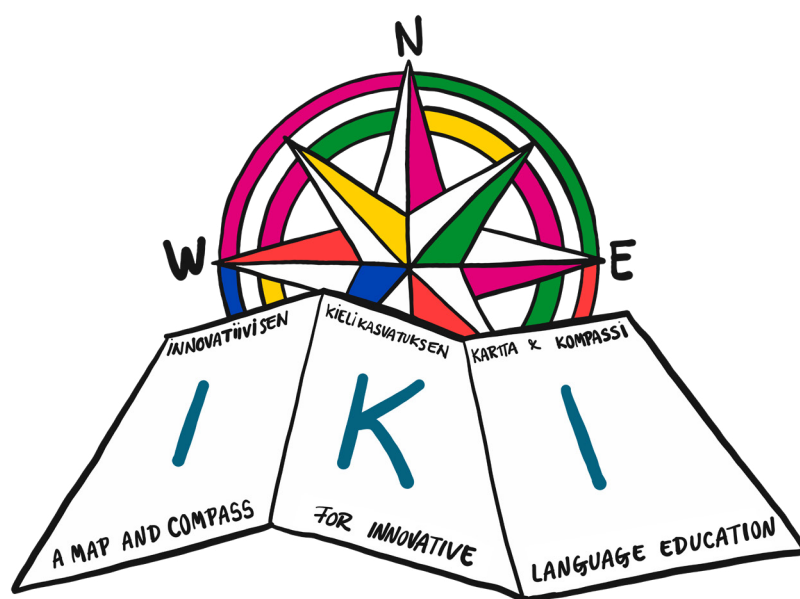




A MAP AND COMPASS FOR INNOVATIVE LANGUAGE EDUCATION:

Steps towards development





A Map and Compass for Innovative Language Education: Steps towards development

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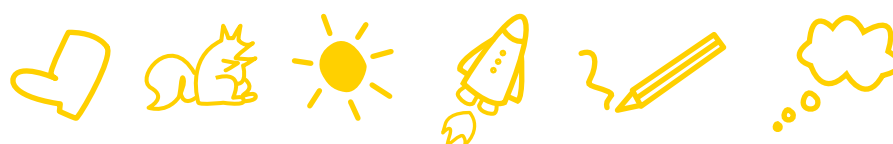
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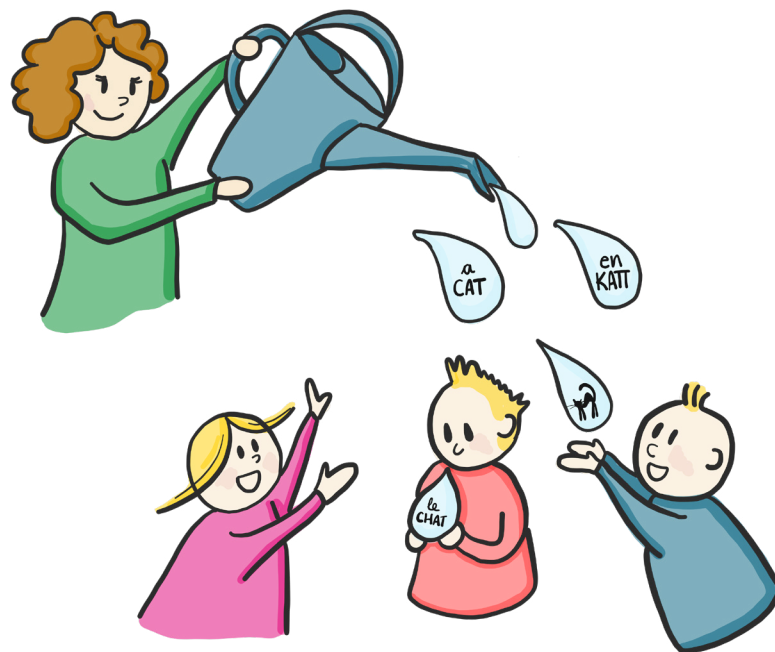
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Part 1 - Introduction



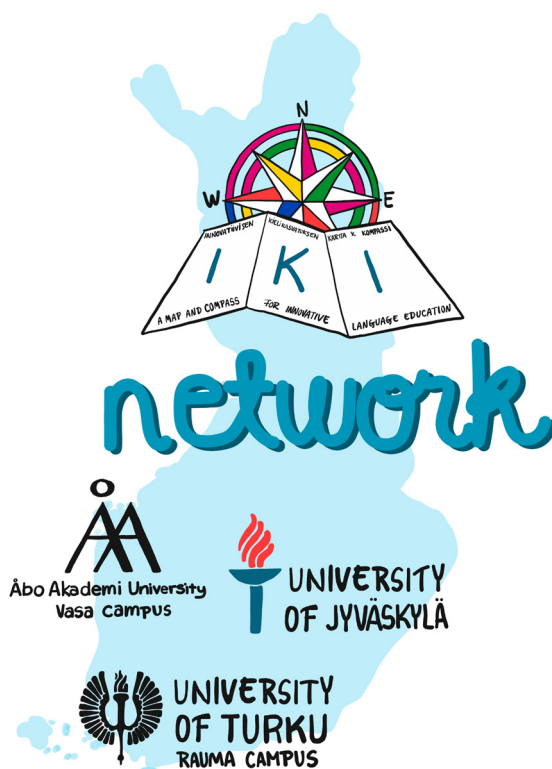
Introducing IKI: An Innovative Map and Compass for Language Education

Josephine Moate, Tea Kangasvieri, Anu Palojärvi & Liisa Lempel

The Innovative Map and Compass for Language Education (IKI), a three year, spearhead project, was funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. The aim of IKI was to map, develop and share language-based innovations that belong to the Finnish educational landscape. This handbook introduces the key ideas behind IKI, insights into pedagogical approaches and examples of innovative language-based activities that are part of the Finnish educational landscape. This opening section briefly outlines the role of language in education in Finland, introduces the IKI project and the activities included in the handbook. A more comprehensive bilingual Finnish-Swedish version has already been published and we hope that this international version of the IKI handbook provides useful insights for educators working outside the Finnish educational system.

Language and the Finnish educational system

Language has an important place in the Finnish curricula for early childhood education and care (age 0-6) (EDUFI, 2019) as well as in the national curriculum for basic education (age 7-16) (EDUFI, 2014). The national curricula recognise that every teacher is a language teacher whether they explicitly teach language(s) or use language to introduce, explore, develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding. In the Finnish educational system, all children are required to learn one of the two national languages for formal study (Finnish or Swedish), to start learning a foreign language in first grade and the second national language in sixth grade at the latest. In the upper grades of basic education and in upper secondary school students can also choose optional language studies and languages can be introduced earlier in education including in day care and pre-school education. In recent years many educators and educational communities have invested in developing the role and presence of language(s) at earlier stages of education. The earlier introduction of languages is referred to as 'varhennus' or 'varhennettu kielenopetus' in Finnish. This phrase emphasises the 'earlier than before' aspect and suggests that this move prepares the way for something that comes later. As this term does not easily translate into English, we refer to 'foundational language education' to highlight the important basis early exposure to different languages provides for the formal study of language at a later stage. We also use the term 'language education' rather than 'language teaching and learning' because it provides a broader notion of what it



means to engage with language(s). In foundational language education, children and students become familiar with the presence and use of different languages in their everyday environment. Foundational language education does not require children to formally study language structures or vocabulary, but prepares the way for further study. Children become accustomed to the sounds and presence of the language(s), their curiosity to know more and their awareness of language is strengthened.

In addition to foundational and formal language education in Finnish curricula, current curricula include [transversal competences](#) that also language-related, such as *multiliteracies* and *cultural competence, interaction and expression*. These transversal competences complement the language awareness that underpins the Finnish curricula and the opportunities for language-enriched education. Whereas language awareness is mandated so that all students learn to use language well, language-enriched approaches provide opportunities to explicitly use and develop more languages within Finnish education.

For example, educators are encouraged to actively include the different home languages of children within formal education, in addition to heritage language classes provided by educational authorities. While some educational communities have opted to integrate language-enriched approaches as part of their everyday practices, other educational communities have developed more extensive bilingual practices. Recent publications draw attention to the variety and extensive role of language in Finnish education (e.g. Pyykkö, 2017). These examples highlight the emphasis placed on language as an integral part of Finnish education, the value placed on language(s) as part of individual and community repertoires and the need for educators to pay attention to the role of language in education.

Introducing the IKI project and partners

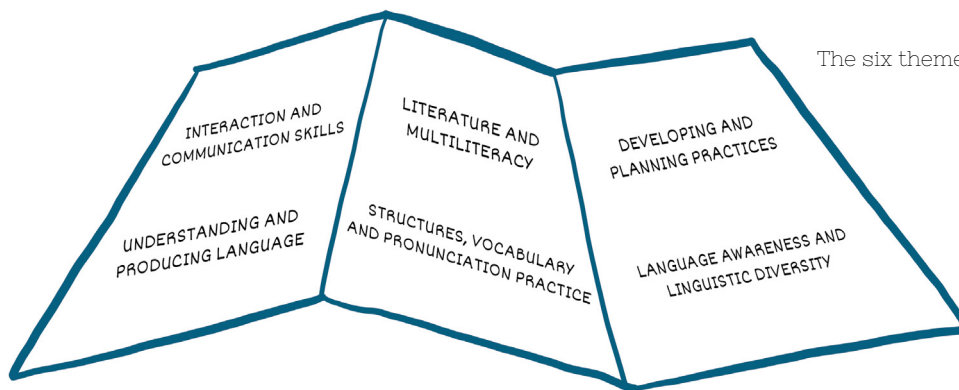
The IKI project is a practical, research-based response to the emphasis on language education in Finnish curricula. An important starting point for the IKI project was recognising the importance of language as part of education, the need to develop how language is used and developed across education, and to go beyond the conventional boundaries of language education. The three university partners involved in the IKI project are the University of Jyväskylä, Turku University Rauma Unit and Åbo Akademi University Vasa Unit. As the project coordinator, the University of Jyväskylä has worked to strengthen connections between different educational stakeholders and to trial different approaches to language education. The University of Jyväskylä has hosted on-line and face-to-face seminars and pedagogical cafés, organized children's language camps, observed teachers and shared experiences across Finland, and

explored different approaches in pre- and in-service training events to develop the IKI network. Project partners based in the Turku University Rauma Unit have strengthened teacher mentor activities as well as the use of [literature and art-based approaches across language education](#). Åbo Akademi University Vasa Unit partners have focused on how to develop [continua in language education as children transition through different stages of education](#) as well as [language aware approaches in subject teaching](#). The IKI websites includes tips, blogs and materials to support and inspire educators, recommended readings and question prompts to support innovation in different communities.

The complementary interests of the partners all invest in the development of language education and highlight the value of sharing different approaches and expertise. The partners provide a positive example of collaboration between Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking universities, between early childhood, class and language educators, researchers and teacher educators, between educators based in the field and at the university, between pre- and in-service education. The IKI project has greatly benefited from the active participation of student teachers and teacher professionals from early childhood education, preparatory, heritage and basic education, teacher education and educational organizations. IKI researchers have visited early childhood education and care (ECEC) centres and schools across Finland. This handbook draws on these experiences and insights gleaned through IKI activities with the aim of inspiring and supporting further innovation in the use and development of language across the educational pathway.



The IKI network.



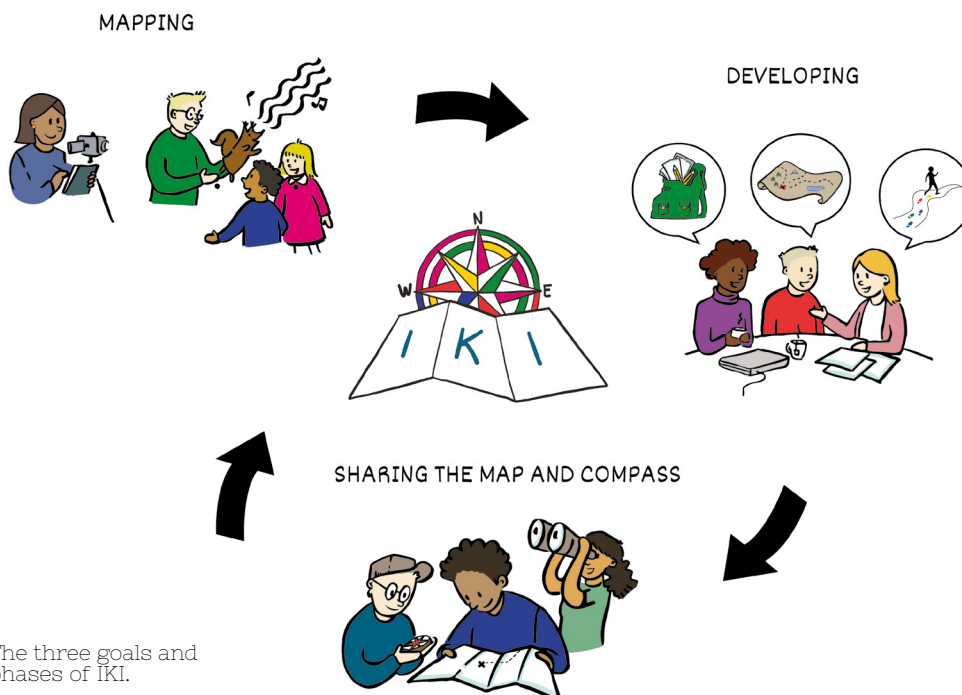
The six themes of the IKI map.

The Guiding Principles and Metaphors of IKI

From the outset IKI has drawn on the linguistic diversity and resources of **the Finnish educational landscape**, and here we have our first guiding metaphor. Just as geographical landscapes form across time and space, so linguistic landscapes take shape in response to different conditions, participants, needs and opportunities. The Finnish linguistic landscape includes bilingual, Swedish-speaking, Sámi-speaking, Finnish-speaking and increasingly multilingual communities. As this linguistic landscape has been shaped over time through the geography, history and communities of different regions, so educational communities have responded to the *particular and changing conditions* of the linguistic landscape. These responses include large- and small-scale innovations such as language immersion and language showers. While some innovations are now established approaches, the IKI team believes that many more educators and educational communities are creatively innovating on a regular basis. This leads to the first IKI goal – **to map and share innovations** that belong to the current Finnish educational landscape. These innovations might be small changes in established practices, other innovations might be new activities, others might build bridges between language users and language communities.

Throughout the project, the IKI map has taken shape as we have engaged with educators that are willing to share their innovations. The innovations presented here are a sample of the many innovations encountered during the IKI project with more innovations published in [the bilingual Finnish-Swedish version of the handbook](#). The innovations are presented under six themes: 1. *Interaction and communication skills*, 2. *Understanding and producing language*, 3. *Language awareness and linguistic diversity*, 4. *Literature and multiliteracy*, 5. *Structures, vocabulary and pronunciation practice*, and 6. *Developing and planning practices*. The international IKI handbook includes two-three activities under each theme.

It is our hope that by sharing these activities, other educators will be inspired to develop their practices in and across other educational settings. Indeed, the second goal of IKI was to support the **development work of educators**. Educational communities have to change to keep up-to-date with curricular changes and as children’s language repertoires expand through exposure to different kinds of media, family histories, personal experiences and educational innovations. At this point another underlying principle should be mentioned – the importance of pedagogical freedom to modify and develop activities that are of value to *these children at this point*



The three goals and phases of IKI.

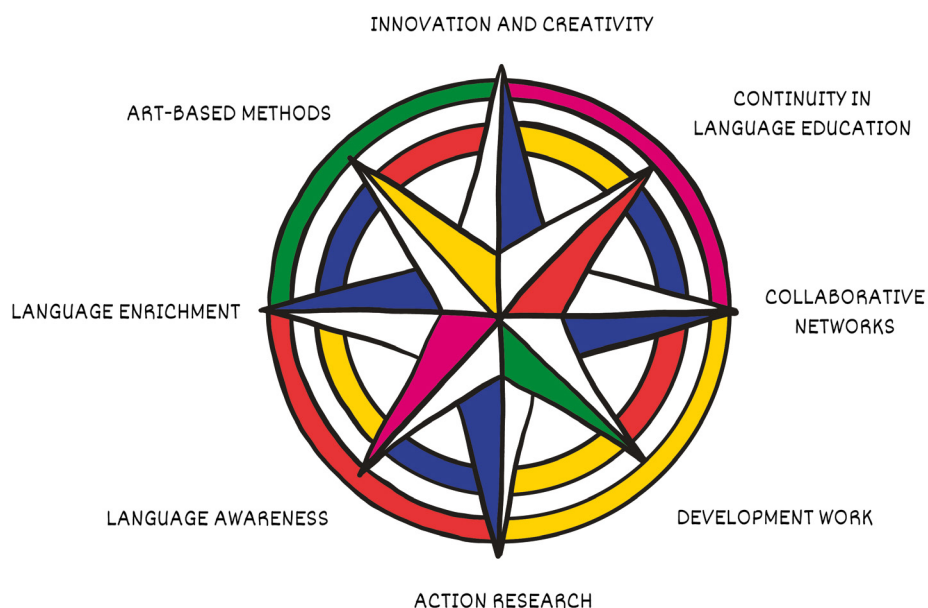
in their educational pathway for *this* purpose. While sharing innovations can inspire others in their own development work, this cannot provide readymade solutions for all communities, indeed all educators and communities need a *compass* to help navigate their ongoing journeys.

A compass is a device that helps a traveller to keep to a desired course. With the different demands of everyday life and the complexity of education, it is too easy to go off-course, to adopt solutions or ideas that appear educational, but on closer inspection are not beneficial. For example, insisting that young students stand behind their chairs and are absolutely quiet before a language session begins might establish the teacher as the 'boss', but it might not help children to engage with the language in a playful and creative manner. If an educator can play a song in the opening moments of a session to get the students' attention or bring a mystery object into the classroom, students can begin to engage with the language without first being 'silenced'. Indeed, younger and older students of language often benefit from the freedom to 'play with' the sounds of a new language, whispering and repeating new words and sounds to themselves, rather than being absolutely silent and waiting for permission to speak. This does not suggest that chaos is appropriate, but it is important that educators are aware of the principles behind their actions and activities they use. When educators are aware of these principles, it is possible to make better decisions about what is beneficial for their individual students and educational communities.

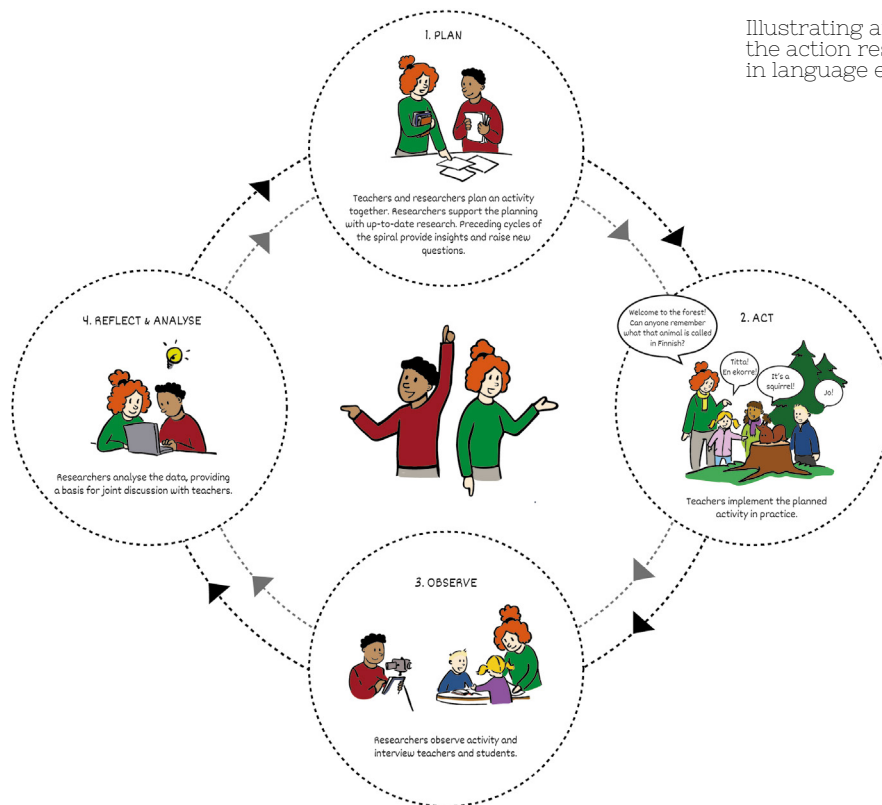
The IKI 'compass' highlights the key principles, or 'points', that have guided the IKI project. The first point, **innovation and creativity**, highlights the need to be active and responsive in the development of language education. Educational innovations can be unique to individual educators or born through community activity. This point, however, highlights

the dynamic nature of education, the responsibility educators carry and the way innovation can be part of everyday practice. The second point is **continuity in language education**. As Hansell and Björklund point out in [Transitions across educational stages](#), it is important that educators are aware of children's previous experiences and existing language repertoires, building on what they have already achieved and preparing the way for further development. The third point is the value of **collaborative networks** to share and try out different ideas and innovations. Collaborative networks can include many different educational stakeholders – teachers, parents, policy-makers, educational administrators. Understanding the bigger picture of educational development and the role of different stakeholders increases the potential success of innovative activities.

The fourth point is **development work** as part of individual and community activity. Although Finnish teachers are well-qualified for the work that they do, change is an inevitable part of education. If development work is seen as something extra, it can easily become a burden or haphazard. If development work is recognised as part of education, it can be more readily integrated into professional activity and time-tabled into the life of a community. The fifth point of **action research** is a well-established, concrete approach to the development of pedagogical practice. An important aspect of action research is that it takes place within a community, rather than being imposed from the outside. Action research involves four important stages of **planning, acting, observing** and **reflecting** on what has gone well through the process and what further areas can be developed. This process highlights the ongoing nature of education and the active involvement of teachers and professional communities in educational development.



The eight points of the IKI compass.



Illustrating an example of the action research process in language education.

The sixth point of the compass is **language awareness** which we understand as recognising the role and presence of language across education, that is, in both activities that target language development as well as in activities that use language as a tool to serve another purpose. Forsmans' section on 'Language-aware teaching in non-language subjects – what does that mean?' provides a more detailed introduction to language aware education. The seventh point is **language-enriched teaching**, an approach that broadens the range of languages actively used in education and the eighth point highlights the value of **art-based methods**, as explained in more detail in Lähteelä, Aerila and Kauppinen's text on *Art as a path to language – art-based language learning and the development of language awareness*. Having named the different points of the IKI compass, we have been able to reflect on our activities and progress, as well as check that we have been moving in the direction that we hope to move in. We hope that the IKI compass will help other language educators to identify, develop and reflect on the principles and practices that underpin their work.

tivity could be used, developed and modified with and for their own children or students.

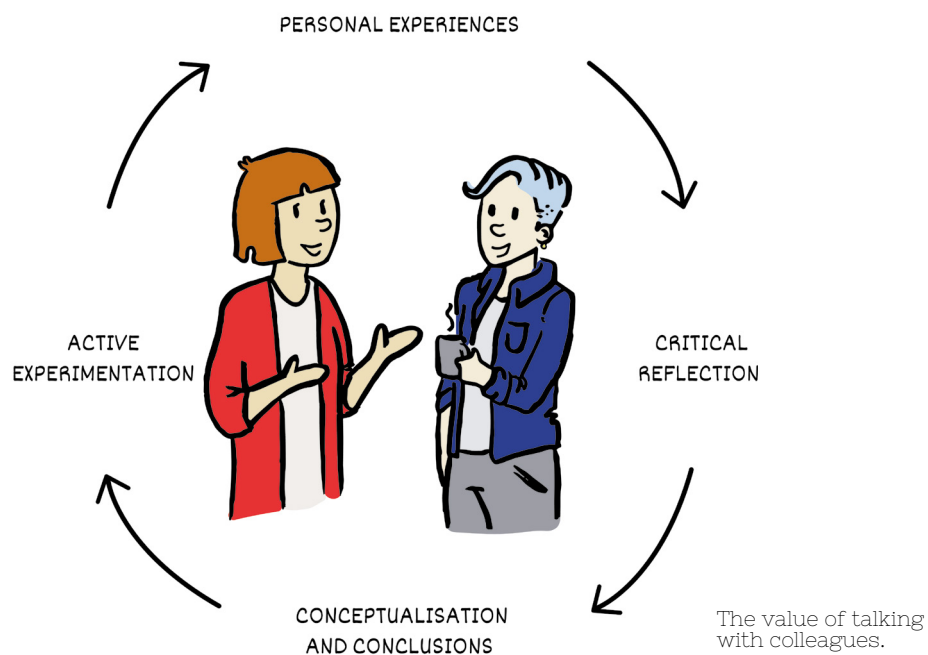
The title of each activity is followed by keywords and a short statement of the aim of the activity helping to characterise the activity. The 'Backpack' included in each section lists the resources needed to carry out the activity and the 'Steps on the path' describe how the activity unfolds. The final section of each description is 'Changing conditions'. This section recognises that with some modification the same activity can be used with different aged students, with different languages and levels of language proficiency. These suggestions included here have been provided by pre- and in-service educators that have collaborated with the IKI project. We hope that this inspires and encourage educators to change innovations in response to the needs of their students and to be sensitive to where students have come from, their different language repertoires and experiences, as well as where they are heading to as individuals and communities. The following illustrations are used to help navigate through the activities.

The activities in the handbook

The main body of the handbook includes a selection of innovative activities that have been shared with the IKI project. These activities come from different educational settings, in early childhood education and care, lower and upper grades of basic education, and represent different ways in which language education can be implemented in Finland in bi- and multilingual communities, in foundational and formal learning environments. In the presentation of each activity, we have sought to describe the activity as though an observer was present and watching the activity take place in real time. We hope that this provides an accessible view into the activity and encourages other educators to consider how the ac-



Illustrations to navigate through the IKI activities.



The six themes that have been used to organise the activities presented in the IKI handbook represent key considerations in language education with younger and older students. The IKI handbook is not a 'recipe' book or textbook in a conventional sense of providing guidelines that should be followed. Rather the IKI handbook is a place to explore different kinds of activities being carried out in language education and to reflect on what kind of activities best suit the children and students you are working with and the aims you are working towards. To support this reflective process, the IKI handbook regularly refers to key principles behind the innovative activities and seeks to make the thinking behind activities available to others. These principles are included to encourage educators to make more informed decisions about what might be good for the students that they are working with and the kind of language education that want to develop. We offer these activities as examples of innovation. Some of these activities are small-scale innovations, others are more extensive. Some of these examples might be familiar to some educators but we hope that even then there is something new for everyone and we think that even 'classic' activities re-viewed in a new light can lead to further innovation.

Supporting innovation in language education

For the IKI team, viewing language-based innovations through ecological metaphors has helped us to see the interconnectedness of different communities and innovations, without losing sight of the contributions of individuals. Education is premised on relationships between different partners with a vested interest in the development of young people in Finland, and in the instance of IKI, with particular reference to the role and presence of language(s) in education. We hope that through the materials made available through the IKI project, educators in and beyond Finland can continue to innovatively invest in and develop the Finnish educational landscape. Although the IKI project is only a small part

of the wider educational landscape, we hope that by recognising our vital interconnectedness we have contributed to better pedagogical conversations and activities that inspire educators to keep sharing and developing resources together.

Innovation does not need to be dramatic to be effective, it does not need to be digital to make a difference and to does not need to be demanding to be successful. The educators interviewed during the IKI project warmly recommend starting with low threshold activities, building collaborative relationships and listening to the children and students that make educational communities. We warmly encourage you to begin by identifying the principles that underpin your practice and consider how these principles have developed and whether they serve the bigger purposes of language education. If possible, discuss with colleagues and reflect together. The questions in the box will hopefully support these reflections.

Keep notes from your discussions and share ideas, be prepared to take a risk and to learn from the experience. Support and inspiration can often be found in unlikely, as well as everyday, places. So, pick up your map and compass, and enjoy the journey.

Acknowledgements

The IKI team would like to express our grateful thanks to the many pre- and in-service educators that have collaborated with us during the project. Thank you for sharing your ideas, experiences, concerns and hopes with us. Thank you for welcoming us to your communities and for talking with us. We have hugely benefited from engaging with educators working in the field and admire the commitment you have to providing positive language education experiences for children and students of different ages. Our grateful thanks as well to the cities, municipalities and towns that have supported the IKI project.

Something to ponder alone or with others:

- What kind of principles and goals guide your work as a language educator?
- What languages do the children or students in your group speak? How can these different languages be included in different activities?
- How can you use your own strengths and interests in the development of your work?
- Where can you get support for your development work? What or who can help you develop further?
- What concrete goals would you like to achieve?
- What kind of development would be easy to start with? What is the next step in your development work?

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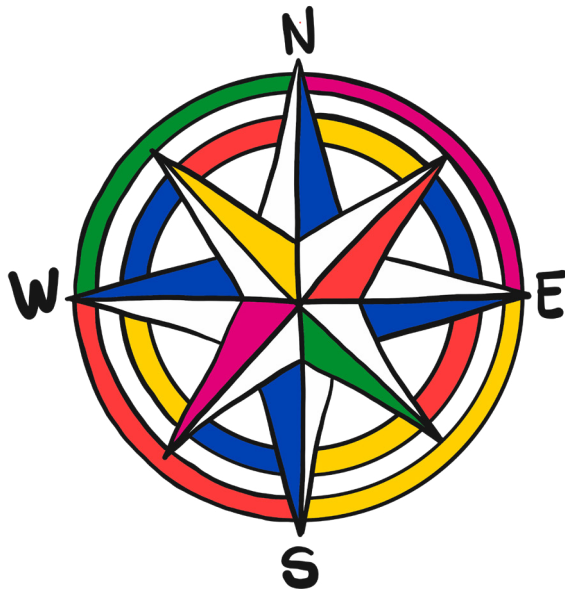
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Part 11 - Compass



Transitional stages in bilingual education

Katri Hansell & Siv Björklund

Transitions between different stages of education constitute major changes for children and adolescents – changes from the familiar and everyday to the new and unknown. This is essential to take into account in educational transitions that involve several stages when aiming to form an interconnected pedagogical, subject-specific and social continuum. This chapter discusses the transitions between educational stages in bilingual education with a particular focus on the early years of education, when transitioning from early childhood education and care to the initial grades of basic education.

It is especially important to pay attention to transitions when a new programme is being developed, such as in bilingual education, where the teaching of a second language is introduced early in the educational pathway. The transitions often especially impact younger children, who, within a short space of time, transition first from the play- and action-oriented culture of early childhood education to preschool, which aims to broaden children's understanding and skills, and then to the subject- and teaching-oriented working culture of school. If the different stages of education are not jointly planned as an established and functional programme, there is a very high risk that the language levels of the different stages will lack continuity – with teaching, in effect, starting again from the beginning with each educational stage transition or whenever a new teacher becomes part of the educational process. This risk is greater still if there are no national guidelines on the linguistic standards of the different stages of education in language-enriched learning. Lack of continuity within the programme can result in children being frustrated by practising what they already know over and over and failing to reach the language level they would otherwise be able to achieve. For example, Swedish-speaking children who have participated in Finnish-Swedish bilingual early childhood education should not be expected to start learning Finnish in school in the same way as absolute beginners. Although bilingual education takes place before formal language teaching begins, it is nevertheless important to take it into account when planning children's transition to the early years of basic education.

To ensure that each transition supports the formation of an educational continuum and that learning is based on what has been previously learned, all stakeholders need to have a good understanding of what has been covered in the previous stages. Similarly, they should have a common view of what is expected of children when they transition to the next stage. This requires joint planning between different stages of education, including teachers in early childhood education, preschool and basic education, their

supervisors and the entire work community. As education and curricula differ between early childhood education, preschool and the early years of basic education, it is important for teachers and their superiors to discuss and get to know and understand each other's learning environments and working cultures. The best results are achieved through regular joint planning, rather than individual discussions before each transitional stage. Long-term planning and cooperation helps all parties to better understand the overall picture and provides better conditions for the development and continuity of joint practices.

Try:

- **Shadowing** between teachers at different stages of education.
- Using a **teaching portfolio** that transitions with the group throughout the programme.

Consider:

- What similarities and differences are there between educational levels, for example, in **opportunities to use and learn language in everyday situations**, such as eating and dressing?
- What changes arise from transitioning between school levels, i.e. **in what situations can teaching be built on** the language already learned by the children/students and **what will change?**

Shadowing, i.e. the practice of teachers following each other's work and the work of children at different educational stages, is a good way to gain a better understanding of the skills of individual groups of children as well as broader working cultures and learning environments. Using a teaching portfolio is another concrete way of regularly monitoring the development of a group. The aim of the teaching portfolio is to document at the group level the teaching provided at different educational stages, such as subjects and content, but also individual activities, such as songs, games and books. The portfolio follows the children from early childhood education to preschool and to basic education. In this way, during each transition teachers have access to information about previous experiences, working methods and topics previously covered. This enables teachers to build on what has already been learned up to that point instead of starting from scratch with each transition. To support this process, they can also draw directly on things previously learned by the group, such as songs that the children are already familiar with. This can increase the children's sense of security and self-confidence when starting a new school year and a new grade.

In addition to cooperation and joint planning between teachers at different stages of education, it is essential that new programmes are established as part of a shared working culture across all educational stages. In this respect, the support and overall responsibility of the school management are key. Programmes must not be dependent on the interests and commitments of individual educators and teachers; instead, local guidance plans should be established that educators and teachers can draw on and that link together the activities of the school management and the different work communities. This is of central importance when creating a long-term programme that promises parents and children continuity in language learning. In this way, if teachers change, bilingual practices and activities will continue smoothly without interruption. In the case of recruitment, the school management is responsible for ensuring that new teachers receive the information and support they need to effectively participate in the programme. Day care centre managers and school headteachers play a crucial role in ensuring continuity, but they, in turn, need support from educational administrators. Finally, in order for the language programme to gain an established foothold as part of the working culture of the unit as a whole, the entire teaching staff must be well informed about the programme and its operating principles.

Remember:

- Creating a functional programme requires regular **joint planning and cooperation** across boundaries of the different educational levels and across all learning environments and working cultures.
- A language programme that interconnects different educational stages cannot be based on the contributions of individual pioneers, but must be **concretely established** as part of the working culture of individual units and of the educational pathway as a whole.
- Even if, in practice, not everyone in the work community teaches in the language programme, **it is important that everyone is informed about the content of the programme.**
- **Support from management plays an essential role in introducing new working methods.**

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Language-aware teaching in non-language subjects – what does that mean?

Liselott Forsman

Language is used in all subjects to convey knowledge and information. No student starts school with already developed subject-specific language and it is therefore increasingly emphasised that all teachers must teach in a way that develops language- and subject-specific skills. Such teaching strengthens students' learning and contributes to the development of language awareness and multiliteracy, as emphasised in the Finnish core curriculum for basic education. But what does language-aware teaching mean in practice?

In general, language-aware teaching develops language- and subject-specific skills by applying different learning strategies and creating bridges between students' everyday language and the languages of different subjects. Learning strategies can help teachers support students' learning in real time, for example by improving their understanding of teaching material texts. Students can also develop learning strategies that they can use independently. To create bridges between everyday and subject-specific language, concepts and text types should always be made visible and explained to students in order to strengthen their awareness of the language and specific linguistic requirements of different subjects. According to the current, broad notion of text, there are many different types of text. Essentially, however, the aim is for students to become aware of the purpose of different texts and, accordingly, of their different structures: for example, descriptions of historical events differ from those of natural phenomena. New subject-specific language and terminology are strengthened by providing students opportunities to process information through spoken and written interaction. This also ensures that all students have the opportunity to develop their own individual skills in line with curricular requirements.

Consider:

- In what ways could you focus more on reading, writing and spoken interaction?

Teaching that develops language- and subject-specific skills includes a wide range of multimodal working methods. The following section explores three broad areas of teaching in more concrete terms: reading, writing, and spoken interaction.

1. COMMON READING STRATEGIES FOR ALL SUBJECTS: STRATEGIC DISCUSSION OF TEXT CONTENT

It is important for students to learn to adapt their reading to different situations and purposes and to be able to understand the content of the text at a deeper level. To achieve this, students should be guided in using various reading strategies *before*, *during* and *after* reading. Teachers should also show students how subject-specific texts should be approached and read in each subject. For example, the focus might be on the function of captions in a certain learning material: Are captions used to highlight key points in the text, or are they used more to show the connections between the subject matter and the daily life of the student? Do pictures support learning?

By regularly discussing texts and by 'thinking aloud' the teacher can make reading strategies concrete and show by example how a skilled reader handles different types of text. For example, students learn to draw on their previous knowledge of a subject when looking at headings and illustrations. They also learn to *work out the meaning of unclear parts* of texts by pausing to find the meaning of unfamiliar words or by going back and re-reading. It might not be obvious to all students how a skilled reader continually *draws conclusions* while reading by reading between the lines and combining the text with other knowledge. Finally, the ability to *summarize* text using keywords, although demanding, is one of the most important skills that, with practice, will contribute to the students' learning in the future.

Discussing texts also provides opportunities for closer examination of their structure and coherence. This draws students' attention, for example, to the use of small words and phrases that are less striking than the main concepts of the field of study, but which bind the sentences together and can be crucial to the overall meaning of the text. A concrete example is the 'the more,... the less...' phrasal pair in the following chemistry text: '*The more noble the metal, the less willing it is to give up its electrons.*'

Digital reading requires multimodal literacy: for example, the ability to navigate between linked texts and different visual content while adapting reading strategies to different purposes. This requires the ability to skim read. By skim reading material, the reader can quickly identify where information can be found using more exploratory reading and which parts require *deep reading*. Although multimodal literacy development remains an under-researched area, it is evident that mastering fundamental reading strategies is essential for developing good literacy skills.

2. USE WRITING STRATEGIES IN ALL SUBJECTS: TRY TO PROVIDE MODELS

Genre competence develops in all school subjects!

Students should be given guidance on genre-specific writing, i.e. how different text types are written according to different purposes and the requirements of different genres. Students explore many different types of text in school, but the most important basic text types are descriptive reports, such as factual texts describing the natural world, narrative texts, such as historical accounts, and explanatory texts as used in science. The teacher should provide support during this process when moving from collaborative to more independent work. One good way for students to develop different writing strategies is to analyse and discuss model texts together with the teacher. If the content of the text is already familiar to the students, it is easier for them to examine its genre-specific characteristics. Students should learn to recognize the structure of the text, i.e. how the text as a whole is built up from logically ordered key paragraphs. Concrete subheadings give the students a clear overview of the text structure, which they can then put into practice themselves from the planning stage onwards. Other features of the text type can then also be looked at together: Is the text written, for example, in the present tense, or does it describe something that has already happened? Is the text written from an objective point of view, or is the author expressing his or her own opinion? The teacher can draw attention to certain expressions that can be used to begin or draw sentences together, such as putting forward reasons, giving examples, or consolidating ideas. Writing templates, i.e. model texts containing certain phrases and expressions, can also help students recognise and structure different texts. As with reading strategies, the teacher can clarify the writing process by modelling his or her own thinking: 'Here I need to think about how to introduce the topic to someone who isn't familiar with it. To do that, how should I begin?'

3. REMEMBER THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING ACTIVITIES IN STRENGTHENING SUBJECT-SPECIFIC LANGUAGE

Students can develop subject-specific language skills by exploring the subject content verbally. This can be practised, for example, through activities where the students investigate a given problem or phenomenon in pairs or groups, search for subject-specific terms, verbally explore the content of the phenome-

non, and evaluate their working process. This is also ideal for arts, crafts and physical education lessons that involve little or no writing. Any activities that require more abstract language, such as the exploratory activity above, help students to diversify their skills beyond concrete 'here and now' language use. For example, instead of pointing and referring to things as 'this' or 'that', to facilitate understanding, the use of proper names of objects is encouraged.

Especially in the early stages, tasks should have a clear structure and help should be provided as needed so that all students have the opportunity to participate. This could, for example, be in the form of pointing out and explaining the key concepts of the task. Spoken activities can then lead further to preparing a written report, as a next stage.

To conclude

For students to develop strategies in reading, writing and speaking, it is rarely sufficient to *present* the strategies and give instructions, rather strategies need to be *used together in practice* so that as many students as possible can appropriate them. Modelling helps to clarify the process: for example, the teacher can think aloud when working with reading strategies and analyse and discuss model texts when working with writing strategies. For students to begin to adopt new strategies, the strategies must be used by all teachers in their teaching. If learning strategies are addressed only in certain subjects, the students might associate them only with those subjects.

It's important for the teacher to think aloud with students:

"What does the writer mean by this, does it remind you of any other words you know?"

Multilingual students often need language-aware teaching after preparatory education: their language of education still needs to be strengthened as they study different subjects. Regardless of their motivation to learn, multilingual students face considerable challenges if class or subject teachers do not aim to teach in a way that develops both language and subject competences. The teacher can also come up with different ways of using the mother tongues of multilingual students in their teaching, such as concept translation tasks or distributing multilingual material. Systematic comparison of languages creates and reinforces a multilingual strategy that many students perhaps already use unconsciously. At the same time, this strengthens the language awareness of all students, whereupon the similarities between languages and language structures can serve as an interlinked strategy sparking curiosity towards learning new languages.

Dare to experiment! Gradually, you will find more and more ways to teach language and skills for developing understanding!

A more language-aware way of working does not necessarily lead to sudden, big changes in teaching; the teacher's own language awareness may also need time to develop. As an example, going through model answers to laboratory assignments or other factual material is standard practice. However, in addition to the factual content, the teacher can also begin to examine with the students what makes the text good (or bad). This strengthens the students' learning while at the same time giving the teacher an opportunity to consider how they can influence the learning process in other ways through language.

Lycka till! – Onnea matkaan! – Enjoy the journey!

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Art as a path to language – art-based language learning and the development of language awareness

Johanna Lähteelä, Juli-Anna Aerila & Merja Kauppinen

Art offers opportunities for experiential and functional learning – pedagogical emphases that are central to all language teaching, regardless of the language. Art-based language teaching draws on a range of art forms: music, drama, literature and creative writing, visual arts, crafts, multimedia-based forms of expression and combinations of these. This chapter introduces the opportunities of art-based language teaching and key considerations for its practical implementation.

Art-based learning is rooted in immersive and aesthetic experiences¹ and is a holistic approach involving different senses and emotional experiences together with a certain freedom and spontaneity. These elements enable a learner-centred approach and can support collaborative learning where joint activities provide natural places for interaction and for the formation and sharing of knowledge. In art-based learning, opportunities for content learning are opened up to students through sharing interpretations and experiences in a variety of ways. At the same time, students become part of a learning community² within an art-based learning environment that enables inclusive experiences and promotes a sense of belonging. Working towards common goals requires developing ideas, agreeing on division of labour, managing the working process, negotiating skills, and evaluating learning. This working approach both requires and develops a good working atmosphere of studying together collaboratively as a community.

Art-based activities not only open up the possibility of communal learning, but also personalise the learning process. During arts-based activities, teachers have the opportunity to follow students' activities from a distance and also to get know the students within a freer context.³ The focus of art-based learning can be, for example, students' emotional experiences and reflections on their actions, experiences and emotions. Identifying and reflectively examining important aspects and emotional experiences contributes to the learner's self-knowledge and thus helps build learner identity.

1 Löytönen & Sava, 2011.

2 Keskitalo, Aerila & Rönkkö, 2017.

3 Aerila & Kauppinen, 2020.

Art-based learning as a support for language awareness and language teaching

Art-based learning in language teaching often requires more planning than, for example, text-book-based teaching and learning. Self-knowledge and opportunities for identity building are key objectives of emotional and interaction skills development at different educational levels. They also connect with the objectives of language teaching: identifying and developing students' linguistic resources and language identity. Moreover, art-based approaches enable students to make their own culture, interests and linguistic resources visible.³ Through art-based methods, the linguistic diversity of the group is naturally highlighted as art-based practices are based on experientiality – providing opportunities for expression through multiple ways of communicating and for experiencing connection with others, even if there is no common language in the conventional sense.⁴

Try it!

- Rap-a-rhythm helps students discern sounds and word and sentence stresses when creating a lyrically and musically coherent rap song.

Being and becoming visible is a central feature of art-based learning. If the texts and tables of learning material are too far removed from students' everyday language and experiences, it can be difficult for them to make connections with their own language and the language practices of their familiar environment. Personal meanings are strengthened when the students' own experiences are taken into account. This can be achieved, for example, through video assignments. For instance, students could be given the task of creating makeup tutorials in different languages. In this way, the language becomes a flexible tool that can be creatively used for multiple purposes both for learning and for fun.

Artefacts created through art-based methods is rich in conscious and unconscious personal meanings that the student may not always know how to verbalise. Students' creations make the content being studied and the experiences, attitudes and emotions

4 Kauppinen & Aerila, 2020a.

related to it visible to the individual producing the work as well as to the other learners and the teacher. Artistic creations offer themselves as experiences that can be interpreted by others without verbal language being an obstacle. Art-based activities make the interpretations of the students, and of others involved, meaningful. When evaluating students' creations, diverse feedback should be provided in accordance with the learning objectives of an integrative learning process. Language can be learned, for example, by describing the colour scheme of, or asking questions about, a work of art.

Literature as a channel for language learning

Literature as an art form offers both a starting point and a channel for building language identity through experiences. For literature-based language education to succeed, engagement with reading and literature as a meaningful reading experience is required. Language teaching that treats literature merely as samples of language to be analysed cannot be considered as authentic literature education or art-based learning. Studying literature, the joy of reading, and reading engagement are especially important for multilingual children. Leisure reading improves the development of language skills in general and contributes positively to the development of second and foreign language vocabulary, reading speed, amount of reading, and motivation.⁵

Various art forms have been established to varying degrees in the teaching of literature and language education in Finland. For example, since the early days of Finnish basic education students have acted, painted and drawn and performed music together based on stories and poems. Art-based methods give the language learner opportunities to experiment with different channels of personal meaning making and expression. In addition, methods that evoke emotions and that are interactive in multiple ways can support students in creating their own language and language learner identity, i.e. in conceptualising what kind of language user they are, why certain forms of language use are appealing to them, and what opportunities these can offer for developing as a language user and learner.

Combining different art forms in reading activities supports student participation. Art-based approaches also support social reading engagement, as students negotiate, act as leaders and participate in decision-making.^{6,7} In addition to reading engagement, literature-based language education also develops, for example, children's self-esteem and self-awareness as well as perseverance and patience.⁸ In this way, literary choices and activities associated with reading can support the development of language and cultural identity.

An art-based education checklist for teachers:

- The teacher does not need to master any art techniques or principles of artistic expression: enthusiasm to try ideas is sufficient.
- Be open to trying everything! A wide variety of art forms can work well in teaching when a framework for activities is provided, yet freedom of thought and expression are not restricted. To ensure creative thinking is not stifled, student activity should not be excessively steered or limited. It is important to allow students the freedom to make highly individual interpretations based on the tasks provided. Multidisciplinarity inspires artistic expression!
- Create a 'Reading River' of personal reading experiences. This helps visualise the learner's personal reading preferences and their relationship to cultural meanings and values. It is also a good tool for developing language and cultural identity and is suitable for people of all ages and languages.
- Cultural considerations should be taken into account when choosing art forms. For example, certain forms of illustration may have important religious meanings.
- Choosing an art form is not about selecting the right materials or technical skills, rather the most important thing is the experiences and emotions that are evoked. Negative feelings are also significant.
- Art-based language learning methods work best in school when they become a natural part of the language learning environment. When students learn in school to regularly reflect on their own language use and the background to it, the foundations are laid for continuous learning and an enduring interest in reading, self-expression and versatile language use.
- Any art form or combination of art forms is suitable for literature-based language education. The TARU projects have experimented with miniature poetry gardens, text composition, different forms of theatre (kamishibai, shadow theatre, reading theatre), filmmaking, photography, creative writing, escape room pedagogy, experiential storytelling, and literary trails (performance).

⁵ Lao & Krashen, 2000.

⁶ Aerila & Kauppinen, 2020.

⁷ Santos, Pettig & Schaffer, 2012.

⁸ Coholic, 2010.

More on the art-based methods trialled in the IKI-TARU sub-project is available on the project website. Here are a few examples:

Silent books: Silent books are books without traditional text and are suitable for readers of all ages and languages. Silent books can be interpreted in many different ways and read in many different languages. The site provides tips on how to read silent books and offers a list of different silent books to try.

Kamishibai theatre: Japanese kamishibai theatre combines visual art, writing and storytelling and is suitable from early childhood education and throughout basic education. The site provides information about kamishibai theatre and different practical case examples of teachers' experimenting with kamishibai.

Reader's theatre: Reader's theatre is all about dramatic reading aloud. Reader's theatre practises reading fluency and can also be used effectively in language teaching. The site provides information about reader's theatre as well as downloadable reader's theatre manuscripts.

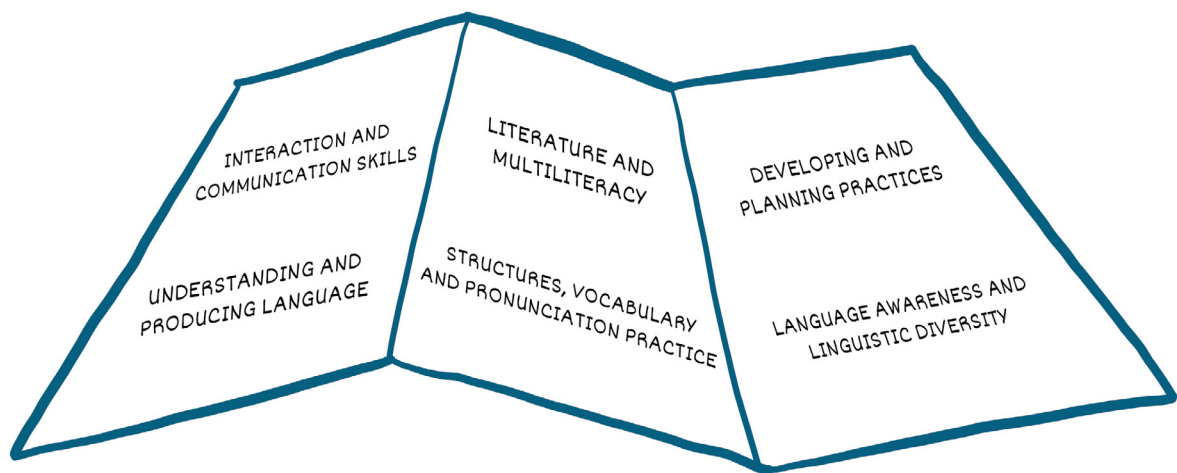
Shadow theatre: Shadow theatre is suitable for students of all ages and supports the use of imagination in storytelling. The site provides downloadable shadow puppet templates.

'Hop into Stories': A booklet for parents and early childhood educators on the power and importance of reading. The booklet is downloadable in six languages.

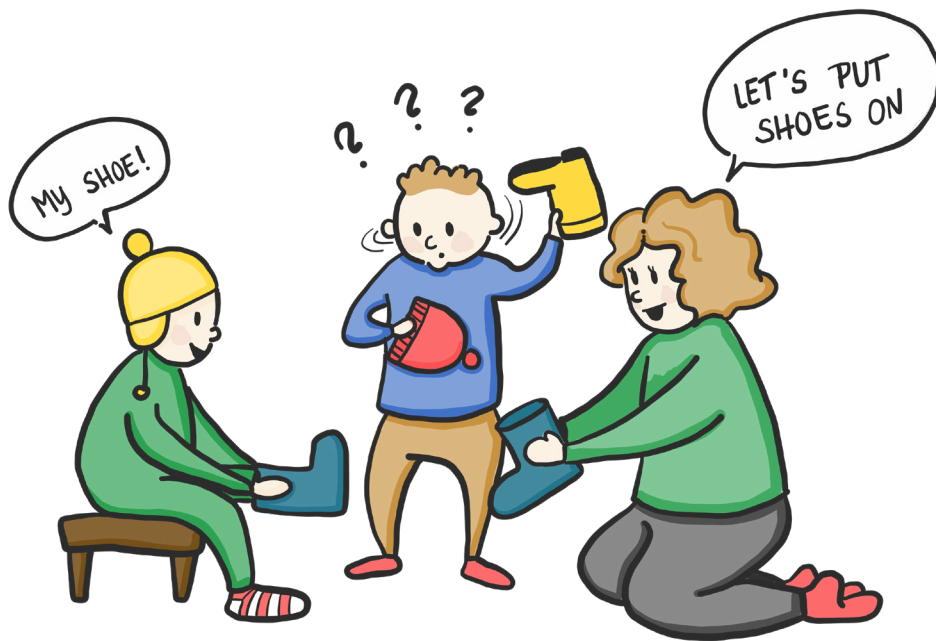
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Part III - Map



1. Communication and interaction skills



Colour market



Keywords:

playfulness, practising oral language skills, foundational language education

Developed by Ilona Leimu,
Hollihaka School, Kokkola,
Finland

Purpose of the activity:

Practising speaking and using colour words in the target language.



Backpack – What kinds of resources are needed?

- Colouring pictures, crayons
- Table or level surface as a market stall



Steps on the path – Activity

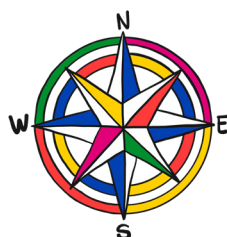
This example activity was carried out in foundational English language education during the first grades of basic education (age 7-9). The space is an ordinary classroom with a table placed outside the room. The table serves as a market stall.

Before beginning the activity, the teacher prepares the children for the task by practising colour words with them, for example by pointing to different objects in the room and asking what colour they are. The teacher can also suggest alternatives by asking: *'Is this pink/blue/red?'*

To prepare the children further for the task, the teacher also goes over with them how to ask for and give things politely in English. The teacher pretends to be a customer at the colour market, asking, for example: *'Hello, can I have pink, please?'* Next, the teacher demonstrates how the stall keeper politely hands the crayon to the customer: *'Here you are.'*

The teacher hands a colouring sheet to each student and asks some of them to form a queue at the market. Each child gets to ask for one or more colours at the market when it is their turn, after which they return to their seat to colour with the crayons they have chosen. Crayons can also be exchanged at any time by asking at the market for new ones.

The role play is carried out in English.



Compass – Principles guiding the activity

The aim of the activity is to encourage children to practise saying and using colour words as well as new language in the context of asking for, receiving and exchanging items (colours). The guiding principle is for the children to use as much English as possible during the activity. The children can ask for help at any time from the teacher, who guides them in the right direction, reminds them what the colours are in English, etc.



Changing conditions – Adaptations

- The activity can be adapted to other vocabulary, such as animals, instead of colours. Picture cards or soft toys, for example, can be used to support the activity.
- The colour market role play game has been used both in early childhood education and in foundational language education in the first grades of basic education. The role play can be adapted to different age levels by changing the difficulty level. The activity can also be used in several teaching sessions.
- Children can take turns acting as stall keepers and customers.
- The colour market game can also be combined with other teaching, such as colour theory. Children can fetch and exchange paint colours based on the same principle and work on their own colour wheel.
- Colours can also be discussed in other languages in each group or class: *'How many languages do you have in your group?'* The children could also write down as many colours in as many different languages as they can, and the colours could then be discussed together.

Everyday language showering

Keywords:

language showering, authentic learning situations, foundational language education, playfulness

Purpose of the activity:

Introducing and beginning to learn a new language little by little in everyday contexts through language showering.



Backpack – What kinds of resources are needed?

- Positive attitude towards using different languages in everyday activities.
- Initially, a bit of planning is needed to decide which daily routines and activities to include and how the new language(s) could be used. As language showering becomes more familiar, less planning time will be needed.



Steps on the path – Activity

A new model of language showering has been developed and pioneered in Jyväskylä, Finland, in which early childhood education professionals provide everyday language shower support for local day care centres. If help or advice about language showering is needed, a language shower facilitator can join the day care centre for a few weeks to come alongside and provide everyday support. The aim is to assist and support the early childhood education professionals so that they can continue everyday language showering after the facilitator moves on to the next day care centre. This provides the day care staff with ideas and skills for using language showering as an everyday part of early childhood education.

Language showering is implemented in early childhood education by integrating the new language into daily routines and activities.



Examples of language showering:

- Greetings, praising and encouraging children and other everyday interactions can be done in the language of showering.
- When dressing, clothes items can be named or instructions given in the language of showering.
- When going on class trips or outings, any items and clothing to be taken along can be named in the language of showering, e.g. also using pictures.
- Themes or topics can be explored in the language of showering through songs or games. For example, if practising rhymes, rhyming pairs can be in the language of showering, or if the theme is animals, animal songs can be sung in the language of showering.
- Games, songs, poems or rhymes in the language of showering can be done during morning circle times as an addition to ordinary routines.
- Language showering can be used in everyday counting situations, such as counting the number of children in class or everyday objects.
- In sports and PE, games and exercises can also be carried out in the language of showering alongside other activities, and familiar games can also be played in several different languages.
- When doing arts and crafts or in play situations objects can be named or instructions given in the language of showering.
- In 'in-between' moments, time-filler games can be played in the language of showering.
- At mealtimes, food and drink can be named or talked about in the language of showering when the children go to fetch their food or when eating together.

For more on the City of Jyväskylä language showering model, visit: <https://hundred.org/en/innovations/language-showering-in-jyvaskyla>



Compass – Principles guiding the activity

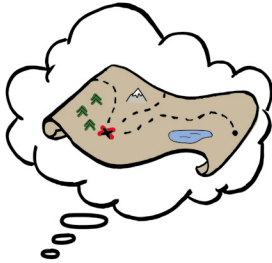
In language showering a new language is introduced through songs, games, activities and other forms of interaction. Language showering has no specific learning objectives; instead, the focus is on familiarising children with the language and awakening their interest in languages and language learning. At the same time, little by little, the children learn new words and phrases and practise listening comprehension.

In language showering, understanding of the new language can be supported through, e.g., images, expressions, gestures, demonstrations and showing concrete examples. In everyday language showering, understanding is also supported by drawing on situations that are already familiar to the children. The language shower facilitator also uses the normal language of the day care centre so that the new language can be introduced into the children's daily activities to an appropriate extent, without the pressure that the language of showering should be used at all times.

Compared to conventional language showering (once or twice weekly sessions), everyday language showering offers the advantage that it can be combined with ordinary everyday activities and with topics and themes being currently explored, making the new language a natural part of the child's everyday experience and language learning more effective. In this way, language showering forms part of a natural, coherent continuum together with other early childhood education activities. At the same time, synergies are created as the same topics and themes are practised in different languages. Another advantage of daily language showering is that the new language is introduced in appropriately small amounts. In this way, the children's interest and motivation are better maintained (cf. one-hour weekly session vs. 2 to 15 minutes of language exposure several times a day). Combining language



showering with daily activities and routines also provides beneficial repetition for enhancing learning. In addition, the amount and type of language showering used can also be assessed and adjusted in real time according to the alertness and other activities of the children, making it more sensitive to the children's needs.



Changing conditions - Adaptations

- Early educators can plan and implement everyday language showering or foundational language education independently without a professional coming from the outside to initiate it in the day care centre. The extent of language showering can be adapted to the daily life and routines of the day care centre, and the amount of new language exposure can be gradually increased as language showering becomes familiar to both the early childhood education professionals and the children. In this way, language showering can begin in very small ways, such as playing familiar games or giving simple instructions in the new language, and the amount of language can be gradually increased as is appropriate for the children.
 - With multilingual groups, the home languages of the children can be included in addition to the language of showering. Children or their parents can be asked to teach, e.g., greetings, songs, or games in their home language, so that these can also be practised together with the children. This also shows appreciation and interest in the children's home languages and promotes in the children an appreciation for and motivation to learn different languages.
 - In schools, language showering or foundational language education can be similarly introduced, e.g., by using the new language in various small ways in everyday situations, daily routines and subject-related activities.
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2. Understanding and producing language





Translanguaging in spoken interaction

Keywords:

practising oral language skills, multilingualism, playfulness

Purpose of the activity:

Reporting text content in pairs in the target language.

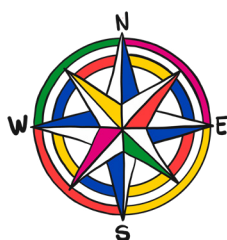


Steps on the path – Activity

This example activity was observed in a 9th grade (age 15-16) Swedish lesson. The task is based on a textbook text that has been worked on, for example, by reading and answering questions about the content.

The teacher writes on the board *helsingforssvenska* [*Helsinki Swedish*] and prepares for the task by saying that in Helsinki you sometimes hear Finland Swedish spoken in a way that the speaker uses both Swedish and Finnish words when talking. The teacher sets out the task by explaining that the text is to be discussed in pairs på *helsingforssvenska* [*as in Helsinki Swedish*]. The idea of the task is to talk freely about the content of the text and to allow the conversation to flow. If the students do not know a word in Swedish, they can say it in Finnish.

The task is kept going until all of the pairs have finished.



Compass – Principles guiding the activity

The task uses translanguaging methods. Translanguaging in the teaching context can mean, for example, the use of different languages in parallel and based on pedagogical principles, so that languages are utilised as a learning resource in various activities and tasks. In the case example, the teacher used Finnish to support the students' understanding and teacher-student communication; however, depending on the activity, different languages and the language repertoire of the students may be utilised as part of the activity.

The activity can be used for reviewing and practising content, but it is also suitable, for example, as a discussion exercise based on a specific theme. The activity gives students the opportunity to use and apply their linguistic resources to carry out the task and encourages speaking and discussion. At the same time, reporting, reading comprehension and text summarising skills are practised.



Changing conditions – Adaptations

- In multilingual groups, the activity can also be carried out so that students use their first language instead of the formal language.
- The activity can also be adapted to different languages and ages.
- Another example of translanguaging is provided in the [Multilingual movement game](#).



Unmix the lyrics

Keywords:

practising oral language skills, multilingualism, playfulness

Developed by Ilona Leimu,
Hollihaka School, Kokkola,
Finland

Purpose of the activity:

Reporting text content in pairs in the target language.



Backpack – What kinds of resources are needed?

- Song lyrics – printed out and cut up line-by-line by the teacher. One copy per group.
- Envelopes for the cut-up lyrics.
- Recording of the song, to be played to the group.



Steps on the path – Activity

This example activity was observed in grade 2 (age 8-9) English immersion. Working takes place in desk groups. Each group receives an envelope containing an English song. All groups have the same song. The teacher has cut the song into separate lines, so each strip shows one line of the song. The teacher explains the activity and steers it forward in English.

The teacher asks the children to take the strips out of the envelope and put them face down on the table before starting the game. The teacher explains to the class that when the music starts each group can start turning over the strips and putting the lines in the right order as they listen to the song.

The song is listened to several times over. On the third round of listening, the teacher gives a tip: Don't try putting all the lines in order in one go – leave gaps and try to fill them in the next time round.

When all the lines are in place, the students sing the song together in their group. The teacher asks one student in each group to point to the lyrics to show how the song progresses in their group. After singing, the teacher uses a document camera to show the correct answers and everyone sings together, with the teacher pointing at each line as the song progresses.

Finally, everyone stands up to sing the song and play around and have fun with the lyrics together.



Compass – Principles guiding the activity

The teacher explains to the students that they already know the song from the first grade, e.g. from PE lessons, so they are already familiar with it. In this activity a familiar song is used, for example, to support learning to read. The teacher supports the work of the groups, for example by giving tips if needed.

According to the teacher, similar singing tasks are used elsewhere in school, for example for learning and practising songs for the school Christmas concert.



Changing conditions - Adaptations

- The activity can be adapted to different content.

Colour spotting on a tablet

Keywords:

multimodality, vocabulary learning, practising narrative talk, second language

Developed by Susan Helldén-Paavola, Kukkumäki Day Care Centre, Jyväskylä, Finland

Purpose of the activity:

A functional approach to practising words and talking about photos.



Backpack - What kinds of resources are needed?

- Tablet or other imaging device, one per child.



Steps on the path - Activity

The original activity was carried out in an early childhood education second language group.

The teacher tells the children in Finnish that, next, they are going to go colour spotting and use a tablet to take photos of different colours that they choose. The teacher gives each child their own tablet and goes with them to spot colours around different parts of the day care centre. The children get to choose which colours they want to take pictures of and can after a while change the colour they want to photograph, if they want, by saying which colour they want to photo next.

During the activity the children spontaneously begin to help each other, and the teacher praises them for this. Occasionally, the teacher also asks the children if they want to change colours and what colours they might like to photo next, encouraging them to talk to each other and help each other. The teacher gives positive feedback.

After a while of going around the day care centre photographing different colours, the teacher asks the children to go back to the room they started in. When they return, the teacher and the children sit around a table. The teacher asks the children to tell what colours the objects are in the photos and where the photos are from. The teacher praises the children in Finnish and occasionally asks more specific questions about the images using different key concepts, such as: 'Was it high or low?'



Compass – Principles guiding the activity

Through movement and independent activity the children remember better what they are being taught. The names of colours are remembered better when the children actively look for them and describe them. By telling about their photos, the children also practise narrative speech. Through the teacher's questions, the children also get to practise the use of different concepts. In addition, collaborative skills and peer interaction are practised through helping friends.



Changing conditions – Adaptations

- Instead of colours, objects related to other vocabulary being taught can also be spotted by the group.
 - A similar activity can be also used in foundational language education for practising different languages, for example.
 - With older children the activity can also be done outdoors with e.g. nature vocabulary or other vocabulary being taught, with the students spotting objects that match certain words. Students can also search for words in pairs or small groups using their own devices, for example.
-

3. Language awareness and linguistic diversity





Multilingual movement game

Keywords:

movement, multilingualism, mathematical skills, language awareness

Purpose of the activity:

Practising counting and body parts in Swedish in a game involving physical exercise. Promoting language awareness and appreciation of different languages by highlighting the children's home languages.

Developed by Susan Helldén-Paavola, Kukkumäki Day Care Centre, Jyväskylä, Finland



Backpack – What kinds of resources are needed?

- Hula hoops
- Tambourine or other instrument/sound source. Music in different languages can also be used.



Steps on the path – Activity

The activity was originally observed in early childhood education in a group in which bilingual pedagogy is implemented and which foregrounds the home languages of multilingual children. The activity is from a PE session and included about eight children from the class.

The teacher goes around the hall placing hoops on the floor and counting them out in Swedish. He then gives instructions in Finnish (the language of the community): *'When the tambourine plays you can run around, but when it stops, everyone has to get inside a hoop.'*

The teacher plays the tambourine and the children run around. When the teacher stops playing, the children quickly run or jump into the nearest hoop. When all the children are inside a hoop, the teacher walks over to one of the hoops and says: *'Nu ska jag räkna hur många huvud finns här'* ['Now I will count how many heads are here'] while touching or pointing to their head. The teacher then counts the children's heads in Swedish, touching each child on the head, and then asks the children stood in the hoop in Swedish to raise their hands, showing by example what to do. When all of the children's hands are raised, the teacher lifts the hoop up over them, and puts it to one side. There's now one less hoop in the game.

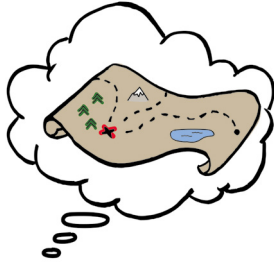
The game continues in the same way, with the body part being counted changing each time. Sometimes the teacher counts aloud with children in Swedish, and sometimes just asks them: *'Hur många?'* ['How many?'] When saying a body part, the teacher either points to or touches it to help the children understand which part is being counted. Occasionally, the teacher also asks a question in Finnish, e.g. by pointing at an empty hoop and asking how many shoulders are inside it.

In the last round of the game, when there is just one hoop left, the teacher instructs the children in Finnish: *'Now you have to have one foot in and one foot out.'* When the children have positioned themselves as instructed, the teacher asks a multilingual child to help him count the number of feet inside the hoop in their home language, and the teacher and child then count their feet together in the child's home language.



Compass – Principles guiding the activity

The activity follows the principles of bilingual pedagogy, i.e. Swedish (the new community language) is used in easy, concrete and repeated situations, and language understanding is supported e.g. by gestures, demonstrations and example setting. Finnish (the shared community language), on the other hand, is used for more complex instructions and abstract situations (e.g. when asking the children how many shoulders are in an empty hoop). In addition, the home language of a multilingual child was also highlighted in the activity by using it to count, demonstrating that that child's language is also valuable and useful. This also allows other children to hear and become aware of the existence and value of different languages.



Changing conditions – Adaptations

- If the body part names are familiar to the children, use of gestures to support understanding (e.g. demonstrating, pointing) can be reduced as the children develop their language skills.
- If there are several multilingual children in the group, all of their languages can be used alternately or in turn in the activity, e.g. for counting or for frequent expressions.
- Older children can be given more complicated instructions to follow or more complex counting tasks.

Multilingual mascots

Keywords:

multilingualism, language awareness, community building

Purpose of the activity

Making visible and utilising the language resources of the group of children, reading buddy activity



Backpack – What kinds of resources are needed?

- Several soft toys or other mascots (each toy speaks a different language).



Steps on the path – Activity

Activity

This activity was carried out with a multilingual group in the initial grades of Finnish-language basic education (age 7-9). The activity is carried out in the group's own classroom or a space where everyone has visual contact with the teacher. The students sit at their desks. The teacher stands in front of the group where everyone can see them. The example activity was carried out as part of the group's first lesson together.

The class has its own mascot, called Ted*. Ted speaks Finnish as his first language. The teacher lifts Ted up so everyone can see him and reminds them that Ted has quite a few friends. At this stage, the class has already met several other mascots who speak different languages as their first language. The teacher



talks with the group about what Ted and the other mascots do and about the mascots speaking different languages. The teacher continues on this topic by saying that as well as Finnish, Swedish, Sami and many other languages are spoken in Finland. The teacher then presents other familiar mascots, saying, for example: '*Han talar svenska* [*He speaks Swedish*]. *Swedish is the other main language in Finland.*'

The teacher leads the conversation to the arrival of the new mascot by telling the students that Ted was 'jumping off the walls' in the classroom this morning when he came to work because Ted had a new friend. The teacher brings out a new mascot, Lilly*. Ted and Lilly start to chat, and it is revealed that Lilly also speaks another language as well as Ted's language. The task of the group is to guess which language that might be. The teacher moves the conversation forward by giving clues, e.g., by saying how many other students in the group speak this language.

The activity ends when the puzzle is solved. The mascots are also present in other teaching situations, and students can use them, for example, as reading mascots. The example activity was carried out in early basic education. The activity is suitable for both big and small groups.

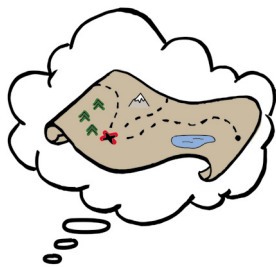
Community approach

The school community encourages multilingualism and different languages are made a visible part of the everyday life and activities of the school.



Compass – Principles guiding the activity

The activity described is ideally suited for language-aware teaching in multilingual groups. The example activity was carried out with a multilingual group in early basic education. Through the activity, different languages spoken in the group can be employed and made visible. The activity also increases students' sense of inclusion and supports the integration of multilingualism and language awareness into the everyday life and activities of the school. The activity can also be used to build interaction and support getting to know each other within the group.



Changing conditions – Adaptations

- Mascots can remain with the same class from year to year. This enables the mascots to be used in a variety of ways, such as introducing and exploring different topics.
- All of the languages in the group should be represented in turn with their own mascot.
- Mascots can be used in various situations throughout the school day (e.g. starting and ending the day, going to dinner). A variety of subjects, such as counting or exploring concepts, can also be approached with mascots.

*) Mascot's name has been changed in the description.

Modelling writing a chemistry lab report



Keywords:

literacy skills, multilingualism, language awareness

Developed by Chemistry teacher at the Swedish language Oxhamn School, Pietarsaari (Jakobstad), Finland, in collaboration with Liselott Forsman

Purpose of the activity

Supporting students in writing lab reports. At the same time, supporting students' awareness of types of text used in school and of writing strategies.



Backpack – What kinds of resources are needed?

- Model text from a well-written lab report
- Poorly-written lab report to help identify different aspects of the texts
- Written instructions for writing a lab report



Steps on the path – Activity

Preparation

The teacher finds or writes (1) a well-written lab report and (2) a lab report containing a number of key shortcomings. The two texts make it easier for the students to concretely see and become aware of different features of the texts and their meaning. The featured shortcomings should highlight key aspects that are usually challenging for the age group or the local context in question, such as formulating hypotheses or key linguistic expressions.

Read the texts through in advance so that you are able to highlight key features and structures during the lesson, such as textual formulations specific to certain text types, good and bad ways to begin sentences, use of the passive voice (e.g. was set up, was divided), and whether the text is written in the present or past tense.

Written instructions should also be prepared so that the students can later review key issues and find support when writing their own texts.

Progress of the activity

Work begins with examining the model texts together as a group. The text should be projected on the board large enough so that everyone can follow it at the same time, with any highlighting or other additions to the text made clearly visible. Changes can be saved as you progress. The students may also have a copy of the text to which they can make the same additions. Discuss the text, paying attention to the main features of the text and how the writer keeps the purpose of the text in mind while they are writing:

'To help the reader understand my text as well as possible, I first need to introduce what the text is about.'

'What kinds of expressions can you come up with that tell the reader...?'

Formulating a hypothesis is a central part of a lab report and can take a lot of time to accomplish. One approach is to allow the students to think about different formulations together to see which are the best and why.



The next work stage is to compare the report containing mistakes with the model text: the students compare the texts together and try to identify errors, thus gaining a deeper understanding of their structure, content and formulations.

Only after this do the students begin writing. Therefore, it is not enough to simply give instructions on how to write a lab report. In many cases students benefit from writing the first text jointly using a model text, with the teacher modelling key things to consider when writing.

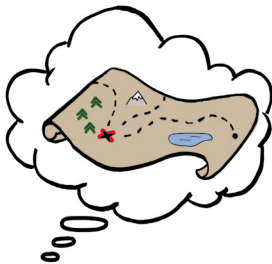
Other points to consider

Working with learning strategies supports the students both in content learning as well as in developing reading and writing strategies for future learning.



Compass – Principles guiding the activity

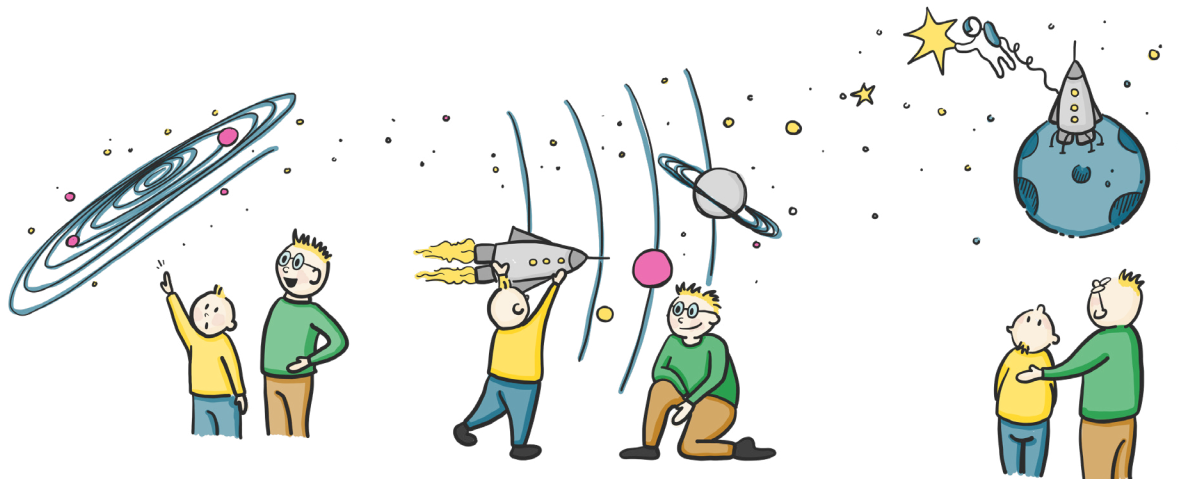
The key to writing different text types is to offer concrete model texts, preferably of differing quality, and to model writing by ‘thinking aloud’ together with the students about the different aspects and stages of the writing process. This working approach is one application of genre pedagogy, which is usually based on a cyclic model (teaching and learning cycle). When working with different text types in school, a number of other support tools can also be used in the writing process in addition to concrete model texts. In factual text writing, a planning tool with a three-column grid is often used to collect facts that are relevant to each content category. Another option is to use sub-headings in the model text to clarify the content requirements and structure of the text. A genre chart is also often used to illustrate the structure of the text type (e.g. whether the text should contain a heading and sub-headings, an introduction, comparative reflection, a conclusion) and preferably the typical formulations for each text section (e.g. use of expressions such as on the other hand and whereas). The charts should preferably be displayed on the class wall or made available to the students at all times in either digital or analogue form to support writing.



Changing conditions – Adaptations

- The activity described here was carried out with 8th graders (age 14-15) but can be adapted to different age groups.
- The same working approach can also be applied to all subjects to maximise its benefits. The use of genre-specific writing simultaneously in several subjects helps students to become aware that different text types have different objectives and requirements with respect to how they are structured and what formulations they typically use.
- In addition, different levels of model texts can also be used to illustrate the development between different grades.

4. Literature and multiliteracies





Creating an ongoing story together

Keywords:

storytelling, cross-curricular learning, collaborative methods

Purpose of the activity

Co-creating an ongoing story by adults and children.



Backpack – What kinds of resources are needed?

The activity requires the vision and opportunities to develop an ongoing, long-term story with the children. Most important is for the adults to have the will and time to build an ongoing story based on the children's suggestions as they arise amid everyday routines and activities. The activity may also require time for planning how other early childhood education/basic education learning objectives can be combined with the story.



Steps on the path – Activity

Children and adults develop a story together over the school year. Creating a story can start, for example, by picking up on an idea, question or observation made by one of the children. After this, the adults and children take turns developing the story: sometimes the adults direct the story more, other times the children come up with different events and plot twists and lead the story forward. The story is developed by talking about the storyline together and coming up with new events, but also by studying and observing the environment and clues from it that reveal how the story might continue. In addition, the story is developed through various activities (e.g. treasure hunts). Finally, the early childhood education professionals can, for example, act out the whole story or the end of the story, and discuss the themes related to the story together with the children.

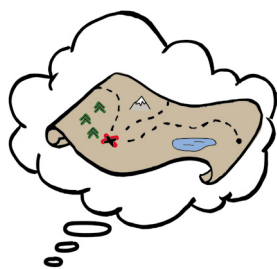
A case example of co-creating an ongoing story:

The story began when the children found an old-fashioned lollipop stick in the playground of the day care centre and came to show it to the early childhood educator, who suggested that it could be a clue to the past, which led the children to thinking and listening to the teacher's stories about what life was like in the past. As the children's interest in history grew, the children and adults told stories about the past and organised treasure hunts and other activities. The story then took a turn on the children's initiative when they 'discovered' that the stick had been left by a candyfloss thief, and the children and adults began to study together what traces and clues could be found as to who the candyfloss thief could be, observing and wondering who could fit the tracks and traces they found and be put on the 'list of suspects'. When the story got a little too alarming for the smaller children in the group, the early childhood education professionals decided that there should be a twist in the story to make it a little bit less scary. The adults acted out a story of a cat who was eating candyfloss and a crow who came and pinched it from the cat. The adults and the children then talked together about feelings and what it means to be friendly and unfriendly. The children were excited about the story and the themes associated with it. The early childhood education professionals also considered the project a success.



Compass – Principles guiding the activity

Practising storytelling and listening skills, expressing own thoughts and negotiating skills. Depending on the story, the activity can be combined with a wide range of content, such as emotional education, inquiry skills, and history. In collaborative storytelling, the children can be involved in creating stories while also practising a variety of skills and exploring content and themes that interest them, which strengthens their motivation to learn and to express themselves through language.



Changing conditions – Adaptations

- Differentiation occurs naturally as the collaborative stories are built through the children's own ideas and participation. In addition, the collaborative stories can also be differentiated through the use of certain themes, learning objectives or skills that could be beneficial to the group.
- The activity can also be adapted by creating stories together in different languages or in other languages taught as part of the curriculum.

Book tasting

Keywords:

narrative language, literacy skills

Purpose of the activity:

Getting acquainted with different styles of books and inspiring reading, becoming familiar with book review text, and practising expressing opinions.



Backpack – What kinds of resources are needed?

- School library or other space with a peaceful, pleasant atmosphere
- Possible cooperation with a librarian
- Materials per student:
 - ▶ A menu-like notebook for students to write a short book review in
 - ▶ A napkin-shaped piece of paper on which students can write their reflections on the activity
 - ▶ A picture handout of a plate, fork and knife, on which students can write words that need clarification.
 - ▶ A leaflet explaining the typical features of different genres
- NB: This example activity used pre-prepared material.



Photograph: A library area prepared for a book tasting session © Tea Kangasvieri.



Steps on the path - Activity



The teacher has prepared a school library space (together with the librarian) for the activity. The space is arranged as a restaurant-like space with the tables laid with the necessary materials for the activity. The tables are covered with a tablecloth and decorated with flowers. The books selected are presented in a rack on the table, from which the students can choose ones that appeal to their taste.

The basic idea of the activity is that the student takes one of the books on display, browses it, reads a few pages, and writes a short review of the book on the 'menu'. The following questions are presented on the menu in English, which the students answer in English based on their reading:

- Genre of the book
- Name of the book
- What do you think of the book cover?
- After reading a few pages, what do you think of the book?
- How did the writer try to persuade you to read the book?
- Would you read this book?
- Score

The students review five books in total. They do the activity sitting at the table, but get up to choose the books. The teacher circulates and manages the time during the activity. While circulating the teacher encourages the students to discuss the books together and asks students questions in English about what they are reading. After doing five book reviews, the students are given some time to finalise their reviews and share their experiences with others. During this reflective part of the activity the students use their table napkins for help in asking reflective questions in English:

- What did you like about the book tasting?
- Were there any books that you liked that you didn't think you would like?

Compass - Principles guiding the activity



During the activity, the teacher asks students about what they are reading, but does not correct their language, focussing instead on encouraging them to actively use the language. The teacher also helps the students with writing English. The students are free to choose any books that interest them and are encouraged to discuss what they have read both with the teacher and the other students.

Changing conditions - Adaptations



- The activity can be adapted to both foreign language and mother tongue lessons.
- The activity can be adapted for learners of different ages and levels, taking into account the students' language skills.
- The teacher can adapt and differentiate the activity by choosing different books for the task with the help of the librarian.
- Books in the students' own languages can also be included in the selection.
- The teacher can decide what kind of help to give the students in writing the book reviews, e.g. what set phrases or auxiliary words to provide, or how extensive the book review should be.

5. Language structures, vocabulary and developing pronunciation



Language coding



Keywords:

early language learning, game-based learning, vocabulary learning

Purpose of the activity:

Practising and repeating words in a functional way; practising coding and coding skills.



Backpack – What kind of resources are needed?

- Different coloured labels/blocks
- A bit of space to move in



Steps on the path – Activity

The children get to practise language coding in pairs. Each pair collects some colour labels and spreads them on the floor where there is a suitable space. The colours are named in English and practised a few times together as a group so that everyone remembers them. The teacher provides the instructions in Finnish and gives an example in the target language.

The idea is for the children to take turns coding a series of colours that the pair has to jump. For example, if one child says: *'Red, green, blue, yellow, blue'*, their partner has to jump from colour to colour in the order given. When the task is completed, the partners change roles. The partner who just jumped now gets to do the coding by saying a colour sequence, and the other gets to jump the sequence. The pair keep swapping roles until the activity time is up. If a child forgets a colour, they can ask the teacher or their partner.

The activity was originally observed in preschool foundational English education.



Compass – Principles guiding the activity

Through movement and independent activity the children gain a stronger grasp of what they are being taught while also learning basic coding skills. The game works best with words the children are already somewhat familiar with and is particularly effective for practising and actively reusing vocabulary.



Changing conditions – Adaptations

- The activity can also be adapted for a multilingual group so that the children teach each other the languages they know.
- Instead of colours, other vocabulary can be practised, e.g. using picture cards or objects.
- Practising giving directions or instructions can also be included in the activity, e.g. by getting the children to say *'Go'* or *'Jump'* when giving each other instructions.
- Word cards can also be used with older children to support memorising.
- The language encoding game principle can also be applied to other activities. E.g., directions can be practised by building a labyrinth by taping boundary lines on the floor and using mattresses and other sports equipment. Children take turns guiding their partner to the centre of the labyrinth by giving instructions in the target language.

Verb miming to develop pronunciation



Keywords:

language sounds, playfulness

Purpose of the activity:

Practising selected target language sounds through miming.



Backpack – What kind of resources are needed?

The teacher has written verb cards with the target sound at the beginning, middle or end of the word. As a teacher-led activity, verb miming is suitable for both large and small groups. The teacher gives a verb card to a student, who comes to the front of the class, and makes sure the student understands the meaning of the verb before they mime it. The teacher is thus also able to differentiate the task and select a verb that is suitable for each student.



Steps on the path – Activity

German-language early grades of basic education (age 7-9). The teacher uses German as the language of instruction, the students use both German and Finnish.

The teacher has written certain 'doing words', i.e. verbs, onto cards. Each verb practises the German [ch] sound. One student at a time takes a verb from the teacher; the teacher makes sure that the student understands the meaning of the word. The teacher checks in German that they understand the meaning, and the student whispers the verb in Finnish in the teacher's ear. The student presents the word to the class as a mime, and the other students guess what action the student is miming.

The student who mimes gets to choose a guesser from the other students. The guesser asks 'Zeichnest du?' [Are you drawing?] to which the mimer answers 'Ja, ich zeichne.' [Yes, I'm drawing] or 'Nein, ich zeichne nicht' [No, I'm not drawing]. Once the correct answer is given, the miming student gets to choose the next student to come to the front to mime. The teacher guides the selection, making sure as many as students a possible have a turn at acting. The teacher directs the mimer to answer the guesser in whole sentences in German: 'Yes, I am drawing' or 'No, I am not drawing'. In this way the student also practises the present continuous form of the verb. The teacher supports the guessing students with help questions and directs their attention to key aspects of the mimes.

Teacher example:

"Was ist das?" ('What is this?' Teacher points at the mimer.)

"Lesen." ('To read'. Teacher gives the student the basic form of the verb.)

"Wie fragst du das?" ('How do you ask that?' Teacher directs the student to ask in ways that conjugate the verb.)



Compass – Principles guiding the activity



The example activity can be used in bilingual education as well as in foreign language education for practising new sounds. In foreign language education the proportion of first language use can be adjusted according to the competence level of the students. Special attention is paid to good pronunciation during the activity, while also allowing the students room for errors. Mistakes are not reprimanded; instead, students are guided towards the correct pronunciation. The teacher directs the activity. Special attention is paid to the specific sounds that are being practised.

Changing conditions – Adaptations



Verb miming is easy to implement and does not require many materials or much preparation. The teacher can also ask the students to come up with guessable verbs, especially with older students. Verb miming can be easily used with all age groups, and the teacher's role can be reduced as necessary with older students. Especially in German, in addition to pronunciation the students are also given the opportunity to practise conjugating the present tense as well as formulating and answering questions. The amount of language used in the activity can be reduced as needed or, as in this example, used throughout the activity, depending on the group.

Team fishing game

Developed by Suvi Mattila,
Finnish International
School of Tampere

Keywords:

vocabulary learning, multilingualism, game-based learning

Purpose of the activity:

Learning words through multilingual activities.

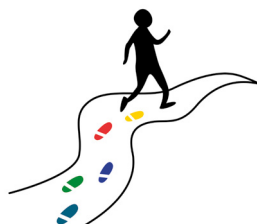


Backpack – What kind of resources are needed?

No specific resources are needed for this activity. In the example activity, the teacher referred to a textbook for vocabulary and grammar examples. The activity was carried out in a classroom, so tables and chairs were moved out of the way before starting. A little extra time may therefore need to be set aside for arranging the classroom.

The activity is suitable for groups of different sizes. However, there should be enough participants to allow the group to be split into two teams. The activity was carried out in English language upper grades of basic education (age 13-16), but it is also applicable to younger learners and different foreign language teaching contexts.

Steps on the path – Activity



The teacher starts the activity by dividing the class in two. The teacher explains the activity in Swedish and asks the students to form two queues, directing the 'ones' to their right and the 'twos' to their left. The students at the front of each line stand opposite each other, and the teacher stands at the head of both lines. The lines are separated from each other so that there is ample space between them.

The teacher says a word at the same time to the first two students, which, depending on the source material the teacher is using, should be said in Swedish

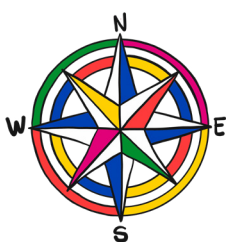


or English. In addition to words from the vocabulary section of the textbook, the teacher asks for some irregular verbs, for example: 'The present perfect form of äta [eat].'

The students compete to say the right answer quickest. The winner gets to 'fish' the first person in the other line over to their own team. The teacher stipulates that some sort of fishing gesture also has to be made in order to win. The students in the lines can check and say the words in the textbook, but the ones first in line cannot.

The teacher adjusts the difficulty level of the activity, for example, by asking for the different forms of irregular verbs. The teacher mainly uses Swedish or English, but may also say the word in Finnish, if needed. In this way, the activity can also be differentiated. If the students respond at the same time or the teacher is unsure what answer was given, the teacher continues asking until there is a clear winner. The activity ends when one team has 'fished' all of their opponents onto their own side.

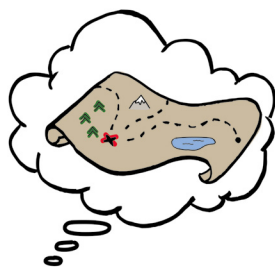
Compass – Principles guiding the activity



The example activity was used to review vocabulary in an 8th grade (age 14-15) Swedish lesson in which the language of instruction was English. The activity is especially suitable for revisiting content that has been previously taught. The teacher guides the activity. The activity can also be differentiated by the types of answers the teacher asks for and which language is used. The example activity was carried out multilingually using three languages (Finnish, Swedish, English) according to the teacher's assessment of the situation.

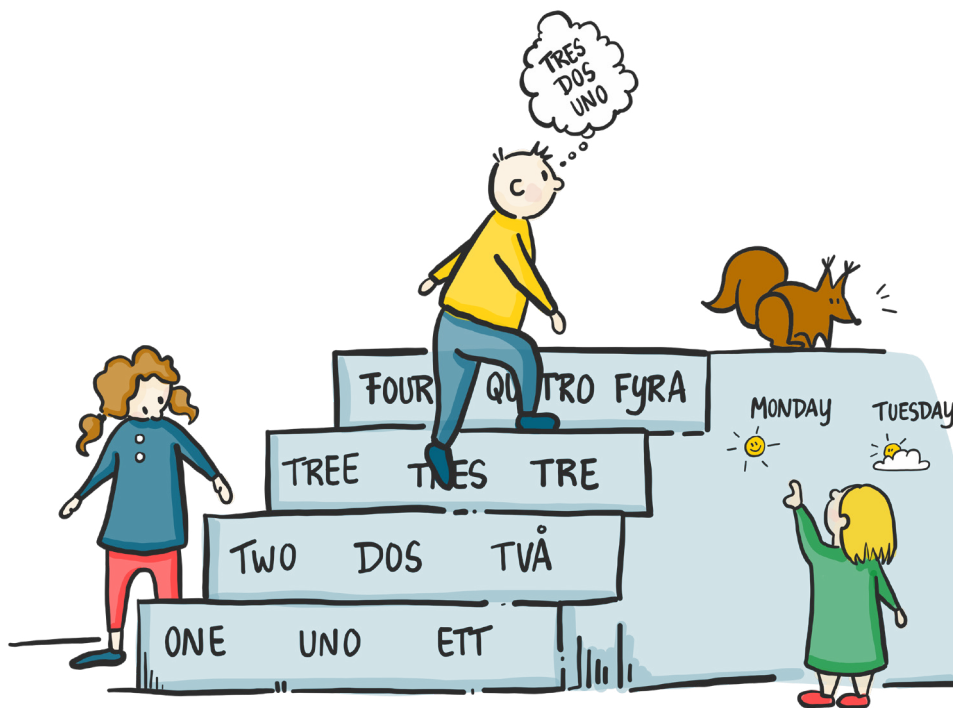
The teacher said they intend to use this activity in almost all groups at some point because it involves active reuse of vocabulary. All of the students participate in active vocabulary practice, both those answering the teacher's questions as well as those standing in line listening to the answers. Those in line can also review the words in the textbook.

Changing conditions – Adaptations



- By modifying the vocabulary used, the activity can be adapted for groups of varying ages.
- For example, in initial basic education the teacher can use picture cards to support the activity.
- The activity can also be applied e.g. to learning synonyms or antonyms.
- Roles can be changed, with students acting as the questioner instead of the teacher. In that case, several rounds could be played with the roles changed or, e.g., the questioner could be changed each time the team game is played in class, according to an agreed order.

6. Planning and developing activities



A calendar wheel for foundational language education



Keywords:

continuum building, collaborative working methods, foundational language education

Purpose of the activity:

Building a continuum in foundational language education and helping teachers establish an early language education programme in their locality.



Backpack – What kind of resources are needed?

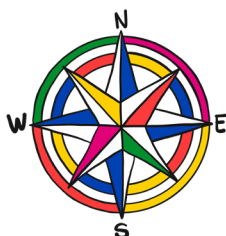
- Some time for joint planning. The amount of time needed depends on the level of detail of the calendar wheel: if only planning general subject areas to be covered, less joint planning time is needed than if making a session- or lesson-specific plan, as in the example described.
- Collaboration between early childhood education professionals and school teachers.



Steps on the path – Community approach

A team of local teachers and early childhood education professionals developed a calendar wheel for foundational English language education from preschool to second grade. The team prepared session/lesson plans, materials, and a calendar wheel. The materials were distributed to all local teachers and early childhood educators working with preschoolers or first or second graders.

A variety of learning methods were taken into account in the session/lesson plans, with an emphasis on functional working methods and varying the session/lesson structure to always allow for new ways of taking the language forward. In addition, materials for each lesson were prepared and distributed to facilitate their implementation. The material was distributed e.g. through a local online learning platform, which all teachers have access to. The session and lesson plans and the calendar wheel can be adapted and varied to suit each group and to differentiate upwards or downwards. In addition, the plans have been designed to ensure that the topics and approaches are appropriate for younger learners.



Compass – Principles guiding the activity

A jointly developed, shared calendar wheel helps to build a continuum of foundational language learning. It is easier for teachers to take into account what has already been learned and build new knowledge and skills on the basis of this as they know what has been previously covered and also have an idea of what is coming later.



Changing conditions – Adaptations

- The calendar wheel can be planned in detail or loosely depending on the teachers' wishes and needs. Common session and lesson plans and materials are not necessarily needed, often the topics and themes can be chosen and scheduled jointly.
- If there is no possibility for joint planning, it is at least beneficial to inform teachers working next with the children about what has been covered previously, especially during points and phases of transition in education.
- The calendar wheel has also been used in many instances to support and monitor children's Finnish language learning, for which it is also an excellent tool. In addition, sharing materials between teachers and other traditional means of collaboration are also well suited to strengthening educational continuums.

Ideas for intermediary evaluation discussions

Keywords:

student centred, self-assessment, collaborative methods

Purpose of the activity:

Providing students with an opportunity to reflect on their skills and learning and teachers with tools for planning their teaching; building effective student-teacher dialogue.



Backpack – What kind of resources are needed?

- A peaceful space for discussion



Steps on the path – Activity

The intermediary evaluation discussion is conducted with each new group. The example discussions were carried out with students studying languages in the upper grades of basic education (age 13-16).

When a new class arrives, especially if some students have been in the same classes previously, the teacher can plan a set of activities to determine the level of competence of the group. If the teacher decides to give a written assignment, this can also be utilised as a basis for discussions with the students.

The teacher discusses with each student for a few minutes, e.g. in the corridor while others are working on assignments in the classroom. During the discussion, the teacher and the student can consider together, e.g., how the student is feeling at the moment, what has been good and going well for them in lessons and their studies, what assignments or ways of working have been appropriate for them, or how it feels to come to language lessons. The teacher encourages the student to share their own thoughts and also encourages honesty: they emphasise that the discussion does not affect the student's grades and that speaking frankly and openly makes it easier for both the teacher and the students to build together the most enjoyable and effective lessons possible.

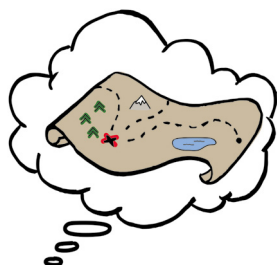


The teacher carries out the discussions incrementally over a period of a few weeks. The discussions require a safe atmosphere. The objective of the intermediary evaluation discussion is to get to know the group members more individually, which supports the planning of teaching. The discussion also encourages students to reflect on their own skills and their own role. Intermediary evaluation discussions can be conducted with the groups each school year.



Compass – Principles guiding the activity

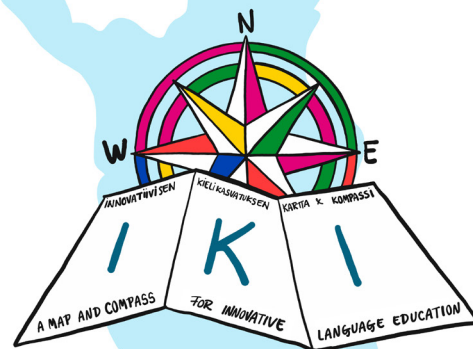
The discussions help the teacher to discern the needs of the group. The student-centred approach and atmosphere of the discussion encourage the students to reflect on their own skills and learning. At the same time, an open discussion atmosphere is reinforced within the group. Based on the teacher's experience, the intermediary evaluation discussions can reduce stress for both the teacher and the students. They are also useful in differentiating and planning teaching.



Changing conditions – Adaptations

- Can be implemented at different stages of the school year and also with already familiar groups.
 - Can be implemented with students over a very broad age range and in different areas of language education.
 - Discussions can focus on aspects specific to each learner in order to address their individual needs. During the discussion it is also possible to discuss how the student feels about the reflective evaluation, whether anything is specifically challenging for them, or how might the teacher take into account e.g. linguistic challenges and in that way better support the student's work.
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