

Mediation and translanguaging in the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework



Cambridge
Life Competencies

What are mediation and translanguaging?

Mediation is defined as ‘When a learner/user acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning.’ (CEFR, 2020, p90). Mediation strategies allow learners to bridge communication gaps, helping others understand something better. This can occur across languages (e.g. relaying information from one language to another) or within languages (e.g. summarising a complex text).

For multilingual learners, translanguaging is a key strategy that supports mediation by enabling them to draw on their full linguistic repertoire to bridge communication gaps and help others understand information more effectively. In this context, translanguaging refers to the use of multiple languages to facilitate understanding and meaning-making. This approach aligns closely with the CEFR’s Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence scales, particularly in areas of **Plurilingual comprehension** and **Building on plurilingual repertoire**.

The CEFR divides mediation activities into mediating a text, mediating concepts and mediating communication. In practice, this might look like:

Mediating a text

- Relaying information (e.g. instructions, key ideas from a text)
- Simplifying complex information
- Explaining visual information

Mediating communication

- Facilitating cross-cultural interaction
- Repairing communication breakdowns
- Using languages strategically (e.g. choosing when and how to use different languages to help understanding)

Mediating concepts

- Supporting group learning and collaboration (e.g. encouraging idea-sharing and dialogue)
- Making new ideas understandable
- Involving everyone in the group

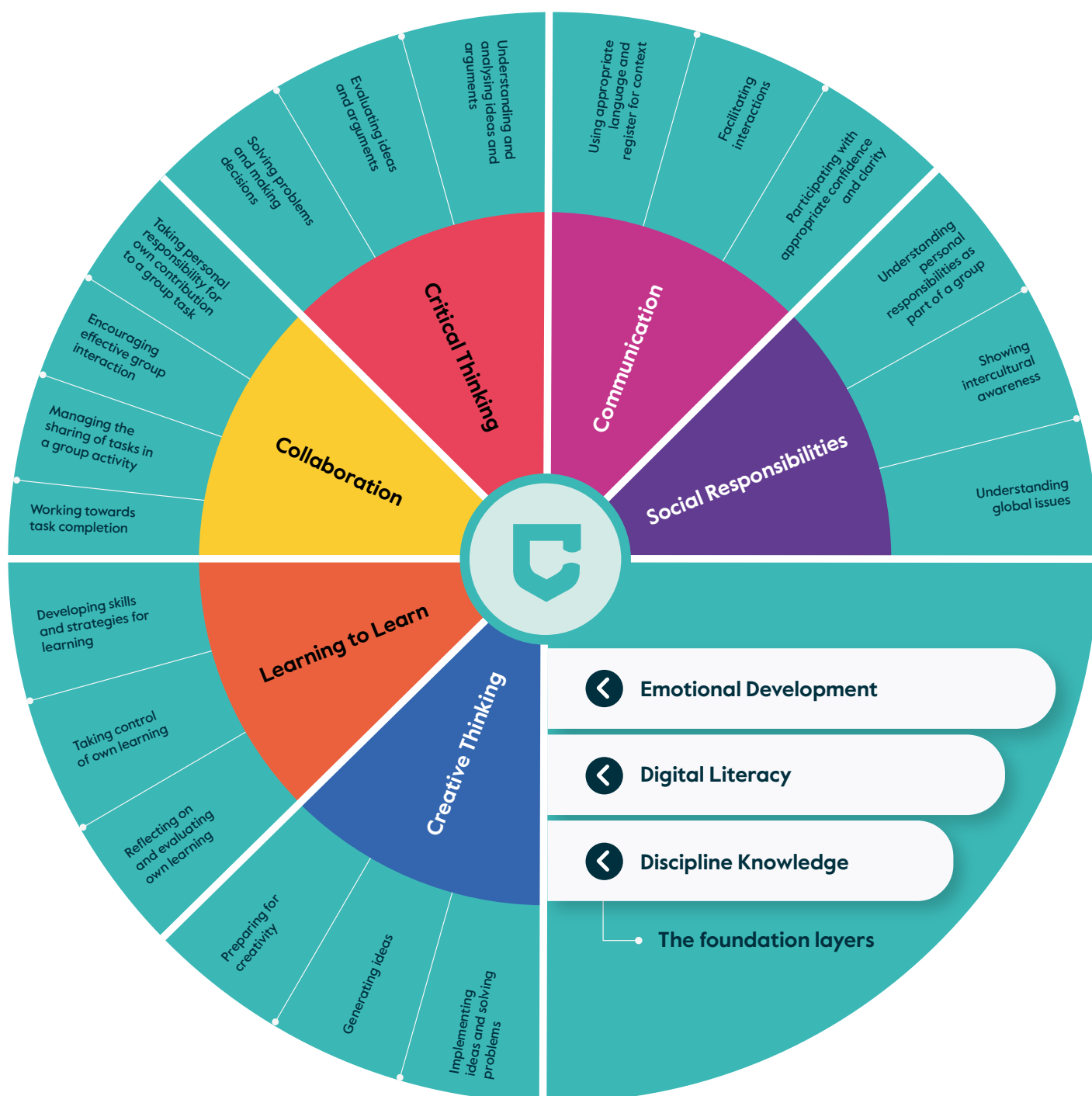
Where can mediation and translanguaging be found in the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework?

The mediation and translanguaging elements are most present in the **Communication** and **Collaboration** competencies. Although the elements of mediation and translanguaging could be mapped to multiple components of these competencies, the mapping below shows only the component to which each element is **most** strongly aligned.

Competency	Core areas	Components	Mediation and translanguaging elements included
Communication	Using appropriate language and register for context	Adapting language use according to different cultures and social groups	Relaying information
	Facilitating interactions	Using strategies for overcoming language gaps and communication breakdowns	Facilitating cross-cultural interaction Repairing communication breakdowns Using languages strategically
	Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity	Explaining concepts and information clearly	Simplifying complex information Explaining visual information
Collaboration	Encouraging effective group interaction	Establishing ways of working together	Supporting group learning and collaboration
		Engaging and supporting others	Making new ideas understandable Involving everyone in the group

In addition, the other competencies of the framework are aligned to mediation and translanguaging in the following ways:

- **Creative thinking:** Drawing on multilingual resources and facilitating group discussion can support creative ideas. Being able to explain new ideas can help present creative ideas effectively to others.
- **Critical thinking:** Analysing and evaluating information across languages can support critical thinking. The processes involved in simplifying complex information and explaining visual data also requires the use of critical thinking skills.
- **Learning to learn:** Mediation and translanguaging skills can enhance language learning when used strategically.
- **Social responsibilities:** Mediation and translanguaging are key foundations to effective intercultural communication and cross-cultural collaboration.
- **Emotional development:** Empathy skills are important for being able to understand how best (and when) to mediate information for others.
- **Digital literacy:** Interacting and collaborating with others online greatly benefits from strong mediation and translanguaging skills.



What do mediation and translanguaging look like at each stage of learning?

The tables below include some example Can Do statements and language from the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework that could be used in materials to develop competencies around mediation and translanguaging for each stage of learning. These are not intended to be comprehensive. For further ideas on how to develop mediation and translanguaging competencies, please see the **Further resources** section at the end of this booklet.

Pre-primary

Competency	Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Communication	Using appropriate language and register for context	Adapting language use according to different cultures and social groups	Tells someone in a shared language about a story they heard in English.	(In a shared language): In the story ...
	Facilitating interactions	Using strategies for overcoming language gaps and communication breakdowns	Helps other children understand simple cultural differences (e.g. ways of greeting).	We [wave/bow].
			Uses basic communication strategies, such as asking for repetition.	Pardon?
			Uses words from a shared language to help someone understand.	Water - acqua
	Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity	Explaining concepts and information clearly	Tells someone the main points of a story.	The girl is sad.
			Points to pictures of objects or people and says what they show using simple words.	Dad!/Sun!
Collaboration	Encouraging effective group interaction	Establishing ways of working together	Establishes the rules of a game.	We take turns.
		Engaging and supporting others	Shows other children how to do simple tasks by demonstrating and using simple words.	Like this!
			Makes sure everyone joins in by asking them to share their ideas.	Do you like ... ?

Primary

Competency	Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Communication	Using appropriate language and register for context	Adapting language use according to different cultures and social groups	Explains the main points of a story they heard in English to someone in a shared language.	(In a shared language): In the beginning ...
	Facilitating interactions	Using strategies for overcoming language gaps and communication breakdowns	Asks and answers simple questions about their own and others' cultural practices.	When we say hello, we ... What do you do when you say hello?
			Tries to use alternative words or expressions if they are not understood.	I mean ...
			Mixes languages to help others understand words they are using in English.	'Horse' means ['at' in Turkish].
	Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity	Explaining concepts and information clearly	Explains instructions in simpler words.	First ... , then... .
			Describes what simple visuals show (e.g. pictures or simple graphs).	This shows ...
Collaboration	Encouraging effective group interaction	Establishing ways of working together	Contributes to establishing group rules.	Remember to ...
		Engaging and supporting others	Explains an idea to others by showing how it's similar to something they already know.	It's like ...
			Encourages other members of the group who may be shy or less confident in speaking English (e.g. by using inclusive body language).	Go on.

Secondary

Competency	Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Communication	Using appropriate language and register for context	Adapting language use according to different cultures and social groups	Accurately conveys information from texts read in another language in English.	The Spanish article said ...
	Facilitating interactions	Using strategies for overcoming language gaps and communication breakdowns	Helps to resolve cultural misunderstandings by explaining different perspectives.	I don't think they meant it like that.
			Notifies when there has been a misunderstanding and uses strategies to restore understanding.	I think there's been a misunderstanding. What I meant was ...
			Flexibly switches between languages to help classmates understand complex ideas.	Photosynthesis is when plants ... In German we say 'Fotosynthese' ...
	Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity	Explaining concepts and information clearly	Presents the main ideas of a complex idea in language appropriate for the audience.	The key point here is ...
			Highlights the most important information from a graph or chart.	What we see here is ...
Collaboration	Encouraging effective group interaction	Establishing ways of working together	Sets expectations of how long each group member should take on their task.	So let's share what we find in [15 minutes].
		Engaging and supporting others	Explains ideas by breaking them down and using analogies.	It's similar to when you ...
			Helps other students put their ideas across (e.g. by rephrasing their ideas or giving examples).	So you're saying ... ?

Higher education

Competency	Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Communication	Using appropriate language and register for context	Adapting language use according to different cultures and social groups	Accurately conveys detailed information from sections of an academic text or research paper.	The researchers examined ... by ...
	Facilitating interactions	Using strategies for overcoming language gaps and communication breakdowns	Mediates in academic intercultural contexts, e.g. by using thoughtful communication to reduce misunderstandings.	Although this might seem ... it's actually ...
			Identifies why a communication breakdown may have occurred and implements strategies to restore it.	Could you just clarify what you mean by ... ?
			Strategically uses the languages they know to support communication effectiveness.	As we say in [Vietnamese] ...
	Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity	Explaining concepts and information clearly	Translates complex academic texts into more accessible formats for non-academic audiences.	To put it another way ...
			Explains the significance of graphs, charts and diagrams used in academic texts.	The data suggest ...
Collaboration	Encouraging effective group interaction	Establishing ways of working together	Discusses best ways of collaborating on the task.	What's next?
		Engaging and supporting others	Explains sophisticated concepts by building on the group's prior knowledge.	We're all familiar with ...
			Invites others to share their ideas and opinions throughout a discussion.	What's your opinion on ... ?

At work

Competency	Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Communication	Using appropriate language and register for context	Adapting language use according to different cultures and social groups	Effectively communicates key information from meetings or presentations to colleagues.	The client requested that we ...
	Facilitating interactions	Using strategies for overcoming language gaps and communication breakdowns	Helps colleagues understand cultural nuances that affect professional relationships.	A culturally appropriate approach could be to ...
			Identifies and resolves communication breakdowns in professional settings.	I believe the issue is ...
			Uses their multilingual repertoire to enhance business meetings.	This concept translates as ...
	Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity	Explaining concepts and information clearly	Distils complex information into actionable insights.	What this means for us is ...
			Presents complex business visuals to help guide decision-making.	We are seeing a clear downward trend.
Collaboration	Encouraging effective group interaction	Establishing ways of working together	Helps establish group expectations.	How often should we update each other on our progress?
		Engaging and supporting others	Explains new concepts, services or products to colleagues by building on their existing knowledge.	The advantage over previous models is that rather than ... it ...
			Invites others to share their ideas and opinions throughout a meeting or discussion.	What's your opinion on ... ?

Further resources*

Cambridge University Press & Assessment (2022). *Mediation: What is it, how to teach it and how to assess it*. Cambridge Papers in ELT and Education. Available at: https://www.cambridge.org/gb/files/6116/7648/0472/CambridgePapersInELT_Mediation_2022_ONLINE.pdf

Cambridge University Press & Assessment's Secondary ELT course *Shining Lights* incorporates a mediation strand. Learn more at: <https://englishpages.cambridge.org/en/shining-lights-2025>

Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – Companion volume*. Council of Europe Publishing. Strasbourg. Available at: www.coe.int/lang-cefr (see the Mediation and Plurilingual sections)

European Centre for Modern Languages' web page on mediation in teaching, learning and assessment: Mediation in teaching, learning and assessment: A current ECML (European Centre for Modern Languages) project which will provide a teaching guide on the issue: www.ecml.at/mediation

Kerr, P. (2019). *The use of L1 in English language teaching*. Part of the Cambridge Papers in ELT series. [pdf] Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available at: https://www.cambridge.org/gb/files/6315/7488/4318/CambridgePapersInELT_UseOfL1_2019_ONLINE-2.pdf

* Please note, these resources are current at the time of publishing – January 2026. However, newer resources may be available at the time of reading and/or some of the links included may no longer work.

Suggested search terms: 'mediation' 'plurilingualism' 'multilingualism' 'translanguaging'



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