



A toolkit for implementing integrated didactics in language education

European Centre for Modern Languages Workshop (03-04 March 2026)





What is the Integrated Didactics project about?

According to the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), the project is intended to provide *“decision makers in schools with a clear rationale for rethinking language education in a holistic way, valuing the entire language repertoire of the learners, and at the same time developing concrete tools and teaching materials for teachers in secondary schools, where languages are often considered in isolation”*.

PPLI participated in this ECML project on integrated didactics from 03-04 March 2026, continuing its engagement with European research and practice in language education. This collaboration brought together educators and policymakers from across Europe to explore how language education can better reflect the linguistic realities of contemporary classrooms.

Rethinking how we understand language learning

The project aims to promote a more holistic understanding of language learning by recognising and valuing learners’ full linguistic repertoires, while also developing practical resources and tools to support classroom practice. At its core lies a simple question: *what might language education look like if we focused less on languages as separate subjects and more on the connections between them?*

While integrated didactics may initially appear to be another teaching methodology, it was presented as a broader educational orientation rather than a discrete approach to be adopted. It encourages educators to view languages not as isolated systems, but as interconnected resources that learners draw upon when constructing meaning, solving problems, and developing new knowledge. From this perspective, learners’ linguistic repertoires are viewed as valuable assets that can be harnessed within the classroom.

Making connections across languages

The workshop highlighted the growing recognition that multilingualism is now a normal feature of many educational contexts. Learners move between languages in their homes, communities, online environments, and schools. This is increasingly evident in Ireland, where growing linguistic and cultural diversity means that many learners engage with multiple languages both within and beyond the classroom. Integrated didactics seek to acknowledge this reality by encouraging meaningful connections between curricular languages, the language of schooling, learners’ home languages, and, where appropriate, other subject disciplines. Language is therefore understood as an area of study and as a tool for learning, thinking, and participating in society.

A recurring theme was the importance of developing learners’ ability to reflect on language itself. Through activities that encourage comparison across languages, learners notice patterns, similarities, and differences between linguistic systems. This process of metalinguistic reflection



supports the transfer of knowledge from one language to another. It can also help learners become more aware of their own learning processes and linguistic resources.

From plurilingual theory to classroom practice

These ideas connect closely with plurilingual and pluriliteracies-informed approaches. There was an emphasis on recognising the linguistic and cultural resources that learners bring to school and on creating learning environments where these resources are both acknowledged and valued. Such approaches have the potential to enhance language learning and to strengthen inclusion, participation, and learner agency.

Participants in this workshop explored practical classroom activities that encourage learners to activate prior linguistic knowledge, make cross-language comparisons, and draw on multiple languages when constructing meaning. A language learning timeline, for example, could be used to invite learners to map key moments when they first encountered, learned or used different languages, helping to make visible the diverse language experiences within the classroom. A cross-linguistic reflection activity could encourage learners to compare the languages they know by identifying similarities and differences in vocabulary, grammar or expressions. What was particularly interesting was the emphasis on moving beyond occasional plurilingual activities towards more deliberate and coherent approaches that support progression over time.

Implications for Ireland and future practice

For PPLI, participation in the workshop provided an opportunity to engage with emerging European thinking while reflecting on its relevance for post-primary education in Ireland. Many of the principles explored align with existing priorities around inclusive practice, teacher collaboration and language-aware approaches to teaching and learning.

The collaboration also offered a useful opportunity to exchange ideas with colleagues from across Europe and to explore innovative approaches to language education that can inform and enrich practice in Irish schools. By engaging with the experiences, research and classroom innovations of other education systems, PPLI can help support the continued development of language teaching that is collaborative, learner-centred and responsive to the linguistic diversity of contemporary classrooms.

As the ECML project continues, PPLI looks forward to contributing to the development of resources and ideas that can support more connected, inclusive and innovative language learning experiences for students in Ireland.

To find out more about the project, please see [here](#).