

3.1 Language outlines

Goal

This little project is suitable for all age levels and helps students to become aware of their own language environment in a creative way, as well as to reflect on their own relationship to the different languages (reflection competence). At the same time, it leads to fruitful discussions that are also instructive for the teacher.

1st–9th grade

30 minutes



Materials:
one A4 paper with the outlines of a boy or a girl (master copies, see p.16 and 17);
colored pencils.

Hints:

The project is best suited as an introduction to language biographical topics, as described in 3.5.

Procedure:

- The instructor introduces the topic carefully, but not for very long. We all grow up in and between different languages: our own language, the language spoken in school, the language spoken by the neighbors, and English terms from advertising and music, etc. The dialect(s) and the standard variant of our first language and those of the host country should also count as languages. We may like many of these languages very much, others not so much. These different relationships can be very well demonstrated by matching individual languages with certain parts of the body.
- Every child receives a sheet of paper with the outlines of a boy or a girl. Assignment: with colored pencils create a legend of the colors (e. g. red = mother tongue in dialect; blue = mother tongue in the standard variety, green = language (dialect) of the immigration country, ..., purple = Tamil as language of a neighbor family, etc.).



- In the language outline, color the the region that matches a certain language with the corresponding color (e. g. mother tongue/dialect near the heart; the school language French near the hands, as it may help me with work later on, etc.) Many languages from the environment will not be entered within, but around the outlines (e. g. the language of the neighbor family, which I hear a lot, but to which I may not have a special relationship. Important: don't give the children suggestions or proposals that are too specific! Filling in of the outlines should occur by working individually and with absolute tranquility in the classroom.
- After 10–15 minutes, the students explain their pictures to each other (in the class as a whole or in groups). Which language did I enter at a given place, which language has what kinds of significance for me? Why is that so?

Variants:

Self-portraits or a personal description with the main focus on languages (my first language, other languages I can speak, other languages that are spoken in my environment, etc.).

Bibliographic references

More in-depth information from the “inventor” of the language portraits, Prof. Hans-Jürgen Krumm, Vienna, can be found under http://www.akdaf.ch/html/rundbrief/rbpdfs/61_Mehrsprachigkeit_Sprachenportraits.pdf

3.2 Bilingual or multilingual writing projects

Goal

In bilingual or multilingual writing projects, the HLT students are made aware of their bilingual resources and potentials and how to use them productively. In terms of their first language, authentic situations may arise, in which the writing competences can be promoted. The resulting attractive products contribute to the motivation.

3rd–9th grade

30–60 minutes



Materials:
depending on the project.

Hints:

- The focus in HLT is the realization of the project in the first language (although many students feel more secure in the language of the immigration country). The version in the second language or language of the host country will follow in a second step.
- A cooperation with regular classroom instruction for these projects is particularly productive and useful. The bilingual texts that are created lend themselves very well for a bilingual expansion (see ideas #21 and #22 in the volume “Promoting writing in the first language”).

Procedure:

- The class is informed about plans for a bilingual or multilingual writing project, followed by discussions of the arrangements, theme, and the kind of text and product to be created. The students should understand that the project aims to utilize their competencies in two languages.
- Possible themes and products:
 - Lower level: creation of a bilingual picture book (the text in the first language at the bottom, the text in the second language at the top). The pictures are either drawn by the children themselves (for a story invented by them or a story read to them by the instructor), or they paste pictures into the text, following a template provided by the teacher (e. g. a picture book). Variant: create a “mini book”, as described in # 21.2 and 22.4 in the volume “Promoting writing in the first language”; Link: <http://www.minibooks.ch/>.
 - Lower and middle level: bilingual poems about a topic or a literary form (e. g. “Elfchen-Gedichte” or “eleven poems” as described in the volume “Promoting writing in the first language”, #21.1). The created texts can be artistically enhanced on colored paper and fashioned into a little booklet.
 - Middle level: creation of a bilingual adventure book, see “Promoting writing in the first language”, #21.2).