The use of cross-linguistic mediation tasks in developing learners' transversal competences

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Abstract

Cross-linguistic mediation, a competence introduced by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in 2001, knows a new momentum after the recent publication of the CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR-CV), in 2020, which introduces new can-do statements for the teaching and assessment of mediation. Situated within the framework of plurilingual and intercultural education, mediation is intended to directly contribute to the development not only of plurilingual and pluricultural competence but also of transversal competences which have recently come to the forefront in language education. This article discusses the role of cross-linguistic mediation tasks in developing learners' transversal competences, including digital competences, intercultural understanding, organizational skills, global citizenship, social skills, media and information literacy, teamwork, and collaboration skills. This contribution aims at highlighting the link between mediation and transversal competences through the presentation and discussion of specific task examples, drawing upon the METLA project.

Keywords: plurilingual repertoire, crosslinguistic mediation, transversal competences, mediation tasks

Résumé

La médiation interlinguistique, compétence introduite par le Cadre européen commun de référence (CECR) en 2001, connaît un nouvel élan après la publication récente du Volume complémentaire du (CECR (CEFR-CV), en 2020, qui introduit de nouveaux énoncés pour l'enseignement et l'évaluation de la médiation. Située dans le cadre de l'éducation pluri-lingue et interculturelle, la médiation est censée contribuer directement au développement non seulement des compétences plurilingues et pluri-culturelles, mais aussi d'autres compétences telles que les compétences

transversales, qui sont récemment passées au premier plan dans l'éducation aux langues. Cet article examine le rôle des tâches de médiation interlinguistique dans le développement des compétences transversales des apprenant.e.s, y compris les compétences numériques, la compréhension interculturelle, les compétences organisationnelles, la citoyenneté globale, les compétences sociales, la littératienumérique et de l'information, les compétences de travail en équipe et les compétences de collaboration). Cette contribution vise à mettre en évidence le lien entre la médiation et les compétences transversales à travers la présentation et la discussion d'exemples de tâches spécifiques s'appuyant sur le projet METLA.

Mots-clés : répertoire plurilingue, médiation interlinguistique, compétences transversales, tâches de médiation

Introduction

This article considers the role of cross-linguistic mediation tasks in developing learners' transversal competences, such as digital competences, intercultural understanding, organizational skills, global citizenship, social skills, media and information literacy teamwork, and collaboration skills (Care & Luo, 2016; European Centre for Modern Languages [ECML], 2021). The ability to mediate cross-linguistically, i.e.,the ability to explain or to relay information from one language to another, refers to several *competences* and skills which are manifested through the use of a number of *strategies*.

A *competence* can be understood as "an integrated result of mastering the content of the educational process, expressed in the readiness of students to apply knowledge, skills and abilities" (Muhidova, 2022, p. 64). In the *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (henceforth RFCDC), competence "is defined as the ability to mobilize and deploy relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by a given type of context" (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 32). This entails, on the one hand, developing a relevant set of values, attitudes, and knowledge and, on the other hand, selecting and coordinating skills. All the above are then applied through appropriate behavior in precise situations (p. 70). In the context of the particular *Framework*, a *skill* is the capacity for carrying out a complex, well-organised pattern of either thinking or behaviour in an adaptive manner in order to achieve a particular end or goal (p. 77). In language education, *competences* are the set of intertwined knowledge, hands-on skills, and attitudes that allow students (considered as social agents) to act under specific conditions, to solve communicative problems and to participate in social life. At school, competences might be target-language

specific (production skills in French, etc.) or transversal which refer to different linguistic and "non-linguistic" school subjects, a context we will not be dealing with in this article. Transversal competences, in the sense adopted in this contribution, are not specific to a target language, meaning that they feed students' competences in multiple languages, also encompassing those not included into the language curriculum.

Drawing upon the METLA project (Mediation in Teaching, Learning and Assessment; see below), we herein attempt to link the development of learners' transversal competences to cross-linguistic mediation and to show that, through a holistic learning experience, mediation tasks promote not only the development of learners' linguistic competences (i.e., to use a language appropriately) but of additional ones, such as cooperation, teamwork, intercultural understanding, critical thinking, and digital/media competence, as well as (multilingual) language awareness and autonomy.[1] After the presentation of the theoretical underpinnings of the contribution, we present three mediation tasks included in the database of the METLA project, and propose that cross-linguistic mediation tasks, which have mainly been conceived for the language classroom, could be conceptualized through a cross-curricular lens, expanding their use to other school subjects in order to contribute to the development of transversal competences. This expanded vision of cross-linguistic mediation might open up new avenues for transforming the curriculum, by better articulating the different school-subjects.

Theoretical background

Mediation in language education

Despite being a relatively recent concept in language and teacher education, mediation draws on a well-established theoretical framework spanning from philosophical to pedagogical concepts dealing with human interaction and learning in plurilingual settings (Araújo e Sá et al., 2014; Dendrinos, 2006; Piccardo, 2012; Reimann & Rossler, 2013; Stathopoulou, 2015). After a rather shy introduction of the concept of mediation in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), in 2001 (Council of Europe, 2001), it has nowseen important conceptual and empirical developments after the publication of the Companion Volume (CEFR-CV), in 2020 (Council of Europe,

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[1]We use "multilingualism" to refer to the presence of different languages in a given sociolinguistic and geographic context (in the literature sometimes known under the term "societal multilingualism"); "plurilingualism" is used to refer to the unique repertoires of individuals (sometimes referred to in the literature as "individual multilingualism").

2020; see North et al., 2022 for empirical studies). While mediation was defined, in 2001, as the activity in which someone engages to facilitate the comprehension of content not linguistically accessible to an interlocutor (through adaptation or translation), the concept was enriched by the perspective that mediation includes making concepts, texts, and plurilingual communication transparent for all participants. Another innovation was the introduction of the idea that mediation occurs both interlinguistically and intralinguistically (Council of Europe, 2020).

The notion of mediation refers to a process which links the individual with the social context in which s/he acts and communicates in order to bridge communication gaps (i.e., when someone fails to understand specific information because it is presented in a different language). Mediation can also be considered as a *transformation* process as certain meanings and information in the original source are not only selected and transferred into the target text, but they are also transformed or altered in order to fit the new context in an effort, on the part of the mediator, to overcome linguistic and cultural obstacles (see Stathopoulou, 2015). In much the same vein, North and Piccardo (2016) define mediation as "the facilitation of the communication itself and/or the (re)formulation of a text, the (re)construction of the meaning of a message" (p. 9). *Recontextualisation* is another term used by Stathopoulou (2015) in order to refer to this movement and adaptation of certain meanings from one context to another (Fairclough, 2003). Such is the case in mediation which is not only linked to a simple transmission, movement or relocation of ideas from one text to another, but also involves textual change, such as paraphrasing, simplification, condensation, elaboration, and refocusing (cf. Linell, 1998).

In this article, we put particular emphasis on *cross-linguistic mediation*, which is outlined as:

> Cross-linguistic mediation is the process of relaying or transferring information from one language to another for a given communicative purpose. Within a multilingual and multicultural context, it is an important activity which facilitates the exchange of meanings and information and ensures mutual understanding. It is an instance of multimodal and cross-cultural communication which leads to meaning construction. In today's globalized world, we often find ourselves in situations in which we have to mediate across languages and interlocutors in order to ensure understanding. (Stathopoulou et al. 2023, p. 16)

As defined in the extract above, the concept of cross-linguistic mediation is core in plurilingualism, referring to individual repertoires. Indeed, it allows one to make sense of the complex and heteroglossic or multivoiced nature of the social exchanges and language learning process in our increasingly diverse societies and individuals (Piccardo, 2018) where individuals develop their plurilingual competence in very different ways and merge different resources,

according to their complex linguistic biographies.

The ability to mediate across languages is seen as part of someone's plurilingual and pluricultural competence, as it makes use of all the linguistic repertoires and semiotic resources available to the individual. Cross-linguistic mediation in educational settings, in general, and in foreign language education, more specifically, translates into pedagogic practices that require a movement between two or more languages, which can be doubled by the use of non-verbal features (such as gestures, the use of objects, etc.). In such situations, the learner may decide to intentionally activate some metacognitive and metacommunicative strategies to reach their goal. These strategies might include plan, select, classify, underline, transfer, use tools such as dictionaries and glossaries, make inferences to deduce the meaning of a word, or simplify (for example, by ignoring non-relevant information) or paraphrasing. Such a dynamic, creative nature of cross-linguistic mediation tasks is both a sign of the pupil's plurilingual competence and a way to further develop it at different spheres: socio-affective, cognitive and verbal, linguistic, communicative, and interactional (Andrade et al., 2003; also Araújo e Sá & Melo-Pfeifer, 2021).

From the above, it does not come as a surprise that cross-linguistic mediation is one of the most promising pedagogical concepts nowadays, as it opens up spaces for plurilingual tasks in an otherwise, still rather monolingual language classroom. Indeed, (cross-linguistic) mediation institutionalizes and legitimizes the participation in multi/plurilingual interaction (Melo-Pfeifer, 2014) instead of reproducing the idea that learning a language is mostly needed to communicate in monolingual situations with (monolingual) native speakers. Multi/pluri interaction refers to situations where not only the interlocutors are plurilingual, but where also the communicative situation is characterized by the co-presence of multiple languages. From this perspective, cross-linguistic mediation has the potential to challenge longstanding and pervasive monolingual ideologies and practices in the language classroom and to normalize "plurilingual interaction" as the standard plurilingual subjects live by. This potential also comes with some dangers, such as an overt attention given to communicative problems in plurilingual interaction or to the overburdening of the mediator as the one responsible for ensuring understanding, while erasing interlocutors' personal agendas in the interaction (Melo-Pfeifer & Schröder-Sura, 2018). From this perspective, the teaching of cross-linguistic mediation in language education should be coupled with the analysis of the complexity of what makes plurilingual interaction multilayered beyond the use of (two or more) languages.

Teaching mediation: METLA

The aim of METLA, from which this article draws examples, was the development of:

1. a guide for teachers who wish to incorporate mediation in their teaching practices and

2. a databank with cross-linguistic mediation tasks which are aligned with the pluralistic approaches of learning languages (i.e., didactic approaches using activities which involve different languages as explained below, following Candelier et al., 2012).

All materials developed within the project are in line with the new CEFR-CV descriptors which refer to cross-linguistic mediation and can be adapted to a myriad of different teaching contexts.

Specifically, METLA mediation tasks combine two or more languages. Learners are asked to read or listen to something in Language A and write or say something in Language B (C, etc.). They are asked in other words to engage their full linguistic repertoire (Candelier et al., 2012) and productively make use of transfer of information across languages. The plurilingual approach is evident in that texts in Language A are given to the learner with the task of extracting the information and re-constructing it in a new (con)text in Language B. Allowing learners, whenever necessary, to rely on their (shared) language(s) (be it their home language or a common language) to accomplish a task in Language B (or C etc.) facilitates the mediation process. As stated by Araújo e Sá & Melo-Pfeifer (2021), the prerequisite for the successful execution of the task by language users who function as mediators is to exploit the full range of their plurilingual competence (in its socio-affective, communicative, and cognitive dimensions). Indeed, cross-linguistic mediation illustrates how plurilingual speakers can use their linguistic competences in a flexible and hybrid way to accomplish real goals in the real world, as "social agents" (Dendrinos, 2006; Piccardo, 2019).

Referring to their characteristics, the METLA tasks are context-oriented and purpose-related, which means that an attempt was made to present authentic tasks addressing students' everyday communicative needs. They consider the social and cultural dimensions of language learning, thus reflecting the link between language and culture and are learner-centered catering for learners' needs and relating to their personal, social, and emotional experiences.

How does mediation relate to the development of transversal competences? The METLA project standpoint

Defining transversal competences

There is increasing recognition of the importance of the development of twenty-first century skills and transversal competences in (language) education. Transversal competences are also known as transferable and they refer to a set of abilities, skills, and attitudes that can be applied across different situations, contexts, and roles. In education, they refer to competences that are not specific to a target language or a specific school subject (ECML, 2021), but rather connected to the development of competences across languages or across school subjects, which are needed to co-construct meaning. These skills are not specific to any particular language, job, or field but are considered of paramount importance for acting as a social agent (Piccardo & North, 2019) in various aspects of life, including (language) education and professional and personal interactions. They complement other language and domain-specific sets of competences. This accounts for the many frameworks found in the literature which describe these skills and competences (e.g., Binkley et al., 2012; Care & Luo, 2016; Gordon et al., 2009).

In 2006, the European Commission presented a document outlining skills useful throughout one's life, such as creativity, critical, thinking and problem solving (European Commission, 2006). The Organization for Economic Development's (OECD) Competency Framework (2014) displays fifteen *core competencies*, many of which can be characterized as transversal (e.g., teamwork or flexible thinking). The 2018 publication of the Council of Europe's detailed RFCDC is another milestone in the discussion about transversal competences. This 20-competence framework is divided into values, attitudes, knowledge, and critical thinking. In 2019, UNICEF published the Global Framework of Transferable Skills, which focuses specifically on the needs of young people in the Middle East and North Africa (UNICEF, 2019, pp. 10–11).

Following the descriptions in UNESCO's framework (Care & Luo, 2016) and shown in Figure 1, there are five transversal competences key to the tasks included in the databank of the METLA project:

- critical and innovative thinking (e.g., creativity, resourcefulness, etc.);
- inter-personal skills (e.g., presentation and communication skills, organizational skills, teamwork, etc.);
- intra-personal skills (e.g., self-discipline, enthusiasm, perseverance, self-motivation, etc.);
- global citizenship (e.g., tolerance, openness, respect for diversity,

intercultural understanding, etc.);

- media and information literacy such as the ability to locate and access information, as well as to evaluate media content.
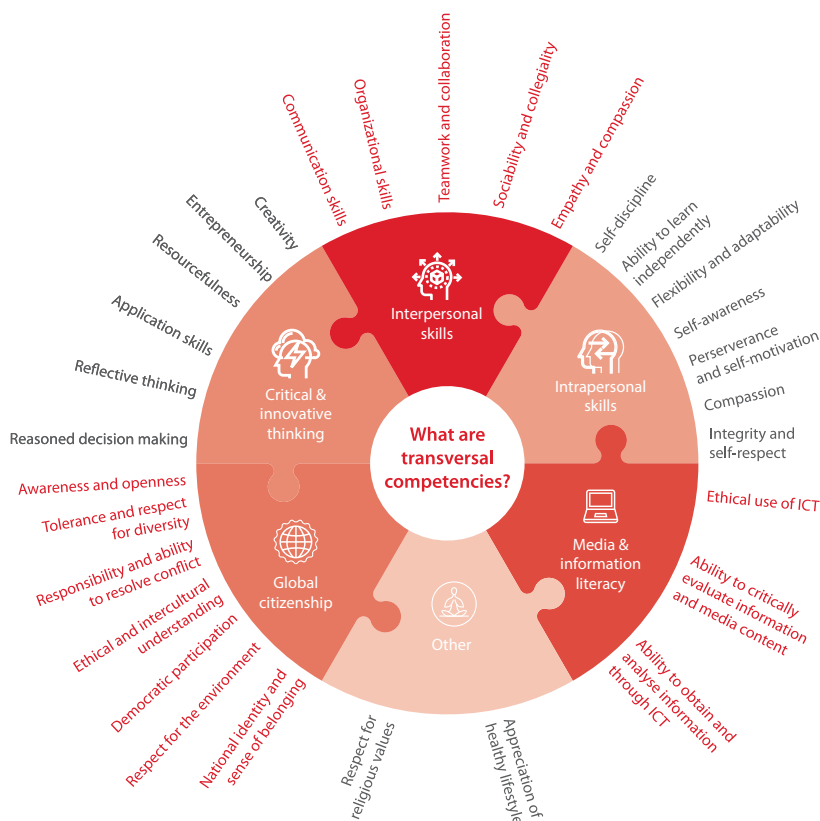
Figure 1

Care & Luo's (2016) framework for the description of transversal competences
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These transversal competences are key when schooling mediation as they equip students with communication skills that extend beyond language proficiency in separate languages. By engaging in cross-linguistic mediation tasks, students learn to convey ideas clearly, by expanding or streamlining information, to observe, listen or read actively, filtering and selecting the

[2] https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/

core information according to the situation, and adapt their communication style to different audiences and situations. As information is sometimes conveyed from different linguistic and cultural viewpoints, students can develop their intercultural sensitivity and critical thinking, by considering the factors at play in the construction of an argument or of a specific piece of information, which might include the ability to identify biases (their own and others' biases), evaluate the coherence of arguments, and understand subjects' positionalities (global citizenship). And finally, as much information students come across nowadays is available online, the above-mentioned skills contribute to the ability to navigate and critically evaluate online information and communicate digitally using specific features and pragmatic functions (media and information literacy).

Transversal competences in mediation tasks developed for the METLA project

Each METLA mediation activity includes information about the educational level to which it is addressed, the proficiency level, the CEFR scales to which it refers etc., but most importantly about:

- the linguistic (or language-related) objectives which refer to the specific objectives of the task; what the learner will be able to do after completing the task, and
- the non-language competences, which are equated to "transversal competences".

Through this distinction, METLA recognizes the importance of addressing transversal competences as many of them are related to effective language learning such as understanding:

- how different languages can be used in order to mediate;
- how the way languages are used can affect understanding and attitude;
- how the different languages carry cultural elements with them;
- how to make cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparisons.

METLA tasks link mediation with transversal competences and adopt a "dynamic vision of language learning and encourage freedom from barriers among and within languages through language integration, multiliteracies and multimodalities" (Piccardo & North, 2019, p. 239). The three examples that follow are characteristic of the authors' attempt to promote global citizenship, education for sustainable development and media education, and also learners' intrapersonal and interpersonal "twenty-first century skills", through mediation tasks that combine different languages for different purposes.

Example 1

The tasks in Figure 2 are extracted from a C1 level lesson about Greek mythology. The aim of this activity is to familiarize students with different cultural aspects and media texts. Firstly, students discuss the features of myths. Then, working in pairs, they listen to a YouTube video about a myth in (Language B, i.e., English), and do the activities (e.g., to collect new vocabulary). Next, they listen to another YouTube video or read a text about a myth with the same topic in Language A (i.e., Greek) and take notes in Language B (i.e., English) (see Figure 2). Based on their notes, they are asked to create a short podcast in Language B.

Figure 2
Task "Greek mythology" (Part a)

Finally, learners have to write an article for the school newspaper (Figure 3) where they compare the two myths and discuss in Language B how myths could be used as examples of different cultures.

Figure 3
Task "Greek mythology" (Part b)

As far as the transversal competences are concerned, in this task learners learn to respect cultural diversity and intercultural understanding as they have to move from one language and cultural aspects to the other (global citizenship). Students finally learn to analyze media content (media literacy) and learn to work together and collaborate (interpersonal skills).

Generally, the lesson provides learners with the opportunity to develop their mediation skills and strategies, while at the same time becoming competent in non-language aspects involved when mediating. Cross-linguistic mediation also becomes a process of cultural mediation here. Comparing myths from different cultures can be a valuable intercultural task, as myths can be seen as cultural expressions that provide insight into the values, beliefs, and traditions of the society where they emerged. Additionally, comparing myths across languages also encourages critical thinking as learners need to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from different sources. They must consider the cultural, historical, and linguistic contexts to draw meaningful comparisons. Skills of listening and observing along with critical skills, especially at the second part of the lesson, are also promoted. The lesson encourages a playful, autonomous, and creative move not only from one language/culture to another but also from one genre to another, as learners have to recall the different generic conventions linked to each genre and produce their outputs accordingly. The author has also created a specific reflection task which appears at the end of the lesson which asks learners to reflect on what

they did, identify areas of strengths and weaknesses and reflect on strategies used in order to carry out the mediation task. Such reflection tasks, which are evident in most of the METLA's lessons, increase learners' responsibility and autonomy and involve them in critical reflection. In addition, for the purposes of the project, a specially designed self-assessment grid has also been created. It is a list of 'I can' descriptors relating to the aims of the lesson while learners evaluate their own knowledge or skills and their performance regarding the aspects mentioned in the section above (see Figure 4).

Name:	3	2	1
ARE YOU A GOOD MEDIATOR?	😎	😐	😤
GENERAL			
I know what a mediation activity involving different languages is.			
I know that I should pay attention to the instructions of the activity.			
I know that mediation activities ask me to transfer information from one language to another.			
DEALING WITH THE SOURCE TEXT			
I read the source text carefully and more than once.			
I can distinguish relevant from less relevant information from the original text.			
I can identify and select the information needed to accomplish the mediation task.			
I consider the purpose of the text (why it has been written, where it appears and by whom).			
TRANSFERRING INFORMATION IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE			
I can transfer information from the original text in another language (Specify the language(s) _____)			
I can paraphrase source information and use it into another language.			
I can evaluate and correct the final outcome.			
I can use pictures, tables, and other visual material in order to better understand the text.			
THIS TASK/LESSON HAS HELPED ME... (put one or more tick(s) and add your own ideas if you wish)			
☐ realise that a speaker of more than one language may have a role as a mediator ☐ be sensitive to differences and similarities among different languages and cultures ☐ be curious to find out about other languages, cultures and peoples ☐ be willing to share my linguistic and cultural knowledge with others ☐ use my knowledge and skills in different languages to understand or communicate in a multilingual setting ☐			
IN THIS TASK/LESSON I FOUND DIFFICULTY IN...(add your own ideas)			
☐			

Figure 4
Self-assessment grid

Example 2

The set of selected tasks presented in Figure 4 was conceived for a B1 level lesson which focuses on oral mediation. The main task aims at developing

learners' skills in selecting information from different sources, one of which is in Language A (Danish) and another in Language B (English) and creating their own short informational video about the best strategies to cope with the COVID-19 situation for teenagers of the same age in Language B (English). Format of the video can be, for example, an Instagram, Snapchat, or YouTube story.

Generally, through this lesson, the learner filters information according to the task and acts according to needs of a social actor (see more in Piccardo & North, 2019 about the action-oriented approach), in order to produce authentic material. These are competences that students can transfer to other school subjects. Specifically, in relation to the transversal competences developed through this lesson, the designers have tried to develop learners':

- interpersonal skills, that is, presentation and communication skills, pair and teamwork (see Steps 5 and 6);
- intrapersonal skills: self-discipline, enthusiasm, self-motivation: addressing a realistic audience (their peers) through their original videos which can then be shared on social media, which is an everyday practice for them, can motivate them and trigger their enthusiasm to work for this task (see Step 6);
- media and information literacy which is related to the ability to locate and access information, as well as to analyze and evaluate media content (see Steps 3–6, all of which involve students in working with media);
- critical and innovative thinking in order to produce their final outputs: they have to critically filter the information they receive from other texts (Step 3) and a video (Step 4), and then attempt to exploit some pieces in order to create their own products. They are thus involved in a decision-making process where collaborative learning is promoted.
- global citizenship: they realize that the whole world is connected. This is achieved through the nature of the tasks, especially the one described in Step 6, since learners create an authentic video which will then be shared to social media.

Example 3

The B2 level mediation task in Figure 5, which involves French (reception) and English (production), was conceived to close a lesson focusing on the European Day of Languages (26 September). Students in groups are asked to prepare a short video, a poster, or a leaflet promoting multilingualism for this Day at the secondary school about the advantages of multilingualism. They then present their products to the class (see Step 5 in Figure 6). Before

Step 3. Preparing for the project (1).
Read these two articles in Danish about youth in corona times. Then summarize in writing the main points of the articles in English.

- https://www.sst.dk/da/corona/forebyg-smitte/saerligt-til-unge
- "Unge og trivsel i en coronatid"

Step 4: Preparing for the project (2).
A. Watch this video (in English): https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Teens-and-COVID-19.aspx

B. Make a list in English of all the advice given in the video.

Step 5: Plan your own advice video.
Work with a partner to create a video giving advice to teens about the difficulties presented by Covid 19. You can use the previous video as an example, as well as the Danish texts and all other information you can find online.

Step 6: Create your own advice video.
Work with your partner. Share your best tips on how to cope with the challenges of the pandemic and support your mental and physical wellbeing during and after the pandemic. Take into account the following:
- The video should be maximum 2 minutes long. It is aimed at people your age around the world.
- You can use TikTok or Instagram or Youtube or any other platform.
- Make sure you have permission from all the participants in your video if you want to publish it in social media.

Figure 5
Task "Coping with COVID-19"

their presentations, learners are invited to participate in various activities: preparing a language mind map of languages spoken by their family members (brainstorming activity), listening to a short video about the European Day of Languages and filling in a worksheet, discussing the purpose of celebrating the European Day of Languages, collaborating to provide headings of a French text about the benefits of multilingualism, among other activities.

To complete the task, learners have to communicate and work collaboratively (interpersonal skills) thus becoming actors of their learning process of which they become aware (Piccardo, 2022). The expected learning outcome is that they develop awareness of what it means to be socially responsible and being of service to others. Students are also expected to learn to make good use of digital tools, thus enhancing their media literacy.

Step 5: The project.

You and your classmates will participate in an international competition. The subject is promoting language learning and diversity. You are asked to create a video, a poster, or a leaflet in English and a second language of your preference presenting the advantages of learning several languages.

For your project, select the most relevant information from the two texts (Steps 4A and B) above and from the video that can be found here:

Video on the European Day of Languages
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxRSzkRxy2U

Figure 6
Task "The European Day of Languages"

This lesson is organized around the conception and development of a project. Project work is crucial in developing learners' autonomy and "collective intelligence" (Piccardo & North, 2019, p. 246) through a creative process of searching for information and producing language. Project work involves a lot of resources — time, people and materials — and students are called to learn by actively engaging in real-world tasks. Given that many classes are increasingly multilingual, project work can offer opportunities for using different languages for the achievement of a final output (Stathopoulou et al., 2023).

From "transversal" to "transformative" competences in mediation

Transversal competences are usually linked to the so-called twenty-first century skills for which different frameworks for their teaching and assessment have been proposed as already discussed. It seems that we now move into a new area which is informed by the new OECD Learning Compass 2030 identifying three more competences that students need to acquire. We believe that the METLA's tasks also reflect the following competences listed below, which are actually described as "transformative competences" (OECD, 2019):

- *Creating new value*: refers to the development, through collaboration with others, of new knowledge, ideas, tools, strategies and innovations which are applied to solve problems. It is linked to critical thinking and creativity.

- *Reconciling tensions and dilemmas*: refers to the process of understanding the links and inter-relations between contradictory or opposing ideas,

perspectives and positions, in order to reconcile them and develop a new rationale and argumentation which will help towards sorting out these conflicts. Handling dilemmas, coping with conflicts, showing respect towards others' views are some of the practices described here.

- *Taking responsibility*: refers to the ability to reflect upon and assess one's own actions drawing upon one's experience, knowledge, education, and by setting personal, ethical and societal goals. Reflective thinking is of particular importance here.

These transformative competences can be used across a variety of contexts and situations that is why they are described as transferable. They are acquired once but they can be used throughout a lifetime.

In fact, the METLA's mediation tasks encourage collaboration for the achievement of a specific goal, which is to communicate through transferring information from one (or more) language(s) to other language(s). When mediating, as shown in the examples above, students may work together to achieve their aims, exchange knowledge, strategies, and ideas in order to create a new text. As described in the CEFR-CV (Council of Europe, 2020), mediation is also related to managing interaction, collaborating to co-construct meaning, facilitating collaborative interaction among others. Working collaboratively in cross-linguistic mediation tasks offers opportunities both for individualization and for differentiation (each student brings his/her own emotions, resources, and competences) and also for socialization (students can collaboratively plan working procedures, division of tasks, aims to attain, and resources to use). Collaborative skills are, therefore, important in the field of (co-)actional approaches to language education (meaning, approaches that see students as social agents communicating and acting together to achieve common goals), as promoted by the Council of Europe (2001, 2020), and constitute an important aspect to be considered in cross-linguistic mediation task design.

In addition to these, the very essence of mediation is "bridging gaps" and "reducing the distance between two poles" (Coste & Cavalli, 2015, p. 12) which means that the second OECD transformative competence presented above fully reflects the process of mediation. Respecting the difference (i.e., difference across languages and cultures), and showing tolerance for ambiguity are connected to mediation practices. Besides, in the CEFR-CV upon which the materials as a result of the METLA project draw, there is a specific new category with the title "Mediating communication", which refers to the process of facilitating understanding between participants in tensions or disagreements.

The final point relates to the last transformative competence which is linked with reflection and evaluation of one's actions. As mentioned earlier, many tasks developed in the scope of the METLA project contain a final

reflection component. Learners are encouraged to reflect upon and document their progress in the development of cross-linguistic mediation strategies and thus become successful mediators and therefore successful interlocutors, listeners, actors. Learner autonomy is promoted through specific tasks and learners thus learn how to take responsibility for their own learning.

Conclusion: Cross-linguistic mediation as a cross-curricular object?

This article has highlighted the link between mediation and transversal competences through the discussion of specific task examples. Cross-linguistic mediation, as we argued, can play a significant role in the development of transversal competences, namely inter- and intra-personal skills, global citizenship, and digital skills. Cross-linguistic mediation involves using specific language skills, in different languages, but it challenges a merely logocentric perspective of communication, by embracing the development of transversal competences that go beyond languages, such as understanding of different perspectives, flexibility, empathy, and critical thinking, among others. These transversal competences, which merge linguistic and intercultural skills, are needed to convey non-verbal communication cues (such as those transmitted by gestures and mimic) and to ensure the use of effective communication strategies to bridge gaps between interlocutors and contribute to successful interactions.

We could therefore argue that mediation is not only a cross-linguistic ability, by enhancing communication across languages, but also as a cross-curricular ability, by enhancing transversal competences, which are not a teaching and learning object of a specific school subject (namely, foreign languages). As a cross-curricular competence, mediation could therefore be conceived in terms of inter- or transdisciplinary skills that go beyond the boundaries of individual school subjects, emphasizing the interconnectedness of different subjects and promoting holistic learning experiences, by adopting action-oriented approaches. For example, in a science class studying environmental issues, students could develop their ability to mediate by researching and presenting different viewpoints on climate change. This approach integrates science and communication, alongside linguistic skills, fostering an understanding of scientific concepts while promoting effective communication and critical thinking. Through collaborative projects and presentations involving the study of texts in different languages, students might engage in action-oriented learning that goes beyond individual subjects, creating a more holistic educational experience.

What is suggested is the potential of curricular innovation brought by cross-linguistic mediation tasks to the language classroom, by bringing together different curricular areas (languages and other school subjects) and

by contributing, in equal terms, to the development of transversal competences. We tried to illustrate how cross-linguistic mediation can contribute to bringing holistic learning experiences to the language classroom, while at the same time promoting the idea that cross-linguistic mediation tasks can be introduced into other school subjects. By incorporating linguistic transversal competences into "non-language" school subjects (such as mathematics, science, or history), teachers can create a more ecological and well-rounded learning environment, instead of limiting language learning to specific language classes. For example, in a science class, students might engage in discussions, write reports, or present findings in different languages (in receptive and productive *modi*), incorporating linguistic competences alongside scientific concepts. This integration might potentially enhance students' ability to communicate effectively, think critically, and apply language in real-world contexts, contributing to a more holistic educational experience. These competences can help students excel in a range of academic areas, where communication, intercultural, problem-solving, critical thinking, and digital skills are necessary, while also preparing them to cope with complex life situations that extend beyond the classroom. The future of cross-curricular mediation may, in this sense, be to expand its curricular scope, leading to its pedagogical use beyond language classes.

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