

# Pluriliteracies in Education

What is it and why should you try it in your classrooms?

A Simple Guide to Broader Perspectives

Start





## How to use this resource

This interactive resource has been designed to be intuitive and easy to navigate.

- To consult a source, simply click on the underlined author's name; this will take you directly to the original reference.
- You can also access the original illustrations by clicking on the images.
- If you prefer to consult all references in one place, a complete list of sources used in this interactive literature review is available on the final page and can be accessed directly [there](#)



# Pluriliteracies

"Approaches that recognise and promote the hybrid nature of literacy practices rooted in situated contexts. These approaches advocate for the integration of plurilingual and multimodal literacy practices across various disciplines, highlighting the continuous interplay of multiple languages, scripts, discourses, dialects, and registers. Pluriliteracies go hand in hand with pedagogical innovations that enhance the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement of both students and teachers to equip them to actively contribute to responsible global citizenship." (Meunier, 2025)

Curious to discover what it concretely means?



What are the components of pluriliteracies?



Why are pluriliteracies necessary in education?



How can we include pluriliteracies in our practices?

*Feel free to explore, but for best understanding, review the "What" and "Why" before the "How".*

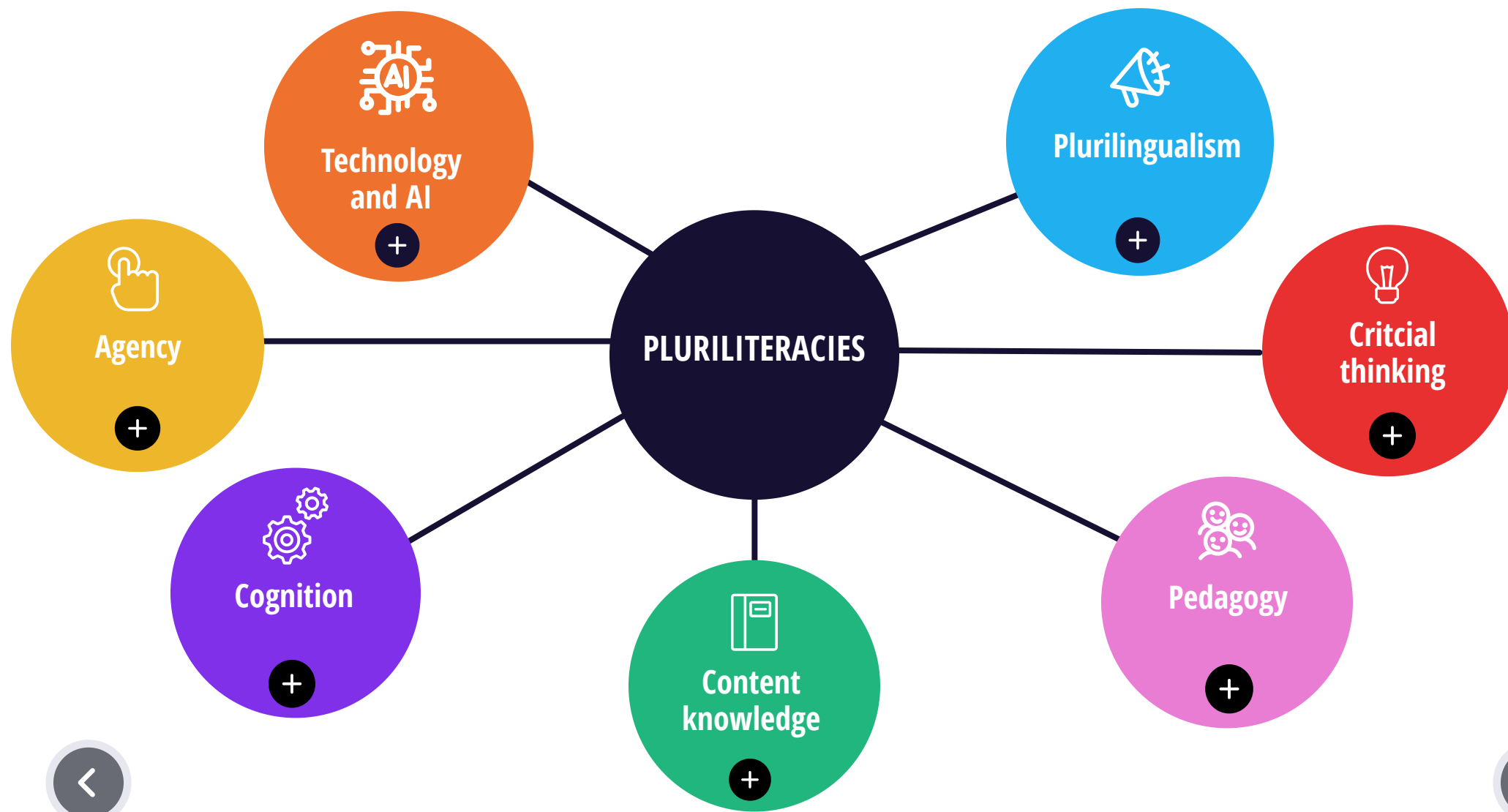
Model inspired by [Meunier, 2026](#).

You can click on any component to access more information.

Curious about why pluriliteracies benefit our classrooms? [Click here!](#)

?

# WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF PLURILITERACIES?





## CONTENT KNOWLEDGE



### What?

Broadening and deepening teaching by integrating pluriliterate dimensions and competencies does not sideline content knowledge. Rather, it reframes it in balance with the diverse skills developed through a pluriliteracies approach.

### Why?

Pluriliteracies foster deeper learning and support student's acquisition of content knowledge. Therefore, as learners progress in their understanding, they must also develop their subject-specific literacies, which enable them to make meaning and construct knowledge.

(Meyer, Coyle et al., 2015)



## TECHNOLOGY AND AI



### What ?

Developing technology/AI literacies can look like:

- Working with Chatbots
- Developing prompt-writing skills to work with generative AI
- Using technological resources to produce creative artefacts
- etc.

(Meunier & Decorte, 2024)

(Decorte, 2024)

### Why ?

In line with recent technological and sociocultural imperatives, creating deeper and constructive learning environments is increasingly reliant on education technology.

Developing digital literacies is fundamental to becoming a pluriliterate citizen and goes far beyond the narrow interpretation of using computers in the classroom.

Using technology in class can promote student agency, make room for new pedagogies and personalized support, engage parents and communities in learning, etc.

(Coyle and Meyer, 2021)





# PLURILINGUALISM

## What?

Plurilingualism refers not only to the ability of an individual to use multiple languages, but more importantly, to interrelate and interconnect these languages as part of a unified communicative repertoire. ([Council of Europe, 2020](#))

This term is used as an umbrella term including multilingualism and interculturality. ([CU.mil, 2025](#))

Plurilingualism embraces the global individuals' linguistic repertoires and agency in several languages. ([Marshall and Moore, 2018](#))

**Why?** Being open to different languages and their intercultural competence and democratic citizenship is making it possible for a fair and equal repartition of power. Plurilingualism is a way to ensure equity and to foster inclusivity. ([Council of Europe, 2020](#)).

First steps toward implementing plurilingualism with your learners can be found within the broader framework of "[pluralistic approaches](#)".

"We are all plurilingual: everyone uses different registers with different audiences and in different situations; [we] use common foreign words without translating them [...]"

([Wandruszka, 1981](#)).

Metrolingualism  
Translanguaging  
Codeswitching  
**Plurilingualism**  
Bilingualism  
Codemeshing  
Polylingualism  
Multilingualism

For a visual comparison between multi- and plurilingualism, [click here](#).



## PEDAGOGY



Pluriliteracies can meaningfully inform the way teachers design and enact pedagogical practices.

### What?

Pluriliterate pedagogies work deliberately and systematically across different literacies to foster creativity, reshape knowledge, and support diverse forms of learning in an integrated, ecological way (inspired by Jewitt & Kress, 2003).

### Why?

It makes it possible to build innovative deeper learning episodes and inclusive classroom practices.

"Plurilingual and [pluriliterate] pedagogy thus brings the focus on the classroom strategies employed by both teachers and learners to raise language awareness and foster intercultural awareness and competence to support learning in the class." (Marshall and Moore, 2016)



# CRITICAL THINKING



## What ?

Critical thinking is about how students can reuse the skills they have learned to act as citizens.

Critical thinking involves the capacity to communicate and negotiate knowledge appropriately. “Critical framing” supports learners in critically reflecting on their own meaning-making processes within their sociocultural context (Coyle and Meyer, 2021).

## Why?

Public schools are required to teach to use notions, content knowledge and competences to engage in some form of critical thinking (hooks, 2003).

It allows students to interrogate information sources, reflect on how knowledge is constructed, and develop an open-minded perspective.

# AGENCY



**What?** As Bandura (2003) defined it, there are three types of agency: individual agency, proxy agency, and collective agency.

Depending on the learning episode, pluriliteracies can support the development of the different types of agency, either individually or in combination.

**Why?** Building agency is a reciprocal process:

- Teachers can build on students' crosslinguistic and crosscultural competences and make them aware of their metalinguistic and metacognitive resources, thereby strengthening self-esteem, agency, and self-efficacy.
- Educators do not need to speak every learner's language, but they need to move beyond a monolingual mindset and focus on the whole person rather than only on language. In doing so, they help learners become more autonomous, connect formal and informal learning, and reflect more effectively on their own learning.
- As Piccardo (2013) argues, teachers should also be willing to share some of the learning responsibility with students and engage with the cultural meanings carried by different languages.

(Piccardo, 2013)





## COGNITION



### What?

Adopting a pluriliteracies approach entails strengthening cognitive processes, organizing cognitive strategies, and fostering students' engagement in metacognitive processes.

### Why ?

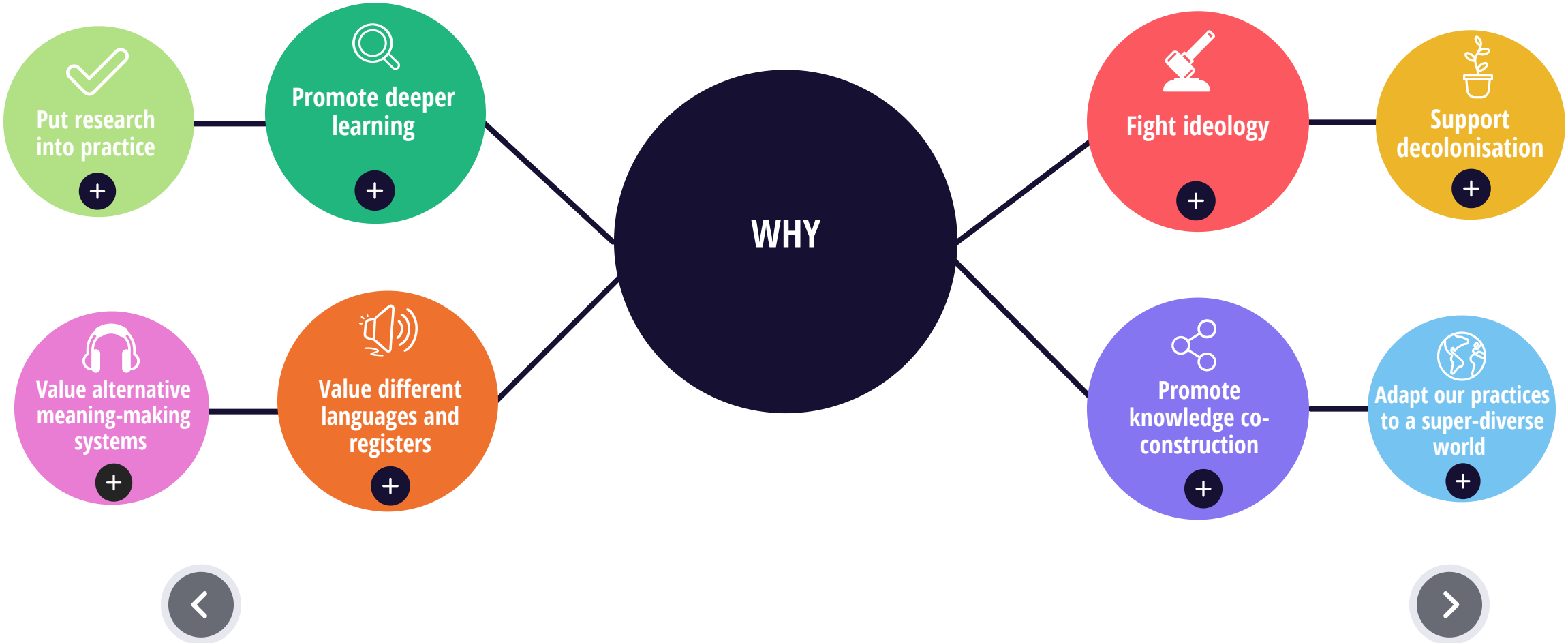
"The goal is to leverage pluriliteracies to build a repertoire of cognitive and metacognitive strategies to understand, analyse, interpret and construct a range of text types and genres for meaning, social purpose and context." (inspired from Coyle and Meyer, 2023)

You can click on any component to access more information.

Curious about the components of pluriliteracies? Click here!

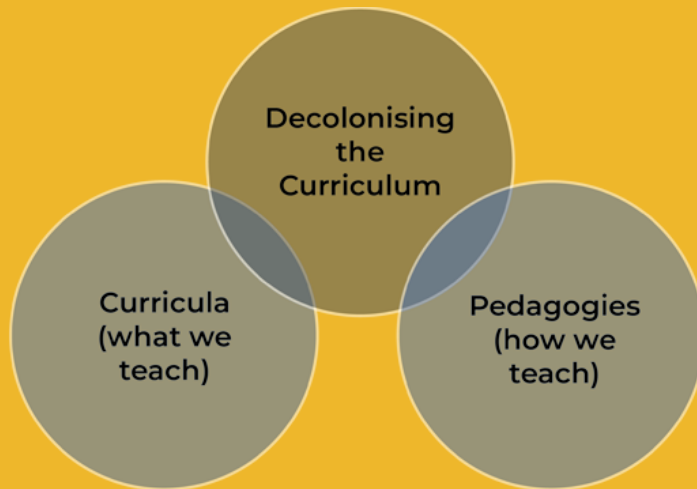


# WHY ARE PLURILITERACIES NECESSARY IN EDUCATION?





## SUPPORT DECOLONISATION: what we teach and how we teach



Pluriliteracies can foster curriculum decolonisation, whereas in secondary education or post-secondary education by:

- Opening our language classes to languages other than English and those prominent in the North.
- Opening studied texts and subjects to a diversity of contents and authors.
- Sharing knowledge building with our students and their cultural backgrounds.
- Fostering our students' critical thinking skills about studied contents and student's agency.

Learn more here: [Ndhlovu & Makalela, 2021](#)  
[Ehlers-Zavala, Back & Ortaga, 2025](#)



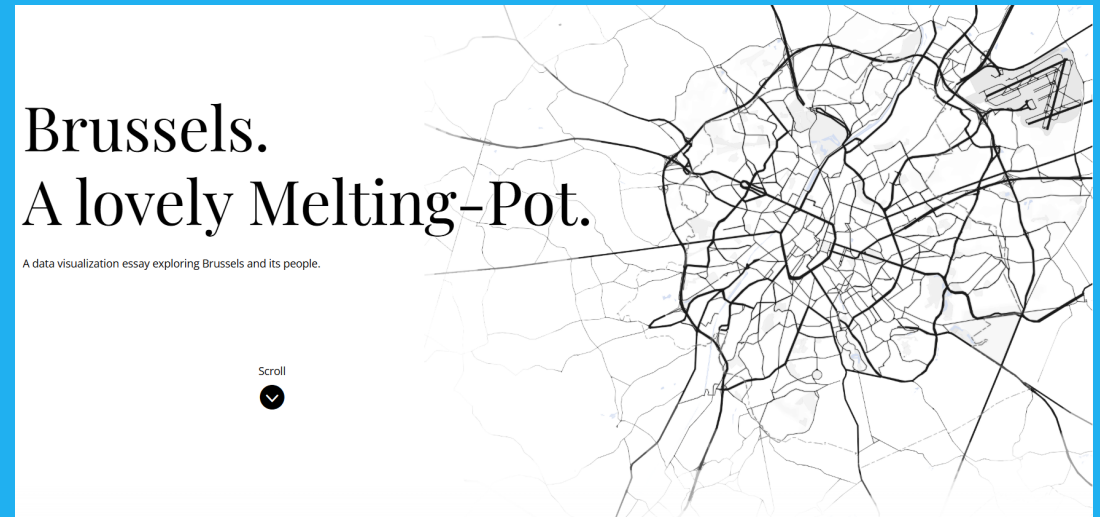
## ADAPT OUR PRACTICES TO A SUPER-DIVERSE WORLD



As Vertovec first coined it in 2007, our contemporary situation is now characterized by a time of "super-diversity". This imposes a renewal in our relationship with languages. ([Vertovec, 2007](#))

In those super-diverse societies, plurilingualism comes into young people's lives in their languaging practices across a multitude of media and modes – oral, written, spatial, aural, musical, tactile, sensory – often separated by time and space. ([Moore & Vallejo, 2018](#))

Therefore, students should be educated in plurilingualisms and pluriliteracies oriented to globalized presents and futures. ([Moore and Vallejo, 2018](#))





## PUT RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE



Putting the learner in a position where they can feel competent is highly beneficial.

Several studies linked to the Fifth Dimension project (Cole & The Distributed Literacy Consortium, 2006), and the related La Clase Mágica project (Vázquez et al., 2015), which promote diversity and digital technologies, have shown how collaborative interactional contexts, in which languages and modalities are mixed as a norm, are **beneficial to learning**.

(Moore and Vallejo, 2018)

"Pluriliteracies works by helping learners connect what they know with how they communicate it. As students develop, they become better at expressing subject-specific ideas using the right genres, styles, and modes for different purposes and audiences. This growing ability shows that they are strengthening the link between conceptual understanding and communication. Over time, learners move from novice to more expert meaning-makers, able to adapt their language to different social and cultural contexts and use it effectively to participate in meaningful interactions."

(Meyer, Coyle et al., 2015)



## FIGHT IDEOLOGY

In the past, the teacher's voice was often the only source of information. Today, schools and teachers play a different role: organizing, guiding, and giving students access to multiple sources of information.

As hooks (2003) noted, democratic education should avoid reinforcing existing hierarchies: the diversity of voices and perspectives can enrich any learning experience.

Therefore, the pluriliteracies approach provides a framework for rethinking our relationship with information.

"[To strive for justice means] changing our educational system so that schooling is not the site where students are indoctrinated to support any ideology, but rather where they open their minds, engage in rigorous study and to think critically."

(hooks, 2003)





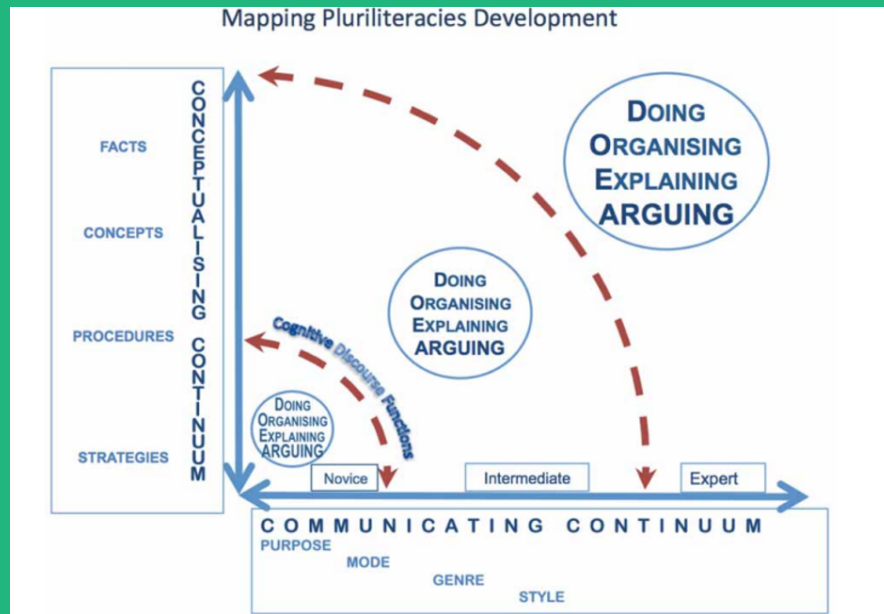
## VALUE DIFFERENT LANGUAGES AND REGISTERS



"When educational settings become places that have as their central goal the teaching of bourgeois manners, vernacular speech and languages other than standard English are not valued. Indeed, they are blatantly devalued. While acknowledging the value of standard English the democratic educator also values diversity in language." (hooks, 2003)

Students whose first language is not English can strengthen their bilingual self-esteem when their home language is validated in the classroom. By adopting inclusive teaching practices, educators can value diversity, support code-switching, and foster intercultural competence and plurilingualism. This helps students with a stigmatised or less valued L1 see their linguistic resources not as a weakness, but as an asset. (inspired by hooks, 2003)

## PROMOTE DEEPER LEARNING



"As a pedagogic approach, pluriliteracies teaching for deeper learning (PTDL) aims to facilitate deeper learning through an explicit focus on disciplinary literacies. By extending the concept across languages and all subjects of schooling learners will be guided towards textual fluency. This will encourage successful communication across cultures and prove a key stepping stone towards becoming responsible global citizens."

([Coyle & Meyer, 2021](#)).

Deep learning and pluriliteracies development are closely intertwined: learners progressively acquire the ability to construct and express knowledge through the disciplinary literacies of each field.

(Adapted from [Coyle, Meyer et al., 2015](#))



## PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE CO-CONSTRUCTION

Adopting pluriliteracies and plurilingual approaches helps create inclusive and empowering pedagogical opportunities for both learners and teachers, who become collaborative co-creators of knowledge. It also supports processes of both production and reproduction, while encouraging active participation in allyship aimed at resisting injustice and promoting social change.

These approaches challenge the status quo by reshaping how competence and knowledge are distributed between adults and children. By focusing on the development of children's skills, they call into question previously assigned roles and categories, particularly as these are negotiated and redefined through interaction.

([Moore and Vallejo, 2018](#))





## VALUE ALTERNATIVE MEANING-MAKING SYSTEMS



Research in New Literacy Studies ([Baynham & Prinsloo, 2013](#)) has shed light on the highly ideological nature of literacy: what counts a being 'literate' is always embedded in a particular context, a particular world-view and in relationships of power.

Therefore, valuing different literacies within groups makes it possible to recognize students' diverse skills, understand learners more holistically, and question existing power dynamics.

# HOW CAN WE INCLUDE PLURILITERACIES IN OUR PRACTICES?

Which subject would you like to explore from a practical perspective?



Arts

Geography





## Food for Thought - Why Arts Matter in Pluriliteracies

Without explicitly drawing on the tradition of pluriliteracies, Pippa Stein's work illustrates how fostering a synergy of expressive modes in the classroom can enhance **creativity** and reveal students' emotional engagement, thereby strengthening their sense of **agency**. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of not overlooking **art and craftsmanship** when seeking to integrate pluriliteracies into educational practice.

This also demonstrates that you can adapt modes depending on your students' social contexts. Doing so can help transform the classroom atmosphere, creating a more relaxed and playful environment.

We suggest fostering a synergy between modes and literacies learning, enabling learners to negotiate knowledge and practise multiple skills. This, in turn, can lead to deeper learning experiences.

(Stein, 2003 in Jewitt and Kress, 2003)

Do you want to know more about how we can implement pluriliteracies? [Click here!](#)



## WORKSHEET 7.2.2 Worksheet A 2: The Carbon Footprint of a Loaf of Bread

Concentrate on the stress and loudness of the speaker

### Worksheet A 2: Carbon Footprint of a loaf of Bread

- 1) Search the passage in the transcript where the speaker explains the quantity of greenhouse gas emissions produced due to one loaf of bread. Calculate how many grams of greenhouse gases are produced per one loaf of bread. Write down your calculation below.



- 2) Read M1.

- 3) Listen to the audio again. While listening,

- a) list all the steps of the process that lead to making a loaf of bread that produce greenhouse gas emissions on the left side in the box below
- b) give reasons **how** emissions are produced in each step (example: driving a car → burning of fuel → carbon emissions) on the right side below

#### M1: Definition of Carbon Footprint

The carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced by human activities. Everything produced and done by humans creates carbon emissions and therefore has a carbon footprint. Therefore, the sources of emissions are industry (21%), agriculture & forestry (24%), electricity & heat production (25%), transportation (14%), housing/ buildings (6%) and other (10%).

#### a) Factors that lead to carbon footprint

Example: A Loaf of Bread

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

#### b) How?

#### Phrase Bank: Linking Words

The starting point is ...  
To begin with ...  
It shows the process  
of ...  
Due to ...  
Because of ...

As a result (of) ...  
As a consequence, ...  
This causes ...  
... is caused by ...  
That leads to ...  
Therefore ...

The reason for this is ...  
This affects ...  
One factor is ... another factor ...  
When ... then ...

- 4) Draw a pie chart about the different sources of greenhouse gas emissions listed in M1.

# Pluriliteracies in the Geography Classroom

## Did you know?

Language classes are not the only setting in which pluriliteracies and plurilingualism can be fostered.

In her article, Nicole Berg presents a learning episode built around the skills needed for geographic literacy, including problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, and multicausal reasoning.

Students also develop communicative competence and meaning-making across the four activity domains of deeper learning: doing, organising, explaining, and arguing geography.

To foster agency, Berg proposes that students create a podcast in their target language to present the results of their inquiry, connected to their own interests.

This illustrates the possibility of developing pluriliterate skills and plurilingualism through subject-based learning episodes, not only in language classes.



Berg, 2023

Do you want to know more about how we can implement pluriliteracies? Click here!





## **In geography classes, simple adjustments might include:**

- Valuing students' geographical backgrounds and languages
- Avoiding the translation of place names (cities, countries, capitals)
- Working with sources produced in languages other than students' first language (L1)
- Recognizing and valuing diverse forms of literacy, such as multimedia presentations
- Encouraging students to share their results in another language



## How?

Integrating pluriliteracies into deeper learning episodes throughout the school year does not require a fully holistic approach. It can also be implemented through shorter, focused learning sequences.

## Activities examples:

- For high school and higher education students: Multilingual Legal Reasoning in the Age of AI (Meunier, 2026) [Click here](#)
- For kindergarten and primary school students: *Le Grand Livre des Musiques* (Meunier, 2026) [Click here](#)

## Where?

Fostering pluriliteracies can take place across a wide range of learning environments and doesn't have to be limited to the traditional classroom.

However, it should be developed in alignment with students' immediate contexts and lived experiences. Encouraging multiple forms of literacy supports the creation of more informal and creative learning spaces that recognize and value students' diverse skills and competencies.



# Diving a bit deeper

PIE Instagram's page



Podcast on plurilingualism: CU.mil podcast #1 -  
Conversation with Jérémie Séror (UOttawa)



Join (and contribute to) our Zenodo  
community: [PIE](#)

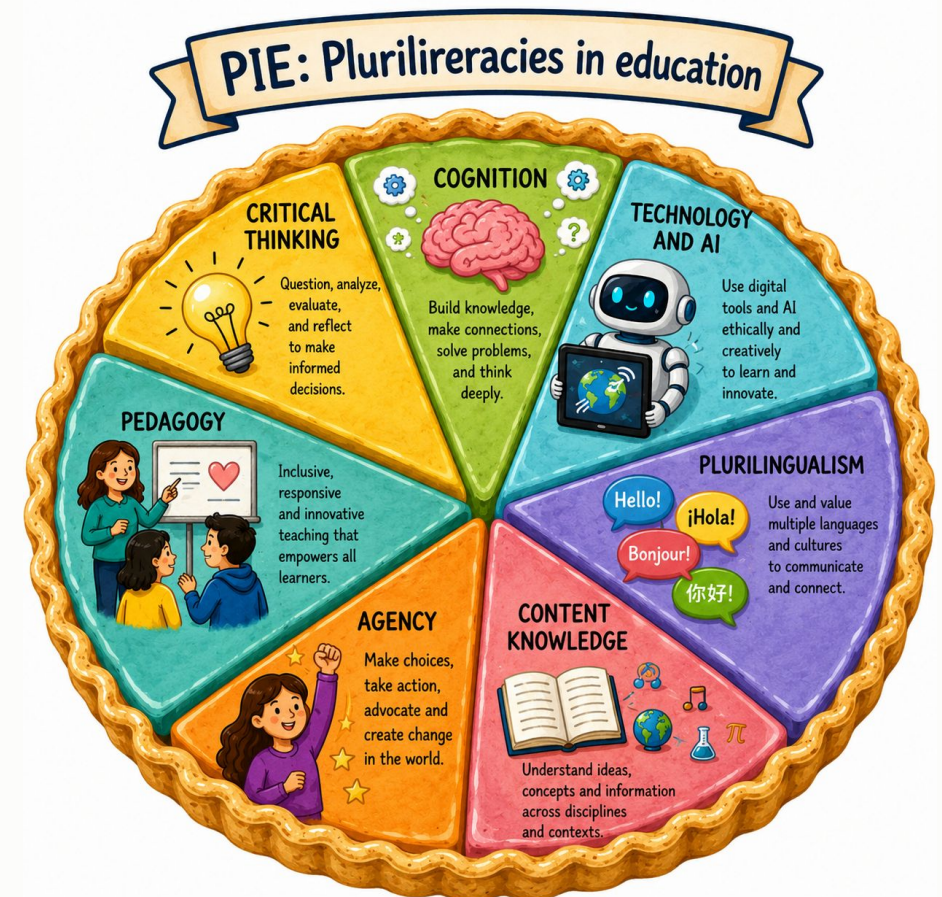


Illustration generated with ChatGPT



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