Erasmus+

PROJECT:

Module 1

Teaching Effective Language Skills in a Diverse Classroom

PAL LAB

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Table of Contents

Training Module 1: Teaching Effective Language Skills in a Diverse Classroom 2

I. Encompassing Romani learners– duration 35 minutes: 2

II. Language Diversity and Culturally Responsive Teaching (55 minutes) 4

III. Principles of Effective Language Teaching – duration 30 minutes: 6

IV. Overview of the Teaching Language Skills – duration 90 minutes: 8

PRACTICAL EXERCISE – group work, 40 minutes 13

REFERENCES 14

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Training Module 1: Teaching Effective Language Skills in a Diverse Classroom

This training module aims to:

- Understand the needs of Romani learners, implement inclusive teaching strategies, and foster a supportive learning environment to help all students develop strong language skills, regardless of their linguistic background.
- Equip educators with the knowledge and skills required to effectively teach language skills in diverse classroom settings.
- Cover key principles, practical strategies, and resources for teaching effective language skills in diverse classrooms.

Module duration – 8 training hours (45 min.) and includes theory, guided discussions and practical exercises

Number of participants – group between 10 – 15 teachers

Module Outline:

Panel 1 – Total of 90 minutes

I. Encompassing Romani learners– duration 35 minutes:

1. **Welcome** participants to the training session, presentations of the aims of the training, the trainer/s and verification of expectations of the participants, introductory question – 10 minutes.

Introductory question: "What strengths, resilience, and assets do Roma students possess, and how can these qualities be effectively implemented in the classroom?"?
The trainer writes the answers on a whiteboard/flipchart

2. **Icebreaker** – 20 minutes:

Activity: Icebreaker "Language Teacher Superhero"

Objective: To introduce participants to each other in a fun and engaging way, while also encouraging focus and reflection on the importance of effective language skills while teaching Roma students.

Instructions:

1. Divide the participants into small groups of 3-4-5 people.

2. Explain to the participants that they are going to create a "Language Teacher Superhero" character together as a group. This superhero should have special abilities related to effective language skills in a diverse classroom.
3. Provide each group with materials such as markers, colored pencils, sticky notes, and a large sheet of paper or a whiteboard.
4. Ask the groups to brainstorm and design their Language Teacher Superhero. They should consider questions such as:

    - What challenges do superhero teachers help Romani students overcome in the classroom?
    - What special language-related powers needs the superhero teacher?
    - What effective teaching strategies use your superhero teacher to support Romani learners in class?

5. After the brainstorming session, have each group present their Language Teacher Superhero to the rest of the participants. Encourage them to be creative and enthusiastic in their presentation.
6. After all groups have presented, facilitate a brief discussion reflecting on the main and commonly outlined characteristics and abilities of the Language Teacher Superheroes. Ask questions such as:
    - How can effective language skills help create an effective and inclusive learning environment?
    - What challenges do teachers face in teaching language skills to Romani students, and how can they overcome these challenges?

SUMMARY – 5 minutes: Focus on the topic of understanding Romani learners and highlight the importance of recognizing and accommodating diverse learning styles and needs in educational settings.

II. Language Diversity and Culturally Responsive Teaching (55 minutes)

II.1 Please, note that every session starts with a relevant question to the teachers– 5 minutes:

Question: Ask participants, what is the impact of language diversity on classroom dynamics and learning experiences?

II.2 Presentation (10 minutes): Language diversity impacts the diverse classroom in various aspects, such as:

1. **Linguistic Proficiency and Development:** Language diversity affects students' linguistic proficiency and language development. Students who come from linguistically diverse backgrounds may have varying levels of proficiency in the language of instruction, as well as proficiency in their home languages. Acknowledging and addressing these differences is crucial for providing equitable access to educational opportunities and supporting students' language development across multiple languages.
2. **Communication and Interaction:** Language diversity influences communication and interaction within the classroom. Students from diverse linguistic backgrounds may bring different communication styles, language registers, and sociolinguistic norms to the learning environment. Educators need to be sensitive to these differences and create inclusive classroom environments where all students feel valued and understood.
3. **Inclusive Pedagogy:** Language diversity necessitates the adoption of inclusive pedagogical practices that accommodate the needs of diverse learners. This includes using a variety of instructional strategies, materials, and assessment methods to scaffold learning for students with different language backgrounds and proficiency levels. Inclusive pedagogy promotes active engagement, participation, and success for all students, regardless of their linguistic backgrounds.

II.2 Presentation 20 minutes: Challenges Faced by Romani students in language learning

Explain the challenges that Romani students encounter:

1. **Limited Proficiency in the Language of Instruction:** One of the primary challenges for Romani learners is limited proficiency in the language of instruction. These students often struggle to understand academic content, participate in classroom discussions, and express themselves effectively in the target language. Students from diverse linguistic backgrounds face challenges in understanding teachers' instructions. Limited language proficiency often hinders their academic progress and lead to feelings of frustration and alienation.
2. **Communication Barriers:** Romani learners could face communication barriers with teachers and peers, particularly if they are unable to effectively convey their thoughts and ideas in the target language. Misunderstandings, miscommunication, and difficulty in expressing complex concepts hinder their social interaction and academic engagement in the classroom.
3. **Cultural Differences:** Cultural differences can also pose challenges for Romani learners. They may come from cultural backgrounds that differ significantly from the dominant culture in the educational setting, leading to misunderstandings, cultural clashes, and feelings of marginalization. Cultural differences in communication styles, social norms, and academic expectations can affect their ability to integrate into the classroom community and navigate social interactions effectively.

4. **Limited Access to Resources:** Romani learners may have limited access to resources and support services that cater to their linguistic and cultural needs. They may face barriers in accessing bilingual education programs, language support services, and culturally relevant instructional materials. Limited access to resources impedes their language development and academic success.
5. **Socioeconomic Factors:** Socioeconomic factors can exacerbate the challenges faced by Romani learners. Students from low-income or marginalized backgrounds may have limited access to educational resources, support services, and opportunities for language enrichment outside the classroom. Socioeconomic disparities can contribute to disparities in academic achievement and exacerbate the challenges of language diversity in education.
6. **Identity and Belonging:** Romani learners may grapple with issues of identity and belonging in educational settings. They may experience feelings of cultural or linguistic identity conflict, as they navigate between their home culture and the dominant culture in the classroom. Lack of representation and recognition of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds can impact their sense of belonging and self-esteem. Feelings of exclusion or isolation are typical for these situations.
7. **Bias and Discrimination:** Romani learners may be subjected to bias and discrimination based on their linguistic or cultural background. They may face stereotypes, prejudice, and discriminatory treatment from peers, teachers, or educational institutions. Bias and discrimination can create barriers to their academic success and contribute to feelings of exclusion and marginalization.

Discussion on the challenges faced by Romani students in language learning – 10 minutes

Ask the teachers to give examples from their experience on the challenges faced by Romani students in language learning and what they do to overcome them?

SUMMARY - Conclusion (5 minute)

15 minutes break

III. Principles of Effective Language Teaching – duration 30 minutes:

III.1. **Question to discuss with the teachers**: What strategies do you implement to support Romani students in your teaching practice? **– 5 minutes**

III.2. Presentation: **Communicative language teaching approach** – theory – 20 minutes:

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach to language teaching that emphasizes the importance of communication in language learning. It originated in the 1970s as a response to the limitations of previous methods, which focused primarily on memorization of vocabulary and grammatical structures without much attention to real-life communication.

Here's an overview of the key principles and techniques associated with Communicative Language Teaching:

1. Focus on Communication: In CLT, the primary goal is to develop learners' ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations. This includes both spoken and written communication, as well as the ability to understand and interpret various forms of communication.
2. Authentic Language Use: CLT advocates for using authentic materials and real-life contexts in language teaching. This could include authentic texts, videos, audio recordings, and tasks that reflect the language and communication skills learners will encounter outside the classroom.
3. Meaningful Interaction: CLT encourages meaningful interaction among learners and between learners and teachers. Activities are designed to promote communication and negotiation of meaning, where learners work together to convey and understand messages.
4. Task-Based Learning: Tasks are central to CLT. These are activities that require learners to use language to achieve a specific goal or complete a meaningful task. Tasks could involve problem-solving, information-gap activities, role-plays, and simulations.
5. Student-Centered Approach: CLT places learners at the center of the learning process. Teachers act as facilitators who guide and support learners in their language development journey. Learners are encouraged to take an active role in their learning and to express their opinions and ideas.
6. Language Functions and Fluency: CLT focuses on developing learners' ability to use language for various functions, such as expressing opinions, making requests, giving instructions, and negotiating meaning. Fluency is prioritized over accuracy, although both are important aspects of language learning.
7. Integrated Skills: CLT integrates the teaching of different language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) in a holistic manner. Activities often involve using multiple skills simultaneously to communicate effectively.
8. Error Correction: While CLT values communication over accuracy, error correction is still considered important. However, corrections are typically done in a way that maintains communication flow and doesn't discourage learners from taking risks.

Discussion on Communicative language teaching approach – 10 minutes

Ask the teachers, if they use some of the techniques presented above?

SUMMARY - Conclusion (5 minute)

III.3. **PRACTICAL EXERCISE – 60 minutes**

Jigsaw Activities:

1. Preparation:
    - Identify several key aspects or components of CLT that you want to focus on during the training session. For example, you could choose topics such as task-based learning, error correction, fluency vs. accuracy, authentic materials, communicative games, etc.
    - Divide the participants into small groups, ideally with 4-6 participants in each group.
    - Assign each group a specific aspect of CLT to become "experts" in. Make sure that each aspect is covered by at least one group.
2. Expert Group Work:
    - Give participants time to work within their expert groups to study and become familiar with their assigned aspect of CLT. Provide them with resources such as readings, articles, videos, or sample lesson plans related to their topic.
    - Encourage participants to discuss and analyze their assigned aspect of CLT, focusing on key principles, techniques, examples, and practical applications. They should aim to deepen their understanding and develop expertise in their topic.
3. Regrouping:
    - Once the expert groups have had sufficient time to study their respective topics, regroup the participants so that each new group has at least one member from each expert group. You may need to rearrange seating or assign new groups accordingly.
    - Ensure that each new group has a diverse mix of expertise, with members representing different aspects of CLT.
4. Knowledge Sharing:
    - In their new groups, participants take turns sharing their expertise on their assigned aspect of CLT. Each participant briefly presents key points, insights, and examples related to their topic.
    - Encourage active listening, note-taking, and asking clarifying questions to promote understanding and engagement within the group.
    - Facilitate a discussion among group members to explore connections between the different aspects of CLT and how they can be integrated into effective language teaching practice.
5. Reflection and Synthesis:
    - After all participants have shared their expertise and engaged in discussion, facilitate a reflection on the jigsaw activity. Encourage participants to consider what they have learned from their peers, how different aspects of CLT complement each other, and how they can apply this knowledge in their teaching practice.
    - Summarize key insights and takeaways from the activity, emphasizing the collaborative nature of learning and the importance of integrating diverse perspectives in language teaching.

Lunch break – 1 hour

IV. Overview of the Teaching Language Skills – duration 90 minutes:

IV.1 Question – 5 minutes: Are you aware of the Bloom's Taxonomy? If yes, how do you think it could help identify the most appropriate teaching techniques for your diverse learners?

IV.2 Presentation – 15 minutes

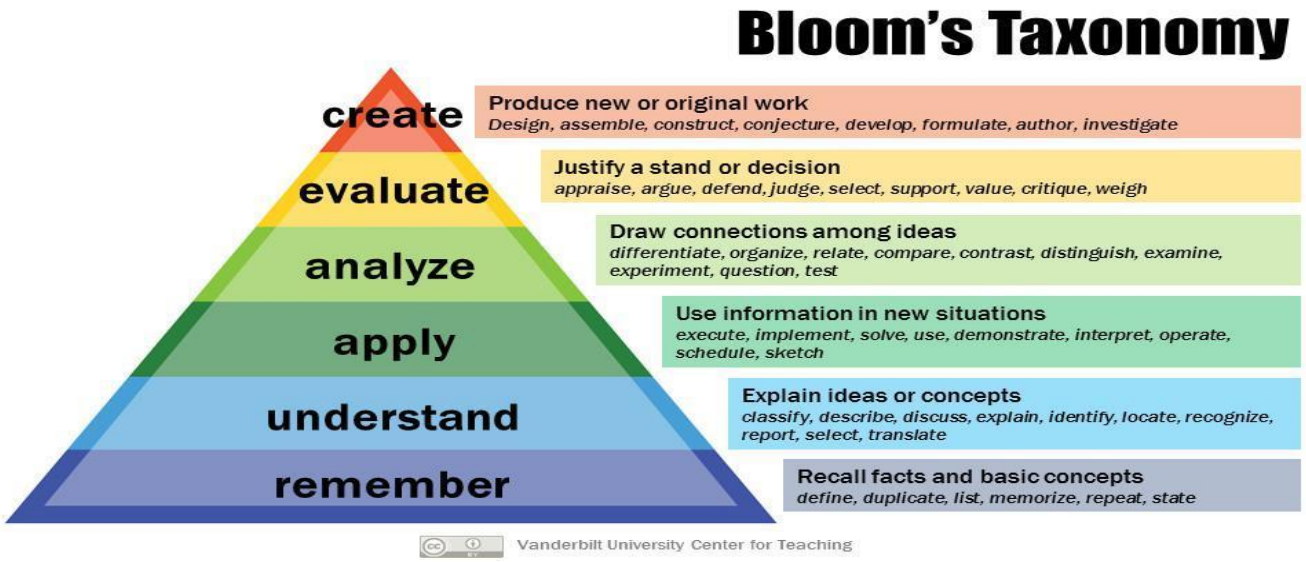
IV.2.1 The Bloom's Taxonomy

It is a hierarchical framework used to classify educational objectives into levels of complexity and specificity. Developed by educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom in the 1950s, Bloom's Taxonomy has been widely used by educators to design curriculum, develop assessments, and guide instructional strategies. The Bloom's Taxonomy provides an order for cognitive behaviors of the reader.

The taxonomy consists of six levels, arranged in a pyramid, each representing a different cognitive process:

- **Remembering:** This level involves recalling or recognizing information, facts, or concepts. Students demonstrate remembering by recalling facts, defining terms, or identifying key ideas.
- **Understanding:** In this level, students demonstrate comprehension by explaining ideas or concepts in their own words, summarizing information, or interpreting data.
- **Applying:** Students apply acquired knowledge and understanding to solve problems, complete tasks, or carry out procedures in familiar or new contexts.
- **Analyzing:** At this level, students break down complex information into its component parts, identify patterns or relationships, and draw conclusions based on evidence.
- **Evaluating:** Students critically assess information, arguments, or theories by making judgments, assessing validity, or determining the credibility of sources.
- **Creating:** This highest level of Bloom's Taxonomy involves generating new ideas, products, or solutions by combining or synthesizing existing knowledge in novel ways.

Summary: Educators use Bloom's Taxonomy to design learning experiences that target different levels of cognitive complexity and promote deeper understanding, critical thinking, and creativity among students. By scaffolding instruction and assessments across the levels of the taxonomy, educators can guide students toward higher-order thinking skills and foster intellectual growth and development.



IV.2.2. Basics for the successful language lesson – 20 min

While planning a language learning lesson, each language teacher shall create engaging, effective, and meaningful learning experiences that support students' language acquisition and development.

Make sure you:

- **Set Clear Learning Objectives:**

Define clear and achievable learning objectives that specify what students should be able to accomplish by the end of the lesson. Objectives should be measurable and aligned with language proficiency of the students.

- **Choose Engaging Content:**

Select content that is relevant, interesting, and age-appropriate for your students. Incorporate authentic materials, real-world contexts, and multimedia resources to enhance engagement and relevance.

- **Incorporate Technology in Language Teaching**

- Utilize digital tools and resources to enhance language learning
- Use online platforms for language practice and skill development
- Use virtual communication tools for engaging with diverse learners

- **Create an Inclusive Classroom Environment:**

- Establish a supportive and respectful classroom culture
- Encourage peer collaboration and language exchange
- Celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity within the classroom

- **Use Varied Instructional Strategies:**

Use a variety of instructional strategies to cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. Incorporate activities that promote active learning, such as group discussions, pair work, role-playing, games, and hands-on tasks.

- **Teachers** shall develop lesson plan using different **techniques and activities, like:**

- **techniques** - these are instructional paths within a specific strategy and at a specific cognitive stage, given to students by the teacher (reflects teacher perspective, **lesson plan**)
- **activities**– these are learning steps within a specific strategy and at a specific cognitive stage performed by the students (reflects student perspective, **activities**)

- **Follow all three main process-oriented phases of teaching process -** planning, teaching and giving and receiving feedback

- **Plan and engage all 3 modes of communication**: interpretive (engaging the receptive skills), interpersonal (engaging the receptive and productive skills) and presentational (engaging productive skills). Use a balance of **listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities** to develop all language communication skills. The four types of communication skills: **speaking, writing, reading and listening** are also commonly referred to as the **productive and receptive skills**.

Speaking and writing are known as the **productive skills** as they both require some form of language output, while **reading and listening** are known as the **receptive skills**

Questions and answers – 10 minutes

Total 50 minutes

IV.2.3 Strategies for successfully teaching language skills

A. Mind Mapping – presentation of the technique -15 minutes

Mind mapping is a visual technique used to organize and represent information in a structured and interconnected manner. It is a mirror of constructivist theory (we learn by organizing new ideas relative to our own experience).

Mind mapping involves creating a diagram, map or graphical representation that starts with a central idea or theme and branches out into related concepts, ideas, or keywords. Mind maps are often used to visualize complex information, brainstorm ideas, outline projects, or study subjects.

Advantages:

- ❏ is a visual aid and a process structure or “map”
- ❏ helps convey large chunks of information concisely

- ❑ easy to use with all levels and ages
- ❑ enhances students' thinking, comprehension and learning; supports creativity and achievement
- ❑ visually organizes new knowledge or content for development in a non-linear way
- ❑ allows for multiple connections b/n ideas
- ❑ encourages strategic thinking: describing, comparing and contrasting, classifying, sequencing, identifying cause and effect, etc.
- ❑ aids language comprehension: students brainstorm around a topic, summarize texts and do other learning activities, such as organizing and storing vocabulary, planning project work, etc.

Process stages of mind mapping – teachers' perspective

- ❑ **planning** - the teacher pre-selects concepts and/or vocabulary from the chosen text and mapping templates
- ❑ **teaching** - the teacher explains a few concepts and/or vocabulary and models organizing them in a simple map, forms groups and offers students a template/instructions/other
- ❑ **feedback** - the teacher walks around the groups and supports with advice and feedback their work

Cognitive stages of this technique for developing language skills - student perspective:

- ❑ **preparatory work** - the teacher shows a text, identifies keywords, vocabulary and/or concepts from it and writes them on the board and/or a handout/online. Students are given templates/models/instructions, they brainstorm and create a map.
- ❑ **implementation** - students form four groups in the four corners and while reading fill out their mind map
- ❑ **results and feedback** - students do a gallery walk to explain (as a designated presenter) or see (as a designated visitor) what others have done and make additions to their group map

Modes of communication (skills):

- ❑ interpretive (receptive): students listen to teacher's explanation of and read the new concepts/words; after reading, in the new groups they listen to their peers and view their maps to make modification/additions
- ❑ interpersonal (mixed): students negotiate and come to a consensus for how their map will look, what it would include and what the relationship between the concepts is
- ❑ presentational (productive): in their stations students show and explain their maps

Advise: Use 'Gallery walk' which is an activity allowing students to get out of their chairs and into a mode of active engagement. Initially, each group works in their assigned corner/ station. Next, students designate a

presenter and a visitor. They take turns as presenters and visitors. The presenters remain in their corner/station and explain their product, while the visitors visit other stations and take notes. Finally, the groups are back together to make modifications/additions to finalize their product as a result of the visit.

Summary and Q&A session – 5 minutes

B. Making connections – Text to Self – 15 minutes

Advantages:

- ❏ allows students to monitor their own thinking
- ❏ draws on their prior experiences to connect with the text
- ❏ actively engages students in the reading process
- ❏ facilitates gaining a deeper understanding of a text by connecting it to their lives
- ❏ supports remembering and retaining by personalizing the learning process
- ❏ provides choice and independent thinking

Process stages:

- ❏ planning - the teacher pre-selects point in the text to connect with personal experiences
- ❏ teaching - the teacher models briefly how the making connections strategy works
- ❏ feedback - the teacher walks around the groups and supports with advice and feedback their work

Cognitive stages:

- ❏ **preparatory work** - teacher creates a list of personal connections to the particular text with which to model this strategy and explains the strategy to students along with sample questions
- ❏ **implementation** - students write on post-it notes their connections with personal experiences
- ❏ **results and feedback** - students share their connections with the text with a partner, find out common points to note on a Venn diagram

Modes of communication (skills):

- ❏ interpretive (receptive): students take notes on post-its while reading the whole text to fill out a template
- ❏ interpersonal (mixed): students discuss and compare connections to personal experiences to note on a Venn diagram
- ❏ presentational (productive): students write an essay about their personal connections with elements of the text

Summary and Q&A session – 5 minutes

15 Minutes break

PRACTICAL EXERCISE – group work, 40 minutes

Please, design a detailed language learning lesson using at least 3 techniques:

-Mind mapping

- Making connections – Text to Self

- One that you use successfully in class

Make sure you describe in detail all stages and communication modes.

Use the lesson template

Gallery walk - 10 minutes

20 minutes- lesson presentations

Questions and answers, discussion – 15 minutes

Did the training meet your expectations? – 5 minutes

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