

Tools and tips for teachers

Consider learners' difficulties in rephrasing or explaining ideas (from texts) to others. Then think of tasks that could help them in overcoming these difficulties. Design small steps within each task. Monitor the tasks. At the end reflect on the work done and on the learning outcomes.

Make sure you provide a context for the mediation task (who is mediating, what, for whom, why, under what circumstances, etc.). Make sure your mediation task provides students with a communicative purpose...

Encourage your learners to reflect on the strategies they are using.

Familiarise yourself with the mediation categories and corresponding activities and descriptors.

After the activity, make sure that there is room for reflection and feedback.

Make mediation an integral part of your classroom practices.

Find out what languages there are in their learners' repertoires and use that information.

Providing a task rubric is important. Students need to be given a very clear idea of what ideas or information to look for in the source text, or else it can be very difficult to understand what should be transferred to the target text.



Select the relevant descriptors from the CEFR-CV (not only those related to mediation) and adapt them if necessary. This process of using descriptors is two-way: descriptors can at times be used as a starting point to develop tasks or after the construction of the task. The teacher can match the descriptors with the task.

Apply the „information-gap“ principle when developing mediation tasks: do not have students say things to each other that they already know about.

Pilot the task and keep an eye on the process.

Identify which mediation strategies are needed on the part of the students to carry out the task and incorporate a 'practice stage' in your lesson, where mediation strategies are practised.

Collaborate with other (language) teachers in the school.

It is important that students have some familiarity with the genre of the target text before undertaking a mediation task. Otherwise, the students might successfully find and reformulate information or ideas from the source text, but find themselves unable to relay the information successfully in the target text.

Avoid isolated role plays without any context where you impose a role on the learner (he or she might not like); remember that the learners should act as social agents and should have a message and an objective - they can only transmit a message if they are convinced about it.

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