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Collaborative art in the multilingual and multicultural classroom: appraising the role of theatre in education for developing multilingual skills and global competencies

The European landscape is characterised by increasingly complex “contact zones” (Pratt, 1991) between people from different linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds that are challenging social cohesion in many places, and not infrequently give way to ethnic tensions (Vertovec, 2007). In education, this situation has given new urgency to the question of how to deal productively and creatively with the dynamics of linguistic and cultural diversity. Arts education is among the educational subjects that most consistently concentrate on fostering openness to difference, interdependence and inquisitiveness. In this context, theatre in particular has been heralded as a powerful pedagogical tool for teaching and learning (foreign) languages (Pakkar-Hull, 2014; Boudreault, 2010) and intercultural competence (Fleming 2004), as it provides a space wherein participants are offered the possibility to use languages in a more contextually-situated setting, and where they can explore and critically probe the boundaries of their own views of the world and engage with those of others (Medina & Campano, 2006). Drawing on data collected from qualitative interviews and an online survey, I will focus in this presentation on a preliminary analysis of what role theatre plays in typically multilingual and multicultural primary school classes in Luxembourg.

Dany Weyer is a doctoral researcher at the Institute for Research on Multilingualism at the University of Luxembourg. Born in Luxembourg, academic and professional experiences in the educational field and cultural sector brought him to Germany and Australia. After focusing on how engagement in music workshops and dance activities affect the development of interpersonal and intercultural skills in his bachelor and master dissertations respectively, his PhD research investigates the role of theatre in education (TIE) initiatives for developing multilingual skills and global competencies.

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