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Mediation in Language Learning and Teaching

December 2020

Dear Teachers, Lecturers, Instructors, Educationalists and Examiners,

This is the second newsletter of the project **MiLLaT – Mediation in Language Learning and Teaching** – which commenced in November 2019 at the Centre for Foreign Language Teaching, University of Warsaw, as part of Erasmus+, Action 2. The four participating universities are the University of Helsinki (Finland), the Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania), Charles University (the Czech Republic) and the University of Warsaw (Poland) as the project's coordinator.

1. MiLLaT adapting to the new situation

The coronavirus pandemic caused all language teaching at the participating institutions to move online in the spring, just before we were due to begin observing mediation activities in the classroom at Charles University. This observation of in-class teaching in Prague was consequently switched to the observation of online activities at all four partner universities during April and May. Three broad categories of mediation tasks were observed:

Asynchronous tasks, where students work independently or in groups online, often at different times;

Synchronous tasks, which take place online in live meetings (e.g. in Zoom or Teams), and in which the teacher and all students are present;

Polysynchronous tasks, which comprise a blend of live synchronous and asynchronous elements.

The tasks observed in the spring have now been piloted by different teachers during October and November. The piloted tasks will form part of two guides to be prepared next year for language teachers wishing to integrate mediation-related activities into their courses: one for **traditional, synchronous and polysynchronous language teaching** and the other for **online asynchronous language teaching**. As teachers in the partner institutions have gained more experience and training in synchronous/asynchronous/polysynchronous learning and teaching over the past nine months, the prepared and piloted mediation tasks are of higher quality and appropriate for the new post-COVID-19 reality.

These changes are also reflected in the renaming of some of the project outputs (O):

- **O2** Materials Developing Mediation for Online Asynchronous Courses
- **O3** Mediation in Traditional, Synchronous and Polysynchronous Language Teaching - a Guide for Teachers
- **O5** Quality Assurance Tools, Procedures and its Implementation for Materials Developing (including Materials Developing Mediation for Traditional, Synchronous and Polysynchronous Courses)
- **O6** Mediation in Online Asynchronous Language Teaching- a Guide for E-Teachers

2. Transnational planning meeting in October

In a joint meeting between the project partners in October, we agreed on the next steps in the project. As a return to classroom teaching is unlikely before next summer, we will continue to focus on online teaching, but will develop more synchronous mediation tasks that can also be adapted for in-class teaching in the post-COVID future.

3. MiLLaT project dissemination

Despite the cancellation or postponement of most conferences and meetings during the coronavirus pandemic, MiLLaT project activities have been disseminated at local, national and international levels. Examples of this dissemination include:

- The MiLLaT website <http://millat.uw.edu.pl/>
- EPALE: <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/users/millat-erasmus-project>
- LINKEDIN: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/millat-mediation-project-3232aa196/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Mediation-in-Language-Learning-and-Teaching-108413360618341/>
- The first issue of MiLLaT newsletter: <http://millat.uw.edu.pl/newsletter>
- The MiLLaT poster "What is Mediation in Language Learning and how does it manifest?" presented at the Cercles Conference, Sept. 2020, by M. Konarkova, S. Kadlecova (<http://cercles2020.cjv.muni.cz/abstract/michaela-konarkova-sarka-kadlecova>)

Furthermore, sample tasks have been made available via Facebook, LinkedIn and EPALE.

4. MiLLaT Online Seminar "Mediation in Language Learning and Teaching"

Vytautas Magnus University in Lithuania will host an online seminar from 8-9 December 2020 (<https://sites.google.com/view/millatseminar/home>). This multiplier event is targeted at higher education language teachers and lecturers, as well as foreign language school teachers from state and privately run educational institutions, and aims at disseminating the intellectual outputs and project activities in Lithuania. The guest speakers include Enrica Piccardo from the University of Toronto, Kris Peeters from the University of Antwerp and Robert King from Pearson ELT. The seminars have been recorded and are available via the above link until 31 December 2020.

We hope that the MiLLaT project will provide inspiration for your teaching.

Best wishes from
The MiLLaT Team