

**“It helps them develop,
it helps me develop, it helps me see”:
Creating spaces for in-service language
teacher transformation through
Collaborative Vygotskian Praxis**

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SLTED 2026, September 11, 2026

DD-LANG (Dynamic Diagnostic Language Assessment) Project



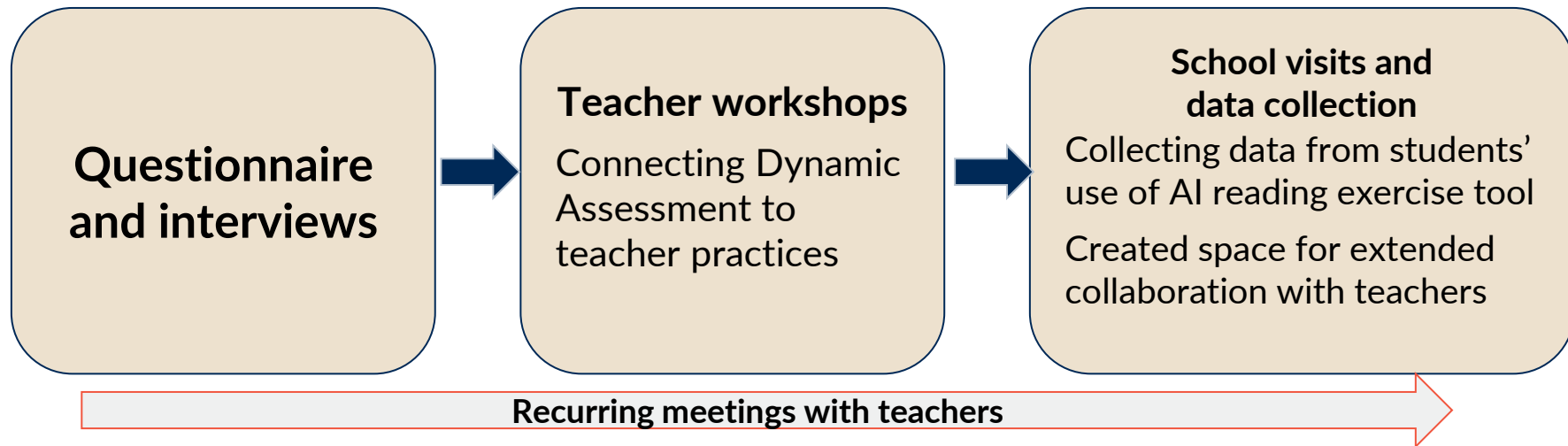
Research to advance the **theoretical, empirical and practical basis** of foreign language (L2) assessment supporting learning

- funded by the **Research Council of Finland** and University of Jyväskylä Sept.1. 2022 – Aug. 31. 2026
- focused on **reading** and writing in English as a foreign language in upper secondary schools in Finland (16–18 -year-olds) during preparation for national Matriculation Exam (ME)
- **Project implementation and development as a reciprocal collaborative process** with upper secondary English teachers

Collaboration with the teachers



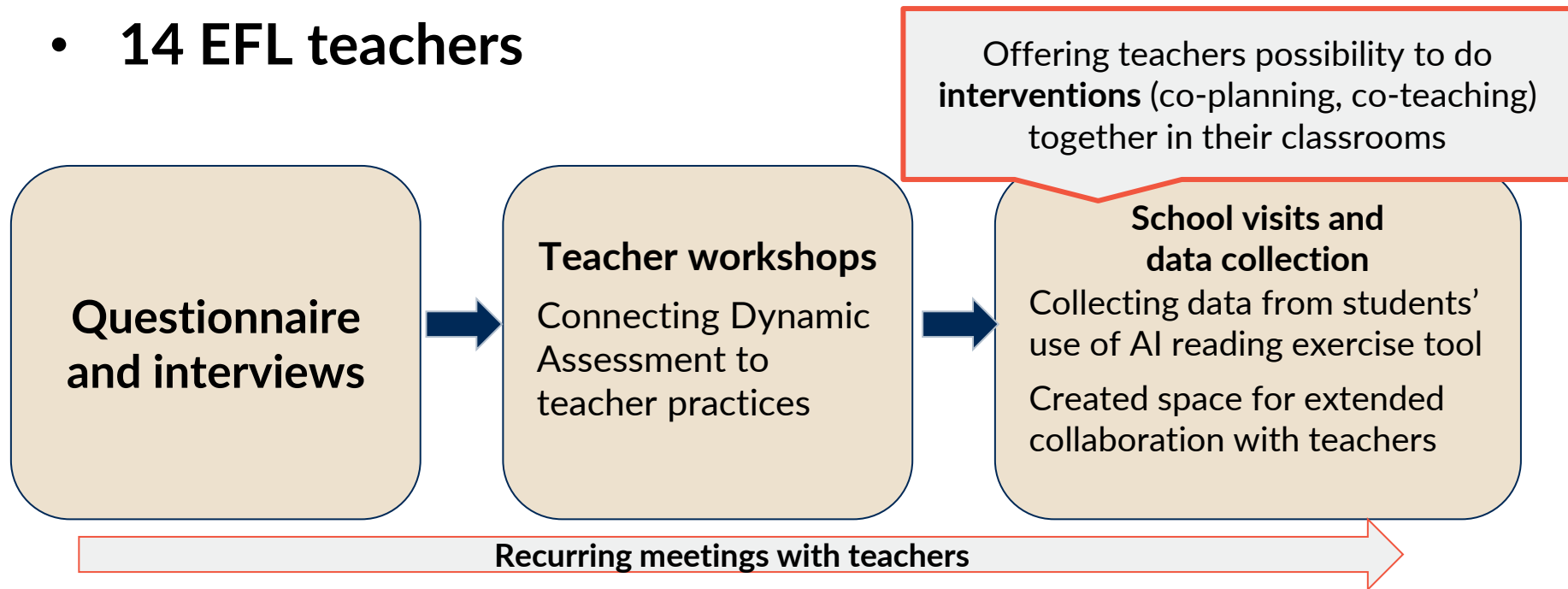
- 7 upper secondary schools in 4 cities in Finland
- 14 EFL teachers



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Classroom Intervention –

Collaborative Vygotskian Praxis (CVP)

(Rieker, Doran, Ah Puck, & Wang, 2026)



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5 Pillars for In-Service Teacher & Researcher Collaboration/Development

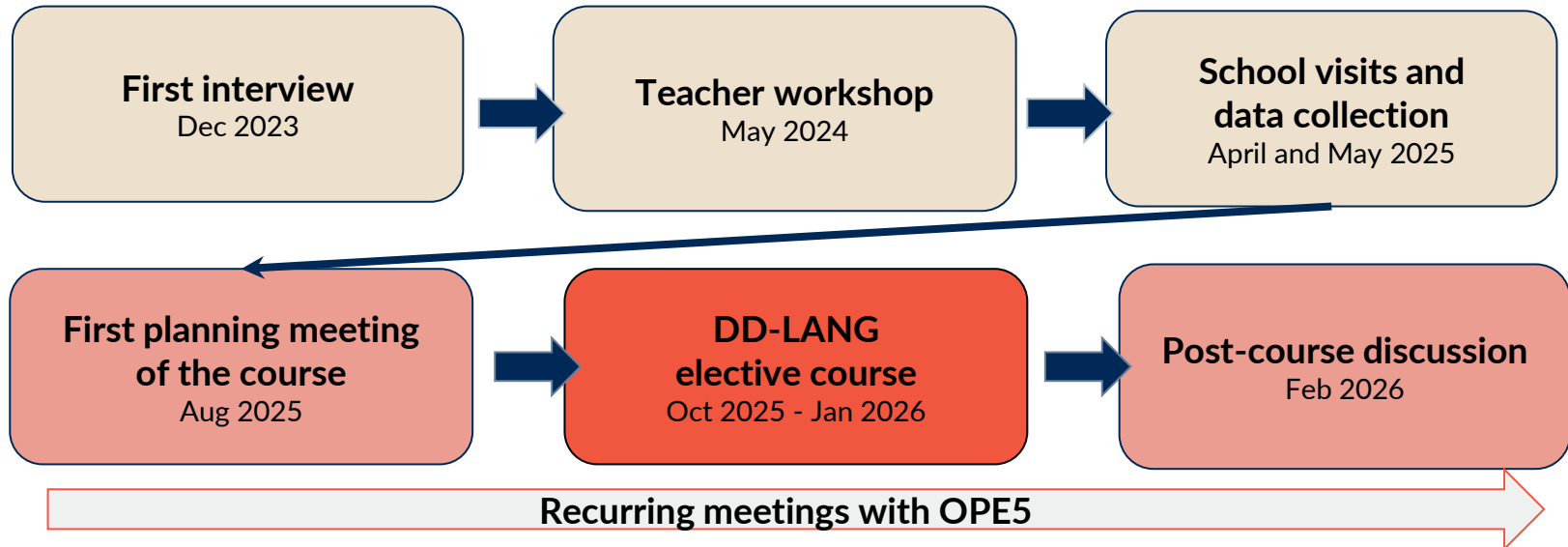
1. Local Contextualization
2. Longitudinal Engagement
3. Responsive Mediation
4. Concept-Based Support
5. Kairic Orientation



OPE5 + Collaboration Timeline



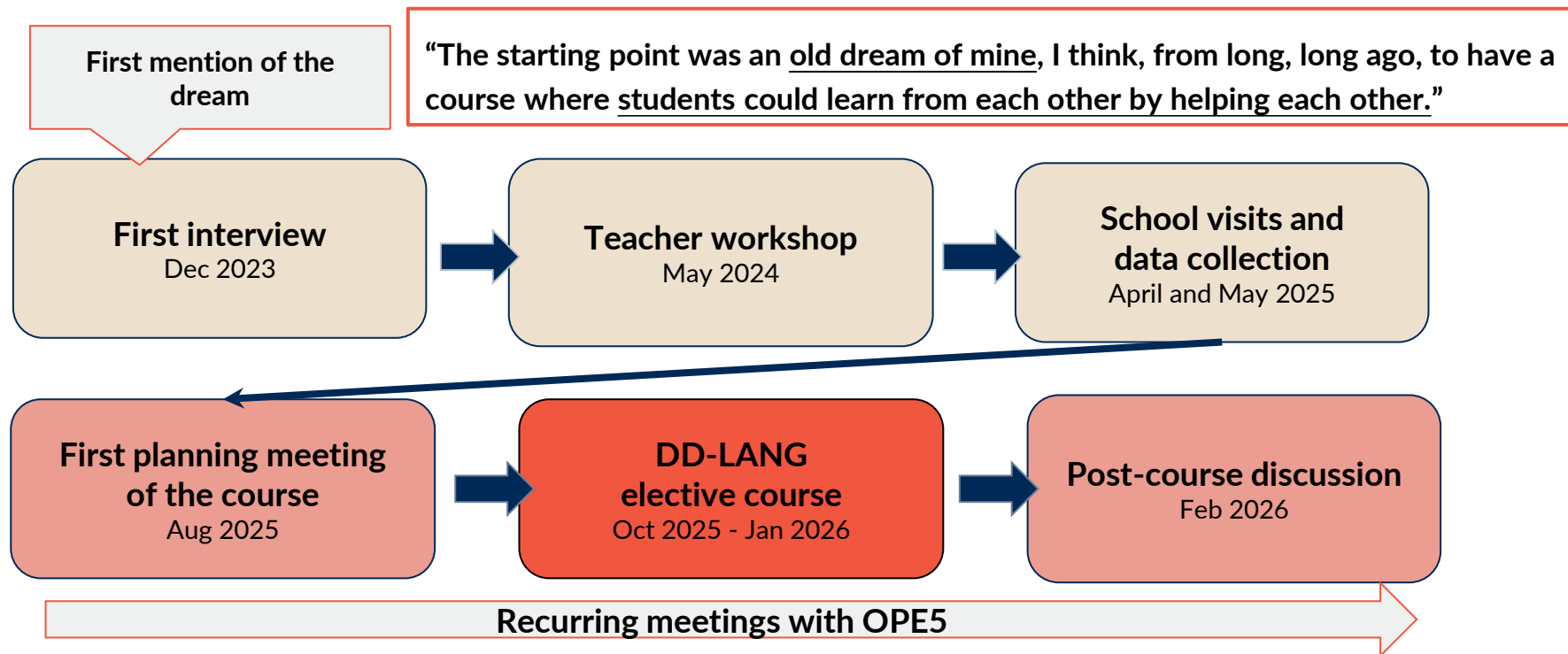
- OPE5's instructional history:
 - **Late-career** stage
 - General upper-secondary **English teacher**



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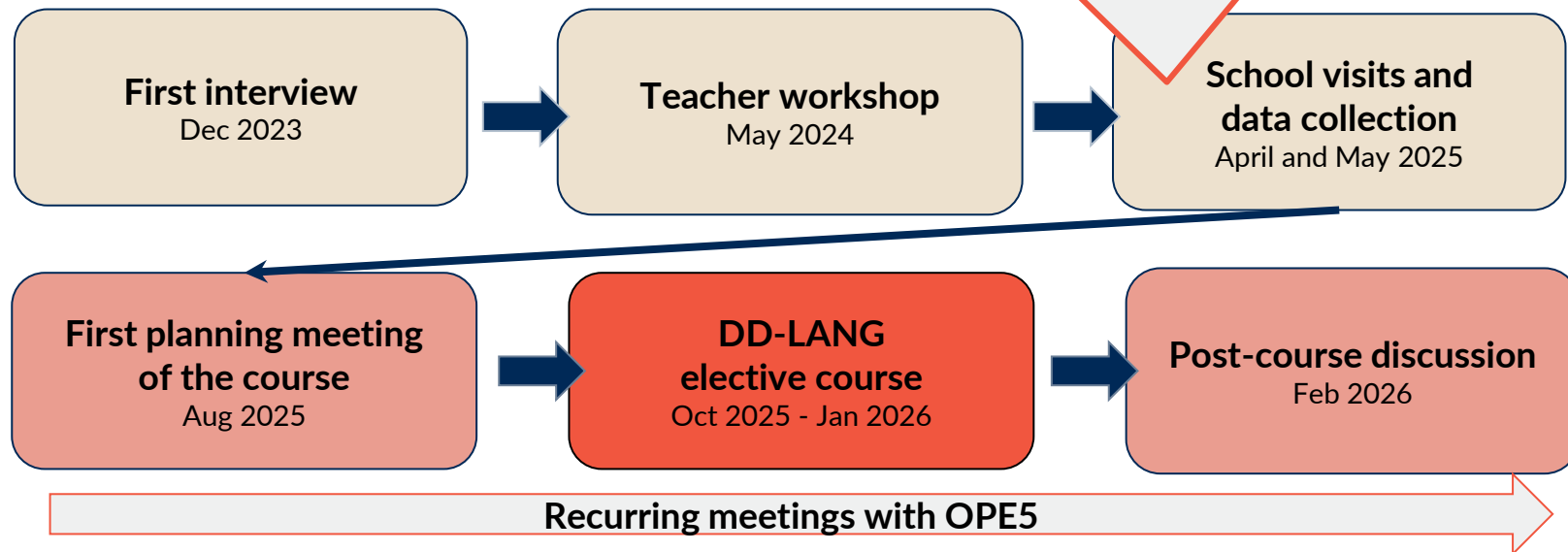


OPE5 + Collaboration Timeline



- OPE5's instructional history:
 - **Late-career** stage
 - General upper-secondary **English teacher**

OPE5 tells research team that she had negotiated the creation of an elective course for matriculation exam preparation, informed by DD-LANG principles



DD-LANG Course Outline

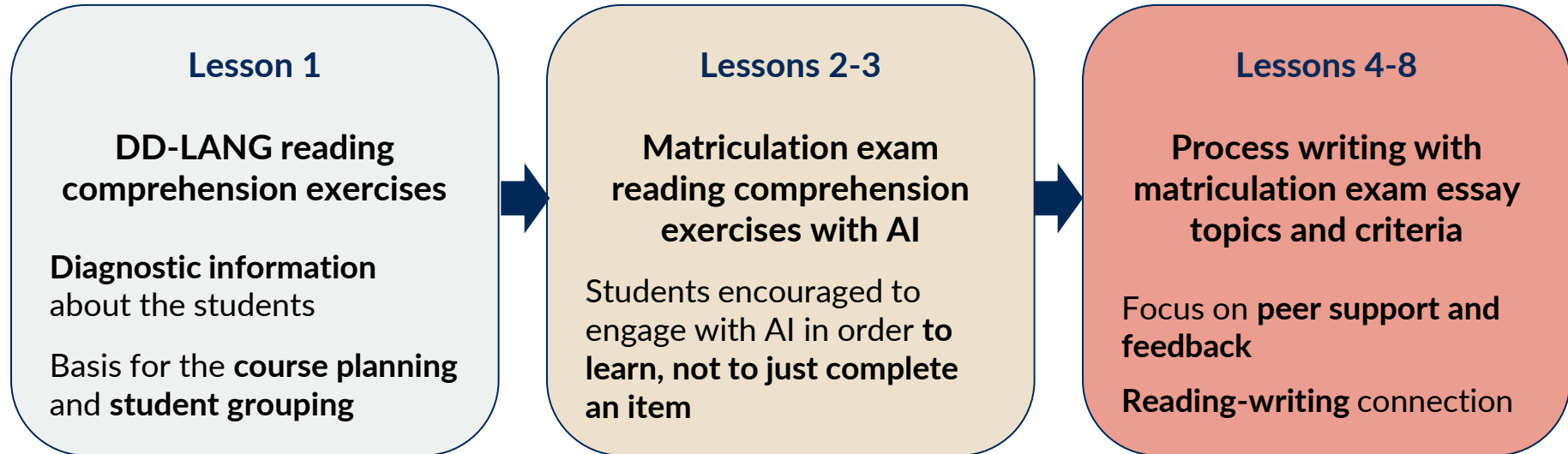


- **Elective** English course that was **designed flexibly and implemented collaboratively**
 - **Weekly lessons** from mid-October 2025 to January 2026 - **8 in total (3 co-taught)**
 - **6** second-year upper secondary school students
 - Collaboration involved: **(a)** teacher-made lesson plans, **(b)** joint planning sessions (on-site, video-conferencing, and email communication), **(c)** lesson implementation, & **(d)** post-lesson written reflection shared with researchers

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Lesson 5 (Dec. 2025)



- Co-taught lesson, focus on creativity in writing within the structures of matriculation exam

It was very rewarding to plan and implement the lesson together with Dmitri. At the end of the lesson, he gave his comments to two of the students and I was trying to encourage my students to ask for his feedback (a real opportunity to get feedback from an expert other than their teacher, and I feel that they really appreciated the opportunity as well). The discussions with the students were very interesting. This may not sound as scientific as it should but as a teacher of the young people of Finland of today, I feel rather privileged 😊.

Lesson 5 Written Reflection (Dec. 2025)

Lessons 7 & 8 (Jan. 2026)

From Creativity to Communicativeness (viestinnällisyys) & Peer Feedback

Using the criteria when asking and giving peer feedback

1. viestinnällisyys Communicativeness
2. tekstin sisältö ja/tai aiheen käsittely Content of the text/how the topic is discussed
3. tekstilajin mukainen rakenne Genre's structure
4. kielellinen laajuus Breadth of language
5. oikeakielisuus ja virheiden vakavuus Language accuracy

They can also discuss the following questions after giving their feedback:

Combining creativity with the criteria during the writing process, how did it feel, easy/difficult and why?

Lesson 8 Reflection (Jan. 2026)



I must say that when observing the students as their English teacher, and having known most of them since their first year in high school, **I felt proud of them and proud of what we all (students, researchers, the researchers as teachers and the teacher) have been able to achieve during the course.**

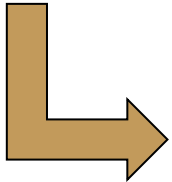
The students have had the absolute unique opportunity to have university researchers help them learn about their own learning process, and the teacher has had the opportunity to learn more about the students and their individual learning processes, as well as the **opportunity to develop as a teacher.**

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On this experience of collaboration —

“It helps them develop, it helps me develop, it helps me see where they need help, helps them see where they might need help, or it might help them see where they are good or what they are good, at as well.”

(Ope5, Post-Course Discussion)

OPE5 Discussing Concepts & Collaboration



OPE5: I got many new ideas, especially the meeting [workshop] in Helsinki, where we had these ... basically not new, but some new concepts. But you made me think about many things like mediation, creativity, which is always part of the a writing process and any learning. So mediation, creativity, teaching OFF your students, which I love. ... The collective expert was very interesting ... So you gave me a lot. And the collaboration was ... you helped me a lot. ... This was all new ... to all of us. So we didn't know where we would end, but I think we've ended or we land in a very good place.

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Points from the DD-Lang workshop to think about

- Mediation, creativity, teaching off your students, collective expert
- Guiding groups of learners. What would you group your students for? How will you know it worked? How do you make students' learning/thinking visible/actionable?

Screenshot from Lesson 4 Reflection, OPE5 using questions and concepts from Helsinki workshop in Lesson Plan

1. **Pedagogical Concepts** became mediational means for teacher lesson planning and decision-making
1. **Open-ended, flexible design of collaboration** supported collective (teacher & researcher) development

OPE5 on Educational Experience of Collaboration



OPE5: **It's been educational**, really educational. And really opened my eyes to see that it's, although my university days are in the 80s, somewhere in the early 90s, **it has it has been eye-opening** in a way and **kind of taken me back to those days at university when you, where you had to think of things in a more detailed way**, kind of.

I don't know how to put it. But **bring the science into, into the teaching, BACK to the teaching**, in a way ... So combining these two ... perspectives has been very productive

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- ❖ **Collaboration was a developmental pedagogical experience for OPE5, similar to her pre-service teacher education program decades before**

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- ❖ **Collaboration was experienced as a form of praxis: the integration of teaching/research**

Discussion



- **Collaborative Vygotskian Praxis (CVP)** can create **meaningful instructional change**, even with late-stage career, expert language teachers
- This orientation offers **an innovative, viable, and generative approach to fostering teacher professionalism, agency, and pedagogical transformation** in the process of conducting research with practicing language teachers in the institutional settings in which they work.

CVP: 5 Pillars

1. Local Contextualization
2. Longitudinal Engagement
3. Responsive Mediation
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Kiitos!
Thank you!

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