

## POINTS DE VUE SUR LA CORRELATION ENTRE LES PARAMETRES DE L'ACTIVITE DIDACTIQUE ET LE CHOIX DES OBJECTIFS

### POINTS OF VIEW ON THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE PARAMETRES OF TEACHING AND THE CHOICE OF OBJECTIVES

Ce qui suit représente *une table ronde virtuelle* autour de laquelle nous avons invité plusieurs enseignants qui, en vertu de leurs fonctions administratives, sont le mieux placés pour expliquer la nature des rapports et les déterminations établis entre les paramètres de l'activité didactique et le choix des objectifs d'enseignement/ apprentissage.

Nous avons regroupé leurs interventions suivant le type d'enseignement pris en considération pour la mise en relief de ces rapports et déterminations, à savoir:

We present below the opinions of several participants in a *virtual round table*, who, by virtue of their administrative positions, can best explain the nature of the relationships and interconnections established between the parameters of teaching and the choice of teaching/learning objectives.

To highlight these relationships, we have grouped their contributions according to the type of education under consideration:

#### □ l'enseignement supérieur économique/economic tertiary education

Many course coordinators know that the drawing up of the course syllabus is perhaps the most energy-consuming activity at the beginning of the academic year. It is also a very responsible task, taking into account that, once the syllabus has been produced, it becomes the guidebook for all the teachers involved in the unfolding of the course for a whole academic year.

Some coordinators may regard it as a boring, repetitive kind of work, especially if they do it for several consecutive years and do not share this responsibility with other colleagues.

In recent years, changes have occurred in the strategy for designing language courses at the Department of Germanic Languages, teachers now working in teams on designing the syllabus for each faculty. Improvement is visible in some directions such as: selection of topics, setting of objectives, time allocation for each topic, distribution of tests, selection of references. This has also contributed to the development of co-operative attitudes and group cohesion.

This working style has also led to setting more rigorous, more realistic teaching objectives, better related to the new job requirements in the business world.

When looking through the syllabi for the English/German courses of the ASE faculties, one can easily notice two categories of objectives:

*general objectives:*

- to improve the students' communicative competence in both oral and written English/German;
- to help the students develop proper verbal and non-verbal business behaviour;
- to raise the students' awareness of cross-cultural differences so as to prepare them for communicating effectively when working internationally;

*specific objectives:*

- to develop the students' ability to understand reference materials according to their specialism (international business, accounting, commerce, marketing, tourism, finance, banking, insurance, applied computer science, management, public administration, environmental economy);
- to help the students acquire and use English/German vocabulary and structures specific to various economic fields;
- to help the students acquire and use linguistic functions such as: suggesting, giving opinion, contradicting politely, agreeing, disagreeing, making concessions, etc;
- to develop the students' ability to speak on the phone, to give oral presentations, to attain successful public speaking skills;
- to help the students acquire and develop proper strategies and techniques for business meetings and negotiations;
- to develop the students' business writing abilities (business letters, memos, business reports, contract clauses, financial and accounting documents, minutes of business meetings, etc);

On the basis of the needs analyses (usually carried out at the beginning of the first semester), and of the students' feed-back (regularly obtained at the end of the academic year), the specific objectives are changed, improved and diversified from one year to another, and are permanently adapted to the professional requirements of each field. This process is not as smooth as the description may suggest. There are many difficulties, among which the following are the most frequent:

- ❖ diversity of the students' needs;
- ❖ constraints of the academic curricula;
- ❖ temporary discrepancies between syllabi and course books deriving from the fact that books cannot be produced as fast as the needs change;
- ❖ limited and infrequent information from potential employers;
- ❖ some authors' oversensitivity to criticism resulting in publishing of materials without having benefited from the necessary scientific and editing advice;
- ❖ teachers' overload (at the ASE Department of Germanic Languages most of the teachers cover more than one teaching load every year);
- ❖ teachers' individual perception of change and progress.

Temporarily, these difficulties may create confusion, demotivation, alteration of the teaching pace, clash of ideas. If they are not adequately managed, such problems may become real threats to the educational process, affecting equally the students and those directly involved in or responsible for the quality of teaching. It is here that the professional spirit of the group can and must interfere to set things right and wipe away any possible danger. For the sake of the "six honest serving men" whose involvement in the pedagogic act is so suggestively mentioned by Rudyard Kipling [quoted in 2, p. 21]:

*I keep six honest serving-men.*

*(They taught me all I knew.)*

*Their names are What and Why and When*

*And How and Where and Who.*

At the beginning of each academic year, the "six honest serving men" work hard to help teachers design their language courses. *What* and *Why* are the first to do it. They know their roles well. They know that, while setting the objectives, teachers make clear promises to their students. And promises are to be kept.

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Les objectifs traditionnels de notre département des langues romanes et de communication en affaires se sont toujours axés sur l'acquisition par les futurs économistes d'une compétence de communication en langues romanes au niveau de la compréhension orale et textuelle, de l'expression orale et écrite ainsi que des stratégies interactionnelles adéquates aux situations de communication professionnelles typiques.

Les compétences orales à s'assimiler vont des échanges quotidiens ritualisés dans les entreprises (niveau I) jusqu'aux simulations de réunions de travail et de négociations interculturelles (niveau III).

L'acquisition des compétences écrites vise en premier lieu la correspondance interne et externe de l'entreprise que sous-tendent des connaissances morpho-syntaxiques et lexicales spécifiques.

Une compétence textuelle centrée sur la documentation en langues romanes se réfère surtout aux étudiants avancés.

Plus récemment, la dimension culturelle en affaires est venue s'ajouter à nos objectifs, étant données les nouvelles opportunités de nos étudiants de travailler dans les multinationales.

Nous remarquons que l'enseignement / l'apprentissage de la communication professionnelle efficace - faire que le message passe - se fait en ce moment au détriment de la perfection formelle, en raison d'un nombre restreint d'heures de cours et du nombre toujours accru des étudiants dans les groupes. Ceci mène à la « rentabilisation » à tout prix et au maximum des séances de travaux pratiques ainsi qu'au développement de l'apprentissage autonome guidé par l'enseignant.

Nos objectifs, essentiellement communicatifs, visent à former les futurs spécialistes en économie pour les situations interculturelles qu'ils auront à affronter et à gérer tant à l'intérieur des multinationales, toujours plus nombreuses dans notre pays, qu'à l'extérieur du pays dans les institutions et organisations partenaires.

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