



## Nieuwbrief Oktober 2023

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Foto genomen tijdens het symposium in april 2023



### Audrey on the last few weeks

One month has flown by! Since my last post, we have continued to work multilingually in the classroom by having discussions supported by multilingual sources once a week, by learning new academic words in each other's languages and by looking at examples from different languages. My favorite topic in October has been: the role of the teacher in language classrooms. We welcomed a guest speaker, Christine Vidon, an experienced language teacher for French and she challenged the students to think about what a good teacher does and whether it was the same in every culture or age group.

It made me think of the activity tip of last month, which was to organize a movie night with movies from different countries and languages around the topic of the role of the teacher. I think that we should go ahead with the organization of this event! I had language teacher colleagues think of movies in which a teacher is the main character and it developed into a nice list of movies already. If you have an idea, don't hesitate to share it with me!

In October, my main concern has been to give clear instructions to the students about the final assignment, which is to write a multilingual teacher guide for volunteer teachers in a chosen learning context. A challenging task for both students and teachers! It is not the typical academic essay but it still had to be at the academic level, which means supported by sources, well references and strongly argued. It took us quite some time to come up with a good rubric for that. Josh and I made our first draft and are ready to start the grading in November. I will keep you posted! If you are interested in seeing the rubric, don't hesitate to contact me.

In the next newsletter, I will tell more about the students' final products and how they managed the multilingual component. I will also share with you the multilingual activities I have been designing for next block!



## Sera's impression

Hi! My name is Sera, and I am one of the first students to participate in the University's new course, Language Learning and Teaching. This course is an elective within the course European Languages and Cultures, and it has been a very interesting semester so far. We have studied a multitude of topics in our class, however the topic I will be discussing today is the multilingual approaches in higher education. My first impression of the multilingual approach of this class was to think; how on earth would this work? While there is an overlap of languages in our class some of them are from totally different families, such as Swedish and French. However when we did our first multilingual exercise, it dawned on me that this is an untapped area of education, one that is new and quite exciting. Something that I loved doing as part of this class was every week, each of us had to find an article in our target language about the week's topic. Then we had to present our findings to each other, and in doing so we were able to broaden our field of research. This exercise involves breaking down the usual language barriers which sometimes prevent us from accessing different papers and information. I, for example, was able to draw references from Spanish research papers by Latin American and Spanish authors, something which usually would have discouraged me due to the language barrier. I also caught a glimpse into the French and Swedish worlds of research, due to my classmate's presentations in class. The experience was very enjoyable and incredibly informative, although a little frustrating at times when you realise that English is the dominating language of research, leading to a lack of papers in other languages. In my opinion, incorporating multilingualism into higher education is something that can be done in all fields. It can make study more personal for students, allowing them to draw on their linguistic strengths to provide new outlooks and approaches to certain topics studied in class. It broadens the educational horizon for everyone involved, and I believe that it can be an asset to higher level education at this university!



## Interview with Josh Prada

From August this year Josh Prada has joined Audrey in teaching the courses Language Learning and Teaching 1 and Language Learning and Teaching 2. He holds a PHD in bilingualism and heritage language education from Texas Tech University and started working at the University of Groningen this August as part of the [Sector Plan initiative](#) from the Dutch government. This is a short article to get to know Josh and his opinion on the course.



### Who is Josh Prada?

His specialisation is multilingualism and his research is mostly on advancing approaches to multilingualism in education and society in terms of equity, access and democratic participation. This means he wants to know how people with a multilingual background navigate life and in what ways people can interact with multilingual communities in a meaningful way. One of the examples Josh named is healthcare communications. One of the questions he mentioned is 'how can we make healthcare provision be linguistically and culturally aligned with these migrant communities'. Another area of interest is how society views migrants and multilingualism. Often migrants are looked at as people with a low level of education and a low socioeconomic status, though this is often simply not true. The migrants that do not fit the low level-education and the low socioeconomic status picture are often referred to as expats. Furthermore, multilingualism is often reduced to the language-component although it represents much more.

Josh is able to do his research through two things: how networks of collaborators and his grant-writing and seeking. He thinks big problems are best solved by groups of collaborators and he has worked together with collaborators from the US, Australia, China, South-Africa and all around Europe. When working with collaborators he likes to have dynamic conversations. He has also received a 2.9 million dollar grant from Indiana University along with his two colleagues: Dr Brandon Sheerman and Professor Aneela Teemant to work on a project called CELEBRATE. In this project they will be working on how equitable learning environments are cultivated and how to advance teacher education.



## His thoughts on LLT1

As for Language Learning and Teaching 1, Josh thinks that with this course they have really tried to challenge views and assumptions that people might have in light of what we know today. So far the course is only a pilot but it has stimulated students in ways that traditional courses aren't able to do. For example, this course really aims for students being their own agents in their learning. The critical point here is that each student has their own ambitions depending on the major language that they're studying and a course with a multilingual approach like this one has room for those ambitions. The aim in this course was to really incorporate the plurilingual spirit in the seminars and lectures. Of course there is plenty of room for improvement and sometimes the course could be a little chaotic but those are areas that will be reflected upon and changes will be made to ensure an improved course for the next run.

## Thoughts on other courses implementing multilingualism

Josh thinks that every course within the faculty could benefit immensely from implementing multilingual approaches in their teaching. Having multilingual approaches within the classroom will really help students to see the world as a multilingual space and help them adapt to the world being a multilingual space. Rethinking the world as a multilingual space is a really important process and ensures room for an open view towards others.

### Activiteitentip:

Meertalige toolkit (downloadbaar PDF)

Tijdens Language Learning & Teaching 1 hebben we een meertalige toolkit ontwikkeld. Deze hebben we gebruikt tijdens de colleges en een gedeelte van de vragen in de toolkit moesten de studenten thuis al voorbereiden. Het idee van de toolkit is als volgt: studenten lezen iedere week artikelen over het onderwerp van die week in het Engels. Vervolgens gaan student thuis op zoek naar een artikel in hun doeltaal over hetzelfde onderwerp. Tijdens het college worden de bevindingen besproken en de resultaten onderling vergeleken. De toolkit is in het Engels aangezien Engels over het algemeen de lingua franca is.

Hieronder zijn een aantal vragen te zien:

- Are these arguments from TL-text in line with the sources that you prepared for this week?
- Can you understand the arguments from TL-text in relation to the cultural frame this article has been written in?
- Try to explain what is typical in this article from the language or culture that it is written in.

Hieronder kunt u ook de link vinden naar het PDF bestand voor de toolkit: <https://mutlilingualtoolkit.tiiny.site/>

**university of groningen**  
Toolkit: Discussion Based on Multilingual Sources

**The Scope**  
Every week students will read a main text in English, then they are tasked with reading an article on the same topic in their target language. In class we will discuss the findings and compare them to the findings that they have been assigned. [TL = target language, ie. the language that the students are studying.]

**Preparatory Questions**

- What are the main arguments of the text in TL?
- Are these arguments from TL-text in line with the sources that you prepared for this week?
- Can you understand the arguments from TL-text in relation to the cultural frame this article has been written in?
- Can you identify terms or jargon that translates the English key terms seen in class?
  - Are they translated into the target language or not, and why according to you?
- What is the theoretical background of this article?
- Is this theoretical background native to the community of your target language?
- Was it new to you?
- Have you used your existing knowledge to make sense of this article, and how?
- Have you used strategies to understand terms or arguments that were difficult, if yes, which ones?
- Have you learned some new expressions or words and can you translate them?

**Discussion Questions**

- Share your insights with a student from another language.
- Try to explain what is typical in this article from the language or culture that it is written in.
- Select one important term in the major language and ask your fellow student to guess its meaning.

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de HogerOnderwijsVernieuwers