limited linguistic competences. Therefore, the activity is useful to help students reflect on the linguistic aspects of every school subject.








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ACTIVITY 14. MUSEUM AUDIOGUIDES

Context	Middle school (11 to 14-year-olds)
Materials	Instruments for scientific experiments, software to generate qrcodes from audio-recording, classroom materials (sheets of paper, glue, scissors, coloured markers)
Estimated time	Range from 15 to 20 hours in the classroom + working at home with parents

By the end of these activities children will have...

-  Learned to reformulate explanations from disciplinary language to more colloquial language
-  Better understood a more in-depth understanding of scientific concepts through different attempts at linguistic reformulation
-  Experienced that they can discuss academic subjects with their parents
-  Realized that there is often no direct match between the words of the different languages
-  Learned to collaborate with peers to develop definitions by building clear, precise and comprehensible explanations

To better understand the concepts and principles of physics and biology, the teachers showed the students some experiments with tools that can be built with recycled materials. The tools used during the lessons to carry out the experiments can be repurposed as exhibits items of a school museum and the students can develop some audio-guides to explain the main scientific principles to all visitors.

In such a didactic approach the audio-guides were developed both in the language studied at school, the taught foreign languages as well as in the dialects of linguistic class repertoire (link



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below). Once they had carried out the experiments with the science teacher they drew up collective texts under the guide of the class language, as a basis to draw up the texts of the oral guides. In case there were any doubts while re-elaborating the concepts mastered, they all faded-away during the following lesson when the science teacher puts over their ideas on the items treated. The written texts were made shorter and more colloquial, to be able to communicate the scientific concepts in a more precise, simpler and more attractive way.

At home pupils asked their parents for help to record an oral explanation based on the text produced at school and aimed at illustrating a scientific tool with the relative experiment. At school, the classmates who spoke that language listened to the audio-guide as a means to verify if the explanation was clear and useful. As soon as the recordings were ready, the teacher turned the themes into different qr codes, that during the visit could be scanned with the use of smartphones, allowing visitors to listen to the audio-guides. Along with audio-guides in various languages and dialects it is possible to develop video-guides in the Sign Language.



During the visit of the parents to the school museum, the students taught them how to shoot the qr codes located nearby the scientific tools and how to listen to the audio-guide in the selected language.

SOME REFLECTIONS

To allow parents to translate the scientific explanations into their mother tongue language or dialect it is necessary to work on the texts to guarantee a more colloquial imprinting similar to the one used in the family.



Such a continuous re-elaborating activity allows participants to feel more comfortable while dealing with scientific matters. At the same time the search for new words and sentences to draw up texts enhances the writing skills. Furthermore, it offers the chance to reflect on the various registers of a language with students.

[Watch video](#)



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EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION

Developing your own evaluation strategy

At the end of the activities, you might wonder if they were successful or not. You will surely have a hint of how it went, but how can you assess more clearly the impact of your activity?

We list here some indicators that can be useful to evaluate your activity. You can develop an evaluation tool using some (or all) of them.

Children's participation

Were children eager to talk and participate? Were they displaying enthusiasm and willingness to be part of the activity? Did you notice an increased participation in terms of children's contributions to the discussion?

Networking in the school

Did you manage to involve a group of teachers in the project? How are your work relationships after the activity?

Parents' involvement

Did you manage to involve parents in some steps of the activities? Were parents asking you about some specific things that children told them at home? Were they curious about the activities that you were implementing?

Policy makers' involvement

Did you manage to inform local authorities about the activities that you implemented? How was their reaction? Are they willing to take part in the activity, in some way?

Professional development

Have you developed new skills during the activity? Do you think you improved your professional competences? Have you learned something?

Overall impact

Are there many people interested in your activities? Did you manage to disseminate them through various channels? Are your colleagues asking you about the activity? Are some colleagues from other schools willing to re-do your activity?



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Developing your own dissemination strategy

You will surely be eager to let people know about the great activities that you managed to co-create with your students. How can you do it?

There are several strategies that you can deploy to enhance the visibility of your activity. We divided them into two macro-areas:

LOCAL LEVEL

At the local level, you can start disseminating the activity while you are implementing it. For instance, after every 'session' you can give students something tangible to bring home (e.g., a piece of paper with a sentence that summarizes the activity, or a small origami, a drawing and so on). You can also involve other people by illustrating the activity through posters and informal chats with children's parents, colleagues, and the headmaster). You can also organize (together with your team) final events that allow to showcase what you have done – invite local authorities and policy makers to these events!

(INTER)NATIONAL LEVEL

You can use various digital channels to present your activities to a broader audience. For example, a platform at the European level is **eTwinning**; here, you can upload a description of your activity and share it with other teachers from different Europe countries.

As you know, there are also other multi-purpose platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and so on (but be careful with privacy issues!)



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So, that's pretty much it. Thank you very much for your attention!

***We hope this handbook has been (and will be) useful for your professional practice.
Best of luck!***

Acknowledgments

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