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Mediation in Language Learning and Teaching

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TASK DESCRIPTION AND PILOTING FORM

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1. Aim of the Intellectual Output

The aim of this Intellectual Output was to develop a “Task Description and Piloting Form” to be used for preparing and piloting materials developing mediation in language teaching in order to assure the highest quality of the developed materials and their applicability in various cultural contexts. The form was prepared especially for the task-based approach and action-oriented approach recommended as teaching methods by the European Union.

2. Description of the form and how it is used

The Task Description and Piloting Form comprises two parts, which are completed separately by two language teachers. The author of a task developing mediation completes the task description part and the teacher piloting the task completes the piloting part and evaluates its usefulness for developing mediation.

Task Description part

In the first section of the task description part, the author of the task records general information on the task and the context in which it has been used, including the task title, lesson type (online/in-class), target learners/course and their CEFR starting level (A1–C2), as well as the target language of the course and any other language(s) used. In addition, the group dynamics for the task are recorded (e.g., pair work/groups of X). The mediation scale(s) relevant to the task are indicated, and finally, a short description of the task is provided, as well as the expected learning outcomes.

In the next section, a description of the task is added. This begins with the background knowledge or sub-skills required by the students and a description of pre-task activities if relevant. The detailed task description follows, including the time allocated to each component of the task. Any potential post-task follow-up activities are also included in the form. Finally, the task author provides some practical details in the form, including the resources required by the teacher and by the students to carry out the task, and any potential challenges and solutions.

The intention is that purely based on the task description part, another language teacher could pilot the task in her/his language course.

Task Piloting part

The piloting of tasks prepared in the MiLLaT project and evaluation of their usefulness for developing mediation was essential for assuring the quality of the developed materials.

In the first section of the task piloting part, the piloting teacher provides similar general information to the task author on the context in which the task was piloted, including the lesson type, target learners/course and their CEFR starting level, the target language of the course and any other language(s) used. The group dynamics for the piloted task are additionally recorded (e.g. pair work/groups of X).

If the piloted task includes pre-task activities, the piloting teacher records how well the students completed these activities and whether they were modified in some way (why/how), and can additionally provide

suggestions for changes (what/why). Similarly, for post-task follow-up, the piloting teacher records how well the students completed these activities, as well as potential modifications or suggestions for changes. The piloting teacher additionally records the resources required and whether they were sufficient, and can also suggest additional/alternative resources for the task.

Finally, the form allows the piloting teacher to provide an evaluation of the skills of the students according to the relevant mediation scale(s), and also to evaluate the task itself (its overall success in developing mediation skills, whether it can be recommended to other language teachers, and how the piloting teacher rates the task on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

3. Development and testing of the form and use in the MiLLaT project

The team developing the form was led by the University of Helsinki and included representatives from the other three partners.

In the first stage of development, a list of components for the task description and piloting form was compiled in a shared document. A preliminary form was created from this list, and the development team tested it by each completing the task description part for one example task used in language teaching. These examples were shared in the team and the form was revised based on experience and feedback. In the second stage, the preliminary form and our task description examples were shared with the other project members from each partner for commenting and editing.

The final form was used in the initial preparation of tasks and their piloting for Intellectual Outputs IO 02 (Materials Developing Mediation for Online Asynchronous and Polysynchronous Courses) and IO 05 (Materials Developing Mediation for Traditional and Synchronous Courses). The best tasks were then selected for inclusion in two teacher guides: one for traditional and synchronous tasks (IO 03) and the other for asynchronous and polysynchronous tasks (IO 06). During the materials development and piloting phase, some technical issues with the Task Description and Piloting Form were identified and fixed.

4. Availability and dissemination of the form

The form may be used and adapted to the needs of other learners in various educational contexts. The form has also been presented at multiplier events, at various conferences, and via other media such as the project Facebook page.

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TASK DESCRIPTION AND PILOTING FORM

Part 1 – Task Description

GENERAL INFORMATION			
Task title:			
Task author/Institution:	Lesson type (online/in-class):	Target learners/course:	
CEFR starting level (A1–C2):	Group dynamics (e.g. pair work/groups of X):	Target language of the course:	
		Other language(s) used:	
Mediation scale(s) relevant to the task (mark with X).			
Relaying specific information in speech	Note-taking (lectures, seminars, etc.)		Acting as intermediary in informal situations (with friends and colleagues)
Relaying specific information in writing	Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature)		Facilitating communication in delicate situations and disagreements
Explaining data in speech (e.g. in graphs, diagrams, charts etc.)	Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature)		Linking to previous knowledge
Explaining data in writing (e.g. in graphs, diagrams, charts etc.)	Collaborating in a group: facilitating collaborative interaction with peers		Adapting language
Processing text in speech	Collaborating in a group: collaborating to construct meaning		Breaking down complicated information
Processing text in writing	Leading group work: managing interaction		Amplifying a dense text
Translating a written text in speech	Leading group work: encouraging conceptual talk		Streamlining a text
Translating a written text in writing	Facilitating pluricultural space		

Short description of the task:
Expected learning outcomes: By the end of the task, students will be able to...

TASK DESCRIPTION	
Background knowledge or sub-skills required by the students:	
Pre-task activities (What were the activities, when were they scheduled and how were they carried out?):	
Detailed description of the task:	Time required:
Post-task follow-up activities (Could any follow-up activities be carried out, what are they, and when should they be done?):	
Resources required by the teacher:	Resources required by the students:
Potential challenges and solutions:	

Part 2 – Task Piloting

To be completed by the teacher piloting the task		
Piloting teacher/institution:	Lesson type (online/in-class):	Target learners/course:
CEFR starting level of the students (A1–C2):	Number of students / group dynamics (pairs/groups of X):	Target language of the course:
		Other language(s) used:

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Pre-task activities

How well did the students complete the pre-task activities?

Did you modify the activities (why/how?) or would you suggest any changes (what/why)?

Completion of the task

How well did the students complete the task?

Did you modify the task (why/how?) or would you suggest any changes (what/why)?

Post-task follow-up

How well did the students complete the post-task activities?

Did you modify the activities (why/how?) or would you suggest any changes (what/why)?

Resources required

Were the resources sufficient?

Can you suggest additional/alternative resources for the task?

How would you evaluate the skills of the students according to the relevant mediation scale(s)?

Write the CEFR level next to the relevant scale:

	Relaying specific information in speech		Note-taking (lectures, seminars, etc.)		Acting as intermediary in informal situations (with friends and colleagues)
	Relaying specific information in writing		Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature)		Facilitating communication in delicate situations and disagreements
	Explaining data in speech (e.g. in graphs, diagrams, charts etc.)		Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature)		Linking to previous knowledge
	Explaining data in writing (e.g. in graphs, diagrams, charts etc.)		Collaborating in a group: facilitating collaborative interaction with peers		Adapting language
	Processing text in speech		Collaborating in a group: collaborating to construct meaning		Breaking down complicated information
	Processing text in writing		Leading group work: managing interaction		Amplifying a dense text
	Translating a written text in speech		Leading group work: encouraging conceptual talk		Streamlining a text
	Translating a written text in writing		Facilitating pluricultural space		

How successful was the task overall in developing mediation skills?

Would you use it again or recommend it to other language teachers? Explain your answer.

How would you rate the task on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)?

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