

Intra-linguistic Mediation: Why, What, How?

Leor Cohen
API Forum 2025



April 3, 2025



האוניברסיטה הפתוחה
The Open University of Israel
الجامعة المفتوحة

NEW CHAPTER

Reconceptualizing Language Education With Mediation: Perspectives From Israel

By Leor Cohen & Ingrid Barth, In *Reconceptualizing Language Norms in
Multilingual Contexts*, Edited by Sarah Jones, Rebecca Schmor & Julie Kerekes,
Afterword by Enrica Piccardo



LINK TO BOOK:

<https://www.igi-global.com/book/reconceptualizing-language-norms-multilingual-contexts/315649>

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PUBLISHER of TIMELY KNOWLEDGE



H-INET

Higher Education in Israel Network of English Teachers

What's in this talk?

1. Conceptual grounding in the literature
2. Operationalizing workable concepts
3. Practical materials to use in the classroom

Why Mediation?

Sources of Resistance

What is it?

- Umbrella concept – includes many different types of activities.
- Overlaps with can-dos in three other modes of communication.

If mediation is everything, then it's nothing.

Is it for me?

- Requires emotional intelligence – ‘beyond my pay grade’.
- ‘Beyond scope and mandate of my classroom’.
- Beyond capacity of my students in their L1’

Map of CEFR-CV Professional Development Module



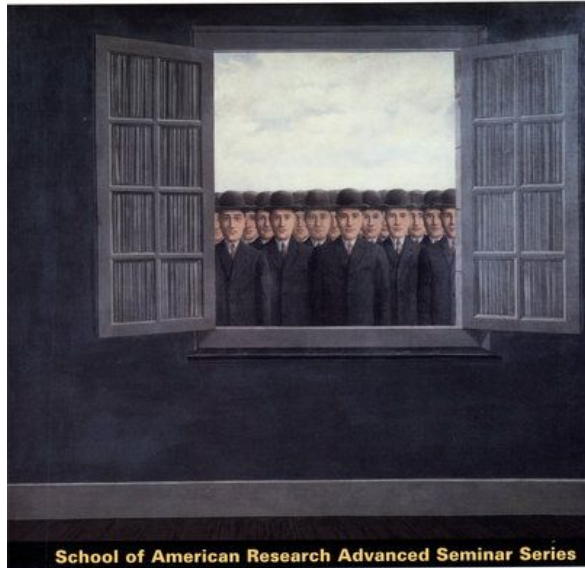
If mediation is everything, then it's nothing.



Wait...What is our Linguistic Ideology?

Regimes of Language

Ideologies, Politics, and Identities



Edited by Paul V. Kroskrity

Contributors Richard Bauman, Charles Briggs,
Joseph Errington, Susan Gal, Jane H. Hill, Judith T. Irvine,
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Michael Silverstein

Language *in* Culture
Lectures on the Social Semiotics
of Language

LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES

PRACTICE AND THEORY

EDITORS: BAMBI B. SCHIEFFELIN, KATHRYN A. WOOLARD,
AND PAUL V. KROSKRITY

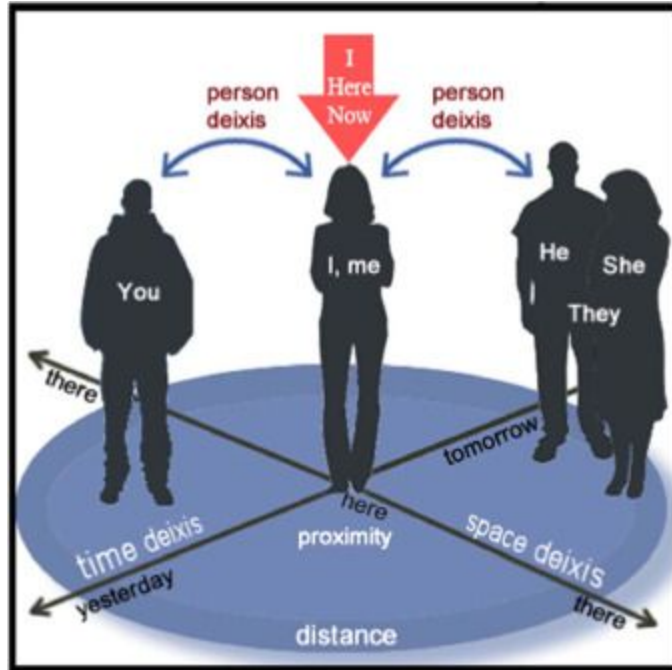


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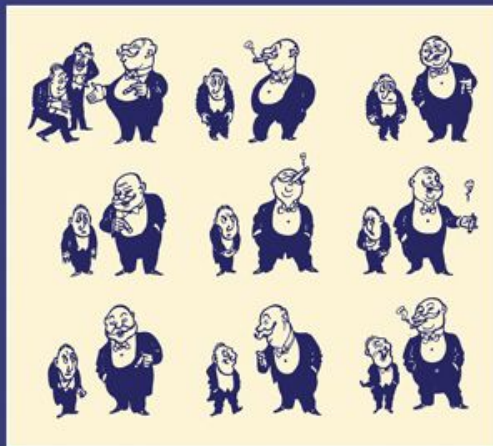
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*Studies in the Social and Cultural
Foundations of Language 24*

Language and Social Relations



Asif Agha

CAMBRIDGE

██████████ those of sarcasm and irony. Under certain circumstances the opposite of the expected usage could confuse, humiliate, or affront an addressee ... This is illustrated by a passage from the twentieth chapter of Tolstoy's *Childhood*.

Grandmother had a singular gift of expressing her opinion about people under certain circumstances by using the plural and singular pronouns of the second person together with a certain tone of voice. She used *vy* and *ty* contrary to general custom, and on her lips these shades of meaning acquired an entirely different significance. When a young prince walked up to her she said a few words calling him *vy* and looked at him with an expression of such contempt that if I had been in his place I would have become utterly confused ...

(An ancient countess would normally use *ty* to a young prince.)

(Friedrich 1986: 280)

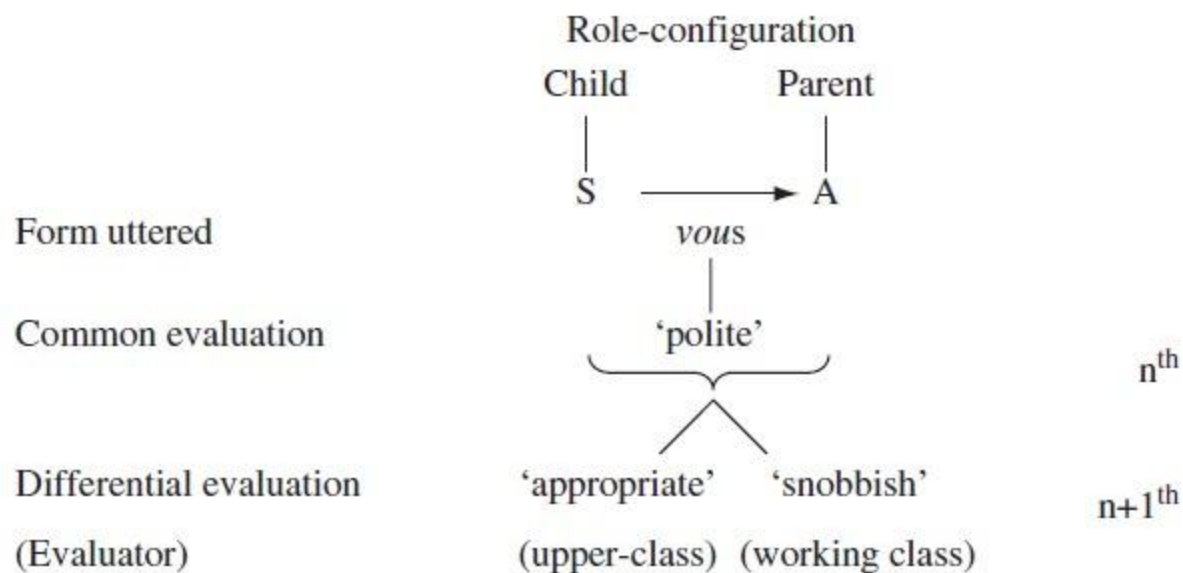
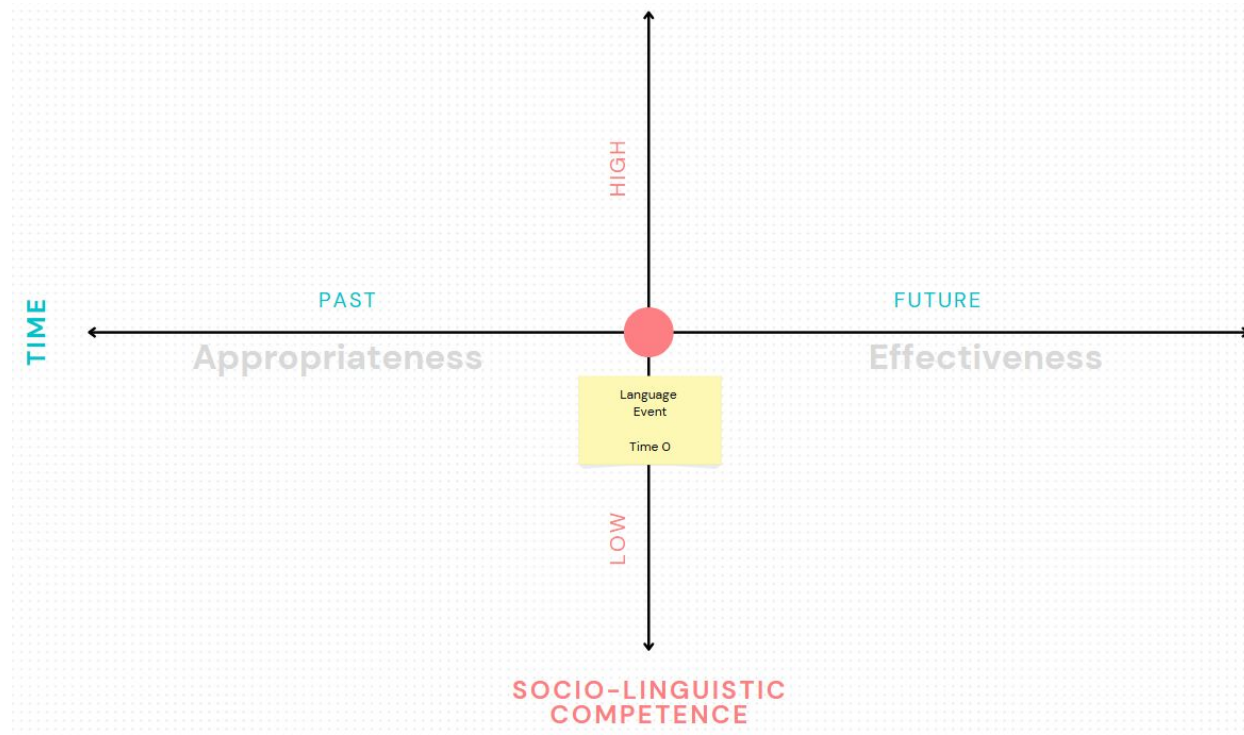


Figure 3.3 *Register-mediated alignments: reanalysis and self-differentiation*
 (Source: Morford 1997)

So what do all these theoretical considerations have to do with mediation?

So what is mediation?



What we say matters, and how we say it matters!

Definition:

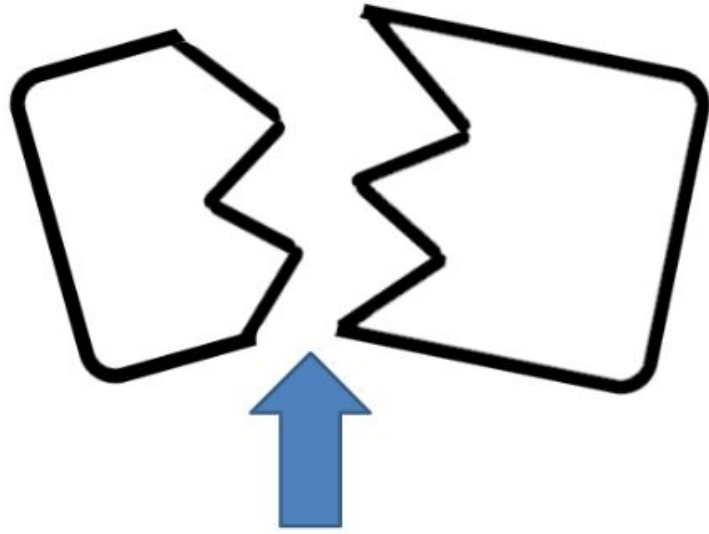
Mediation is the language we use in an attempt to be appropriate and effective in our communication.

How did we operationalize mediation?

We focused on the *method (the HOW)* of mediating,
and not the *object of mediation*.

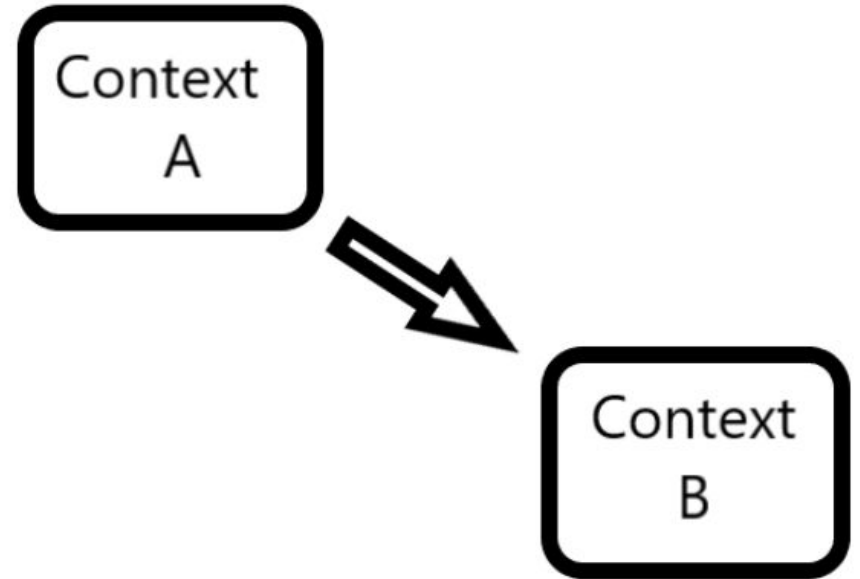
The HOW

Single-context mediation



Cognitive and/or Emotional Gap

Double-context mediation



Hymes Speaking (mnemonic)

- Setting or Scene
- Participants
- End (goal)
- Act Sequence
- Key (tone, manners, spirit)
- Instrumentalities
 - (channel) oral, written, telephone ... etc.
- Norms of Interaction and Interpretation
- Genre

Platform/
Channel

Language/
Register

Author/
Speaker

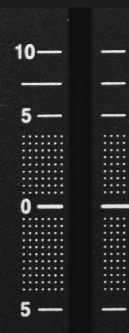
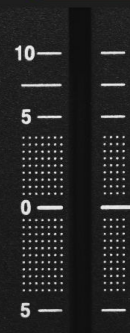
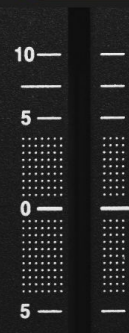
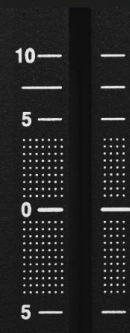
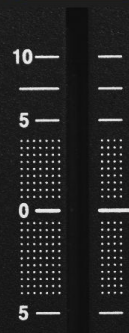
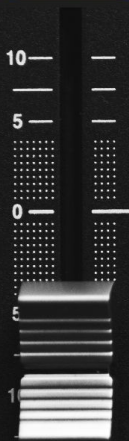
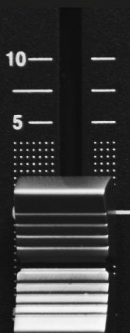
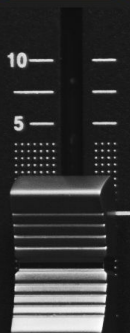
Genre/
Activity Type

Purpose

Audience

Time

Place/
Location



Teaching Mediation: Single-Context

Level:

A2

Scale:

Facilitating communication in delicate situations and disagreements

Descriptor:

Can recognise when people disagree or when difficulties occur in interaction and adapt memorised, simple phrases to seek compromise and agreement.

Imagine this - you need to break up with your significant other that you have been romantically involved with for some time. This is difficult enough, but your significant other also happens to be in the same course as you, sitting in the same classroom, week after week. How will you break up with her or him? How will you compose your message? What discursive moves will you make in delivering your message and what are the relevant language chunks? Your goal in this is to let the person down gently, caring for them as a person and establishing a relationship with that person where you two can continue to see each other in class and remain civil.

For instance, the first move is to establish a private space within which to have the awkward discussion. How might this be achieved? Perhaps:

"Hey, can we talk?"

"How's it going? Do you have a second?"

Once the two of you are in a more private space, the next move is to broach the subject - the relationship is problematic. How might you begin introducing this topic? Perhaps:

"Look, I don't think this is working out anymore."

"I think we need to be just friends."

The next move is to do some damage control - show empathy. How might this be achieved? Perhaps:

"We've had a really wonderful time together."

"You deserve someone who can give you what you need."

Now, it is time to hear the response. This part is more open and you need to respond appropriately and effectively. After a bit of back-and-forth, it is time for the end-game. How do you bring this conversation to a close, taking care to leave channels of communication open, if only platonically. Perhaps:

"Listen, we can talk more about this later."

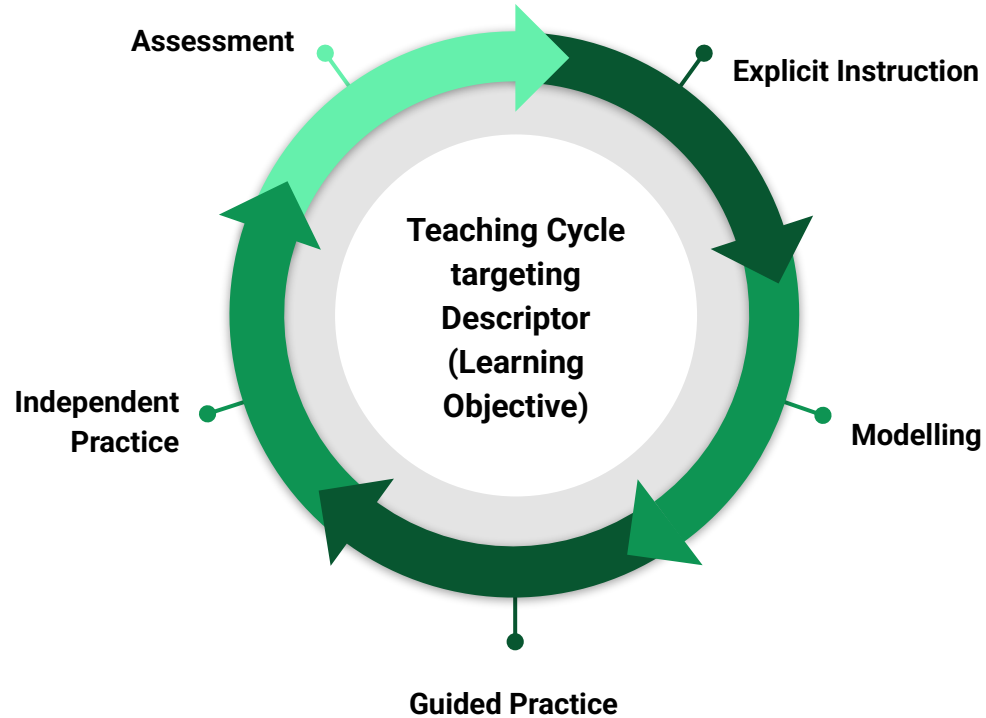
"I'll see you around."

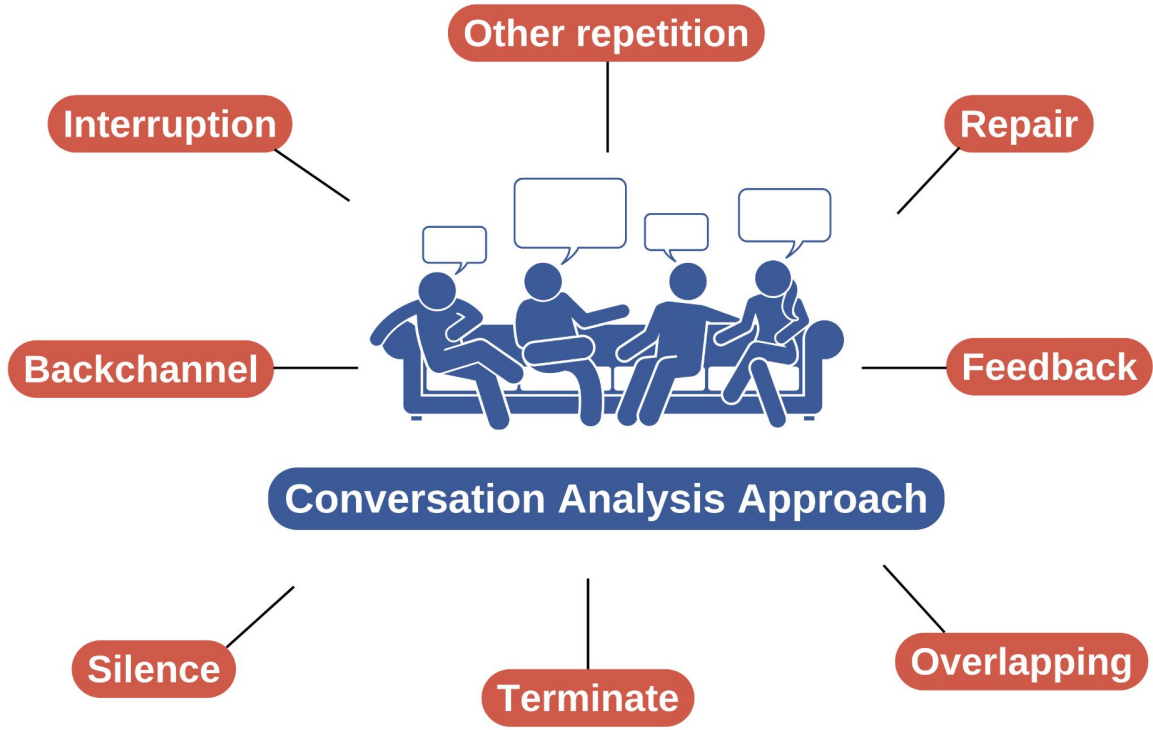
[Link](#)

Teaching Mediation: Double-Context

- Computer Science
- Law
- Economics
- History

Teaching Mediation: The Pedagogical Responsibility





Harvey Sacks

Emanuel Schegloff

Gail Jefferson

I couldn't like you anymore.

What was up with yesterday?!?

Assessment

Mediation Activity Grading Rubric – Speed Break-Up Activity (50 points)

Category	Poor	Fair	Very Good
Structure (14 points)	Lacks clear structural elements. No logical progression between mediation stages. No use of discursive moves or transitions.	Some structural elements present, but transitions between mediation moves are weak or inconsistent. Some use of discursive moves and signposting.	Follows a clear and logical structure incorporating all mediation stages: Initiating the conversation (2 pts), Broaching the subject (2 pts), Expressing empathy (4 pts), Managing responses (3 pts), Closing while maintaining civility (3 pts).
Content (23 points)	Lacks accuracy and relevance. Discursive moves do not align with the intended purpose. Empathy and emotional intelligence missing. Responses are abrupt or insensitive.	Some moves well-executed, but others lack appropriateness or depth. Empathy is attempted but not fully convincing. Logical flow is inconsistent. Some responses effective, but others lack sensitivity.	Strong grasp of mediation strategies: Effective use of discursive moves (6 pts), Appropriate responses that validate emotions (8 pts), Logical and coherent progression of dialogue (4 pts), Thoughtful language fostering a civil post-breakup relationship (3 pts), Inclusion of well-placed language chunks (2 pts).
Vocabulary & Grammar (9 points)	Poor word choice and incorrect usage of language chunks. Frequent grammatical errors disrupt comprehension.	Partially appropriate vocabulary and structure. Some incorrect or awkwardly used language chunks. Some grammatical errors.	Appropriate word choice and use of language chunks (4 pts), Grammatically correct sentence structures (5 pts).
Mechanics (4 points)	Frequent spelling, punctuation, or formatting errors.	Some errors in spelling, punctuation, or formatting, but meaning remains clear.	Correct spelling (1 pt), Proper punctuation (1 pt), Consistent capitalization (1 pt), Correct formatting (1 pt).

Create a lesson or **Enrich** an existing lesson

Create a lesson - when designing a new program, build from scratch

Enrich an existing lesson - find an opportunity in your existing program

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Thank you!
Questions or Comments?