

## Mediation

[Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec 2022\)1 on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture](#)

Measures

- b. vi. promote the teaching of languages in interaction with one another.
- b. ix. explore ways of including home languages.
- b. xiv. encourage pedagogical approaches that develop learners' language and cultural awareness and equip them to engage in intercultural dialogue.
- c. iv. engaging teachers in a detailed exploration of what plurilingual and intercultural approaches to education entail in terms of classroom practice.
- c. v. helping teachers to develop the pedagogical competences needed to manage linguistic and cultural diversity for the benefit of all pupils and students.

### What is it about?

Mediation often refers to activities that facilitate communication between individuals or groups who, for whatever reason, are unable to communicate with each other directly. More generally, mediation refers to the role of schools and education systems in supporting learners' trajectories by reducing distances related to language, knowledge, social belonging and perceived otherness (Rec 2022, p. 13).

In the classroom, mediation tends to arise spontaneously when groups of learners use all the languages at their disposal to engage with, explore and explain curriculum or discipline content. Such activities typically lead to mediation in an extended sense, embracing a wide range of collaborative procedures by which teachers and learners negotiate diverse attitudes and beliefs as they construct knowledge. Mediation in this broader sense, whether within or between languages, is fundamental to teaching approaches that aim to harness and extend learners' individual and collective agency and create a democratic classroom culture by making space for the learner's voice. Rec. 2022 EM - 3.e. (p.23).

## Why is this important, and what can be done?

Recognising the plurality of language resources that learners have and bringing languages into interaction with each other not only fosters the development of plurilingualism and intercultural competence but also develops learners' mediation abilities and supports inclusion and integration. From a wider educational and policy perspective, mediation constitutes a core educational function: it supports learners' mobility across school pathways, their access to communities of practice, and their inclusion in educational and social life. Rec. 2022 EM - 3.i. (p.25)

It is important to challenge the traditional view that only one language should be used in each lesson and to support the development of competences in interactive, mediational and plurilingual communication. The illustrative scales for mediation in the CEFR Companion volume provide a detailed description of these competences.

It is also important for teachers to recognise that they should support their pupils in building on their home languages in the classroom, even when the teachers themselves do not understand those languages. Rec. 2022 EM – 5c. iii-iv. (p.35 - edited). For example, learners can research a subject and/or bring to school materials and artefacts written in their home language and explain these to others. At the same time, education systems need to recognise mediation as a shared responsibility of teachers, learners and institutions, and to create structural conditions that enable mediation practices to support learners' mobility across school pathways, their access to communities of practice, and their inclusion in educational and social life.

## Council of Europe resources for policy/decision makers

Resource 1: [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - Companion volume](#)

The CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR-CV) updates and extends the 2001 CEFR, which provided a common basis for developing language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, and textbooks, supporting the alignment of curriculum, teaching, and assessment. It includes the complete set of updated and extended CEFR descriptors, replacing those from 2001. These now also cover areas such as mediation, online interaction, plurilingual and pluricultural competence, and sign language competences. The CEFR-CV offers a vision of language learning and use in which learners are viewed as active, responsible participants in society, using language to achieve real-life goals and engage meaningfully with others.

The sections of the CEFR-CV most relevant to mediation are [Section 2.5](#) (pp. 35-36) in which mediation is briefly introduced and [Section 3.4](#), which provides a comprehensive set of descriptors for different types of mediation. Here, for policy makers the most relevant parts are on Overall Mediation at the beginning of [Section 3.4](#) (pp. 90-92) and the short introduction to each of the groups of descriptors: Mediating a text, Mediating concepts, Mediating communication, and Mediating strategies.

## Resource 2: [Mediation](#)

This short 6-minute video explains the concept of mediation, which is central to plurilingual and intercultural education. It begins with a brief introduction of the CEFR and then, in the main part of the video (5 minutes) three primary and secondary school teachers (one Israeli, one Portuguese, one Canadian) explain what mediation means for them and the way they implement it in their classes.

This video gives policymakers an overview of ways in which mediation can be implemented in different ways in real world-oriented tasks at different levels in different contexts. This may be of assistance when developing guidelines that highlight the importance of making space in the curriculum and/or teacher education for acknowledging the range of languages in a class and for teaching languages in interaction with each other.

## Resource 3: [Education, Mobility, Otherness – The Mediation Functions of Schools](#)

This Council of Europe document provides decision makers with a conceptual framework for understanding how schools act as mediation institutions. The last chapter (Conclusion, pp. 61-64) gives access to the main ideas of the document; section 4 (School trajectory and mediation, pp. 34-59) shows how schools (i.e. various players within an institutional framework) can strategically use mediation across all stages of the school career to turn mobility, diversity and transitions into drivers of educational success, social inclusion and long-term societal cohesion, rather than sources of inequality.

## Council of Europe resources for teacher educators/ pedagogical advisors

### Resource 1: [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - Companion volume](#)

See above

Especially [Chapter 2](#) (pp. 27-45) and [Section 3.4](#). (pp. 90-122)

The CEFR-CV gives teacher educators and language programme managers and pedagogic advisors a 27-page [Chapter 2](#) on CEFR key concepts that is very suitable for introducing to (student) teachers such topics as mediation, and the use of CEFR descriptors.

[Section 3.4](#) also provides a detailed discussion of the concept of mediation and a large number of illustrative scales for mediation in both senses defined above (cross-linguistic/cultural – and collaborative procedures by which teachers and learners construct knowledge). All the illustrative descriptors contained in Chapters 3-6 (searchable in different languages in an Excel file at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/home>) also provide rich raw material to inspire (student) teachers to design tasks involving mediation.

### Resource 2: [Mediation in teaching, learning and assessment](#)

This ECML resource, Mediation in teaching, learning and assessment (METLA), explains the concept of mediation and demonstrates how teachers of additional languages in primary and secondary education can include (cross)linguistic mediation in their teaching practices. The

project provides a downloadable [Teachers' Guide](#), as well as a [repository of mediation tasks](#). It offers step-by-step guidelines on how you can design and evaluate your own language mediation tasks.

Resource 3: [A Guide to Action-oriented, Plurilingual and Intercultural Education](#)

This guide outlines the educational vision of the CEFR Companion Volume, explaining crucial aspects of plurilingual and intercultural education, including a four-page Section 5.3 on [integrating mediation into the curriculum](#). It summarises work of the Council of Europe in language learning, summarises theoretical inputs, and gives a good overview of Council of Europe resources (with links) on different aspects of plurilingual and intercultural education as well as providing orientation for teacher educators and curriculum developers on how to implement it.

## Further resources

---

[CEFR website – Mediation page](#)

The webpage provides info-sheets, videos, workshop materials and articles on mediation, supplemented by a corresponding page on ideas for implementation of mediation, showing a wealth of resources.