

LEARNING IS FUN
Teaching Methodology for Plurilingual Education
and a Balanced Life

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(eds.)

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Cultural and linguistic diversity are intrinsic to the civilizations of the contemporary world (except for, maybe, a few areas around the globe); yet, despite their prominence, especially in educational contexts, the latter have not benefited from increased emphasis in this direction.

In the field of foreign language learning, we witness the prevalence of the monolingual theoretical model, alongside the erroneous notion – I consider - that learners have to reach a high level of language use based on the ‘native speaker’ proficiency model, as unique reference for language development and its evaluation in formal settings.

Due to this shortcoming, knowledge of foreign language and culture are most often used at minimal and devalued dimension.

Tangible and immediate manifestation nowadays, diversity needs recognition and use of the foreign language in a form of teaching/learning that lends value to this notion. Plurilingualism, as alternative educational framework, is offered as solid alternative, able to cater to this need.

Case in point, this is one of the stated goals of the volume in question: to connect the theory of plurilingualism, the notions of interculturality, of cultural dialogue to practice; to observe the plurality of cultures and languages in empirical studies, to give concrete examples of the current methodology of teaching/learning foreign languages adapted to this intricate context.

We start from the ever constant and overbearing features of the world today: a globalized society characterized by relentless mobility and change - phenomena with a direct impact on the linguistic landscape.

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Advanced language use is no longer seen as a phenomenon separate from culture, society, learning and teaching experience. Rather, its very essence is modeled by these various linguistic and cultural experiences. Plurilingualism underwrites the transition from homogeneous, monolithic, to heterogeneous, transferable competencies.

This is the given circumstance. How do we adjust then, how do we achieve an adaptation considered successful, how do we change our educational practices so that we may keep pace?

The present volume offers a complex, coherent and practical answer to the questions above.

Starting from the outline of today's inter and transcultural realities, the volume proposes in three Parts featuring own Chapters, a relevant series of contributions to the teaching methodology of foreign languages.

As highlighted by the coordinators (Roxana-Elisabeta Marinescu and Roxana-Magdalena Bârlea), the three parts of the book represent three different standpoints that analyze and assess life-long-learning adult education. The first Part, **Plurilingual Citizens, Intercultural Education**, draws on the concept of intercultural education, seen as essential competence to be acquired and mastered in nowadays globalizing and globalized environment. Modern lifestyle and accompanying strive for balance in private and professional contexts makes for the second Part, entitled **Contemporary Lifestyles: Personal and Professional Personas. Learning is Fun**. The third Part, **Language Learning & Teaching, Digital Competence and Dance – A Cross-Disciplinary View on Methodology**, scrutinizes diverse methodological aspects, such as creating a blended learning context for autonomous learning, teaching Romanian as a foreign language and the contribution of terminology, assessment of foreign language competences from an action perspective, or Polish dance and poetry in the period between the two world wars.

Discussing explicitly adult education in foreign language learning, the solution proposed by the authors pleads for learning that is anchored in the social fabric and present in every facet of an individual's life. The process does not halt in 'class', but continues, in various shapes and forms, in every moment outside the class session.

The central notion endorsing the whole endeavor is 'playing', dance, the idea of 'having fun'. But the plea swiftly drives beyond the seemingly minimalizing characteristics of these notions and convincingly displays a spirited and effective, at the same time, way of learning and practicing language skills in foreign languages. More so, presented case studies, hands-on examples from the European funded project dedicated to learning and practicing languages through dance (*Oportunidance. Dance Your Way to Other Cultures*), references made to

neoliberal ideologies or to technology and blended learning, film, poetry, even mathematics, unquestionably demonstrate the validity of the proposal.

The volume demonstrates that it is important for those who teach and those who are taught to co-create meaning and knowledge, that individuals should not stand for mere transmitters of already produced information; that what one does in life can and should be 'brought in' into the classroom and vice-versa; that this very crisscross process is inspirational, self-developing and serving to reach overall life-work balance.

As pertinent instance of what has so far been argued, a very popular English-language learning textbook produced by The National Geographic is titled, simply, 'Life'; among chapter headings for covered topics: Social Living, Reason and Emotion, Digital Media, More than a Job, Relationships, Development, Customs and Behavior etc.

Headlining a dense collection of experienced perspectives, the volume edited by Marinescu and Bârlea stands proof that foreign languages can no longer be conceived as separate, or decontextualized from life – under all its aspects, and that the methodology of teaching them should convey this reality.