

"Teacher reflection as a way to cultivate pluralistic approaches"

By Miranda Karjagdi Çolak, Athina Vrettou, Kenia Puig I Plane

Developing Teacher Competences for Implementing Pluralistic Approaches

by Züleyha Tulay

Miranda Karjagdi Çolak, Athina Vrettou, and Kenia Puig I Plane collaborated in an endeavor to integrate teacher reflection and pluralistic approaches in their own teaching contexts. During the session, they presented a reflective tool developed as a part of a sequence of training activities and encouraged participants to reflect on pluralistic approaches and strategies in relation to a specific context as well as their own.

The speakers shared the definition of 'pluralistic approaches' proposed by the European Center for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe (ECML). The center defines these as didactic approaches that use teaching-learning activities involving several varieties of languages and cultures. The session continued with a discussion on these approaches and the speakers wanted to find out the participants' perspectives by posing the following question:

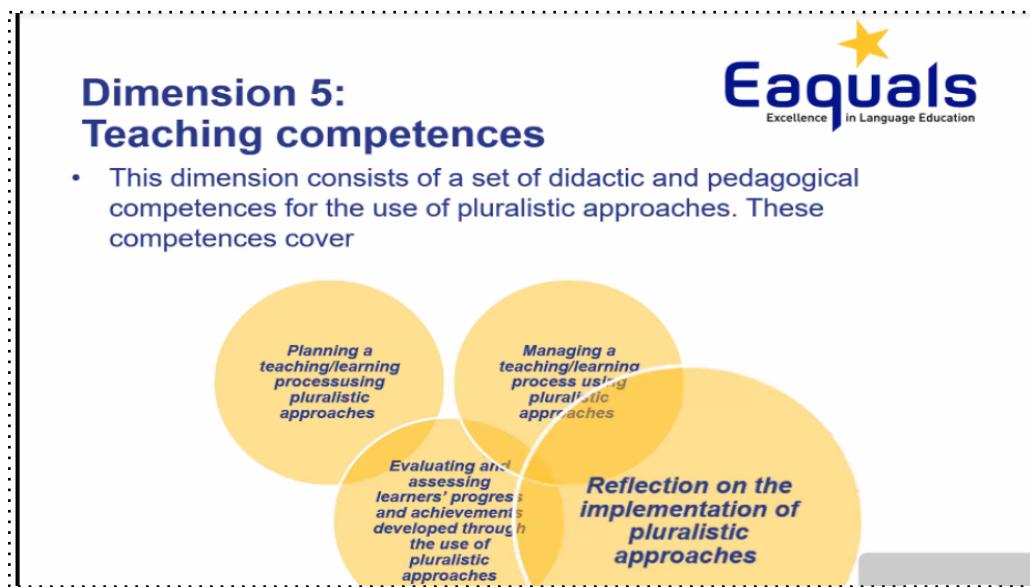


Which of the following would you identify as 'pluralistic approaches'?

You may choose multiple options.

- awakening to languages
- compartmentalized language learning
- integrated language teaching
- intercomprehension between languages
- exclusive use of the language of schooling
- focus on one language only
- intercultural education

The participants mostly agreed that awakening to languages, integrated language teaching, intercomprehension between languages, and intercultural education could be categorized as pluralistic approaches, which all aligned with those shared by ECML.



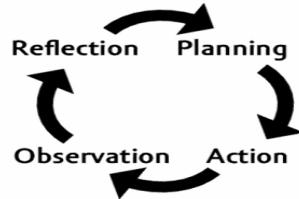
The speakers then focused on specific competences needed to make use of pluralistic approaches in teaching. Evidence of the weak presence of pluralistic approaches in actual classroom practice resulted in the development of a framework. This framework was aimed at providing an organized description of the field of teaching competences for the use of pluralistic approaches and a template for developing these competences and finally enabling users (those working in the field of teacher education, teachers, and educational authorities) to choose objectives for teacher education according to the knowledge of their context. The teaching competences discussed in this session were planning and managing a teaching/learning process using pluralistic approaches, evaluating and assessing learners' progress and achievements developed using pluralistic approaches, and reflection on the implementation of these.

In the final stage of the session, Miranda Karjagdi Çolak shared her personal experience with the pluralistic approaches she tried and tested in her classroom following an ECML workshop in September 2021. She said that she participated in that workshop with her "trainer hat", yet started reflecting on her takeaways in her teaching context.

An EFL class, state University, 12 students

• PLAN

- Explore their cultural and linguistic backgrounds on weekly basis.
- How? By using digital writing prompts through Google Forms and preparing follow-up activities based on student driven content
- - **Example topics** : write about your name, reflect on varieties of your own language, your representations of languages, tell the story of the immigrant
- Follow up activities: find someone who, gallery wall, open discussion,



- 1 Arab student from Yemen
- 1 American Turkish
- 10 Turkish students, 4 of whom were raised by grandparents speaking one of the Balkan languages

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Miranda Karjagdi Çolak's planning-action-observation-reflection cycle after she tried pluralistic approaches with her students

After Miranda Karjagdi Çolak reflected on the implementation of pluralistic approaches, she developed a reflection tool with Athina Vrettou and Kenia Puig I Plane. The reflection tool includes statements in five subsections: General attitude towards students' languages and cultures, communicative and teaching practices in a plurilingual/pluricultural perspective, meaning student engagement with content, feed-forward and feedback, and questioning and listening to students. The tool has been piloted in Italy, Greece, and Ireland. In Italy, the tool was used in a course on plurilingual and intercultural education for teachers of foreign languages. Teachers have reported their satisfaction with the opportunity the tool offers for reflection on teaching practices. Piloting in Greece has been conducted with two experienced primary school teachers and they shared their experiences with the tool in terms of their teaching philosophy, methods, techniques, and details even though they were not familiar with pluralistic approaches. In Ireland, a group of MFL secondary school teachers wrote that they needed to learn more about different countries' cultures before posing questions during their classes. Miranda Karjagdi Çolak, Athina Vrettou, and Kenia Puig I Plane concluded their session by reminding the participants of the need to move forward with teachers' awareness of pluralistic approaches.

References

Developing teacher competences for pluralistic approaches - Training and reflection tools for teachers and teacher educators

<https://www.ecml.at/ECML-Programme/Programme2020-2023/Developingteachercompetencesforpluralisticapproaches/tabcid/4300/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>