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Open Education for Young Europeans
through History, Art and Cultural Learning

Open Education for Young Europeans through History, Art and Cultural Learning

OpenEYE Learning Methodology

Compiled by

University of South-Eastern Norway (USN)

With

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Introduction

Objective: The main objective of this methodology is to provide a framework of pedagogical principles for the development of a practical toolkit for teachers of migrant students in primary schools to further learners' language competences (in the language of instruction and/ or foreign languages) and social integration. These principles are based on findings from Output 1 of the OpenEYE project, a survey of teachers' needs and focus groups discussions involving parents in the four participating countries. Findings of the research conducted in Norway, Greece, Slovenia and Italy, as well as the Synthesis Report bringing together the survey findings from all project countries, can be accessed on the project website: erasmusopeneye.eu

The overall objectives of the methodology can be summed up as follows:

- 1) To provide educators with knowledge and skills to deliver culturally sensitive training for refugee and newly arrived learners.
- 2) To introduce to educators a variety of innovative approaches for aiding language development and social integration, and concrete learning activities focusing on history, culture and art.
- 3) To build cultural awareness and recognize cultural implications through culture- based learning

Target Group: The target group of this methodology is two-fold:

1. primary target group: trainers in formal and informal settings working with learners with migrant backgrounds in the age-range 6-12.
2. secondary target group: learners within this age range in linguistically and culturally diverse settings, with a special emphasis on learners with refugee and migrant backgrounds

It is difficult to clearly define refugee and newly arrived students in terms of cultural or educational background. In some countries, such as Norway, newly arrived students are in some municipalities grouped into separate introductory classes where students with no previous literacy skills can be grouped together with students with a solid educational background from their native countries. Such students have significant gaps in their schooling but may possess a range of different language skills through longer or shorter stays in several other countries before their arrival in the home country (Burner & Carlsen, 2017). While the most common approach to migrant schooling in the partner countries is that newly arrived students are placed in mainstream schools, the system of migrant education differs from country to country. It is important to highlight that, while the learning approaches outlined in this project are primarily directed at students with refugee and migrant backgrounds, they are meant to benefit all learners, regardless of their individual background. The basis for an inclusive approach is that *all* learners, no matter their background, benefit from educational approaches focusing on diversity, intercultural competence, and multilingualism. Social integration is as much the responsibility of the established community as the individuals who seek to become part of it.

History, art and cultural learning: A core assumption of the OpenEYE project is that a focus on history, art and culture can be especially useful in promoting these competences and supporting students with highly diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This includes a variety of cultural objects, art forms, literature, and storytelling such as fairy tales and myths. Approaches based on cultural expressions such as these are helpful in introducing children with limited language skills to new ways of communicating, resulting in learning taking place and furthering social integration in a new environment. Expertise within these areas is provided by two of the partners of the project – the Museum of Greek Children’s Art and the Museum of Natural History in Livorno.



Artist: Evaggelou Nokoleta (12).
From a workshop at the Museum of Greek Children’s Art.

Structure: Part 1 of this document will outline the key pedagogical principles of this project. Here we describe in some more detail the pedagogical and methodological approaches that are especially relevant for the target groups. Part 2 offers example activities that show how the pedagogical principles can be translated into practice. These examples are also meant to provide guidelines for the development of the OpenEYE toolkit. The activities are interrelated through the core principle of learner-centeredness using cultural expressions. It is important to underline that the core principles underpin all the activities in part 2.

Part 1: Core principles of the OpenEYE Learning Methodology

The core principles of the OpenEYE Learning Methodology are based on the results from Intellectual Output 1 (IO1), where questionnaires and interviews were used to map educators’ needs in working with learners from six to twelve years of age with a migrant/refugee (M/R) background. The results showed that educators have an urgent need for different approaches for working in multicultural and multilingual classes, developing learners’ collaborative and communicative skills in safe environments, and involving learners’ parents. Furthermore, the results revealed the importance of integrating cultural expressions and intercultural learning in work with learners with M/R background, and developing a methodology that is culturally sensitive in order to avoid negative reactions based on stereotypes. According to the IO1, many educators already use art forms, such as visual art, photography, design, music, storytelling, cultural heritage, theatre, literature, films. However, the extent of the use of such cultural expressions seems to be dependent on the background and interests of individual educators.

We have chosen **Action Learning** as the methodological approach to implement changes in practice. Action Learning has a long history as a methodological tool in various fields, among others health, social welfare and education. It is a bottom-up approach where educators and parents, together with facilitators - for example colleagues from other educational institutions or external experts/researchers - try out and reflect on changes they would like to implement (see Figure 1).

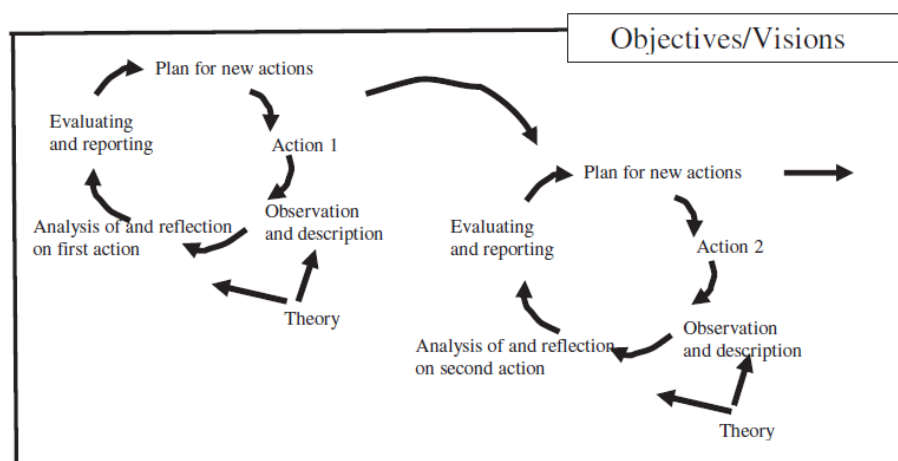


Figure 1. Learning cycle inspired by Carr and Kemmis (1986), Korthagen (1985) and Zuber-Skerritt (1992).

Figure 1 shows how the Action Learning methodology works for implementing the approaches described in IO1. An action in OpenEye is based on the activities described below and materialised in the learning toolkit to be developed. For example, a teacher team at a primary school in need of tools to work with children with R/M backgrounds discuss and pick two or three of the activities. The activities are planned to be part of one or more lessons, described as the action. The action is then carried out, observed and described. A teacher can observe him-/herself by being aware of how the activities are conducted - or better: have a colleague to observe the activities in action. In the next step, the educators (teachers in our example), parents and other relevant stakeholders reflect upon the action. The action is related continuously to theory, for example theories on language learning and cultural diversity, as described in IO1. They assess what they did – the action – making any necessary adaptations and changes to the action before carrying out new cycles of actions. The actions can be repeated and new ones can be tried out. This is an ongoing process and the ultimate goal is to change practices and adopt the approaches as described below. The Action Learning methodology is just the medium.

The OpenEye learning methodology is **research-based**. We draw on evidence from research in multilingual and multicultural settings, how languages are learnt, how diversity is understood and enacted upon, and how interactive and communicative skills enhance learners' participation and integration in society. Furthermore, the methodological approach for implementations - Action Learning - is also research-based.

The OpenEYE Learning Methodology:

- is research-based, drawing on the practical results from OpenEYE's Intellectual Output 1
- is implemented through a bottom-up approach by using a research-based methodology called Action Learning
- encourages varied approaches to working with learners with a M/R background
- values cultural and linguistic diversity as a resource in language learning
- promotes social integration and intercultural understanding

- ensures that cultural sensitivity is taken into consideration when implementing changes
- uses cultural expression as a means to make learning easier and facilitate the integration of pupils in the school/local community

Below we describe the approaches that underpin the OpenEye learning methodology and give examples of how Action Learning can be used to implement changes in practice. The approaches are learner-centeredness, multilingualism and multiculturalism, cultural expressions, non-formal learning and inclusiveness.

Adopting a learner-centered approach

A learner-centered approach to children's learning is concerned with a change from the activity of the adult to learners' active participation (Dewey, 1916/2011; Vygotsky, 1978). Learners draw on their previous knowledge and experiences (Dewey, 1938/1997), and communicate and collaborate with others to develop their understanding. This is also a key feature of Communicative Language Learning, where learners are motivated to interact in meaningful contexts (see for example Burner et al., 2019). The established knowledge and experiences they draw on, is the actual zone of development. Learners need to move beyond this zone in order to develop their understanding. When learners experience a link between new information and their established knowledge, they are learning in their potential zone of development. If the new information is far from their established knowledge or experiences, it is difficult or impossible to learn. Learners' actual zone of development - i.e. what they bring with themselves from home - varies a lot, particularly for learners with a M/R background, since they not only may have different first languages but also differ to the extent they have any formal experience with kindergartens or other public learning arenas with peer collaboration.

Any learner-centered approach should therefore:

- ensure a safe environment in which learners can communicate, learn and develop
- adopt activities that activate learners' previous knowledge and experiences
- encourage learners to communicate interactively with adults and peers
- motivate learners to collaborate with peers through interactive learning techniques
- promote action and interaction between previous knowledge and experiences and new knowledge

Adopting a multilingual and multicultural perspective

Multilingualism and intercultural competence have had a strong impact on educational policies over the past two decades. Both areas are strongly reflected in *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001, 2018), developed by the European Commission, which is a framework document that has shaped national curricula in language subjects across Europe. Multilingualism involves the key idea that language learners can benefit from their accumulated previous language skills when learning new languages: the learner "builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact" (Council of Europe,

2001, p. 132). This idea stands in contrast to traditional views of language learning, which tends to see languages as stored in separate compartments in the brain and sought to avoid contact between them. This traditional view is still sometimes reflected in education and society at large, and reflects the way foreign languages are often kept strictly apart in learning situations (see for example Burner & Carlsen 2019; Haukås, 2018).

Recent research on multilingualism has given rise to the pedagogical concept of *translanguaging*, an approach in which learners should be encouraged to make use of their whole language repertoire, both for the purpose of linguistic development and in order to raise the acceptance of language diversity in society more generally (García & Wei, 2014). However, the research underlines that a multilingual perspective has to be implemented by educators in an active and systematic way, and that positive attitudes on behalf of educators do not automatically lead to linguistically inclusive language teaching.

Intercultural competence, too, highlights the view that learners' diverse cultural insights and experiences can be a resource for learners. Social and pragmatic awareness in one language can for instance be transferred into a new context. The companion volume to CEFR entitled *A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (Council of Europe, 2012), furthermore, highlights the importance of language and culture for an individuals' identity, stressing the importance of learning about the cultures in which the target languages are spoken, but also about the cultures of co-learners in the group and the immediate environment (Council of Europe, 2012, p. 33). Research on intercultural competence uses the term "de-centering" to describe the ability to adopt other viewpoints than one's own (see Dypedahl & Lund, 2020).

A multilingual and intercultural approach to learning should therefore:

- cultivate positive attitudes among learners towards their existing language skills, no matter which languages they speak
- motivate learners to use their whole language repertoire actively in their language learning
- encourage learners to adopt the perspective of others and develop sensitivity towards cultural diversity

Using cultural expressions as the means to make language learning relevant and attractive

The term *cultural expressions* as used in this project includes a broad range of art forms and art-related approaches. In the field of language learning, the use of literature, storytelling, film, and drama are established tools. Literature and film have traditionally been valued both because they provide authentic examples of language use and because they can provide insights into different cultures and individual perspectives (see for example Bland, 2020; Villanueva, 2020). In this way, fiction and storytelling through reading or film can challenge audiences to "de-center", stimulating important intercultural competences such as empathy and mutual understanding. These objectives have also been at the core of drama-related approaches in language learning, highlighting that drama in an especially effective way can challenge learners to step into different situations and viewpoints, in addition to communicative skills, including vocabulary range and fluency (see for example Wagner, 2002).

Approaches to visual art in language learning can be connected to multimodal texts, where relationships between image and text are central, both as objects of study and as tools for language learning (see for example Rimmereide, 2020). This includes producing multimodal texts such as picture books, posters, and storytelling in physical and digital formats. Like drama, art helps learners to visualise language, thereby vitally supporting the cognitive processes of language acquisition, particularly for young learners. Proponents of art-related approaches also highlight the intercultural benefits of art work with culturally and linguistically diverse learners, providing “opportunities to develop their voices; enhance multicultural awareness; take pride in heritage; and recognize their role in, respond to, and participate in the world at large” (New York State Education Department, 2010, p. 3).

An approach using cultural expressions should therefore:

- exploit the potential of visual, literary, drama-related and other art forms to support learners’ language learning,
- draw on art forms both as learning material and creative, student-centred approaches
- use varied cultural expressions that represent different cultural perspectives that are represented in the learning environment and society in general

Using non-formal methods of learning and group work

Non-formal methods of learning are distinguished from random and informal learning methods, which are not intentional and/or not institutionalised. Non-formal learning occurs in “... a planned but highly adaptable manner in institutions, organizations, and situations beyond the spheres of formal or informal education. It shares the characteristic of being mediated with formal education, but the motivation for learning may be wholly intrinsic to the learner” (Eshach, 2007, p. 173). Non-formal methods of learning are typically based on intrinsic motivation on behalf of the learners, they are usually voluntary (as opposed to a school setting), they are not assessed, they are generally guided by professional learning facilitators (such as youth trainers) or by volunteers (such as youth leaders), and they are typically non-sequential. They may affect cognitive and affective domains of learners, generating feelings of wonder, enthusiasm, and eagerness to learn and experience new things. Some examples of non-formal learning situations are science centers, museums, libraries, botanical gardens, zoos, planetariums, industrial sites, and non-governmental institutions working with children’s rights or environmental issues. It is important to consider the relation between the curriculum and in-school activities and the non-formal learning, visit the non-formal institution beforehand, inform the learners and ask about their expectations, provide them with some tasks to conduct when visiting the institution, inform parents and encourage them to join, and consider how the activities can be followed up at home (Eshach, 2007). The Open Eye project will take advantage of two consortium members, namely the Museum of Greek Children’s Art (Athens) and the Museum of Natural History of the Mediterranean (Province of Livorno), both of which are non-formal education providers, to test the project methodology in non-formal learning situations.

Non-formal methods of learning should therefore:

- draw on learners’ intrinsic motivation

- focus on clearly defined purposes
- be planned through collaboration with learners and their parents
- be related to the school's curriculum and followed up at home

Adopting an inclusive approach to stakeholders

An inclusive approach means that all learners, no matter their background, benefit from educational approaches focusing on diversity, intercultural competence, and multilingualism. Furthermore, the needs analysis especially highlighted the involvement of learners' families/guardians. Learners' families/guardians should be actively involved not only because they help to strengthen the ties between learners and the educational contexts, but also because their varied cultural resources can enrich the school community. Research on parent involvement in schools shows that active partnerships between schools and parents can have a decisive influence on learners' motivation, well-being and achievement in school (Oostdam & Hooge, 2013). It is first and foremost up to educators to facilitate this partnership and to ensure that communication barriers are eased, for example through the support of bilingual teachers. Findings on parents with M/R backgrounds indicate that their involvement in the childrens' schooling is often high, but there is a lack of opportunities and arenas to become engaged with teachers and the wider school community (Schneider & Arnot, 2018). In highly culturally diverse parent communities it is important to emphasise the shared commitment to the learners' educational progression as the common area of interest.

An inclusive approach to stakeholders should therefore:

- involve all learners and parents/ guardians both from M/R, national and other backgrounds
- be based on active communication between stakeholders, especially teachers, learners and their families/guardians in order to establish mutual trust and a common engagement in the learners' educational progress
- take into account that communication barriers may exist and devise ways to tackle these barriers
- seek opportunities to involve stakeholders, e.g. families/guardians, in different activities in formal and informal educational activities

Part 2: Practical examples

A learner-centred approach

Example activity 1: The Language Suitcase

This activity is a widely used storytelling technique to involve learners and work with basic vocabulary in primary schools and kindergartens in Norway. The trainer places a book with a story together with objects that relate to the story in a bag or suitcase. Instead of simply reading the story, the teacher first introduces main features of the story -- e.g. the main character(s), places, and objects that play an important role, as well as important words that the students are unlikely to know.

The objects help learners to visualise the story, and create interest and expectations of what is going to happen. Additionally, they support language development by creating concrete links between words and physical objects. Ideally, the activity should be carried out with groups of not more than five children, so that all have the opportunity to use the objects, ask questions, and participate actively. A typical sequence could follow these steps:

- Show the learners the book cover. What might this story be about?
- Present the main character/ important objects
- Describe the main point or problem of the story
- Retell the main plot by using the objects
- Describe parts of the book based on pictures in it
- The learners' engagement is crucial: allow students to ask questions, comments, talk about associations they get, memories etc.
- Encourage learners to recreate the story using the objects (for example in a later lesson)
- Useful follow-up activities could be to create drawings based on the story and dramatising important episodes



Illustration: a language suitcase for a Norwegian children's book (from: utdanningnytt.no)

Example activity 2: Using songs and chants

Songs can be an especially efficient tool for practicing basic language and for social integration. Younger learners will often find songs motivating because of its rhythmical features, engaging texts, and above all because singing is a collaborative activity.

Children's songs often contain repetitions of words and basic language structures within a meaningful context, as well as a special emphasis on the rhythm of words and phrases. Usually, the tempo of speech is slower while singing too. These things support language acquisition both in terms of vocabulary learning, grammar, and pronunciation. At the same time, in singing or chanting activities, children are creative together, stimulating social cohesion. Because of this creative and collaborative aspect, singing shifts the focus away from differences in language competence, engaging learners to contribute in a safe setting. It is easy to find children's songs and recordings in many different languages. Learners and parents could also be involved in collecting songs that they know in the mother tongues and that could be learned together and talked about in class.

Example activity 3: Find someone who

"Find someone who" is an interview activity in which students interview and collect answers from their peers about everyday questions such as those below. The aim is to find someone in the class for each of the questions. The activity focuses on oral skills, allowing learners to practice everyday phrases in a secure environment. It is often useful to go through questions with learners in advance, clearing up any uncertainties or language issues. A focus on language diversity could be added by including questions about language skills. Here is a sample handout for the activity:

Find someone who...

has a pet	has a brother/ sister	has been abroad	likes board games
speaks several languages	loves films	likes drawing	plays an instrument
has a middle name	was born in January	likes swimming	has been to a football game

Using an Action Research methodology to implement one or more of the activities above means that the educators read about learner-centered approach to learning, plan the actions (based on the example activities given), carry them out in practice, describe, reflect upon and

evaluate how they went, before carrying them out again either with the same participants or new participants. If possible, various stakeholders such as parents, should be involved in the process.

A multilingual approach

Example activity 1: Greetings from around the world

Visual examples of the languages represented in a class or school signal the school's inclusive attitude towards language diversity in a simple but effective way. For this purpose, the students could be asked to design speech bubbles with greetings in their native languages and dialects. Greetings in English and other foreign languages they may learn in school should be included. A small label naming the language could be added, as well as a pronunciation note where needed.

The finished products could be used as a basis for a discussion of the diversity of languages represented in the class, a comparison of writing systems used in the languages, and a simple pronunciation exercise where each student pronounces her or his greeting and the rest of the class repeats. This allows each student to act as an expert of her or his language, and raises awareness of distinctive characteristics connected to pronunciation and intonation. Learners asked to decorate the bubbles, for example by including a flag of the country, a national symbol, a famous person from the country, or an individual wearing traditional clothing. Learners could also make other shapes, for instance shaping it into an object they associate with the country (e.g. an ice cream for Italy or a moose for Norway).

The finished products should be displayed, for example at the school entrance or in the classroom.



Example activity 2: Creating a family language tree

The language(s) and dialect(s) we use form an important part of who we are – where our family comes from, where we live and have lived. The template of the family tree could be used as the basis for an activity that invites the students to collect information about and visualise their family's language history.

This exercise encourages the students to involve their parents and grandparents, creating a direct link between the school subject and the students' home environment. As Schader (2013, p. 123) points out, a potential result of this project is the insight that movement and migration is a normal part of a family's history even for families defining themselves as "local" within the school district.

The language tree could include the full name, mother tongue/ dialect, and place of origin of each family member up to the level of the grandparents. For older students, the project could be extended to include further branches, including great grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. A template for a family tree such as the one below could be shown and adapted by the students to create individual designs.



Example activity 3: Identity texts

Identity text is a broad term for a multimodal text presented in various formats, such as physical posters or digital presentations, i.e. as a digital story or video recording. The activity was developed by Jim Cummins and other colleagues in Canada with the aim of integrating literacy practice, activation of students' multilingual resources and "identity affirmation" (Cummins et al., 2015). The focus on developing students' confidence in their multilingual and multicultural identity is based on the observation that students from "marginalised communities" tend to underachieve in school. It is argued that, by challenging students to engage with their hybrid identities and visualising this in the school building, identity texts can help to promote understanding and respect for diversity within the school community in particular, and society in general.

Identity texts can be about many different topics, but key ingredients are:

- focus on the student's own multilingual/ multicultural experiences
- text in multiple languages (e.g. English and the students' mother tongue(s))
- multimodal expressions

In addition to the social dimension of the activity, identity texts are a useful framework for involving students' diverse language repertoire. Putting together a personal text in several languages highlights the equal value of these languages as modes of expression. Multilingual texts can also be a good starting point for language awareness tasks, comparing and contrasting features of the languages involved.

The main goal is not to practice translation skills or to ensure that the texts are completely free of errors. Rather, the goal is to make multilingualism visible in the classroom and at the school, to prevent the formation of negative stereotypes of minority language children, and to empower these children to construct strong identities and become academically engaged.

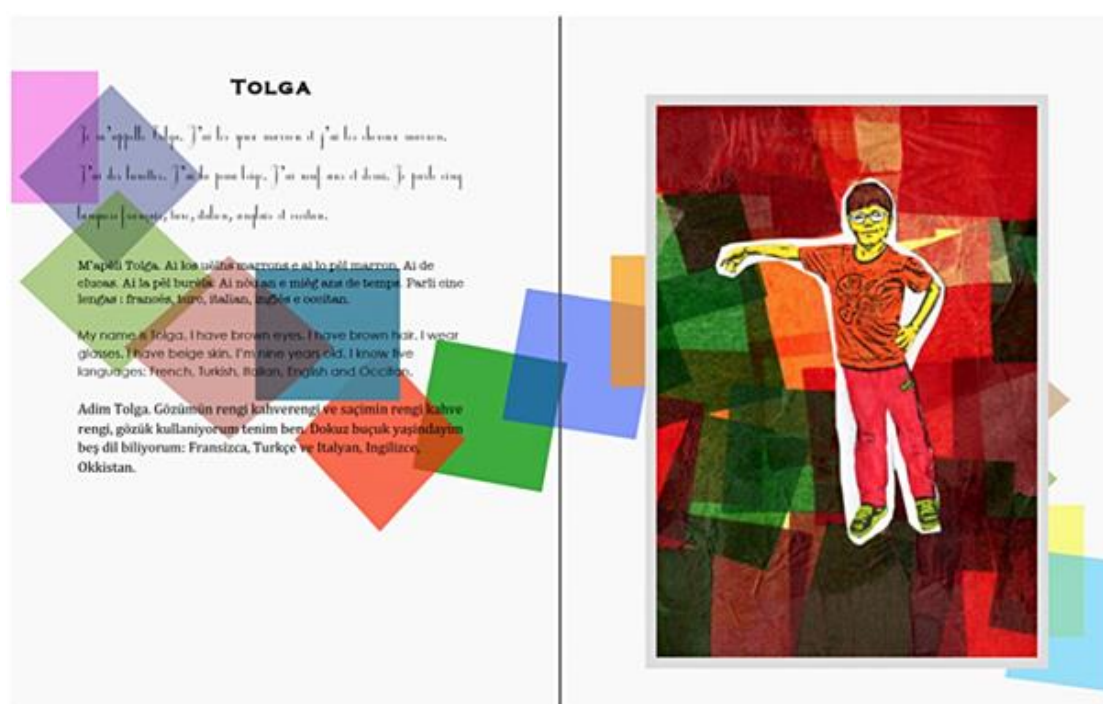


Figure 1. From: Prasad (2016)

The figure above shows a page from a book of identity texts created by students at a school in Montpellier, France. Each page features a short text about the student together with an illustration. In addition to French, the students were asked to write the descriptive text in the dialect Occitan, English and their (other) mother tongue languages, in this student's case, Turkish.

Using an Action Research methodology to implement one or more of the activities above means that the educators read about a multilingual approach to learning, plan the actions (based on the example activities given), carry them out in practice, describe, reflect upon and evaluate how they went, before carrying them out again either with the same participants or

new participants. If possible, various stakeholders such as parents, should be involved in the process.

Special focus on cultural expressions

Example activity 1: Working with picture books

Studies from Norway, the UK and the USA show that characters with minority backgrounds are underrepresented in children's literature (Heggernes, 2020). However, as Heggernes has pointed out, it is important that children encounter characters in fiction that they can relate to, and who "look, think, and live like themselves". This connection can help to strengthen students' interest in and motivation to work with the text. At the same time, one of the basic principles of using literature in intercultural education is the opportunities stories provide for encountering different personal experiences, perspectives, attitudes and mindsets. Such diverse encounters can help to foster empathy and the ability to adopt different points of view.

Picture books are especially useful to stimulate language learning among younger pupils because illustrations provide scaffolding for readers, and because the text is often kept short and linguistically uncomplicated. One of the challenges faced by struggling readers is the ability to visualise words and the feeling of being overwhelmed by the amount of words on the page.

Example activities:

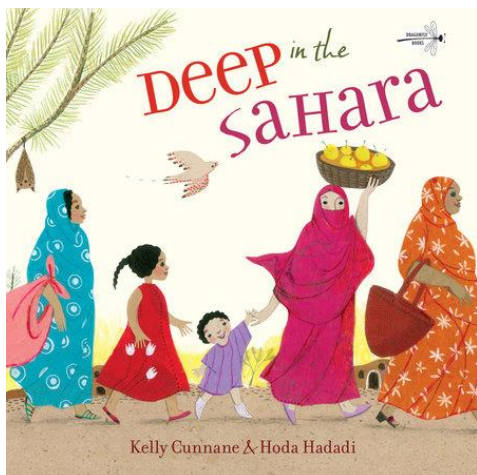
Apart from language-related work, the main objective should be that students reflect on the content of the story and put words to their thoughts, questions and experiences. Reading should therefore be accompanied or followed up by questions about the texts and drawings that allow them to talk about the meaning of the plot the characters' motivations and feelings as well as about their own experiences, for example questions such as:

- which countries/ places are described in the story? what makes them similar/ different to the places the students have lived in?
- how are the main characters similar and different from themselves in terms of clothing, habits, traditions?
- which choices do the main characters make, and why?
- have the students been in a similar situation?
- what would the students do in the same situation?
- what can readers learn from the story?

Some picture books relevant for the OpenEYE age group, from different cultural settings:

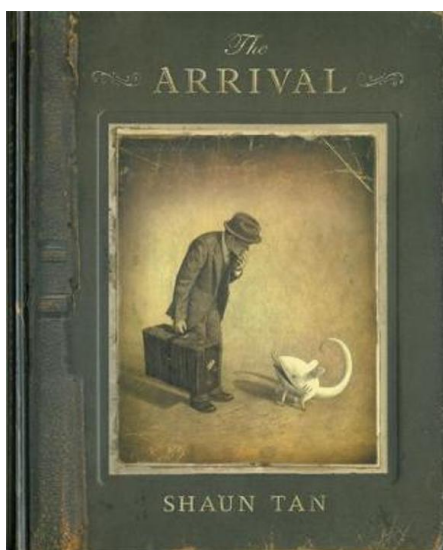
Deep in the Sahara (Cunnane & Hadadi, 2020)

The book is about Lalla, a girl from Mauritania who learns about the meaning of the traditional shawl, malafa, which women in her society wear and which symbolises tradition, womanhood and faith.



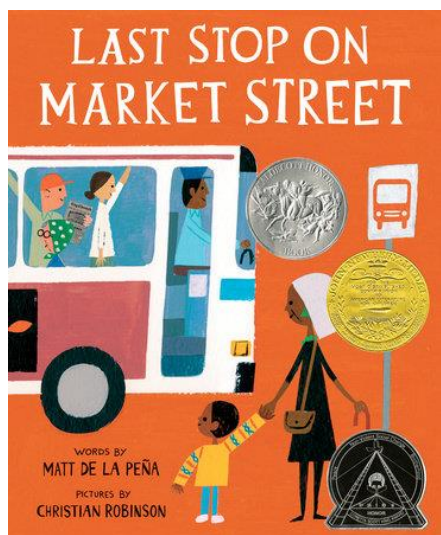
The Arrival (Tan, 2006)

The award-winning Australian illustrator Shaun Tan has published several engaging picture books for young readers as well as adults. *The Arrival* is a picture book without words that follows a young man who migrates to another country, leaving his wife and child behind. The illustrations do not specify which countries are involved, and the reader plays an important role in creating the story.



Last stop on Market Street (De La Pena & Robinson, 2015)

An Newbery award-winning book from the USA following a young boy, CJ, as he travels with his grandmother through New York wondering why things are as they are.



Example activity 2: Expressing cultural values visually

This activity asks learners to make visual representations of cultural values.

Learners are asked to individually think about what they consider to be three of the most important cultural values for them. For example, a common conception of a cultural value in Norway among young learners would be “freedom”, “fairness” or “democracy”.

Then they form micro-groups of 3-4 where they share their three values and explain why they think those are cultural values for what they define as their culture. They agree on two cultural values per micro-group they want to present for the rest of their peers. A3 sheets are handed out, with crayons, markers, pencils etc. They use drawing to illustrate the selected values.

One person from each micro-group presents the cultural values for the rest of the peers by first letting them guess the values after seeing the drawings, then indicate if the guesses are correct or not. If guessing does not help, the answers are revealed and then the next micro-group presents.

Finally, all the drawings are posted on the walls and the learners can walk around and take a closer look.

Example activity 3: Exploring cultural heritage sites

The objective of this activity is to introduce refugee learners to culture and history of host country. Cultural heritage includes places, objects, practices of cultural significance, buildings, industrial structures, technology, landscape, music, religious beliefs, performances, and social survival among others.

Educators have a wide range of activities that they can organize for the learners’ benefit. Trips to museums, historical sites and participating in festivities are some of the arrangements that motivate language learning. One way of exploring heritage sites is to discuss and compare the

historical function and cultural significance of different sites in the country of instruction and students' native countries. Relevant questions could include:

- Why was the building/ statue/ landmark etc. created, when and how?
- What is it made of? What is special about the architecture?
- What do they mean to people of that country/ cultural area today?
- What sites that you know of could you compare them with?

Some relevant examples from the OpenEYE partner countries could be:



The Parthenon in Athens, Greece



Heddal Stave Church, Norway



The cathedral and leaning tower in Pisa, Italy



Predjama Castle, Slovenia

Using an Action Research methodology to implement one or more of the activities above means that the educators read about cultural expressions and learning, plan the actions (based on the example activities given), carry them out in practice, describe, reflect upon and evaluate how they went, before carrying them out again either with the same participants or new participants. If possible, various stakeholders such as parents, should be involved in the process.

Non-formal methods of learning

Example activity 1: “Caring through art” -- a workshop by the Museum of Children’s Art (held at refugee camps 2016-2017).

The “Caring through art” educational program of the Museum of Greek Children's Art involved a learning process based on personal experience, which aims at a deeper understanding of the complex meaning of caring and attempts to illustrate how it can be expressed, not simply through individual actions, but essentially in more collective forms of engagement.

More specifically, in the art workshops organized at the refugee camps by the Museum of Greek Children's Art, the workshop leader separated the children in two teams, which in some cases included children from the same ethnic group and in others, children of various ethnicities and age groups. The children were asked to draw the outline of each other's head on paper; then the child who created the outline was given the option to complete the portrait on his / her own, or to work on it as a team together with the child who sat as the model. The main idea of this workshop was to promote teamwork and collaboration, interaction and communication between the children with the help of art, language barriers notwithstanding. At the same time, the careful examination of the facial characteristics of the other team members and the depiction of their own as seen through the eyes of others, helped the children identify their differences and similarities and, thus, facilitated the process of acknowledging each other as members of the same team and accepting their particular personalities. Moreover, the self-confidence of these children and the significance of their being part of a team was reinforced even by the fact that they had created an actual work of art, their own portrait.



The next stage of the artistic project included the creation of a setting for these portraits. Younger children worked individually, while the teens worked together as a group and the portraits were placed in a large scale composition upon a background created by the entire group. The concept of habitat, in other words the place where one lives and prospers, is rather elusive for a refugee, especially a child. In this particular stage the children were given the opportunity to choose, where they wanted to place themselves. Hence, they could state either where they came from or where they dream of getting to; they had the chance to simply express their sentiments using simple lines and patterns. In any case, children restricted by the limitations of the reality of their everyday life were given the freedom to express themselves and to dream. During the workshop, children, who understood what they were supposed to do, started working first, while the rest followed them by imitation. In several instances, actually, a casual bystander would not have been able to discern that the groups consisted of children, who did not all speak the same language; faced with the challenge of completing a common project the children were compelled to overcome the language barrier and find other ways to communicate and assist each other. Nevertheless, the presence of an interpreter did indeed facilitate the whole process, especially by giving the initial instructions,

as well as by establishing a pleasant, comfortable and safe environment for the children to work in.

As a final evaluation of the “Caring through art” workshops that were carried out with children refugees, one could say that they offered these children the chance to work in an environment fit for their age, a chance to be children once more. They provided a pleasant break, an enjoyable experience, a small retreat from their tough reality. In addition, as the working sessions progressed, the relationships between the teammates evolved, the children grew closer to one another and were able to rid themselves from their inhibitions, to relax and express themselves freely. Finally, individuals of various ages and ethnicities were able to come together effortlessly, albeit in a small numbers, in order to share a pleasant experience and become members of a group, whose common objective is simply to create art.

Examples from the workshops



Evaggelou Nikoleta (12)



Keramari Sofia (11)



Flaka Katerina (11)

Example activity 2: Peer learning at the museum (Museum of Natural History, Livorno)

The Museum of Natural History of Livorno has for several years successfully used peer teaching techniques, which proved to be effective with both young students and Migrants.

In the schools, the museum trains a selected group of learners who are already in junior high school (11-14 years old) to help and support peers during workshops or group activities organized for younger pupils (5-10 years old) by educators or facilitators.

The museum also uses peer education with adult refugees: in 2017, in the framework of project HETYA, a special guided tour of the museum was organised: a group of migrants/refugees were trained to guide the visitors (students from local high schools) through the museum, using selected exhibits to talk about their own culture and their experience in dealing with European and Italian culture.

This knowledge transmission system has several advantages. It improves the self-esteem of peers, tests them, improves their interpersonal and communication skills. Learners get the

concepts more easily, in a work environment in which they feel at ease, without grades or judgments, also developing skills and resources. It also allows dealing with topics and themes (such as friendship, love, diversity) that are difficult to discuss with adults, in particular in a migrant/refugee context where cultural differences could create barriers between student and teacher. Furthermore, peer education, precisely because it promotes mutual respect, trust and cooperation between peers, is also to be considered a system of prevention against negative phenomena, such as bullying or discrimination.

Example 3: Using the local library

Studies show that reading for pleasure in non-formal settings enhance young learners' cognitive development, vocabulary and mathematical skills has a greater effect on student achievement than their parents' educational background (Sullivan & Brown, 2015).

Libraries are one such place where successful projects for learners with refugee backgrounds have been conducted. They have the particular advantage of including a variety of literature at different levels with a focus on multilingual and multicultural topics.

Libraries are often flexible learning spaces, inviting social interaction as well as varied learning material in various languages. It is important that longitudinal partnerships between local libraries are used to foster non-formal education among learners. Stakeholders such as school principals, heads of departments, museums or other institutions where newly arrived children receive non-formal education, can establish formal long-term partnerships with local libraries.

Such partnerships should:

- Involve the learner's teachers, so that the non-formal education becomes an integrated part of the formal education. For example, literature used in formal education can sometimes be supplemented in the non-formal one, where the focus shifts towards reading for pleasure.
- Involve parents by informing them about the partnership and inviting them sometimes to be present at the library together with their children (maybe particularly in the beginning of the partnership).
- Draw on learners' interests for specific genres.
- Activate learners' previous language and cultural background, for example reading books in their mother tongue(s) and books written by authors who - and about contexts which - they are familiar with.

Using an Action Research methodology to implement one or more of the activities above means that the educators read about non-formal ways of learning, plan the actions (based on the example activities given), carry them out in practice, describe, reflect upon and evaluate how they went, before carrying them out again either with the same participants or new participants. If possible, various stakeholders such as parents, should be involved in the

process.

An inclusive approach

Involving the parents/ guardians

The responsibility of involving parents/ guardians lies with the school as the professional stakeholder in this partnership. Research on parent/guardian involvement first and foremost highlights the positive effects of good communication between parents and schools in culturally diverse educational settings (Drugli & Nordal, 2016). The form of communication is not so important, but it is crucial that there is good communication, particularly for newly arrived childrens' parents.

The communication usually consists of a combination of parents' evenings, meetings with individual parents/ guardians, information sharing in digital learning platforms, emails, phone calls and in some cases home visits. It is important that communication is two-directional, and that parents/ guardians get the opportunity to voice their experiences, questions and concerns on a regular basis.

School leaders and teachers should have clearly defined strategies for communicating with parents/guardians, and communication should as far as possible take positive form, by highlighting positive episodes involving the student. This will also make it easier to take issue with challenges if and when they arise (Drugli & Nordal, 2016).

Example: A culinary bazar (IC Geoss)

Education center Geoss in cooperation with Primary school Litija organised an international culinary bazar in the premises of the primary school in February 2020. The main objective of the event was to encourage networking of immigrant parents among themselves and also with other people from the local community and to motivate them to participate in the upcoming activities of the projects, addressed to them.

At the culinary bazaar the parents presented traditional dishes from 9 countries, from where the pupils of the primary school Litija come: Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Poland, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Russia, Yemen and Dominican Republic. Parents, especially mothers, prepared each two dishes, typical for their country. Besides dishes they decorated the tables with typical objects from their countries and prepared printed recipes of the presented dishes. Pupils prepared flags and posters of each country which were also exhibited at the tables. Music from these countries was played in the hall as well. The event took place during talking hours with teachers so there was a lot of visitors, not only parents of the pupils and teachers from the school, but local inhabitants as well. The event was a success on the side of the participating parents who were proud to be able to present their country and also on the side of the visitors from the local community and we plan to organise a similar event again.



Using an Action Research methodology to implement one or more of the activities above means that the educators read about an inclusive approach to learning, plan the actions (based on the example activities given), carry them out in practice, describe, reflect upon and evaluate how they went, before carrying them out again either with the same participants or new participants. If possible, various stakeholders such as parents, should be involved in the process.

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